



**IP CHAMPIONS**  
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# A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' 11 BUILDING BLOCKS



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# A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' 11 BUILDING BLOCKS

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## SUMMARY

The promotion, respect, and protection of the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/ Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs) is important to address historical and persistent injustices against these communities. In recognition, the Philippines has signed various international legal instruments and passed domestic legislations to complement its moral duty with legal obligations. This led the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to develop the policy known as the “Eleven (11) Building Blocks of Resilient, Responsive, and Relevant ICCs/IPs.” The policy significantly impacts ICCs/IPs, therefore gives rise to the need to surface and discuss the policy for it to be properly evaluated alongside generally accepted human rights principles. To do so, this Policy Brief appraises the Building Blocks using a Rights-Based Approach (RBA) alongside the legal obligations under domestic and international law. This analysis then reveals fundamental limitations that ultimately support a call for the NCIP to pause the implementation of the policy. It also offers suggestions to align the Building Blocks with the human rights principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and the rule of law.

## 1. Background

As the country reeled from the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, then concurrent National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Chairperson and National Secretariat of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) Executive Director Allen A. Capuyan<sup>1</sup> discussed before the House of Representatives Committee on Indigenous Peoples the

1. Hereinafter referred to as “Chairperson Capuyan”.



### **Box 1. The NCIP's 11 Building Blocks of Resilient, Responsive, and Relevant Indigenous Cultural Communities/ Indigenous Peoples**

- 1. Confirmation of Indigenous Political Structure**
- 2. Registration & Accreditation of Indigenous Peoples Organization**
- 3. Delineation Process for the Issuance of Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title / Certificate of Land Title**
- 4. Establishment of Ancestral Domain Management Offices**
- 5. Formulation of Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans**
- 6. Systematization of IP Wealth Management Through the Formulation of Community Resource Management and Development Plans**
- 7. Institutionalization of the Process for Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and Exercise of Priority Rights**
- 8. Effective Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR) in the Local Legislative Bodies**
- 9. Formulation of Efficient Memorandum of Agreement/ Understanding/ Cooperation**
- 10. Conduct of Socio-Economic Activities with IP Cooperatives**
- 11. Establishment of Ancestral Domain Defense System.**

guidelines for the protection of the rights of ICCs/IPs.<sup>2</sup> He unveiled what was to be known as the “Eleven (11) Building Blocks of Resilient, Responsive, and Relevant Indigenous Cultural Communities/ Indigenous Peoples (“Building Blocks”).<sup>3</sup> Not much about the Building Blocks was known as communities dealt with the pandemic. It was only in 2021 that more information about

2. Rep. Act No. 8371, § 3(h). Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples — refer to a group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, become historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos. ICCs/IPs shall likewise include peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, at the time of conquest or colonization, or at the time of inroads of non-indigenous religions and cultures, or the establishment of present state boundaries, who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, but who may have been displaced from their traditional domains or who may have resettled outside their ancestral domains.

3. 11 Building Blocks of Resilient, Responsive, and Relevant ICCs/IPs in their Ancestral Domains, NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WEBSITE, available at <https://ncip.gov.ph/resources/11-building-blocks/> (last checked Oct. 1, 2023).

the Building Blocks was revealed in the 2020 NCIP Annual Report.<sup>4</sup> Since then, the NCIP has pushed for implementing the Building Blocks.<sup>5</sup> It has been popularized in various provinces and was showcased during the National Indigenous Peoples Summit in 2022 at Camp Aguinaldo, the general headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The Building Blocks thus became the centerpiece program of the NCIP.

General activities are also provided in furtherance of each block. Specific ICCs/IPs rights are also interspersed throughout the document. Nonetheless, it is notable that the Building Blocks provide scant details as to the program's genesis, the process of development, its validation, the identification of the rights holders and duty bearers, and assessment and performance indicators. Consequently, the determining factors that lend legitimacy and acceptance to the Building Blocks remain unclear.

