

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 7234



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT ESTABLISHING RESOURCE CENTERS FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMMUNITIES/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO ENHANCE AND ENSURE DELIVERY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine Constitution recognizes the protection, promotion, and fulfillment of the rights of IPs. In addition, Republic Act 8371, also known as the "Indigenous Peoples Rights Act" (1997, IPRA), upholds the right of IPs to manage their ancestral domains; in fact the said law has become the cornerstone of current national policies on IPs.

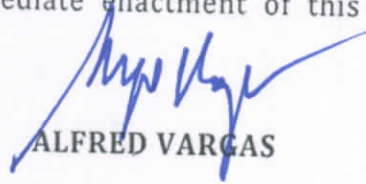
Majority of the 17 Million population of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) and Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in the Philippines reside in the uplands which they claim as part of their traditional territories. They are mainly concentrated in Northern Luzon specifically the Cordillera Administrative Region (33%), and Mindanao (61%), with some groups in the Visayas area.

The IPs represent nearly 14% of the country's population.

However, despite financial aid and technical assistance from various international donor agencies, they are among the poorest and the most disadvantaged social groups in the country. As a result, the incidence of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty is much higher among the IPs, compared to the rest of the population. One of the major causes is that the IP settlements are remote, which resulted to deprivation in the access to basic services.

Considering the above premises, it is of vital importance that Resource Centers be established in all ICCs/IPs which are ethnographically located as determined by the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). These centers shall enhance the delivery of basic, social, technical and legal services to the ICCs/IPs.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate enactment of this measure is earnestly sought.



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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the "Resource Centers for Indigenous Peoples Act of 2018."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. The State shall recognize, respect and protect the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs)/ Indigenous Peoples (IPs), to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions and institutions. It shall consider these rights in the formulation of national laws and policies; Furthermore, the State shall take measures, with the participation of the ICCs/IPs concerned, to protect their rights and guarantee respect for their cultural integrity, and to ensure that members of the ICCs/IPs benefit on an equal footing from the rights and opportunities which national laws and regulations grant to other members of the population.

SECTION 3. Establishment of Resource Centers for ICCs/IPs. There shall be established ICCs/IPs Resource Centers, hereinafter referred to as the "Center", in such strategic places as may be determined by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), hereinafter referred to as the "Commission", taking into consideration their ethnological locations.

SECTION 4. Staff and Components of the ICC/IP Resource Centers. The Commission shall designate in every Resource Center a Chief Coordinating Officer. Concerned government departments and agencies and local governments shall assign staff members to the Resource Centers.

SECTION 5. Composition and Functions of the Center. The Center shall be composed of the following three (3) major service areas with their respective functions, namely:

- (a) Statistical Service Area – Documentation and recognition of ICCs/IPs, their Indigenous knowledge, systems and practices, political structures and customary laws through census, appraisal and baseline reports and libraries;
- (b) Human Development Index Service Area – Addressing of problems of ICCs/IPs and provision of basic and necessary services through link-up with concerned government department and agencies, such as training programs, scholarship grants, employment, livelihood and enterprises and health services; and
- (c) Domains Management Service Area – Promotion of participatory programs, projects and activities for ICCs/IPs to effectively deliver their responsibility of maintaining ecological balance, restore denuded areas, observing laws and ensuring the implementation of the Ancestral Domains Sustainable Development and Protections Plans and such other existing programs.

SECTION 6. Monitoring Progress and Implementation and Impact of this Act. The Commission shall submit to Congress every three (3) years or as determined in the implementing rules and regulations, an annual report of its accomplishments.

SECTION 7. Funding. The initial funding requirements for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the agencies concerned. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the agencies yearly budgets under the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). Within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, the Commission, shall issue the necessary Rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act, in coordination with the following concerned government agencies to wit:

- Local Government Units (LGUs);
- Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA);
- Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);
- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
- Department of Education (DepEd);
- Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- Commission on Human Rights (CHR);
- Department of Justice (DOJ);
- Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);
- Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- Department of Health (DOH);
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- Department of Agriculture (DA);
- Land Management Bureau (LMB);
- Land Registration Authority (LRA);

SECTION 9. Repealing Clause. All laws, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modify accordingly.

SECTION 10. Separability Clause. If any part, section or provision of this Act shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, no other part, section or provisions thereof shall be affected thereby.

SECTION 11. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,