Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan

Honoring environmental heroes,
Continuing the struggles
for the people’s right to a healthy ecosystem

March 15, 2018
Institute of Biology,
University of the Philippines-Diliman
Quezon City, Philippines
Cooperating Organizations

**Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines** is a non-government organization based in Quezon City founded through the initiatives of people’s organizations. At the grassroots level, CEC works with communities and organizations, supporting initiatives to nurture ecosystems, defend common access to natural resources, and eventually improve their living and working conditions in the context of a balanced and healthy environment. At the national level, CEC supports people-oriented, patriotic, sustainable, and scientific policies and programs for the protection of the Philippine environment. At the global level, CEC engages in information sharing, international networking, cross-cultural exchanges, and solidarity initiatives on common environmental issues and concerns.

**AGHAM-Advocate of Science and Technology for the People** is an organization of patriotic, pro-people science and technology advocates, bonded together by a common interest of promoting science and technology that genuinely serve the interest of the Filipino people, especially the poor. AGHAM aims to vigorously encourage S&T professionals, workers, and advocates to share their knowledge and expertise through direct community service, research, consultancy, campaigns and advocacy, fora, fact-finding missions, and discussion groups.

**Alay Bayan-Luson, Inc.** works for the realization and strengthening of a regional network of people’s organizations and institutions committed to community-based and development-oriented responses in addressing the vulnerabilities stemming from poverty, powerlessness, environmental degradation and political abuse.

**The Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA)** is an independent federation of progressive peoples organizations, most of them grassroots-based organizations among indigenous communities in the Cordillera Region, Philippines. CPA is committed to the promotion and defense of indigenous peoples’ rights, human rights, social justice, and national freedom and democracy.

**Farmers Development Center (FARDEC)** is a non-stock non-profit organization established in 1989 by a group of religious and lay persons to serve as a regional support mechanism for the farmers in Central Visayas (particularly the provinces of Bohol, Cebu, and Negros Oriental).
**Cooperating Organizations**

**Magsasaka at Siyentista para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura (MASIPAG)** is a farmer-led network of people's organizations, NGOs and scientists working towards the sustainable use and management of biodiversity through farmers’ control of genetic and biological resources, agricultural production and associated knowledge.

**Panalipdan Mindanao** is a broad alliance of environmental groups, human rights organizations, religious groups, research organizations, academe, civil society groups, and people's organizations. It is an environmental rights group advocating and advancing environmental protection, land rights, food sovereignty, and national patrimony.

**Philippine Network of Food Security Programmes (PNFSP)** addresses core issues that threaten food security including conversion of agricultural lands, landlessness, import liberalization, feudal relations of production, backward means of production, migration and urban poverty, unequal food distribution, and generically engineered food. The network also recognizes political instability, natural disasters, and development aggression as factors that worsen food insecurity.

**Nilad** is a regional network of volunteers, groups, clubs, associations, environmental protection advocates and individuals who are working to preserve, restore, and promote the protection of ecological (integrity) balance, bio-diversity & sustainable development of Metro Manila. Some of the partners of Nilad include the Earth Island Institute, Save Freedom Island Movement, Piglas (Navotas), Defend Manila Bay (Pasay), Pull Out Coalition (Manila) and Save Laguna Lake Movement.

**Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP)** was founded by the Association of Major Women Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMWRSP) in 1969. Its members commit ourselves to support peasant’s quest for justice, freedom, access to commons and genuine agrarian reform. As a Church of the Poor, RMP strengthening the rural poor the awareness that all have the right to live fully as human beings, to self-determination, and to freedom from oppression and all forms of exploitation.
Cooperating Organizations

Francis S. Morales Resource Center (FSMRC) builds on the legacy of Francis S. Morales, or Tatay Francis, who advocated sustainable agriculture and environmental care and served the people. FSMRC aims to strengthen the environmental resilience of marginalized communities through agriculture and science education.

