



Land Rights Literacy Training for CHR Summary Report

16-17 September 2025 | Sotogrande Katipunan Hotel, Quezon City, Philippines



Land Justice Initiative is implemented by:



Acknowledgments

The learning event has been jointly organized by the Center for Social Justice and Humanitarian Protection (CSJHP) and Human Resource Development Division (HRDD) of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), and Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN) with the funding support from the European Union (EU) through the Land Justice Initiative Project.

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Layout and design: Joseph Onesa

Citation

Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Commission of Human Rights - Center for Social Justice and Humanitarian Protection (CHR-CSJHP), Commission of Human Rights - Human Resource Development Division (CHR-HRDD), and Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN). (2025). *Land rights literacy training for CHR*. 16-17 September 2025. Sotogrande Katipunan Hotel, Project 4, Quezon City, Philippines. ANGOC, CHR-CSJHP, CHR-HRDD, and KAISAHAN. [Summary Report].

ISBN 978-971-8632-96-3

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Background

Throughout history, Filipinos have consistently fought for their right to land. From the colonial era, when Spanish friars and powerful families held vast estates or *haciendas*, to contemporary struggles for the implementation of laws like the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) and the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA), the pursuit of land justice has been a continuing effort. Today, this struggle persists, with land rights still under threat from State-led programs and industrial expansion.

In many developing countries, land rights are closely linked to core human rights, such as the right to food, livelihood, and self-determination. For farmers, fisherfolk, and indigenous peoples (IPs), land is more than a resource. It is their source of sustenance, identity, and culture. However, land rights are often neglected in human rights dialogues due to their legal and structural complexity. Beyond ownership, land rights encompass access, usage, occupancy, and secure tenure — all of which are governed by diverse and sometimes conflicting national and local legal systems, making land disputes an ongoing challenge.

Global human rights instruments recognize the central role of land. Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) affirms the right to own property and protection against arbitrary deprivation. Moreover, General Comment No. 12 of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) affirms that access to productive land is essential to realizing the right to adequate food, particularly for indigenous communities whose ancestral territories are at risk.

General Comment No. 26, recently adopted by the CESCR, further emphasizes that secure and equitable land access is crucial to ending hunger and poverty, ensuring food security, and preserving cultural identity. Additionally, the United Nations General Assembly's 2022 resolution on the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment underscores the deep connection between IPs and their ecosystems. It calls on States to protect their land rights as a means to prevent environmental harm and uphold human rights.

Despite these international standards, land rights in the Philippines continue to face systemic barriers. A 2018 study by the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) pointed to issues such as unfair distribution of, access to, control of, and ownership of land and resources; conflicting laws; and, overlapping mandates among land agencies. Many landholdings also lack proper documentation, increasing the risk of land fraud and contested ownership.

General Comment No. 26 identifies several pressing issues affecting land governance:

- Rising competition for land access, which disproportionately affects marginalized groups like peasants, rural communities, and IPs;
- The commercialization of land and housing markets, which reduces land accessibility for vulnerable populations;
- Urbanization and large-scale projects, including tourism, that displace rural communities from productive land;
- Environmental degradation and climate change, which worsen food and water insecurity, fuel land-related conflict, & force displacement; and,
- Weak or corrupt land governance systems, which deepen social inequality and perpetuate poverty.

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR), as the National Human Rights Institution of the Philippines, fulfills its constitutional mandate to monitor the State's compliance with its obligations under the aforementioned human rights instruments, and to investigate cases of human rights violations (HRVs). In line with this, and to enhance the capacity of CHR personnel in addressing land rights issues and

deepening their understanding of the concepts and frameworks surrounding such rights, the CHR, through its Center for Social Justice and Humanitarian Protection (CSJHP) and Human Resources Development Division (HRDD), in partnership with Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) and Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN), jointly organized a **Land Rights Literacy Training for CHR**, as part of the project titled “Land Justice Initiative: Amplifying Land Rights Defenders’ Access to Justice and Uniting Stakeholders for Land Rights Accountability (LJI)”, funded by the European Union (EU).

Objectives

The two-day learning event aimed to:

- enhance CHR personnel’s understanding of land rights as a human right;
- deepen knowledge of legal frameworks such as IPRA and CARL;
- surface recurring issues in land governance and human rights violations; and,
- strengthen CHR’s role in monitoring and policy engagement on land rights.

Refer to Annex A for the program of activities.

Participants

The event was attended by 81 CHR personnel (44 females and 37 males) — lawyers, special investigators, training specialists, and information officers from the Central and 16 Regional Offices of the CHR. A total of 47 CHR personnel (21 females and 26 males) attended in-person, while 34 personnel (23 females and 11 males) joined online.

Opening Session

Welcome Remarks – Ms. Mary Joyce M. Crisanto, CHR-HRPCO Director

Ms. Mary Joyce M. Crisanto highlighted that land is not merely a resource but the foundation of livelihood, dignity, and identity, especially for farmers, fisherfolk, rural communities, and IPs. Ms. Crisanto further mentioned that CHR employees, as duty-bearers, are encouraged to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills necessary to address land-related concerns, protect the rights of vulnerable groups, and help shape inclusive policies that advance social justice.



Ms. Crisanto extended her gratitude to ANGOC and KAISAHAN for their steadfast collaboration in making the training program possible, acknowledging their expertise and contributions to land rights advocacy. She also commended the CSJHP and HRDD for spearheading the initiative and demonstrating the value of partnerships in pursuing a shared cause.

The Director urged the participants to be engaged, reflective, and open throughout the training program, with a call to transform the lessons learned into concrete actions that empower communities and uphold human rights. The message concluded with warm wishes for a fruitful and inspiring experience for all participants.

Opening Message – Dr. Mario Gemmer, EU Representative (video)

A recorded message was delivered by Dr. Mario Gemmer, Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to the Philippines, reaffirming the EU’s strong support for the LJI project and its partnership with the CHR, ANGOC, and KAISAHAN.

The EU representative acknowledged that the landless and the poor are among the most vulnerable sectors in society, often deprived of a voice in decision-making processes. Dr. Gemmer expressed gratitude to CHR and its partners for working on such an important issue, noting that the training program contributes to ensuring that the concerns of marginalized groups are heard by State actors, civil society, businesses, and labor groups.

The message further highlighted that land rights are not just technical or legal concerns but fundamental to social justice, dignity, and human rights. By supporting this initiative, the EU aims to amplify the voices of the underprivileged and promote accountability among key stakeholders.

In closing, the EU representative extended his best wishes for the success of the training program and expressed hope to meet with partners and participants again, whether in Manila or elsewhere in the Philippines, to continue strengthening cooperation in advancing land rights and human rights.

