

Japan-Philippines NGO Symposium

Report on the 1st Japan-Philippines NGO Symposium,

held on November 24th-25th, 2006

Theme : "Empowering the Poor for Poverty Alleviation towards 2015: Partnership Building between Philippine and Japanese NGOs"

Host City: Taguig, Manila, Philippines

Venue: Market! Market! Trade Hall

Participants: NGOs from both countries (50 organizations from the Philippines and 13 organizations from Japan), about 150 people including those with government ties

Background: In 2006, the 50th Philippines-Japan Friendship Year, the 1st Japan-Philippines NGO Symposium was held. Representatives from Japanese and Philippine NGOs that are concerned with poverty alleviation in the Philippines introduced their activities to each other, deepened each other's understanding of participating NGOs, and discussed how to build a partnership between NGOs of both countries.



1st Japan-Philippines NGO Symposium

Results:

- Representatives of NGOs from both countries agreed to work together for the empowerment of Filipinos living in poverty and to aim for an international society that can achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
 - Awareness of the current situation of Japanese and Philippine NGOs was raised and recommendations were given as to how to build a partnership between Japanese and Philippine NGOs.
 - The participants' understanding of historical relations between Japan and the Philippines, and Japanese ODA Policy was deepened. Also, concrete recommendations were raised as to how to make effective use of Japanese ODA.
 - Using this symposium as an opportunity, participants began substantial activities toward Japan-Philippines NGO partnership building and created a basis for the development of later projects such as a Philippines-Japan NGO Partnership Fund and Thematic Group Activities.
-

Summary of Proceedings

◆Day One: November 24th, 2006



Welcome Remarks by Fr. Francis Lucas

As a representative of the Philippines-Japan Partnership (PJP), Fr. Francis Lucas gave welcoming remarks to the participants. On behalf of Philippine civil society, he thanked the Japanese people for their support and said he wants a relationship of learning and reciprocity between Japanese and Philippine NGOs to be nurtured for years to come.

Opening Remarks by H.E. Ryuichiro Yamazaki Ambassador of Japan

Ambassador Yamazaki delivered the opening remarks. He said that the symposium was one part of the ongoing celebration of the 50th Friendship Year activities and expressed his belief that Japan-Philippines relations are contributing in concrete ways to Philippine development.

Defining Objective of the Symposium

Representing both JPN and PJP, Mr. Michio Ito of ACC21, elucidated on the aims of the Symposium and was supported by all the participants.

<Keynote Speech on Poverty, MDGs and Strategic Interventions for NGOs>

Former Philippine President Corazon C. Aquino (Delivered by Mr. Rapa Lopa)

Mr. Rapa Lopa delivered Mrs. Aquino's speech on her behalf because of her unavailability due to unavoidable circumstances. Mrs. Aquino explained that Japanese ODA goes to microfinance, economic cooperation and sustainable development, humanitarian and Basic Human Needs assistance and that, increasingly, Philippine NGOs have become an important part of such initiatives. She also said that in order to understand the issue of poverty, it was necessary for different NGOs to cooperate with each other and be



active participants in the field. In closing, Mrs. Aquino said that a Philippines that is stronger economically and politically would be able to contribute substantially to sustaining peace and stability throughout the world.

<Presentation 1: NGO Perspectives and Experiences in Poverty Alleviation>

Mr. Sixto Donato C. Macasaet, a representative of PJP and the Executive Director of the Caucus of Development NGO Networks or CODE-NGO, gave a presentation on the current situation and issues surrounding Philippine NGOs while JPN staff presented on Japanese NGOs and their activities in the Philippines. Both sides deepened

each other's understanding of each country's NGOs' general activities and their shared problems. Mr. Macasaet said that Philippine NGOs have to strengthen internal regulation and develop the next generation of NGO workers and leaders, and that it was necessary for NGOs to cooperate with each other so as to meet these challenges.

<Workshop 1: Finding Common Ground between the Philippines and Japan for Alleviating Poverty in the Philippines>



Participants from Japan and the Philippines gathered into small groups and exchanged opinions on the topics specified below. The groups then summarized their insights and gave their respective advices. Cooperative work was promoted so as to prompt greater discussion amongst the Japanese and Filipino participants.

◎Question 1: What are the main reasons for poverty in the Philippines?

Answer : Causes include inequitable resource allocation, lack of education, and government corruption

◎Question 2: What are the important interventions that Philippine and Japanese NGOs can present?

Answer : Education and values formation, community capability building, market creation

◎Question 3: Why should we work together?

Answer : To share learning, resources, and expertise for synergy as well as build greater understanding and interconnectedness

<Presentation 2: Launching of the BEST-OF-PREN Project for Renewable Energy>

Ms. Veronica Villavicencio Executive Director, Peace and Equity Foundation

Ms. Villavicencio introduced the partnership program between the Philippine Government and the Peace and Equity Foundation for "Renewable Energy". She pointed out that the government cannot afford to fund nor promote the project nationwide, and that the cooperation of NGOs is needed.

◆Day 2: November 25th, 2006

<Presentation: "From Reparation to Cooperation-The 50 Years' Experience of Japanese and Philippine Relations">

Professor Yoko Yoshikawa, Nanzan University

Professor Yoshikawa presented on the historical relations between the Philippines and Japan as well as Japanese aid policy toward the Philippines. At the end of the presentation, she cited a survey disclosing the general views of the Japanese by the Filipinos. 30% responded that the war would never be forgotten and that Filipinos' views

would become worse without any efforts on the part of Japan. Looking back on Japanese-Philippine history would become an important consideration for JPN and PJP for the future of the Japanese-Philippine relationship.

<Panel Presentation: Exploring Partnership Modalities>

Three different examples of existing partnership modalities were presented by the Philippine and Japanese NGOs: HANDS, ACTION, and OISCA. After the presentation, Mr. Koji Matsuura of Child Fund Japan proposed to add three more organizations to be analyzed in terms of how they develop shared goals or themes, and in terms of instances in which they have broadened their successes across the country. This analysis would be beneficial for future activities involving Japan-Philippines partnerships.

<Presentation: “Towards Supporting a New Type of Partnership: Finding a Common Development Agenda and Support for Philippine and Japanese NGOs”>

Ms. Faina Lucero-Diola

For this symposium, PJP carried out a study of Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP). After presenting a summary of the study and discussing the key points regarding the study’s results, Ms. Diola recommended that the Japanese Embassy should increase its support allocation to GGP as a matter of policy and that 75% of allocation for GGP should be given to NGOs. She also suggested that a new funding mechanism be managed within the Embassy for NGOs. The recommendations here became the basis for the Philippines-Japan NGO Partnership Fund.



<Workshop 2: From Agenda to Action>



In order to create a long-term view of the concrete partnership between Japanese and Philippine NGOs, a workshop was conducted and the following opinions came forward:

1. Consider the PJP-JPN partnership for the long term, with a joint mechanism for advocacy, and a formalized partnership
2. Study other models of bilateral partnership
3. Communications and information database projects as important tools

Regarding the priority agenda for 2007, the following ideas were incorporated:

1. Continue Japanese-Philippine dialogue
2. Institutionalize this forum at the national level
3. Advocate to allocate more of the ODA to GGP