



Management
Association of the
Philippines

The Philippines' Leading Management Association

Press Statement

15 October 2012

STATEMENT ON THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON THE BANGSAMORO

A dramatic achievement has been reached with the signing of the 2012 Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro between the Aquino government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). We receive this development with great hope that, after 15 years of on-again, off-again negotiations, there now exists a clear roadmap by which crucial and long-awaited structural reforms can be established, leading to what can truly be a lasting peace in Mindanao.

The business community believes that the Framework Agreement, and the process that led to its final form, abides by the provisions of the Constitution and balances the valid interests of the Government of the Philippines, the MILF, and the Bangsamoro people. We laud the intent of the parties to ensure that the creation of the Bangsamoro political entity is undertaken in an inclusive and democratic manner. We also appreciate the efforts to duly take into account the values, culture, history, and struggles of the Bangsamoro in crafting the agreement.

This would not have been possible without the earnest and untiring efforts of the negotiating parties. We, thus, congratulate the government's peace panel led by Sec. Teresita Deles and Dean Marvic Leonen for their dedication amidst the various challenges during the peace talks. We also commend the MILF panel led by Chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim and head of the MILF peace panel Mohagher Iqbal for seeking a peaceful resolution to our long-standing divisions. We also extend our thanks to our country's international partners who have continued to provide their invaluable assistance in the forging of this historic accord.

The signing of the Framework Agreement is but the first step in the march towards a harmonious and progressive Mindanao. The Transition Commission to be formed still faces tough negotiations ahead as it drafts and seeks Congress' and the people's support for the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law. As we welcome the President's intention to certify this as an urgent bill, we sincerely hope that this will truly embody the aspirations of the Bangsamoro and will indeed pave the way towards a much-deserved reemergence of the region as a center of economic and cultural activity.

Besides other factors, we believe that economic neglect has been among the foremost reasons for the generations-long conflict. As such, it is gratifying to note that the agreement has garnered the favorable response of the business and international diplomatic community. Along with the promise of peace, we hope that this optimism will later translate into business relationships in the Bangsamoro, leading to the realization of Mindanao's potential to be an integral part of the Philippines' improving economic engine and, ultimately, to the upliftment of the lives of the Bangsamoro people.

With this milestone in our history, we remain positive that trade and genuine development will again flourish in these areas long-scarred by conflict. As the Bangsamoro slowly takes shape as a new, yet vital, part of the Philippines, the business sector offers its full support in helping the region become politically progressive, economically vibrant, and socially inclusive.

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