Message of Support – Mr. Nathaniel Don Marquez, ANGOC

On behalf of ANGOC, a message of support to all the training participants was delivered by its Executive Director Mr. Nathaniel Don Marquez. He highlighted that the training program is part of the Land Justice Initiative (LJI), a project jointly implemented by ANGOC and KAISAHAN with the support of the EU. The LJI seeks to increase access to justice for land and human rights defenders by strengthening capacities, building programs, and fostering partnerships with stakeholders such as the CHR.

Mr. Marquez recalled ANGOC’s longstanding collaboration with the CHR, which started in 2014 with the launch of the Land and Resource Conflict Monitoring (LRCM) Report. Such initiative documented incidences of HRVs in ongoing land conflicts. These include killings, enforced disappearance or detention and illegal arrests, physical harm or threat, forcible eviction, and other forms of harassment. HRVs relating to land rights may also come in the form of inaction by government agencies or non-implementation of government policies.

Box 1. Key findings of 2023 LRCM Report

- Nearly half of land conflict cases with local communities were due to private sector investments and government projects.
- Some 36% of the conflict cases were in the context of private investments, mostly in mining and plantations.
- Majority of communities in land conflict consisted of smallholder farmers/producers (63% of cases) and IPs/ICCs (22%).

The LRCM Reports provided valuable insights on the drivers of land-related conflicts and their human rights dimensions. Through subsequent years, joint policy dialogues and training courses, including webinars in 2020 for CHR field investigators, further deepened the CHR’s engagement in land rights advocacy. These collaborative efforts also fed into the Commission’s 2023 Land Rights Monitoring Report and Policy Advisory on Land Rights (CHR Advisory No. A2023-004 – see <https://www.scribd.com/document/838306729/CHR-VI-Policy-Advisory-Resolution-No-A2023-004>).

Furthermore, Mr. Marquez underscored that land rights must be recognized as basic human rights and are critical to social justice, echoing global frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He emphasized the interconnection between economic, social, and cultural rights violations and civil and political rights abuses, urging participants to approach land issues with this holistic perspective.

Finally, Mr. Marquez called on both CHR and civil society organizations (CSOs) to intensify their shared efforts in advancing land and resource reform. He reminded participants that while laws exist to promote equity and justice, their effective enforcement is essential to empower the rural poor. He further mentioned that the learning event was framed not only as a venue for knowledge-sharing but also as a call to action to ensure that land rights are realized as fundamental human rights.

Message of Support – Mr. Anthony Marzan, KAISAHAN

Mr. Anthony Marzan, KAISAHAN Executive Director, started his message in recalling their earlier EU-supported projects in Negros where farmers directly experienced land-related HRVs. According to him, many of these farmers sought assistance from the CHR, often perceiving it as one of the few government institutions willing to stand by them. However, challenges arose when cases were referred back to the same agencies accused of violating rights, highlighting the need for stronger mechanisms of accountability.

Mr. Marzan emphasized that the LJI builds on earlier programs, which focused on land conflict monitoring. Through KAISAHAN's paralegal formation work, ANGOC's LRCM initiative, and the CHR's expanding mandate, a collaborative framework emerged to enhance farmers' access to justice. He noted that most land-related cases had dragged on for 10 to 20 years or more, and if resolved earlier, could have prevented grave violations such as killings, threats, and red-tagging.

Furthermore, Mr. Marzan underlined that the core goal of the LJI is to strengthen the protection of farmers' land and human rights by building capacities across multiple levels: training *barangay* (village) justice personnel, capacitating CHR investigators, forming farmer-paralegals to document violations, and engaging institutions like the Philippine National Police (PNP) through dialogue on agrarian reform implementation. Policy advocacies, including the Human Rights Defenders Bill and fair agribusiness arrangements, were also cited as integral components of the initiative.

In closing, Mr. Marzan stressed that the training program should serve as a process of collective learning. With CHR personnel and resource speakers bringing frameworks and methodologies, and participants contributing rich experiences from the ground, the event was framed as a venue to bridge documentation practices with advocacy for justice. He expressed optimism that through shared effort, land-related HRVs could be prevented and communities could be empowered to claim their rights.

Session 1: Setting the Frame

Relevance of land in the national context – Mr. Antonio Quizon, ANGOC

Mr. Antonio Quizon highlighted the central role of land in shaping human rights, livelihoods, peace, and sustainable development in the Philippines. He began by contextualizing the country's socio-economic standing, noting the Philippines' low rankings in global indices on human development, corruption perception, and governance. Despite strong education indicators, disparities remain wide, particularly between regions, with poverty persisting as a predominantly rural and agricultural issue.

Box 2. Land and people

- 7,107 islands; 30 million hectares
- Some 14.2 M hectares (47 percent) of land area is classified as alienable & disposable, while 16.8 M hectares (52 percent) is “forestland” or owned by the State. *Forestland* refers to the public domain, not to actual forest cover. Many “forestlands” have no trees.
- Some 41 percent of the land is agricultural (12.4 M hectares)
 - ⇒ Arable land (rice, corn, vegetables): 5.6 M hectares
 - ⇒ Permanent crops (tree crops): 5.3 M hectares
 - ⇒ Meadows & pastures: 1.5 M hectares
- Maritime nation: the country’s territorial waters is seven times the size of its land mass: 2.2 M sq kms including the Exclusive Economic Zone
- Consisting of islands with rugged mountainous interiors
 - ⇒ Highly fragile ecosystems
 - ⇒ 60 percent of population live along coasts
- Ranked 2nd most densely populated nation in Southeast Asia (368 persons/square kilometer)

He emphasized that land is not merely a resource but the foundation of life and dignity that is deeply tied to *people, planet, and peace*. About half of the country’s land area remains classified as forestland, while more than 41 percent is used for agriculture, with farms becoming progressively smaller due to land conversion and population pressure.



Some 53 percent of the population live in rural areas. Agriculture and fisheries are major drivers of the economy; over one-third of population depend on agriculture and fishing.

For farmers and indigenous peoples in rural areas, land is a critical element in pursuing their livelihood, satisfying their food needs, and ensuring harmony in their communities. Thus, land tenure security and resource rights of small farmers, fisherfolk, and indigenous peoples must be recognized and respected.

This is indispensable in achieving an inclusive, healthy, and prosperous society as envisioned by the government.

For rural women, tenure security means equal status given to women and men, whether married or not in the awarding of tenurial rights, and recognition of the tenure rights of women not just as tillers and fishers themselves, but also as providers of labor in various points of the farming and fishing process. It also means recognition as leaders and members in organizations, and equal treatment of women farmers/fishers by government functionaries.

Yet **poverty** remains predominantly **rural and agricultural**, with rates nearly three times higher than in urban areas. Around two-thirds of all poor households depend on agriculture and fisheries. Poverty incidence among farmers (30 percent) and fisherfolk (30.6 percent) is significantly higher than the national average of 18.1 percent, underscoring the inequities in access to land and livelihood resources.