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## 2. Analysis and Recommendations

The stated purpose of the Building Blocks is to give life to the rights of Indigenous peoples, consistent with the 1987 Constitution and the IPRA. Thus, at the center of the policy

4. National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, 2020 National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Annual Report: Correcting Historical Injustices for Indigenous Peoples Rights and Welfare, xvi-xvii (2020).

5. Peter Balocnit, NCIP pushes for 11 building blocks of resilient ICCS/IPs, PHIL. INFORMATION AGENCY, Dec. 16, 2021, at <https://pia.gov.ph/news/2021/12/16/ncip-pushes-for-11-building-blocks-of-resilient-iccsips>; NCIP pushes institutionalization of 11 building blocks, starts with healing and reconciliation, NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WEBSITE, June 12, 2022, available at <https://ncip.gov.ph/news/ncip-pushes-institutionalization-of-11-building-blocks-starts-with-healing-and-reconciliation/>; Jamie Joie Malingan, Ifugao IPs Engage in Building Resilient, Responsive, and Relevant Communities, PHIL. INFORMATION AGENCY, Aug. 26, 2022, at <https://pia.gov.ph/news/2022/08/26/ifugao-ips-engage-in-building-resilient-responsive-and-relevant-communities>; NCIP raises public awareness about IP rights, POLITIKO, Aug. 29, 2021, at <https://centralluzon.politico.com.ph/ncip-raises-public-awareness-about-ip-rights/>.

**Given the primacy of Indigenous peoples in implementing this social policy, the Building Blocks should be scrutinized following a Rights-Based Approach (RBA), a conceptual framework applied to human development that normatively involves international human rights standards.**

are four bundles of ICC/IP rights: the right to ancestral domains and lands, the right to self-governance and empowerment, the right to social justice and human rights, and the right to cultural integrity. Given the primacy of Indigenous peoples in implementing this social policy, it should be scrutinized following a Rights-Based Approach (RBA), a conceptual framework applied to human development that normatively involves international human rights standards. RBA further promotes and protects human rights by using international human rights system norms, standards, and principles in developing prospective plans, policies, and development processes.<sup>6</sup>

Supplementing the RBA are the PANEL principles,<sup>7</sup> which reflect five (5) fundamental principles that assist in determining whether human rights are applied in practice. The first principle, “participation,” facilitates inquiries into the meaningful and effective participation of the essential stakeholders. The second principle, “accountability,” refers to determining the legal duties and responsibilities required to adopt a rights-based approach. This demands the monitoring of compliance with the various rights standards. It also calls for redress mechanisms for breaches of obligations. The third principle, “non-discrimination,” avoids discriminatory practices and determines whether the vulnerability of specific sectors is considered throughout the planning and implementation of policies and programs. The fourth principle, “empowerment,” augments the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enliven their rights or to fulfill their obligations. Finally, the fifth principle, “laws,” relates to the legal anchors that ground the policy.

The 1987 Constitution, the IPRA, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and other international conventions that intersect with ICCs/IPs rights, particularly the International Covenant on Economic, Social and

6. Rights-Based Approach Systems and Tools Manual, UNDP-PHILIPPINES, U.P. NCPAG, & COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, 2006, available at <https://www.ombudsman.gov.ph/UNDP4/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Right-based-approach-systems.pdf>.

7. P.M. de Ala-Muego et al., Handbook on Human Rights Based Approach to Development Planning for the Philippines Partners of Fastenopfer, FASTENOPFER, 2018, available at [https://fastenaktion.ch/content/uploads/2018/05/human\\_rights\\_based\\_approach\\_FO\\_philippines\\_handbook.pdf](https://fastenaktion.ch/content/uploads/2018/05/human_rights_based_approach_FO_philippines_handbook.pdf).



Cultural Rights (ICERD), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), are also used to determine the concomitant ICCs/IPs rights that the State should fulfill.

