



PHILIPPINE POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

Philippine Social Science Center, Diliman, Quezon City, PHILIPPINES

FINAL REPORT ON THE CONDUCT OF THE 2003 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Carrying the theme *Strengthening Society, the State, and the Discipline*, the 2003 National Conference of the Philippine Political Science Association (PPSA) was successfully staged from October 23 to 25, 2003 at the Royal Mandaya Hotel, Davao City. With close to 140 participants, the Conference had 10 simultaneous panel sessions and two plenary sessions (see attached program), with a total of 35 presentors. Two panel sessions had to be canceled a day after the conference when the presentors for the panel begged off due to conditions beyond their control.

The keynote for the conference was delivered by an eminent historian, Dr. Reynaldo Ileto. Dr. Ileto spoke about the need to develop a complete picture of Philippine history that has often times been manipulated by those who desire to distort it for purposes of subjugation. Dr. Ileto is the only Filipino who holds a full professor appointment at the National University of Singapore.

Given the support extended by the United Nations-Mindanao Development Program, the Conference saw the largest attendance of Mindanao-based academics, social researchers, and peace and development advocates. About 40 participants came from Mindanao higher educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. Their participation in the Conference provided new perspectives in understand the dual concerns of the conference—chiefly promoting greater democratization and development. At the end of the Conference, the Mindanao-based participants, joined by the SZOPAD included contingent from Palawan, agreed to continually collaborate with each other and constituted themselves into a chapter of the PPSA in Mindanao.

Co-organized with the Ateneo de Davao University and with significant support from the Mindanao State University-General Santos campus, through Dr. Macario Tiu and Dr.

Macapado Muslim, respectively, the discussions during the panel sessions were animated. Through the cases presented and with competing perspectives presented, all the panel sessions saw the participants exchanging views on the modes of securing peace, development, and positive political change in the Philippines and the Southeast Asian region. Specific to Mindanao development and identity issues, the Mindanaoans present during the Conference underscored the need to have their experience, history, and concerns reflected in the divergent discourses that take place in both public policy and academic arenas. For example, at the end of the keynote speech, the Mindanaoans emphasized the reality that the incomplete rendering of Philippine history is not merely reflected by the lack of “coverage” of the Philippine-American war but more importantly by the many struggles and peculiar experiences of the Mindanaoans. The keynote speaker, Dr. Iletto, concurred with such observation and urged the Mindanao academics who are present to enrich the chronicle of Philippine history by contributing their own narratives in textbooks and other publications. Indeed, the PPSA 2003 National Conferences brought to the mainstream, at least among the academics present, the views on a host of critical societal, political, and disciplinal concerns, from the fringes/periphery, specifically from Mindanao. We hope to sustain this inclusive process of discussion in the subsequent conferences and other Association activities that aim to focus more specifically on policy and program issues, especially those that impact on a qualitatively better political system and more equitable process of development.