



CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE

For the Defense of the Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

May 4, 2011

Results and Highlights of the 27th Cordillera Day Celebration: Live out the glorious history of our struggle! Fight for land, life and honor!

Cordillera Day 2011 or the 27th Cordillera Day celebration was a huge success, with the regionally centralized celebration in Buneg, Lacub, Abra province from April 25-28, 2011 that was attended by over 5,000 delegates from the Cordillera provinces, Ilocos region, National Capital Region, Southern Tagalog, regions from the Visayas and Mindanao islands, and overseas (Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Japan, Belgium, Korea, United States and Chile). Guided by the central theme *“Live out the glorious history of our struggle! Fight for land, life and honor!”*, this year’s celebration is characterized by the Cordillera-wide Multilateral Unity Pact on Development Aggression and Militarization, the Joint Peace Consultation of Cordillera indigenous peoples with the Government of the Philippines (GPh) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), and remembering the lessons from the successful struggle of the Tingguian indigenous peoples versus Cellophil Resources Corporation (CRC) in the 1970s, to steer us through present struggles.



The celebration was hosted by the Timpuyog dagiti Umili ti Lacub, Bantayan Ekolohiya ken Kinabaknang (TULBEK or Lacub People’s Federation for Ecological and Resource Protection) and the Kakailian Salakniban Tay Amin a Nagtaduan (KASTAN)-CPA Abra. Cordillera Day 2011 was also celebrated in Hong Kong, Canada (Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto), and Macau through the initiative of fellow Igorots, Filipino migrants, and solidarity groups in these countries.

Welcome Ritual and Opening Ceremonies

TULBEK and the people of Buneg warmly welcomed the delegates on the evening of April 25 through a traditional welcome ritual led by Buneg elders, for the safety of all delegates during their stay in Buneg until their return to their respective communities. The beating of gongs and community dancing relieved the delegates’ exhaustion from long hours of travel in the rugged roads leading to Buneg.

Cordillera Day 2011 was formally opened through a Mass for Peace and Ritual in the morning of April 25, followed by a colorful welcome presentation by Buneg children, a militant flag dance and the acknowledgment of delegates. The opening ceremonies was completed through the sharing of the Cordillera Day 2011 rationale by CPA Chairperson Windel Bolinget. Fr. Cirilo Ortega provided a very inspiring keynote address on the central theme and the need for further people’s unity for justice, freedom and democracy. Fr. Ortega is a veteran of the Tingguian indigenous peoples’ successful resistance to CRC and current president of Divine Word College in Bangued, Abra. This was followed by the sharing of the National Situation of the Filipino People and Indigenous Peoples, including our urgent tasks, as provided by Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (KAMP) National Spokesperson Piya Malayao.

Cultural Presentations of People's Struggles and Solidarity

The afternoon of the first day kicked off with an inspirational message from Joan Carling, Secretary General of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and former chairperson of the CPA. This was followed by provincial presentations on urgent issues and campaigns through cultural form, by the Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, and Mountain Province, and Baguio City delegations. A synthesis of the Cordillera situation was provided by an elder from Mountain Province through an *uggayam* (indigenous chant).



Before the Solidarity Night in the evening of April 26, a human rights award was presented to the people of Lacub for their consistent record of asserting indigenous peoples' right to self determination and ancestral land rights. The award was received by the TULBEK leadership. This was followed by the Abra delegates' provincial presentation, also in cultural form. In solidarity with Cordillera indigenous peoples, international and national delegates also performed participatory cultural presentations.



The Joint Peace Consultation of Cordillera Indigenous Peoples with the NDFP and GPh

A distinct character of the 27th Cordillera Day is the Joint Peace Consultation of Cordillera Indigenous Peoples with the GPh and NDFP, co-organized by CPA and KATRIBU Indigenous Peoples Partylist, which took place in the morning of April 27. The Consultation provided a venue for Cordillera indigenous peoples' to critique, recommend and put forward their key issues and demands to both the GPh and NDFP's drafts on Socio-Economic Reform (SER), which is the second substantive agenda of the peace negotiations, to address the roots of the armed conflict for just and lasting peace. In the consultation were Rafael Baylosis of the NDFP Reciprocal Working Committee (RCW) on SER and Ednar Dayanghirang of the GPh RCW on SER. Members of the academe, the Church and professionals composed the presidium.

In the consultation, representatives from the six Cordillera provinces, Baguio City, and basic sectors (workers, peasants, women, youth), put forward key issues and demands for socio-economic reform and the respect of indigenous peoples' rights. These include the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights to ancestral domain and self-determination, provision of basic social services, on militarization and human rights violations, on large-scale mining and for rehabilitation of mined-out communities, wage hike. In response, both panels recognized indigenous peoples' rights over their ancestral lands and both panels supported the people's opposition against large-scale mining. Both the GPh and NDFP agreed to the formation of a sub-committee on indigenous peoples to help the negotiating panels and reciprocal working committees on the inclusion of indigenous peoples' concerns towards the crafting of the Comprehensive Agreement for Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER). The consultation concluded with a Maeng ritual called *bagawas*, which bound the NDFP and GPH to their word otherwise they will forever be cursed. National and international delegates served as observers and witnesses to the consultation.

