



PHILIPPINES

Statement delivered by

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

H.E. ALLEN A. CAPUYAN
Chairperson, Philippine Commission on Women
Chairperson
National Commission on Indigenous Peoples

During the General Discussion on the
“Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the ECOSOC and emerging issues, specifically challenges related to pandemics and responses to them”
(Item 7)

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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Philippines recognizes the importance of the Permanent Forum as a platform to exchange views and develop partnerships with indigenous peoples, especially as the pandemic and other emerging challenges have exacerbated their vulnerabilities.

It is crucial that genuine IP voices are heard and amplified, and that programs and cooperation are developed based on the needs and free prior and informed consent of the IPs themselves. This has always been the thrust of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), as the focused mechanism of the Philippine Government for the promotion and protection of the rights of the 14 million IPs in the country.

Since its creation in 1997, the NCIP is mandated to represent and capacitate IPs on the ground. As chair of the NCIP, and an IP myself -- let me reaffirm the resolve of the Philippine Government under the leadership of President Rodrigo Duterte to ensure that issues related to indigenous peoples are IP-driven. Indeed, the Philippines empowers IP communities to have their voices heard in national and international fora.

During the pandemic, the Philippine Government distributed food aid to IP households and extended livelihood assistance to IP communities towards greater self-sufficiency. Indigenous peoples, together with other socio-demographic groups at higher risk of COVID-19 infection, are also included in the priority groups for vaccination, despite limited vaccine supplies.

We hope that the Permanent Forum’s work will always be based on credible and reliable information, and not be politicized. It must stay focused as an inclusive and balanced platform, bringing about the genuine empowerment of IPs worldwide.

Thank you.