



Cordillera Peoples Alliance

For the Defense of Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

August 27, 2009

**To our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters and
All Victims of Typhoon Morakot in Taiwan**

**THRU: Committee on Indigenous Peoples
Taiwan Committee for Philippine Concerns and**

Hunter School

Dear Friends,

We wish to convey our condolences and sympathy to the victims of the tragic typhoon Morakot in Taiwan, especially to our indigenous brothers and sisters who lost their loved ones, and their homes, lands and properties destroyed. The same super typhoon named "Kiko" in the Philippines hit us, killing dozens of people including indigenous peoples and small-scale miners, leaving over 1,000 families homeless, and affecting more than 28,000 people in total.

It may be good to know about the Taiwan government's quick disaster relief and rehabilitation response as its given responsibility to the typhoon victims and the devastated areas. However, its proposed Typhoon Reconstruction Bill fails to consider the participation of the local communities in reconstructing their homes and regions. If there are people most concerned about the rehabilitation and reconstruction against this tragic event, these are the affected communities and indigenous peoples themselves. At great risk is their survival. They should be part in every step of the decision making on matters affecting and concerning them.

The framework of rehabilitation and reconstruction covering indigenous territories should underpin the respect and recognition of the inherent individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples over their ancestral lands, resources and territories, as also enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Taiwanese government should also review and reverse its policies and projects contributing to and worsening environmental crisis and climate change resulting into this unprecedented disaster. The government policy should not be the eviction of indigenous peoples from their own ancestral territories in the guise of rehabilitating affected communities and declaring such as danger zones. If leaving the area is the ultimate option because of the risk and danger, the communities must be involved in the decision making with their consent ensured. Meantime, the government must ensure first the safety, immediate services and recovery of the indigenous peoples hit by Morakot and refrain from proposing laws that further marginalize these oppressed people. Passing of laws by taking advantage of this tragic situation to pave the way for further state landgrabbing and entry of government and capitalist projects in indigenous territories must be opposed and condemned. Any solution and effort of reconstruction should not sacrifice the Taiwanese indigenous peoples.

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Typhoons Morakot and Kiko, floods, long droughts, extreme cold and dry spells, rising sea levels and the like clearly manifest we are in a global climate and environmental crisis of catastrophic proportions. The global economic order and “free-market globalization” driven by the imperialists and their transnational corporations is the root cause of over-exploitation and depletion of resources, environmental destruction and excessive release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere resulting in climate change and global warming. Climate change is not merely an environmental issue but a question of social justice, national sovereignty and people’s control over their resources, sustainable growth and human development.

Mother Nature is now seeking redress for the plunder and destruction that humanity has done to her. Unfortunately, it’s not the monopoly capitalists and the ruling elite in power, who are safe and sound day and night, but the majority poor people including indigenous peoples bearing the brunt of these disasters not of their own making. In fact, indigenous peoples all over the world contributed the least to climate change given their sustainable natural resource management, worldview, and existence which is dependent and intertwined with nature. Yet, they are among the most vulnerable to the climate crisis and nature’s wrath.

The Cordillera Peoples Alliance is in unity with the Taiwan indigenous peoples’ struggle for their rights on their lands and resources. We are with you in opposing the Typhoon Reconstruction Bill and salute you in your collective undertaking in overcoming this great difficulty and the Morakot aftermath. At this time of great difficulty, we must strengthen our solidarity than ever before and intensify our struggles for our ancestral domain and self determination. We must work for a world order and society that is socially just, democratic and ecologically sustainable, and one which respects the self-determined development of indigenous peoples and their right to self determination.

Long live international solidarity! Long live the indigenous peoples of Taiwan!

Mr. Windel Bolinget
Secretary General

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