

UPDATES FROM THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

The API Regional Committee (RC) met in Davao City, Philippines last November 2007 to make an initial presentation on the API Regional Project to the Executive Committee (ExeCo). The API Community's Regional Project on the environment is billed as "*Community-Based Initiatives Toward Human-Ecological Balance*."

The project has three objectives: to mobilize API-Community collaborative in view of the regional environmental challenge; to discover, document, and promote local environmental knowledge; and to contribute to an Asian perspective on environmental issues confronting the region.



Nick Deocampo served as Workshop Director.

The last two years have seen the RC initiating conceptualization and developing the project, in a consultative process involving all stakeholders and stops in various places, as was shared in the RC report featured in API Newsletter Issue 15. In September 2007, it conducted the 1st API Regional Project Workshop, held in Tagaytay City, Philippines. Proponents from the 5 API countries gathered for an initial dialogue, to establish related efforts at responding to the environmental crisis.

In various group sessions, they identified current national and transborder concerns establishing the quality of environmental response in the region. Nick Deocampo (Philippines) served as Workshop Director.

The Tagaytay workshop required consolidating the various



Eric de Guia (Kidalat Tahimik), film director, writer, actor, was invited at Tagaytay Regional Project Workshop as a special resource person.

responses into a common proposal from the region, featuring viable community-based strategies for addressing the environmental crisis. As a follow-up, the RC designated a smaller drafting team from the Tagaytay proponents to undertake proposal writing.

This team consisted of Henry Chan (Malaysia), Yayan Indriatmoko (Indonesia), Fumio Nagai (Japan), and Willy Torres (Philippines). In early November, the team convened in Kuala Lumpur to draft a consolidated proposal. RC sent Narumol Aphinives (Thailand) and Yeoh Seng Guan (Malaysia) to assist

them in integrating the aims, substantive approaches, and strategic directions of the broad project envisioned in Tagaytay.

The next RC plenary opportunity took place in Davao City, Philippines, in late November 2007. It coincided with the 6th Workshop for Asian Public Intellectuals. Aside from fulfilling their task as panel reactors during the fellows' conference, RC members also processed the draft proposal for substantive realignments, preparing it for an initial hearing with the Executive Committee (ExeCo).

In Davao, the RC reviewed the proposal, taking up more substantive concerns including diversifying the project sites, so that all 5 API countries could enjoy equal opportunities at participating in the project. The RC also passed a resolution asserting a pro-active role in managing the API Regional Project. The decision was prompted by the need for an evolving regional perspective, where balancing various competing interests is clearly a challenge to the 5 countries.

More importantly, the RC presented the draft proposal in Davao to the ExeCo and it was approved in principle. As a result of this hearing and substantive review, the ExeCo made the following suggestions and the RC was entrusted to follow up.

- The project site must allow for a dynamic integration between the API Community and local communities.
- To benefit from local wisdom, the project must encourage the participation of local peoples/communities.
- The project must be conducted in an ethical way.
- Flexibility and non-traditional approaches can be used to further the API Community's role in policy making advocacy.

The next step of the Regional Project development is the country workshops where substantial time will be devoted to presenting the Regional Project and to call for participation. Across the 5 countries, the RC will circulate the same set of information and documented materials on the Regional Project. This is the opportunity that the RC hopes to utilize in recruiting more participation in the Regional Project Working Groups. The RC will also hold substantive discussion with Fellows in attendance on the specific terms of relationship between the RC & the management team that will implement the API Regional Project.

► Danilo Francisco M. Reyes



Participants of API Regional Project Workshop in Tagaytay.