

## CHAPTER 17

# Attaining Just and Lasting Peace

Peace and development initiatives were sustained in 2021 despite the ongoing pandemic. In particular, the implementation of the components of signed peace agreements and the conduct of local peace engagements (LPE) are being pursued with the goal of completing and finalizing them by the end of the Plan period. Complementary development interventions are also continuously being carried out in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable communities to avoid the recurrence of violence and reap the gains of the peace processes towards inclusive development. In the final year of the Plan period, the government is resolved to further improve the peace and development situation in the country as a strong foundation in achieving the country's development objectives.

## ASSESSMENT

Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic, the peace and development environment in the country has improved with the support and commitment of national and local governments, regional bodies, parties to the signed peace agreements, international partners, communities, and other stakeholders. The challenge for the succeeding administration is to build on these gains and pursue strategic interventions to mainstream peace and conflict-sensitivity in government policies and processes, towards inclusive and sustainable peace.

## IMPLEMENTING PEACE AGREEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATED WITH ALL INTERNAL ARMED GROUPS

**Various intergovernmental relations (IGR) mechanisms have been organized.** As provided in RA 11054, also known as the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), these IGR mechanisms are created to coordinate and resolve issues on intergovernmental relations through regular consultation and continuing negotiation in a non-adversarial manner. Significant issues concerning budget, financial management, resource development, energy, governance, and funding from development partners were resolved through IGR mechanisms. Currently, the following IGR mechanisms have already been organized: (a) Intergovernmental Fiscal Policy Board; (b) Intergovernmental Energy Board; (c) Intergovernmental Infrastructure Board; (d) Joint Body for the Zones of Joint Cooperation; and (e) the Council of Leaders. The Philippine Congress-Bangsamoro Parliament (PC-BP) Forum and the Bangsamoro Sustainable Development Board (BSDB) are yet to be organized.

**Implementation of the normalization program for the Bangsamoro remains on track.** More than 12,000 combatants and 2,100 weapons were already decommissioned after the completion of the second phase of the decommissioning process in 2021 for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The third

phase is ongoing, with 5,250 of the 14,000 targeted combatants already decommissioned. The Transitional Justice and Reconciliation (TJR) Roadmap is being finalized by the Government of the Philippines-Moro Islamic Liberation Front (GPH-MILF) TJR Technical Working Group.

**Transition period in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has been extended.** The pandemic situation hampered the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), BARMM's interim government, from undertaking and completing its mandated functions under the BOL. To this end, RA 11593, signed on October 28, 2021, resets the first general elections for the BARMM from 2022 to 2025, thereby extending the transition period from ARMM to BARMM. The extension is expected to enable the BTA to complete its remaining commitments and deliverables [See box article].

**Completion of the remaining agreements under the 1996 Final Peace Agreement (FPA) with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) is actively pursued.** Preparatory activities for the implementation of the MNLF Transformation Program, which aims to transition the armed elements of the MNLF into productive and peaceful citizens of the country, were completed. These include the approval of the Implementing Guidelines and Mechanisms on the Security Component of the Program with the Sema Group in October 2021 to implement the validation, verification, and profiling of 1,000 MNLF combatants in Sulu, and the establishment of four security mechanisms tasked to implement the guidelines.

**Various initiatives to end local communist armed conflict are being implemented.** The National and Regional Task Forces to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF/RTFs-ELCAC) are actively pursuing both military and socioeconomic interventions to clear communist-terrorist group (CTG)-affected barangays, reintegrate former rebels, and spur socioeconomic development in these areas. The mainstreaming of LPE by the regional and local task forces is purposively carried out with local chief executives through community consultations and problem-solving sessions. Local peace dialogues with former CTG members have also been undertaken to facilitate the integration of former rebels as productive members of society. The BARMM Government has also implemented activities in support of the NTF-ELCAC objectives, including the creation of the Bangsamoro Task Force on ELCAC (BTF-ELCAC) and the conduct of the Bangsamoro Peace and Security Summit. This summit serves as a venue for the immediate resolution of conflicts in certain areas of the region and the formulation of a rehabilitation and development program for conflict-affected communities in Maguindanao.

