



*Editorial*

## *Organized Move*

Loss of land and culture, environmental degradation, and abusive police/military operations continue to plague many indigenous peoples in Asia. Development projects are ironically some of the major causes of these problems in recent decades. And laws that do not recognize the rights of indigenous peoples facilitate the occurrence of these problems.

Concepts such as "free, informed and prior consent" and "open dialogue and negotiations" are not much of help unless the indigenous peoples themselves are prepared to deal with governments and other institutions such as business enterprises.

Recognizing that many of their problems will not be solved unless they assert their rights collectively, indigenous peoples are organizing themselves, within their own communities and across communities at the national and regional levels. They need to raise their voice more strongly to force the recognition of their problems and claims by governments, private sectors, and international institutions.

The effort toward greater unity of purpose and action by the indigenous peoples should be welcomed and supported.

Human rights are more meaningful when realized by those who bear them. This is what the indigenous peoples are probably aiming at by organizing their communities for collective action.

FOCUS Asia-Pacific is designed to highlight significant issues and activities relating to human rights in the Asia-Pacific. Relevant information and articles can be sent to HURIGHTS OSAKA for inclusion in the next editions of the newsletter.

FOCUS Asia-Pacific is edited by Yoshio Kawashima, Director of HURIGHTS OSAKA.

# Emerging Indigenous Peoples Movement in Indonesia

*Sandra Moriaga*

For decades, the indigenous peoples of Indonesia had been engaged in low profile struggles against the loss of their rights and pride due to state policies, laws and activities. In 1999, they started to organize. More than 200 representatives of indigenous peoples from all over the country gathered in the first Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago (Kongres Masyarakat Adat Nusantara I, or AMAN I). The Congress was originally initiated by Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Kalimantan Barat/Indigenous Peoples Alliance of West Kalimantan (AMA Kalbar), Jaringan Kerja Pemetaan Partisipatif/ Participatory Mapping Network (JKPP) and Jaringan Pembelaan Hak-hak Masyarakat Adat/The Indigenous Peoples Rights Advocacy Network (JAPHAMA) and received strong support from other regional indigenous peoples organizations and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) networks. The Congress, held in the heart of Jakarta, gained large media coverage and resulted in the establishment of Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (Alliance of the Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago) or AMAN. *Gayung bersambut, kata berjawab* - the challenge has been accepted (to continue to struggle for indigenous peoples' rights).

Prior to the Congress, many indigenous peoples had been struggling to save their lands and lives. Many stood up firmly against companies and local authorities taking over their lands, some struggled in quiet ways. Starting in 1988 and continuing until today, hundreds of Batak Toba in North Sumatera have been struggling against P.T. Inti Indorayon Utama (now renamed P.T. Toba Pulp Lestari), that was granted permits to clear the forest and develop timber plantation for its pulp and paper mill. Ten women led by Nai Sinta pioneered the struggle in defending their ancestral lands. The land was secretly transferred to P.T. Inti Indorayon Utama through forged signatures. In another case, youth and elders of Dayak Simpang in Ketapang District, West Kalimantan resisted a palm oil plantation development and logging concession on their customary lands. In Kalimantan the Dayak Bentian, who are known for their knowledge and skill in rattan cultivation, struggled against logging companies cutting down their forests and ruining their rattan gardens.<sup>1</sup>

## Initial step

In response to the local struggles and the authoritarian state attitude, Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia/Indonesian Forum for Environment-Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI) and Wahana Lestari Persada (WALDA)-Toraja facilitated a meeting in 1993 in Tana Toraja of a number of indigenous peoples leaders such as Nai Sinta from North Sumatera, Petinggi Aris from Simpang Hulu, L.B. Dingit from East Kalimantan, Den Upa Rombelayuk and Pak Sombolinggi from Tana Toraja, Oom Ely from Haruku and Tom Beanal from Amungme Peoples in West Papua. The meeting was also attended by human rights and environmental advocates (mainly the young indigenous ones) who, with the indigenous leaders, went on to establish JAPHAMA. The meeting also agreed to use the term *masyarakat adat* as a common expression to refer to indigenous peoples in Indonesia. This term, known and used by many indigenous peoples in Indonesia, means: peoples who have ancestral origin in a particular geographical territory and have a system of values, ideology, economy, politics, culture, society and land management. The term was also seen as the most socially and politically acceptable in the context of 1993 under the authoritarian and oppressive rule of the Soeharto regime.

The meeting concluded that the large number of cases of indigenous peoples rights violations in Indonesia have to be confronted with a mass organized movement. Realizing the limitation of the individuals and groups attending the meeting, it was agreed that priority would be given to strengthening the movement by agreeing that each participant is obligated to 'quietly' familiarize the concept, terms and advocacy strategy to their own constituencies. Furthermore, it was also agreed that JAPHAMA should not become a formal institution by itself but should remain a dynamic network with the mandate to support the development of indigenous peoples organizations and internalization of indigenous peoples concerns by as many NGOs and other institutions as possible.

1993 onward was the era when more indigenous peoples' organizations and indigenous advocacy NGOs were established all over Indonesia in addition to those that already existed. In West Sumatera young Mentawaians founded Yayasan Citra Mandiri, in West Kalimantan some young Dayak founded

Lembaga Bela Banua Talino, while in East Kalimantan Lembaga Bina Benua Puti Jaji was founded. A similar process was established in Maluku with Baileo Maluku which later became a network of indigenous peoples' organizations and indigenous NGOs in Central and South-east Maluku. In West Papua young lawyers established Lembaga Pengkajian dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Adat(LPPMA).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, some of the Jakarta-based human rights and environmental NGOs took up the indigenous peoples issue as their priority work, including groups such as the Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy (ELSAM), WALHI, International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID), Konsorsium Pembaharuan Agraria/Agrarian Reform Consortium (KPA) and Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia/ Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI).

During the 1996-1997 period, the first two regional indigenous peoples organizations were established, namely Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Kalimantan Barat and JAGAT in East Nusa Tenggara. In the same period, a number of NGO networks were growing and taking up indigenous peoples' issues as one of their priority concerns. JKPP, Konsortium Pendukung Sistem Hutan Kerakyatan/Consortium for Supporting Community-based Forest Management (KPSHK), Jaringan Tambang/Mining Network (JATAM) and Jaringan Pesisir dan Laut/Marine and Coastal Network (Jaring Pela) are examples .

