

# PRESS RELEASE

## *Philippine Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva*

14-16 Allée David-Morse, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland • Telephone No. +41 22 716 1930 • <http://www.genevapm.dfa.gov.ph>  
E-mail: [geneva.pm@dfa.gov.ph](mailto:geneva.pm@dfa.gov.ph) • Facebook: Philippine Consulate General, Geneva URL: <https://www.facebook.com/genevapcg/>



### **PH CITES ADVANCES IN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS PROTECTION AND PROGRESSIVE HUMANITARIAN TRADITION AT DIALOGUE WITH UN COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN GENEVA**



*The Philippines's Constructive Dialogue with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 25th periodic reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination was held on 19-20 April 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland.*

**GENEVA** – The Philippines, led by Hon. Allen A. Capuyan, Chairperson of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, engaged in a Constructive Dialogue with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> periodic reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination on 19-20 April 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Philippine delegation particularly highlighted the significant strides made in the promotion and protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights pursuant to the 1997 Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) and other relevant laws during the period under review (2009-2018). These include the enactment of 215 laws, including the landmark Bangsamoro Organic Law, covering a wide range of rights under ICERD, the issuance of 260 Certificates of Ancestral Domains Titles and 252 Certificates of Ancestral Land Titles, awareness programs on cultural practices and ancestral domains, and expanded access to health services and educational assistance, among others.

In line with its rights-based development agenda pursued through participatory and inclusive processes, the Philippine Government, through the NCIP, fully enforces the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent process especially as regards development projects involving mining and energy infrastructure.

To further improve the provision of services to indigenous cultural communities, the NCIP, in collaboration with other government agencies, is working with the World Bank to strengthen its institutional capacity to collect comprehensive data on Indigenous Peoples that will be accessible to policy-makers and stakeholders through a single digital portal.



*NCIP Chairperson and Head of Delegation, Hon. Allen A. Capuyan delivers his opening statement at the Constructive Dialogue with UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. To his left is Ms. Verene Albertha Shepherd, Chair of the Committee.*

The Philippine delegation also emphasized that the government continues to advocate Indigenous Peoples' issues and interests, including in the areas of environment and climate change, disaster risk reduction, and gender development, in its bilateral and multilateral engagements in the UN and other fora. In this regard, the Foreign Assisted Program and International Relations Office of the NCIP was recently created to ensure Indigenous Peoples' representation and effective participation in the conduct of the country's external relations.

In addition, the delegation cited the Philippines' longstanding humanitarian tradition and abiding commitment to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol, recalling the recently launched Complementary Pathways program offering durable solutions for refugees by providing a safe and regulated avenue of admission and stay in the country through education, as well as the country's accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Philippines also recently issued an administrative regulation to establish a fair, efficient and non-adversarial procedure for the protection and assistance of refugees and stateless persons. An inter-agency committee was institutionalized in February 2022 tasked to facilitate access to socio-economic services by refugees and stateless persons.

While the accomplishments are significant, Chairperson Capuyan nonetheless acknowledged that more has to be done by the government amidst various challenges, including the weaponization of human rights by leftist extremists that actively radicalize Indigenous Peoples and misrepresent them in the UN to advance their violent agenda of overthrowing the duly constituted government of the Philippines.

Chairperson Capuyan underscored that the Philippine Government embraces a whole-of-nation and whole-of-government approach to protect the Filipino people from the "efforts of the CPP-NPA-NDF to divide the Filipino people and propagate violence".

*"The Philippine Government is in full throttle in operationalizing ICERD...We unify our people, we capacitate our people, and we mobilize our people for a better future with no one left behind",* he added.



Joining Chairperson Capuyan in the delegation were Philippine Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, H.E. Evan P. Garcia, Presidential Human Rights Committee Secretariat Executive Director, Undersecretary Severo S. Catura, and Council on Welfare of Children Chairperson, Undersecretary Angelo M. Tapales, as well as other officials from the Department of Justice, Office of the Court Administrator of the Supreme Court, Council for the Welfare of Children, Philippine Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, Presidential Human Rights Committee Secretariat, and NCIP.

The Philippines signed and ratified ICERD on 7 March 1966 and 15 September 1967, respectively. Article 9 of the ICERD obligates States Parties to submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for consideration by the Committee, a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative and other measures adopted giving effect to the provisions of the Convention. The Philippines' last constructive dialogue with the Committee was held in 2009.

The Committee raised questions and observations on the following themes: domestic law and institutional framework to implement ICERD, hate speech, statistics on Indigenous Peoples, situation of minority groups and Indigenous Peoples, situation of Internally Displaced Persons, and training courses on racial discrimination.

The Committee is composed of 18 experts from different countries with Ms. Verene Albertha Shepherd (Jamaica) as Chair and Mr. Michal Balcerzak (Poland) as Rapporteur for the Philippines. END