

Filipino Asylum-seeker Harassed

I have learned from news releases that the Dutch BVD and the US CIA have been trying to justify their effort to recruit me as an agent or informer for them, on the grounds that the New People's Army (NPA) is supposedly preparing to hit at American targets in Western Europe.

The story on the NPA is pure concoction, a story without a shred of evidence. I believe that it is a crude attempt to draw attention away from the real issues at hand: the rights and the security of asylum-seekers like myself and the integrity of the asylum process.

Far from being "legal" as the BVD claims, the whole operation was most irregular.

When the agents of the CIA and the BVD approached me last October 10, they did not visit nor phone me at home; they accosted me on the street. They did not introduce themselves as being agents of the BVD and the CIA. "Mr. Cees Overveen" merely introduced himself as being with the Ministry of Interior and he showed me an identification card on which the words "Binnenlandse Zaken" were printed. I then thought that they were both from the Interior Ministry. I only found out that "Mr. Charles Taylor" was an American when we were already in the car on the way to Holiday Inn (Utrecht). They did not explain to me why they wanted to talk with me until we were already in the coffee shop of the hotel.

The only reason that I went with them was that I thought representatives of the Interior Ministry wanted to talk with me regarding my application for political asylum in the Netherlands and that they wanted to catch me at an unguarded moment. Since I felt that I had nothing to hide, I agreed to go with them.

My heart skipped a beat when "Mr. Taylor" introduced himself in the car as an American, stated that he had been to the Philippines several times, and spoke some Tagalog (Filipino) words. It was only then that I began to sense that they wanted to talk with me not about or not just about my asylum application.

At the coffee shop, I felt very scared when "Mr. Taylor" revealed that

he was with the American intelligence. To impress on me that they knew a lot about me, he gave a rundown of my personal history which contained some surprisingly accurate information, but also certain inaccuracies. Yes, I told myself, "Mr. Taylor" is probably with the CIA.

"Mr. Taylor" tried to recruit me to be an informer for US intelligence, to provide them with "accurate information" about the internal workings of the National Democratic Front (NDF), and "advance information" about NDF activities. Although I was not quite sure whether or not I was also being recruited for Dutch intelligence, I presumed that there was connivance between the US and Dutch intelligence.

In exchange for my working with them, "Mr. Taylor" offered me financial assistance -- a bribe, to put it simply -- to be able to live more comfortably; a safe return to the Philippines should I decide to go back; release from prison should I go back to the Philippines and get arrested again; and the possibility to travel "anywhere in the world."

I took this last point as their hint that they could do something about my application for asylum. I had told them earlier that it was very difficult for me to be able to travel outside the Netherlands as I did not have any passport. Without their having to tell me, I knew that asylum-seekers get a refugee passport only when their asylum status has been granted. (In the subsequent meeting on October 26, "Mr. Taylor" specifically said that their getting a refugee passport for me "would not be so difficult.")

When they proposed another meeting, I said that I wanted to think their offer over and I asked them how I could get in touch with them in case I wanted to take up their offer. But they were insistent. Finally, they suggested that we set an appointment, and if I did not want to meet with them again, all I had to do was not show up. I then said: Okay, October 26, Amsterdam. They selected the coffee shop of Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza as the venue.

Immediately after this meeting with the two agents, I went to see my colleagues -- Filipino asylum-seekers and refugees like myself -- and narrated to them what happened. We agreed to expose this sordid affair so nothing like it would ever happen again.

On October 11, I went to see my lawyer, Hans Langenberg, but he was out of town. So I asked the help of my colleagues in looking for another lawyer and they contacted Bernard Tomlow. Through some Dutch friends, we were able to contact the Dutch media and we asked them to tape the October 26 meeting.

The tapes of that meeting, although far from complete, expose enough.

