

The 29th Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development

*High Level Dialogue on Population and Development
in a Culturally Pluralistic Society*

Study Visit

29-30 August 2013

La Trinidad and Baguio, Philippines



The Asian Population and Development Association (APDA)

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Organized by:



Hosted by:



With support from:



Study Visit
29-30 August 2013
 La Trinidad and Baguio, Philippines

Programme

DAY 0, 27 August 2013, Tuesday		
	Arrival and registration of participants	Reception Desk: Ground Floor
DAY 1, 28 August 2013, Wednesday		
8:00 - 9:00am	Registration	Bahia Room, 14 th Floor
9:00 - 9:45am	Opening Ceremony	
	Philippine National Anthem	
	Opening Message Hon. Yasuo Fukuda <i>Former Prime Minister of Japan/Chair of APDA/Honorary Chair of JPPF</i>	
	Welcome Address Hon. Juan Edgardo “Sonny” Angara <i>Senator of the Republic of the Philippines and PLCPD Vice-Chairperson for the Senate</i>	
	Keynote Address Hon. Walden Bello <i>Representative of the AKBAYAN Party List and PLCPD Chairperson for International Linkages</i>	
	Messages Ms. Anne Harmer <i>Regional Programme Coordinator of UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (APRO) On behalf of Director Ms. Nobuko Horibe, Director of UNFPA-APRO</i> Ms. Nora Murat <i>Regional Director, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) East & South East Asia & Oceania Region (ESEAOR)</i>	
	Moderator: Hon. Jun Omar Ebdane <i>Former Representative, 2nd District of Zambales</i>	
9:45 - 10:15am	Group Photo & Tea Break	Bahia Room
Session I: Population and Development Issues and Religious Perspectives		
10:15 - 12:00nn	Prof. Ernesto Pernia <i>Professor, University of the Philippines College of Economics</i> “Population and Development Challenges amid Unrelenting Catholic Hierarchy Opposition against the RH Law” Hon. Sitti Djalía Turabin-Hataman <i>Representative, AMIN Party List and PLCPD Member</i>	

	<p>“RH Law in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao”</p> <p>Bishop Rodrigo Tano <i>President, Interfaith Partnership for the Promotion of Responsible Parenthood</i> “Religion and Reproductive Health: The Interfaith Perspective”</p> <p>20-minute Discussion</p> <p>Session Chair : Hon. Ahmed Abdulla <i>Member of the Parliament, Maldives</i></p>	
12:00 - 1:00pm	Lunch Break	Poolside, Ground Floor
Session II: Population and Development Issues and Cultural Pluralism		
1:00 - 2:30pm	<p>Message Hon. Longde Wang <i>Member of the Standing Committee and Vice-Chairman, Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee, National Peoples’ Congress of China</i></p> <p>Message Hon. Pia Cayetano <i>Senator of the Republic of the Philippines and PLCPD Chairperson for the Senate</i></p> <p>Hon. Nancy Catamco <i>Chairperson of the Committee on National Cultural Communities, House of Representatives</i> “Population and Reproductive Health Challenges among Indigenous Communities”</p> <p>Ms. Elizabeth Angsioco <i>National President of the Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines</i> “Mobilizing Community Women and Youth on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: The Struggle for the RH Law”</p> <p>20-minute Discussion</p> <p>Session Chair : Hon. Ugyen Wangdi <i>Member of Parliament, Bhutan</i></p>	
2:30 - 2:45pm	Coffee Break	Bahia Room
Session III: Dialogue between Parliamentarians and the Youth		
2:45 - 4:15pm	<p>Message Hon. Gusto Kanjeng Ratu Hemas <i>Deputy Speaker of Regional Representative Council</i></p> <p>Hon. Janette Garin, M.D. <i>Undersecretary of the Department of Health</i> “Upholding Women’s Rights to Reproductive Health: The Philippine Government’s Programs and Services”</p> <p>Hon. Percival Cerdana <i>Commissioner at Large</i> “National Youth Programs on Population and Development”</p> <p>Ms. Lady Lisondra <i>Clinic Operations Officer and former Youth Coordinator, Family Planning Organization of the Philippines</i> “Key Challenges on the Youth’s Access to Reproductive Health Services”</p> <p>Ms. Heart Diño <i>Student Council Alliance of the Philippines</i> “Mainstreaming Population and RH Issues in the Campus Settings”</p> <p>Rev. Fr. Rodolfo Vicente Cancino, Jr., MI</p>	

	<p>Head, Programs and Planning, The Camillian Fathers, Inc “HIV and AIDS Interventions for the Youth”</p> <p>20-minute Discussion</p> <p>Session Chair : Hon. Francis Marus <i>Member of Parliament, Papua New Guinea</i></p>
	<p>Moderator: Hon. Dr. Vitthaya Inala <i>Senator of the Kingdom of Thailand and Vice-Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs</i></p>
4:15 - 4:30pm	<p>Synthesis Ms. Anne Harmer <i>Regional Programme Coordinator of UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office,</i></p>
4:30 - 4:45pm	<p>Closing Address Hon. Toshiko Abe <i>Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs/Chair for the Gender Issues Committee of the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JFPF)</i></p> <p>Closing Message Hon. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo <i>Rep. Aurora Province and PLCPD Chairperson for the House of Representatives</i></p>
6:00 - 7:30pm	Dinner Reception Legaspi Room, Ground Floor
DAY 2, 29 August 2013, Thursday	
8:30am	Departure to Baguio
	Lunch at “Isdaan sa Gerona”, Tarlac City
3:00pm	Arrival at The Manor Hotel
3:00 - 5:00pm	Check in and Rest
5:00 - 5:30pm	Travel to Philippine Information Agency
5:30 - 7:00pm	<p>Cultural Interaction <i>with National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Cordillera Region Media, Local Government Units</i></p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Helen R. Tibaldo <i>Director of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA)</i></p> <p>Hon. Mauricio Domogan <i>Mayor of Baguio City</i> “Opening Message”</p> <p>Hon. Longde Wang <i>Member of the Standing Committee/Vice-Chair of the Education, Science, Culture and Public Health (ESCPH) Committee, National Peoples’ Congress of China (NPC)</i> “Message”</p>
7:00pm	Travel back to Hotel
DAY 3, 30 August 2013, Friday	
8:30am	Travel to La Trinidad, Benguet Municipal Hall
9:00 - 11:30am	<p>Forum: “Population and Development Challenges of IP Communities in the Cordillera Administrative Region in a Pluralistic Society”</p> <p>Moderator : Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto <i>Executive Director of PLCPD</i></p> <p>Ms. Joan Bacoling <i>Planning Officer of La Trinidad</i></p>

	<p>“Profile of La Trinidad”</p> <p>Hon. Edna Tabanda <i>Municipal Mayor of La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines</i></p> <p>“Welcome Message”</p> <p>Mr. Rafael Sallocoy <i>Secretary to the Mayor, Baguio City</i> <i>On behalf of Hon. MAURICIO DOMOGAN, Mayor of Baguio City</i></p> <p>“Opening Message”</p> <p>Hon. Teddy Brawner Baguilat <i>Representative of Lone District of Ifugao and PLCPD Vice-Chairperson for Luzon</i></p> <p>“Keynote Message”</p> <p>Dr. Caster Palaganas <i>Head of Social Department, University of the Philippines, Baguio</i></p> <p>“Situationer: Challenges of the Cordillera IP Tribes”</p> <p>Message from representatives of IP Tribes from the five provinces in the Cordillera Administrative Region and one faith-based organization</p> <p>Dr. Paulina Sawadan Pastor Paul Baguitay Abra</p> <p>Dr. Norberto Duran Apayao</p> <p>Dr. Peter Cozalan Benguet</p> <p>Dr. Imelda Parcasolo Dr. Julie. C. Cabato Rev. Henry Hakcholna Ifugao</p> <p>Ms. Sheana G. Bumangil Kalinga</p> <p>Ms. Lynn Madalang Mt. Province</p> <p>Rev. Jonathen Obar Faith Based Organization</p> <p>Hon. Nguyen Thi Kha <i>Member of Parliament, Vietnam</i></p> <p>“Message”</p> <p>Discussion</p>
11:30 - 12:30pm	<p>Lunch and TETE-A-TETE With Media Calajo Restaurant, La Trinidad, Benguet</p>
12:30 - 2:30pm	<p>Exposure Visit to Bahong, Municipality of La Trinidad, Benguet Observation of JICA Integrated Rural Development Project</p>
2:30 - 3:00pm	<p>Travel to KAP Convention Center</p>
3:00 - 4:00pm	<p>Wrap-up Session Feedback from Participants:</p> <p>Hon. Tissa Karalliyadde <i>Minister of Child Development and Women's Affairs, Sri Lanka</i></p> <p>Hon. Mariany Mohammad Yit</p>

	<p><i>Senator, Malaysia</i> Moderator & Synthesis:</p> <p>Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto <i>Executive Director of PLCPD</i> Vote of Thanks:</p> <p>Mr. Ramon San Pascual <i>Executive Director of AFPPD</i> Closing Messages:</p> <p>Hon. Yutaka Kumagai <i>Member of House of Councillors/JPPF Member, Japan</i></p>
4:00pm	Travel back to Manila
	Dinner at Max's Restaurant, Hacienda Luisita, Tarlac City
10:00 midnight	Arrival to Hotel in Manila
DAY 4, 31 August 2013, Saturday	
	Departure of Participants

29 August 2013

**Cultural Interaction
with National Commission on Indigenous Peoples,
Cordillera Region Media, Local Government Units**

The Philippine Information Agency
Baguio, Philippines

Welcome Ceremony

Welcome Remarks

Ms. Helen R. Tibaldo

Moderator

Director of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), Philippines

Good afternoon everyone!

Welcome to the Philippine Information Agency, Baguio City.

We would like to welcome all the participants to the 29th Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population

and Development and Study Visit -*High Level Dialogue on Population and Development in a Culturally Pluralistic Society*. We are very glad that Baguio is chosen as your on-site visit. To start, may we call on our Hon. Mayor Mauricio Domogan for the opening prayer.

Welcome Ceremony
Welcome Message and Opening Prayer

Hon. Mauricio Domogan

Mayor of Baguio City, Philippines
Former Member of the House of Representatives

Thank you very much Director Helen. I am asked to render an Ogayam, which is actually a cultural song of many of the tribes in the Cordilleras. This is a cultural song that is being sung in happy occasions like this one for asking for the blessings of the Lord on all of you who are visitors here in the City. We welcome you with this prayer that the Lord Almighty will continue to bless all of us, especially you, so that you eat our food, you drink our water, and it will strengthen your health and wash away the dirt from you. We likewise include in the prayer that the

very purpose and reason why you are here will be pleasing to God the Almighty, because that is the only way we can say God loves us all if we continue to spread His blessings. We are thankful that you are here sharing your talents and expertise on the subject of Population and Development. So allow me therefore to perform my task. My voice is not that good, but I hope it can serve the purpose for this evening's event.

