



DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION
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January 22, 2019

HON. ROY A. CIMATU
Secretary
Department of Environment and Natural Resources

SIGNATURE OVER PRINTED NAME

Date: _____

Dear Secretary Cimatu,

Isang makakalikasang pagbati!

We, participants of the Kamayan para sa Kalikasan Forum held last January 18, 2019 at Kamayan Restaurant on EDSA, echo the call of the Mangyans in Mindoro that they be involved in decision-making processes affecting their communities.

In 2015, when Typhoon Nona struck Mindoro, the towns of Naujan, Victoria and Baco suffered from massive floods and landslides. This resulted in loss of family members and sources of livelihood. It was later discovered that the negative impacts of the typhoon were worsened by the excessive blasting during the construction of a hydro power plant and its connecting tunnel by the Sta. Clara International Corporation. The blasting heavily deforested the area and weakened the rock substrate causing landslides and flooding.

Members of the communities including the Mangyans, insisted that mountain blasting was not agreed upon by involved stakeholders in the Memorandum of Agreement on the construction of the power plant. Asked by tribe leaders why this aspect of the agreement was invalidated, the corporation responded that it needed to meet certain deadlines; that mountain blasting was the faster method to finish the power plant's construction.

While the local authorities have decided to halt the construction activities of the plant in 2016, a lot of damage and loss has already occurred. It will be hard for the affected communities to recover from the tragic experience. Therefore, we further support their appeal that community members be included in the monitoring of the rest of this project as well as other projects.

We call on your good office to review Republic Act 8371 or the Indigenous People's Rights Act of 1997 and to uphold its provisions especially on "ensuring genuine exercise by Indigenous Cultural Communities of their right to Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), whenever applicable" and on "protecting their rights in the introduction and implementation of plans, programs, projects, activities and other undertakings that will affect them and their ancestral domains to ensure their economic, social and cultural well-being."



Indigenous peoples are crucial in the environmental struggle because they experience firsthand the dangers of the rapid destruction of the environment. We must learn from their perspective, they who live intimately with nature. Projects meant for development may ironically become tools for disasters and further lowering of people's quality of life should they be implemented without consulting, engaging and involving all the stakeholders. Ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples means ensuring the integrity of the environment.

With DENR in the helm of protecting the environment, let us all work together towards the protection of our only home and the achievement of sustainable development!

Para sa kalikasan,

Green Convergence for Safe Food, Healthy Environment and Sustainable Economy