But they do not say anything about all my apprehension and anxiety, the feeling of being followed and bugged that I have experienced and will probably continue to experience. I think that my exposure of the sordid affair and the parting threat made against me by "Mr. Taylor" have put me in grave danger. How would you feel when the CIA tells you after you have exposed

them, "Nathan, you're finished!?"

Now I would like to comment on what I believe to be the issues at hand.

First, I would like to state that the attempt of the CIA and the BVD to recruit me was harassment against me and a violation of my rights as an asylum-seeker and as a person.

I have been informed by some staffers of the VVN that this is not the first time that such recruitment has been attempted.

I appeal to the Dutch government to put a stop to this practice once and for all. Asylum-seekers like myself are in a most vulnerable position and are apt to believe that they have to cooperate and become informers and agents even against their will in order to gain asylum status. Indeed, asylum-seekers are most vulnerable to blackmail along this line.

Second, I believe that the security of asylum-seekers approached by Dutch or US intelligence to become informers or agents, especially those who refuse, is at stake.

How many asylum-seekers have been threatened with, or become victims of reprisal for not "cooperating?" How many have been told "you're finished!?"

Third, I believe that what happened to me was a travesty, a mockery, of the asylum process. Not only have I been delivered right into the hands of the CIA, a force which I believe seeks to destroy me and the movement to which I belong. More than this, I am no longer confident that the information that I provided in confidence to the Dutch Ministry of Justice when I was interviewed -- about myself, my friends and colleagues, and the NDF -- has not been shared with the US intelligence and other unfriendly forces.

Despite the terrible ordeal that I have been through, I have no regrets whatsoever about what I have done. If, just to gain political asylum, I have to agree to become a CIA or BVD agent or informer and go against my principles, then I would rather be sent back to the Philippines even if I would surely be arrested and detained again, possibly tortured again, perhaps disappear like my brother Ronald Jan or even killed like my brother Ishmael.

Now that this has been made public, I hope that no other asylum-seeker will ever experience something like what I have been through. Never again.

Nathan Quimpo
28 October 1991

Appeal of Filipino Refugees in the Netherlands to Human Rights Organizations for Support

On the afternoon of October 26, 1991, a team of journalists and technicians of VARA's program *Achter Het Nieuws* (Behind the News) was able to cover the attempts of "Charles Taylor" of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and "Cees Overveen" of the *Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst* (BVD, Dutch Internal Security Service) to intimidate, bribe, and recruit political asylum-seeker Nathan Quimpo to become an informer against his compatriots (also refugees and asylum-seekers) in the Netherlands. The television coverage was upon the behest of Quimpo himself, who had earlier decided to expose the whole sordid business.

The Dutch media crew was able to follow Quimpo and the intelligence agents from one coffee shop to another, and tape the conversations. The American CIA agent told Quimpo that they could give him a passport, pay for all expenses he may incur while doing work for them, and gave him a thousand dollars for the month of October. He was also promised the same amount every month.

In the face of the incontrovertible evidence broadcast on Netherlands TV Channel 2 in the aforesaid program in the evening of the same day, the Dutch Interior Ministry admitted publicly that the BVD was indeed cooperating with the CIA in trying to recruit Quimpo to be an informer against Filipinos residing in the Netherlands.

In an obvious attempt to overshadow the public exposure of their fiasco in trying to recruit Quimpo, the CIA and the BVD immediately planted false stories in the world mass media, especially in the Netherlands, the Philippines, and the United States, about the possible threat of "terrorism" from Filipinos in the Netherlands.

The CIA and BVD can also take steps in the future to retaliate against Quimpo. When they realized that their discussions with Quimpo had been taped and recorded on video, the CIA operative, "Charles Taylor," threatened

Quimpo with the words, "Nathan, you're finished!"

