

Chapter 14

National Harmony: The Peace Process

GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

The goals of the peace process for the present administration are as follows:

1. Completion of comprehensive peace agreements with rebel groups resulting in the permanent cessation of armed hostilities by 2010;
2. Completion of implementation of all final peace agreements signed since 1986;
3. Mainstreaming the rebel groups through an enhanced amnesty, reintegration, and reconciliation program;
4. Rehabilitation, development, and healing of conflict-affected areas; and
5. Strengthening the peace constituency and citizens' participation in the peace process on the ground

The extreme poverty, political marginalization, and social exclusion experienced by the minority Muslim population, exemplified by the low socioeconomic development in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) but also felt by Muslims outside the ARMM, is recognized as a special challenge. This provides a continuing sense of grievance that feeds the armed conflict in Muslim Mindanao.

The administration shall adopt and implement a peace plan comprising two major components, namely:

1. Peacemaking and peacekeeping; and
2. Peacebuilding and conflict prevention

A. Peacemaking and Peacekeeping

This component aims to permanently end all insurgency-related armed conflicts through peace negotiations and to immediately reduce the level of violence in conflict areas through local and civil society-led peace initiatives. This involves the following:

1. *Continuation of peace talks and conclusion of final peace agreements with each of the following rebel groups:*
 - a. Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)
 - b. Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/National

Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF)

- c. Rebolusyonyang Partidong Manggagawa ng Pilipinas/Revolutionary Proletarian Army/Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPMP/RPA/ABB)
- d. Rebolusyonyang Partidong Manggagawa ng Mindanao (RPMM)

The process of peace talks includes the conduct of confidence-building measures, adoption of interim or humanitarian ceasefire mechanisms, and negotiations on the substantive agenda constituting reforms to address the roots of the armed conflict. The final peace agreement will also involve a political settlement and an agreement on the final end of hostilities and disposition of forces.

2. ***Complementary measures to minimize the level of violence arising from armed conflicts.***

Government shall encourage, recognize, respect, and support grassroots peacekeeping initiatives by civil society or local government units (LGUs), especially the community declaration of peace zones and other “spaces” for peace, citizens’ campaigns for and monitoring of ceasefire agreements, and localized peace talks. In conflict-affected indigenous communities, traditional or indigenous mechanisms for conflict settlement shall be tapped. Information education to promote nonviolent means of conflict resolution shall likewise be undertaken.

3. ***Full implementation of existing final peace agreements***, particularly the (a) Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) Peace Agreement of 1996, and (b) GRP- Cordillera People’s Liberation Army (CPLA) Peace Agreement of 1986. The former shall involve the full implementation of Republic Act (RA) 9054, or the new Organic Act for an expanded ARMM; and the provision of livelihood/direct development assistance to unserved MNLF state commands and Bangsamoro women’s cooperatives.
4. ***Implementation of an enhanced and integrated reintegration, rehabilitation, and amnesty program to mainstream former rebels into society.***

An Amnesty and Reintegration Commission (ARC) shall be established in lieu of the National Amnesty Commission and shall be placed under the supervision of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP). The ARC shall integrate the management of all national programs and services for former combatants and work closely with concerned LGUs to take a leading role in the reintegration program in their own localities.

B. Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention

This component seeks to address the major causes of insurgency. It also aims to eliminate sources of grievance, transform conflict-affected communities into peace and development areas, and heal the social wounds brought about by the long-drawn internal armed conflicts. This shall constitute the streamlined and enhanced Mindanao National Initiatives (MINDANAO NATIN), which shall be composed of the following:

1. **Rehabilitation and development of conflict areas**

Priority areas shall be identified for accelerated barangay-focused rehabilitation and development to be undertaken and completed in by 2010. MILF-affected areas include Palimbang in Sultan Kudarat, the perimeter towns of the former Camp Abubakar (Barira, Buldon, and Matanog in Maguindanao); perimeter towns surrounding Buliok (Pikit in North Cotabato and Pagalungan and Datu Montawal in Maguindanao), Triple-S/B areas in Zamboanga Peninsula (Siocon, Sibuco, Sirawai and Baliguian); Carmen and President Roxas in North Cotabato; and Damulog in Bukidnon.

For affected areas in Muslim Mindanao (which may include MNLF communities), the following multidonor-assisted funds will be fully mobilized, such as: ARMM Social Fund for Peace and Development, United Nations (UN) Multi-Donor (and successor) Funds, European Union-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Fund for Rehabilitating Internally Displaced Persons, and the Mindanao Trust Fund which shall be operational upon the signing of a final peace agreement with the MILF to cover 150 identified conflict-affected municipalities. The Mindanao Peace and Development Fund shall be activated to cover conflict areas outside the ARMM.

