Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
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House Resolution No. 1579

INTRODUCED BY
REPRESENTATIVES ALLEN JESSE C. MANGAOANG, MAXIMO Y. DALOG, JR., SOLOMON R. CHUNGAŁAO AND ELIAS C. BULUT, JR.

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT TO NAME AND DESIGNATE THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (NCIP) AS THE ADMINISTRATOR AND MANAGER OF A FIVE THOUSAND (5,000) SQUARE METER LOT SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBED IN OCT. NO. 01, LOCATED AT HARRISON ROAD, BAGUIO CITY; AND GIVING AND GRANTING AUTHORITY THERETO TO SAID AGENCY TO DEVELOP THE LOT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "CORDILLERA CULTURAL CENTER" THAT WILL CATER FOR THE INTEREST OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMMUNITIES OF THE CORDILLERA REGION.

WHEREAS, in the 1950’s, the City of Baguio had become a melting pot of different ethnicities and culture, as well as an education center, with increasing number of students seeking formal education specially those who are coming from the different remote areas of the Cordillera Region.

WHEREAS, IP students, resolute in attaining formal education, practiced their customary ways of collectivity between and among them by aiding their less fortunate fellows regardless of their differences as to their ethnolinguistic affiliations. A bond soon followed among IP students leading to the formulation of BIBAK Organization, BIBAK meaning Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc, Apayao and Kalinga, which became their identity inside their respective colleges and universities in the City and nearby adjacent Municipality of La Trinidad.

WHEREAS, in these different colleges and universities, the students formed BIBAK Organizations. Soon thereafter, efforts were made to unite the different groups which resulted to the formation of the Centralized BIBAK Association, Inc. (CBAI) which was duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on January 07, 1958, with the primary goal to unite all Cordilleran Students and to serve as their voice in all matters that concern the youth.

WHEREAS, with the help of other government agencies, CBAI was able to secure for the exclusive use of students from the different provinces of Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc,
Apayao and Kalinga (BIBAK), that 5,000 square meter lot, portion of OCT No. 1, located at No. 40 Harrison Road, Baguio City, by virtue of Resolution No. 8 dated June 16 1961 issued by the Baguio Coordination Committee of the City Government of Baguio.

WHEREAS, in the 1960’s, two structures were built on the “BIBAK Compound” as separate dormitories for male and female students. These structures and the 5,000 square meter lot were subsequently declared for taxation purposes by the BIBAK under Tax Declaration No. 275. Furthermore, the survey plan for the BIBAK Dormitories, Inc. Was approved on November 10, 1972 as Plan No. SWO 41583.

WHEREAS, on June 28, 1973, BIBAK Students Dormitories, Inc. was registered with the SEC as a non-stock, non-profit corporation, purposely to own, possess, administer, operate, maintain, manage and supervise the BIBAK Students Dormitories, Inc., IN TRUST for the benefit of the students of BIBAK.

WHEREAS, in the early 1980’s, the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities took over the management of the BIBAK Dormitories. Unfortunately, the structures eventually deteriorated, and were declared unsafe for habitation and ordered closed, until its demolition by the City Government in 1983. However, the idea of rebuilding the dormitories has since persisted to the present day.

WHEREAS, by virtue of E.O. No. 122-B issued in January 1987, the Office for Northern Cultural Communities (ONCC) was created to cater to the needs and concerns of Indigenous Peoples. The ONCC drafted a proposal to construct dormitories, a museum and a multipurpose hall at the BIBAK lot and was approved. Meantime, E.O. No. 220 was issued creating the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) that further created the Cordillera Regional Assembly (CRA) and the Cordillera Executive Board (CEB). The CEB constructed the earlier proposed multipurpose building (now the BIMAAK Hall) and managed the same. On November 12, 1990, the CEB turned over the administration of the building in favor of the ONCC-CAR purposely for the utilization of Cordillera students.

WHEREAS, regrettably, the BIMAAK Hall and the BIBAK Compound was occupied by some elements of the Cordillera People’s Liberation Front (CPLA) and the defunct CRA, as well as by private individuals in spite of the attempts of eviction by the ONCC.

WHEREAS, on October 29, 1997, Republic Act No. 8371 was enacted, creating the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to protect and promote the interest and well-being of the ICCs-IPs with due regard to their beliefs, customs, traditions and institutions. Being the successor of ONCC, possession and administration of the BIMAAK Building, among others, was transferred to the NCIP.

