

NOT GOOD ENOUGH IP WOMEN FLUNK PNOY

4 5 indigenous women leaders coming from 19 tribes and sub-tribes around the country gave the PNoy administration's first year a "bagsak" for its failure to deliver on promises Aquino made during the campaign period and during his first state of the nation address (SONA).

President Aquino started his administration with a high approval rating and high expectations from those who supported his candidacy. In October 2010, Aquino's popularity rating was 79%. It dropped sharply to 64% in

November and continued to dip from then on. In March this year, his rating stood





at 51%. As some observers point out, PNoy's anti-corruption efforts could not help maintain his high ratings. The appointment to cabinet positions of several leaders of civil society groups did not help, either.

During the National Gathering of IP Women held at Christ the King Retreat Center in Koronadal City on 23-24 July 2011, women leaders from indigenous communities, sharing their thoughts about their conditions under the PNoy administration, agreed that the one-year regime failed their expectations.

Speaking before the IP women, Judy A. Pasimio of the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC-Ksk/Friends of the Earth-Phils.) recalled that in his speech in 2010, "PNoy said 'Ngayon,

pwede na tayong mangarap.' (We can now dream.) As women who are in the forefront of struggles, we have always kept our dreams." Pasimio said the more critical question that IP women should ask is whether PNoy is an ally in the fulfilment of these dreams.

Same fundamental issues

"*Bagsak kay wala nya napugnan ang padayon nga pagtaas sa presyo sa mga palalitan, gasolina, bugas kag iban pa namon nga mga inadlaw-adlaw nga panginahanglan,*" said Amihan Ambag, a T'boli. (He failed to stop the continuing increase of prices of goods, oil, rice and other daily needs).

"*Hanggang ngayon, hindi pa rin kinikilala ang aming mga karapatan sa aming mga lupang ninuno at wala pa ring tulong mula sa pamahalaan upang ma-*





paunlad ang aming mga lupain," reported one workshop group during the gathering, adding that PNoy failed to stop the encroachment of large-scale mining, logging, hydro projects and other extractive industries in their ancestral lands. (Our right to our ancestral domains is not yet recognized. And the government has yet to work with us so that we could develop our lands).

PNoy also failed to stop militarization in the countryside which resulted in various cases of human rights violations, according to the group.

Keynote speaker Beverly

Longid of Katribu Partylist said that "food on the table and other basic needs are among the main concerns of most indigenous women, and PNoy failed to address these basic problems one year after his assumption to power."

"Even PNoy's 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program), supposedly to address extreme poverty, perpetuate discrimination of indigenous women, aside from becoming another source of corruption among officials," Longid said. She added that until now, PNoy has not issued a clear-cut policy on Indigenous Peo-

ple's concerns, much more on IP women.

Windows of hope

Judith Maranes of the Ibaloi-Kalunguya tribe from Baguio City expressed hope that, with the appointment of a progressive Chairperson, the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) will be able to respond to the needs of indigenous people. NCIP's new chair, Zenaida Brigida Hamada-Pawid (or 'Manang Briggs' among her peers in the indigenous communities), is an Ifugao who has been part of the struggle for the protection of IP rights.

The women leaders also lauded the current leadership

of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), through Chairperson Etta Rosales, who is expected to act on issues raised by indigenous communities, especially of women who are discriminated and threatened both as an IP and as a woman.

The IP women likewise hoped that the peace talks and discussions will open a venue where indigenous women's groups can participate and be involved.

"We hope that the peace talks will not just solve these political problems but also address the very issue of the lack of basic social services in far-flung areas. We reaffirmed in the sessions that basic needs such as food, education and health are not delivered to the poorest of the poor communities," they said.

With the theme "IP women: weaving aspirations and dreams, forging collective strength towards solidarity and genuine changes", the two-day discussion-workshop's expected outcome will be formulated into an IP women agenda, to be given to relevant agencies both at the national and local levels.

Source: <http://lrcksk.org/main/2011/07/ip-women-to-pnoy-bagsak/>