



NATIONAL GRID CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

News Release

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NGCP supports IP Congress in North Cotabato

As part of its social responsibility initiatives advocating the protection and promotion of indigenous peoples and their culture, the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) recently gave its full support to the 1st Provincial Indigenous Peoples (IP) Congress in Makilala, North Cotabato.

Power transmission service provider and system operator NGCP operates and maintains electrical facilities throughout the country including 19,575 circuit-kilometers of transmission lines and 25,842 megavolt amperes (MVA) of substation capacity.

NGCP representatives from the head office in Quezon City joined more than 4,000 members of ethnic groups who gathered at the Makilala Municipal Gym from June 18 to 19 to seek the participation of IPs in decision making.

The event dubbed as “Kongreso sa Katawhang Lumad sa North Cotabato” was co-organized and sponsored by NGCP and the office of Rep. Nancy Catamco (2nd District of Cotabato), herself a member of the Manuvu-Bagobo tribe.

A panel discussion for the drafting of supplemental guidelines in the implementation of the mandatory representation of IPs and Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) was participated in by the Congressional Committee on National Cultural Communities, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the lumads of North Cotabato.

At the end of the two-day activity, the panel finalized and submitted a resolution calling on Congress to implement the mandatory representation of IPs in various policy making bodies and other legislative councils.

To seal their commitment to protect the rights of the IPs, local government leaders and IP tribal leaders and elders all signed a manifesto upholding the provisions of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act and promoting the collective interest of the constituents to help them recognize their responsibilities in nation building.

During the IP Congress, DILG Secretary Jesse Robredo was also formally adopted as Honorary Datu of Bae Catalina Dapan Clan under the Bagobo tribe. He was given the tribal name “Datu Makauyag.”

Mandatory representation of IPs and ICCs is stated under Section 16 of RA 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997: “Right to Participate in Decision-Making. ICCs/IPs have the right to participate fully, if they so choose, at all levels of decision-making in matters which may affect their rights, lives and destinies through procedures determined by



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them as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous political structures. Consequently, the State shall ensure that the ICCs/IPs shall be given mandatory representation in policy-making bodies and other local legislative councils.”

Last month, NGCP announced the continuation of a scholarship program for IPs in Mindanao. Through NGCP’s *Bulig Ki Agulanga* (Tulong Para kay Ate/Kuya) Program, nine high school and six college students from IP communities in Bukidnon will be granted full school year educational assistance. This includes tuition fees, book and uniform allowance, and a monthly stipend. Scholarship grants for this school year amount to more than half a million pesos.

Now on its second year of implementation, the scholarship program supports scholars from small IP communities in Barangays Pualas and Dalirig in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. Students were screened from a list submitted by tribal chieftains of the Higaonon tribe in Barangay Pualas and the Higaonon-Talaandig tribe in Barangay Dalirig.

NGCP started implementing the educational grant for lumads in ancestral domains in connection with its Abaga-Kirahon-Maramag-Bunawan 230-kV Transmission Line Project in Mindanao. The project aims to strengthen the existing transmission system and ultimately ensure the stability, reliability and efficiency of power delivery service in the entire Mindanao Grid. ###

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