



1. **Title of Panel:** Autonomous Regions and Federal Arrangements in Southeast Asia: Addressing Development and Indigenous Peoples' Issues

2. **Convener:** Alejandro N. Ciencia, Jr., Ph.D.,
Chair, Department of Economics and Political Science (DEPS),
College of Social Sciences, and
Head, Governance and Public Policy (GPP) Research Program,
Cordillera Studies Center
University of the Philippines Baguio

3. **Brief Description of Panel:**

Federal arrangements and the creation of autonomous regions have been proposed or adopted in different areas of the world to address, in part, issues of development, whether at the national or sub-national levels of government. The Philippine government is currently considering adopting a federal system of government to remedy the problem of underdevelopment and uneven development in different parts of the country. The proposed panel seeks to assess the performance of existing federal systems and autonomous regional arrangements in Southeast Asia, particularly in terms of promoting economic growth and development; maintaining peace; mitigating societal conflicts; and, addressing the needs of underdeveloped regions and marginalized sectors, specifically, indigenous peoples. The panel will also look into the prospects of adopting federalism in the Philippines to address development issues in Mindanao and the Cordillera region. Rodrigo Duterte's assumption of the Philippine presidency has clearly significantly boosted the aspirations of pro-federalism advocates. Interestingly, proponents of autonomous regional arrangements in Mindanao and the Cordilleras appear to have embraced Duterte's federalism drive as providing the venue or platform to pursue meaningful regional autonomy in the country. It is not clear however whether a federal arrangement will actually result in meaningful regional autonomy. Moreover, the panel will assess the prospects of non-federal solutions to the problems of indigenous peoples in different parts of Southeast Asia. Simply put, the panel seeks to answer the question: Does/Can federalism actually produce development and greater autonomy for indigenous peoples and underdeveloped regions in Southeast Asia?