This is the first joint community consultation of the GPh and the NDFP, and it is encouraged for similar consultations to take place with other indigenous territories and sectors across the country.

Unity Pact and Workshops

Following the Joint Peace Consultation, Cordillera elders held a caucus in the afternoon to forge a unity pact against development aggression and militarization. The resulting *Pagta* (pact) has 9 provisions on concrete steps to undertake in relation to addressing development aggression and militarization in whatever means possible and decided by the communities. These include prohibiting indigenous peoples from:

- Collaborating with mining, dam, logging and geothermal energy companies;
- Selling properties and resources to foreign and local mining companies and other companies working on extractive industries;
- Allowing encampment of the State's military forces in residential houses, and the pullout military troops inside communities;
- Becoming members of the State's paramilitary group (CAFGU), and joining goons of politicians and warlords;
- Allowing disturbances in the unity and peace in communities
- Supporting politicians who allow the entry of destructive mining and other extractive industries and those who tolerate human rights violations against indigenous peoples



Similar to the Cellophil and Chico struggles where multilateral unity pacts were forged through the leadership of indigenous elders in the course of indigenous peoples' resistance to development aggression and State terrorism, the Unity Pact has further galvanized Cordillera peoples' movement for the assertion of ancestral land rights and right to self determination.

Simultaneous with the elders' caucus, workshops were held on urgent issues and concerns of Cordillera indigenous peoples: large-scale and small-scale mining, climate change and disaster response, agricultural liberalization, regional autonomy and self-determination, human rights and Oplan Bayanihan, Cordillera Situation and the international Indigenous Peoples' Movement for Self-determination and Liberation (IPMSDL), women's and children's workshop. The workshops resulted in resolutions on large-scale mining, regional autonomy, small-scale mining, human rights and Oplan Bayanihan, and climate change and disaster response which were later presented in a plenary and were signed and affirmed by all delegates.

Following the human rights award given to the people of Lacub on April 26, similar awards were given to the people of Ucab, Itogon, Benguet ; Gawaan, Balbalan, Kalinga, and to the communities of Lepanto in Mankayan, Benguet. As done every year, a Tribute to Cordillera Martyrs and Heroes took place at dusk, to remember and honor men and women who bravely fought and asserted for the defense and recognition of Cordillera indigenous peoples' rights. This year, we also paid tribute to respected botanist Dr. Leonard Co, slain by the military in November 2010 while researching on indigenous tree species in Leyte. Dr. Co had significantly contributed to enriching traditional knowledge on health and medicine while working in the Cordillera through the Community Health, Education, Services and Training in the Cordillera (CHESTCORE). CHESTCORE provided medical and dental services throughout the 2-day celebration, as it does every year on Cordillera Day.

More cultural presentations from different delegations were presented during the Solidarity Night Part II in the evening of April 27, which lasted until the dawn of April 28, before the delegates' departure.

Our Gains

Cordillera Day 2011 would not have been successful, if not for the resoluteness of the people of Lacub, who did not succumb to the harassment, threats and attempts to sabotage Cordillera Day 2011, by local warlords and the military, especially during the preparations. En route to the venue on April 25, the jeepneys of our provincial delegations were even deliberately and severely damaged when spikes and nails

were systematically placed in the provincial roads, causing flat tires to some 12 jeeps. This did not discourage or stop the delegates from reaching Buneg and actively participating in the celebration. By overcoming these and with the support of over 5,000 delegates who attended, Cordillera Day 2011 was a huge success and a meaningful one.

As the biggest political, cultural and solidarity gathering in the region, Cordillera Day contributed to strengthening the Cordillera mass movement. Twenty-seven years of Cordillera Day is a celebration of victories and achievements, and drawing lessons from these, towards building a stronger indigenous peoples' movement for the defense of ancestral land and self-determination, human rights, national freedom and democracy.

Our specific gains from the celebration this year include:

1. Presentation and submission of Cordillera indigenous peoples' key issues, demands, critique and recommendations to the GPH and NDFP on socio economic reform and indigenous peoples' rights towards the crafting of the Comprehensive Agreement on Indigenous Peoples Rights
2. Forging of a Cordillera-wide Unity Pact with concrete provisions, on the issues of militarization and development aggression
3. Greater capacity of communities, especially those threatened and affected by destructive corporate mining and human rights violations in collectively addressing the urgent problems, crisis and challenges they face.
4. Continuing solidarity among Cordillera indigenous communities through cultural exchanges and sharing of experiences in their common struggles
5. Greater intervention and engagement of elders in the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples' rights, promotion of inter-tribal peace and genuine regional autonomy in the Cordillera
6. Renewed and strengthened solidarity relations of Cordillera indigenous peoples with national and international advocates

It is this Cordillera Day that CPA has organized since 1985 that is embraced and supported by the people. Each yearly celebration has lessons and gains that must be built on for the Cordillera mass movement and for future Cordillera Day celebrations, such as Cordillera Day 2012, which will also be the 28th celebration.

The Cordillera Peoples Alliance is deeply indebted to all delegates, solidarity friends, partners and advocates for a triumphant Cordillera Day 2011. Thank you for tireless and unconditional support and solidarity! #



Windel Bolinget
Chairperson



Abigail Anongos
Secretary General