

VIDEO PRESENTATION 1

Ging Deles_Intro

Ging – I'm Teresita Quintos Deles, I'm better known as Ging, I'm currently serving as the managing trustee and executive director of International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance or INCITEGOV, I was a long time civil society advocate focused especially on 1997 on the Peace Issue including working on People's Peace Agenda, and developing people's participation both in community based peace processes and as well as in monitoring the national-level peace negotiations between government and the different armed parties in the country.

In 2001, I was asked to serve in government and I took the position of the League Convener of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, a cabinet position from 2001 to 2003 when I moved to the position of Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process until 2005 when together with 9 other colleagues in government, I resigned

VIDEO PRESENTATION 2

Ging_NAPC and structure

Ging – The National Anti-Poverty Commission was created by law, Republic Act 8425, which was passed in 1998, creating a new body in government which institutionalized the representation of participation of basic sectors on the policy table of government on issues that most affect the basic sectors.

Basic sector is the term that is used in the Philippines to refer to the poor and marginalized sectors. Partners include the more traditional sectors: small farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous people, urban poor, formal and informal labor, but also identify certain sectors which are marginalized or discriminated against or have distinct disadvantages to be able to participate to benefit in the socio-economic benefits and political life of the country, so that includes women, youth and students, senior citizens, persons with disabilities; and it also includes sector which is looking at briefing of disasters and calamities; non-government organizations also have a place on the table.

Under the structure of the NAPC, the NAPC body is convened by the president of the Philippine Republic and it has 2 components. On one side is the representatives of the basic sectors, who are chosen through a process that the basic sectors themselves undertake, they choose the representatives that will sit there, so each of the 14 sectors have a sectoral representative that sits in the NAPC.

And on the other side are the government heads of departments and agencies that are designated/most responsible for the issues that most concern these sectors. So for example, for the farmer sector, we have the Department of Agriculture as well as the Department of Agrarian Reform, for the marginalized or disadvantaged sectors, they will have the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and down the line you have the Department of Labor for formal and informal labor.

Video Presentation 3

Ging_NAPC Role and Important Function

Ging – For the basic sectors, the NAPC was important because it was their intermediary or their advocate within government for their issues.

On the side of government, what NAPC provided was a venue or a platform for inter-agency work - on issues many of which really can't be solved simply by one agency.

With the example of land, some lands will be under the department of agrarian reform which are still being distributed and at the same time there maybe some aspects of the land or some portions of the land may fall under certain regulations of the department of environment and natural resources, so a piece of land may have certain qualities to it, because of this history or the type of land, it may have overlapping rules, regulations and dynamics, it is very hard for agencies to settle that among themselves because there is always a problem of not wanting to be a subject to another departments.

That is the specific advantage under the NAPC, because it is not an implementing agency, it is able to facilitate this discussion because nobody suspects it of wanting to get one of their programs from them, to subordinate another agency under them. And because NAPC is directly under the office of the president, it does have that kind of a clout, that is why the NAPC is not a plantilla position, it is not a department, a full department, but it is a cabinet position, precisely because it has to be able to have that rank that can call on other secretaries and bring them together.

VIDEO PRESENTATION 4

Ging_NGOs got together and laws were passed

Ging – The law came to be passed because of a process the basic sectors themselves underwent, until it reached the point where they have enough of an evidence that such a law would be good which is the process of basic sectors coming together first within their sectors to come to an agreement of what is our most important agenda and always there is the guidance there, although you can imagine there is a range on how strictly they stick to that guidance; The agenda should not be a long shopping list, they would have to prioritize, because a long shopping list is hard to push, it diffuses the focus and might leave you with easy answers that yes, might lead you to the agenda; but does not get you into the concrete requirements of an agenda

First was the coming together within the sector which meant causing some divides from historical backgrounds, maybe some in-group competition among some of them, maybe some differences in political or theological orientation. But deciding that really we are stronger and that's what we had always said "Our strength will be in our being able to come together and speak with one voice", so there was the work within the sector to try to get consensus on an agenda which also includes the processes of coming up with that. Who chairs? How is the representation going to happen? How many people is my organization going to have? How many are you sending? How do we make sure that it is a level playing field among us?

That's within the sector and then there's the different sectors coming together because what we want to do is to face government really with even more strength than just one sector, we are saying that we are the majority of this country but not benefiting equally.

In the Philippines this happened during the National Peace Conference in 1990 because of the proclamation of the last millennium – as a decade for peace, the idea was let it be a peace that will really benefit the poor majority and there was a decision to hold a National Peace Conference but the decision was before we go the National Peace Conference, let every sector do its work, preparing its agenda.