**The peace agreements with the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa ng Pilipinas/ Revolutionary Proletarian Army/Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPMP-RPA-ABB) and the Cordillera Bodong Administration-Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CBA-CPLA) are already underway.** In support of the finalization of these peace agreements, the decommissioning program for both groups have been completed and finalized. The demilitarization and disposal of firearms, explosives, and ammunitions for both peace tables were completed in 2021.

Socioeconomic interventions were also provided to beneficiary-members and their families for both groups. For the RPMP-RPA-ABB peace process, social enterprise trainings, social protection packages (i.e., renewal of PhilHealth membership and endorsement to local government unit (LGU) scholarship programs for qualified next-of-kin) to 727 beneficiary RPA members and their families, and housing units for qualified families. For the CBA-CPLA peace process, interventions were also undertaken, such as

agri-based livelihood opportunities, various infrastructure projects, programs for healing and reconciliation particularly in recognition of martyrs and old guards, installation of memorabilia for the preservation of the Cordillera identity, and social protection packages and organizational development support for peoples' organizations. Employment of more than 600 individuals from both groups as *Bantay Gubat members* was also renewed, in line with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process - Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (OPAPP-DENR) Joint Memorandum Circular 2013-02 (Implementing Guidelines on Providing Employment Opportunities to Beneficiaries in Support of the Peace Process through National Greening Program, Forest Protection, and Other Forestry-Related Activities).

**A National Amnesty Commission was created to complement the efforts towards the successful implementation of the various peace agreements.** Executive Order No. 125, s. 2021<sup>1</sup> mandates the National Amnesty Commission to receive and process applications for amnesty, an important step towards reintegration, social healing, and reconciliation among former rebels and the affected families and communities. Applicants entitled to amnesty are provided under the following proclamations, also issued in February 2021: Proclamation No. 1090 (MILF members); Proclamation 1091 (MNLF members); Proclamation No. 1092 (RPMP-RPA-ABB members); and Proclamation No. 1093 (CTG members).

## PROTECTING AND DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AND CONFLICT-VULNERABLE AREAS

**Various socioeconomic interventions continue to complement the implementation of peace agreements towards community development.** These include:

- *Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA) Program.* The PAMANA Program has implemented various peace-promoting socioeconomic interventions in peace agreement, conflict-affected, and conflict-vulnerable areas in 16 regions, 50 provinces, and over 500 municipalities and cities. For the period 2017 to 2021, the program continued to allocate funds for more than 92,000 beneficiaries composed of former combatants and/or their next of kin for scholarships, health insurance coverage, educational assistance to indigenous peoples, jobs and livelihood support, and other programs. The program has also strengthened the resilience of communities to conflict by improving their socioeconomic capacity, particularly their personal, social, entrepreneurial, and technical skills. In addition, the program has brought economic development to communities through infrastructure support, economic integration, and employment generation projects.
- *Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP).* In 2021, more than 5,000 former rebels have surrendered to the government. They, together with their families and communities, were given financial, livelihood and employment, housing, education, and psychosocial assistance to facilitate their reintegration into society. At least 70 rebels were also qualified and admitted to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) as part of regular force or civilian armed forces.

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<sup>1</sup> Executive Order No. 125, s. 2021, Creation of the National Amnesty Commission, February 5, 2021.

