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Attaining Just and Lasting Peace

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This year saw the milestone passage of the Republic Act No. 11054 entitled the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (also known as the Bangsamoro Organic Law or BOL), which will advance peace and development in the southern Philippines. The gains of the peace process, including those with other peace tables will be further pursued and sustained by enabling conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable communities to participate in the implementation of the peace-promoting programs.

While significant strides have been achieved to attain just and lasting peace in the country, there are remaining gaps and challenges that need to be addressed such as the need for smooth transition to Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Effective implementation of programs, activities, and projects must be ensured to sustain the gains of the peace process.

Assessment

Negotiating and implementing peace agreements with all internal armed conflict groups

The signing of the BOL was a significant achievement towards a just and lasting peace in Mindanao, but there is a need to enable a smooth transition into the BARMM. The signing of RA 11054 in July 2018 marked a defining moment in the decades-long struggle for meaningful autonomy and self-determination by the Bangsamoro people. The BOL strengthens and expands the current set-up of the ARMM by giving its regional government more control over its political, social, and economic affairs. Among the law's salient provisions include the establishment of a parliamentary form of government, creation of intergovernmental relations bodies for effective cooperation and coordination with the national government, and improved financial resources and greater fiscal autonomy.

The BOL mandates that following its ratification, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) will be established and intergovernmental relations bodies will be organized. The transition period from the ARMM to the BARMM is critical to ensure the continuous delivery of services and effective functioning of the government in the Bangsamoro Region.

There are remaining commitments under the peace agreements with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) that still need to be implemented. The Independent Decommissioning Body (IDB)¹ has intensified its preparatory work for the second phase of decommissioning of MILF forces and weapons. This includes planning workshops on the concept of operations, survey of potential verification sites, development of IDB database, consultation meetings on the decommissioning process, engagement with key stakeholders, capacity building on verification and decommissioning, among others. The Task Force for Decommissioned Combatants and their Communities continued the delivery of the remaining socioeconomic interventions

¹ The IDB oversees the process of decommissioning of MILF forces and weapons, including inventory, verification, and validation. The IDB is composed of three (3) international experts (from Turkey, Norway, and Brunei), and four (4) local experts jointly nominated by the Parties.

for the 139² decommissioned combatants, including livelihood assistance. The Joint Task Forces on Camps Transformation has fully validated and produced the necessary documents such as detailed engineering designs and program of works for small-scale infrastructure to be built in the six previously-acknowledged MILF camps. Capacity enhancement programs for people's organizations on project management and participatory area development were also undertaken.

A more pragmatic approach has been adopted to address communist insurgency even as formal talks with the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/National Democratic Front of the Philippines (CPP/NPA/NDFP) have not resumed. Following the issuance of Proclamation No. 360 in November 2017,³ the President gave the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process/Government of the Republic of the Philippines (OPAPP/GRP) clear instructions on forging a ceasefire agreement to stop mutual attacks while talks are underway. Backchannel efforts have also been intensified to discuss the President's requirements for the resumption of the talks, as follows: (a) a coalition government will not be established; (b) the collection of "revolutionary tax" will be stopped; (c) the venue of the talks will be in the Philippines; (d) a ceasefire agreement will be signed; (e) and armed NPA members will be encamped in designated areas. A bigger peace table involving the general public and other sectors in government was also engaged to ensure that all consensus points and agreements have palpable support. Despite these efforts to advance the peace negotiations, successful results are yet to be attained.

Meanwhile, the government continued its social and development programs in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable communities and to former rebels. The President signed Administrative Order (AO) No. 10 in April 2018, creating the Task Force *Balik-Loob* to centralize all government efforts for the reintegration of former rebels from the CPP/NPA/NDFP. These former rebels and their immediate family members are provided with a complete package of assistance through the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP). The President also issued Executive Order (EO) No. 70 in December 2018 creating the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict under the Office of the President. The EO institutionalizes a whole-of-nation approach in prioritizing and harmonizing the delivery of services and provision of social development assistance to conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable areas.

Efforts to finalize and complete the implementation of peace agreements with other internal armed groups were also actively pursued. These include the 1996 Final Peace Agreement (FPA) with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF); the Cordillera Bodong Administration – Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CBA-CPLA); and the *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa- Pilipinas*/Revolutionary Proletarian Army/Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPM-P/RPA/ABB).