## A. Participation

A review of the history of the Building Blocks ostensibly shows that there is little evidence of the participation of ICCs/IPs throughout the country in drafting the policy. Based on the House of Representatives' public posts, then-Chairperson Capuyan gave the Representatives forming the Committee on Indigenous Peoples a presentation of the Building Blocks from December 2020. The virus still ravaged the country, and social gatherings remained on hold. The Philippine Government was still finalizing deals with Sinovac Biotech to procure vaccines.<sup>8</sup> Logistically, ICCs/IPs could not suitably participate completely and effectively during this period. Subsequently, when social limitations were raised, the NCIP activities from 2021 onwards showed that the discussions already involved the operationalization<sup>9</sup> of the Building Blocks. The NCIP already set the policy, and its implementation was the only thing that remains to be done.

Several building blocks are seemingly consistent with the tenets of the IPRA. However, these rights still require the communities'

**Several building blocks are seemingly consistent with the tenets of the IPRA. However, these rights still require the communities' acceptance and validation because the policy is subject to numerous interpretations, and each ICC/IP is distinct.**

8. World Health Organization, Philippines: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report #65 (Dec. 15, 2020).

9. Healing, Reconciliation and Operationalizing the 11 Building Blocks in the Ancestral Domain in support to the Whole of Government/Whole of Nation Approach by Empowering the Former Rebels, IP Youth, IP EPs and IP Leaders, NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WEBSITE, July 19, 2022, available at <https://ncip.gov.ph/news/healing-reconciliation-and-operationalizing-the-11-building-blocks-in-the-ancestral-domain-in-support-to-the-whole-of-government-whole-of-nation-approach-by-empowering-the-former-rebels-ip-youth-ip/>; LOOK | AGUSAN DEL SUR - 04-05 July 2022 | Healing, Reconciliation, and Operationalization of the Eleven (11) Building Blocks in the Ancestral Domain in support to the whole-of-Government (WoG)/ whole of nation (WoN) Approach by Empowering the Former Rebels, IP Youth, IP Enlisted Personnel, and IP Leaders, FACEBOOK, July 5, 2022, at

**There is a possibility that a particular block may not apply to a community. One size does not fit all, as each of the ICCs/IPs has its unique lived reality.**

acceptance and validation because the policy is subject to numerous interpretations, and each ICC/IP is distinct. Conceptually, the “s” in Indigenous Peoples recognizes not only self-determination but also the diversity and distinctiveness of the numerous communities throughout the country. Thus, there is a possibility that a particular block may not apply to a community. One size does not fit all, as each of the ICCs/IPs has its unique lived reality. Unfortunately, the blocks do not address immediate concerns of ICCs/IPs/. While the Building Blocks point that ICCs/IPs throughout the country are infiltrated by the New Peoples Army (NPA), Stakeholders’ Submission of the Philippines to the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) contradict this claim.<sup>10</sup> According to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), among the chief concern of ICCs/IPs is the “systematic ‘red-tagging’ of and disinformation about activists, human rights defenders, and civil society organizations, including members of indigenous peoples’ communities, by the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).”<sup>11</sup> Stakeholders, on the other hand, raised concerns about the occupations of schools by the military and the threats against children and teachers made by military personnel, which escalated following the order of then-President Rodrigo R. Duterte to “bomb and close the Indigenous peoples’ schools in Mindanao.”<sup>12</sup> There have also been reports of ICCs/IPs being “harassed, vilified as terrorists, and murdered because they had defended their right to their ancestral lands. Their schools had been attacked and denounced as terrorist hubs and they had been caught in the middle of the conflict between the Government and the New People’s Army.”<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, despite the importance of these concerns, the Building Blocks do not address the concerns submitted before the UN Human Rights Council.

There is an apparent failure to properly account for the ICCs/IPs’ participation in crafting the policy.

10. United Nations General Assembly, Summary of stakeholders’ submissions on Philippines: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/WG.6/41/PHL/3 (Aug. 31, 2022).