(He sang the prayer song in their dialect).

Welcome Ceremony

Message

Hon. Wang Longde

Member of the Standing Committee
Vice-Chair of the Education, Science, Culture and Public Health (ESCPH) Committee,
National Peoples' Congress of China (NPC)

Today we are very pleased to come to this beautiful city of Baguio and we really enjoy the very beautiful scenery here and we are honoured to join this evening. I think tonight can be called a carolling of Asian Sunday.

I think this 29th APDA meeting is of crucial importance and that the Chinese delegation greatly learned at this meeting. Especially, we learned from this country how to deal with the health issues of the young generation. This is of crucial importance to our social management. I hope that countries in Asia will further facilitate our communication and information-exchange regarding the issues of population, development and

health issues. Let's join our hands together to work for the common good of the Asian development, Asian population and a sound, safe and sustainable development of this continent.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend sincere thanks to the organizer, APDA and the host Philippine Parliament and PLCPD for their generous hospitality. Everything has been arranged well, and we really enjoyed everything you have done. I would like to welcome everybody to visit China in the near future.

Last but not least, I wish you all good health and wonderful family life. Thank you.

[Ms. Helen R. Tibaldo, Moderator]

Thank you, Hon. Wang.

We would like to acknowledge also the presence of the Executive Director of AFPPD, Mr. Ramon San Pascual, and PLCPD Executive Director, Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto.

We would like to thank our parliamentarian guests for bringing in the good weather. For the past days and weeks, it has been raining here in Baguio City. This the first day we are enjoying a good weather. For that, let us give our guests a big round of applause.

Before you interact with each other, please be entertained by our young students from the University of Cordillera on their cultural dance number to get to

know more of the different dances of the Cordillera provinces. Please give a big hand to our dancers.

“Padyok” originated from the Municipality of Lubuagan in Kalinga, it is the most popular and it means the “beat of the feet and movement of the body” which is performed to celebrate festivals, rituals and social gatherings. “Kalisug”, originated from Botbot, Tinglayan, is a nearly choreographed dance, performed with heavy footwork expressing joy over an achievement, and dance steps of the women portray sophistication, strength and unity.

(Dances were performed by a group of students. After a while, parliamentarians were invited to join and most of them participated and danced).

30 August 2013

Forum
“Population and Development Challenges of IP Communities
in the Cordillera Administrative Region
in a Pluralistic Society”

Municipal Ednicky Hall
La Trinidad, Benguet

Welcome Message

Hon. Edna Tabanda

Municipal Mayor of La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines

A pleasant morning to one and all.

It is indeed a great honour and a pleasure to have been chosen as the venue for this very relevant activity and welcome parliamentarians from Asian countries. I find it a very humbling experience. The population and development challenges of our pluralistic society in the Cordillera Region are now the call of the hour. Indigenous people have been for a long time marginalized and it is about time that we reach out to them.

We commend the organizers for coming up with this kind of activity, and we hope that this advocacy in population and development for Indigenous community will be sustained through policies and affirmative actions at the international, national, and local levels. This can also be done through transnational exchanges and sharing of best practices on population and development in Asia.

This activity is indeed a very appropriate activity for all, especially policy-makers. We really hope that this will be localized in the Local Government Units because they are the implementers of all the programmes of the national government, as well as international policies relative to population and development.

You will be going to one of the Barangays for interaction with Indigenous people there. And we are pleased to introduce our resource persons here today, whom you can interact with, for they are very much knowledgeable about the situations in the Cordillera Region. We also have representatives from different provinces in the Cordillera Region. I hope that we will be able to learn through this interaction and that this will be sustained.

We, in the Municipality of La Trinidad, Benguet in the Cordillera Region, and Congressman Baguilat commit ourselves, to be strong advocates for population and development because we know its impact to the environment, education and health, especially to the indigenous people.

I have been to Bhutan, when there was an activity celebrating mountain women. It was just like La Trinidad with beautiful rivers and mountains. Your measurement for your development is Gross National Happiness, and I hope that the Philippines will have that measurement too. I have also been to China, where we met some indigenous people in the rural areas there. Indonesia has population programmes, and I would like to congratulate you on the implementation of the family planning programmes.

To the Japan representative, we would like to inform you that La Trinidad is a recipient of JICA project funds. One of the Barangays is a recipient of an agricultural project, called "Highland Integrated Rural Development Project". The Benguet General Hospital, which we will be passing by later, also received a grant from the Japanese government through JICA. Many of our people here have been to Japan through exchange programme. We would like to thank the Japanese people for their generosity. We have the third generation of Japanese here in La Trinidad and in the province of Benguet, and we have forged beautiful friendship with Japan. We hope that you, our friends here, will also be able to establish exchange programmes with us, as I believe that this would be the

beginning of beautiful friendship between the Philippines, especially La Trinidad, and your country. We look forward to it and hope that this will push through this plan.

To Mr. Romeo, Executive Director of PLCPD, we have a lot to do in establishing friendship with other countries. I believe that this is also one way of promoting peace among countries of the world. And we are very happy and proud that the first interaction is held here in our municipality.

Thank you very much to PLCPD and Congressman Baguilat who is here, to help us facilitate this programme. Once again, welcome and enjoy yourselves, and thank you very much for your presence.

Opening Message

Mr. Rafael Sallocoy

Secretary to the Mayor, Baguio City

On behalf of

Hon. Mauricio Domogan

Mayor of Baguio City

Thank you, Mayor Tabanda.

I was assigned by the Mayor Domogan to be the one to address you because yesterday at the PIA grounds he already welcomed you by way of singing a welcome song or chant. Today I will not make a chant, I am not a very good chanter like our Mayor. So please forgive me.

Honourable Asian Parliamentarians,
Our Representative to Congress Hon. Teddy Baguilat,
Mayor Tabanda of the Municipality of La Trinidad,
Mayor Salgadi,
Councillors,
Barangay Officials,
Department Heads,
Officers and Assistant Heads,
Media guests,
Distinguished Guests,

A very pleasant and sunny morning to all of you.

Let me thank the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), the other organizers, as well as the officials of La Trinidad and Mayor Tabanda, for embarking on this programme. The subject is Population and Development Challenges of the Indigenous

People (IP) Communities in the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Population studies show that there is rapid movement of population from rural areas to cities due to the latter's attractions of better infrastructures such as roads, institutions for higher learning, better hospitals, employment opportunities and the lure of night life. Allow me to personally express my sincere thanks to Mayor Tabanda for advocating and implementing the ordinance on the closure or the curfew on the opening of bars in La Trinidad.

We all know that the increase in the abovementioned development, people have to increase their activities, to meet the needs of the fast-growing population. Hence, the consequences would be more waste, pollution, squatting, scarcity of water, and more conflict due to cultural differences.

Cultural differences bring negative and positive results to our society. The wit and humour of the Ifugaos make us laugh and feel well. We praise the Ibanit or the Ibanggat for their vegetables, strawberries, and their gold. For the Ibontoks, they have many positive values.

Negative scenarios may appear when we hear people say “The Ibanogs are shy” or “tribal conflicts in Kalinga should be confined in their native areas and not be brought it to the city”. Or if our Muslim brethren who are engaged in their line of business that might be illegal, they become enemy of the local governance. These are only examples of the negative effects of migration. But if these various cultures are internally understood, blended or acculturated, then harmony and progress for us IPs in the Cordillera would succeed. As we often say, there is unity in diversity.

We also need to create a balance between population growth and resources that will meet the needs of the growing population. Technology may be an option and it is indeed fast advancing, but technology will fail to address people’s predicaments if people will not accept sacrifices and changes in the political, economic and cultural structures. Balance cannot be attained by chance or accident, but must be

founded on the basic values and goals at individual, national, or global levels.

Owing to the cultural differences, the human transformation may be slow, but there is a saying that it surely will happen. People must explore their goals and values as much as the world or conditions that they see to change. Yes, we in the Cordillera can!

On behalf of Mayor Mauricio Domogan, allow me again to congratulate and thank you for manifesting your interest in advocating and enlightening population and sustainable development programmes in the Cordillera.

Mabuhay. May God bless us all!

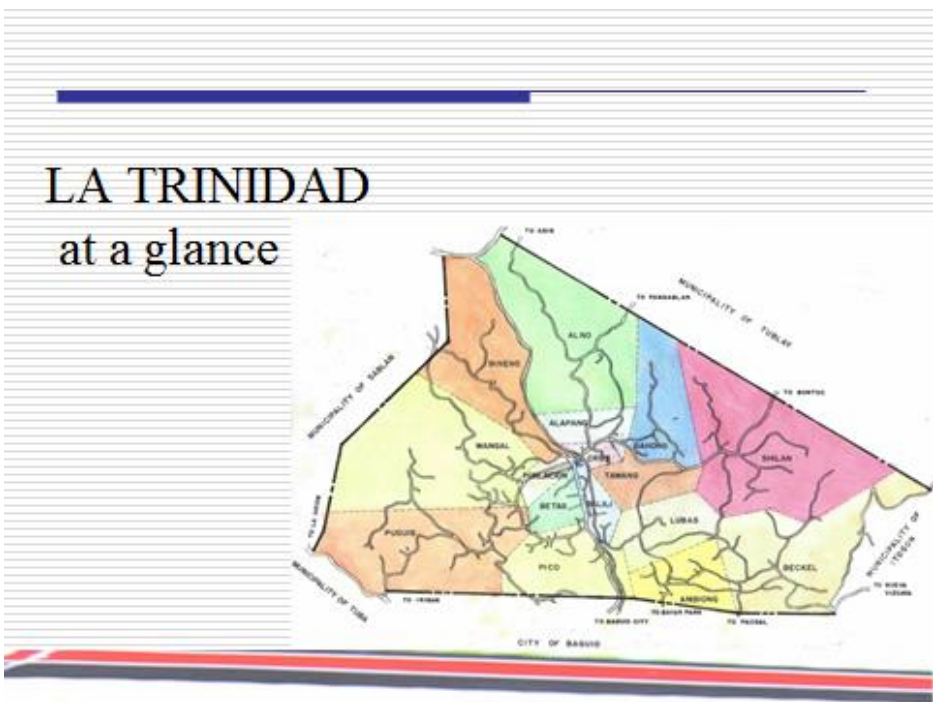
[Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto, Moderator]

May I invite everyone to see the presentation on the Profile of La Trinidad, Benguet, where we are now located. This will be presented by Ms. Joan Bacoling.

