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INTRODUCTION

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) regional technical assistance project (RETA 5953) on Capacity Building for Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minority Issues and Poverty Reduction has two objectives: to strengthen ADB's Policy on Indigenous Peoples through poverty assessment of these peoples in selected developing member countries (DMCs) and to develop, using participatory methods, an appropriate agenda for action to ensure poverty reduction for indigenous groups.

The specific objectives are to

- conduct a poverty assessment of indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities and examine the DMCs' relevant national policies and legislation, programs, projects, and initiatives pertaining to indigenous groups/ethnic minorities as these address the multifaceted dimensions of poverty;
- evaluate and assess the impact of ADB's interventions that address the vulnerability and poverty of indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities in the DMCs; and
- provide capacity building for government, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and indigenous peoples/ethnic minority groups so that they can actively participate in formulating action plans as well as in ADB-sponsored programs and projects.

In the Philippines, the task was undertaken by a two-member team, one of whom was assigned within the Cordillera area in the northern part of the country with emphasis on a specific ADB project for indigenous peoples, the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management (CHARM) project. The other covered the southern island of Mindanao in addition to working

closely with the focal agency or the relevant government entity responding to the needs of indigenous peoples.

The guiding forces directing the work of the team were creating an atmosphere of trust and transparency; nurturing interpersonal relations as a ground for constructive cooperation; and adhering to a nonextractive engagement with stakeholders. This approach is consistent with ADB policy: the "recognition of the right of indigenous peoples to direct the course of their own development and change."

The two-pronged task of the team consisted of working closely with the Office of the Presidential Advisor for Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (OPAIPA)¹, as specified in the third objective above, and the conduct of a poverty assessment in the three ethnographic regions of Mindanao² and in the Cordillera region in Northern Luzon.

Participation in OPAIPA activities was through membership of one team member in a technical working group specifically dealing with the Mechanics and Criteria for the Selection of Commissioners for the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and the Consultative Body. Activities consisted of a National Consultation of Indigenous Peoples Leaders (18–21 April 2001), Ethnographic Consultations Regional Convenors' Workshop (5–6 May 2001), two ethnographic region consultations (Central Mindanao, 23–24 May 2001; Northern and Western Mindanao, 29–31 May 2001), and planning and assessment meetings during April–August 2001.

One of the authors was also invited to sit in the Selection Committee for the "long-listing" of applicants for Commissioner positions in June 2001 and to serve as cofacilitator for the OPAIPA Workshop with the New NCIP Commissioners (22–25 August 2001).

The outputs mainly provided support to the OPAIPA. These consisted of the documentation of the two Mindanao consultations, the translation/

consolidation of identified needs of the three ethnographic regions in the area, and the translation/documentation of some quick-response reports. Inputs were also provided in the design of forms, assessment of activities, deliberations on representation of indigenous peoples, long-listing for the selection of Commissioners, and sharing in the conceptualization of and participation in the final workshop with the new Commission.

Stakeholder consultations and networking with various institutions in Mindanao facilitated the conduct of the Mindanao Indigenous Peoples Consultation on Poverty Reduction and Development on 21–22 July 2001 in Cagayan de Oro City. Results³ of the gathering provided a broader context to brief case studies of two areas in Bukidnon and Davao, respectively.

The other author was primarily responsible for the evaluation of the policy framework for indigenous peoples' development, analyzing national poverty trends, and investigating the ADB-funded CHARM project. The project covers Abra, Benguet, and Mountain Province. It aims to reduce poverty in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) "by increasing disposable incomes of smallholder farm families in the target areas." In May and June, 2001, stakeholder consultations with indigenous leaders, representatives in the respective communities, and local authorities were conducted. These field consultations resulted in an in-depth analysis of poverty in the Cordillera and insights on the CHARM project. A workshop in the Cordillera was held on 4–5 June 2001.

Information gathered through the participatory approach was corroborated by empirical studies by academic institutions, NGOs, and government organizations. After the fieldwork and other consultations, draft poverty assessment reports were

presented and validated during the provincial and national workshops.

The national workshop was conducted on 1–2 October 2001 at ADB Headquarters, Manila, entitled National Workshop on Mainstreaming Government Programs for Indigenous Peoples' Poverty Reduction. The workshop focused on the dialogue between various government line agencies and NCIP. It also benefited from the constructive inputs of other stakeholders including NGOs, indigenous peoples' representatives, and funding agencies. The plan of action produced by the national workshop corresponds to the draft NCIP framework of operations.

The data presented in this report consist of contributions (workshop consultations, key informant interviews, focus-group discussions) from the indigenous peoples, the OPAIPA, NCIP, NGOs, indigenous peoples' organizations (IPOs), academe, and other agencies. Data from these stakeholders were also made available upon request. Field notes were also shared by anthropologists Daylinda Banzon Cabanilla (on the Ata Manobo), Aileen Toohey (on the Bajao).

The report is structured as follows. After an introductory chapter, problems in defining indigenous peoples are outlined (Chapter 2). An overview of indigenous peoples in the Philippines follows (Chapter 3). The law and policy framework is discussed next (Chapter 4), followed by a description of the national dimensions of indigenous peoples' poverty (Chapter 5). Poverty assessments for the Cordillera and Mindanao are given in chapters 6 and 7, respectively. Relevant development programs and projects are then reviewed (Chapter 8), followed by ADB's experience in poverty reduction projects in the Philippines (Chapter 9). Finally, the elements of a national plan of action for poverty reduction among indigenous peoples in the country are presented (Chapter 10).