- *Barangay Development Program (BDP) of the NTF-ELCAC.* More than 800 former conflict-ridden communities benefited from more than 2,000 projects, including farm-to-market roads, health facilities, school buildings, and other livelihood and social assistance. The BDP contains sustainable rehabilitation and development projects for barangays that were former guerilla fronts of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF).
- *Social Healing and Peacebuilding Program.* The program aims to sustain the gains of different peace tables through the implementation of different plans and programs. This includes the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP-WPS), which has already been localized in six different regions to further engage women at the grassroots. Youth participation, meanwhile, continues to be strengthened through various multi-stakeholder consultations towards the formulation of a NAP on Youth, Peace, and Security. Basic courses for various regional bodies and LGUs were carried out to mainstream conflict-sensitive and peace-promoting (CSPP) approaches in the comprehensive development plans (CDP) in conflict-affected and conflict- vulnerable LGUs, as part of the implementation of the Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, s. 2020 issued by OPAPP and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). Finally, the program has also supported Marawi rehabilitation and recovery through the conduct of peace conversations and solidarity gatherings, community training sessions on CSPP, and various livelihood and enterprise projects particularly for internally displaced persons (IDPs). Mainstreaming peace education also continues to remain part of the core deliverables of the program geared towards building a culture of peace.

## IN FOCUS: ALI, ASPIRING RICE TRADER FROM MARAWI CITY



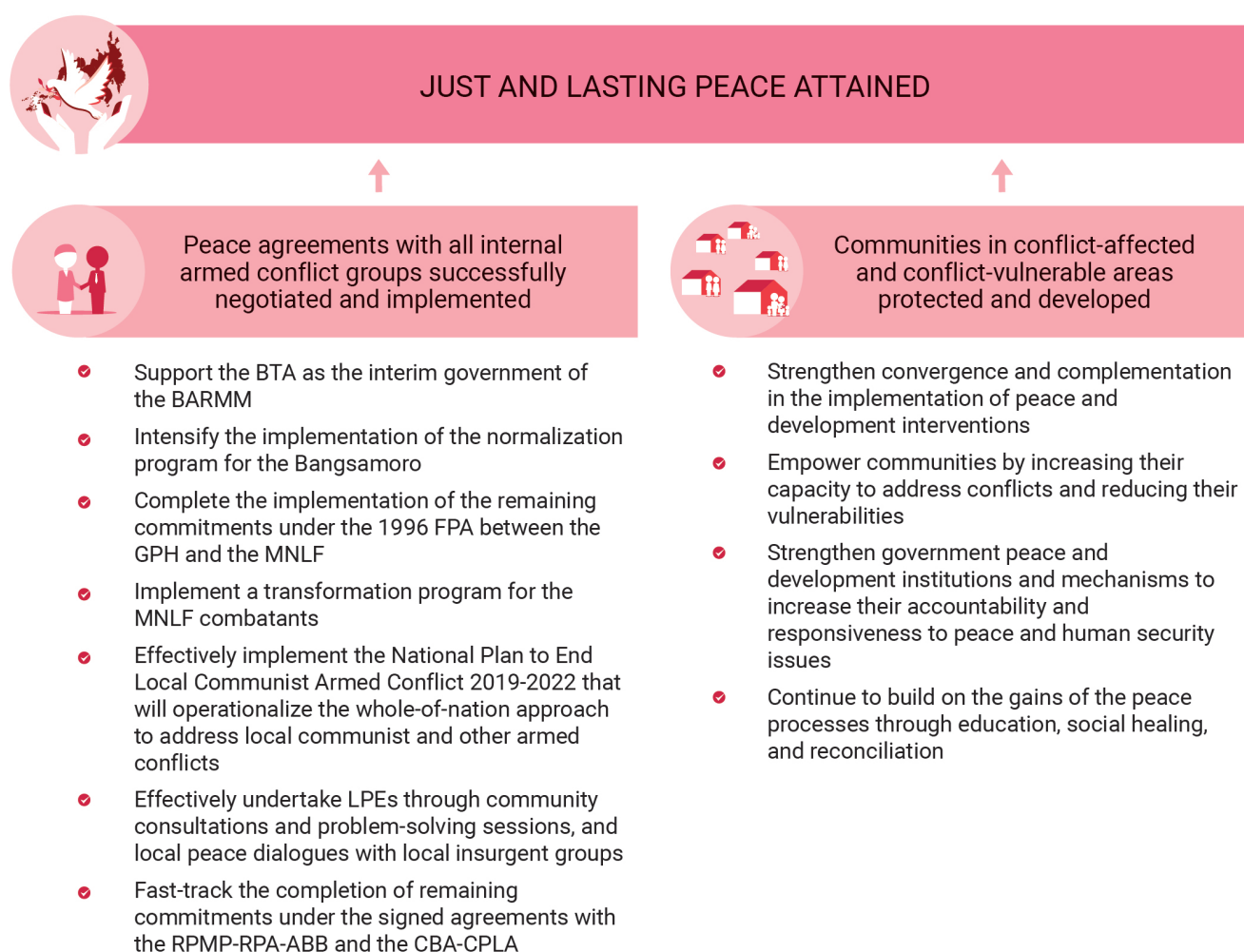
*Ali, 17 years old, is the eldest of five children and resides in Marawi City. Born to Maguindanaoan parents, his family migrated to Marawi to escape the incessant violence plaguing their village. His younger brother, aged 15, was almost recruited by a local armed insurgency group, taking advantage of his frustrations over their hardships. Reflecting on his and his family's experiences, Ali's goals are simple but profound: to live in a city with a peaceful environment, where he can fulfill his dream of becoming a successful rice trader. He also wants his siblings to finish school and for his parents to age comfortably, with all their needs adequately provided. However, he still feels uncertain, not knowing whether a violent incident will occur at any time. He fears for his and his family's safety and what the future holds for them.*



# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The priority strategies towards attaining just and lasting peace, as provided in the Updated PDP 2017-2022, will still be pursued to accelerate peace and development and uplift living conditions for similarly-situated individuals as Ali and his family. Certain strategies, however, will require a more focused approach given recent developments in the peace processes. In addition, these strategies also aim to address the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the implementation of peace agreements and the delivery of socioeconomic interventions for individuals, families, and communities in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable areas.

**Figure 17.1. Strategic Framework to Attain Just and Lasting Peace**



## TO SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATE AND IMPLEMENT PEACE AGREEMENTS WITH ALL INTERNAL ARMED CONFLICT GROUPS

### **Support the BTA as the interim government of the BARMM**

*Address potential issues and challenges that may arise during the extended transition period in the BARMM.*

The National Government remains steadfast in its commitment to support the BTA in fulfilling its mandate and functions within the extended transition period up to 2025. This will be undertaken through various intergovernmental relations bodies, most of which have already been organized. To this end, the creation of the remaining IGR mechanisms (i.e., PC-BP Forum and the BSDB) needs to be fast-tracked in order to institutionalize all avenues for greater intergovernmental cooperation.

### **Intensify the implementation of the normalization program for the Bangsamoro**

*Guarantee the completion of the components under the normalization program for the Bangsamoro.* Among the major concerns that need to be addressed are the timely implementation of the third phase of the decommissioning process for MILF forces and weapons, disbandment of private armed groups and implementation of the program for small arms and light weapons, and the finalization of policing arrangements in the BARMM and the procedures on the entry of MILF and MNLF members into the regular police force. Complementary interventions towards the socioeconomic development of conflict-affected areas, confidence-building, and transitional justice and reconciliation will still be undertaken as critical components of the normalization process.

### **Implement a transformation program for the MNLF combatants**

*Finalize the formulation of the transformation program for the MNLF.* The program mirrors the normalization program for the MILF. It will serve as a take-off point for the implementation of projects to be funded under the Bangsamoro Development Assistance Fund and the monitoring of the Tripartite Implementation and Monitoring Committee, which is expected to be completed in 2025 when the transformation program is successfully implemented.

**Effectively implement the National Plan to End Local Communist Armed Conflict 2019-2022 that will operationalize the whole-of-nation approach to address local communist and other armed conflicts and effectively undertake localized peace engagements through community consultations and problem-solving sessions, and local peace dialogues with local insurgent groups**

*Strengthen the capacities of regional institutions and local governments to sustain efforts towards ending local communist armed conflict.* To further institutionalize the whole-of-nation approach in attaining inclusive and sustainable peace, engagement and partnership between and among the Regional Development Councils, Regional Peace and Order Councils, the Bangsamoro Economic and Development Council, and local governments will be continued. Through this, a bottom-up approach will be institutionalized for planning and programming of peace and development interventions, with conflict-sensitivity, peace promotion, and local development as the overarching principles for inclusive peace.

