

# Building Capacities for Peace Process

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## The GRP and MILF

By Abhoud Syed M. Lingga

*Executive Director, Institute of Bangsamoro Studies*

Center for Integrative and Development Studies

University of the Philippines, Quezon City

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# GRP-MILF Negotiations

- Negotiations to solve the Mindanao problem were confined with the MNLF before the 1996 Peace Accord.
- Contacts between the GRP and the MILF were at the informal level.
- August 3, 1996, Sec. Ruben Torres met MILF vice chair for political affairs Ghadzali Jaafar in Davao City.
- Another meeting was held in Cagayan de Oro City on Sept. 9-10, 1996 where issues on cessation of hostilities and creation of technical committees to draw talking points and guidelines of ceasefire were discussed.
- Jan. 7, 1997, first meeting of the technical committees of GRP and MILF Peace panels. The start of the formal negotiations.

# Both GRP and MILF recognize

- The need for comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement of the conflict in Mindanao through negotiations.
- That the “peace negotiations between the GRP and MILF is for the advancement of the the general interest of the Bangsamoro people and other indigenous people”.
- “The negotiation and peaceful resolution of the conflict must involve consultations with the Bangsamoro people free of any imposition”.
- The “Bangsamoro people’s fundamental right to determine their own future and political status.”
- “...respect for the identity, culture and aspirations of all peoples of Mindanao.”

# GRP and MILF agreements

## 1. Security Aspect

1. Ceasefire
2. Monitoring Team
3. Acknowledgement of MILF camps
4. Isolation and interdiction of criminal elements

## 2. Rehabilitation and Development Aspect

1. Return and rehabilitation of evacuees
2. Implementation of development programs
3. Reparation
4. Respect for human rights and observance of international humanitarian laws

# Agenda under discussion

- Ancestral domain
  - ◆ Concept
  - ◆ Territory
  - ◆ Resources
  - ◆ Governance

There are agreements in principle on the concept, territory and resources. The issue of governance was discussed last week during the exploratory talks held in Kuala Lumpur last week.

# Strong points

- **The negotiations started with discussion on less controversial issues**
- **Incremental approach – the signed agreements form part of the final peace agreement. There is a need for strong commitment to honor, respect and implement all past agreements.**
- **The negotiations used the process of exploratory talks to break deadlocks.**
- **The MILF peace panel had undergone training on negotiations, including interest-based negotiations**
- **GRP and MILF representatives participated in a workshop on ancestral domain conducted by the US Institute of Peace**

# Problems

- Major violations of the ceasefire
  - ◆ 2000 all-out GRP war against the MILF
  - ◆ 2/11/2003 attack against MILF positions in Pikit and Pagalungan
- Slow implementation of agreements on rehabilitation and development of conflict-affected areas

# Recommendations

- There is need for GRP peace panel to undergo training on interest based negotiations
- There is need for effective information dissemination on the importance of resolving the problem for the
  - ◆ Military establishment
  - ◆ Members of the Senate and Congress
  - ◆ Business sector
  - ◆ Media
  - ◆ Christian communities

# Recommendations

- Educate the members of the Senate and Congress, the military and the Filipino people on the importance of
  - ◆ Implementation of agreements
  - ◆ Building confidence and trust
  - ◆ Healing
  - ◆ Restorative justice
  - ◆ Truth-telling
  - ◆ Reparation