11. Id. at 1 ¶ 5.

12. Id. at 8 ¶ 83.

13. Id. at 10 ¶ 106.

If they had been widely consulted, the main concerns mentioned earlier would have been addressed. The Building Blocks would then reflect the direct concerns of Philippine ICCs/IPs.

Lamentably, it does not, and such drawback signifies that ICCs/IPs right to self-determination and self-governance may have been compromised, contrary to Articles 3, 4, 18, 19, 23, and 32 of the UNDRIP and Chapter IV, Sections 13, 15, 16, 17, and 20 of the IPRA.

Participation, following open and free consultation, should be conducted because ICCs/IPs must be included in any discussion that affects their rights and interests, directly or indirectly. They should be allowed, without restraint, to decide on these matters effectively. The consultations should be widespread and representative of all the members of the community. Any attempt to vilify members should be prevented and penalized.

## B. Accountability

Each prescription, as provided in the Building Blocks, requires the determination of the duty-bearers. However, not much explanation is provided under the plan. The closest determination as to who are the duty-bearers concerning the Building Blocks was provided by then-Chairperson Capuyan in a social media post, where it was explained that each block would require ICCs/IPs to act on their own, in collaboration with the NCIP, or with other National Government Agencies (e.g., DAR, DENR, LRA, SEC, DOLE, CDA, AFP) and Local Government Units.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, there is no official document to support this and no framework to monitor it properly. Measures for institutional strengthening are absent. The capacity-building needs of the

**Participation, following open and free consultation, should be conducted because ICCs/IPs must be included in any discussion that affects their rights and interests, directly or indirectly.**

14. The ICCs/IPs 11 building blocks' operationalization through the Whole of Government (WoG) and Whole of Nation (WoN) approach in our interagency collaboration, coordination, and synchronization is to make ICCs/IPs resilient, responsive, and an active partner in our national peace, unity, and development undertakings, Facebook, Aug. 1, 2022, at <https://www.facebook.com/allencapuyan2020/posts/pfbid02MSpEmmepj6edRQdU5evUhJuuVGYmCmNhsMSyoALe4nVCzg9EfmMVSdLxTq85vc7GI>.



ICCs/IPs and the duty-bearers mentioned may not be addressed. The absence runs counter to the vital human rights principle of accountability.<sup>15</sup>

**Accountability measures covering rights holders and duty-bearers, that include specific mechanisms to hold these parties answerable to ICCs/IPs and the public, should be provided in the Building Blocks.**

Furthermore, the Building Blocks do not provide for any redress mechanisms concerning the alleged violations of ICCs/IPs rights. According to the NCIP, there have been several “burning issues” relating to, among others, leadership conflicts, land selling and grabbing within ancestral domains, and FPIC interventions. However, the only response concerning these violations is the establishment of an Ancestral Domain Defense System (ADDS). This is problematic because the understanding of a defense system is primarily focused on a martial approach. This may be inconsistent with the duties of the State under Section 22 of the IPRA.

Accountability measures covering rights holders and duty-bearers, that include specific mechanisms to hold these parties answerable to ICCs/IPs and the public, should be provided in the Building Blocks. Following the requisite consultations with the communities, the Building Blocks should also provide the activities that animate each ICCs/IPs right. Each activity should also reiterate that ICCs/IPs have obligations to fulfill. At the same time, duty-bearers' performance concerning ICCs/IPs projects should be measured alongside performance indicators, in consultation with Indigenous groups, that determine progress in implementing their obligations. The NCIP should revive previous efforts to build a comprehensive database management information system for monitoring and evaluating ICCs/IPs projects and their impact. The participatory monitoring and evaluation system should also be restored, as proper documentation is a learning tool and accountability measure. Finally, the NCIP, with assistance from various CSOs, should provide legal aid to ICCs/IPs to initiate cases against erring public officials, members of the community, or non-Indigenous persons/entities in consonance with customary laws and traditions to ensure that there would be accountability to the law.