Completion of the implementation of the remaining commitments under the 1996 FPA with the MNLF

The remaining commitments relative to the convergence of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement and the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro has been complied with through the participation of the MNLF in the Bangsamoro Transition Commission and in the appointment of some of their members to the Bangsamoro Transition Authority. Further, the issue on co-management of strategic minerals has been resolved with the inclusion of the provisions on Article XII on fiscal autonomy and Article XIII on regional economy and patrimony of the BOL. Information and education campaigns were also conducted to support the ratification of the BOL, including the conduct of MNLF assemblies in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, North Cotabato, Sulu, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi.

In December 2018, the MNLF released a resolution accepting the BOL as the appropriate political solution to the Bangsamoro issues and committing to rally their people to ratify the BOL.

² The number of decommissioned combatants was decreased from 145 to 139, as five (5) are now deceased and one (1) is working abroad.

³ Declaring the Termination of Peace Negotiations with the NDFP-CPP-NPA

Immediate Conclusion of the Peace Process with the CBA-CPLA and the RPM-P/RPA/ABB

On the CBA-CPLA. The completion strategy focused on the implementation and sustainability of socioeconomic reintegration programs for former CPLA members and their families and communities. Various programs were also sustained such as the renewal of 508 forest guards under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-OPAPP Forest Guard Program; provision of training and funding of livelihood projects for ten people's organizations composed of 887 former CPLA members; and completion of 76 community development projects. Support from various fronts was provided for Cordillera's aspiration towards autonomy. All CBA-CPLA groups (Balao-as, Suggiyao, Humding-Bahatan-Ganggangan, Molina) also signified their unified support for regional autonomy through a resolution signed in May 2018. On the side of the government, the passage of House Bill 5343 (An Act Establishing the Autonomous Region of the Cordillera) and various Senate bills⁴ on the Cordillera autonomy has been actively pursued through various advocacy fora and events.

On the RPM-P/RPA/ABB. The Clarificatory Implementing Document (CID) to the 2000 Peace Agreement is being finalized by leaders from the GRP and RPM-P/RPA/ABB. The CID has the following components: disposition of arms and forces and security arrangements; social and economic reintegration; release of remaining alleged political offenders (APO); transformation of the RPM-P/RPA/ABB-Tabara Paduano Group (TPG) into a civilian organization; and community peace dividends.

Pending the signing of the CID, various programs and activities are already underway. Validation of inventoried firearms, ammunitions, and explosives were conducted, including 78 assorted light weapons, 4,378 ammunitions, and 53 explosives in the provinces of Bukidnon, Negros Oriental, and Aklan.

Socioeconomic programs were also provided, including employment of 128 profiled TPG members as forest guards under the DENR Forest Guard Program, enrolment of 9,262 individuals as beneficiaries under the *Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan* – Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PAMANA-Philhealth) sponsored program, and inclusion of 75 grantees (next-of-kin of RPA-TPG members) under the OPAPP/PAMANA-Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Study Grant Program. All 100 Sustainable Livelihood Program peoples associations from the RPA-TPG-identified barangays under the Community Peace Dividends Program have been accredited and were each awarded a seed capital amounting to PHP500,000.00.

Case files for the release of the remaining APOs are also being organized and reviewed. The framework for the full transformation of the RPM-P/RPA/ABB-TPG into a civilian organization is likewise being developed.

Protecting and developing communities in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable areas

Efforts were pursued to strengthen the reintegration programs for former rebels, their families, and communities. The issuance of AO 10, s. 2018 will strengthen the complementation between PAMANA and E-CLIP programs to maximize their socioeconomic impact through effective and efficient implementation and coordination. Task Force *Balik-Loob* serves as the central coordinating body which supervises reintegration efforts, and is composed of representatives from the Department of National Defense, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Office of the President, National Housing Authority, and OPAPP.