The position the basic sectors were taking was government has peace negotiations with the armed opposition groups but we want a real peace. We have to look at what about our peace, we want the government to be addressing our issues, you might have a very nice agreement with an

armed party but if it does not address our issues then it is not going to be peace for us; in fact the advocacy was this is our agenda both government and other armed group should look at what makes our peace and we want in fact our own agenda also to be responded to by whatever you are discussing on the table.

Question – So for indigenous peoples for example, what would that peace mean?

Ging – The recognition of ancestral domains and in this entire process for example we held the National Peace Conference in 1990 – so this whole process in fact led to several important laws being passed which were first brought to the table by the sectors within the National Peace Conference later days with government so that it became a joint advocacy of the executive government and the basic sectors that was able to push this through the legislature and so that you have this certain laws enacted.

VIDEO PRESENTATION 5

Ging_NPC process of consensus building

Ging - ... ever since after the dictatorship was ousted, most of the sectors – especially the sectors that have been in struggle already under martial law thought that it was important to use a democratic space to be able to pursue their agenda which was not possible under martial law so there was this work of doing agenda prior to 1990. But the idea of doing a Peace Conference, was provided an **invetus** for being able to bring more voices together

Question - Whose initiative was the national peace conference?

Ging – it was led by one of the NGO's which was headed by a very strong peace advocate, what he immediately did so that it does not become an initiative of just one person/or just one agency, was to convene a group of convenors, so that National Peace Conference had several convenors – a convenor for each sector whose job was to bring to the sector, convince them to be part of the process, let them organize their own process and bring whatever is happening to that process into the table of all the convenors so that as the design for the National Peace Conference was being made, it was already being fed by the practice of the consultations that were being held on the ground.

So for those who have the resources, they did regional consultations before they went to the national consultations which chose the people that would go to the National Peace Conference, so there were different causes depending on the sector.

It was a 2-3 day process where every sector raised it's agenda and **goes from me** how to be approved. And there were agreements that if everyone agreed to the agenda then it was adopted in full, but if any sector did not agree then it would be noted that this was not one of the agenda items that were adopted in full by the National Peace Conference.

Question – I'm trying to understand how look, for example an urban-poor sector would have a list of items that they keep up with as a sector; they present it to the Peace Conference. Would the other sector have a say in the individual issues?

Ging – Yes, every item will be decided upon if they agree to it or not – the sectors would decide. During the National Peace Conference, there was

a business sector, there were certain issues that they could not be in full agreement with as you can imagine; for example the perspectives on agrarian reform were different.

I think the very beautiful experience here was that you can really see how seriously the sectors listen to each other, and for many this was the first time. Business for example has not come into dialogue with many of this sector. But the seriousness of listening, trying to express your problems with that and it would just not be with business. Even the creation of an informal labor sector, the recognition of a formal sector in labor, was not immediately acceptable to the formal sector, because for them (Labor Sector) ... because this informal group has to convince the other sectors, not on the first National Peace Conference, but on the succeeding ones they put it on the plenary and they go to the different sectors and convinced them - until they convinced the majority of the sectors.

Video Presentation 6

Ging2_NPC consensus building process2

Ging – It was agreed on that every sector had only one vote so even if you have 14 or 10, we agreed on a number that everyone should bring in, but of course that did not always happen so the first agreement was the sector had only one vote, you had to settle it among yourselves and then each sector voted and the ideal that was being aspired for was consensus.

Sometimes you didn't get consensus and there would be an appeal, if the one objecting really couldn't agree till the end, then this was set aside as not part of the agenda that was fully adopted by the National Peace Conference, but it was noted as to who did not agree with it, so it was not that it was lost or completely discarded, it was maintained in the records – this was brought up, this was discussed, but it did not achieve full consensus.

There is a request if there is only one – “Can you withdraw your objection?” and if they felt that, “No, it is a matter that would be against what they thought they stood for”

VIDEO PRESENTATION 7

Ging3_CLOSING

Ging - What we've tried to do here is to share a story of a process and a struggle that was undertaken by the basic sectors in the Philippines which succeeded in bringing them an entitlement to be able to sit in policy-making at the highest level of government.

It is an achievement that did not come easily, it took a lot of struggle within sectors, between sectors and many struggles of engagement with government through several decades.

It will continue to be a struggle but we hope that the story is able to show that in fact things are possible. It is possible to bring the voices of the poor and marginalized, to be considered a focal point of policy making by government in processes that are so institutionalized to ensure that it brings the basic sectors speaking on their own behalf, bringing their own agenda, bringing their won processes so that they can engage government in a meaningful dialogue.

And through this meaningful dialogue and consensus building to bring about laws and government programs that address the most important concerns.