Coinciding with the 'internal' process of strengthening the indigenous peoples movement, the authoritarian government fell in 1998. This situation provided a more open political space for the civil society. And thus some indigenous peoples leaders and advocates organized the first Congress in 1999.

The second Congress (AMAN II) was held in September 2003. It is an obligation and right of AMAN members to be present at the Congress, by appointing one person or more to represent each community. AMAN's members are indigenous communities in addition to indigenous organizations at local and regional levels (referring to district or customary bounded territory and provincial space) allied in AMAN. Thus as planned, the second Congress was attended by more than 1,000 representatives of AMAN's members. AMAN now has 927 registered communities, and 777 of them are verified members. 18 indigenous organizations at local level and 11 at regional level are allied with AMAN. The expectation in 1999 that all members would demonstrate

indigenous organizational capacity, performance and achievement was correct. In preparation for the second Congress, 12 regional (provincial) indigenous meetings and many local meetings were held as a means of organizational consolidation and to choose representatives for the Congress.

The series of activities leading to AMAN II were carried out through reflection-consolidating approaches. The main goals were: (a) to draw lessons learned from implementation of the decisions of AMAN I over the last 4 years; (b) to consolidate the organization of indigenous peoples and to develop synergy of all actions of the indigenous communities at regional levels; (c) to mobilize broad-based support for the indigenous peoples' movements through strengthening and broadening of the alliance with other pro-democratic groups; (d) to develop organizational structures that are more responsive to changing situations and more effective in serving the members; and (e) to sharpen the platform of the movement by developing strategic guidelines for organization and programmatic frameworks that accommodate the aspirations and demands of the indigenous peoples in Indonesia. All these goals are directed at creating broader space for the indigenous peoples' movement for social transformation in Indonesia. Aware of the challenges and main goals, the second Congress brought out some important results. A new structure of the National Council with defined area of work, and set of Coordinators, improvement of its bylaws, political resolution, and programs were all adopted.

In addition to their local, regional and national coordination, AMAN also developed linkages with various international indigenous peoples organizations. In Asia, AMAN became a member of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP). During the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), it joined the Indigenous Peoples Caucus, one of the most organized and effective civil society groups. AMAN has been working closely with International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) both to support their work and join international advocacy. Besides joining the international networks as a group, AMAN also facilitates its members' participation in various international forums and networks.

### **Internal and external criticisms**

The indigenous peoples' struggles and empowerment through the process of organizing as exemplified by AMAN does not mean that their problems are

solved. The process is perceived as the development of tools to empower themselves for collective struggle. The efforts are not immune from critics both internal and external.

After the first Congress, AMAN's Board of Representatives met regularly every six months. The meetings were used for internal reflection, discussion of new issues, and planning of further activities. In addition, AMAN and supporting NGOs held a joint reflection meeting in 2001. Some of the issues identified in the meeting, for example, are the problems about the different stages of development of the indigenous peoples organizations that have different needs; the "wrong" attitude toward the AMAN secretariat by treating it as a savior (*dewa; penyelamat*) and the need to be aware of the fact there is a tendency to utilize the *masyarakat adat* issues to revitalize feudalism.

AMAN in cooperation with the World Agro Forestry Center (ICRAF) and the Forest Peoples Program (FPP) in 2001 developed an interesting exercise to test its organizational strength. The exercise challenges AMAN's own "strong" statement: "If the state does not recognize us, then we will not recognize the state". This strong statement not only challenged the government to respond to the demands of the indigenous peoples, it also stimulated a fertile and much needed debate within the communities on what kind of recognition the indigenous peoples actually seek from the government. Moreover the question goes further: if the State does not recognize the rights of the indigenous peoples how exactly will they then exercise these rights? How should national laws be shaped to accommodate the diversity of customs and aspirations of the country's 500 different indigenous peoples? What kind of legal recognition of land rights are the communities seeking? Who will negotiate on behalf of the communities in the future? How will the communities govern themselves? How will they interact with the government? The exercise was aimed at facilitating more in-depth discussions over these questions within some indigenous peoples communities in AMAN's circle. It is a response to the need to clarify many of AMAN's demands.

Perhaps the demands are clear from the indigenous peoples' point of view. But a fully agreed upon explanation of these demands is still waiting to be written up.

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This article is an excerpt from the author's *From Bumi Putera to Masyarakat Adat: a Long and Confusing Journey*, presented at the Workshop on Adat Revivalism in Indonesia's Democratic Transition, Batam Island, 26-27 March 2004 organized by Asia Research Institute, University of Singapore.

## Endnotes

1. For more details on the struggle of the indigenous peoples, see Abdias Yas, "Menapaki Jejak Pejuan Hak Adat," *Seri Kumpulan Kasus* No. 01, (Pontianak, Lembaga Bela Banua Talino, 2003); Theo P.A. van den Broek ofm, et al, *Memoria Passionis di Papua. Kondisi Sosial Politik dan Hak Asasi Manusia Gambaran 2000* (Sekretariat Keadilan dan Perdamaian, Keuskupan Jayapura and Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan, Jakarta 2001); Janis Alcorn, "An Introduction to the Linkages between Ecological Resilience and Governance" in Janis B. Alcorn and Antoinette G. Royo, eds. *Indigenous Social Movements and Ecological Resilience: Lessons from the Dayak of Indonesia* (Biodiversity Support Program, Washington, D.C., 2000); *The Indigenous World 1997-1998* (IWGIA, Copenhagen, 1998) pp. 216-220; and websites of Down to Earth ([www.dte.org](http://www.dte.org)).
2. There are other organizations that are doing good work on the indigenous peoples issues that are not mentioned here for lack of information.

# Ainu People Today

## - 7 Years after the Culture Promotion Law

*Yoichi Tanaka*

During the 19th century, Japan competed with Russia in colonizing the region of Ainu *mosir* (Hokkaido), Kurile Islands and Sakhalin. A 78-year old Ainu, Mr. Shigeru Kayano, who was once a member of the Japanese parliament, commented: "we don't remember either selling or leasing Ainu *mosir* to Japan." Since then Japan ruled Hokkaido and its Ainu people. In 1899 it enacted the Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act. This law was repealed only in 1997 when the Law for the Promotion of the Ainu Culture and Dissemination and Advocacy for the Traditions of the Ainu and the Ainu Culture (Culture Promotion Law) was enacted.