People’s Climate Change Action Network (PCCAN) that are working to build disaster-resilient communities that are prepared for and respond to climate change through scientific, community-based, rights-based and comprehensive climate change mitigation that addresses the root causes of climate change.

Musika Publiko is public interest music collective, is a network of musicians, composers, performers, and enthusiasts who are advocates of public interest music – songs in various styles and genres that articulate people's issues and highlight aspirations for real change and development for the many.

The De La Salle University-Dasmarinas (DLSU-D) Environmental Resource Management Center (ERMAC) is the office responsible for the initiation, implementation, supervision and evaluation of all the university’s programs and policies together with its compliance to national government standards related to environmental management and safety, pollution control and disaster risk reduction.

Fair Trade Foundation – Panay, established in June 2001, is a non-stock, non-profit organization that serves as a Business Support Organization (BSO) to facilitate services among small fair trade producers in Panay.
Foreword

For the past decades, the Philippine environment has gone through severe critical conditions impacting the lands and lifebloods of communities. The need to protect and care for the environment has become a common advocacy. We see it in everyday in all forms of media. Schools and the church are teaching it. Arts are made to express it.

The concern for our environment resounds especially now when the threats of extractivism, corporate land monopoly, and other unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are increasing. These patterns have caused serious landlessness, poverty and climatic changes that we are witnessing the brunt of it. Our lands and waters are our lifeblood and sanctuary for life. When these are disturbed at a unprecedented scale, we also bear witness to stories of disasters, tragedies and destruction. Despite these systemic challenges, we also witness valiant acts of courage by ordinary individuals and groups who braved these challenges to champion the cause of the people and the environment.

It is in this context that the Center for Environmental Concerns launched the Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan last 2009. The award is for the unsung heroes and heroines in our midst. They are the natural nurturers of the environment - our farmers, our fisherfolk, our indigenous peoples, our women, our workers - who are the forefront of fighting for the people and the environment from ridge to reef.

While these fights are being met with various obstacles, this year’s batch of bayanis have the passion, commitment and integrity to carry on serving the people and the environment amidst life threatening circumstances especially in these trying times.

In this year’s 5th Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan, we are honoring and recognizing grassroots efforts of extraordinary environmental defenders who are fighting the fight through various forms and capacities. This year, we will listen and be inspired by some of their stories - stories of women lumads and communities leading the struggles to protect their ancestral domains, of church leaders herding their flock towards peace and environmental protection against mining, of a disaster survivor group that mobilized 20,000-strong survivors to call for accountability and climate justice.

By listening to their stories and recognizing their efforts, we are hoping that all of us will be inspired to act and continue the environmental activism that they have started. Let us continue to be inspired to support and persist with the struggle for genuine and sustainable development and for rights of the people for a health ecosystem!

Owen Migraso
Executive Director,
Center for Environmental Concerns – Philippines
The Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan (GBK) is a biennial awards event and lecture series honoring Filipino heroes and heroines who have defended the environment and people’s rights.

The Philippines is endowed with rich natural resources that can support the country’s national development and ensure that the Filipino people can live in peace and prosperity. For the past century, however, our environment has gone through severe destruction and depletion. The degradation of our ecosystems has proceeded alongside poverty and the dislocation of communities from their lands and livelihoods.

In the face of these worsening environmental and socio-economic impacts, many among the Filipino people have offered their talents, efforts, time, and even their lives to defend the rights of the people and the country’s national patrimony. These heroes and heroines serve as an inspiration for the generations to come.

In salute and recognition of these struggles, the Center for Environmental Concerns, in cooperation with Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan Awards Committee and the GBK’s collaborating organizations, is pleased to launch the fifth Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan, an awards event and lecture series recognizing exemplary individuals and organizations who have become part of the people’s movement to defend our environment, lives, and rights.

