

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

THE CHAIRMEN OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES (GRP) AND THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT (MILF) PEACE NEGOTIATING PANELS MET ON FEBRUARY 22-23, 2000 IN CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY.

RECOGNIZING THAT THERE WILL BE LASTING PEACE IN MINDANAO WHEN THERE IS MUTUAL TRUST, JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND TOLERANCE FOR THE IDENTITY, CULTURE AND ASPIRATIONS OF ALL THE PEOPLES IN MINDANAO, BOTH PARTIES HAVE REAFFIRMED THEIR SINCERITY TO PURSUE PEACE TO BRING AN END TO THE ARMED CONFLICT IN MINDANAO. FURTHER, BOTH PARTIES COMMIT TO COMMENCE TALKS ON THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND RESOLUTELY CONTINUE THE NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL A NEGOTIATED POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IS REACHED.

FURTHERMORE, THE GRP AND THE MILF REAFFIRM THE FOLLOWING COMMITMENTS TO PEACE:

1. PARTIES AGREE FOR THE EARNEST CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS, NAMELY: CARMEN, COTABATO PROVINCE; SHARIF AGUAK, DATU PIANG, TALAYAN, KABUNTALAN AND AMPATUAN, MAGUINDANAO PROVINCE; AND, ISULAN, SULTAN KUDARAT PROVINCE, EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 28, 2000, SIX O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AGREEMENT ON GENERAL CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES OF JULY 18, 1997;
2. PARTIES AGREE THAT THEIR COORDINATING COMMITTEES ON THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES (CCH) SHALL EARNESTLY OVERSEE THE SMOOTH, SINCERE, EFFECTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES;

3. PARTIES REITERATE TO STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES OF THE CCCH, IFFC AND QRT FOR THEM TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE TASKS ASSIGNED BY THE PEACE PANELS;
4. PARTIES AGREE FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE SECOND ROUND OF FORMAL PEACE TALKS ON MARCH 1 & 2, 2000 AT ESTOSAN HOTEL, COTABATO CITY; AND,
5. THAT FINALLY, PARTIES AGREE TO GIVE MEANING AND IMPETUS TO THE AGREEMENT DATED OCTOBER 6, 1999.

DONE THIS 23RD DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2000, IN THE CITY OF CAGAYAN DE ORO, PHILIPPINES.

FOR THE GRP:

FOR THE MILF:


 LT. GEN. EDGARDO E. BATENGA AFP (RET.)
 CHAIRMAN, GRP PEACE PANEL


 ALEEM ABDULAZIZ MIMBANTAS
 VICE CHAIRMAN FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS
 AND CHAIRMAN, MILF PEACE PANEL


 DR. EMILY M. MAROHOMBSAK
 MEMBER, GRP PEACE PANEL


 MR. MOHAGHER IQBAL
 VICE CHAIRMAN FOR INFORMATION
 AND MEMBER, MILF PEACE PANEL

WITNESSES:



 ATTY. ALBERTO A. BERNARDO
 MEMBER, GRP TECHNICAL COMMITTEE


 ATTY. ALAN L. FLORES
 MEMBER, MILF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE


 BGEN. ANTONIO Q. ROMERO (RET.)
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GRP PANEL


 MR. EID KABALU
 CHAIRMAN, MILF CCCH


 CPT. VICENTE G. BATAC PA
 DND REPRESENTATIVE


 MR. RUDY RADIAMODA
 ADVISER, MILF PEACE PANEL