Land and agrarian reforms are founded on the fact that a major cause of poverty is the unequal distribution of natural resources and productive assets. Thus, poverty reduction is not just a matter of providing social safety nets, but by changing unequal relations in tenure rights and property ownership. Land and resource tenure reforms manifest a rights-based approach to poverty reduction.

Box 3. Land in the development agenda

- The desire for “*comfortable homes with the desired amenities and secure tenure*” forms part of the Filipinos’ own vision for the country.
- **Ambisyon Natin 2040**: “A prosperous, predominantly middle-class society where no one is poor; our people shall live long and healthy lives, be smart and innovative, and shall live in a high-trust society.”
- The **Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023 to 2028** highlights *security of land tenure*, especially in Chapter 5 on *Modernize Agriculture and Agribusiness* and Chapter 13.1 on *Ensure Peace & Security*.
- Globally, the **UN Agenda 2030** emphasizes the importance of land rights in combatting poverty, especially SDG 1.4.2, on “securing tenure & resource access for poor & vulnerable women and men.”

Tenure is the relationship, whether legally or customarily defined, among people, as individuals or groups, with respect to land. It defines how access is granted to rights to use, control, and transfer land, as well as associated responsibilities and restraints. Tenure systems increasingly face stress as the world’s growing population requires food security and as environmental degradation and climate change reduce the availability of land, fisheries, and forests (FAO).¹

The elements of land tenure security include:

- *formal and legal tenure*, preferably represented by a tenure instrument or documented right;
- *actual possession and control* of the land;
- *absence of threats*, or no fear of being evicted;
- *access to work, support services, public facilities, and markets*;
- *participation* in decision-making - especially related to the allocation, use & management of the land/resource; and,
- *equal recognition of rights of women* — i.e., in titles, leases, contracts, and permits; recognition as farmers and fisherfolk; and, rights to participate & represent.

¹ Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.

In the Philippines, a number of land and resource tenure reforms were instituted in response to the clamor by different sectors — farmers and farmworkers, indigenous cultural communities, and small fisherfolk. Among these reforms include the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL), Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), and Fisheries Code.

Box 4. Salient features of CARL, IPRA, and Fisheries Code

Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) – 1988

Objectives

- Implements the directive of the Philippine Constitution to implement an agrarian reform program based on farmers owning the lands they till
- RA 6657 is based on the principles of social justice as well as improving overall economic growth and efficiency of the rural sector
- Aims to improve the lives of the landless farmers and farm workers by providing them access and ownership of agricultural lands, access to support services, and agrarian justice delivery

Key provisions

- Authorizes the acquisition and distribution of all public and private agricultural lands, as well as the provision of support services and agrarian justice to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs)
- Awards a maximum of three hectares to qualified ARBs
- Provides for a landowner's retention ceiling of five hectares of agricultural lands and three hectares each to children who qualify as preferred beneficiaries
- Mandates the payment of just compensation to landowners and prohibits the transfer of CARP-awarded lands except through hereditary succession
- Prohibits the conversion of irrigated lands

Mode of implementation

- The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) undertakes the following: (1) authorizes the acquisition and distribution of all public and private agricultural lands, as well as the provision of support services and agrarian justice to ARBs, (2) conducts land surveys, identifies qualified ARBs, generates and distributes Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) titles, (3) addresses agrarian disputes through administrative action, and (4) adjudicates agrarian cases.

Tenure instruments

- Provides for different tenurial instruments based on land classification: tenurial security for forestry areas, and tenancy reforms & land redistribution for private and alienable lands
- Land redistribution is completed by the provision of support services such as extension, credit, livelihood support, among others.

Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) - 1997

Objectives

- Seeks to advance the directive of the Philippine Constitution to protect the rights of IPs to preserve and develop their cultures and institutions
- Recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples over their ancestral domains
- Provides for a process of titling of lands through the issuance of Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) and Certificate of Ancestral Land Title (CALT)

Key provisions

- Recognizes the rights of IPs over their ancestral domains (ADs) and provides for a process of titling of lands
- ADs are all areas generally belonging to indigenous cultural communities/indigenous peoples (ICCs/IPs) comprising lands, inland waters, coastal areas, and natural resources therein, held under a claim of ownership, occupied or possessed by ICCs/IPs, themselves or through their ancestors, communally or individually.
- Empowers the IPs to formulate an Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP), which provides them with a legal framework for their “traditional use” policies and presents the details of the allowable and non-negotiable activities on their ADs. It likewise contains the priority projects and programs identified by the IP community after consultations following customs and tradition.

Mode of implementation

- The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) is responsible for: (1) identification, delineation, and recognition of ancestral lands/domains, based on self-delineation by the ICCs/IPs; (2) oversight of the management of ancestral lands/domains in accordance with a master plan (i.e., ADSDPP) formulated by the ICCs/IPs; and, (3) with the free and prior informed consent (FPIC) of the ICCs/IPs concerned, issues the certification precondition prior to the grant of any license, lease, or permit for the exploitation of natural resources affecting the interests of ICCs/IPs or their ancestral domains.

Tenure instruments

- CADTs and CALTs are ownership tenurial instruments issued and awarded to an applicant community or clan. These tenurial instruments have no term limits.
- Representatives chosen by the community act as holders of the CADT in trust in behalf of the concerned indigenous community.

Philippines Fisheries Code – 1998

Objectives

- Founded on the mandate of the Philippine Constitution to protect the rights of subsistence fisherfolk to communal fishing resources
- Establishes food security as the overriding consideration in the utilization, management, conservation, and protection of fishery resources
- Among the Code’s objectives are: (1) conservation, protection, and sustained management of fishery and aquatic resources; (2) poverty alleviation and the provision of supplementary livelihood among municipal fisherfolk; and, (3) improved productivity in the industry through aquaculture, optimal utilization of offshore and deep-sea resources, and upgrading of post-harvest technology.

Key provisions

- Limits access to fishery and aquatic resources in the country to Filipino citizens, and provides small fisherfolk and their organizations with preferential use of municipal waters
- Municipal waters include not only bodies of water within the municipality which are not included within the protected areas as defined under RA 7586 (National Integrated Protected Areas System law), public forest, timber lands, forest reserves or fishery reserves, but also coastal marine waters within 15 kilometers from the shore.
- Forbids commercial-scale fishing in municipal waters, except in special cases where municipal permits are issued, and only in waters over 10.1 kilometers from the shore with a depth of at least seven fathoms (12.8 meters)
- Mandates the creation of fisherfolk settlement areas, to be located in certain areas of the public domain, near fishery areas

Mode of implementation

- Local government units (LGUs) manage and issue fishing rights over municipal waters.
- The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) assists in the implementation of the Fishery Code, including the delineation of municipal waters.
- The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) prepares the technical details of all municipal waters. LGUs are supposed to enact municipal ordinances establishing the boundaries of their municipal waters in order to complete the delineation areas.