Following a nationwide process of nomination and selection, each GBK honors a roster of seven awardees composed of three individuals, three organizations and most exemplary individual or organization. It is followed by a lecture series in the form of forums for dialogue, education, and learning between the awardees and the general public. It aims to establish a regular Philippine civil society organization mechanism to recognize, promote, and draw public awareness to the efforts of nameless individuals and communities who have selflessly spearheaded or helped lead significant environmental struggles and the protection of basic rights.

The Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan aims to:

a. To promote awareness of critical environmental issues and the situation of communities directly relying on the natural resources.

b. To recognize the valiant struggles of the people to defend the environment, lives, and rights, to serve as an example and lesson to the people who continue to confront similar challenges.

c. To recognize the exemplary deeds and initiatives of simple individuals and organizations who have contributed to the upholding the environment and people’s welfare at the national and/or local levels.

d. To strengthen the link between the sustainable preservation and conservation of the environment with the struggle for social, economic, and political rights.
About the Awards

Categories

Seven recipients of the Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan will be chosen by the Board of Judges: composed of three (3) individuals (Gawad sa Indibidwal), three (3) organizations (Gawad sa Organisasyon) and a recipient of the Natatanging Gawad (Most Distinguished Award).

From a shortlist of ten awardees, the Board of Judges will choose one (1) recipient of the Natatanging Gawad (Most Distinguished Award), in recognition his/her/their being an inspiration and example to the Filipino people for offering time and talents for the defense of the environment and advancement of the people's welfare.

Gawad sa Indibidwal (Individual Award) – Awarded to individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary ability and effort to uphold the environment and people's welfare, whether in the form of advocacy, campaigns, education, research, technology development, community services, mass media, or cultural work.

Gawad sa Organisasyon (Award for Organizations) – Awarded to people’s and community organizations and institutions that have demonstrated unity in upholding the welfare of the people and of the environment by exemplary actions and advocacy, campaigns, education, research, technology development, community services, mass media, or cultural work.
About the Awards

Criteria for Judging

The Board of Judges will be composed of three personalities selected by the GBK Steering Committee. They will choose the final list of awardees based on the following guidelines and criteria set by the Steering Committee:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUAL AWARDS (GAWAD SA INDIBIDWAL)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service and Devotion to the people</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributed to the Defense of the People’s Welfare</td>
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<td><strong>Defense of the Environment and National Patrimony</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Actively defended the people’s rights to a healthy ecology and national patrimony serving the welfare of the people</td>
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<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
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<td>Gave inspiration to the people to continue engaging in the defense of the environment and people’s welfare</td>
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<td><strong>Integrity</strong></td>
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<td>Demonstrated integrity and principles in the face of challenges and adversity</td>
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<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONAL AWARDS (GAWAD SA ORGANISASYON)</th>
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<td><strong>Characteristics of the Organization</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintains a significant and active grassroots constituency and upholds the principles of self-reliance and democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Objectives and Principles</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Upholds a scientific, pro-people, pro-environmental, patriotic and progressive orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Campaigns and Actions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiates activities and campaigns to defend the environment and people’s welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Result or Concrete Achievements</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attained concrete victories, helped communities through projects or campaigns, and enabled the organization to build its capacity and unity</td>
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Awards Committee

Most Reverend Deogracias Iniguez, Jr.,
Awards Committee Chairperson
Bishop Emeritus of Caloocan, member of Ecumenical Bishops Forum

Dr. Bienvenido Lumbera
National Artist for Literature, multi-awarded writer

Dr. Carol Araullo
Chairperson of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan,
Convener of the Movement Against Tyranny

Dr. Teresita Perez
Professor, Environmental Sciences Department,
Ateneo de Manila University

Dr. Rowena Boquiren
Environmental Historian,
Professorial Lecturer of Biology, University of the Philippines – Baguio

Atty. Gloria Ramos
Vice-President ng Oceana Philippines, environmental lawyer,
Founding Executive Director, Philippine Environmental Justice Center

