# IPN-MG Symposium on Intellectual Property, Innovation and Health

September 4, 2007, Manila Hotel, Philippines

By Nonoy Oplas

The International Policy Network (IPN, London) and Minimal Government (MG, Manila) co-sponsored this forum attended by some government officials and personnel, NGOs and media people involved in health policies, particularly the "Cheaper Medicines Bill"currently being debated in both the upper and lower chambers of Congress.

The speakers in the event were **Mr. Philip Stevens**, Director for Policy of IPN, and **Prof. Bibek Debroy** of International Management Institute, Delhi, India. The master of ceremonies and forum moderator was **Dr. Epictetus Patalinghug**, Professor at UP College of Business Administration, Diliman, Quezon City.

(In the picture, left to right: Prof. Epictetus Patalinghug, Prof. Bibek Debroy, Mr. Philip Stevens, and the author)

About 40 people came, mostly from the Executive branch (Philippine Health Insurance Corp. [PhilHealth], Philippine International Trading Corporation [PITC], Department of Science and Technology [DOST], Intellectual Property Office [IPO], and Legislative branch (both from the Senate and House of Representatives). There were also a few representatives from health NGOs and local media.

Philip spoke rather quick with his powerpoint presentation, but Bibek took the "extra time" of Philip and spoke longer. He's also very eloquent and passionate when talking.

ABS-CBN (1 of 2 largest tv network in the Philippines) showed the sympo in its evening news that same day. The following day, 3 broadsheet newspapers (Malaya, Manila Times and Philpine Daily Inquirer) reported the event, though PDI bannered a malicious title about IPN.

In the afternoon after the Manila Hotel event, there was another forum entitled ***"Health and Wealth: Forum on intellectual property, innovation and health"***. This was held at the College of Pharmacy auditorium, University of the Philippines (UP) Manila campus. It was jointly sponsored by the UP Debate Circle and the UP Pharmacy Association, in association with MG and IPN.

About 150 students and some faculty members attended. It was a good audience considering that many students and faculty members were rushing to various make-up classes, research papers and even quizzes due to the cancellation of classes for a week due to the 3 typhoons that hit Metro Manila and neighboring provinces about 2 weeks earlier.

There are some expectations about MG's follow-up activities after the 2 events on September 4. With very limited resources, it is not possible for MG to come up with similar events in the near future.