Tenure instruments

- Delineating the boundaries of a municipality's 15-kilometer waters is essential for sustainable management of fishery resources and granting the preferential rights of municipal fishers within such zone.
- Duly registered fisherfolk organizations/ cooperatives shall have preference in the grant of fishery rights by the LGUs.
- The LGUs shall maintain a registry of municipal fisherfolk, who are fishing or may desire to fish in municipal waters for the purpose of determining priorities among them, and for monitoring fishing.

Source: <https://angoc.org/portal/state-of-land-and-resource-tenure-reform-in-the-philippines-2023-second-edition/>

While resource tenure reforms in the Philippines have brought about the transfer of ownership rights to the rural poor, the quality of implementation of asset reforms has been uneven across the different sectors. Under CARL, many agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) are still unable to enjoy the full benefits of property rights or security of tenure despite being issued their Emancipation Patents and Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs). Support services to small farmers have been inadequate and irregular, and many large private lands under compulsory acquisition remain undistributed. Under IPRA, several IP/ ICCs have been given legal recognition of their collective rights to ancestral domains through the issuance of Certificates of Ancestral Domain Claims/Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADCs/CADTs), and yet for many IP communities, little has changed in terms of their actual exercise of traditional rights to land. Different government agencies continue to issue titles, leases, and other tenure instruments within CADCs/ CADTs, while government projects, private investments, migrants and other groups continue to intrude into ancestral domain lands. Meanwhile, little has changed for small municipal fisherfolk in terms of fishing rights and tenure reforms. Large commercial fishing continues to intrude into municipal waters, and municipal fishers continue to lose out to private businesses and political interests in the allocation of rights to foreshore and coastal areas.

Mr. Quizon also tackled the environmental dimension of land, pointing to biodiversity loss, deforestation, mining pressures, and the vulnerability of upland and coastal dwellers to climate change and disasters. Land tenure insecurity, particularly in informal settlements, uplands, and coastal areas, leaves millions vulnerable to displacement during disasters. Areas most severely affected by typhoons are coastal and uplands where residents have no legal tenure. The poor are forced to live in highly vulnerable areas that are too steep, prone to erosion, or susceptible to flooding. With no security of tenure, they are often displaced — finding it difficult to return or having to face disputes over their land parcels. Those without formal tenure rights are unable to claim entitlements (i.e., housing, credit assistance) to rebuild. Thus, many sink deeper into debt and poverty.

Box 5. Land and the environment

- The Philippines is among the world's 18 mega-diversity countries. However, it is also one of the top 10 countries with the largest number of species threatened with extinction.
- The forest cover in the early 1970s was 10.6 M hectares or 35 percent of the country. This shrank to just 6.4 M hectares in the late 1980s, due to widespread logging.
- A logging ban and community-based forest management approaches helped in the partial regeneration of forests. Also, a National Greening Program was instituted in 2011 to 2016.
- The forest cover is currently about 7 M hectares, or about 23 percent of the country's land area.
- Yet continuing forest loss is driven by logging, mining, forest clearings for agriculture and settlements, collection of fuelwood & poor management by government and tenured stakeholders.
- The Philippines is one of the world's most highly mineralized countries. As of 2022, some 305 Mineral Production Sharing Agreements within 556,321 hectares had been issued. Moreover, there are 42 Exploration Permits on 93,550 hectares.
- Most of our priority conservation areas sit on top of large mineral reserves. Many significant biodiversity areas conflict with mining areas. Mining causes deforestation and destruction of ecological systems, pollution, subsidence, sinking and displacement of communities. Mining is a major source of land conflict, encroaching on an estimated 53 percent of IP ancestral domains.

The presentation stressed that inequality in land ownership and weak governance continue to fuel land conflicts, violence, and HRVs, disproportionately affecting small farmers, fisherfolk, and IPs. Nearly 85 percent of key biodiversity areas (KBAs) overlap with ancestral domains, underscoring the crucial role of indigenous communities in stewardship in the face of competing pressures from mining, infrastructure, and agribusiness.

Land is directly linked to peace. There is no official data on landlessness. However, the lack of land rights and tenure security continues to be a key driver of conflict and impediment to development. Mindanao is affected by conflict and instability that have left thousands of people living in protracted displacement over decades.

As control over land can translate into power and influence within a territory, land is also the object of competition and aggression, affecting governance and authority. Studies have shown that land conflicts can result in violence and human rights violations (HRVs) against individuals and communities (killings, harassments, red-tagging, displacement, etc.).

Finally, Mr. Quizon underscored that secure land tenure for all is essential to poverty reduction, social justice, and resilience. Secure rights enable families and communities to invest in their livelihoods, safeguard against displacement, and actively participate in decision-making processes. Resource tenure reforms continue to play a central role in addressing rural poverty. However, they should go beyond the issuance of titles and tenure instruments. There is need for the enforcement of land rights; an enabling environment and support services to help poor rural households make their lands productive and profitable; basic social services accessible; and, systems of land and resource governance where the voices of poor sectors are heard and addressed. He concluded that land rights must be recognized as human rights; integral to dignity, equality, and sustainable development.

Land rights as human rights – Atty. Geminiano Sandoval, Jr., ANGOC

Land is essential for the enjoyment of other rights – shelter, food, freedom. It is paramount to attain human dignity and security. As land is a source of livelihood, it is central to economic rights. Land is also often linked to peoples’ identities and so, it is tied to social and cultural rights.

Defining land rights and identifying their violations, however, is often difficult and complex, especially since many violations are not immediately visible. Killings, arbitrary detentions, and red-tagging are clear violations of human rights, yet authorities often fail to see their links to land rights. They often overlook the fact that the enjoyment of many human rights depends on secure access to land and resources — and that violations of land rights can serve as pathways to broader human rights abuses.

The UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, in its General Comment No. 4, states that everyone should have a “degree of security of tenure which guarantees legal protection against forced eviction, harassment, and other threats.” In its General Comment No. 7, the Committee underscores the interrelationship and interdependency of all human rights and thus, forced evictions may lead to the violation of other human rights, such as the “right to life, the right to security of the person, the right to non-interference with privacy, family and home and the right to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions.”

Atty. Geminiano Sandoval emphasized that land rights go beyond issues of property ownership and titles because it encompasses tenurial rights, waters, and access to natural resources. Land, he explained, has unique features: immobile, indivisible, and central to life and dignity. These make land-related conflicts deeply connected to systemic problems such as weak policies, corruption, and power imbalances. Land rights emanate from profound connections to land since they often relate to shelter, livelihood, and any other factor that contribute to human dignity. Land rights commonly involve

ancestral lands and waters, agrarian lands and agrarian reform, mining and the environment, or housing. Thus, land rights are protected and enforced through social legislation to tilt the balance in favor of the vulnerable and marginalized rights holders because their lives depend on land. As violations of land rights often lead to broader human rights abuses, land rights must therefore be recognized as an integral part of human rights protection.

