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Assert our right to self determined sustainable development! Junk WTO!

INDONESIA—As the 9th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) kicks off this week in Bali, the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) joined other grassroots indigenous peoples organisations and international movements and reiterated its call to Junk the WTO given the irreversible impact to indigenous peoples resulting to the non-recognition of ancestral lands and territories, violation of the right to self determination and sustainable development, food insecurity and further impoverishment, among others.



With the Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL), Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network (APIYN), Alyansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), Barisan Pemuda Adat Nusantara (BPAN) Land is Life and the Committee on the Protection of Natural Resources in Manipur, the CPA organised today the International Workshop on Indigenous Peoples and the “World Trade Organisation: Resisting Globalisation and Asserting Self Determination”.

Participated by some 38 indigenous leaders worldwide including women and youth, the workshop sought to build deeper understanding and awareness on the WTO and neoliberal globalisation and its impact to indigenous peoples and concretise these through various experiences and responses of indigenous communities. Highlights of today’s workshop, which concludes tomorrow with a Declaration and Action Plan, include: firmer grasp and understanding of the current neoliberal development paradigm and the dominant economic system of capitalism, impact of globalisation to developing nations and indigenous peoples in particular, and the need for support and solidarity between and among indigenous peoples worldwide, who are confronted with the same urgent concern of globalisation impacts, and have a common history of colonisation, subjugation and resistance, and lastly, that the multiple crisis and underdevelopment experienced globally is due to the capitalist development paradigm.

Concrete experiences of indigenous peoples in Indonesia, Philippines, North America, Ecuador and Sweden were presented and discussed, including strategies and success stories from these experiences, further enriching the realisation that indigenous peoples have common issues and aspirations, thus the need to support and learn from each other.

The Bali Package

The WTO MC9 seeks to revive the stalled negotiations during the Doha Development Round in 2001, where no new deals were made in view of many issues raised by developing countries on the principal agreements in the WTO such as the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS), Trade Related Intellectual Property Rules Agreement (TRIPS) and Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), and sustained protest from the people of the world, including indigenous peoples.

While the WTO MC9 has raised the possibility of discussing changes in its agricultural rules and addressing the issues raised by the least developed countries, at the heart of its MC9 is forging a new deal on Trade Facilitation (TF), which will only push for greater liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation at the expense of weaker economies of developing countries, like the Philippines. TF involves actions and processes to make buying, selling and shipping goods across borders faster and easier, and this involves the removal of procedural barriers such as government regulations and controls that are in fact intended to protect domestic economies from foreign control.

While the GATT was formed only in 1995, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) governed international trade since 1947. Prior to this, the main vehicles of globalisation were the World Bank and

International Monetary Fund, with their structural adjustment programs (SAPs) and stabilisation programs for the third world, which essentially consisted of loans with high interests and a lot of conditionalities.

This week at the People's Global Camp parallel to the WTO MC9, indigenous peoples will be engage and call for specific demands to the WTO, including states and big corporations. ***

References:

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