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The Mindanao Commission on Women presents the State of the Women of Mindanao 2004 Report to emphasize the roles and contributions of women in the many facets of life in Mindanao. Many of them are victims of poverty and violent conflict, but despite this, women hold a pivotal role in achieving peace and development in Mindanao. This year's report emphasizes socio-economic indicators. These show how dismal Mindanao's performance in the pursuit of economic progress has been and how formidable the tasks are that lie ahead. Mindanao women need urgent attention in the areas of economic opportunities, reproductive health, political participation, education, and even basic services such as water and power.

Women of

This report gives particular focus to the situation of the Moro and Lumad (Indigenous People) women, in recognition of their importance in the region's socio-economic, cultural and political life and as a modest attempt to redress the historical injustice they have so far withstood. Moro and Lumad women are barely visible in government statistics and policy papers. Women are not only victims but also resilient survivors of the long-running conflict in Mindanao. Moro women have shown that they are as loyal defenders of the Bangsamoro homeland and the jihad as their men. Lumad women have also stood beside their men in the struggle for the return of their ancestral lands.

Mindanao

As in many struggles over land and other resources such as in the current development debate and on-ground work related to the implementation of the IPRA (Indigenous People's Rights Act) some claim gender is "not an issue". Yet in the postponement of the integration of gender in these debates, success and sustainability come into question. The multiple roles women play in keeping family and community together place them in a strategic position to contribute significantly to reducing poverty and achieving peace at all levels in Mindanao. This report shows the impact of policy on the women of Mindanao. We hope that this report reflects the diversity of views and perspectives present in Mindanao.

2004

For all the differences in perception and interpretation of facts, there are points of agreement and common sources of hope: Moro and Lumad women are the poorest and the most disadvantaged among Mindanao's population. There is also ample evidence even in "gender-blind" reports, that like their other Mindanaoan sisters, they remain an important albeit largely untapped resource. If Mindanao is to develop as an economically productive and culturally vibrant society, improving the status and condition of Moro and Lumad women must take high priority.

Report

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