Respecting land rights is necessary for the enjoyment of other fundamental human rights listed in the International Bill of Rights which consists of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). This causation underscores the interrelatedness and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Atty. Sandoval noted that the UDHR has established that each person has the right to own property and not to be arbitrarily deprived of it. It also underscores the right of one, together with her/his family, to an adequate standard of living, including proper housing. These provisions show that land rights do not merely deal with land ownership, but are fundamentally linked to human dignity. As with the UDHR, the ICCPR emphasizes the right to life. The right to life is not to be interpreted merely as protection from killing or physical harm, but also seeks to ensure that every person enjoys a life with dignity. The ICESCR



meanwhile asserts the right of each person “to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.” The right to housing is coupled with the right to live in security, peace, and dignity.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) also provides for the land rights of IPs. Article 24 states that IPs have a right to the land, territories, and resources they have traditionally occupied.

Atty. Sandoval also discussed the Philippine legal context, referencing the Constitution. The Bill of Rights protect persons from abuses, particularly from the government. He also highlighted the social justice provisions of the Constitution. Article XIII of the Constitution refers to Social Justice and Human Rights. Section 1 mandates Congress to pass laws that promote human dignity and eliminate all kinds of inequalities. Thus, the State is given the authority to regulate property ownership. At the same time, the Constitution also tackles eviction. Under Article XIII, Section 10, urban or rural poor dwellers shall not be evicted nor their dwelling demolished, except in accordance with law and in a just and humane manner.

In Article XII, Section 6, the Constitution underscores that property has a social function and at the same time grants to the government the authority to redistribute land for the common good. The provision also assigns to government the duty to protect people from arbitrary evictions.

Thus, there should be no question that land rights are protected in the Philippines. For all intents and purposes, they are human rights. However, as mentioned earlier, gaps in legislation, outdated policies, wrong priorities coupled with corruption and inaction by government created a system that constantly infringes the recognized rights to land of the vulnerable and marginalized.

Session 2: Land Tenure Structure and Governance

Land tenure systems, land administration systems, dealing with land conflicts – Mr. Antonio Quizon, ANGOC

Mr. Quizon provided an in-depth overview of land tenure and governance systems in the Philippines, underscoring their implications on human rights and access to land. As per Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), land governance is defined as the set of rules, processes, and structures through which decisions are made about land use, distribution, enforcement of rights, and the management of competing interests. As such, land governance involves three key elements:

- ***a set of rules, processes and structures***, whether these are defined by legal, customary, or traditional systems;
- ***decisions on land distribution, access, and use***, including the enforcement of rights; and,
- ***management of conflict*** due to competing interests on land.

The presentation highlighted the three main land tenure domains: (1) Public Domain, governed by the Public Lands Act of 1936 and managed primarily by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), covering agricultural, forest, mineral, and national park lands; (2) Private Lands, protected under the Civil Code and regulated through land titling systems such as the Torrens Title; and, (3) Ancestral Domains, recognized under the IPRA, which cover not only physical lands but also the cultural and spiritual environment of IPs.

Aside from the 1987 Constitution, some 12 basic laws (as amended) define the land tenure system:

- Public Land Act of 1936
- Forestry Code of 1975
- Mining Act of 1995
- National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992; E-NIPAS of 2018
- Land Registration Act 496 of 1902
- Civil Code of 1949
- Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988
- Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997
- Fisheries Code of 1998
- Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992
- Local Government Code of 1991
- Bangsamoro Organic Law of 2019



Mr. Quizon stressed that despite the existence of such major laws shaping land governance, the system remains fragmented and complex. Issues such as: outdated land classification (e.g., Baguio as forestland, Marawi as military reservation); lack of consolidated tenure maps; overlapping mandates of agencies like the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Land Registration Authority (LRA), and National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP); and, unresolved delineation of forest lines continue to generate disputes and confusions.

He further discussed land administration systems, pointing out that at least 14 different agencies are involved in land-related mandates, ranging from the issuance of titles and permits, to land valuation, and zoning. This bureaucratic complexity often leads to overlapping tenure rights and inefficiencies. Additionally, there are at least 39 types of tenure instruments in use, which vary from perpetual titles — like Transfer Certificate of Title (TCT) and Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) — to time-bound usufruct agreements and leases (e.g., mining contracts), adding layers of confusion for communities.

On land use and planning, Mr. Quizon emphasized that while LGUs are mandated to craft Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs), only 40 percent have updated plans as of 2021. Furthermore, sectoral plans like Forest Land Use Plans and Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans (ADSDPPs) are often not harmonized, resulting in exclusion of upland dwellers and conflicts with conservation areas. He stressed the urgent need for a National Land Use Act to integrate these systems.

Table 1. Key land agencies in the Philippines and functions related to tenure

Agency	Key functions related to land and tenure security
Land Registration Authority (LRA), Department of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing decrees of registration and original certificates of title, and subsequent “transfer certificates of title” (TCTs) derived from the original certificates of title • Implements the Torrens System of land registration as the central repository of land records involving registered or titled lands
Register of Deeds (ROD), Department of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public repository of records of all real estate deeds, titles, and instruments affecting registered or unregistered lands in the province or city • Registration of sale, donation, or assignment of real or personal property.
Land Management Bureau (LMB), DENR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning for the land sector. • Policies for the administration and management of A&D lands of the public domain. • Assists in the M&E of land surveys, management, and disposition of lands
Forest Management Bureau (FMB), DENR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers all forest land, grazing lands, and forest/watershed reservations • Forest Land Use Planning (FLUPs) in coordination with LGUs; issuance of various tenure instruments over forest land & resources
Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), DENR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes and manages protected areas • Mainstreaming of Protected Area (PA) Management Plans into local plans, including restoration and rehabilitation • Establishment of PAMBs & ICCAs
Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), DENR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration and disposition of mineral lands and mineral resources • Evaluates mining applications and issues exploration permits (EPs) & mining agreements (MPSA, FTAA) • Implements the National Small-Scale Mining Program
National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), DENR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The central mapping agency, depository, and distribution facility of natural resources data in the form of maps, charts, texts, and statistics.
National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification, delineation, and recognition of ancestral lands/domains • Oversight function for the management of ancestral lands/domains in accordance with ADSDPPs • Issues Certificates of Ancestral Land/Domain Title (CALT/CADT) • Institutes and enforces policies on “free, prior and informed consent” (FPIC)
Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of CARP in undertaking land acquisition and land distribution, settlement of agrarian disputes, and provision of support services • Approval powers over the conversion of agricultural land to other purposes

