



Press Statement

29 January 2014

MBC STATEMENT ON THE SIGNED ANNEX ON NORMALIZATION AND ADDENDUM ON BANGSAMORO WATERS

The Makati Business Club congratulates the Aquino administration and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) for the successful signing of the Annex on Normalization and Addendum on Bangsamoro Waters—the last of the four annexes leading towards a Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. We join our countrymen and the international community in recognizing this noteworthy move that will bring about genuine and lasting peace and development in Mindanao.

MBC commends the government's peace panel led by Sec. Teresita Deles and chief negotiator Miriam Coronel Ferrer, and the MILF panel led by Chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim and head of the MILF peace panel Mohagher Iqbal, who, through their tireless leadership amidst all the challenges, have ensured that the negotiation process was fair, transparent, peaceful, and inclusive. MBC also extends its deepest appreciation to the country's international partners, whose valuable assistance made this historical breakthrough possible.

As work now shifts towards the crafting of the Bangsamoro Basic Law and, subsequently, implementing its provisions, we call on our legislators and other stakeholders to pursue this path to peace with even greater vigor and dedication. It is our fervent hope that the Basic Law to be urgently enacted will indeed embody the aspirations of the Bangsamoro, paving the way to the region's revival as a vibrant center of economic and cultural activity.

This landmark achievement proves that cooperation and open dialogue can indeed serve as an effective bridge between parties whose differences may, at first, seem irreconcilable. In the same breath, it may be high time for the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the MILF to come together and identify points of consensus between the 1996 Final Peace Agreement and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro on which a more sustainable and lasting peace in Mindanao can be built.

The business community strongly believes that, besides other factors, economic neglect has been among the primary reasons for this conflict and that, in pursuit of our shared goal of sustainable and inclusive growth for all Filipinos, development in the Bangsamoro will be critical. Thus, the business sector will continue to fully support this final phase of the process. Likewise, the business sector stands ready to assist in harnessing the region's potential as a vital part of the Philippine economy, with the ultimate aim of uplifting the lives of our brothers and sisters in Mindanao.

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