

AGREEMENT ON THE RULES AND PROCEDURES

ON THE

CONDUCT OF THE FORMAL PEACE TALKS

BETWEEN THE

GRP AND MILF PEACE PANELS

This Agreement is being entered into by and between:

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), represented by the GRP Peace Panel, herein represented by its Chairperson, Undersecretary Orlando V. Soriano;

and

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), represented by the MILF Peace Panel, herein represented by its Chairperson, Aleem Abdulaziz Mimbantas.

Pursuant to due authority, the two Panels hereby agree:

ARTICLE I COMPOSITION

The Panels respectively created by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) composed of six (6) members each, shall hereinafter be referred to as the GRP and MILF Peace Panels.

ARTICLE II GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND MANDATE

Section 1. Guiding Principles. In their deliberations during the formal peace talks and in the interpretation of this Agreement, the GRP and MILF Peace Panels shall at all times conform to the letter and spirit of the General Framework of Agreement of Intent between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front signed on August 27, 1998 at the Da'wah Center, Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao.

Section 2. Mandate. The GRP and MILF Peace Panels are mandated to pursue the peace negotiations on the substantive issues under a favorable atmosphere of peace and harmony. They shall be clothed with proper credentials and authority

duly signed by the President of the Philippines, or by his authority in the case of the GRP, and by Chairman Salamat Hashim in the case of the MILF, to bind and speak in behalf of the GRP and the MILF, with the aim in view of continuing the peace negotiations until the Parties reach a negotiated political settlement of the armed conflict in Mindanao.

ARTICLE III CONDUCT OF PANEL NEGOTIATIONS

Section 1. Agenda for the Peace Talks. The agenda for the peace talks shall be prepared by the GRP and MILF Technical Committees and shall be agreed upon by the Peace Panels. The Panels shall exchange detailed proposals and/or working papers on the agenda of the peace talks within a reasonable period of time before such agenda shall be discussed.

Section 2. Venue and Schedule of the Peace Talks. The GRP and MILF Peace Panels shall hold their formal peace talks in a venue to be previously agreed upon. The two Panels shall also mutually agree on the schedule of meetings.

Section 3. Attendance/Quorum.

- a. The officially designated members of the GRP and MILF Peace Panels shall be the permanent attendees at every Panel meeting.

In the event of permanent disability for any reason, a substitute shall be named to replace him/her; provided, finally, that prior official notice of such designation of substitute shall be given to the other party.

- b. A majority of the composition of each Panel is required to be present at every meeting in order to constitute a quorum.

Section 4. Presiding Officers. The two Panel Chairpersons shall act as co-presiding officers for the meeting of the two Panels.

Section 5. Presence of Persons other than Panel Members at Meetings. Other than the Peace Panels, only the Panel Advisers, Secretariat and Technical Committees of the GRP and MILF shall be allowed in the meeting room.

- a. *Technical Committees.* The GRP and MILF Technical Committees shall provide the technical support to their respective Peace Panels on the substantive issues.
- b. *Permanent Secretariat.* There shall be a permanent GRP and MILF Secretariat which shall have the following tasks and functions:

b.1. To document the proceedings of the meeting of the GRP and MILF Peace Panels;

b.2. To prepare and submit the agenda of the meetings of the Peace Panels;

b.3. To prepare the highlights of consensus points/agreements between the GRP and MILF Peace Panels after every meeting; and,

b.4. To handle all administrative requirements relative to the conduct of the meeting.

c. Consultants and Resource Persons may be invited as necessary, and as mutually agreed upon by the two Chairpersons of the Peace Panels.

Section 6. Procedure of Formal Meetings:

a. The two Panel Chairpersons shall agree on the allocation of time for each agenda item.

b. Each Panel shall have equal time and opportunity to fully present its side in meetings, orally and/or in writing, to propound questions, and to respond to the other Panel regarding any agreed agenda item.

c. When no agreement has been reached on an agenda item within a reasonable period of time, such item may be deferred for further deliberation or referred to the respective Technical Committees for further study. Thereafter, the two Panels shall proceed to the next agenda item.

Section 7. Format of Meetings.

a. The Chairperson of each Panel shall speak on behalf of the Panel, but may designate other Panel Members to speak when appropriate.

b. During a deliberation of one Panel Chairperson, the other Panel Chairperson or his Panel Members permitted by him may interpellate or respond immediately to any point, with the permission of the Chairperson deliberating.

c. Each Panel may propose a draft on any agenda item which may become the basis for discussion.

Section 8. Meeting Flow. The flow of the meeting shall be as follows:

- a. Invocation (GRP and MILF Representatives)
- b. Opening Statements (GRP and MILF Chairpersons)
- c. Approval of Agenda for the Meeting
- d. Adoption of Report of Previous Meeting
- e. Discussion of Unfinished Business
- f. Discussion of Agenda Items
- g. Adoption of Consensus Points/Agreements
- h. Adoption of Proposed Agenda, Schedule and Venue of the Next Meeting.
- i. Adoption of Joint Statement/Press Release

ARTICLE IV MEDIA COVERAGE

Section 1. Media coverage of the proceedings of any meeting shall be mutually agreed upon by the two Panel Chairpersons.

Section 2. The holding of joint press conferences or the issuance of joint press statements shall be mutually agreed upon by the two Panel Chairpersons.

Section 3. The respective Chairpersons of the GRP and MILF Peace Panels, or in their absence, a member of either Peace Panel duly designated, shall act as the Official Spokespersons for each Panel, as the case may be.

ARTICLE V GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Confidentiality.

- a. The Panel Chairpersons may mutually agree on the confidentiality of sensitive issues under negotiations.
- b. Limitations on access to or release of official records of the deliberations and minutes of the meetings shall be mutually agreed upon by the Chairpersons of the two Peace Panels.

Section 2. Amendments. The two Peace Panels may from time to time mutually agree to amend, modify or supplement this Agreement.

Section 3. Safety and Security Matters. The two Peace Panels shall agree on the provisions of safety and security at the site of the meeting.

Section 4. Effectivity. This Agreement shall take effect upon the signing hereof by the Chairpersons of the two Peace Panels.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunder signed this Agreement this 17th day of December 1999 at SR, Maguindanao, Philippines.

**FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PEACE PANEL:**



USEC. ORLANDO V. SORIANO
Chairperson, GRP Panel

**FOR THE MORO ISLAMIC
LIBERATION FRONT
PEACE PANEL:**



ALEEM ABDULAZIZ MIMBANTAS
Chairperson, MILF Panel

WITNESSETH:



COL. DELFIN M. LORENZANA
Acting Chairperson,
GRP Technical Committee

SHIEK MONER M. BAJUNAID
Chairperson,
MILF Technical Committee