Priority NPA-affected areas will include influenced barangays in Regions III and IV which are closest to the National Capital Region (NCR), barangays in the Bicol region, Mindoro and Samar islands, and Surigao provinces and Compostela Valley in Mindanao. For the RPMP, 100 priority barangays have been identified mostly located in the Negros provinces and Panay island, while around 76 priority barangays in the Lanao provinces, Agusan provinces, and Maguindanao have been identified for the RPMM. In the absence of a major donor-assisted fund to cover these areas, *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* (KALAHI), under the supervision of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, will continue to be mobilized and strengthened. Mission funds, particularly of the European embassies in Manila, shall also be tapped as a quick-response source of assistance.

The delivery of core shelter units and immediate livelihood assistance for displaced families shall be prioritized. Infrastructure and basic services for conflict-affected communities i.e. access roads, schoolbuilding and teachers, potable water, electricity, and multipurpose center shall also be targeted.

2. **Catch-up development program for ARMM and affirmative action agenda for Muslims. The catch-up development program for ARMM will focus on :**

- a. Completion of the devolution of national agencies to the ARMM in accordance with RA 9054.

Among the agencies still to be devolved and which have been approved by the Oversight Committee are the Department of Public Works and Highways, Regional Police Commission/ Regional Police Force (REPOLCOM/RPF), Bureau of Jail Management and

Penology/ Bureau of Fire Protection (BJMP/BFP), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Cooperative Development Authority, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Commission on Higher Education.

b. Budget reform to enhance fiscal autonomy.

To strengthen the ARMM's capacity to generate revenues, two specific measures have to be accomplished, namely:

- A Regional Department of Finance in the ARMM shall be created, with the mandate to mobilize ARMM resources to support regional budgetary requirements.
- An inventory of all funds that should be made available to the ARMM from the budgets of national agencies and lump sums has been identified. A common protocol or system shall be established to facilitate the flow of funds from these agencies to the ARMM.

c. Completion of infrastructure for interconnectivity of ARMM-constituent provinces and city and of affirmative action roads to provide access to remote conflict-affected areas.

d. Catch-up plan for health and education to raise the Human Development Index.

This involves the implementation of culturally-responsive programs in public health and the provision/improvement of appropriate infrastructures, complementary supplies and equipment, including the effective management of these services. On the other hand, a Madrasah education program will be implemented by the DepEd consisting of curriculum development, training of madaris teachers, and a catch-up plan for Muslim students.

(Chapter 18: Education)

e. Filling up of all vacancies and support for effective operation of shariah courts.

This will necessitate the reactivation of the Search Committee to identify qualified candidates and, possibly, the conduct of continuous education programs to upgrade their competencies and skills.

f. Land tenure improvement for actual occupants.

To address claims on land and resolve existing conflict in land claims, a land tenure improvement program to be piloted by the Office on Muslim

Affairs (OMA) in coordination with the concerned agencies will identify land ownership and facilitate the generation of land titles. In addition, a One-Stop Action Center for Titling Assistance for Muslim Minorities, which was initiated by the DAR for Region XII, shall be continued and may be expanded in cooperation with the ARMM.

g. Enhanced agricultural productivity program.

Consistent with the effort to make Mindanao the country's agri-fishery export zone, the development of the ARMM as the Halal-based food production and processing center shall be supported. The region's agricultural and fishery production centers shall be linked cost-effectively through the provision of adequate transport and communications services and infrastructures. (*Chapter 2: Agribusiness*)

h. Support for the implementation of "The ARMM Special Economic Zone Act of 2003," which created the Regional Economic Zone Authority (REZA) to oversee the establishment and operations of special economic zones, industrial estates, export processing and free trade zones in the ARMM.

Support shall be given to ARMM-Department of Trade and Industry, which functions as the REZA in the transition period, to explore and launch pilot economic zones. This may range from industrial-type estates, which require huge development incentives, to municipal or even barangay-level free zones. The implementation of Polloc, Parang, Maguindanao as an ecozone, as designated by the Philippine Special Economic Zone Act of 1995 (RA 7916), shall also be studied.

i. Holding of peaceful, orderly and meaningful elections in the ARMM in August, 2005, and August, 2008, in accordance with RA 9333.

The affirmative action agenda for Muslims to eliminate cultural biases throughout the country, will focus, among others, on:

- Proportionate share of appointments to senior government positions;
- Rehabilitation/entry of Islamic banking;
- Creation of salaam police units for NCR and urban centers;
- Ensuring non-discriminatory policies and procedures in any police/military action against terrorism;
- Improved Hajj supervision;
- Promotion of Muslim holidays and religious festivals through official declarations and conduct of awareness program on these important events;
- Policies to ensure elimination of discrimination, even affirmative action, in schooling and employment; and
- Streamlining and strengthening of OMA.

3. ***Conduct of healing and reconciliation programs in conflict-affected communities.***

These shall include the conduct of community-based interfaith and intercultural peace education and advocacy campaigns; trauma counseling and rehabilitative services for displaced families, especially women and children victims of armed conflict; and holding of community rituals and traditional practices for cleansing, healing, and reconciliation.