Profile of La Trinidad

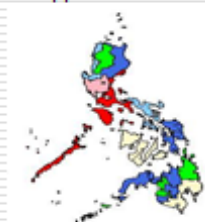
Ms. Joan Bacoling

Planning Officer of La Trinidad, Philippines



Locating La Trinidad

Philippines



Cordillera
Region



Benguet
Province



PURSUING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our Vision

We envision a La Trinidad that is dynamic, self-sustaining, ecologically-balanced & peaceful, where God-loving and healthy people live in an atmosphere of social justice & effective governance.



PURSUING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide for adequate, dedicated & responsive services to enable our citizens to live in comfort, security & prosperity, through maximum utilization of resources, active people's participation, active partnership with government organizations, civil society & the private sector.



PURSUING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our Goals

- Improved quality of life;
- Accelerated economic growth;
- Improved access to basic services and facilities
- Sustained green, clean & aesthetically-pleasing environment.

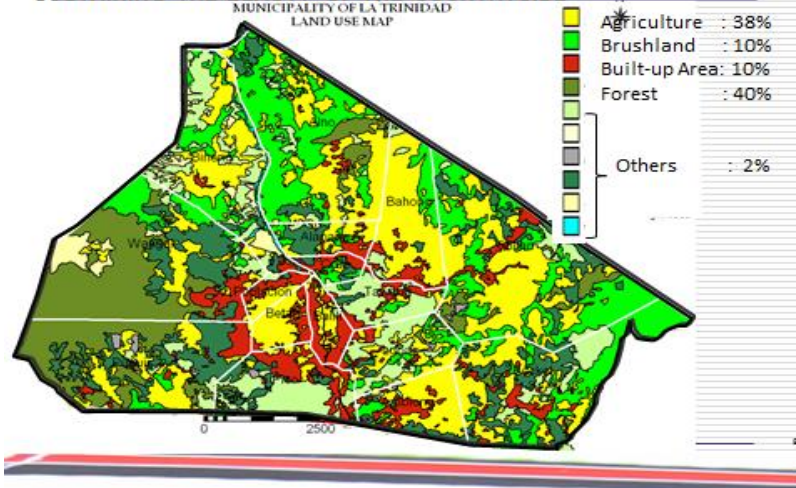


SUSTAINING THE BEAUTY OF THE COUNTRYSIDE



Land Area	:	8,079.51 hectares
Topography	:	Mountainous
Climate	:	Cool @ an ave. of 18.5° C
Water & Air Quality	:	Generally Fair
Geology	:	Vulnerable to Hazards
# of Barangays	:	Sixteen (16)
Urban Barangays	:	8 Barangays (2,740 hectares)
Rural Barangays	:	8 barangays (5,338 hectares)

SUSTAINING THE BEAUTY OF THE COUNTRYSIDE



SUSTAINING THE BEAUTY OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

FOREST RESOURCES

The Municipality's **FOREST AREA** measures **3,190.8 hectares**, more than **39%** of the total land area.

Communal Forests: 170.4 hectares

- Alno Communal Forest (30.8 hectares)
- Alapang Communal Forest (36.0 hectares)
- Puguis Communal Forest (48.2 hectares)
- Shilan Communal Forest (44.4 hectares)

Watersheds: 237.9 hectares

- Busol watershed (225 hectares)
- BSU forest reserves (12.9 hectares)

Agroforest & unclassified public forests

KEEPING TRACK OF THE EVER GROWING POPULATION

2013 Population : 119,989
of Households : 29,997
Average family size : 4
Mun. Pop Growth Rate : 3.83%
Density : 13 persons / hectare
Major Ethnic Groups : Ibaloi and Kankanaey



Main Economic activity: Agriculture



- Main crops:
 - Highland Vegetables
 - Cutflovers
 - Strawberries
- Average cultivated area is 0.5 hectare



WE HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF ITS GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AS AN IMPETUS TO ECONOMIC GROWTH



The La Trinidad Vegetable Trading Post

MARKETING CENTER for the Province of Benguet

HIGHLIGHTING ON ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES

As a HIGHLAND VEGETABLE PRODUCER

We were formerly known as the

“SALAD BOWL OF THE PHILIPPINES”



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FOCUSING ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

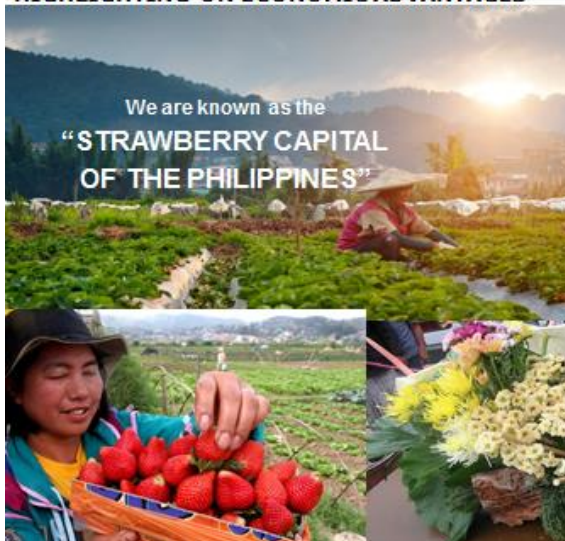


Training our farmers to prepare natural plant pesticides and plant fertilizers.



HIGHLIGHTING ON ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES

We are known as the
“STRAWBERRY CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES”



HIGHLIGHTING ON STRAWBERRIES IN TOURISM

We hold the **GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORD**
for Baking the Largest Fruit Short cake



AGRICULTURE supports its manufacturing sector



HIGHLIGHTING ON ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES

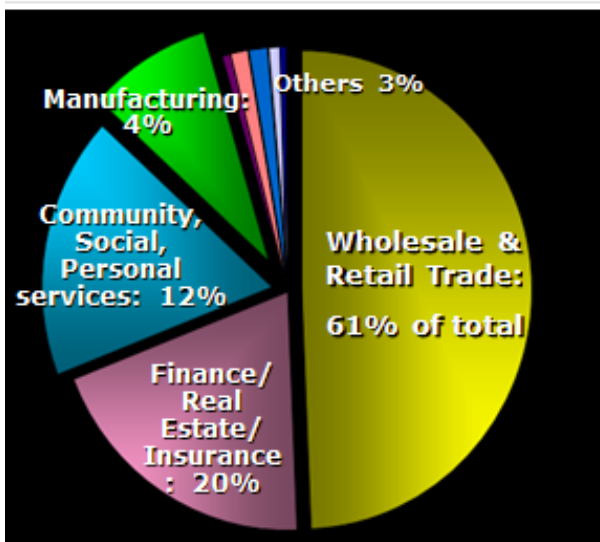
As a Cutflower Producer,
We have also gained the title of
"ROSE CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES"



THE LA TRINIDAD VEGETABLE TRADING POST IS THE PRIME BOOSTER IN THE ECONOMY



COMMERCE & INDUSTRY have increased.



•**WHOLESALE & RETAIL TRADE** provide for 22% to the total employment.

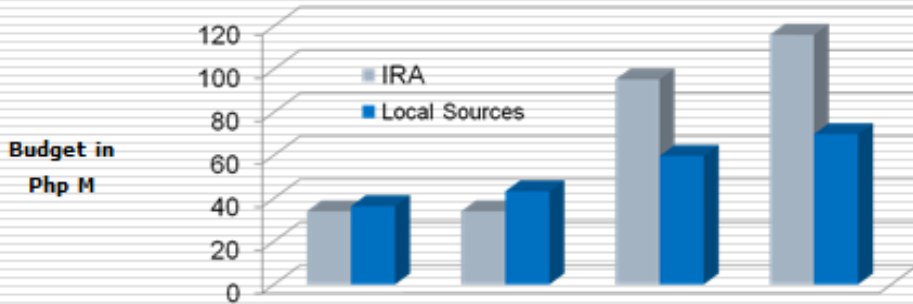
•**FINANCIAL SERVICES** are growing--currently 24 banks and 25 lending inst'ns operating within the municipality

•**MANUFACTURING**, in micro and small scale, is also increasing: mostly woodworks, metal / ironwork shops and bakeries.

•**EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS** currently a total of 37 private schools in the municipality.

ENHANCING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

By increasing tax collection efficiency, the budget of the Local Government has more than doubled over the years.



SOURCES/YR.	2000	2005	2010	2013
Local Sources	36.4	60.0	59.7	69.87
IRA	34.0	43.3	95.3	116
Total Budget	70.4	103.3	155	185.9

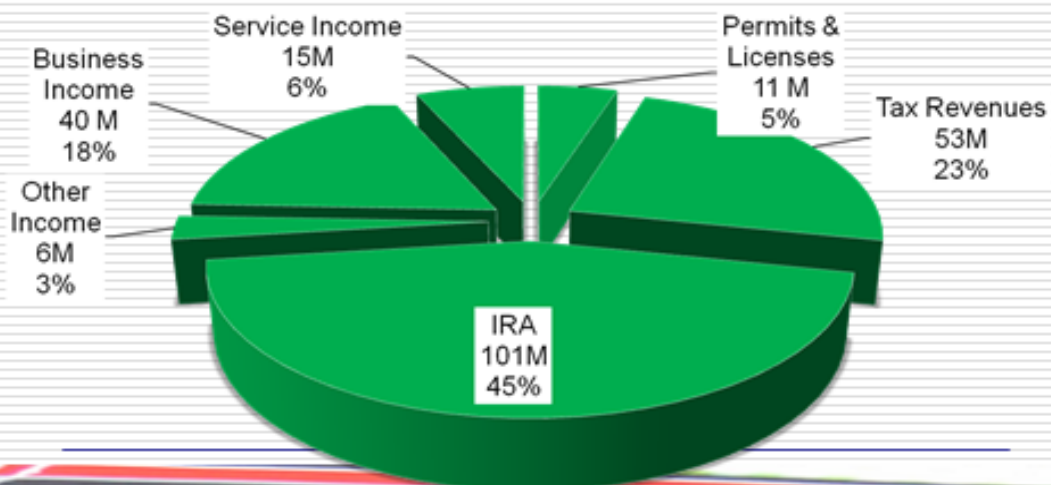
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ENHANCING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The Municipal Government of La Trinidad is one among the few LGUs that is not totally dependent on the

Internal Revenue Allotment.

Municipal Revenue by Source



22

Keynote Message

Hon. Teddy Brawner Baguilat

Representative of Lone District of Ifugao
PLCPD Vice-Chairperson for Luzon

Thank you and good morning to each and every one of you.

I was supposed to give a keynote message, summarizing everything, but I will limit myself to the situationer of the Indigenous People (IPs) nationwide because our resource persons will talk more on it. So I will talk about IPs in general and in our region.

