

# Briefing on the consultation

*by Lolit Hafner-Monico*

I am delighted to add my own warm welcome to you all. Also compliments for having found your way to the venue, considering your long journey behind. For this reason, I will not tire you more with a long talk. Instead, I will refer you to the enclosed page on the house rules for your orientation. Please feel free to get in touch with the numbers listed therein for any clarification.

Now on the overview of the consultation, this will be elaborated by the other speakers during the sessions. I will just scratch the surface of it.

This 3rd ICBE consultation seeks to focus on the issues that have been started during the previous meetings which has significance to all of us, Igorot migrants. These issues are relevant and culminate in the theme for this consultation, which is: Our Igorot Cordillera Culture: Heritage and Social Integration.

The same previous methods will be used to attain our objectives. There will be workshops and discussions on the different topics of interest and on the question left open on Igorot values. This will commence in the morning with the workshop for both first and second generation. In the afternoon, there will be the workshops on different topics of interest. We will hear from the facilitators/speakers and other individuals, views and perspectives on topics of aging migrants, retirement in the Philippines, Cordillera concerns and migrant issues, stories of our Igorot culture and one workshop group for the second generation. We expect that as we go along, we will gain greater insight into ways to meet the challenges and to achieve the objectives we have set.

Ever since our first European meeting (Assembly of Cordillera People in Europe - ACPE) in Gent, Belgium, it is heartening to experience the willingness of most to come together and tackle nagging issues and challenges affecting us, Igorot migrants, as well as concerns back in our homeland. It is further hoped that by addressing the range of current relevant issues that will be raised over the next three days, we will have taken some significant steps in promoting awareness of our Igorot/Cordillera concerns.

Another challenge that falls on us as individual or as family is on how we think of our heritage and its worth. We are all living now in a different society. Amid the rapid modernization and technological growth, the tendency is that the cultural heritage of many of us is either threatened or sidelined (whether intentional or otherwise). This is more eminent in our younger generation who are born or raised here in our adopted country. The challenges now are: how do we connect or strengthen our younger generation to the Igorot culture and heritage, how do we emphasize the reinforcement of link to our homeland and what do the youth think of all these challenges? To help us meet these questions, it is imperative that there is youth participation in the sessions. We then encourage and invite them to actively participate. We will undoubtedly benefit from the interaction with them.

So, I have touched the surface of a number of issues here. You will see that there is a considerable work for us to do in working through the issues by sharing ideas and opinions, observation, suggestions, etc. Let us be open-minded and forthcoming with views and ideas. On that, to ensure a well contributed result, I invite each of you to reflect and ponder upon the themes and issues mentioned and what it means to us as group and individuals.

I then pass on the floor to our emcees. Have a good rest and good night to all.