The Ainu people are still struggling for the full recognition and acceptance by the Japanese society of their culture and language, and for the recognition in law of their rights as an indigenous people.

They tried to protect their rights by filing cases in court such as the 1997 case demanding the cancellation of the expropriation order to build the Nibutani Dam in Nibutani, Biratori, along the Saru River in Hidaka District of Hokkaido, and the 1999 complaint questioning the management of their properties by the Governor of Hokkaido. Though these cases were ultimately dismissed, the rulings recognized the Ainu people as indigenous people based on the United Nations (UN) definition (Nibutani case), and faulted the Hokkaido prefectural government for its management of the Ainu properties (Ainu common properties case). The decision in this latter case has been appealed to the Supreme Court.

While the Culture Promotion Law protects the Ainu language and culture, the Ainu people still struggle for a recognition as an indigenous people. The government has only recognized the Ainu people as an ethnic minority in the 1991 report to the UN Human Rights Committee.

### **Organizing to promote Ainu understanding and culture**

Ms. Mutsuko Nakamoto of Chitose City in Hokkaido, 76 years old, is one of the elders actively

engaged in continuing the traditional culture of the Ainu people. Ms. Nakamoto decided to commit herself to this task at the age of 50. She was born in an Ainu family. Her parents and her grandmother, however, refused to talk in Ainu language in front of their children. She recalled that people at that time maintained the view that "the Ainu have an inferior existence. It can't be helped if they are discriminated against." She grew up despising her culture.

In 1979, she gathered Ainu people in her restaurant in Chitose city. 30 men and women, old and young, came to converse in Japanese and Ainu languages. They ended the gathering dancing outside the restaurant. "Everybody must have been happy. I also strongly felt that I wanted to learn and know more about Ainu," she said. From then on, she was actively promoting the Ainu culture. Because of the Culture Promotion Law, and a prestigious award in Japan on her work,<sup>1</sup> she has been getting financial support for her activities aimed at making the Japanese understand Ainu culture. Now she is the President of the Chitose Ainu Bunka Denso Hozonkai (Chitose Ainu Culture Transmission and Preservation Society), teaches Ainu language classes in Chitose and Tomakomai, and lectures a class on oral literature. She also attends activities in schools and museums in various parts of the country, dressed in traditional Ainu clothes, to speak on Ainu experiences and culture and to introduce the poetry from the Shin'yoshu.

Mr. Osamu Hasegawa heads another group of Ainu people, Rera no Kai. The group runs an Ainu restaurant, Rera Cise, in Tokyo. He explains that "the legitimate way to claim indigenous peoples' rights is through land rights. The Culture Promotion Law does not mention land or indigenous peoples' rights. However strongly you may emphasize your 'pride as an ethnic people' no policy for ethnic people will ensue unless the government admits its responsibility for its colonial rule."

Rera Cise celebrated its 10th anniversary in May 2004. Mr. Hasegawa, speaking on the occasion, said, "Rera Cise will no longer be necessary when we

have a society in which Ainu people can live normally." At present Ainu people still face the reality of having to put on a bold front to live openly as Ainu.

Mr. Kouichi Kaizawa, who was involved in recovering the Ainu culture since childhood recalled the harsh social environment toward the Ainu people. "When you take part in a meeting of Ainu people in those days, you hardly saw anybody younger than I was. Now, cultural activities would be funded, and there are clearly more people willing to say that they are Ainu," he said, recognizing the effects of the Culture Promotion Law.

On the other hand, he said, "the Ainu people are generally poor. It is doubtful whether farmers or self-employed people can engage in cultural promotion unless their livelihood is secure." This is because funding under the Culture Promotion Law does not provide any support for livelihood. He also suggests that the law must "explicitly recognize the Ainu as indigenous people, and become an Ethnicity Law which covers other ethnic minorities. "

### **The Ainu Association of Hokkaido**

Aside from the efforts of small groups of dedicated Ainu people, there is a bigger organization of Ainu people which aims to eliminate Ainu discrimination. Formed in 1946, the Ainu Association of Hokkaido now has 4,700 members. It has been working to improve the livelihood and education level of Ainu people. It also worked for the provision of welfare services to them. But it recognized that these efforts are not enough. The former Executive Director of the Association, Mr. Giichi Nomura, stressed that "continuing the welfare policies will not eliminate the discrepancies between *Wajin* (the Japanese majority) and the Ainu people." He believes that a true solution cannot be achieved unless the basic structure of discrimination, built layer upon layer of more than a century of assimilation policies, is changed.

Through his leadership, the Association started in the 80s to lobby for a new legislation replacing the 1899 Act.

The Association prepared a draft Ainu *Shinpo* (New Ainu Law) in 1984 which provides for the government to recognize the history of, and responsibility for, forcing a policy of assimilation on an ethnic

group that has its own distinct culture, and calls for indigenous peoples rights. Specifically, it requires 1) protection of the fundamental human rights of the Ainu people, 2) allocation of seats in the legislature based on ethnicity, 3) promotion of their education and culture, 4) support for the stability of their industries and economy, 5) creation of an ethnic self-support fund, and 6) consultative body for ethnic policies.

In 1988, the Governor as well as the Prefectural Parliament of Hokkaido adopted this draft law proposal, but without a provision for legislative seats based on ethnicity.

The opportunity for the new legislation increased in 1994, when Mr. Kayano, who committed himself to preserving the Ainu language and traditional tools, was elected to the House of Councillors in the Diet (parliament) under then Japan Socialist Party. It was also the year when the Murayama coalition government came into power.

The designation of 1993 by the UN as the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, the subsequent declaration of 1995-2004 as International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, and the start of deliberations on a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, also helped push the Association's legislative agenda.

With such support, the Culture Promotion Law was adopted. As Professor Teruki Tsunemoto (Hokkaido University) explains, it is extremely difficult for minorities to push through new legislation. "It was achieved by miracle upon miracle." Its Article 1 proclaims that the law " aims to realize a society in which the ethnic pride of the Ainu people is respected and to contribute to the development of diverse cultures in our country" and requires national and local governments to implement policies to promote Ainu culture. The government assigned Hokkaido to draft the "Fundamental Program" under the Law, and set up a Foundation for its implementation. The financial support for activities such as those of Ms. Nakamoto comes from this Foundation. Its operational funds amount to around 600 million Yen per year.