Agency	Key functions related to land and tenure security
Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role under CARP includes: land valuation, payment of compensation to landowners and collection of land amortization payments from ARBs
Department of Agriculture (DA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts zoning of agricultural lands as provided for under AFMA of 1997 • Identifies irrigation areas, which makes these lands ineligible for land conversion
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), DA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development, management, and conservation of fisheries and aquatic resources • Facilitates LGUs in the implementation of the Fishery Code, including the delineation of municipal waters
Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and policymaking, regulatory, program coordination and performance monitoring for housing, human settlement, and urban development • Zoning and classification of land based on Land Use Plans (CLUPs) by LGUs
Department of Energy (DoE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All government plans, programs, and activities relative to energy exploration, development, utilization, distribution, and conservation • Issues exploration permits and mining licenses re: oil, natural gas, coal, and energy sources
Local Government Units (LGUs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local land classification and zoning, Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) • Manages and issues fishing rights over municipal waters • Manages foreshores and public areas under co-management with DENR • Land valuation and collection of real property tax • Local police powers and enforcement of rights

Source: Antonio Quizon (powerpoint presentation)

Finally, the presentation turned to land conflict management, citing the 2024 Philippine Land and Resource Conflict Monitoring Report. The ANGO study documented 262 ongoing land conflicts covering over 775,000 hectares, affecting more than 104,000 households. These conflicts are primarily driven by private enterprises, agrarian disputes, and overlapping claims between communities and government programs. Alarming, at least 28 incidents of HRVs were recorded in 2024 alone. Communities largely turned to peaceful resolution mechanisms such as negotiations, government adjudication, and demonstrations, though systemic issues persist.

Mr. Quizon briefly assessed the land conflict management mechanisms. Local dispute resolution mechanisms are locally accessible and effective for addressing land disputes within the community. However, they have limited scope and coverage. On the other hand, administrative and quasi-judicial mechanisms are generally responsive to sectoral issues. Their limitations include: a) confined to their agency jurisdictions, i.e., DAR on agrarian cases, DENR on competing forestland users; and, b) cannot fully resolve overlapping tenure rights, conflicting inter-sectoral policies, or procedural lapses (EIAs, SIAs, FPIC). Overall, the issues are lack of mechanisms to deal with conflicts arising from systemic issues — the multiplicity of laws, lack of harmonization of policies, conflicting tenure claims, and functional overlaps among agencies. Thus, some cases may require resolution at a higher level, or through an inter-agency body.

Mr. Quizon concluded by underscoring that land is a fixed and limited resource and therefore an inherent source of conflict. For human rights workers and advocates, understanding the structure of land governance is critical in protecting tenure rights, resolving disputes, and ensuring that land serves its social function of equity, justice, and human dignity.

Session 3: Land and Human Rights Challenges Faced by Farmers in the Philippines in relation to Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL)

Farmers' Struggles under CARL – Atty. Mary Claire Demaisip, KAISAHAN

Atty. Mary Claire Demaisip's presentation focused on the lived realities of farmers and farmworkers, particularly in Negros Occidental. She highlighted that while farmers provide the backbone of food security, they continue to suffer from insecurity of tenure, land inequality, and systemic neglect. Despite the CARP, many beneficiaries remain landless or face obstacles in accessing and fully enjoying their rights.

Drawing from the monitoring work of KAISAHAN under the DAGYAW Negros Project, Atty. Demaisip presented case studies where unresolved land disputes resulted in displacement, loss of livelihood, harassment, and even killings. She stressed that farmers and land rights defenders are particularly vulnerable to intimidation and red-tagging, especially when advocating for their communities. Many cases documented by KAISAHAN lasted more than a decade, and in the absence of swift government action, violations of land rights escalated into broader human rights abuses.

The session underscored that delays in land acquisition and distribution, erroneous notices of coverage, permissive land conversions, and weak enforcement of agrarian laws contribute to worsening vulnerabilities. Atty. Demaisip emphasized that government inaction is often a central factor that enables perpetrators to violate farmers' rights with impunity.

She also noted that unresolved land conflicts pose risks not only to farmers' dignity and survival but also to peace and security, as unaddressed grievances may fuel social unrest and insurgency. In this light, she called for a more proactive and coordinated role for government agencies, including the DAR, CHR, local government units (LGUs), and the security sector, to ensure accountability and delivery of justice.

In conclusion, Atty. Demaisip outlined recommendations such as: proactive CARP implementation; swift correction of erroneous notices of coverage; stricter monitoring of land conversions; passing the Human Rights Defenders Bill and National Land Use Act; and, strengthening the CHR's programmatic support for land and human rights. She also emphasized the importance of empowering farmer-paralegals and expanding partnerships between government and civil society to better document and address land-related HRVs.



Session 4: IPRA and Its Challenges

IPs' Land Rights – Mr. Teddy Baguilat Jr. of Tawali Tribe, Ifugao

This session was presented by Mr. Teddy Baguilat a prominent advocate for IP's welfare, former legislator, and member of the Global Consortium on Indigenous Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCA Consortium). The sharing provided a comprehensive discussion on the IPs' concept of land, the legal foundations of their rights under the IPRA or Republic Act No. 8371, and the continuing challenges in its implementation.

Mr. Baguilat began by emphasizing that, for IPs, land is life; a sacred and holistic space that sustains their identity, spirituality, and livelihood. He underscored that ancestral land is not merely a physical territory but

includes everything above and below it, encompassing biodiversity, culture, and the community's spiritual connection to nature. He stressed that land cannot be separated from the life and survival of IP communities.

The discussion then focused on the four pillars of IPRA, which guarantee:

- The right to ancestral domains and lands – recognizing collective and individual ownership of sacred and livelihood areas;
- The right to self-governance and empowerment – affirming the autonomy of IP communities in managing their affairs according to customary laws;
- The right to social justice and human rights – ensuring access to their indigenous systems of justice consistent with national and international human rights standards; and,
- The right to cultural integrity – protecting indigenous knowledge, cultural expressions, and traditional practices.



Mr. Baguilat also discussed the role of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as the implementing agency of IPRA. While NCIP has the mandate to adjudicate and safeguard IP rights, the agency is burdened by limitations due to jurisdictional overlaps, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and lack of funding support. For instance, as of 2021, 257 CADTs covering 5.97 million hectares have been approved, yet only 56 were registered with the LRA due to administrative and legal conflicts.

He further explained that ancestral domains overlap with other land tenure instruments, including agrarian reform lands and protected areas, causing tension between government agencies such as the DAR, DENR, and LRA. These overlaps have been worsened by the non-functioning Joint Administrative Order (JAO) 01-2012 and the limited support for the formulation and implementation of ADSDPPs.

The presentation concluded with a discussion on current challenges facing IP rights protection, including:

- Tradition versus bureaucracy, particularly the clash between oral traditions and written legal systems;
- Corruption, illustrated by controversial projects such as the Kaliwa Dam; and,
- Conflicting laws, such as those involving tourism projects in Boracay's ancestral territories.