Under the PAMANA Program, various socioeconomic development programs and projects were sustained including education and health assistance, livelihood support, housing and infrastructure projects, and capacity-building activities for peacebuilding. The conflict-sensitivity and peace-promoting approach

⁴ Senate Bills 1678, 1923, and 1930, all entitled, "An Act Establishing the Autonomous Region of the Cordillera"

of PAMANA has ensured that governance processes and structures enhance social cohesion, strengthen community resilience, and build peace.

Communities were empowered by increasing their capacity to address conflict and reduce their vulnerabilities. People's Peace Tables are continuously convened to serve as the government's platform to ensure people's participation in the peace process. It provides a democratic space not only for continuing dialogues between the government and community stakeholders to surface, discuss and clarify issues and concerns that are at the root of, resulting from, or affecting the peace process, but also to gather recommendations and strategies to address these concerns. These include the Indigenous People (IP) Peace Panel, which is considered as the government's first concrete measure in response to the clamor for IP representation in the peace process. There are consultations being conducted with IPs regarding their concerns, inputs, and recommendations along the different peace process tracks. A Youth Peace Panel was also created to gather young peace advocates from school- and non-school organizations and various ethnolinguistic groups, to further explore their capacities in building a culture of peace and conflict-sensitivity.

The National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security is continuously being implemented and localized to ensure the protection of women's rights in conflict situations. Various activities in support of women's greater participation in the peace process were conducted, including consultations on indigenous women's rights, the Second Bangsamoro Women's Summit that was held in March 2018, and the drafting of Agency Strategic Action Plans of member-agencies of the National Steering Committee on Women, Peace, and Security.

With regard to mainstreaming conflict-sensitive and peace-promoting (CSPP) practices, 24 regional line agencies; four (4) security sector agencies; 18 other national government and attached agencies; 67 local government units (LGUs); six (6) civil society organizations; and one (1) academe in 12 regions were capacitated on CSPP approaches. The Guidebook and Facilitator's Manual on CSPP were developed as part of the Comprehensive Development Plans for LGUs in conflict-affected areas to serve as a reference guide and practical tool kit in adopting a conflict-sensitive and peace-promoting framework in local development planning.

The Humanitarian and Development Assistance Program (HDAP) of the ARMM established a coordinated and systematic mechanism to address and mitigate the effects of both human-induced and natural calamities. The emergency response component of the HDAP, implemented through the ARMM Humanitarian Emergency Action Response Team (ARMM-HEART), includes the provision of relief and medical missions for internally displaced persons (IDPs); and capacity-building programs on Incident Command System and Rapid Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis for the affected communities. As of December 2018, the ARMM-HEART provided humanitarian assistance to more than 175,000 IDPs. On the other hand, the development component of the HDAP involves the provision of socioeconomic and peace and development projects, such as livelihood assistance and training projects; construction of various health facilities, roads, integrated potable water systems, and community peace and development centers; and education and skills training programs.

The formulation of the *Bangon Marawi Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Program (BMCRRP)* was completed and subsequently turned over to the Task Force *Bangon Marawi (TFBM)* for implementation.⁵ TFBM is the inter-agency body mandated to oversee the government's rehabilitation efforts in Marawi City and other affected localities, particularly Butig and Piagapo. The BMCRRP includes strategic interventions on infrastructure, shelter, business and livelihood, social services, local governance and peace building, and land resource management.

⁵ NEDA spearheaded the formulation of the BMCRRP together with various government agencies and LGUs.