Of the six main pillars in the draft New Ainu Law, only one (promotion of culture) is included in the Culture Promotion Law. Why is respect for dignity

necessary? Why must the state promote culture by law? These questions are left unanswered in the Culture Promotion Law. There is also no mention of indigenous peoples' rights. The law may have also created a social complacency that sees the Ainu issue solved once and for all.

Ironically the Association has not been active since the Culture Promotion Law came into effect.

### **Challenges for the Ainu people's movement**

The Ainu people's movement emphasizing the rights of the indigenous peoples may have come to a new turning point since the 1997 Culture Promotion Law. It can no longer rely on the simple slogan: abolish the discriminatory Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act and adopt a new legislation. They have the new legislation, which support events featuring Ainu culture being actively held in all places in the country for the time being.

The Japanese government, however, has steadfastly refused to respond to the Ainu people's demands for an accounting of their suffering during the colonial rule in Hokkaido. It is said that the government is concerned that it may affect the outcome of the increasing number of cases involving reparations related to the Second World War, including those claimed by resident Koreans. Politicians still continue to make empty statements declaring that Japan

was able to develop because it is a homogenous country, with no other ethnic minorities. Such statements deny the ethnicity of the Ainu people, and are based on the same old idea of assimilation.

Several hundred years have passed since the Ainu people got involved in conflicts with the *Wajin*. For a minority constituting less than 0.1% of the Japanese population to reflect its views in the Japanese society, the challenges are numerous. Exchanges across borders with other indigenous groups as well as solidarity with other discriminated minority groups in the country, such as with the resident Koreans, will become increasingly important. And above all, there must be those who can persevere against these challenges coming from the Ainu people themselves.

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### **Endnote**

1 In 2004, she was awarded the Yoshikawa Eiji Cultural Award for her work which includes preserving the Ainu Shin'yoshu (Collected stories of the Ainu Gods) by the late Yukie Chiri in audio form.

## **HURIGHTS OSAKA 10th Anniversary Activities**

### **International Symposium**

### **A System of Human Rights Protection in Asia**

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, HURIGHTS OSAKA organized a symposium entitled "A System of Human Rights Protection in Asia" in Osaka on June 29 June 2004. Although Asia does not have an established regional human rights system, as in the other regions, there has been developments in networking and building working relationships in some parts of Asia, or on particular human rights issues. Three distinguished experts, Professor Kinhide Mushakoji (Director, Center for Asia Pacific Partnership, Osaka University of Economics and Law), Ms. Jung Kang-Ja (Commissioner, Korean National Human Rights Commission), and Mr. Fumio Takemura (Attorney at Law) spoke on various aspects of the possibility of such a system in Asia. Mr. Akio Kawamura (Associate Professor of Kobe College) coordinated the discussions.

This symposium is part of the series of activities leading to the 21 July 2004 anniversary celebration of HURIGHTS OSAKA.

# Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact

*Jannie Lasimbang*

Many indigenous peoples working in NGOs and peoples' organizations in Asia used to be unsure about the idea of promoting indigenous concepts and systems, and their capability to undertake this task. That was in early 90s. But it was clear at that time that decades of suppression of indigenous peoples led to increasing support on the right to self-determination. When Asian indigenous representatives gathered for the first time in April 1992 in Bangkok, very few were aware of the discussions at the international level on this issue, particularly of the standard setting work by the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Indigenous Population.

The 1992 Bangkok meeting of indigenous peoples of Asia resulted in the recognition of the need to promote indigenous peoples rights. The UN proclamation of 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples provided additional support for this need. Thus in 1992, the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) was inaugurated.

## **The network**

AIPP is crucial for indigenous peoples in Asia in fostering closer cooperation and solidarity among themselves, restoring and revitalizing their indigenous systems including social and cultural institutions, gaining control over their ancestral homeland, and determining their own development and future.

It now has 17 member-organizations and 2 candidate member-organizations from Nepal, India/North-East India, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Japan/Ainu *mosir*, Taiwan and Bangladesh. These member-organizations are either national networks or indigenous local organizations. AIPP has contacts with indigenous peoples organizations in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. It also has direct links to indigenous peoples organizations in other regions (Africa, Pacific, Arctic, Eastern Europe, North America, and Latin America).

## **Activities**

AIPP sends representatives to various UN meetings such as the session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Working Group on Indigenous

Populations (UNWGIP), Ad-Hoc Inter Sessional Working Group on the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (WGDD), Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), meetings related to the Convention on Biological Diversity such as Conventions of the Parties (COPs), Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions, Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing, Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and other forums on indigenous peoples. AIPP representatives were also active in the 4th World Conference on Women (1995), the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001), World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), and the World Parks Congress (2003).

It holds training sessions, exchanges and exposure activities, and annual conferences. It also addresses internal needs of the member-organizations, and organizes three-month internship for indigenous community representatives at the AIPP Secretariat. Its research work, though not fully developed, has produced several outputs. The AIPP Secretariat also regularly disseminates information, including monthly updates of AIPP's activities, through email to all its members and contacts.

## **Regional Networking: Challenges and Reflection**

Like other regional organizations, AIPP has its own share of challenges in the ongoing process of building regional networking. Among the concerns constantly being reflected upon are the following:

### **a. Communication**

Asia with its myriad of mainstream and indigenous languages poses a great challenge in the field of communication. Although communication costs have been considerably cut with internet access for most indigenous peoples organizations, there are still many who cannot afford the technology or do not have access to good facilities. The main problem remains: language of communication. AIPP could only manage to translate materials for its executive council members (at least two out of seven members need translation). This cuts out the possibility of regular teleconferences, which are cheaper and would have allowed more active involvement. For regional

meetings and conferences, interpreters have to be employed, which raises costs or reduces the number of indigenous participants, not to mention less smoother and clearer exchanges between participants. In the last two years, AIPP has compiled a pool of translators to translate documents into local or national languages to allow indigenous peoples more access to information in their own language.

AIPP tries to ensure that there are translators during meetings and the materials are translated. Donors have to be made to understand such needs and ensure that sufficient funds are allocated.