Sr. Ma. Carmen Dianne Cabasagan, RGS
Member of the Sisters Association in Mindanao,
Member of Panalipdan Mindanao, Convener of In Peace

Board of Judges

Dr. Carol Araullo

Dr. Teresita Perez

Rodne Galicha
4th Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan Gawad Indibidwal awardee,
manager of Climate Reality Project – Philippines

John Arcilla
Environmentalist and actor,
founder of Care and Protect Life on Earth (CAPABLE Foundation),
member of the Concerned Artists of the Philippines
Nominees

**INDIVIDUAL AWARDS CATEGORY**

- Dr. Kelvin Rodolfo
- Archbishop Sergio Utleg
- Joseph Canlas
- Romulo Solivio
- Bai Bibyaon Ligkaian Bigkay
- Beatrice Belen
- Boy Dominguez
- Francis Morales
- Rachel Aurelio
- Sultan Macasalong Sarip
- Josefina Panginen

**ORGANIZATIONAL AWARDS CATEGORY**

- Tribal Indigenous Oppressed Group Association (TINDOGA)
- Central Luzon Aeta Association (CLAA)
- Leyte Center for Development Inc. (LCDE)
- People Surge
- Compostela Farmers Association (CFA)
- Center for Lumad Advocacy, Network, and Services (CLANS)
Most Distinguished Awardee
Abiok “Bai Bibiaon” Ligkaian Bigkay
Most Distinguished Awardee

Hailing from the lush peaks of Pantaron Mountain Range in the Davao region, Abiok Ligkaian Bigkay, or “Bai Bibiaon”, is known as the only living woman warrior and chieftain of the Lumad people that has taken the helm in asserting the Lumad’s right to their ancestral domains and in preserving its rich biodiversity and natural resources.

A well-respected leader of her people, Bai Bibiaon serves as the Chairperson Emeritus of the Sabokahan To Mo Lumad Kamalitanan or the Confederation of Lumad Women in Southern Mindanao and as a council member of the Salugpongta `Tanu Igkanogon (the organization of lumad in Talaingod, Davao del Norte), Natulinan Ta `Tanu Igkanogon (the organization of lumad in Sitio Natulinan), and a member of the council of elders of PASAKA Confederation of Lumad Organizations in Mindanao.

Bai Bibiaon and her fellow Talaingod Manobo are the fiercest defenders of the 12,600 square-kilometer Pantaron Mountain Range, which cuts across the provinces of Bukidnon, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Misamis Oriental, Agusan del Norte, and Agusan del Sur, covering 12.4 percent of the entire Mindanao.

Pantaron is home to one of the largest remaining virgin forests in the country and supplies the water of major rivers in Mindanao mainly the Mindanao River, Pulangi River, Davao River, Tagoloan River,
and major tributaries of Agusan River. The natural forests of the region play host to immeasurable biodiversity and links important breeding sites of the Philippine eagle at Mount Kitanglad and Mount Apo.

Bai Bibiaon’s leadership is a keystone in the Lumad’s impregnable defense of Pantaron against big logging and mining, preserving its virgin forests and pristine headwaters in the process. She has also contributed in the efforts of instituting livelihood programs and alternative Lumad schools, greatly improving the self-sufficiency of their community.

Bai Bibiaon and the rest of the Talaingod Lumad once successfully waged Pangayaw, the traditional armed defense of land by the Lumad, against the extractive company Alsons. Up to present times, her fellow tribal leaders look to her approval in waging resistance against destructive and pollutive industries and programs. As such, the forests of Pantaron have remained verdant to date.

These heroic exploits have been met with intensifying militarization in their communities, including attempted assassinations, forcing Bai Bibiaon and her tribe to flee their beloved homelands. The fierce woman-chieftain still remains a sentinel over the Pantaron through the generations of Lumad inspired to carry on her struggle.

