

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT AND ACTION OF THE URBAN POOR COALITION ASIA

This Declaration of Commitment and Action of the Urban Poor Coalition Asia was made on the last day of the UPCA launch event, March 16, 2012, in Quezon City, Philippines, by the representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The official launch of UPCA and the Declaration was made with the participation of Hon. Jesse Robredo, Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Mayor of Quezon City Mr. Herbert Bautista, and over 1000 community representatives from the Philippines and Asia.

UPCA formalises the commitment of community organisations across Asia to work together as a regional platform for mutual support and collaboration. It has arisen from a series of regional meetings, including Asia Pacific Urban Forum in June 2011. The UPCA launch event also brought the establishment of a regional UPCA revolving fund, starting with a seed fund contributed by Asian urban poor representatives, who agreed to contribute 1 USD per person. This regional UPCA fund is expected to become an active financial tool for the support of community driven activities around Asia.

1. We, the urban poor communities of Asia, want to declare today that we are ready and able to make change to our lives. We want to be active actors and participants, not just recipients, in all development relating to our lives. We want to be active partners in all development activities of government and development agencies.
2. For several decades of urban development, poor people still have unsteady and low-paid jobs, live in very insecure and unhealthy communities without or very little infrastructure or services; and face eviction with little opportunity for new housing.

While many kinds of development activities exist, only a little can sometimes reach us; but most of the time they do not fit with what we really need. We mainly have to find our own solutions and struggle to survive, sometimes out of nothing. We are tired, we are bored, and we want change. We don't want to be just victims of a city development that is decided by others, but we want to be a visible part and more equal partner in city development. To have secure jobs, access to basic services and secure tenure are basic rights of all human beings.

3. Furthermore, in the past decades, we have also learned to make much change, with some support from development agencies.

We have learned to organize and to coordinate among ourselves. We have learned to get our information and do mapping of our settlements. We have organized our saving groups and community fund; we have started to get loans to improve our income and jobs, to develop our infrastructures, to upgrade our communities, to make our housing projects from our loans and from our Community Fund.

We have linked our many organizations into community networks, within a city and between cities, at a national scale and between countries. We have much greater opportunity to

share, learn and help each other between communities, cities and even between countries. And we are now able to link together as community organizations in Asia.

We have learned that we have great potentials and ability to solve all the problems by ourselves; and that our solutions are always better, cheaper; they answer our real needs and bring us together as a community

4. Therefore, the urban poor communities in Asia, represented today by Cambodia, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, want to announce this new important change today:

That we, the urban poor of Asia, linking together under the Urban Poor Coalition Asia, will work actively together for all possible action and self-development, in order to make visible and concrete change to the poverty, insecure housing, jobs and welfare, etc., which we have long faced unjustly.

Together, we will:

- develop our savings and financial system and build our Community Fund to support development initiatives and housing by community people;
- develop information about all communities and households in all the cities through our mapping work;
- negotiate and survey all existing land in order to secure and develop proper housing and legitimize our poor people to live as proper citizens with dignity in the city;
- build our capacity to work, boost our community members to all be active and organized as a strong community unit to work together;
- build city-wide networks for city-wide action and collaborate with local authorities and development agencies, in order to make a joint plan and achieve our development.

5. In order to achieve all those, UPCA wants the government, international development agencies, and local development organizations to join and assist our mission by:

- Recognizing that the poor people want to be an active force to make change, and support such a process for the people to do this. They must give room for the people to do this in a big way and allow these people processes to be an active force to work in the cities with the government and development agencies. They should let the implementation process on the ground be undertaken as much as possible by the people themselves.
- Involving the community people in whatever poverty program or development activity government and development agencies plan to initiate, whether it be in a positive or a negative way like eviction, through a process of dialogue and joint discussion, of planning, implementing, deciding, and managing in all the key stages as much as possible so that all the development activities should allow people to benefit in the process.
- Allocating more funds directly to communities to solve poverty or housing development through a demand-driven approach. The fund would support

community systems of finance, like community development funds. At present, there are many investments in infrastructure and other development initiatives but negligible funds for housing development activities or activities that address poverty issues being implemented by the people. They should let the people manage the fund and manage their own development. With the proper management of a community revolving fund, we will be able to leverage more funds to help even more communities.

This will ignite the urban poor communities to come together and strengthen their national and regional processes to solve the serious problems that they face. This makes way for real and concrete action such as pushing constitutions and policies to become pro-poor and effect genuine social change. Only then will the poor people become more visible, their voices stronger, and their presence felt at the city, regional, national and international levels.

Support Commitment by:



HON. JESS ROBREDO
DILG Secretary



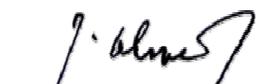
HON. CORAZON SOLIMAN
DSWD Secretary



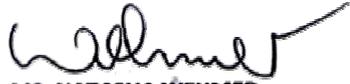
HON. HERBERT BAUTISTA
Mayor, Quezon City



HON. HERNANI PANGANIBAN
Chair, PCUP



MS. ANNA OLIVEROS
Chair, SHFC



MS. NATASHA WEHMER
UNESCAP



Representative from Sri Lanka



Representative from Cambodia



Representative from Indonesia



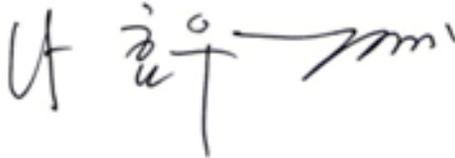
Representative from Nepal



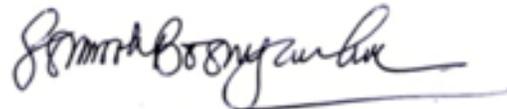
Representative from Mongolia



Representative from Myanmar

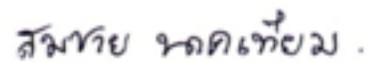


Representative from Korea



Representative from ACHR

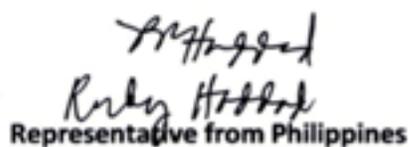
Representative from Vietnam



Representative from Thailand

Representative from Laos

Representative from Pakistan



Representative from Philippines