#### b. Able leadership

Indigenous peoples organizations have found over this decade the need to respond to many issues relating to civil and political rights, economic and social rights, sustainable development, environment and gender. In particular, women leaders have been overloaded with work if they have to respond to regional and international commitments apart from their own local struggles. Although many indigenous leaders are very committed to build AIPP, many also lack the capacity to grasp regional needs, particularly the need to develop broad strategies that involve different cultures and situations. Too many tend to rely only on local experience. Lack of time and finances to visit other countries and communities in the region also pose a problem. One solution was AIPP's effort to have sub-regional representatives in its Executive Council, who will be in charge of smaller geographical areas. However, for some, going beyond their own area is also a financial and mental challenge, especially when limited funds are available to implement these tasks.

#### c. Understanding the concept of network

Another major concern is the seeming lack of understanding of the concept of networking. From the start, AIPP has envisioned the Secretariat to be staffed with indigenous peoples and this has helped build capacity and confidence. At the same time, it does not want its activities to be concentrated and driven by secretariat staff, but rather ensure participation of all network members in all activities. The secretariat-driven activity implementation is a common problem faced by many regional and international networks where members rely completely on secretariat staff to do all the activities, and members become mere recipients or have minimal involvement in the projects and activities of the net-

work.

Over the last five years, the AIPP Executive Council adopted a committee system to operationalize the various activities planned. Four committees, namely the Human Rights and Advocacy Committee, the Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Committee, the Gender Committee, and the Research Committee, have provided support and implemented activities. Each Committee has focal persons from indigenous peoples organizations as members.

However, much remains to be done in these committees to fully realize their envisioned tasks of fund-raising, and administering and providing continuity of their respective programmes. Much of these committees' work is still done by the secretary general.

To appreciate the concept of networks, member-organizations need to be proactive and think of ways of contributing to the network, rather than a mistaken understanding that the secretariat of the network is there to serve members. AIPP now requests member-organizations to devote human and financial resources as well as activities for regional activities.

### Conclusion

AIPP was formed because of felt needs of indigenous peoples in the Asian region. Despite the numerous hurdles it faced since its formation, it has survived as the only regional indigenous, grassroots organisation in Asia. As more local organizations feel the impact and positive outcomes of AIPP's efforts, encouragement and support for AIPP grew. However, indigenous peoples organizations in Asia are urged to go beyond treating networks as a means of meeting their own needs, and to look at meeting the needs of others and of AIPP as a network. AIPP will dedicate its fourth General Assembly in October 2004 to discuss how to build a stronger network in the region.

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# Resistance to Development and Militarization - Report on the Second Asian Indigenous Women's Conference

*Mieko Fujioka*

Indigenous women from various parts of Asia gathered in Baguio city, the Philippines, on 5-8 March 2004 for the second Asian Indigenous Women's Conference (AIWC). This gathering was held 11 years after the first AIWC. About a hundred people, including observers, from 13 countries participated. There were no Ainu women participants. The author participated on behalf of an Ainu woman. The conference was organized by the Asian Indigenous Women's Network and Tebtebba, and hosted by INNABUYOG-CWERC (Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center).

## **Development, militarization, and anti-"terrorism"**

A major issue in the conference was the link between globalization and development and its effect on indigenous women in Asia. In the Cordillera (Philippines), indigenous vegetable growers have been badly hit by the influx of cheap vegetables from China and other countries. A participant from Yunnan, China reported that the policy of the Chinese government forces indigenous farmers to produce cash crops. But only a handful succeeded in it. Many are increasingly being pressured to abandon their communities and migrate to cities in order to survive. With the entry of "suicide seeds"<sup>1</sup> or other genetically engineered seeds of high yielding varieties marketed by transnational corporations, indigenous women farmers are now losing the role of keeper of indigenous seeds. They now have to buy seeds, which is an added drain on their already limited cash.

These cases show a common pattern of the market economy penetrating indigenous communities resulting in the loss of subsistence economy and more dependence on cash income. This situation leads to greater economic gap between rich and poor within the community and the collapse of mutually beneficial traditional social system. In this process, distinct cultures undergo significant transformation.

This process greatly affects women. It was reported that in many parts of Asia, indigenous women used

to have an important role in resource management and production in the traditional economy. However, as the market economy penetrates the communities and women's roles are no longer valued, their status in the community declines.

Large-scale infrastructure projects such as dams are undertaken in indigenous peoples' lands without their consent. In the Philippines, most of the large-scale dams have been built or planned in indigenous peoples' territories. In India, it is reported that 40 to 50 percent of those who were displaced by development projects are indigenous peoples.

The Doyang Hydro Electricity Project in Nagaland, India is a case in point. The dam was built on Doyang River in 1983 and 30,000 indigenous people were affected.

They (the Nagas) lost their land and traditional ways of living which depended on the forest and wetland resources. They became wage laborers, while their community systems and social fabric were affected. A second phase of the project is proposed and they fear that the destruction of the indigenous communities will continue.

Development in the form of tourism transforms indigenous peoples' lands into national parks and protected areas. Many of these projects have military support to suppress people's opposition. The most obvious cases can be seen in Burma.

Militarization of indigenous peoples' territories is one of the common issues facing indigenous peoples in Asia. Military power is used not only to violently suppress indigenous movements for self-determination and autonomy (such as in Nagaland), but also to promote State-sponsored or private transnational corporation development projects. Militarization deprives indigenous peoples of freedom of movement, destroys their environment and gives rise to sexual violence against women and girls.

Another serious issue related to militarization is the increasing labeling of legitimate indigenous move-

ments as "terrorists" in the "war on terror" after September 11, 2001. In the Philippines, after the US government added the Communist Party of the Philippines and its military wing New People's Army (NPA) to its Foreign Terrorist Organizations list, the Philippine government undertook military offensives against the NPA and the indigenous communities suspected of supporting it. In India, many indigenous peoples organizations fighting for their rights to land and resources have been labeled as "terrorist" organizations under the Prevention of Terrorism Act enacted after September 11, 2001.

The author reported on the situation and concerns of Ainu women, particularly the Ainu Communal Property Case. This case, filed in 1999, questions how the Ainu common property has been managed under an 1899 law on the Ainu people. There is a suspicion of misuse of the common property by the Governor of Hokkaido who is given the responsibility to manage it. The litigation is considered as one of the efforts towards restoring Ainu's right to their land and resources.