**Fast-track the completion of remaining commitments under the signed agreements with the RPMP-RPA-ABB and the CBA-CPLA**

*Ensure continuous operationalization of mechanisms for the completion of remaining commitments under the peace processes with the RPMP-RPA-ABB and CBA-CPLA.* The current initiatives of the Joint Enforcement and Monitoring Committee (JEMC) for RPMP-RPA-ABB and the JEMC for CBA-CPLA will be sustained to provide inclusive and participatory interventions to both peace tables. This will also help propel the completion of the various interventions under the normalization programs for both groups.

## **TO PROTECT AND DEVELOP COMMUNITIES IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AND CONFLICT-VULNERABLE AREAS**

**Strengthen convergence and complementation in the implementation of peace and development interventions and strengthen government peace and development institutions and mechanisms to increase their accountability and responsiveness to peace and human security issues**

*Continue the implementation and enhance the monitoring of peace and development programs and projects, including those under the various national and local action plans.* Program implementation will be sustained in the remainder of the Plan period, with emphasis on providing key assessments to inform the succeeding year's peace and development agenda. Among these programs and projects include: (a) the PAMANA Program; (b) E-CLIP; (c) the various BDP projects in CTG-cleared barangays; (d) the activities under the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and NAP-WPS; and (e) the work plan for the implementation of the Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Act (RA 11188). Information, education, and communications campaigns and strategic communication programs will also be pursued to strengthen public trust and confidence in the government's peace and development agenda.

**Empower communities by increasing their capacity to address conflicts and reducing their vulnerabilities**

*Pursue active and continuing engagements with various groups affected by and are vulnerable to armed conflicts.* In order to build on and sustain the gains of the peace processes beyond the Plan period, individuals and communities at the grassroots level which experienced the impacts of armed conflicts must be engaged and consulted as critical stakeholders, in pursuit of lasting peace. Women, indigenous peoples, the elderly, and internally displaced persons will be at the center of peace and development efforts. To this end, various physical and digital platforms for engagements will be utilized. Digital support infrastructure will also be strengthened to improve peace education and advocacy and attune to the new normal environment. Capacity development support among government and non-government peace partners for mainstreaming peace education and CSPP approaches will also be continued.



**Continue to build on the gains of the peace processes through education, social healing, and reconciliation**

***Expedite the rehabilitation and recovery of Marawi City and other localities affected by the Marawi Conflict.***

The *Bangon Marawi* Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Program (BMCRRP) crafted in March 2019 aims to guide the rebuilding of the Marawi City (including the Most Affected Area), and the Municipalities of Butig and Piagapo in Lanao del Sur. The Task Force *Bangon Marawi* will oversee the implementation of the programs and projects in the BMCRRP geared towards social healing, reconciliation, and inclusive development for the residents of Marawi City and nearby communities. The Bangsamoro Government will also continue to participate actively in the rehabilitation efforts through the creation of the Marawi Rehabilitation Project Management Office.

### **EXTENSION OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD IN THE BARMM**

The BOL calls for a three-year transition period (2019-2022) from the ARMM to the BARMM. During this period, the BTA serves as the interim government mandated to undertake relevant functions necessary for the establishment of a fully-functioning BARMM Government. Among these are the enactment of priority legislations, determination of parliamentary districts, organization of the bureaucracy, full transfer of powers and properties to the Bangsamoro Government, and disposition of personnel of the ARMM.

As provided in the BOL, the first regular elections for the Bangsamoro Government must be synchronized with the 2022 national elections, after which the BTA would have been dissolved. However, the BTA has encountered several challenges, particularly in instituting the necessary reforms and complying with the expectations set in the BOL, aggravated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this, the President signed RA 11593 on 28 October 2021, resetting the first regular elections in the BARMM from 2022 to 2025. During this extension, the BTA will remain as the BARMM's interim government.

