CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE NATION STATE IN ASIA

Baguio City, Philippines, 18-21 April 1999

THE BAGUIO DECLARATION

We, representatives of indigenous peoples of Asia gathered in Baguio City came together to share our experiences and aspirations in the face of our concrete situations. We have come to find out that our peoples are faced with problems such as denial of our right of self-determination, militarization and State sponsored violence, governmental transmigration policies, cultural oppression, development oppression and denial of our identities as indigenous peoples.

We have also come to find hope in the various struggles being waged by indigenous peoples in Asia and we affirm and assert the following:

1. Assert that the right of self-determination of all peoples, including indigenous peoples, is an inherent and universal human right, as exercised by them throughout history;

2. Reiterate that the right of self-determination is enshrined in international law, including in the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

3. Reiterate furthermore that indigenous peoples' right of self-determination is recognized and included in numerous national accords, legislations and international treaties between indigenous peoples and States;

4. Bearing in mind that peoples right of self-determination is premised on the principles and equality, non-discrimination and prohibition of racism;

5. Recall that the draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that indigenous peoples, like all other peoples, have the right of self-determination;

6. Emphasize the fundamental importance of ensuring that the right of self-determination of indigenous peoples is implemented equally and universally;

7. Emphasize further that the implementation of the right of self-determination is fundamental for the survival and achievement of human security for indigenous peoples,

including, but not limited to, their cultures, values, languages, religions, economies, political and legal institutions, indigenous knowledge systems, way of life, ancestral territories, lands and resources;

8. Acknowledge that although autonomy and self-government may be a way through which many indigenous peoples wish to exercise their right of self-determination, that these are not the only ways by which indigenous peoples may exercise this right;

9. Emphasize therefore that indigenous peoples' right of self-determination cannot be qualified, and that they have the right to establish their own government and determine its relations to other political communities, including States and international organizations;

10. Assert that indigenous peoples in their exercise of the right of self-determination have the right to genuine autonomy or self-government, if they so decide, including, but not limited to, in matters relating to culture, religion, education, information, media, health, housing, development, employment, social welfare, economic activities, land and resource management, environment and entry by non-members into their territory, as well as ways and means for financing these autonomous functions, as recognized in the draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

11. Express deep concern about the fact that oppressive States force indigenous peoples to take up armed struggle;

12. Recognize that although armed struggle can be an important means of achieving the right of self-determination, it should always be in the context of bringing about just and lasting peace based on a final negotiated settlement that recognizes the legitimate aspirations of all involved peoples and parties, including non-indigenous inhabitants living on indigenous territory;

13. Underline that a just and non-discriminatory implementation of the right of self-determination is a core means to prevent and resolve conflicts;

14. Express serious concern that the languages and cultures of indigenous peoples are not recognized in many Asian States and that languages and cultures of majority groups are imposed upon indigenous peoples;

15. Express grave concern at the condition of indigenous people who have been forced to become international refugees and internally displaced persons;

16. Express deep concern that the economic policies of the Asian states under the pressures of globalization, international finance capital and lending agencies acentuate internal colonization of indigenous peoples' homelands, exploitation of their natural resources by national and multi-national Corporations, exploitative tourism, harmful structural adjustment, unwarranted cutbacks of welfare support of weaker sections with grave repercussions of forced dislocation, unprecedented impoverishment and immiseration and the increase of inhuman practices long eradicated elsewhere like debt bondage, forced labour, force prostitution and child labour.

17. Express deep concern about state sponsored transmigration of impoverished groups into the homelands of indigenous peoples and state acquiesced appropriation of land and survival resources by these migrants that results in displacement and marginalization of indigenous peoples threatening their physical and cultural survival.

18. Express deep concern at the atrocities on indigenous peoples, intolerance of their cultural uniqueness and cultural aggression through the imposition of the dominant paradigm by the agencies of the state threatening indigenous identity, culture, values and ethos.

19. Express deep concern at the silent complicity of fellow Asian states at the grave violations of the rights of indigenous peoples using the ASEAN policy of non interference in each others affairs as an excuse.

20. Strongly condemn the militarization of indigenous territories and homelands and the use of non-governmental paramilitary forces to suppress the legitimate struggles of indigenous peoples;

21. Condemn the manipulation of inter-indigenous differences and the extension of patronage to selective indigenous individuals and groups to disrupt the unity among indigenous peoples and to create conflicts between and among indigenous peoples and their communities;

22. Urge governments to acknowledge and respect indigenous peoples' right of self-determination, including their right of self-identification, in the manner that the indigenous peoples have chosen to exercise these rights;

23. Urge Asian governments to provide official recognition to indigenous peoples as indigenous peoples in their national constitutions as well as other national, regional andd local legal instruments;

24. Urge governments and indigenous peoples to work towards a genuine dialogue concerning the implementation of the right of self-determination that is truly

representative of the parties concerned, and is based upon good faith and mutual respect as equals;

25. Strongly urge governments to refrain from militarization of indigenous territories and homelands and other state-sponsored activities undermining the rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples, the use of suppressive and oppressive measures leading to human rights violations against legitimate struggles of indigenous peoples, and further demand that the victims of human rights violations by as members of government-sponsored military, paramilitary and police units be provided due justice;

26. Urge Asian governments to take necessary measures to prevent indigenous people from becoming refugees and/or internally displaced. We further urge the concerned governments to create conditions to repatriate and/or rehabilitate these people in their original homes and lands, and to involve national, international and inter-governmental organizations and agencies in the process of their repatriation/rehabilitation;

27. Urge governments, indigenous peoples and organizations, intergovernmental organizations, voluntary organizations and other members of civil society to take steps to promote respect for the rights, needs and aspirations of indigenous peoples;

28. Urge also the United Nations to adopt the draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as presently worded, including provisions pertaining to the right of self-determination, and to take necessary steps to ensure full and effective implementation of indigenous peoples' right of self-determination.

29. Furthermore, strongly urge the United Nations to establish a permanent forum for indigenous peoples within the United Nations as soon as possible, in which indigenous peoples and governments meet as members on equal footing.