It became very clear in the conference that globalization, development and militarization go hand in hand to hinder indigenous peoples from achieving self-determination and full enjoyment of their legitimate rights.

### **"Tradition" and cultural development**

The conference also took up a wide range of other issues including women's rights, reproductive rights/health, violence against women, and women's organizing.<sup>2</sup>

The participants reported that under customary practices women usually play a central role in preserving the land and forest resources and thus their status in society is relatively high.

Indigenous customary laws and practices worked favorably for women in many cases. In the Cordillera, violence against women used to be a communal concern and various interventions by the community were useful in preventing violence or persuading the men from resorting to violence. With the deepening westernization of the society, however, violence against women became private matter and no longer subject to communal intervention. Also, indigenous women used to have control over

forest resources which helped guarantee their relatively independent and higher status in the community. Due mainly to the imposition of the modern land registry and forest management systems, women have lost this important role. These examples suggest that it is desirable to maintain, rather than dismantle, the traditional economy and value systems, and the customary laws and practices in order to keep the women's status high and protect their dignity.

On the other hand, there were reports about traditional practices that women want abolished. In some indigenous societies, the "bride price" system in marriage is now functioning as if "women are being bought." A Maing participant from Thailand said that after marriage she was forced to pay back through her labor the cost of her huge wedding ceremony. Male child preference is strong in some ethnic groups, such as the Hmong in Thailand, and in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, women are pressured to give birth to two or more male children. If they fail, the husband divorces his wife and/or takes another wife.

In sum, the destruction of traditional indigenous systems and the shift to modern values and legal systems often lower women's status in society and lead to violation of their rights. On the other hand, changing certain traditional laws and practices that work against the interests of women, should not mean that other systems and cultural aspects that the women themselves want to preserve should also be destroyed. The participants expressed pride in transmitting their distinct culture and values to future generations. To label them as "victims of tradition" is wrong.

A Nepali participant explained that when a marriage system that allows a woman to marry all the brothers of one family in an ethnic community in Nepal was subjected to Western feminist criticism, the women in the community strongly felt shame and lost confidence in themselves. Women without self-confidence "will not become agents of change in the social institutions they want to abolish," she pointed out.<sup>3</sup>

### **Empowering indigenous women**

In response to the need to protect and/or recover the traditional important role of indigenous women, the second AIWC recommended to the indigenous peo-

ples organizations and movements the following:

#### Empowerment of Indigenous Women for Leadership

- Empower indigenous women to exercise our life skills in health, education and decision-making and to play our important roles in our families, communities and the indigenous peoples' movement.
- Carry out gender-sensitivity programmes within indigenous organisations and communities.
  - Strengthen indigenous women's participation in all aspects of leadership and governance. Special meetings, leadership training as well as other training courses and exposure programmes should be organised.
- In terms of participation, a quota for women should be allocated, and when projects or meetings are going on, nursery facilities should be provided.
- Women will be encouraged to take up decision-making positions, after gaining the necessary confidence.
- The role and perception of women should not follow stereotypes and women who are qualified and experienced should be selected as leaders.

Leadership by indigenous women will have an impact on the way the indigenous people's organizations and movements operate. It will also supplement the ongoing effort to establish indigenous women's organizations in many countries in the region.

#### Future networking in Asia

In the past 11 years, organizing of indigenous women in Asia has considerably advanced. In Indonesia, indigenous women's network called Aliansi Perempuan Adat Nusantara, or Indigenous Women Alliance of the Archipelago (APAN) was created in 2000. In Bangladesh, 11 indigenous women's organizations participated in Hill Tracts NGO Forum that was established in 2000. In Nepal, 8 indigenous women's organizations are organized and 9 more are planned. At the sub-regional level, South Asian Indigenous Women's Network was established in 2003. The conference decided to activate sub-regional and regional networking of indigenous women in Asia. It successfully ended by adopting the Baguio Declaration.<sup>4</sup>

*Guatemala Project, and a university lecturer.*

*For further information please visit:  
[www.tebtebba.org](http://www.tebtebba.org)*

#### Endnotes

1 Also called terminator seeds. These are crop seeds that become sterile at harvest time.

2 The conference also discussed an issue particular to indigenous peoples in one country. The Baguio Declaration has a statement on this issue:

##### Violation of the Right to Citizenship of the Tribal Peoples of Thailand

The right to citizenship of the tribal peoples of Thailand has not been guaranteed by the government; with applicants facing long delays in the processing of documents. Without citizenship, indigenous and tribal peoples are denied their most fundamental rights and entitlements, including access to education and other public services, land and property rights, and social mobility. Under these conditions, indigenous women are rendered extremely vulnerable and marginalised. Urgent government action is needed to redress this situation.

3 The Baguio Declaration also includes a statement about the general condition in Nepal, as in the following:

The declaration of Nepal as a Hindu State has meant the promulgation of laws, rules and regulations (including the Constitution) based on Hindu values including cultural norms which consider women as inferior and impure. The government policy of Hinduisation undermines the egalitarianism of traditional indigenous societies of Nepal and downgrades the status of indigenous women.

4 See [www.tebtebba.org/tebtebba\\_files/gender/aiwdec.html](http://www.tebtebba.org/tebtebba_files/gender/aiwdec.html)

*Mieko Fujioka is the Coordinator of the IMADR*

## Events

### Recently Held Events

The South India Regional Convention Against Death Penalty was held on 13 April 2004 in Bangalore, India to appeal to the state government of Karnataka, and the Indian central government to heed the United Nations call for an end to death penalty.

*For further information, please contact: South India Cell for Human Rights Education and Monitoring (SICHREM) I/F, 35 Anjanappa Complex, Hennur Main Road, St. Thomas Town Post, Lingarajapuram, Bangalore - 560 084 India, ph/fax (918) 2547 3922 / 2549 2856; e-mail: sichrem@satyam.net.in*

The 6th Summer Course on International Women's Human Rights 2004 was held at the Caritas Seminar Room of Miriam College on 3-8 May 2004. The Summer Course provided a specialized orientation/ training on women's human rights to mid-career public servants, educators and professionals; tried to deepen understanding, systematize and institutionalize the study of human rights from gender and Asian perspectives; and, generated materials to constitute a sourcebook and regional database on women's human rights.