Before anything else, I would like to welcome you all to the Cordillera Region. This is a unique place because this is the only mountainous area in the Philippines. So people say it is the Region closest to God, near the heavens.

There is a legend in my province, in my tribe of Ifugao. In old times, the heaven, the sky wall is just very close to the earth. You can just touch the sky, according to our forefathers. Then the Ifugaos were spoiled because whenever they prayed for food, immediately they received food because the God could hear their supplication. Pray for a bicycle, in the morning there is a bike, pray for food, there is food. So they became lazy and nobody wanted to work. Why would you work when you can always pray to God. So they started fighting because they had nothing else to do. They also started entertaining themselves with

vices. So the God says that it is high time that the Ifugaos should work. He would not give them anything if they do not work. Then the God taught the Ifugaos the art of rice terracing, and that is how we built our rice terraces. The God is very curious of what was happening here and so he is watching closely when the Ifugaos were celebrating, dancing and eating. One of our dancers, an alpha male, is dancing quite animatedly with holding a spear, because that is how they danced during those times. It is said that a dancer accidentally threw the spear upward while dancing, hitting one of the Gods, who was watching.

Of course, He did not die because he was immortal. But the God said, "Oh, these human beings are very dangerous when they are happy. Let's move a little farther away from the earth". And so that is why now here in the Cordillera we are still closer to the God but it is much farther away from how it was before. Our forefathers have been telling us that the reason that when you pray, you do not immediately get what you want. So, that is the Cordillera.

We are a very privileged region as far as the IPs are concerned. Today, you will hear the information from our resource persons about the IPs here in the Cordillera Region.

But that is not a reflection of how the IPs are in general nationwide. The Cordillera is not a microcosm of the entire situation of Indigenous People in the Philippines.

Every time there is a conference of the Indigenous People in the Cordillera, many of our brother and sister IPs in Mindanao, down south in the Philippines, in Central Luzon, and in Visayas, are amazed to learn that there are IPs who are Mayors, who are lawyers, who are doctors, who are congressmen. Down south, the majority of 14 million IPs are marginalized. They are marginalized economically, politically, socially, and culturally, unlike here in Cordillera.

Here in Cordillera, comprised of six provinces and one city, is predominantly populated by IPs. In the Philippines there are 110 ethnic tribes. Down south in Mindanao, the Manobos and the Subanons are a million each. And they say they face a lot of problems such as discrimination.

I am one of the principal authors of the Anti-Discrimination Bill, which I refiled again in this congress. This Bill penalizes government offices, private corporations, or individuals who discriminate against persons on the account of their racial or religious orientation. This means discrimination against IPs, discrimination against Muslims, sexual orientation and general identity in terms of employment, government services, and portrayal in the public.

In the previous Congress, I served as Chair of the Committee on National Cultural

Communities/Indigenous People. During the 3 years, we conducted a lot of congressional hearings of complaints regarding Indigenous People. Most of them talked about displacement from their ancestral land because of mining. Mining is being practiced extensively in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao. There are a lot of exploitations by mining companies.

IPs are the most marginalized, the poorest, but it is in their ancestral land that you find gold and wealth of our country. So before the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA), many of the IPs were displaced from their homes by mining companies. Now the enactment of IPRA, no one can displace IPs, especially if they have been given a certificate for the ancestral domain.

Also, it used to be that any mining company started operation, but now they have to get prior consent of the Indigenous People. But that is the government process and we all know any government process is not perfect. But by and large, the Aquino Administration right now is doing its best to respond to the needs of the Indigenous People. We are strengthening the Commission on the Indigenous People under new leadership. Hopefully, it will be more responsive to the needs of the IPs but it is a small agency while it handles a lot of concerns ranging from education, services, health, to land titles. So, we need to strengthen the Commission.

Recently also the Ministry of Education prepared an IPs Educational Framework in which IPs now have more access to schools.

That is one of the disadvantages of IPs in the Philippines, especially for those who are in the hinterland, in the middle of the jungle, or on the island where they do not have schools or services. Under the IPs Educational Framework by the Department of Education, the government provides more resources. The Ministry of Social Welfare also has a Poverty alleviation programme targeting Indigenous People.

The problem here in the Philippines with regards to services to IPs is that, while here in the Cordillera we all know that we are IPs and where we are, in Central Luzon and in Mindanao it is hard for the government agencies to locate where the IPs are. They are marginalized and live deep in the in the forests, so the services do not reach them.

Therefore I drafted a bill, and I hope it will be enacted, that mandates the government to include the survey on the ethnicity in the census. This way we will know who the IPs are and where they are so that the services can reach them.

I am also an author of a Civil Registration Law for Indigenous People. For instance, the Philippines is a predominantly Christian nation, but IPs have Indigenous cultures.

Normally they have only one name, their maiden name. But in civil registration you have to put your Christian name. Also, we are now trying to pass a law that will legitimate marriages by tribal priests because right now only those solemnized by the mayor or by parish priest or Christian ministers are recognized. We would like the tribal religious leaders to be

given a license to conduct marriage ceremonies according to their customs and traditions.

These are just among the pieces of legislation that my Committee on Cultural Communities/Indigenous People are trying to pass in this Congress.

When it comes to population issues, I do not think that Indigenous People have taboo on reproductive health. At the time of difficult passage of the Reproductive Health Law in the previous Congress, the biggest block that actually swung the boat in favour of passage of the Reproductive Health Law was Muslims in Mindanao and Indigenous People. Of the eight IPs Congressperson, six of us voted yes for RH Law. Congresswoman Nancy Catamco from North Cotabato also voted for RH Law and I think Congresswoman Hataman, an IPs in Mindanao, also voted for RH Law.

In terms of education, you will notice that Baguio and La Trinidad are the center of education, at least in Cordillera. People, even from Manila, come here to study at the universities.

In terms of our cultural heritage, I have to admit that some of our brother and sister IPs have started to adapt themselves to modern technologies. We do not say that we do not want modern technology, as it is part of life. In the Cordillera, we are starting to modernize, we are Christians, and we now have modern local governance. But we still practice our own rituals. That is also true in all marginalized tribes in the Philippines. The more remote you are, the

more marginalized you are, the more you tend to stick to your traditional livelihood and traditional norms. However, whenever they migrate to the city, they start to adapt your life to modern way of living. This is the situation here in the Philippines as far as IPs are concerned.

The problem we have is discrimination. Reportedly, 33 tribal leaders were killed in the Philippines over the past years, mainly because of their opposition to mining. I would like to believe that the government is trying to redress the situation, although I may be biased because I am a member of the Liberal Party, the ruling party of the administration. But I would like to say that the government is working to help the Indigenous People.

I would like to make an appeal to my fellow parliamentarians to work for IPs in your countries. The Philippines is blessed in a

way that we have the Indigenous Tribal Act and the Commission for the Indigenous People. Many Indigenous People in Asia and the Pacific Region are marginalized. They are not even recognized by the state itself. I hope that while you are here, you will learn about the situation of IPs in the Philippines.

And I do hope that when you go back to your respective countries, you will also start to work on legislation for the benefit of IPs in your countries. I know that Indonesia is in the process of passing a law on IPs. Bangladesh also is in the process of coming out with the law on IPs. I do hope that all of you will do the same for the right of the Indigenous People.

With that, again thank you very much for visiting our region. I hope that you will have a pleasant stay here.

Introduction of Local Government Representatives

Moderator

Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto

Executive Director of PLCPD

After hearing the introduction of the Asian Parliamentarians, it is good to hear also from the representatives of Local Government of Baguio and the provinces. May we hear from you, please state your name and your representation:

I am Rafael Sallocoy, Secretary to Mayor. I will speak again later.

I am Dr. Paulina Cauagan, representing the Academe, Department of Education and at the same time, I am representing the province of Abra. I am Indigenous and I belong to the IPs. Thank you very much.

I am Paul Baguitay, Sr., representing the province of Abra, particularly the Indigenous People called Maong or ethnic tribe of 3 municipalities of Abra, which are Togo, Luba, and Villavisyusa. Thank you.

I am Janet Tao-ing, representing the Mountain Province. I am a pure blooded Igorot.

I am Walter Angaoay, Sr. representing the people of the mountain, which is called the Mountain Province People. Thank you.

I am Norberto Duran from the province of Apayao. I am working with the National Anti-Poverty Commission and a representative of Region I and CAR. Thank you.

I am Imelda Parcasio, representing Benguet. I teach at Benguet University which is located here in La Trinidad. Biologically, I am an Ilocano but Igorot by heart because I was born here and raised here.

I am Peter Punzalan from the town of La Trinidad. I am from Benguet of the Ibaloy group. I represent Benguet and the Indigenous People of Cordillera at one time on the Regional Development Council. Unfortunately, our biggest rice production and food production areas, known as Mambuklaw, have been devastated by the construction of many hydro dams. Thank you.

I am Henry Actuna, representing the IPs of Ifugao. I am a full-blooded Ifugao. I stay for several years here in La Trinidad working for the grassroots, especially for the Benguet people. I am proud to be Indigenous. Thank you.

Situationer: Challenges of Cordillera IP Tribes

Dr. Caster Palaganas

Head of Social Department, University of the Philippines Baguio
Freelance Consultant and Researcher

Good morning everyone. It is a pleasure to be with you this morning. I am the substitute of Commissioner Pawid. And we just wish she was here this morning to talk about the NCIP and what it is doing right now for the people of Cordillera.

Our guest parliamentarians, you can be our ally and co-advocates for whatever issues confronting Indigenous People in the Cordillera. Since the issues that Mayor Tabanda wanted me to talk about is on reproductive health, Population and Development issues, I will try to mention also some other facts that we are confronted with in the Cordillera.

Hon. Teddy Baguilat has mentioned the richness of our natural resources. I may not be an IPs, but as Mayor Tabanda has said, I work in the Cordillera all these years and I have been in many parts of Cordillera. From the farthest barangays of the Cordillera, I see the richness in the natural resources in the Cordillera in terms of forest resources, water and river resources, agricultural lands, mineral resources. In fact we have 11 mineral resources in the Philippines, out of 17 mineral resources that can make a country industrialized.

Unfortunately, we have remained to be an agricultural country. We really need agriculture, but despite the presence of minerals that are needed to be an industrialized country, we have not reached that status.

But in spite of these natural resources, one of the issues that we have been confronted with is the physical inaccessibility. Although in recent years, roads have been constructed, a lot of villages still cannot be reached by means of transportation.

Let me focus on some issues on population and reproductive health. Usually in the Cordillera we look at the general well-being of the individual, family and community when it comes to co-existing with the spirit world and the natural and human environment. Population issues are always connected with our land and environment of the Cordillera. Therefore, when we talk of happiness and peace in the family and community, we always look at how physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy a population is. We cannot really talk of population or development issues, if we do not talk of the physical, emotional

and spiritual wealth and health of Indigenous People.