In view of the manifest malicious intent of the CIA and the BVD, the Filipino Refugees in the Netherlands (FREN) is appealing to organizations and individuals committed to the defense of human rights and the rights of refugees to undertake the following actions:

1. Protest to the Dutch Ministry of the Interior against the actions of the BVD and the CIA on Nathan Quimpo and other political asylum-seekers who have also been approached by these two security agencies;
2. Request the Dutch Ministry of Justice to grant political refugee status to Nathan Quimpo; and,
3. Request the Dutch Parliament to conduct an investigation of the recruitment activities of the BVD on political asylum-seekers and other persons residing in the Netherlands.

Teodoro C. Lansang
President, FREN
Utrecht
October 29, 1991

Singapore : Future Fulcrum of American Military Power in Southeast Asia

The transfer of the US Navy's Seventh Fleet logistics operations command from Subic Bay in the Philippines to Singapore has serious implications for the future well-being of this region.

What it means is that Singapore will now become the fulcrum of American military power in Southeast Asia. This not only perpetuates foreign military presence in the region but also impedes the growth of a zone of peace, freedom, and neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia which has been the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) dream for the last twenty

years. The transfer of the Seventh Fleet's logistics command to Singapore is in fact a severe blow to the long struggle of Southeast Asian states for genuine political independence and national sovereignty.

One would have thought that after the Philippine Senate asserted the sovereignty of the Filipino people by asking the US Navy to leave Subic Bay, other ASEAN states would show their appreciation by at least refusing to host the facilities which Subic provided. Such a stand would have demonstrated the real meaning of ASEAN solidarity.

A principled demonstration of ASEAN solidarity with ZOPFAN in mind would have made a lot of sense particularly at this juncture of history. The Cold War has ended. The Soviet Union has disappeared from the map of the world. A peace settlement has been achieved in Kampuchea. Laos is seeking admission into the ASEAN. Vietnam is pursuing economic policies aimed at integrating the country into the international system. India is also changing course "to harmonize with global economic trends." China is yet another huge nation which wants to be integrated into the world economy. And Japan, as subservient as ever to the US, seeks to adjust to the latter's demands on trade and investments.

If these are the trends -- trends which show that conflicts, and the potential for future conflicts of a certain kind have receded -- why is it necessary to perpetuate an American military presence in Southeast Asia via Singapore? US leaders argue that it is to ensure "peace and stability in the region." The assumption is that the US is somehow crucial for peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

And yet the evidence shows something else. A hundred years of American military presence in the Philippines has brought neither peace nor stability to that nation. On the contrary, the American military presence is one of the factors responsible for the chaos and misery that have overtaken the republic. For more than a decade, the American military was present in Vietnam. The result: the massacre of more than two million Vietnamese struggling for independence from colonial rule and neocolonial domination.

US leaders and a number of Singaporean elites have also expressed the view that if the US were not around, there would be a power vacuum in the region which would be filled by someone else. The "vacuum theory" is a typical colonial justification for domination and control. The British, the Dutch, and the French had all used the same hollow argument to justify their colonization of different parts of Southeast Asia from the nineteenth century onwards. The Dutch, for instance, were convinced that if they did not extend direct colonial control over the whole of the Indonesian archipelago someone else would and the Javanese and the other natives would be all the poorer for it. The vacuum theory, in short, is a vacuous theory, without an iota of credence.

If anything, that theory exposes the real motive behind the US attempt to perpetuate its military presence in Southeast Asia. As the only military

superpower around, the US is determined to use its colossal strength to ensure that every part of the planet is under its political control. Establishing effective regional security networks with the help of its allies is part of the plan. The aim is to tell nations in the region that the US -- and its ally or allies -- will not tolerate any challenge to its hegemony. Singapore for its part believes that if "Big Brother" is behind her, no one in the region will dare to take liberties with her.

There is no reason why the peoples and governments of Southeast Asia should acquiesce in this crude endeavor to perpetuate US hegemony. Citizens' groups, in particular, should make it crystal clear to both the US and Singapore government that their military tie would only exacerbate intra-regional relations. Some of Singapore's important neighbors could become increasingly suspicious of the city-state's real intention, especially at a time when long-standing conflicts in the region and elsewhere are being slowly resolved. Mutual suspicion and distrust could lead to an intensification of the arms race in Southeast Asia. This would be disastrous for the millions of ordinary men and women in a corner of the world where standards of living are just beginning to improve.