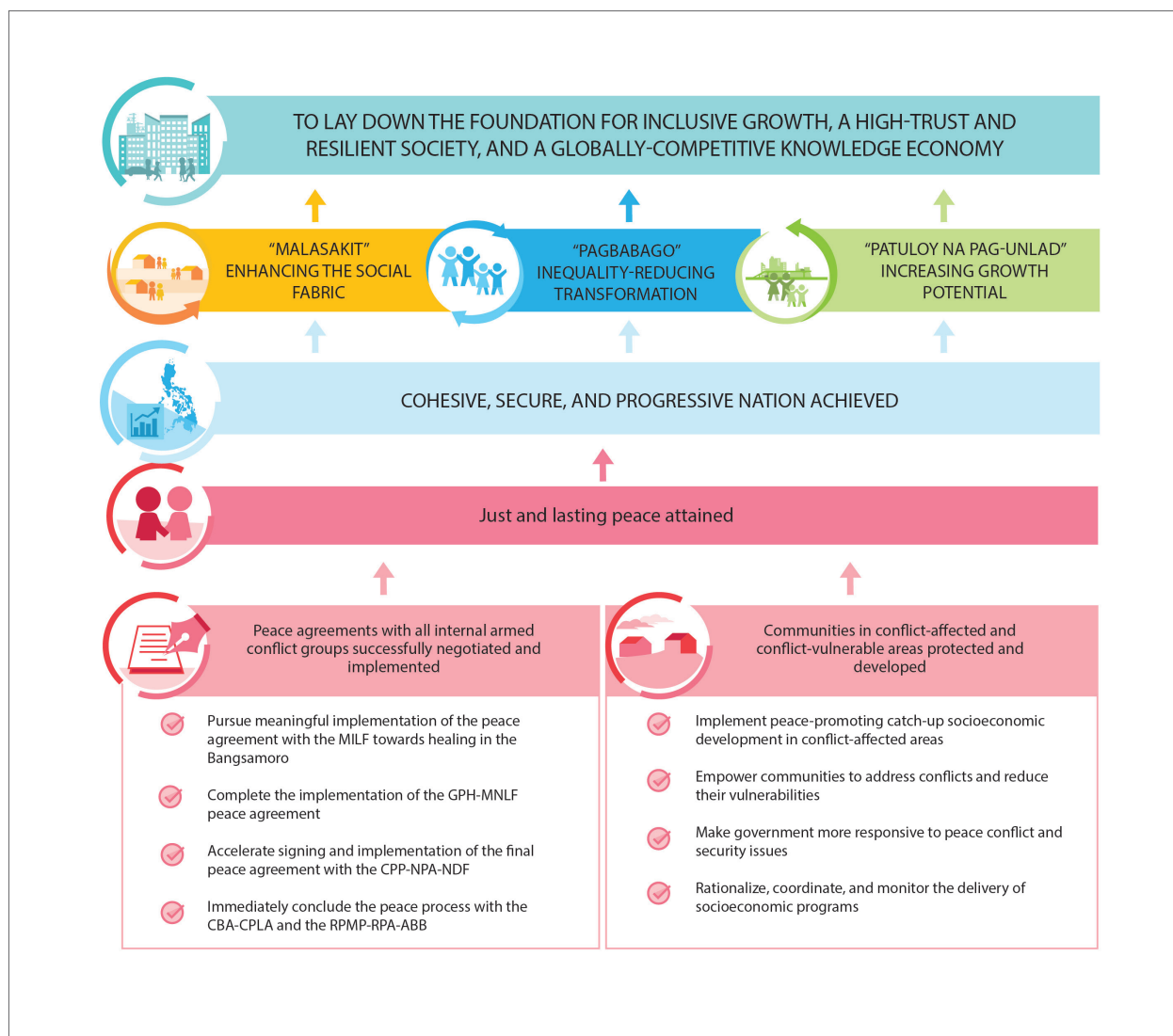
Even prior to the preparation of the BMCRRP, early recovery activities have already been undertaken in the aftermath of the siege. These include immediate assistance to affected families such as the construction of transitory shelters and the provision of cash assistance or starter kits for livelihood programs, continuing education, health services, and psychosocial support to the internally displaced families. Families from the Most Affected Areas whose homes were damaged by the conflict were able to briefly go back to their communities during the *Kambisita* Program. They also participated in a social cartography activity involving the enumeration and mapping of individual structures and lots. Several multi-stakeholder meetings and dialogues were held among IDPs to discuss specific issues and to help in the healing process. Moreover, the Social Healing and Peacebuilding Program was launched to enhance social cohesion, promote peacebuilding, and contribute to the peace and security environment in Marawi City. It has three major components namely (a) Mainstreaming of Conflict Sensitivity Approaches in Local Development Planning; (b) Welfare Assistance to Vulnerable Entities; and (c) College Educational Assistance Program.

