

# INFORMATION FOR ALL PROGRAMME (IFAP) PHILIPPINES

## Completion Report

*Prepared by the IFAP Philippines Technical Secretariat  
(Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication)  
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The UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM) – Communications Committee created in September 2007 the IFAP Philippines National Committee, which is composed of a general membership and an executive committee (ExeCom).

Among the functions and responsibilities of the IFAP National Committee, in cooperation with UNACOM, are:

- Identify and motivate national institutions concerned with the various objectives and activities of IFAP
- Constitute a permanent forum to facilitate the flow of information between UNESCO/IFAP and interested national institutions
- Regularly disseminate information about IFAP objectives and activities provided by the UNESCO/IFAP Secretariat and maintain a national IFAP website
- Organize periodic national IFAP meetings and prepare an annual report on national activities to be addressed to the UNESCO/IFAP Secretariat for publication by UNESCO and consideration by the IFAP Intergovernmental Council
- Facilitate appropriate national inputs to and participation in, as a member or as an observer, the sessions of the IFAP Intergovernmental Council and IFAP-related international and regional meetings

The general membership is composed of individuals representing various sectors of society, *ie* government, business and industry, academe, and civil society organizations, among others. They come from public information, mass media, information and communication technology, telecommunications, and library and archives, among others.

The multi-sectoral composition of the general membership and ExeCom reflects UNACOM's desire to involve all relevant stakeholders in policy and program planning particularly in pursuing the vision and goals of IFAP.

Among the responsibilities of the ExeCom are:

- Plan activities and projects of the IFAP Philippines National Committee
- Approve proposed projects and recommend them for funding by UNESCO
- Implement and/or monitor IFAP projects
- Coordinate with the Technical Committees on their recommendations, proposals, and action plans

The Executive Committee members appointed by UNACOM are the following:

- Chairperson: Commissioner Angelo Timoteo M. Diaz de Rivera, Commission on Information and Communications Technology
- Vice chairperson: Mr. Vincent T. Lazatin, Executive Director, Transparency and Accountability Network
- Members:
  - Assistant Director General Daniel F. Pabellon, National Economic and Development Authority
  - Mr. Jose Pavia, Executive Director, Philippine Press Institute
  - Ms. Cynthia Mamon, President, Information Technology Association of the Philippines
  - Fr. Francis B. Lucas, President/CEO, The Catholic Media Network
  - Ms. Susima L. Gonzales, President, Philippine Librarians Association, Inc.
  - Mr. Ramon R. Tuazon, President, Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication
- Adviser: Dr. Florangel Rosario-Braid, Chair, UNACOM Communication Committee

The Technical Secretariat of IFAP Philippines is the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication and is headed by Ms. Ann Lourdes C. Lopez, AIJC Associate Director.

The IFAP Philippines Executive Committee has convened at least four times since its creation (18 September, 10 October, 12 November, and 28 November 2007). These meetings focused on the following agenda: (a) composition of the general membership, (b) mandate of the IFAP, (c) organizational structure and management, (d) initial projects and activities, and (e) program for the first general membership meeting cum policy forum on The Right to Information.

The Right to Information Policy Forum and IFAP Organizational Meeting was held on 19 November 2007 at Linden Suites, Pasig City. Co-convenor of IFAP Philippines was the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC). A total of 50 individuals representing the general membership attended the forum.

The general membership was divided into five technical committees/working groups representing the five main program areas of IFAP, *ie* National Information Policies, Human Resources for the Information Age, Gateways for Information Access, Information Processing and Management Tools and Systems, and ICT for Education, Science, Culture and Communication. A draft work program was prepared by the committee members and presented to the plenary.

For the policy forum component of the event, the following policy papers were presented:

- ***State of the Right to Information in the Philippines***  
By Vincent Lazatin, Executive Director, Transparency and Accountability Network
- ***The Need for Secrecy***  
By Secretary Ricardo Saludo, Cabinet Secretary, Office of the President
- ***Philippine Information Literacy and ICT***  
By Dr. William Torres, President, Mosaic Communications, Inc
- ***Shooting, and Being Shot, in the Dark***  
Vergel Santos, Chair, Editorial Board, BusinessWorld
- ***The Philippine eLib Project***  
Prudenciana Cruz, Director, National Library

The highlight of the event was the speech of no less than Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno who discussed the forthcoming ***Writ of Habeas Data***. Chief Justice Puno described the Writ as “a remedy to protect the image, privacy, and honor of an individual and to enforce the freedom of information of a person.” Countries now implementing the writ are in Latin America, including Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Argentina and Ecuador.

Chief Justice Puno’s presentation was followed by a press conference attended by journalists covering the Supreme Court.

The forum also provided advocates of the proposed Freedom of Information Act of 2007 an opportunity to lobby for multi-sectoral support among the forum participants. The bill has been filed in both houses of Congress, *ie* House of Representatives and Senate. The Access to Information Network (ATIN) and Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN) are spearheading the lobbying work for this bill. Both networks are represented in the IFAP Philippines ExeCom.

The forum provided the newly created IFAP Philippines a visibility needed to be able to mobilize support from and participation by relevant sectors. Its multi-sectoral composition is an opportunity to demonstrate how government, business and civil society can work together in ensuring that everyone has access to information that is relevant and has the opportunity and skills to use this information in creating a better society, as stated in the vision statement of IFAP.

The event was well covered by national media – print and television, including some community newspapers.