



Press Statement

27 March 2014

MBC LAUDS THE SIGNING OF THE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT ON THE BANGSAMORO

The Makati Business Club is one with the Filipino people in hailing the successful signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. MBC believes that the process that led to this final peace accord was conducted with utmost respect for the principles of fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. We greatly commend 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 have seen this process through, amidst all the challenges during the entire stretch of the negotiations. We also extend our warmest thanks and congratulations to the various local and international organizations, and foreign governments, particularly the government of Malaysia, who have all been instrumental in the forging of the agreement.

With the journey towards lasting peace now entering the halls of Congress as it crafts the Bangsamoro Basic Law, we reiterate our call to our legislators and other stakeholders to continue to ardently pursue this path to peace. We repeat our shared aspiration that the Basic Law, which the government has committed to certify as urgent legislation, will truly embody the aspirations of the Bangsamoro and usher the region towards greater economic, social, and cultural activity.

Furthermore, we continue to believe that this milestone is a testament to the strength of cooperation and dialogue in bridging seemingly irreconcilable differences. Thus, as we have previously stated, "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."

We believe that the success of the peace deal hinges largely on genuine economic development, and the improvement in the quality of the lives of the people, both in the Bangsamoro and in Mindanao as a whole. We are hopeful that the effective implementation of the Agreement will unleash the region's vast potentials for agriculture and agribusiness investments, tourism, and natural resource development, among others. With this achieved, Mindanao will take its deserving place as a truly vibrant and essential part of the Philippine economic engine.

With the country's steadily improving investment climate, the peace deal presents a golden opportunity for the Bangsamoro and Mindanao. In this context, the business community must do its part. Thus, we call on our colleagues in business to be active participants in developing Mindanao's economy and in providing greater livelihood opportunities for our brothers and sisters in the region.

Indeed, it is only through coming together as a people that the greatest of challenges can be confidently faced and surpassed. Let us build upon this landmark achievement to bring forth a generation of peace and inclusive development in Mindanao and in the other troubled areas of our country.

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