In closing, Mr. Baguilat called for a renewed commitment from both State institutions and civil society to uphold IP rights, strengthen the implementation of IPRA, and ensure genuine participation of IP communities in land governance and national development.

Session 5: Markers of Land Conflict

Land conflict: elements and markers – Atty. Geminiano Sandoval, Jr., ANGOC

Atty. Geminiano Sandoval stated that HRVs affecting land rights commonly happen in land conflict cases. He reiterated that violations of land rights often go beyond isolated incidents and instead develop into systemic conflicts that can span generations — driven by inequality, weak governance, and concentrated power structures.

Land conflict occurs when two or more parties assert conflicting claims — whether of ownership, tenure, use or access — over the whole or a portion of a specified land or territory. A land conflict case details the

narrative of the conflict — location, duration, size of land or resource in conflict, and the types of land and resource involved, based on their actual use by communities.

Atty. Sandoval identified the key elements of land conflict, namely: contentious claims, specific land areas, stakeholders, overlapping claims, drivers, latent conditions, triggers, and markers. Each of these elements, he explained, plays a crucial role in identifying and understanding ongoing conflicts and their escalation patterns.

The discussion highlighted drivers such as government infrastructure projects, private investments, and agrarian disputes, which may not directly violate land rights but often create the conditions for conflict. Latent conditions, such as insecure tenure, corruption, population pressure, and unbalanced power structures, set the stage for disputes even before they become visible. Triggering events, like forced land conversion or expropriation, ignite these tensions, while markers (e.g., protests, legal actions, evictions, and violence) indicate the escalation of conflict. Atty. Sandoval emphasized that identifying markers allows human rights workers to trace the storyline of land conflicts rather than treating incidents in isolation.

Two case studies were used to illustrate these dynamics. The San Roque Dam Project demonstrated how the absence of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), coupled with poor governance and environmental mismanagement, led to displacement, flooding, and livelihood loss among the *Ibaloy* community and smallholder farmers; as well as the entire province of Pangasinan, as subsequent events would manifest. Meanwhile, the Manila Bay Reclamation Projects showcased how large-scale private and government investments, despite warnings of environmental degradation, resulted in the displacement of fisherfolk and harassment of activists. Both examples underscored how land rights violations often lead to HRVs such as eviction, loss of livelihood, and violence.

In his synthesis, Atty. Sandoval stressed that recognizing markers of land conflict is crucial for agencies like the CHR to respond proactively. He urged participants to “look beyond incidents” and examine the underlying structural causes of disputes to prevent future HRVs. The presentation concluded with a call for multi-stakeholder cooperation — between and among CHR, government agencies, and civil society — in addressing land conflicts through a human rights-based and preventive approach.

Session 6: Lecture on CARL

Video presentation on CARL – Atty. JM Sandino Imperial, DAR

In this session, Atty. Imperial provided a comprehensive brief on Republic Act No. 6657, also known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL). The presentation outlined its constitutional foundations, scope, prohibited acts, and the roles of implementing agencies.

Atty. Imperial began by citing the 1987 Constitution, which mandates the State to implement agrarian reform, ensuring that landless farmers and farm workers gain the right to own or benefit from the lands they cultivate. Agrarian reform, as explained, is not limited to land redistribution but includes a wide range of support services intended to uplift the socio-economic conditions of farmer beneficiaries. Alternative arrangements such as profit sharing, labor administration, and stock distribution were also noted as part of the reform framework.

The session highlighted the quasi-judicial powers of DAR, especially under Section 50 of the CARL, granting DAR primary and exclusive jurisdiction over agrarian reform matters, with some exceptions under the DAR and DENR.

Atty. Imperial also discussed the prohibited acts under Section 73 of the CARL, which includes: (1) circumventing retention limits, (2) illegal occupation or detainer by non-beneficiaries, (3) unauthorized land conversion to avoid CARP coverage, (4) obstruction of program implementation, and, (5) unauthorized transfer or conveyance of awarded land rights.

To clarify agrarian law processes, DAR Administrative Order No. 3 (2017) was introduced, which governs cases involving classification of landholdings, identification and qualification of beneficiaries, issuance and cancellation of Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs), exemptions, and conversions. Likewise, the DAR Adjudication Board (DARAB) 2021 Revised Rules of Procedure were emphasized, particularly on jurisdiction over just compensation, annulment of judgments, and agrarian disputes referred by the DAR Secretary or the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC).

Addressing a common query, Atty. Imperial clarified that under Republic Act No. 9700 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER), DAR's authority to issue notices of coverage ceased on 30 June 2014. However, cases pending before that date may still proceed until resolution and execution.

In closing, Atty. Imperial underscored that agrarian law implementation and agrarian disputes operate under separate frameworks: (1) Administrative Order No. 3 of 2017 for agrarian law implementation, and, (2) DARAB 2021 Rules for Adjudication of Disputes.

The session ended with a strong reminder of DAR's continuing role in regulating agricultural land use, protecting farmer beneficiaries, and providing free legal assistance and representation in courts and quasi-judicial bodies.

Group Activity and Reflection

The Group Activity and Reflection was facilitated by Atty. Geminiano Sandoval Jr. (ANGOC). Participants analyzed sample land conflict scenarios by applying human rights framework. They reflected on CHR's possible interventions, identifying documentation, legal referral, and advocacy as key roles.

Ms. Mary Jean Evangelista (CHR-HRDD) led a collective reflection where participants underscored the need to strengthen regional office engagement and deepen coordination with partner agencies.



Some takeaways include:

- Land rights are not only about ownership but also about access, tenure security, and dignity.
- International frameworks provide important anchors, but national implementation remains weak.
- The CHR has an important role in linking community struggles with relevant policy reforms efforts.
- Strong and sustained collaboration with concerned national agencies and civil society and grassroots organizations remains crucial.

Participants recommended that the CHR develop a standardized monitoring tool to be used in investigating land rights–related cases and documenting relevant issues across regional and central offices. In response, Mr. Marquez of ANGOC informed the participants of the ongoing process of producing a manual that aims to contribute in enhancing the process of monitoring, documenting, and reporting cases of land conflicts and incidences of HRVs, and their connection. Through this manual, the Land Justice Initiative will engage and support the Commission on Human Rights in addressing land conflicts and HRVs while strengthening protections for affected communities and human rights defenders.

Closing Session

Remarks – Atty. Faydah M. Dumarpa (Commissioner, CHR)

In her closing message, Commissioner Dumarpa extended the Commission’s deep appreciation to its partners: ANGOC, KAISAHAN, CSJHP, and HRDD, for their vital collaboration in ensuring the success of the Land Rights Literacy Training for CHR. She emphasized that this activity forms part of the broader Land Justice Initiative (LJI), an EU-funded project that highlights the shared responsibility of all stakeholders in advancing justice and accountability for land rights defenders.