15. The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies, UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP WEBSITE, Sept. 2003, available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/human-rights-based-approach-development-cooperation-towards-common-understanding-among-un>.

## C. Non-Discriminatory

The Building Blocks do not directly discriminate against any group. They do not single out individuals or communities based on age, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender identity. However, it also generalizes ICCs/IPs and makes presumptions about their shared concerns. While it should be lauded that no single community is privileged by the Building Blocks, there should still be recognition of the diversity and that within each ICCs/IPs are doubly or triply marginalized members. Overlapping or intersecting social identities for ICCs/IPs who are women, children, PWD, and LGBTQI+ should be considered, given that these factors compound their oppression. Their voices are often muted. The relative muteness of women ICCs/IPs is greatly reflected in the gender distribution of Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representatives (IPMR) throughout the country. In 2020, out of 4020 IPMRs, only 863 were women – a mere 21%. There is significant underrepresentation because, during the same period, over 49% of the population are women (56,879,731 out of the 115,559,009 Philippine population).

Consultation and decision-making mechanisms that ensure the participation of women, children, the youth, LGBTQI+, and PWDs should be designed to provide the validation of the Building Blocks and their implementing activities. Alongside this, data surrounding the communities should be disaggregated to highlight the intersectionality of their concerns and to approximate proper representation. Finally, any violation of these significantly marginalized subsections of ICCs/IPs should be swiftly condemned by the NCIP to avoid concealing incidents affecting their rights. Failing to include these sectors in effective decision-making processes proactively would violate various domestic and international standards.<sup>16</sup>

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16. As exemplified in Sections 21, 26, 27 of the IPRA, Chapter V, Section 28 of the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710), Articles 30, 31, 36, and 41 of the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities (Republic Act No. 7277, as amended), Articles 7, 17, 21, 22, and 44 of the UNDRIP, Article 2 of the CEDAW, Articles 28, 29, and 30 of the CRC, and Articles 29 and 30 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## D. Empowerment

**For the protection of human rights, empowering starts by letting people know their rights, the agency to determine their rights, and the capability to vindicate said rights if ignored, infringed, or abused.**

Empowerment means that a community or an individual has autonomous decision-making power over their lives. Thus, for the State to empower them, they should be made capable of claiming their rights and having the option to influence and decide their realities. For the protection of human rights, empowering starts by letting people know their rights, the agency to determine their rights, and the capability to vindicate said rights if ignored, infringed, or abused. More specifically, for ICCs/IPs, empowerment demands that the right to be informed of their rights, the right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), the right to representation, the right to self-determination and governance, and access to justice.

To achieve this would demand more than informing ICCs/IPs of their rights. The State, primarily through the NCIP and State Media, should make the dominant society fully aware of who ICCs/IPs are and what they stand for. More importantly, to exercise their power, the State should provide safe spaces and access to justice. Both formal and informal education should be strengthened for ICCs/IPs to allow them to realize their rights. Alongside this, duty bearers, such as civil society and non-government organizations should be more active in bringing to light known violations and assisting ICCs/IPs throughout their engagements with external stakeholders. Legal professionals should also develop better legal aid mechanisms to represent ICCs/IPs in dealing with violations. True empowerment of ICCs/IPs forwards several standards.<sup>17</sup>

17. This includes, among others, Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Articles 21 and 39 of the UNDRIP, and Chapter IV, Sections 20, 21, 25, 28, and 31 of the IPRA.



The NCIP should initiate a comprehensive review of previous policies to empower ICCs/IPs so the commission may learn from the strengths and weak points of previous undertakings. Also, access to justice should be a priority to provide ICCs/IPs the capacity to seek redress from formal institutions capable of making binding decisions. It is a human right and a process ensuring universal human rights are protected. This right is expressed under Article 8 of the UDHR, which provides that *“everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.”* This principle is also embedded in Sections 1 and 11, Article III of the 1987 Constitution, and Section 46 (g) of the IPRA.