*For further information, please contact: Shyr Lagura, Projects Administrative Staff, Women And Gender Institute (WAGI) - Miriam College, Loyola Heights, Quezon city, Metro Manila, Philippines 1101; ph (632) 580-5400 ext. 3590, 435-9229; ph/fax (632) 435-9229; e-mail: <slagu - ra@mc.edu.ph> or <wagi@mc.edu.ph>.*

The two-day Asian hearing of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) was held in Manila on 17-18 May 2004. The regional hearing discussed migrants in the labor market, migration, economic growth, development, and poverty reduction, irregular migration, human rights, migrants in society, and national, regional and international governance of migration. Delegates from Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, India, Japan, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, The Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United Kingdom attended the hearing. Regional experts, and representatives of non-governmental organizations and the media also attended the hearing.

*For further information, please contact: Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), 1, Rue Richard-Wagner, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland, ph (4122)*

*748-4850; fax (4122) 748-4851; e-mail: info@gcim.org; www.gcim.org*

A Trainers Training on Combating Torture was held on 17-21 May 2004 in Coimbatore, India. Participants made a commitment to participate in the zonal training programs in June 2004 and also to monitor torture issues that take place in the next 6 months at least. The training was organized by the People's Watch - Tamilnadu in association with the Asian Human Rights Commission (Hong Kong), Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (New Delhi), Human Rights Law Network (New Delhi) and World Organization Against Torture (Geneva).

*For further information, please contact: People's Watch-Tamil Nadu, No. 6, Vallabai Road, Chokkikulam, Madurai - 625 002. India; ph (91452) 2539520; ph/fax (91452) 2531874 ; e-mail: Henri Tiphagne <info@pwtm.org>; www.pwtm.org*

A National Training on Human Rights, Criminal Law, Communalism, Dalits Rights and Globalization was held on 17-23 May 2004 to bring legal awareness and consciousness about human rights among social activists, community workers and students, and to train them and strengthen the campaign of the social reforms and justice from grassroots level.

*For further information please contact: Deepika D'Souza, Director, India Centre For Human Rights and Law, 4th Floor, CVOD Jain School, 84 Samuel Street, Dongri 400 009 India; ph (9122) 3759657/3716690/23439651/23436692; e-mail: huright@vsnl.com*

The 4th Workshop on the ASEAN Mechanism on Human Rights was held on 17-18 June 2004 in Jakarta. The workshop discussed the developments in the efforts toward the establishment of an ASEAN mechanism for human rights, cooperation on issues of common concern in the ASEAN region, terrorism and human rights, trafficking in women and children, human rights education in ASEAN, and ASEAN security community and human rights. Senior officials of ASEAN governments as well as national human rights institutions attended the workshop. It was jointly organized by the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism and the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

*For further information, please contact: Carlos P. Medina,*

*Jr, Secretary General, Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism , Ateneo Human Rights Center/ LAWASIA Human Rights Committee, School of Law, Ateneo de Manila University, Rockwell Center, Rockwell Drive, Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines; ph (632) 899-7691 ext. 2111/2112; 899-3633; fax (632) 899-4342; www.aseanhrmech.org*

A Seminar on International Courts and Tribunals for Practitioners from Southeast Asia and the South Pacific was held in Wellington, New Zealand on 28 June - 2 July 2004. The seminar aimed to illustrate to practitioners from Southeast Asia and the South Pacific regions how international courts and tribunals, and other major implementation control and dispute settlement bodies, are used and accessed. The general goal of the seminar was to create local capacity to access and utilize international courts and tribunals effectively. The seminar was jointly organized by the Project on International Courts and Tribunals (PICT), the Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

*For further information, please contact: Cesare P.R. Romano, Center on International Cooperation, Associate, Project on International Courts and Tribunals, Assistant Director, New York University, 418 Lafayette Street, Suite 543, 10003 New York, NY USA; ph (1-212) 998-3688; fax (1-212) 995-4706; e-mail: cesare.romano@nyu.edu; www.cic.nyu.edu*

An "Asia-Pacific NGO Forum" held on 30 June-3 July 2004 in Bangkok was a follow through by the women's movement on what, by far, has been an effective civil society engagement with official UN sponsored policy-making processes. The objective of this regional NGO forum was to set in motion a process for the women NGOs and other civil society groups to prepare, consolidate and advocate their findings and recommendations at the Asia-Pacific level and to conduct follow up at the Commission on the Status of Women 2005 session (CSW 2005) and other international fora.

*For more information, write to: Annie Serrano, Coordinator, Asia-Pacific NGO Forum, c/o Women and Gender Institute, Miriam College, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines 1101; ph (632) 426 0169; fax (632) 924 6769; e-mail: apngoforum@mc.edu.ph; http://ap-ngo-forum.isiswomen.org*

### **Events to be Held**

The Non-governmental Organizations Training Center (NGOTC) is offering a Short Course on Human Rights and

Islam to be held on 6-9 July 2004 in Tehran. The training course aims to familiarize the participants on the relationship between human rights and Islamic beliefs and attitudes. The participants will do research on existing challenges to human rights, and on Islam and human rights. The four-day course is open to Iranians and non-Iranians.

*For further information, please contact: Non-governmental Organizations Training Center (NGOTC), First floor, No. 1 Golbarg-e Panj (Fifth Golbarg) alley, Golsar Str., Golriz Str., Kharazmee Str., Molasadra Avenue, Tehran 14359, Iran; ph (9821) 803 06 37; fax (9821) 803 58 93; e-mail: info@ngotc.org; www.ngotc.org/english/en\_about.asp*

The 2nd Asia Pacific People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) Congress will be held on the 10 July 2004 in Bangkok just prior to the World AIDS Conference. The Congress is open to any person living with HIV/AIDS who is a residence of any country in the Asia Pacific region. It will discuss and obtain consensus with regard to draft regional advocacy strategic action plans and agenda; and adopt a PLWHA resolution addressing the issues of Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA), Treatment, and Stigma and Discrimination in the context of the 10th anniversary of the GIPA principles adopted in the 1994 Paris Declaration.