Reflecting on the two-day training course, Commissioner Dumarpa underscored that participants gained not only technical knowledge but also deeper insights into the complex realities of land rights in the Philippines. She highlighted how the sessions reinforced the understanding that land is not merely a resource but is intricately tied to livelihood, culture, and dignity. She noted that the stories shared by resource persons and participants illustrated a crucial truth: **land rights are human rights**.



As members of the CHR, the Commissioner reminded participants of their duty to protect, respect, and fulfill these rights in their casework, advocacy, and community engagements. She encouraged everyone to view the training not as an endpoint but as the start of stronger partnerships and collaborative efforts between the CHR and its allies in pushing for inclusive, rights-based land governance. In doing so, she stressed that CHR honors the continuing struggles of farmers, fisherfolk, and IPs who courageously defend their land and future.

Commissioner Dumarpa concluded by congratulating all organizers and participants for a meaningful and successful training, leaving a strong call for unity, persistence, and action in promoting land rights and social justice. ■

Annex A: Program of Land Rights Literacy Training for CHR

TIME	ACTIVITY	PIC
Day 0 (15 September 2025)		
02:00– 05:00PM	Check-in at Hotel (for provincial-based participants)	
Day 1 (16 September 2025)		
08:30–09:00AM	Registration	HRDD
09:00– 09:10AM	Preliminaries (Invocation, National Anthem, etc.)	HRDD
09:10–09:25AM	Welcoming Remarks	Ms. Mary Joyce M. Crisanto Director III, CHR – Human Rights Policy Centers Office (HRPCO)
09:25–09:30AM	Video Message from European Union	Dr. Marco Gemmer Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to the Philippines
09:30–09:35AM	Message from Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)	Mr. Nathaniel Don E. Marquez Executive Director, ANGOC
09:35–09:40AM	Message from Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan, Inc. (KAISAHAN)	Mr. Anthony Marzan Executive Director, KAISAHAN
09:40–10:00AM	Objectives and Program	Ms. Marie Jean Evangelista Training Specialist V, CHR-HRDD
10:00–10:20AM	Photo Opportunity and Health Break	
10:20–10:50AM	Session 1: Setting the Frame Relevance of Land in the National Context	Mr. Antonio B. Quizon ANGOC
10:50–11:30AM	Session 1: Setting the Frame Land Rights as Human Rights	Atty. Geminiano Sandoval, Jr. ANGOC
11:30–12:00PM	Question and Answer	
12:00–01:00PM	Lunch	
01:00–01:30PM	Session 2: Overall Land Tenure Structure and Land Governance in the Philippines	Mr. Antonio B. Quizon ANGOC
01:30–01:45PM	Question and Answer	
01:45–02:00PM	Health Break	
02:00–03:15PM	Session 3: Land and Human Rights Challenges Faced by Farmers in the Philippines in relation to Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law	Atty. Mary Claire A. Demaisip KAISAHAN
03:15–03:45PM	Question and Answer	
03:45–04:00PM	Announcements and Closing of Day 1	
Day 2 (17 September 2025)		
08:30–09:00AM	Registration	HRDD
09:00–09:45AM	Session 4: Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act and its Challenges	Mr. Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr. Tuwali Tribe of Ifugao
09:45–10:00AM	Question and Answer	
10:15–10:30AM	Health Break	
10:30–11:30AM	Session 5: Markers of Land Conflict	Atty. Geminiano Sandoval Jr. ANGOC
11:30–12:00PM	Question and Answer	
12:00–01:00PM	Lunch	
01:00–01:15PM	Session 6: Lecture on the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (video presentation)	Atty. JM Sandino Imperial Assistant Director, Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)
02:30–03:30PM	Group Activity	Atty. Geminiano Sandoval Jr. ANGOC
03:30–04:30PM	Group Presentation/Reporting	
04:30–04:40PM	Closing Remarks	Atty. Faydah M. Dumarpa Commissioner, CHR
Day 3 (18 September 2025)		
Departure (for provincial-based participants)		



Land Justice Initiative aims to contribute in protecting and supporting Land and Human Rights Defenders (LHRDs) who face increasing threats and challenges in advocating for land rights and social justice. In particular, the LJI aims to enhance access to justice, legal protection, and institutional support for LHRDs through capacity building, policy advocacy, and investigative monitoring. The main target areas of LJI are Negros Occidental and Leyte provinces. Jointly implemented by KAISAHAN and ANGOC, LJI is a three-year project supported by the European Union through the European Commission in the Philippines.



Founded in 1979, the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) is a regional association of national and regional networks of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Asia actively engaged in promoting food sovereignty, land rights and agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture, participatory governance, broadening civic and democratic space, and rural development.

ANGOC member networks and partners work in eight Asian countries together with some 3,000 CSOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). ANGOC actively engages in joint field programs and policy discussions with national governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and international financial institutions (IFIs).



Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran sa Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN) is a social development organization promoting a sustainable and human society through the empowerment of marginalized groups in rural areas, especially among farmers and farm workers, to undertake their own development, participate fully in democratic processes, and demand their rightful share in the stewardship of the land and the fruits of their labor.



The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) is an independent National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) created under the 1987 Philippine Constitution, established on 05 May 1987 by virtue of Executive Order No. 163. The Commission is mandated to conduct investigations on human rights violations against marginalized and vulnerable sectors of the society, involving civil and political rights. It upholds six fundamental characteristics — independence, pluralism, broad mandate, transparency, accessibility, and operational efficiency.

The Center for Social Justice and Humanitarian Protection (CHR-CSJHP) is one of the thematic centers of the Human Rights Policy Centers Office (HRPCO) of the CHR. Guided by the CHR's constitutional mandate, the Center is tasked to promote and protect human rights in situations of crisis, conflict, displacement, and environmental harm. The Center leads in mainstreaming a humanitarian and protection lens in CHR's work, focusing on vulnerable and marginalized populations such as internally displaced persons (IDPs), indigenous peoples, environmental defenders, and communities affected by disasters or development-induced displacement. The CHR-CSJHP ensures the integration of international human rights and humanitarian law standards in domestic response and policy development. It also spearheads monitoring, advocacy, and capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening the protection of civilians and promoting accountability in humanitarian contexts.

The Human Resource Development Division (CHR-HRDD) is responsible for managing and implementing programs and policies on learning, capacity-building, and employee welfare within the CHR. Operating under the Administrative Office, the Division develops and enforces systems that enhance the competence, performance, and professional growth of CHR personnel across all regional and central offices. The CHR-HRDD designs and delivers training programs, performance evaluation mechanisms, and career development initiatives to ensure that CHR's workforce remains responsive to evolving human rights challenges. Through its work, the CHR-HRDD upholds the Commission's commitment to excellence, transparency, and continuous organizational development in the service of human rights protection and promotion.