Rather than allow this to happen, we should seize the opportunity afforded by some of the changes in regional and international politics to revive ZOPFAN. With the end of the superpower rivalries, the time has come for regional groupings to give serious consideration to ways and means of enhancing their own security through their own efforts. Southeast Asia does not need a "Big Brother" to look after its security. We do not need a superpower to protect our seas and skies. In any case, superpower protection, of whatever ideological hue, is seldom benign.

The long and checkered history of the nations and communities that comprise contemporary Southeast Asia shows that they were most stable and most secure when they were on their own, when they did not have to align to some big power or another.

In view of all this, we the undersigned appeal to the Singapore government not to pursue any further the plan to transfer the US Navy's Seventh Fleet logistics operations command from Subic to Singapore. This will force the American government to cancel the entire plan.

Finally, as a Southeast Asian nation, Singapore should be aware of that ancient Southeast Asian saying, "When two elephants fight, the grass dies." It was during the Cold War that our people realized the wisdom of that saying. Now there may be only one elephant roaming as it likes. But we Southeast Asians know that the grass is going to get trampled nevertheless.

Endorsers of the above letter:

1.) Abdul Kareem Hassan, 2.) S. Asamaley, 3.) Abdul Mulok Daud, 4.) Abdul Rahim Karim, 5.) Dr. Ariffin Omar, 6.) Dr. K. Anbalan, 7.) Dr. M.S. Abdul Gafoor, 8.) Sdr. Ahmad Chik, 9.) Anil Netto, 10.) Badriyah Hj. Salleh, 11.) Bruno Pereira, 12.) Collin Nicholas, 13.) Chang Yii Tan, 14.) Sdr. Chua Tian Chang, 15.) Sdr. Chong Tan Sin, 16.) Dr. Cecil Ng, 17.) Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, 18.)

David Anthony, 19.) Edmund Gnanamuthu, 20.) Edda de Silva, 21.) Evelyne Hong, 22.) Fajar Bin Omar, 23.) Sdr. Francis Cheong, 24.) Sdr. Fan Yew Teng, 25.) Dr. Francis Loh Kok Wah, 26.) Ustaz Fadhil Noor, 27.) Sdr. K. George, 28.) Sdr. Ghouse Karim, 29.) Sdr. Gan Kong Hwee, 30.) Sdr. Goh Beng Lan, 31.) Habib Rahman, 32.) Dr. Hamima Dona Mustafa, 33.) Sdr. A. Halim Ali, 34.) Ismail Mohamed, 35.) S.M. Iqbal, 36.) Ismail Nor, 37.) Dr. Ishak Shaari, 38.) Dr. Ikmal Said, 39.) Sdr. Ismail Hashim, 40.) Ismail Mydin, 41.) Johari Abdul, 42.) Sdr. John Kim, 43.) Sdr. Joan Shan, 44.) Dr. Johan Saravananmuthu, 45.) Dr. Jayakumar Devaraj, 46.) Krishnan, 47.) Koh Swee Yong, 48.) Dr. Khoo Joo Ee, 49.) Sdr. Kassim Ahmad, 50.) Sdr. Khoo Kuay Jin, 51.) Sdr. S. Karunakaran, 52.) Sdr. Lim Jee Yuan, 53.) Dr. Latif Kimaluddin, 54.) Musawar Ali, 55.) Mohamed Hussain, 56.) Monohara Subramanian, 57.) Sdr. Manjit Kaur, 58.) Dr. Mustafa K. Anuar, 59.) Sdr. Maznoor Buchara, 60.) Sdr. S.M. Mohd Idris, 61.) Sdr. Mohideen Abdul Kader, 62.) Sdr. Misenakshi Raman, 63.) Dr. Maznah Mohamed, 64.) Sdri Mariam Mohd, Hashim, 65.) Sdri Mohanarani Rasiah, 66.) R.P. Nathan, 67.) Dr. Nasir Mohd. Hashim, 68.) Othman Baba, 69.) Omar Othman, 70.) Sdr. N. Patkunan, 71.) Dr. P. Ramasamy, 72.) Sdr. Rozli Omar, 73.) Sdr. P. Ramakrishnan, 74.) Sdr. Rosely Tahir, 75.) Sdr. R. Rajanoothy, 76.) Dr. Sanusi Osman, 77.) Dr. Syed Husin Ali, 78.) P. Selvam, 79.) Sdri Saleha Hassan, 80.) Sdri Suguna Popachan, 81.) Hj. Subky Latif, 82.) Sdr. Sivarasa Rasiah, 83.) Sdri Shakila Menon, 84.) Dr. Subramanian S. Pillay, 85.) Dr. Tan Liok Ee, 86.) Sdr. Tan Chuan Kooi, 87.) Dr. Tan Chee Beng, 88.) Sdr. M. Thayalan, 89.) Datuk Usman Awang, 90.) Victor Paul, 91.) Wan Chik, 92.) Wahab bin Mohamed, 93.) Dr. Wong Soak Koon, 94.) Sdri Wan Zailena Noordin, 95.) Yusoff Mohamed, 96.) Sdr. Yem Ahmad, 97.) Hj Yusof Rawa, 98.) Zainuddin Karim, 99.) Sdr. Zulkifli Ahmad, and 100.) Sdr. Zaharom Nain (January 13, 1992).