"We are not interested with the entry of large business, of mining companies or of all the money that the latter has to offer. What we need is to return to our homeland. What we want is for the military acting as private armies to large corporations to pull out from our communities."
INDIVIDUAL Awardee
Josefina Panginen
Individual Awardee

A half-blind day care teacher turned daring farmer-leader, Josefina Panginen—Ka Josie to her comrades in the peasant movement—serves as the Chairperson of the Panlalawigang Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Aurora or PAMANA. She also sits as a member of the Anti-Logging and Mining Committee of the Multi-Sectoral Action Group (MSAG) in the province.

The relatively untouched tropical forests of the Sierra Madre mountain range cuts across the length of Aurora, a fitting backdrop to Ka Josie’s peasant organization, which translates to ‘Heritage.’ Ka Josie, PAMANA, and the MSAG are instrumental to defending this portion of the country’s longest mountain range, which serves as the Luzon island region’s natural defense from the constant harangue of typhoons generated by the great Pacific that batter our country.

Through Ka Josie’s leadership, the frontline communities of Aurora have successfully stopped the destructive logging operations of Integrated Development Corporation, Pacific Timber Export Corporation, and other logging companies. Their long-standing struggles against mining operations have also successfully resulted in the disapproval of 30 mining applications encroaching Aurora’s forests and agricultural lands.

Threats to land and life never seem to cease, as Ka Josie and her farmer compatriots are currently pitted against the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport (APECO) and the PTC Energy Inc.’s Hydro Power Dam, among others. The latter threatens to submerge entire villages of the indigenous Alta upon its commencement.

But even with her old age and physical limitations, Ka Josie is steadfast in asserting that the land belongs to the tillers, not the plunderers. She serves as a shining example to many peasant women in continuing the fight to protect and defend our lands and environment.
Archbishop Sergio Lasam Utleg D.D.  
Individual Awardee

These are the fighting words that the people of Cagayan Valley often heard from Bishop Utleg during his speeches. Serving as the Archbishop of Tuguegarao, Most Rev. Abp. Sergio L. Utleg has a long history of being an environmental advocate and a crusader for just peace.

Abp. Utleg is one of the veritable pillars upon which rests the struggle of Cagayanons against four (4) offshore mining operations covering 54,664 hectares lying mostly in Babuyan Channel. He bravely exposed the officials of Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) that have been colluding with mining companies to allow their entry in Cagayan province.

Abp. Utleg did not only limit his advocacies in Cagayan Valley. He played a vital role in organizing the communities of Ilocos region in their struggle against destructive mining. As the Chairman of the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples, he also actively campaigned to seek justice for Dexter Condez, a slain indigenous Ati leader in Boracay. He also opposed the construction of Laiban Dam that will submerge the parts of ancestral land of Remontado and Dumagat in Rizal.

Fully understanding how resolving social conflict is inextricable with upholding the integrity of our ecosystems and natural resources, Abp. Utleg supported the peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. Holding mass during the onset of the fifth round of talks under the Duterte government, Utleg urged both parties to “work hard for the talks because the people need peace.”

An Archbishop of his stature this does not exempt him from threats and intimidation. Last year, he became a victim of a series of vilifications by the Philippine Military. Miles upon miles of highway roadsides were vandalized with his name along with various other progressive groups against mining in North Luzon, all accused of being supporters of armed revolutionary forces.

It is through the actions of Abp. Utleg as well as many other faithful stewards of God’s creation that gave life to the ‘Laudato Si’ encyclical of celebrated Vatican leader Pope Francis. When Pope Francis exhorted that “We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it,” Abp. Utleg’s full embrace of the people’s struggle to defend the environment best illustrates this call to unite in defense of our common home.
Known to many as “Tatay Francis”, Francis Morales, a principled people’s leader who was almost an ordained priest, was the tireless and diligent spokesperson of the environmental network Panalipdan Southern Mindanao. He was hands-on for tasks big and small, whether it was in the pickets barricading the offices of big mining companies or the military, or in a small forum running for the logistics, and always with a bright smile.