In the Cordillera, we have to ensure that Indigenous People can meet their basic needs. The attention is paid to the enabling relationship when we talk of population and development, including RH and gender issues. Together with Mr. Ramon San Pascual and Ms. Edna Tabanda, we did a Cordillera-wide study on the RH concerns of the Cordillerans. When we asked people to rank their problems in their health and well-being in line with population issues, they brought up the following issues:

- 1) Insufficiency of the basic needs
- 2) Problems related to funding and planning a family
- 3) Health-related problems such as SRH problems, maternal and child health, adolescence RH, family planning, violence against women and children, sexually transmitted diseases HIV/AIDS, especially in town centers where tourism has been growing.

We also have community problems, such as lack of social facilities that are vital to agricultural production and transportation problem that I have mentioned earlier. Others include: under-developed water system for safe and adequate supply of potable water, partial electrification in Barangays, absence of irrigation facilities, and lack of land pavement for drying corn harvest.

Would you believe just the simple problem of not having a piece of land where they

could dry their corn because that is the basic life? That is where they get their basic necessities. Without hanging bridges, children cannot cross rivers just to go to school in the nearest village. In addition, they do not have adequate school facilities. In some Barangays, they do not have qualified teachers. In the Cordillera we still have the multiple grades, which means that students in grades 1, 2, and 3 are taught by one teacher and those in grades 4, 5, and 6 are taught by another. So you have grades 1, 2, and 3 in one classroom. These are the problems that confronted Indigenous People and I think that these issues that should be addressed by parliamentarians.

You may have heard about this saying, but we do not inherit the land from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children. The land is the most valuable, as Hon. Baguilat mentioned earlier. For any Indigenous People, I guess it is the land that has matters most to them.

Please let me share with you some facts of the Cordillera Administrative Region. As of May 2010, the population was 1.6 million and the population growth rate was 1.7%. The land area was 18,293km², and we have 86 Local Government Units. Per Capita Growth was PHP 74,359 and GDP was PHP 122.4 billion. The unemployment was 5.7%. We have many nurses under unemployment, and they are working at food chains such as McDonald's and call

centers. Underemployment is one of our serious issues.

The poverty rate, according to the latest data was 17.1% and the poverty threshold was PHP 16,122, which is not very different from the national level.

Another issue has arisen as miners come here from different countries. I hope you could advocate for us so they would not come and destroy our land and rivers. These are all interconnected to population issues. Our Abra river basin has already been destroyed, which has affected poverty issues.

Population and development are indeed intertwined. I sincerely hope that the parliamentarians here with us can help us with issues like this. The budget hearing is on-going right now, but as of 19 August 2013, the Cordillerans are given one of the lowest budget for 2014. I hope you can help us tell our President to increase our budget because we need to provide social services to our people. According to the data, the Cordillera Administrative Region received the lowest allocation among the 16 Regions in the country. Please help us really push for a higher budget for the Cordillera Administrative Region.

It is very hard to carry out basic services if we do not have the budget. As I mentioned earlier, most of the villages in the Cordillera

are inaccessible. Some villages do not have hanging bridges, so when the rivers swell, children cannot go to school. In fact, we have cases wherein children were drowned because of the sudden swell of water. Without meeting these basic needs, how can we achieve 100% education for all as in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)? And how can we achieve maternal and child health as in the MDGs if the budget is cut. We would like parliamentarians to see that we really need to put money where the needs of the people are.

I can go on what the needs of the Cordilleran people are. But I will stop. I really hope that together with the Asian Parliamentarians who are here, if we have one voice, it will help us push the government to put money where money should be. I am from the University of the Philippines, the national university of the Philippines. Every year we march down the street to push for higher budget for state education. And the government says "there is no money". But look where all the money is going. We only need our voices to be heard. You can help our voice be heard.

Dear Parliamentarians, we are a rich Region, but unfortunately, the benefit of this richness is not coming back to us. Help us get the benefit back to our people.

Thank you very much.

Messages from Representatives of IP Tribes From the Five Provinces and of the Cordillera Administrative Region and One Faith Based Organization

Dr. Paulina sawadan, Abra Province

Good morning everyone, our brothers and sisters from Asian countries, welcome to the Cordillera! I studied in Japan for 2 years. I was in Thailand last year. Two years ago I was in Malaysia and Indonesia in programmes by the Department of Education.

Thank you very much for being with us today. I am representing the Academe, the Department of Education but I will talk more about my province because I am also an IP. I belong to the Pengian folk of Abra we speak the same dialect. Abra is one of the provinces of the Cordillera, of which composing of 27 municipalities, only 9 municipalities are non-IPs. Of the 27 municipalities we have 310 Barangays. There are some remote areas that need to be improved, especially roads. One of the problems of population and development is that services are difficult to reach especially when products have to transport.

Our population as of 2013 National Statistics Office was 254,474 with an area of 4,166.03km². It is close to Ilocos Sur, the coastal plain of the Ilocos Region.

But to tell you frankly, Abra is dominated by non-IPs especially Ilocano people, but the IPs of Abra owned the two-thirds of the land. Actually, more non-IPs plants rice and

the IPs just do not buy rice. When I was still young, the population is a half of the current population. Because education is already developed, we go on family planning. But when I was young, maybe I was 5 years old, I remember my mother said "How can you control population in the IPs communities?" According to my mother, there are wines that they drink so that population will not burst.

In Abra, we have colleges, aside from secondary and elementary schools. We have a private college called Abra Valley College. We have Abra Institute of Science and Technology that are run by the government. I think we have some more colleges and in the province of Abra.

We are divided into southern and northern parts. My friend here who is a Pastor will talk about the southern part. I am talking about the largest part of Abra, the northern part, composing 18 municipalities. I belong to Indaing tribe. We are doing well in terms of the development and population, although we are divided between IPs and non-IPs in terms of reproductive health. There are some people who do not agree. Anyway, we know what we are doing. We are practicing our Indigenous style of population development so to speak. But education has spread and educated our people, so more people agree on that, because they

believe that the government is implementing population programmes for the good of province of Abra.

May I talk a little about the Department of Education. The Department of Education is in partnership with the development of population. The Department undergoes literacy mapping, so that we know how to improve education for our children, our adults, young adults. Thank you very much.

Pastor Paul Baguitay, Southern Abra

It is my honour to present to you some facets of the Maing tribe, the ethnic tribe. It is not the Baung tribe because in Maing tribe it is a mixture, I represent Southern Abra. In the sense that Maing tribe is properly represented from the Manobo municipality from the Villavisyusa, Loba, and Tobog. And I am qualified to represent the ethnic tribe. Because my father and mother came from that place. The most destitute area in Abra in the Southern. And I also represent Bagu in the sense that my father came from Risau, Mountain Province.

When I was born, I was born in Maligod, Ilocos Sur, wherein the popularly known as Bagung tribe. And my older brother, who is also a retired school teacher, he went to Abra as at one time a representative of the ethnic tribe. I will say in short that one of the areas that make to be a tribe in the Maing tribe is education. I learned the hard way. In fact I represent the religion sector in a sense that now I am overseeing 300 licensed pastors all over the Cordillera including the Region 1 and Region 2. And I learned the hard way, I went back to school.

When I finished my Theological Education, actually Theological Education was first to me and then secular. In short, I will ask you to pray for the Maing tribe. In fact, right now, we have been challenged in terms of education. And now in the Maing tribe, we have attorney, we have doctors in the medical profession. In fact, my two daughters are registered nurses and I would like you to know that each has been assisted by the government, especially among the IPs.

So, the time allotted to me, I would like to thank all these Parliamentarians in Asia. In fact I was in Malaysia this month, August 8, 9 & 10. Even in the Region 12 there is what we called unity among the religious group all over the world today. May this first assembly here in La Trinidad through the initiative of our beloved Mayor, it pleases God that in your committee we will call for unity in time of diversity. May God bless you.

Dr. Norberto Duran, Apayao,

Thank you Mayor Edna for your introduction but I make a clarification that I am not a doctor by profession. I am just a simple graduate of AB Political Science. It is my honour and privilege to me to speak in front of you right now. I was attending a meeting in Ilocos Norte when one of the staff of Mayor Edna call me that I am one of the participants here now in the program the Asian Parliament. Pardon me if I could not speak well because I feel nervous. My beloved province Apayao is separated from Kalinga in 1995 through Republic Act 7878. According to our

political leaders before, they separate the two provinces in equal division in 7878 because Kalinga is composed of 8 municipalities and Apayao is composed of 7 municipalities so they call it 7878 when they separated into two distinct provinces.

Apayao is composed of 7 municipalities namely Pudtol, Cabugao, Luna, Lora, Koler and Kalanasan. Eighty percent (80%) of our total population belong to Indigenous People. The major dominant tribe in Apayao is the Itnag tribe where I belong. We love nature and we preserve our watershed and forests. 80% of our land area is forest. Forested and we have forest preservation. We have a potential tourist destination like the Mount Polo where the American soldiers hide during the 2nd world war. And also the Silalay Falls, where also the Japanese soldiers hide during the 2nd world war. We also have the program of governance in Apayao in our forest protection areas we call it the Lapaz System, where in the river no fishing, no fishing and forest are preserved or no cutting of trees. We protect our forest and rivers through Lapaz System. That's all. Good morning again.

Dr. Peter Cozalan, Benguet

Thank you Mayor. I won't greet you individually so that I will be able to deliver what I am supposed to deliver within the period covered. So, I am going to concentrate not on Benguet alone, but on the situation on the Region. Congressman Baguilat told me about the IPs national concern. I am going to do something about the major what I think is the development

concerns of the Cordilleras, Benguet province, and the La Trinidad of course.

The first one of this is the development challenge in the recognition of the existence of the Indigenous People in the Philippines and particularly the Cordilleras. The second one of course is the physical displacement by development programmes by the Manila government, national government in other words, of the Indigenous People from their ancestral lands. And the third one has to do with the ragged mountainous terrain areas of the Cordilleras that make it difficult, costly to provide health services like education and other social services.

What are the implications of all of these, first with respect to its system and what is the history of this.

