



# PHILIPPINES

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Statement delivered by  
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During the Third Committee Debate on  
**Agenda Item 66: Rights of Indigenous Peoples**  
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**Mr. Chair,**

We thank the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Mr. James Anaya, for his presentation and report, as well as for the other reports delivered under this agenda item.

**Mr. Chair,**

The Philippines gives paramount importance to the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, including women, children, the elderly, and indigenous peoples with disabilities.

The Constitution of the Philippines is one of the most progressive constitutions in South-East Asia, with several specific provisions relating to indigenous peoples, including Article XIV (sect. 17), which provides that the State is to recognize, respect and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions and is to consider these rights in the formulation of national plans and policies.

In 1997, the Philippine Government enacted Republic Act No. 8371, known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), to give effect to the constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. The IPRA recognizes indigenous peoples' inherent rights, including their right to self-determination, to ancestral domains and the applicability of customary laws governing property rights, to self-determined development, and to the requirement that free prior informed consent be obtained in relation to any developments that have impact on them.

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IPRA provides for the creation of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as its implementing agency. It is an agency under the office the President that is composed of commissioners representing the seven ethnographic regions in the country as defined by the IPRA. The NCIP is the primary government agency that formulates and implements policies, plans and programmes for the recognition, promotion and protection of the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples.

The NCIP recently promulgated the Revised Guidelines on the Exercise of Free Prior and Informed Consent and Related Processes, consistent with the State's policy that no concession, license, permit or lease, production-sharing agreement, or other undertaking affecting ancestral domains will be granted or renewed without going through the process laid down by law, including the indigenous cultural communities' or indigenous peoples' consent.

Indigenous Peoples have rightful access to mainstream governance as well as in exercising their rights to self-governance. The Local Government Code of 1991 and the IPRA have provisions to address the governance situation of Indigenous Peoples aimed at upgrading their socioeconomic development, the provision of adequate educational and health services, as well as guarantee their physical security and welfare.

At the multilateral front, we actively support initiatives relating to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. The Philippines was one of only a handful of countries to have contributed to the voluntary Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues and was the facilitator of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

**Mr. Chair,**

At this time next year, the United Nations high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples would have already been held and an outcome document adopted.

As we prepare for the forthcoming World Conference, my delegation hopes that we will all come up with an outcome document that is short and concise, and that will complement existing normative frameworks on the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. We laud the preparatory efforts being taken for the World Conference, such as the Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference for the UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, which took place in Alta, Norway. The outcome document of the preparatory conference is an important contribution to the whole preparatory process and provides us with a broader picture of pressing concerns within the historical and current context of indigenous peoples from around the world. My delegation looks forward to actively participating in the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014.

I thank you, Mr. Chair, for your kind attention.