Moving Forward

The prospects for the attainment of peace and development particularly in Mindanao will heavily rely on the ability of the BTA to govern effectively until the Bangsamoro regional government is established. Technical support from the national government is also expected to strengthen the capacity of the BTA as interim government to carry out their mandated functions and eventually transition into the BARMM. In the long run, increased fiscal autonomy and self-governance will likely result in more economic activities and socioeconomic interventions. Improved public financial management and seamless delivery of public services in the region will provide the environment for new investments that will spur growth in the area.

Commitment from the government and parties involved in other peace tables will be critical in moving peace agreements forward. Except for the peace agreement with the CPP/NPA/NDF, the outlook for other peace tables generally remains positive, particularly with regard to the delivery of socioeconomic interventions and reintegration programs for former CBA/CPLA and RPM-P/RPA/ABB combatants. The completion process for these agreements is expected to reduce conflicts and enable former rebels, their families, and communities to eventually be fully reintegrated into society.

Figure 17.1. Strategic Framework to Attain Just and Lasting Peace



To negotiate and implement peace agreements with all internal armed conflict groups

Enable a smooth transition into the BARMM. As the ratification of the BOL provided a fresh mandate to the Bangsamoro, continuous implementation of the normalization program, particularly on security, socioeconomic development, confidence-building, and transitional justice are necessary to ensure that the Bangsamoro peoples are able to achieve their desired quality of life while ensuring human security and freedom from fear and violence. The passage of the Bill (currently pending at the House of Representatives) creating the National Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission for the Bangsamoro will address human rights violations, marginalization, and legitimate grievances of the Bangsamoro peoples.

During the transition period until the 2022 national elections, the BTA shall serve as the interim government of the Bangsamoro. To ensure smooth transition from ARMM to the Bangsamoro, the government of the Philippines (GPH) and the MILF created the Coordination Team for the Transition (CT4T) to the BTA

in 2014 and was reactivated in 2018. The CT4T shall serve as the primary mechanism for coordination between the parties to undertake the necessary and appropriate steps in the transition process leading to the installation of the BTA. Composed of representatives from the GPH (including the ARMM Regional Government) and the MILF, the CT4T is currently preparing the transition plan for consideration of the BTA.

Pursue complementary efforts to resolve armed conflicts with communist insurgency groups. Local or traditional conflict resolution and management mechanisms, and formal and informal avenues for dialogue should be pursued. Humanitarian concerns resulting from internal armed conflicts should also be addressed through the integration of disaster risk reduction and management practices into the peace process. Implementation of peace and development projects in areas covered by the peace agreements should also be accelerated.

Complete the peace process with the CBA-CPLA. The completion strategy for the peace process with the CBA-CPLA will focus on the sustainability of the socioeconomic interventions and on strengthening mechanisms for inter-agency participation in planning and implementing peace and development interventions. In support of Cordillera's aspirations for autonomy, information, education, and advocacy activities will be conducted to support the passage of HB 5343.

To protect and develop communities in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable areas

Rationalize, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of socioeconomic programs in conflict-affected areas, especially in Mindanao. This includes strengthening the coordination and convergence among the various inter-agency bodies and committees tasked to implement and harmonize the socioeconomic development programs for individuals and communities in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable areas.

Promote the culture of peace especially to the youth, communities, government, and development workers to counter radicalism and violent extremism. Various socioeconomic and structural issues such as poverty, poor access to education, inadequate financial and economic opportunities, social exclusion, and limited access to basic services make the youth vulnerable to and at risk of radicalisation and violent extremism.

A holistic and whole-of-nation approach is necessary to address these issues and other deeply-rooted sources of conflict. Mainstreaming peace education programs and promoting a culture of peace and non-violence in both formal and non-formal settings also need to be continued and expanded. Effective collaboration with education agencies will be continued to operationalize this mainstreaming agenda, in partnership with local stakeholders, teachers, and *madaris*. Social media and other non-traditional approaches will be utilized to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity, and to facilitate dialogue. The conduct of Peoples Peace Tables will be continued as a venue to organize multi-stakeholder consultations. The finalization and implementation of the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism will also require a comprehensive and collaborative approach in addressing the factors that drive individuals to violent extremism, radicalization, and terrorism. A conflict-sensitive, peace-promoting, and inclusive rehabilitation and recovery program will be implemented to rebuild Marawi City.