As a people and citizen of the Philippines, 52 years after the birth of the Philippines in 1935 as a Republic that we were recognized as Indigenous People this was through the 1987 Constitution. 1987 was the only time that the Indigenous People of the Philippines were formally recognized by the National Government. What is the implication of these? I mentioned a while ago that our biggest food production area in Benguet province is along the Agno River known as the Amboklaw River Basin. This has been inundated because of the national program for the production of cheap electricity and where the duct electricity go it went to the industrial center or the urban center. It did not benefit the rural area which has been destroyed. What happened here, more

than 200 families were removed, displaced without relocations from these areas. This is what marginalization does to us as Indigenous People in the Cordilleras. What are the other implications? The system of government that we have traced to the colonial system that 300 years of Spanish dominations of this country gave me the *buenas dias a todos* greetings. And more than 50 years of American colonization of the Philippines which still exist to a certain degree economically today and politically today, have given us a cultural change the Indigenous People were not prepared for. Now what do I mean by these? The concept of population against development which has been developed by the World Bank, by the economist of the United Nations, favours more the industrialized nation than the Indigenous people. Why? Because as Congressman Baguilat has mentioned, we are rich in natural resources. But let us not conclude by the national government or what Senator Pimentel said is the Imperial Manila. By the way, Senator Pimentel a Parliamentarian like you was the one who authored the Local Government code. He was the one who saw the difference between a central government based in Manila and the Local Government unit that should know better the situation in the field than the technocrats at the top. So these are the problems. So why do I say I do not believe much in the population versus development.

To the Indigenous people, in fact there is divorce law among them a part of the customary law. What happens when they get married, there is propagation of

children, why? Because as marginal family they need the labour of more children in order to be able to survive under the harsh circumstances in their environments. So these are the reasons for them to propagate more, the population expert would of course again say, on a macro scale yes. That is why China adopted a two children law where you get incentives if you have only 2 children but you get penalized by certain system if you have more than 2 children.

So here is a situation when you deal with a marginal family who need labour. Because they cannot, unlike the industrialized area where you can hire labour. In the rural areas they used customary law to resolve labour problems. In the Philippines we have the cooperative labour exchange or in the building of houses, *bayanihan* in tagalog. For people here in the provinces, for farming exchange labour, what do they do, they pull together their community resources or labour to cultivate the farms and to do their agricultural system. The recognition of the system of the Cordillera Indigenous are still in the process up to now after 52 years and after 25 years of 87 Constitution we still have to be recognized. Congressman Baguilat was saying that they are still reforming or trying to streamline the NCIP. The NCIP has so far not been able to champion the rights of Indigenous people provided for in the Constitution and provided under the INFLRA law the reason is most of our lawyers are educated in the Regalian Doctrine which was passed from the Spaniards through the Americans to the Philippine National Government today. The second one is the physical

displacement: we are rich in natural resources in the Cordilleras. But it is own by the National Government under the Regalian Doctrine. The state owns the natural resources. They are under its control and supervision. 85% of our Cordillera limes, the ancestral limes of the Cordillerans are under National Government reservations. It means barely 15% is under the AMB or what is AMB? That is something which can be cultivated and something which can be filled up by the people. And this is 2013 and we are talking of the current situation of land.

Recognition of the rights of the Indigenous people has not filtered down even to the national government itself despite the Constitutional provisions. What is the implication of this? We have very poor local government. Why? Because they have no managerial control over the resources. If they have no managerial control over the resources, there cannot be collection of taxes from those who make use of the natural resources. Why? Because the national government collects all the taxes and most of these taxes, despite the local government code that provide a share of the local government unit goes to the central area particularly Makati. That is why if you have been around Makati you will see the buildings there, they may have free social services like education, health and so on. But where do the riches came from? Basically, they came from the mines of Benguet province. The most developed but also the most abused of all the provinces of the Cordilleras. Why? Because since 1904 our mining, our natural

resources have been exploited, the logs have been completely removed or logged out to support the mining industry. So this is what makes us poor because the local government unit is unable to provide the social services that were divulged by the national government to the local government.

So in effect the people are poor because the local government itself is poor. The rugged terrain which you have seen around and which is common in the Cordillera, it is more expensive and need more money, time and resources to build school buildings, to build also hospitals, to provide basic services. This is more expensive to maintain and build infrastructure that will make access to social access to the people to their market and to the other social areas. What makes this worse is that the laws of the Philippines now I do not know if it is true in your areas, distributes the taxes through the so called IRA or Internal Revenue Allotment. It is based number one of population and number two on land areas. When we have lots of lands we have 1.6 M only within the whole Cordilleras that is only equal to one province in the region, joining region of Pangasinan, which has 2.6 million people. So what is the implication, what happens? The social services funds of the government distributed through the IRA go only to the rich and populated areas. So I think given the time limit we would interchange opinions later. So I have outlined to you more or less the problems of the Indigenous people particularly in the Cordillera. Thank you.

Message

Hon. Nguyen Thi Kha

Member of Parliament, Vietnam

On behalf of the delegates I would like to thank everyone for warm hospitality and friendship you have given us from yesterday up to now. You have been treating us well just like we are at home.

Today when we met you and received all the information to which we pay respect. You are working very hard for the people in this region, and we were able to learn much experience from you.

In my country and other countries as well, we have many ethnic minorities, most of

whom face many difficulties. Many governments pay attention to them to improve their standard of living. As parliamentarians, we are responsible for ethnic minorities. We must care of them, especially their health issues, not only in your country, but also in this region.

Again, I would like to thank you and everyone in the region for your efforts. We hope to invite you to come to Vietnam in order to share experiences and deepen mutual understanding. Thank you very much.

Response from the Parliamentarians

Discussion

[Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto, Moderator]

The floor is now open for your thoughts, your ideas or questions to our Presenters. And for those who were not able to present, this is now the time when you can share. However, I hope we can maximize the remaining time for our Parliamentarians to react on the presentations.

[Mr. Manmohan Sharma, India]

Thank you very much. I am very happy to know about the provinces and municipalities. It is very similar to our country. But I am a little surprised because in my country, there are a lot of crowds in the municipality hall with their problems. So here I am happy there is no crowd in the municipality and this is probably because problems are solved by the local government. So how do you solve local problems like electricity, water, irrigation problems? While in my country people come to the municipality office with all these problems, the people here sitting are all delegates. How come there are no people appealing their problems here at all, either the problem is being solved at the local problems or they do not want to come here? I really want to learn from you.

[Mayor Edna Tabanda, Philippines]

Maybe you can invite us to India?

The local government unit is the second level in the structure of our government and we have the Barangays headed by Barangay Chairs and they are the first liner

to implement laws and policies and also deliver services. So they are there at the Barangay level and if the problems cannot be solved there, they go to the municipality and to the provinces. So we have the different basic divisions of the government and regional agencies which also provide technical and financial assistance.

We also have our own development programmes and services. We have the agricultural department and have our local government unit. We have a population officer under the municipal social welfare of our office. We have the civil registry office. For environmental programmes, we have an environment officer under the office of the mayor. All these basic services are provided in these agencies and offices under the local government unit. And we have the water department which takes care of the delivery of domestic water and the department for the intervention of the irrigation programmes. So we have all of these different offices in the municipality that provide the basic services for our people. We also get assistance from the province, while we provide technical and financial assistance to the barangay level. As mentioned by Dr Peter, assistance through the Internal Revenue Allotment as well as technical assistance from the National Government through their Regional Offices. We have the regional offices of agriculture, social services, population and development and health.

That is the structure here. And we also have the NGOs from the private sector to provide services through their Corporate Social Responsibilities to the academe to their community service programmes. That is how we manage the resources of the local government unit. Through partnership, we also have the private/public/social partnership in our local government unit. That is how we provide it. We go into the empowered mechanism so that people will not be so dependent on the government. We always have the partner scheme. For example, if you go into the construction of roads, the barangay will also have to come up with a counterpart in the municipality. And we also get a counterpart from the province.

[Mr. Manmohan Sharma, India]

Thank you. Yes, sure. You are invited to come to India any time.

One more question, what revenue do you generate? Do you collect some taxes?

[Mayor Edna Tabanda, Philippines]

Under the Local Government Code, we have a limited base for taxation. Most of the local governments in the Philippines depend on the Internal Revenue Allotment from the National Government. Many of our local government units due to lack of funds, fail to develop their natural resources. So again they lack of local resources, and usually being an agricultural region, most of our people do the farming. Usually they do not pay the taxes. We derive our taxes from the business sectors because in the valley we have more industries and businesses. So that is where we get our taxes.

[Mr. Manmohan Sharma, India]

Is health priority for you?

[Mayor Edna Tabanda, Philippines]

Oh yes, I am a nurse by profession and I really look into the social concern of the province. I believe that even if we have all the infrastructures and technologies if people are not healthy it would be useless. I am an advocate of reproductive health, Population health and we now have the concept of population, health and the environment that we would like to go into it. We are going to make our plans in the second week of September and we are putting more emphasize on health, reproductive health and services because we believe these are what the people need, especially the IPs.

We are also promoting indigenous medicine. We have been asking the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to identify indigenous medicinal trees and plants and we are also encouraging our people to go herbal gardening.

[Mr. Manmohan Sharma, India]

In my country there are more than 2,000 indigenous medicine doctors..

[Mayor Edna Tabanda, Philippines]

There are also many doctors here. We are really going into that and we would like to encourage our government agencies concerned to look into this. Medicines are really expensive now for our Indigenous people.

[Hon. Eladio Antonio Faculto de Jesus, Timor Leste]

Thank you very much for the opportunity. First of all, I would like to say that Timor

Leste is a very new country. We had our independence 11 years ago and so opportunities like this is very vital for us to learn. I just want to ask one question out of curiosity. Today one of the delegates said that you have a lot of nurses and not much work for them. Why are there many nurses but not enough work for them?

[Mayor Edna Tabanda, Philippines]

When I entered Nursing, we always say that we take up nursing for humanitarian purposes. But now I think many take up nursing because of opportunities abroad, so many of them are in other countries. It is sad. The compensation of nurses is very low, and the nursing before was seen as low profession because of the dirty job of cleaning urine and so forth. But now even doctors go into nursing just to go abroad.

[Hon. Eladio Antonio Faculto de Jesus, Timor Leste]

As you may know, Timor Leste is a very small country with only a million people. The Philippines is a big country, so we understand why they go abroad to get the job. But you must need more nurses in this country.

[Mayor Edna Tabanda, Philippines]

You know the government is also looking into this. That is why the Department of Health is also encouraging medical people, doctors and nurses, to go to the Barangays. So they have a programme on nurses and doctors in the Barangays with a compensation that is worth it. This way we have now the rural doctors and rural nurses because the government is working on providing opportunity for them here in the Philippines. We are seriously facing a lack of medical people in the rural areas. We also lack infrastructure, such as roads,

clinics and Barangay health centers. The government now is already promoting health services at the grassroots level. So we hope our congresspersons will push for a piece of budget for health, reproductive health and population development programmes and they will again be re-elected in 2016.

[Hon. Antonio Ximenes Serpa, Timor Leste]

Thank you once again for the opportunity. I would like to ask a question with regards to education. How many percentages of people can read and write in the area?