*For further information, please contact: Shiba Phurailatpam, Asia Pacific PLWHA Resource Centre (APPRC), 13 Jor Bagh, New Delhi-3, India; ph (9111) 24620618/24632339; fax (9111) 24631647; email: shiba.p@undp.org; www.plwha.org*

The conference "Living and Learning Together: The role of human rights education in strengthening communities in New Zealand and the Pacific" will be held on 11- 13 July 2004 in Auckland, New Zealand. The conference dwells on both right to education and human rights education. The conference organizers invite curriculum developers, principals, academics, teachers, educators in related fields, students, government policy advisers, local government, NGO and community workers, caregivers and those who have a general interest in human rights. The New Zealand Human Rights Commission and the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO are organizing the conference.

*For more information please contact: Lili Tuioti or Rosi Fitzpatrick, TEUILA Consultancy, PO Box 78 321, Grey Lynn, Auckland, New Zealand, ph (649) 360 0257, fax (649) 360 0258; e-mail: tkconz@xtra.co.nz; or, Victoria Gregory (Human Rights Commission) victoriag@hrc.co.nz*

The UNICEF Office for Thailand, in collaboration with the

Royal Thai Government's Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation (DTEC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of Welfare Promotion, Protection and Empowerment of Vulnerable Group, and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security will organize the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) Fellowship Training Course on Child Rights Sensitization: Training of Trainers, on 12-23 July 2004 in Bangkok. Eligible countries are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China PRC, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Vietnam.

*For further information, please contact: Director, External Cooperation Division I, Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation (DTEC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 962 Krung Kasem Road, Bangkok 10100, Thailand; ph (662) 281 1049; fax (662) 280 3107; e-mail: dtec@saranrom.or.th; or Vipunjit Ketunuti (Ms), TCDC Programme Coordinator, UNICEF Office for Thailand, 19 Phra Atit Road, Bangkok 10200, Thailand; ph (662) 356 9212; fax (662) 281 6032; e-mail: Vipunjit Ketunuti <vketunuti@unicef.org>*

The Diplomacy Training Program is organizing a training program for indigenous community representatives in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. The training will provide knowledge of international human rights law and the working of the UN and other inter-governmental systems and mechanisms and organizations dealing with Indigenous People's Rights within the UN System; and practical skills training in strategic advocacy and "peoples' diplomacy", and skills in working with the media and using the internet for advocacy. The capacity building program is scheduled to take place from 25 July - 4 August 2004 in Darwin and is hosted by the School of Australian Indigenous Knowledge Systems at Charles Darwin University.

*For further information, please contact: Patrick Earle, Executive Director, Diplomacy Training Program, Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW 2052, Australia; ph (612) 9385-2277; fax (612) 9385-1778; e-mail: dtp@unsw.edu.au; www.dtp.unsw.edu.au*

The NGO Forum on National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) with the theme "Building Strategic Partnerships between NGOs and NHRIs: Upholding Human Rights during Conflicts and while Countering Terrorism" will be held on 12-13 September 2004 in Seoul. This forum is being held in relation to the 7th International Conference for National Human Rights Institutions (14-17 September 2004) and the annual meeting of Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions [APF] (13 September

2004).

*For further information, please contact: Giyoum Kim, MIN-BYUN-Lawyers for a Democratic Society (Seoul, Korea), e-mail: m321@chol.com; Seonghoon Lee, Pax Romana/ CONGO, e-mail: leesh@paxromana.int.ch; Ravi Nair, Asia Pacific Human Rights Network (APHRN)/South Asia Human Rights Documentation Center (New Delhi, India), e-mail: rnair@aphrn.org*

The 8th Annual Asian Training and Study Session on Human Rights at Chulalongkorn University will be held on 10-30 October 2004 at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. It is being organized by the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and the Center for Social Development Studies (CSDS), Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University. The purpose of the study session is to provide a comprehensive human rights course for activists in the region. It is open to applicants from all countries in the Asian region. Persons working in the field of human rights, social justice, development and peace are encouraged to apply. The program will accept 25-30 participants, gender balance being considered.

*For further information, please contact: Angkana Krabuansaeng, Program Support Assistant, FORUM-ASIA, 111 Suthisarnwinichai Road, Samsennok, Huaykwang, Bangkok 10320 Thailand; ph (662) 276-9846 ext. 216; fax (662) 693-4939; e-mail: angkana@forumasia.org*

The Asian Civil Society Forum (ACSF) 2004 with the theme "Building UN/NGOs Partnerships for Democratic Governance through MDGs" is tentatively scheduled on 21-25 November 2004 at the UNCC, UNESCAP in Bangkok, Thailand. The proposed ACSF 2004 is a main follow-up to the ACSF 2002 and at the same time as a regional preparatory process and forum for the Millennium+5 in 2005. It is hoped that the ACSF 2004 can create a more sustainable regional forum where regional NGOs can identify common challenges and develop strategies for joint advocacy on a regular basis.

*For further information, please contact: Seonghoon Lee (Anselmo), CONGO Working Group on Asia (Geneva); ph (41-22) 823 0707/41, 79 253 7815 (mobile); e-mail: leesh@paxromana.int.ch; Rashid Kang, Forum Asia; ph (669) 023 1301 (mobile); e-mail: hrd@forumasia.org*

## HURIGHTS OSAKA ACTIVITIES

HURIGHTS OSAKA recently organized a series of meetings on several issues in Osaka. On 5 June 2004, a meeting was held on the issue of human rights and the Filipino Muslims. Three Filipino Muslim non-governmental organization leaders discussed the human rights problems affecting the Filipino Muslim communities. On 7 June 2004, a meeting was held on sexual harassment and gender equality education with the participation of NGO workers from South Korea. And on 11 June 2004, another meeting was held on human rights issues in India.



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HURIGHTS OSAKA, inspired by the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, formally opened in December 1994. It has the following goals: 1) to promote human rights in the Asia-Pacific region; 2) to convey Asia-Pacific perspectives on human rights to the international community; 3) to ensure inclusion of human rights principles in Japanese international cooperative activities; and 4) to raise human rights awareness among the people in Japan in meeting its growing internationalization. In order to achieve these goals, HURIGHTS OSAKA has activities such as Information Handling, Research and Study, Education and Training, Publications, and Consultancy Services.



**HURIGHTS OSAKA**

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