Covenant on Philippine Development

Preamble

Bearing in mind that the right to development is a right granted by the Creator and upheld by the community of nations in the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights,

Aware that the Philippine government is a signatory to these laws and international instruments and that consistent with these, the Philippine Constitution and the Civil Code recognize that there is a clear need to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to age, race, color, gender, language, religion, political opinion, class or social status,

Recognizing that development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the attainment of a better quality

of life for the people and the protection and conservation of the environment that is based on the active, free and meaningful participation of the people in development and on the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom,

Recognizing that the people are the primary force and beneficiary of development and that development policy should be geared towards the enhancement of their potentials and well-being, and of their environment,

Cognizant of the right of the nation to sovereignty and of the people to self-determination, by virtue of which they have the right to freely determine their political status, to pursue economic, social and cultural development without any foreign intervention and to exercise responsible utilization, stewardship and control over all their natural wealth and resources,

Considering that the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created wherein all can enjoy economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights,

Conscious of the efforts of the people, through their organizations, at undertaking participatory development work in response to the needs of the communities and the goal of people's empowerment towards a meaningful change and sustainable development,

Mindful that the primary responsibility for the creation of conditions favorable to the development of the people lies with the State,

Concerned, however, that despite the Philippine government's vote for the UN Declaration on the Right to development and the ratification of a new Constitution that clearly spells out the responsibility of the State to promote their welfare, the nation still finds itself confronted with serious obstacles to development,

We, Philippine development Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) therefore, proclaim this Covenant on Philippine Development to unite us in a common effort to promote, protect, and assert the right to development of the people. We do so fully aware of the compelling need for the Philippine government to guarantee the free and unobstructed exercise by NGOs of their right to undertake development work.

Part I

Development Principles and Goals

We stand by the following fundamental principles of development:

1. The right to development is an inherent, inalienable and universal human right which entitles every person, whether acting individually or with others, to contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development.

2. Development should ensure the free and complete fulfillment of the human being. Development should therefore be integrated and holistic in approach, taking into account both the material and non-material needs of individuals and communities, and should ensure a harmonious relationship between people and their natural environment.

3. The right to development carries with it the full realization of the right of the nation to sovereignty and the right of the people to self-determination which includes their economic, social, cultural and political goals and policies without foreign intervention of whatever nature, and the right to exercise responsible utilization, stewardship and control over all their natural wealth and resources.