Tatay Francis became a prominent figure during the height of mass actions staged by the survivors of Typhoon Pablo under Barug Katawhan in 2013. Being the Executive Director of Bulig Alang sa Mindanao (BALSA Mindanao), he helped discuss the plight of the survivor’s group.

He articulated what the difference between a disaster victim and a disaster survivor is, noting there is resistance in surviving from both the adversities of disaster and climate change impact and the government neglect that made the suffering chronic and persistent.

Tatay Francis bravely defended the rights of Typhoon survivors amid media slanting and attacks from government institutions, due to the Barug Katawhan’s organized confiscation of hoarded relief goods in the Department of Social Welfare and Development’s (DSWD) regional office warehouse. Threatened by then Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman with criminal charges for defending how the “hungry and angry” survivors were justified in the assertion, Tatay Francis retorted with an intense but calm “see you in court.”

He became part of Magsasaka Siyentipiko Para sa Pagpapaunlad ng Agrikultura (MASIPAG) where he became their advocacy officer (until 2006) before being part of its Board of Trustees. Applying his wide knowledge in sustainable agriculture, he initiated a Resilient Agriculture Program that benefitted the communities affected by Typhoon Pablo and Yolanda.

Until his last breath, Tatay Francis was knee-deep in serving the people. He served as the rock and foundation of the Daluyong Network of Disaster Survivors formed in 2014 at Tacloban City, an unprecedented gathering of typhoon survivors from all over the country.

Indeed, Tatay Francis has lived a simple but a well-meaning life devoted in defending the environment and serving the oppressed. He passed away in 2014 from a serious ailment he had been facing during his last few years, something he faced still with his trademark smile.
Organizational Awardees
It was in 1991, after the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, when entire villages of the indigenous Aeta people were forced into an exodus from their ancestral lands in the Zambales Mountain Range. Generations of Aeta whose lives and livelihood were nurtured by the rich highlands surrounding Pinatubo were uprooted in just a matter of days.

With the objective of uniting the dispersed Aetas to protect their abandoned ancestral lands and of securing their fellow Aeta in the evacuation centers, the Central Luzon Aeta’s Association (CLAA) was formed.

CLAA was among the main organizations that led the campaign to rehabilitate their lahar-ridden ancestral domain and ensured that all evacuated Aeta can return to their homeland. Soon after the dust of Pinatubo’s explosion settled, various mining projects and other big business interests attempted to encroach into what the Aeta were forced to leave. CLAA has successfully opposed repeated intrusions into their sacred lands in Mt. Negron by Pisumpan Copper Mines Inc. since 1997 until recently in 2011.

CLAA’s calling now goes beyond the crisis wrought by Pinatubo. Seeing the predicament of its people, CLAA leaders and members facilitated the enlistment of teachers to develop modules for the educational needs of Aetas across Central Luzon.
CLAA currently campaigns against various land grabs attempting to convert the agricultural lands and fragile forest ecosystems within their domain into a vast military and business zone. Military exercises between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the United States troops regularly held in the military reserves forcibly established over their domain have also constricted their way of life.

“It is no secret to us in Central Luzon that the annual Balikatan war games use our ancestral domain … When Camp O’ Donnel was built, they drove away the Aetas. Now they are expanding, and they are once again driving away Aetas,” said Edwin Danan, an elderly but still sprightly looking leader of CLAA.

In the face of military and corporate land grabs, CLAA and the Aeta people are making their last stand. “We have moved before from one place to another. There are no more places for us to move and live but where we are now,” said Danan.

Ever determined, whether in the face of volcanic eruptions or development aggressions, the CLAA will remain sentinels rooted in the homeland they once lost. As the saying goes, it takes roots to weather the storm.
They are the ‘children of the storm,’ reborn from the rubble of Super Typhoon Yolanda’s aftermath in 2013. The People Surge, a movement of typhoon survivors built from Ground Zero of the most powerful typhoon in world history, transformed hapless victims of disaster neglect in the Eastern Visayas region into seekers of justice.