## E. Laws

While the Building Blocks reflect specific ICCs/IPs rights guaranteed under the 1987 Constitution, the IPRA, and international legal instruments, it remains essential to provide complete information as to the legal origins of the formulation itself. The legal basis that animates the Building Blocks remains a mystery as no record of any Master Plan, Administrative Order, or Memorandum Circular has been released aside from the oft-shared poster. A comprehensive document showing the respective legal anchors, supporting rationale, implementation plan, monitoring and evaluation, and resource requirements is vital to fully understanding the guidelines. The allusion to the 1987 Constitution and the IPRA does not provide the requisite specificity to fully and adequately inform ICCs/IPs of the plans that should safeguard their rights.

Equally important is the NCIP's candidness in addressing whether the Building Blocks is principally a social justice policy addressing a civilian concern under the NCIP or a national defense policy under the direction of the NTF-ELCAC. The concurrent position of then-Chairperson Capuyan as the head of the NCIP and NTF-ELCAC executive director, calls for an Ancestral Domain Defense Systems, and the active push from the AFP leads to the assumption that the policy is directed to address a national

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security concern instead of a civilian concern. Disclosing the policy thrust assists in determining the applicable legal regime and judicial consequences of the Building Blocks.

Ultimately, these legal concerns should give ICCs/IPs and the NCIP a reason to pause. While the Building Blocks appear to innocently give life to the ICCs/IPs rights, in truth, the details of the policy may be more complicated and tend to cause more significant harm. At this stage, rather than pushing for the fulfillment of the Building Blocks, prudence dictates that the NCIP should consider it to be merely in its ideation stage. In the interim, widespread, representative, and open consultations with ICCs/IPs, ideally in their ancestral domains, should be conducted to consider the unique perspectives of each ICC/IP and allow the plan to evolve according to the community responses.

### 3. Conclusion

Sober evaluation of the 11 Building Blocks using a rights-based approach and the PANEL principles reveals the inadequacy of the policy and its failure to recognize the complexity of the problems facing ICCs/IPs. There is an apparent gap in the policy formulation as it is seemingly assumed to be suitable for all ICCs/IPs. There is also no recognition of the intersectionality of the problems plaguing ICCs/IPs as the policy failed to consider other vulnerable groups within the communities. This omission tends to further the multiple discrimination faced by these sectors. Measures that ensure the proper implementation of the IPRA are also lacking. There are no redress mechanisms provided under the law that would ensure that violations would be effectively dealt with. Access to justice has been sidestepped in the policy as there is no mention of support mechanisms and legal support in the Building Blocks.

Furthermore, while empowerment is idealized, there is a scant explanation for how this will be attained. Pedestrian activities providing information, education, and communications (IEC) on ICCs/IPs rights fail to address the power imbalance between communities and dominant society. Also, despite the mention of specific duty-bearers, no platform has been provided to allow ICCs/IPs to interact and demand action from these duty-bearers. There are also no measurable and objectively verifiable indicators to show the effectiveness of the policy in promoting and protecting the rights of ICCs/IPs. Lastly, the legal basis of the policy is still ill-defined. It has not been embodied in any comprehensive Master Plan, Administrative Order, or Memorandum Circular that would explain the whole rationale of the policy and its implementation details.

All efforts that recognize, promote, and protect the rights of ICCs/IPs should be lauded and encouraged. The NCIP should thus be commended for proposing the 11 Building Blocks. Nevertheless, even good intentions are not enough to make policies work. Thus, the author hopes that the NCIP would recognize the previously indiscernible limitations and trepidations through careful policy evaluation using a human rights lens. Furthermore, respectful proposals are also provided to determine ways forward. It calls for all stakeholders to assist the NCIP in developing a robust Master Plan that fully delivers the requisite human rights principles. This is because, amid difficulty and challenges, there is an even greater opportunity to better the lives of ICCs/IPs throughout the country.



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