

ADVISORY

CALLING ON CONGRESS TO OPEN ITS DOORS TO FARMERS FOR GENUINE AGRARIAN REFORM

CHR-A2009-008

The Commission on Human Rights issues this advisory in the wake of various media reports and complaints filed against Speaker Prospero Nograles together with the officers of the House of Representatives for the forcible dispersals of groups camped out at the gates of Congress calling for the extension of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law with genuine reforms.

Peoples' Organizations, Human Rights NGOs and Farmers Groups including the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), the Katipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid sa Timog Katagalugan (Kasama-TK), Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), Amihan National Federation of Women, National Network of Agrarian Reform Advocates – Youth, Crispin B. Beltran Resource Center, Unorka, Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services, Mindanao Farmers Development Center, Peace Foundation, Kababaihan ng Pilipinas Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates and 23 other Provincial Farmers Federations, have asked the Commission on Human Rights to join the appeal for Congress to listen to their pleas for a genuine agrarian reform to take place. Many human rights organizations have backed the farmers' cause and reiterated the call for extension with reforms.

Genuine Agrarian Reform

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has been unanimous in backing the demands of the farmers. Rightly, a genuine agrarian reform program will not only benefit the agricultural sector but also lend greater food security for the country. Agrarian Reform is a tool to attain social justice in this country.

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Republika ng Pilipinas
Komisyon ng Karapatang Pantao ng Pilipinas
(Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines)

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY
CHR A2012-007

**CALLING FOR AN OPEN AND TRANSPARENT PROCESS
IN THE APPOINTMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE
REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ASEAN
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN
RIGHTS
(AICHR)**

The Commission on Human Rights, as the national human rights institution in the country, takes every opportunity to advocate for transparency and accountability in governance processes, including in the appointment of government officials. A transparent and open selection and appointment process is a hallmark of a human rights based approach to governance that should be applied to public servants, specially those with policy determining functions and in human rights institutions.

The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) is a sub-regional human rights mechanism in ASEAN that the Philippine Government is a part of. The Terms of Reference of the AICHR provides for the Philippine Government to appoint a Representative who shall be accountable to the government.

As provided in the TOR, the “Representative serves a term of three years and may be consecutively re-appointed for only one more term.” Further, “Member States should consult, if required by their internal processes, with appropriate stakeholders in the appointment of their Representatives to the AICHR.”

The Commission notes that the term of office of the first Philippine Representative to AICHR ended in October 2012. The Commission, once again takes this opportunity to remind the government of the international standards in governance practices following human rights principles and norms. In this light, the Commission calls on the Philippine Government

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through the Department of Foreign Affairs to adopt an open and transparent process, containing among others the following:

1. The announcement of the vacancy and the qualifications of the appointment in media of wide circulation;
2. Participation of key stakeholders in the selection process, e.g., civil society organizations, human rights NGOs; and
3. Potential candidates from a wide range of societal groups.

The Commission is well aware of the important contributions of the current Philippine Representative to the AICHR in the development of the human rights agenda in the ASEAN. It acknowledges and welcomes the possibility of a re-appointment for another term.

The Commission therefore urges the DFA to start designing this open and transparent process which shall be put in place in the succeeding years.


Issued this 19th day of December 2012 at Quezon City, Philippines.


LORETTA ANN P. ROSALES
Chairperson


CECILIA RACHEL V. QUISUMBING
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