Bearing the banner of People Surge was its chair, Dr. Efleda Bautista. A retired principal and local civic leader, Dr. Efleda survived Tacloban City’s massive storm surges but witnessed how many did not. The movement’s face was its spokesperson, Marissa Cabaljao, a young peasant woman who found her voice amid the despair and anger of thousands of victims with whom she shared the common cry for justice.

Realizing how their plight was not a deadly fortuitous event but a result of State abandonment and climate shocks, People Surge and thousands survivors shook the nation on the first anniversary of Typhoon Yolanda with a series of protests crying “Justice for the Victims of Typhoon Yolanda!” from Eastern Visayas to the heart of Metro Manila.

Through wave upon wave of protests outside various government offices and agencies even up to Malacanang Palace itself, the People Surge has been victorious in expanding the beneficiaries of Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) in 2015-2016 and the Presidential Financial Assistance...
Program (PFA) in 2017. Despite the negligence by local governments, People Surge was still able to respond to these challenges through the empowerment of their communities.

People Surge also took the lead in the campaign against Leyte Tide Embankment Project (LTEP), a mega infrastructure project that is purported to prevent storm surges with over 7 billion pesos worth of funding from the Department of Public Works and Highway (DPWH). However, investigations by People Surge with environmental groups found that the construction of the LTEP will result into the denudation of mangrove forests stretching across 27.3 kilometers along the coastline and will displace hundreds of families.

The movement brought the plight of Yolanda survivors to the international scene, as Dr. Efleda served as a global climate ambassador during the historic 400,000-strong People’s Climate March held in New York City.

Being the communities that have suffered the effects of changing climate, People Surge has played a significant role in voicing out the stand of poor communities on how to confront the worsening climate crisis. Many disasters have struck Eastern Visayas since then, and Dr. Efleda and the People Surge continue to be vigilant over the plight of survivors, old and new.
The Center for Lumad Advocacy, Networking and Services (CLANS) is a patriotic institution that promotes scientific education for the indigenous Lumad people in the Socsksargen region of Mindanao.

CLANS promotes the Lumad right to self-determination by supporting indigenous people’s movements to address the root causes of inequality, disrespect, injustice, discrimination, and plunder of ancestral lands. It provides and facilitates extension programs and services such as education, community-based health care systems, sanitation programs, water systems, small-scale alternative electrification, irrigation systems, and sustainable agriculture to its partner Lumad communities.

The service institution initiated various projects upholding the rights of the Lumad and for the protection of the environment. They have successfully established 50 Lumad community schools across the whole region. Water and sanitation projects they helped build in the provinces of Sarangani and South Cotabato have benefitted almost 100 families, reducing the incidence of water-borne diseases such as diarrhea and amoebiasis by 90%.

A micro-hydro power project was also established through the facilitation of CLANS, which supports the operation of corn-mills and the electrification of Lumad villages in the hinterlands of Sarangani.

CLANS also carried out a reforestation project to improve the local environment of the Lumad community schools.
Consciousness on environmental protection was taught in the Lumad schools such as waste segregation, refraining from burning plastics, and using glyphosate in farms. CLANS also participated in the widespread movement to oppose the operations of Sagittarius Mining Corporation (SMI), known as possibly the largest large-scale mine in Asia which covers four (4) provinces including Lumad ancestral domains.

Intensifying attacks from the military and paramilitary groups are directed at CLANS to pacify their staunch opposition to the entry of mining and plantation companies in their partner Lumad communities. Even their volunteer teachers and staff members are experiencing intimidation, harassments, illegal arrests, and trumped-up charges.

Despite the unimaginable tribulations they face, the advocates of CLANS and their Lumad communities remain defiant, dedicated towards delivering much-needed education and building a sustainable future for the Lumad people.
The 5th Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan wishes to thank the following people and organizations for their contribution and support:

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