

**Results and Highlights of the Local and Sectoral Conversation  
on the GPH-NDFP Peace Process  
Cordillera Region<sup>1</sup>  
March 16-17, 2015  
Baguio City**

*“Peace is not merely an absence of war, an absence of hostilities. Peace is not only the silencing of guns. Peace is, above all, the well being of every woman, man and child. Peace lies in a just and equitable distribution of the earth’s resources.”<sup>2</sup>*

We are peace advocates from the different parts of the Cordillera - from the provinces of Benguet, Mountain Province, Ifugao, Kalinga, Abra and the City of Baguio. Today, four years after the regional Government of the Republic of the Philippines/Government of the Philippines (GRP/GPH) and National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) Joint Consultation in Lacub, Abra (April 2011), we affirm our continuing work for peace based on justice.

We are affirming the following results and recommendations<sup>3</sup> from the 2011 consultation which are the following:

1. For the people to support the peace negotiations between the GRP/GPH and NDFP, and actively engage both Parties to address the roots of the armed conflict, specifically the exploitation and oppression of IPs, for a just and lasting peace;
2. For both Parties to conduct continuing consultations and dialogues with IPs particularly at the grassroots level, and institute responsive mechanisms and reforms especially the GRP/GPH – being the Party in power; and
3. For all to gather broader support towards the realization of the proposals and monitoring the response and/or commitment of both Parties to address the issues that the participants raised during the consultation.

The peace talks have been stalled four years ago.

The civil war is ongoing in the country and the conflict in Philippine society is manifested through various aspects of our lives - political and security, economic and socio-cultural. The non recognition and violation of the right to ancestral land and self-determination of the Cordillera indigenous peoples continues, especially with the imposition of development plans and policies not based on our needs but based on the want for profit. Our villages remain militarized resulting to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The worsening crisis in Philippine society all the more marks the need for the peace talks to resume immediately.

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<sup>1</sup>The Cordillera Peace Conversation result will be submitted to the National Peace Summit to be held in Manila on April 16 and 17, 2015.

<sup>2</sup>INTRODUCTION JOINT PEACE CONSULTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES (GRP) AND THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES (NDFP) ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE 27th CORDILLERA DAY Buneg, Lacub, Abra, April 27, 2011 by Sr. Alice M. Sobrevinas, OSB, Member, Presidium for the GRP--NDFP Joint Consultation in Lacub, Abra 2011

<sup>3</sup>SUMMARY REPORT Government of the Philippines (GPH) - National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) JOINT PEACE CONSULTATION WITH COR DILLERA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (IPs) April 27, 2011 Buneg, Lacub, Abra

In this Cordillera Peace Conversation<sup>4</sup> held from March 16-17 here in Baguio City, we discussed the updates on the stalled peace process, talked about the people's issues such as the worsening denial and violation of Cordillera indigenous peoples right to ancestral land and self-determination, and the violation of human rights of democratic sectors such as women, youth, workers, peasants and urban poor, and we arrived at the following summary points :

1. We have identified and affirmed various manifestations of denial, non-recognition and violations of our right to ancestral land and self-determination as indigenous peoples in our local context.
2. We have affirmed that for us indigenous peoples to overcome the inequality, marginalization, discrimination that we refer to as national oppression, we have to assert our right to freely pursue our economic, social and cultural aspirations and freely set up a corresponding political system in a mode and pace that we define
3. The GPH on its part, signed into law the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) and set up the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to mandated to uphold indigenous peoples' rights and welfare. But as we have experienced, the IPRA and NCIP further worsened the situation by being the instruments of national oppression of indigenous peoples. It is why an overwhelming majority of indigenous peoples in the region and other indigenous communities in the country are calling for the scrapping of IPRA and abolition of NCIP.
4. On one hand, we learned of the 10-point program of the revolutionary Cordillera Peoples Democratic Front (CPDF) which is reflective of our aspirations for genuine self-determination through genuine regional autonomy.
5. We heard as well the tireless effort of the NDFP in pursuing lasting peace, based on justice and in pursuing peace negotiation despite several setbacks.
6. It is our aspiration that the GPH and the NDFP will resume peace talk the soonest possible time and consider the recommendations of this Cordillera Peace Conversation as well as past efforts of grassroots views from past initiatives like the 2011 Lacub peace consultation as well as that in Sagada and Ifugao in 2012 and in Bokod in 2013.
7. We call on the GPH and the NDFP to abide by the TheHague Declaration, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) and hopefully come up with a Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER) with our right to self-determination fully acknowledged and protected.
8. We call for justice and accountability for the cases of human rights and international humanitarian law violations that have been perpetrated.

With this, we affirm that "In concrete, peace begins when the hungry are fed and when the thirst for justice is quenched. Genuine peace is only possible in a society where justice is nurtured by the dignity felt by every human being – free from poverty, cynicism, violations and other evils borne out by greed and the insatiable crave for power. Thus, peace is not solely a term and a concept. It is a process."<sup>5</sup>

We call on the peoples of the Cordillera and all Filipinos to partake in this work for a just and enduring peace which will only be realized when people link arms and persist.#

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<sup>4</sup>sponsored by the Citizen's Alliance for Just Peace, Sulong CARHRIHL, Pilgrims for Peace-Cordillera and the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance. Held at Hotel Supreme, Baguio City, the Regional Peace Conversation had a total of 60 participants.

<sup>5</sup>INTRODUCTION JOINT PEACE CONSULTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES (GRP) AND THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES (NDFP) ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE 27th CORDILLERA DAY Buneg, Lacub, Abra, April 27,2011 by Sr. Alice M. Sobrevinas, OSB, Member, Presidium for the GRP--NDFP Joint Consultation in Lacub, Abra 2011