[Mayor Edna Tabanda, Philippines]

The literacy rate is about 98% in the Cordillera Region. We are very proud to tell everyone that inside the Philippines Cordillera has the highest literacy rate. We went to Mindanao and some rural areas in the Visayan Islands, and we found that many could not write or read. In the Cordillera, if you enter a grade one classroom and after 2 or 3 months, people can already write and read.

Maybe we can attribute this to the culture. The people of the Cordillera place high importance to education. They even lease their land just to send their children to school. They make sacrifice because education is very important to indigenous people. However, unfortunately, before women were not given the opportunity to go to school. It was men who went to school. Now many women are educated. And we are also proud to tell you that the Cordillera people know more how to speak English than the national language, which is Pilipino. This is maybe because of the entry of the Americans, who penetrated the Cordillera Region, not the Spaniards. So

you can speak to peddlers in the street and they will answer you in English.

[Hon. Eladio Antonio Faculto de Jesus, Timor Leste]

I would like to congratulate you on having achieved such a high level of education. As I said, we are here to learn and as you know we have a high illiteracy rate in Timor Leste. We would like to know the secret formula to improve the literacy rate. Do you have any tip?

[Mayor Edna Tabanda, Philippines]

Maybe you can ask our teachers here to go to your country. Many are now being invited in China and even in the States. They are helping in these countries because they speak English very well. They are also undergoing tutoring in Korean here in the Cordillera region.

[Hon. Eladio Antonio Faculto de Jesus, Timor Leste]

Maybe that is not a good idea because the two official languages in Timor Leste are Portuguese and Tetum. They are not keen on learning English.

[Mayor Edna Tabanda, Philippines]

Oh very nationalistic. Actually, in college we have a subject on basic Spanish. It is now an elective subject.

[Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto, Moderator]

Thank you, madam. We are really running out of time. I am sorry. But we still have time during the lunch to interact and talk with our representatives from the municipality and provinces. It has been a very substantive discussion, and I would like to thank Mayor Edna Tabanda for welcoming us and for this well-prepared programme.

30 August 2013

Wrap-up Session

Feedback from Participants

Hon. Tissa Karalliyadde

Minister of Child Development and Women's Affairs, Sri Lanka

Good afternoon. First, I would like to give thanks to everyone on behalf of my country Sri Lanka. We had a very fruitful discussion on population and related issues from religious perspectives. The leading population challenge in the Philippines is the Reproductive Health Law and religious objection against it. It should be in partnership with religious authority for the promotion of responsible parenthood. Reproductive health also has challenge in indigenous communities, including HIV/ AIDS intervention. I have gained knowledge about these issues, and I would like to share these experiences in Sri Lanka

After the meeting in Manila, we had an opportunity to visit Baguio. Although it was a long journey, we enjoyed beautiful landscape and the sceneries. We did have the occasion for cultural interaction with

the Cordillera Indigenous community. This visit reminds me of visiting one of our own Indigenous communities. This community in Sri Lanka is also struggling to preserve their cultural heritage and tradition in the ever-changing society due to interaction with the outside world.

All in all, this programme was a great educational value to us and some lessons learned will no doubt to help us sharpen our own policies issues in our own countries. I have seen many interesting activities during my visit here. Although I have lots of things to share, I have a very limited time to speak. I will take my speech very brief. I want to take this opportunity to thank APDA, PLCPD, UNFPA, IPPF, AFPPD and the Mayors and all other distinguished Guests. Thank you very much and good luck.

Feedback from Participants

Hon. Mariany Mohammad Yit

Senator, Malaysia

Good afternoon everyone. First, I would like to thank APDA, UNFPA, JFPF, AFPPD and specially PLCPD for this event. I would like to congratulate the organizers for everything to build up from Day One, to Day Two and Day Three. Everything was well placed and timed. And we are very comfortable of our journey to Baguio City and everyone was never hungry. Every time we land, there is food to eat and plenty to drink. Thank you very much. We are very at home.

For the First Day, at the InterContinental Hotel all the Presenters are very good. And they were all rightly telling us their views, as per instructed under the agenda. Especially, I was impressed with the last session on the youth with attention to HIV and youth-related sexuality problems. In Malaysia we have two faces of the youth problem: the teen pregnancy, unwanted pregnancies, knowledge with regards to the family planning. Now we need to educate all people including young people.

In the 1950's and the 1960's, in Malaysia we were successful with regards to the family planning. The family planning was brought in the 1960's and then it was very well accepted. So in Malaysia there was a family planning clinic. But we lost it. If teens do not understand this, we will lose the advance or what we have done in the past. Therefore, we must find strategies how to handle young people. I have learned in the conference that we use and we can adapt in Malaysia.

Our trip to Baguio City and La Trinidad was the most impressive. We went on a study visit in Cambodia in January. It was a visit not to IP communities but to rural areas. I felt very sorry for the Cambodians because they just gained ceasefire 13 years ago. So what they are experiencing now is what Malaysia is experienced in 1950's and 1960's. It was very touching for me to see how young people go to school. If we compare that to the Barangay Bahong that we visited, there is no problem. Their children and their grandchildren go to the universities. An old lady was fit and strong and telling me her child is in Canada and the other is somewhere else. So she hopes to visit the child in Canada. If you compare their lives to those in Cambodia, it is very far apart - like 30-40 years apart. So I must congratulate the IPs in the Philippines, especially in Bahong that they lifted their bound. And I hope that what we see in Bahong will also be seen in other part of the Philippines where there are IPs. I understand that in Mindanao there is a lot to be done.

With regards to the Malaysian experience, we also have similar experiences where the IPs would like to live the way they were, near the jungle, free to move from one place to another. There is also another group and I have a programme with them. They keep telling that they want to move from there. They want opportunities and they want land to cultivate. In some part of Malaysia, yes,

we have plenty of land. The IPs are given 2-3 acres to cultivate. On the other hand, there are still others who want to keep balance between the environment and development. And call of the time things will change. So will our cultures, our values for all societies including the IP's.

Today, again I am impressed with the support and the welcome by the people of Benguet and Barangay Bahong. Especially, I was impressed with the Lady Mayor. She is all over in the place. I think she can go for many more years. How involving she was, as we saw today. And she is so knowledgeable what they have done and what they going to do after this.

Again I congratulate the people. I hope the APDA can host other events in other

countries so we can learn more. I have learned a lot here and I am impressed. And as I have said earlier, comparing IP communities in Malaysia to Bahong, Malaysia is behind. I was truly impressed in what they did today.

I would also like to add a positive side of Malaysia when it comes to the IPs. We have a department under the Ministry of Rural Development dealing with IPs. We also have a senator representing IPs. When his term is over, another one will be appointed. So there is always representation in the senate. We also have a Siamese in the senate. And truly I agree with Mr. Manmohan that as part of the learning process we make friends. And we enjoyed ourselves with what we do outside the classroom. Thank you.

[Mr. Manmohan Sharma, India]

Thank you very much. Let me first thank APDA for giving us the opportunity to join and also PLCPD for hosting us. A wonderful conference and the field trip also.

When we meet together in such conference and meetings we have shared our experiences, our policies and programmes. We learned from each other. Some countries are doing better and others not. And after learning we try to mention our comments.

On the first day, the presentations were very useful and fruitful. Everybody liked that, especially the youth one. I must appreciate APDA for organizing always the field trip. I am happy to mention that these field trips were proposed by me about 6 years ago. Without a field trip, we spend full day at the hotel listening to presentations, and we are not able to know what is happening to this country.

If there had been a field trip, we would not have come to know that the Philippines has such beautiful mountains, tribes and indigenous population. We would have never known them. We would have just come from the airport to the hotel and from the hotel to the airport.

Also, we meet each other and we get to know each other more closely on our coach during the journey. It is a wonderful time. During the field trip we become closer to each other. We know more each other's countries, their situations and programmes. That is more important and educative.

Of course listening to presentations is also important. While you will remember

hand-on experiences, like traveling in the jeepney, and you are going to tell people what you have learned. So that is a wonderful experience. I think I should congratulate these opportunities. It was a study visit in Cambodia last time in January 2013 on APDA's programme and this time here in the Philippines. We still have a fresh memory of the field trip in Cambodia where we went to the field and learned the issues.

So it is a really very good learning process. Once again I congratulate APDA for continuing these programmes. I hope that it will continue. Thank you

[Hon. Ugyen Wangdi, Bhutan]

I shared my experiences over the last three days. Although we have the Standing Committee in the Parliament related to the population and development. Yet we have other committees to stand to look for the issues related to population and development. We are dealing all these issues in the Parliament. Coming to this meeting, I have learned that how IPs are addressing the problems in the mainstream of an economic development. Bhutan has never been colonized by any foreign nation, so whoever lived in Bhutan are all IPs and I should consider myself as an IP.

In Bhutan we have no minorities, no differentiation and no discrimination, just all in one nation. But coming here to visit the Philippines and looking at your programmes here, you have the land holding so long and you can engage people in one particular agricultural production, such as flowers. It really enhances their income and makes their village as a model to other countries as well.

I was also impressed that they have a high rate of literacy, with 98%. This is something that we can take back. In Bhutan, it is hiking but is still about 60%. We are also starting some programmes for the elderly people who could not go to school so that they can learn read and write.

Also knowing all the colleagues here is a great pleasure. Hereafter we look forward to exchanging with each other. Bhutan being in the new form of democracy, we are looking forward to learning some solutions from our colleagues. Through this programme, we were able to make many friends and learn so much from each other about solutions. I am very happy that I have come here to be part of this. I still have 5 years to join you all.

Lastly, I would like to thank our organizers APDA and PLCPD for making this field trip a great success. Thank you.

[Hon. Ahmed Abdulla, Maldives]

I can call you all my friends because before we did not know each other, but we became friends during the field trip. I hope that we will use the information that we learned from this fruitful programme. I have gained a lot of information which I never learned before, like the problems of reproductive health care and education

for IPs. Our population is very less compared to other participating countries. We have 340,000 people. The problems that we face are different from other countries.

I would like to thank APDA and PLCPD for organizing this event, which was very fruitfully and very well-organized. Special appreciation to Mayor of La Trinidad and Baguio City and the people we met in Bahong during our last trip. I believe people in the Philippines are friendly and good friends of us now. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to participate in this event and the way you welcome us. Thank you very much.

[Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto, Moderator]

If there will be any additional feedback or thoughts that you would like to share with us, please do so later. But we need to proceed to finalize the Call to Action that we distributed during the first day at the conference for your comments and feedback.

We will finalize the statement so that before we leave the Philippines, it becomes the official outcome for the programme entitled "The 29th Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting and Study Visit on Population and Development".