4. The people are the primary force of development. It is therefore their right and responsibility to actively participate in the process of development, relying primarily on their individual and collective efforts and resources in the achievement of their development goals, while effectively utilizing all available knowledge, resources, technology and expertise from other countries to their own advantage.

5. Development efforts should be sustainable and should not jeopardize options for future generations.

6. Development should sustain the natural environment as a socio-economic base. Continuing environmental degradation have an irreversible effect on the future of the nation and on the quality of life of succeeding generations. Environmental consciousness should be integrated in all development policies and concerns.

7. The people should be the primary beneficiary of development. Development policy should therefore be geared towards the enhancement of their potentials and well-being, and should ensure the equitable distribution of the benefits of development.

8. The human right to development carries with it the responsibility for the full respect of the fundamental rights of others as well as one's duties to one's community. In the pursuit of the desired goal of development, the cooperative spirit should prevail.

9. The State, by virtue of the trust reposed in it by the people, has the primary responsibility of providing the conditions favorable to the development of the nation in every aspect of life, with a preferential option for the poor. In a situation where the State clearly fails with its duty to promote the well-being of the nation, however, the people themselves have the prerogative to pursue their own path to development.

10. The State has the responsibility to take steps that will ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all regardless of color, gender, race, language, religion, political or other opinion, class, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. the elimination of obstacles to development, promotion of peace and the protection of national sovereignty

rest primarily on the State.

11. Cooperation among peoples of different nations on the basis of peaceful coexistence, respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual trust, benefit, and respect for personal dignity is an indispensable requirement for Philippine development.

We abide by the following development goals:

1. Development should ensure the total well-being of the people and the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. Development should lead to social justice and the equitable distribution of wealth, power and access to resources in Philippine society.

3. The initial goal of development should be the satisfaction of the basic needs of the broad majority of the people.

4. Development should promote the empowerment of the people and ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making.

5. Development should lead to the full participation of women and all sectors in all spheres of national life and enable them to gain equal access to opportunities and resources.

6. Philippine development should aim for the establishment of a common sustainable future towards forging a new international economic order.

7. Philippine development should provide a venue within which the culture of peoples of the Philippines can be nurtured and enhanced.

Part II

The United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development

We urge the Philippine government to fully implement the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development. The Declaration emphasizes that the duty of establishing the conditions favorable to the full realization of the right to development lies primarily with the State.

Part III

Conditions for Philippine Development

Contrary to the objectives of the UN Declaration, there now exist serious obstacles to the attainment of conditions necessary for Philippine development. We urge the government to eliminate these obstacles to enable

the country to move toward development.

1. The Philippine government must protect ancestral domain, implement genuine agrarian, aquatic and urban land reform as well as sustainable industrialization as the first step towards genuine economic development. The imperative of social justice requires greater political will on the part of the Philippine government in bringing about the equitable access to resources in Philippine society.

2. The Philippine government must protect national sovereignty. The 1987 Philippine Constitution stipulates that foreign military bases, troops or facilities shall not be allowed in the country after the expiration in 1991 of the RP-US Military Bases Agreement, except under a treaty duly concurred in by the Senate and recognized as such by the other contracting State. A treaty meant to extend the presence of the military bases has already been rejected by the Senate of the Philippines. No extension violating the Constitution should be allowed.

3. The Philippine government must address the country's foreign debt problem. We urge the Philippine government to categorically reject all forms of foreign intervention in the nation's affairs and to resist the impositions of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral institutions and foreign governments which run contrary to the national interest. We call on the government to review, disclose and restructure the loans. In the light of the continuing disasters and calamities which have affected millions, we ask the government to consider other solutions to the debt problem such as a limit to debt service. We also call on our private and official creditors to forgive and write off fraudulent loans.

