



# PHILIPPINES

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement delivered by  
**H.E. LIBRAN N. CABACTULAN**  
Permanent Representative  
Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations

During the Third Committee Debate on  
**Agenda Item 65: Rights of Indigenous Peoples**  
69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
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**Thank you, Madam Chair.**

This review of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People comes at the heels of the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the adoption of its outcome document last September 22, 2014.

My delegation fully supports the outcome document as it strengthens the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP) and provides concrete action points for both Member States and UN entities for the effective implementation of the Declaration.

We particularly support the invitation to the Human Rights Council to review the mandates of its existing mechanisms, in particular the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with a view to modifying and improving the Expert Mechanism so that it can more effectively promote respect for the Declaration. We also support the development of a UN system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration.

**Madam Chair,**

The rights and protection of indigenous peoples is guaranteed by the Philippine Constitution and by law. As the Secretary General's report indicates, the Philippines is among the first states to enact a national law specific to indigenous people's rights.

Since 1997, Republic Act No. 8371, known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) has recognized indigenous peoples' inherent rights, including their right to self-

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determination, to ancestral domains and the applicability of customary laws governing property rights, to self-determined development **and to the requirement that free and prior informed consent be obtained in relation to any developments that have an impact on them, including for projects undertaken near or in their ancestral lands.**

This recognition and protection is carried over into the draft Basic Bangsamoro Law that is the outcome of the Philippine government's successful conclusion of peace negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The Basic Bangsamoro Law is envisioned to end the decades-long strife in Mindanao by establishing a political entity for the Bangsamoro peoples. In doing so, it provides that “[t]he Bangsamoro Government recognizes the rights of the indigenous peoples, and shall adopt measures for the promotion and protection of their rights, the right to their native titles and/or *fusaka inged*, indigenous customs and traditions, justice systems and indigenous political structures, the right to an equitable share in revenues from the utilization of resources in their ancestral lands, the right to free and prior informed consent, right to political participation in the Bangsamoro Government including reserved seats for the indigenous peoples in the Bangsamoro Parliament, the right to basic services and the right to freedom of choice as to their identity.

It also mandates, among others, the following:

- the creation of a “tribal university system” to address the higher educational needs of the indigenous cultural communities in the Bangsamoro;
- the creation of a commission for the preservation of their cultural heritage;
- the creation of an Office for Tribal Justice System responsible in overseeing the study, preservation and development of the tribal justice system within the Bangsamoro;
- the provision of an equitable share for indigenous peoples from the revenues generated from the exploration, development and utilization of natural resources that are found within the territories covered by native title; and
- the recognition of indigenous structures or systems which promote peace, and law and order.

This is the product of inclusive consultations and constructive dialogue with indigenous peoples and national and local government agencies, including the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

**Madame Chair,**

The Philippines agrees that the post-2015 development agenda cannot overlook the needs and rights of indigenous peoples. The full and effective participation of indigenous peoples is integral to the formulation and achievement of sustainable development goals.

As such, governments should continue to dialogue with and listen to the voices of its indigenous peoples. Recognition of their rights and aspirations will go a long way towards national unity and inclusive development.

**Thank you, Madam Chair.**