WHEREAS, the NCIP persisted in seeking the eviction of the illegal occupants of the BIMAAK Hall and the BIBAK Compound, in its desire to make the property available for the needs of IP students, various recognized IP student organizations and different IP groups; and as a training ground in the development of cultural knowledge of arts, dances, practices and traditions of the Cordillera.
WHEREAS, on November 11, 2008, the Regional Development Council (RDC) issued RDC EXCOM Resolution No. CAR-80 Series of 2008 requesting the DENR-CAR to facilitate the issuance of a Presidential Proclamation over the BIBAK Compound for the use of Cordillera students, and for the construction of a twin dormitory and for other uses, under the administration of the NCIP-CAR.

WHEREAS, inter-agency efforts through RDC’s sectoral committee, the Committee on Indigenous Peoples Concerns (CIPC), chaired by NCIP-CAR, resulted to the issuance of a Demolition Order by the City Government of Baguio on August 15, 2017. However, implementation was postponed until October 18, 2017 pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the NCIP-CAR, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-CAR, the City Government of Baguio, and the Presidential Commission on Urban Poor. The unlawful occupants, being signatories to the MOA, likewise gave their full consent to the demolition of whatever structures left standing in the area; as well as agreed to cease and desist from operation any unpermitted business from effectivity of the MOA. So, on October 18, 2017, the demolition was carried out by the City Government of Baguio with the NCIP supervising the same with the aid of the Baguio City Police Office.

WHEREAS, after the demolition, it was agreed by the concerned agencies and the City Government of Baguio that the property will be placed under the management of the NCIP. Now in the possession and management of the NCIP, but with portion serving as a temporary Barangay Hall for Barangay Carino-Palisips, the BIMAAK Hall is being utilized as venue for office affairs and as IP students’ training center on IP culture and heritage through arts, dances, crafts, etc. It also accommodates the office of the NCIP Commissioner for CAR and Region 1.

WHEREAS, at the advent of the growing number of IPs from different provinces of CAR, whether for the purpose of gaining formal education and job placements, the City became not only their host but more importantly, the provider for their goal in attaining scholastic tutelage and occupation. Many IPs settled and have established their domicile in the City and most were born and reared inside this diverse and highly urbanized Metropolis, which in effect, caused a cultural drain to IP youth and students wherein appreciation and awareness on the rich Cordilleran culture depreciated.

WHEREAS, IP youth and students grew up witnessing concrete jungles unconsciously submitted themselves to the ever emerging influence of the mainstream popular culture. Thus, draining their appreciation and knowledge of their own respective traditional culture.

WHEREAS, IPs growing up and being reared in this popular-culture dominated highly urbanized city went on for years wherein the younger generations became less and less appreciative and conscious of their culture. The sanctity of cultural dances was reduced to mere amusement. The supposed habitual practice of cultural rituals became odd and atypical through the eyes of these IP youth and students. Sacred customary relics diminished to mere commodities subject to appropriation to the tune of commerce. The worst is the repetition of this cycle from one IP generation to another wherein if tolerated would lead to ethnocide.

WHEREAS, it is with this reason that a Cordillera Cultural Center at the BIBAK Compound should be erected to address that conceived ethnocide. More than just an avenue
for IP youth and students as training and education center to learn cultural practices, it will also serve as a sanctuary for IPs dwelling in the City. It is envisioned that the Cordillera Cultural Center will be opening its doors not only to IP youth and students but also to IP elders/leaders from different provinces of CAR who are the best mentors and educators of the Cordillera culture and practices. Through this, inter-generational cultural exchanges between IP elders/leaders and IP youth and students is envisioned to prosper.

WHEREAS, among others, the Cordillera Cultural Center will be giving space to the following:

1. IP Regional Museum,
2. IP lodging,
3. Basement Car Park,
4. NCIP-CAR Regional Office, and others that are deemed necessary for the benefit of the IP youths and students.

WHEREAS, with the above premises as a background, it is humbly requested that the Office of the President NAME and DESIGNATE the NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (NCIP) through a Presidential Proclamation or Executive Order as the Administrator and Manager of the subject BIBAK Compound; and granting authority therefore to the NCIP to develop the said area for the establishment of a “CORDILLERA CULTURAL CENTER”.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives to encourage the Office of the President to issue said Presidential Proclamation or Executive Order for the above purpose.

APPROVED,

HON. ALLEN JESSE C. MANGAOANG

HON. MAXIMO Y. DALOG, JR.

HON. SOLOMON R. CHUNGALAO

HON. ELIAS C. BULUT, JR.