4. The Philippine government must make sure that all foreign assistance directly benefits the majority of the Filipino people, especially those living under conditions of extreme poverty. The government must also ensure that NGOs and POs are consulted and involved in ODA-funded development programs and projects.

5. The Philippine government must protect and conserve our natural resources and avert the destruction of our fragile ecosystems. We urge the government to implement a total commercial log ban and the preservation of forest areas especially our primary forests and its bio-diversity, to curtail destructive mining methods, prevent the dumping of toxic wastes, and to impose a ban on trawling and other destructive forms of fishing. We call on the government to strictly enforce environmental laws, encourage continuous research and community-based resource management and to initiate and sustain information campaigns to heighten the people's awareness of the need to protect the environment.

6. The Philippine government must institutionalize mechanisms for the direct participation of the Filipino people, through their NGOs and POs, in decision-making with regard to development policies. Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of women and all sectors in development. In this regard, the Philippine government should institutionalize

local autonomy and decentralization.

7. The Philippine government must ensure public accountability by bringing to the bar of justice those who betray the public trust.

8. The Philippine government must safeguard fundamental freedoms and human rights enshrined in the Philippine Constitution, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions and in all other international documents, codes or treaties to which it is a signatory.

9. The Philippine government must foster people's traditions and capabilities while ensuring channels of culture and information to promote the common good.

10. The Philippine government must protect the right to self-determination of all indigenous peoples of the Philippines.

11. The Philippine government and all armed groups must exhaust all possible peaceful and democratic means to immediately resolve the armed conflict.

Part IV

Rights, Responsibilities and Obligations of Development NGOs

We believe that Philippine NGOs should be allowed to exercise the following rights in the pursuit of their work:

1. Philippine development NGOs have the right to assert their legitimate role as equal partners in development.

2. Philippine development NGOs have the right to propose and implement alternative development strategies and programs.

3. Philippine development NGOs have the right to remain autonomous from the government and from any other organization, political or otherwise.

4. Philippine development NGOs have the right to equal access to funding and other resources, both local and foreign, without compromising their principles or their autonomy.

5. Philippine development NGOs have the right to assert immunity and neutrality from operations and encounters of warring factions.

6. Philippine development NGOs have the right to unhampered operations in delivering relief goods and services to communities affected by

natural and man-made disasters including armed conflict situations.

7. Philippine development NGOs have the right to free and unhampered access to information.

We, the undersigned Philippine development NGOs bind ourselves to the following responsibilities and obligations:

In relation to the communities we serve, we shall:

1. Protect and enhance the integrity, autonomy and independence of People's Organizations (POs).
2. Respect and enhance the culture and traditions of the community and creatively build up indigenous structures.
3. Provide access to all forms of information.
4. Help create a democratic and participative leadership in the community.
5. Institute the necessary mechanisms such that we share our own perspective without the danger of imposition or manipulation.
6. Respect the dynamics of communities and enhance local initiatives.
7. Enhance community empowerment by encouraging greater self-reliance in terms of resourcing, organizational and program management and by facilitating linkages and cooperation among POs and communities.

In relation to our partner funding agencies, we shall:

1. Nurture an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect towards a common vision and goal.
2. Encourage greater solidarity and cooperation while asserting the autonomy and independence of NGOs and POs such that projects are mutually beneficial.
3. Request partner agencies to clarify and share their development framework, areas of priority, procedures and other relevant information on a non-discriminatory basis.
4. Nurture transparency, mutual respect and mutual accountability with our partners.
5. *Respect differences among partner agencies and take on the responsibility of understanding the realities that impinge on partner agencies.*
6. Encourage member NGOs to take on the responsibility of informing the constituents of our partner funding agencies, either directly or through our partner, regarding the progress of projects they helped finance.

7. Mutually agree upon the parameters of success through evaluations that are participatory in nature.

8. Strive to diversify partners in order that the agency does not become a mere extension of one funding agency.

In relation to government, we shall:

1. Strive to create an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect based on the perspective that POs and NGOs perform an important role in a democratic society.