Synthesis

Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto

Executive Director of PLCPD

I noted some of the highlights of our visit in Baguio City and La Trinidad, Benguet. This study visit started last night with the Mayor of Baguio City, Mayor Mauricio Domogan, gave an Opening Prayer and welcomed us at the grounds of the Philippine information agency. He offered an “ogayam”, a traditional way of praying and singing and wished us good luck, good health for our study visit in Baguio and La Trinidad. Our representative from China also offered thanks to the Mayor of Baguio City and the Philippine Information Agency. It was an interaction with dinner and we were back to the hotel after.

Today as you witnessed, Mayor Edna Tabanda was very prepared to welcome us. There was a dance during in the opening with students and ladies in their traditional clothes. They gave us leis, flowers, and we were guided to the beautiful hall of their Municipal building. Mayor Tabanda provided us all the information on current issues of what the Municipality is facing.

The Planning Officer of La Trinidad Benguet also provided us with the economic and demographic profile of their Municipality. Representative Baguilat from

the Province of Ifugao gave us a keynote speech not only on the IPs in the Cordillera but also on the conditions of our IP brothers and sisters in Mindanao. Representative Baguilat also shared with us some of the policy initiatives that they are now doing to promote and protect the rights of our brothers and sisters in the north and the south in IP communities.

In Barangay Bahong we were again treated with beautiful and very warm dance and singing. Some of us joined the traditional dance. They provided us the information on the economic profile of the Barangay. And out in the field we saw how flowers were grown and how rural development project is being implemented.

I think these are the highlights of the study visit. It is difficult to capture the essence because there is much information. Almost all of the ethno linguistic groups and Provinces were represented in the morning forum.

Ladies and Gentlemen, now we move to the vote of thanks. We have here with us Mr. Ramon San Pascual, AFPPD Executive Director, to lead us the vote of Thanks.

Vote of Thanks

Mr. Ramon San Pascual

Executive Director of AFPPD

Maraming Maraming salamat. This is our way of our saying thank you and being grateful.

Thank you very much for the time you spent with us. APDA had already involved me at least 3 times in their study visit events. The first was in Laos. I think that was 4 years ago in 2010. I almost made it in Sri Lanka. Congressman Lagman and I were there only for a day and we had to go back for RH bill advocacy. So this is my third time, and I am very happy as you can imagine for the fact that this is being hosted by my country, the Philippines, and by the organization that I loved and have been working with for so long time. And now it is being led by Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto, Executive Director of PLCPD. So you can sense how special this is to me because this is the first major global or regional event that the PLCPD has hosted in the post-RH.

Can you imagine we are talking now the post-RH. We have been hosting events here, but every time the question was, when is the RH law going to be passed, if it is passed at all. But now the anticipation is how soon it will be settled in the Supreme Court and what would be the outcome. Once it is being implemented, there is so much hope and I sense it in the room on Day One, where there are so many Speakers felt so too. The situation now has really changed. Now we are talking about how it will be carried out or how it

will impact people's lives on women's health and rights of couples.

Now the world is looking much in the Philippines after that long struggle on the rights of women and families. Now there is an RH law. The world is anticipating that it will indeed make the Philippines a much improved society, not only in terms of economic development but also in terms of human development.

So we are grateful and excited that we are hosting this APDA meeting. Of course this meeting is very special to me because I am coming home after the series of meetings. This has been a really busy year in terms of parliamentary global network. It is coming from the work of the ICPD beyond 2014, which will be celebrated next year. And for the post-2015 of the MDGs, there are many of events we are engaging ourselves in, because parliamentarians have been proven in the RH law in playing a key role in fulfilling the ICPD. It cannot happen without the law. We fought together with the parliamentarians through at least 4 congresses and 3 Presidents of the Philippines — all in the spirit of the ICPD that we agreed on as a community of nation in the 1994 in the Programme of Action in the ICPD.

Putting the integrity at work, particularly in women and that is not easy discussing multicultural diversity. Even I myself I have learned quite a few things. I live my life as

a Filipino. I have been to Cordillera few times, but I realized how diverse our country is. And no one can really claim that it is a Christian country alone, or it is a catholic country alone. Even the Catholic Filipinos, there are so much diversity. Most of the Cordillerans, they belong to the indigenous groups. But they are also Christians. Or some of them remain in their traditional belief.

I think today's programme enlightened us on how mining impact sustainability of the traditional agriculture. Even when we go to the flower plantation today, my questions were: to whom do those flowers cater to? Does it feed people? Yes, as much as there is a market. But at the end do you really sustain the local agriculture by depending on the external market? And we have learned from the past that it cannot.

Therefore, sustainability should be inherent in the community itself. And this is where reproductive health does come in. So thanks to APDA that you diverted our focus from campaigning just for the ICPD for the 2014 to the issue of culture, tradition, and diversity in the society. And still it links. I think now you can appreciate what ICPD is all about. ICPD as much as it promotes rights, it promotes women's dignity. It is also about respect of the diversity of our culture.

I am thankful to my colleagues at PLCPD. I am so proud of you. You can see how intense it is to be with PLCPD. I saw some new members in PLCPD because of the election that happened recently, but I also see the old, invulnerable veterans of the PLCPD, including Hon. Bellaflor Angara Castillo, Hon. Pia Cayetano, and Hon. Teddy Baguilat.

In PLCPD, there is a mix of activism between the staff and the parliamentarians. And they all come along together. At a time you cannot even distinguish because both the staff and the parliamentarians in PLCPD share the same culture of setting change of bringing basics back to the community. I feel proud that they can handle such a big event as you have seen in the past three days.

And I also thank the local government units. The two Mayors, you can easily be mesmerized by their energy and their dedication from last night to today. Last night was very special because Mayor Domogan used to be part of the Parliament. And he would attend sessions in the Parliament on special days, wearing that outfit where you can see people dancing. That he is such a proud "Igorot" He is such a proud Cordilleran. So that is where diversity again comes in with respect. And Parliamentarians are meant to champion diversity and rights particularly of women. This is not the last definitely event for this year. There are three or four major events that are bound to happen. And the next one is the Asia Pacific Population Conference in September. We have been reminding the parliamentarian groups and national committees to send your best MPs, because we will negotiate among 60 countries, the whole Asia and the Pacific, with an outcome document that will carry out for the next 10 years.

In October, Minister Tissa of Sri Lanka will be the host of the Global Meeting of Young Parliamentarians who are 35 years old and below. And we are thinking for another meeting in Colombo in October.

And then we will come back again here in Manila for the main standing committee

meeting in that middle of October. All along the lines of campaigning for the post-2015 and the ICPD beyond 2014. So keep it up, let's keep our camaraderie alive and meaningful. This is where I am proud APDA and AFPPD too. We are not just hosting meetings for the sake of the meeting. We are hosting meetings for the sake of setting changes in our respective countries. And we will continue to do that.

And I thank especially each one of you for being here with us for the past three days. Thank you very much.

[Mr. Romeo C. Dongeto, Moderator]

Thank you very much Mon. And now we are almost finished with our stay in the cool and the beautiful place of Baguio City.

Ladies and Gentlemen to formally close our event, here is Hon. Yutaka Kumagai for the closing message. Hon. Kumagai is from Japan representing the JFPF and APDA.

Closing Messages

Hon. Yutaka Kumagai

Representative JFPF and APDA

Hello, everyone. You must be tired so I would like to make it short.

First of all, since I come from the devastated area caused by the great tsunami and earthquake two years ago, I would like to express to my deep gratefulness to all of you, who gave us support and help to us. Even though we are still suffering from the aftermath of the tsunami, but we are rebuilding and reconstructing our place. So please visit us anytime you can. I will take you to the devastated and reconstructing areas.

Second, in terms of population, as you all know, Japan is aging rapidly. But when it comes to the parliament, it is getting younger than ever. For instance, I am from the Liberal Democratic Party, which is now a ruling party. Now we have 94 parliamentarians out of 410 who are under the age of 45. You may imagine how much older generation expect from us in the next century.

Third, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to every one of you for making very substantial discussions in the past three days. My appreciation goes to PLCPD, the governments of La Trinidad and Baguio City, the National Commission of Indigenous People and all those who rendered their support to make the meeting and study visit a great success.

With support from UNFPA and IPPF, the Asian parliamentarians' meeting and study

visit on population and development have been organized annually by APDA, Secretariat of JFPF, with this year's marking the 29th such event. These parliamentarians' activities have constituted a very important contribution to the development of AFPPD for such an extended period, since APDA was established in 1982 as a backbone of AFPPD.

Population issues vary from region to region, from country to country and from culture to culture. Unlike 30 years ago when APDA and AFPPD were established, we now all know that we have to go beyond stabilizing the population growth. We must tackle multifaceted aspects of population issues to improve individual well-being and achieve sustainable. Under such diversified circumstances, we as parliamentarians have a crucial role to build an enabling environment for these goals.

This year's theme focused on cultural pluralism and population, under which we were able to learn from the Philippine's experiences in a culturally pluralistic society. This is relevant to all of us in our efforts to address diversifying population issues in a way to respect cultural diversity and improve people's well-being.

JFPF, together with APDA, would like to continue to facilitate parliamentarians' activities and programmes such as this in order to strengthen our partnership and concerted action to solve population

issues, which I believe, will pave the way
for a brighter future for all.

Thank you very much.

Call to Action

The 29th Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting and Study Visit on Population and Development

30 August 2013
The Philippines

We, Parliamentarians from (number) Asia and the Pacific countries, gathered in the Philippines to commit ourselves to continuing and enhancing efforts to address population issues, contribute to the acceleration of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and promote sustainable and equitable development toward and beyond 2015.

We reaffirm that:

1. Addressing population issues are essential precondition for individuals' wellbeing and sustainable development;
2. Promoting parliamentarians' activities on population and development is crucial to strengthen our role, both individually and collectively, to protect and improve people's happiness and dignity;
3. Population measures and programmes should respect different cultures and values, and in consistent with the International Conference on Population and Development -Program of Action and related international agreements on population issues.

To this end, we parliamentarians commit ourselves to the following actions:

1. Put in place population programmes and measures that ensure respect for different faiths and cultures, which constitute the basis of people's lives and values;
2. As a bridge between the governments and people, work closely with culturally different groups to improve conditions that promote people's well-being and adopt practical, culturally-sensitive population measures (including modern methods of family planning) in respective religious and cultural settings;
3. Call upon the government to pay special attention to social, health and economic challenges that culturally different groups face and secure necessary means of subsistence and survival.

Using this common understanding as a platform for concrete action and further exchange, we parliamentarians pledge to carry out these actions and actively share the progress we make through parliamentarians' groups and networks. We also pledge to continue to further enhance partnership and collaboration among parliamentarians in order to advocate and address population issues as an integral part of the post-2015 development agenda.

