



CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE

For the Defense of the Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

April 27, 2010

Celebrating Cordillera Day 2010 to Advance the Politics of Change

About 5,000 delegates from different provinces in the Cordillera, Ilocos Region, Cagayan Region, NCR, Central Luzon and Mindanao, and indigenous peoples' advocates from Taiwan, Cambodia, Thailand, Canada, France, Germany and Australia participated in the successful celebration of the 26th Cordillera Day celebration held last Sunday, April 25, at Melvin Jones, Burnham Park, Baguio City. Organized by the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), the celebration carried the theme *Advance the Politics of Change*. It formally opened with an Ibaloi indigenous ritual and prayer led by Ibaloi elders.



Significant outputs of the celebration include the ***Cordillera Peoples Declaration on the May 2010 Elections and the Politics of Change*** which embodies the Cordillera indigenous peoples issues, concerns and needs on matters of ancestral land rights, basic social services, human rights and genuine regional autonomy, among others. The Declaration serves as the Cordillera people's agenda to political candidates and parties this May 2010 elections. Provincial resolutions were also presented during the celebration.

"The success of the 26th Cordillera Day celebration demonstrates the Cordillera indigenous peoples' continuing efforts to advance the politics of change through the defense of the ancestral land, resources and human rights amidst heightening state repression, development aggression and red tagging of people's organizations and leaders especially at this time of electoral campaigns," said CPA Secretary General Abigail Anongos.

As guests of honor on this celebration, senatorial candidates Satur Ocampo and Liza Maza of the MAKABAYAN Coalition donned the Igorot G-String (*wanes*) and Benguet tapis (*devit*) as requested by the CPA and elders from the different Cordillera tribes. "We are very honored that they responded to our request. Their track record on good governance and credibility and concrete support to Cordillera communities as political activists and Bayan Muna and Gabriela Women's Party Representatives deserves such recognition," CPA officers quoted.

KATRIBU Partylist nominees Beverly Longid (1st nominee and a Kankanaey-Bontok), Nelson Mallari (3rd nominee and an Aeta) and Virgilio Aniceto (5th nominee and an Ibaloi) challenged the delegates to act against the heightened 'black propaganda' against Katribu and other progressive partylists and the threats received by candidates and community leaders. In her Keynote Speaker for the celebration, Longid stressed that "Indigenous peoples should vote that which truly represents them in the upcoming elections."

Longid also stated that the party sought for the disqualification of A-IPRA Partylist First Nominee and NCIP Chairperson Atty. Eugenio Insigne because his being a government employee seeking Congressional seat is against the partylist law.

Despite heavy rains, the 5000-strong delegation enthusiastically marched along Session, Magsaysay and Harrison in their indigenous attires and continued at Melvin Jones for the sharing of the Cordillera provinces on the people's agenda for the upcoming elections and the Cordillera Day Declaration for Politics of Change and the May 2010 Elections

Baguio City mayoralty candidate Atty. Joe Molintas and candidates for councilor Art Allad-iw, Pinky Rondez, Richard Carino and Rob Ocampo joined Makabayan Coalition and Katribu in a Meeting de Avance.

The celebration culminated in a tribute to heroes and martyrs, and a solidarity night which showcased local, national and some international indigenous people's culture. The most recent martyrs who were given recognition are Francis Dulag, son of Cordillera hero Macliing Dulag from Kalinga province, and Rt. Rev. Peter Alangui from Sagada, Mountain Province. Dulag and Alangui have actively campaigned for indigenous peoples. This year's Cordillera Day was also celebrated in Cordillera provinces – Benguet (April 10), Mountain Province (April 17), and Apayao and Kalinga (April 24). Abra will hold its provincial celebration on May 1 in Bangued. Likewise, fellow Igorots from the Cordillera and advocates celebrated Cordillera in Hong Kong on April 4, Canada on April 17. Indigenous groups and advocates from Taiwan who attended the celebration shall re-echo the results of the Cordillera Day to different indigenous communities in Taiwan.#



The Declaration and Statement are available at the CPA website (www.cpaphils.org).