2. Coordinate on a selective and critical basis with the different branches of government with the aim of promoting further the interests of our partner people's organizations.

3. Foster a continuing dialogue especially in areas and programs where both GOs and NGOs are involved.

4. Insist on mutually agreed upon objectives and methodologies for specific projects, while maintaining the independence and autonomy of NGOs.

5. Act as fiscalizers of the government especially in relation to the implementation of policies and programs and the performance of government officials in areas and communities in which we are involved.

Among NGOs, we shall:

1. Promote greater cooperation and solidarity, through constant dialogue, sharing of resources, information, expertise and experiences, and enhance mutual development based upon the premise that we are partners, not competitors, in people's development.

2. Maintain a high standard of professionalism based on honesty and dedication in the service of the people.

3. Strive for gradual self-reliance by developing skills and generating resources.

4. Strive towards unity while upholding pluralism in the interpretation and expression of development work.

5. Ensure that inter-NGO relations are based on mutual respect and independence such that the work of others is acknowledged, the integrity of each agency is enhanced, its personnel developed, and conflict among agencies found in the same communities is resolved.

6. Promote the rights, welfare and development of NGO personnel.

In relation to our staff, we shall:

1. Provide avenues for individual and collective growth and development.

2. Provide just compensation and promote the rights and welfare of all personnel.
3. Ensure that management is participatory and democratic.
4. Provide access to information essential for decision-making at all levels.
5. Ensure the accountability of the leaders and managers.
6. Encourage a lifestyle consistent with development principles.

In undertaking these responsibilities and obligations, we commit ourselves to coordinate with other sectors in our work toward structural change through active non-violent and democratic processes.

Part V

General Provisions

We have agreed on the following general provisions governing this Covenant:

1. This Covenant shall enter into force upon its ratification by a General Assembly of Philippine development NGOs.
2. Philippine development NGOs may propose amendments to this covenant. Amendments shall come into force after they are approved by the majority of Philippine development NGOs in a General Assembly.
3. The General Assembly of Philippine development NGOs shall establish the appropriate mechanisms that will ensure the enforceability of this Covenant.
4. All aspects of the right to development set forth in this Covenant are indivisible and interdependent and each of them should be considered in the context of the whole.
5. Nothing in the present Covenant may be interpreted as impairing the other rights of the people guaranteed or recognized by the Philippine Constitution and relevant laws, conventions, regulations or customs.

Part VI

Our Urgent Calls and Challenges

As a starting point towards attaining our vision of Philippine development,

We call on the Philippine development NGO community to:

1. Adhere to the principles, goals and provisions embodied in this Covenant.
2. Encourage foreign partners to observe and respect the Covenant.
3. Take appropriate steps to implement the provisions of this Covenant.
4. Popularize this Covenant and further broaden the constituency for genuine Philippine development.

We challenge the Philippine government and politicians to:

1. Respect this Covenant and use this as basis for relating with the development NGO community.
2. Immediately act fast on these calls and demands as a step towards the attainment of genuine philippine development.
3. Affirm its absolute and unconditional support for the United Nations' Declaration on the Right to Development by establishing the appropriate structures and mechanisms for its implementation in the concrete Philippine setting. In this regard, consultative status should be given to Philippine development NGOs in the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and other appropriate government instrumentalities.

We also urge the government and the armed groups to respect the neutrality and ensure the unhampered rights of NGOs in the performance of their work.

We likewise urge foreign governments and multilateral agencies to demonstrate their commitment to development by using the Covenant and the United Nations' Declaration on the Right to Development as the general framework for development assistance to the Philippines.

We call on the United Nations, other national and international agencies and sectors concerned on the Philippines to support this Covenant and assist in accelerating the setting up of structures and mechanisms for the effective enforcement and realization of the letter and spirit of the United Nation's Declaration on the Right to Development.

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