1ST ROUND OF THE GRP & MILF
FORMAL PEACE TALKS
Da’wah Center, Crossing Slimay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao
January 19-20, 2000

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING

1. The First Round of Formal Talks between the GRP and MILF Peace Panels was held on January 19-20, 2000 at the Da’wah Center in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. The meeting was also attended by the members of both Panels, Advisers, Technical Committees and Secretariat. GRP Panel Chairman Lt.Gen. Orlando V. SORIANO (Ret.) and MILF Panel Chairman Alieen Abdulrazzak MIMBANTAS co-chaired the meeting.

2. The GRP-MILF Technical Committee submitted the following Agenda items for the Talks to the GRP and MILF Peace Panels, which both Panels approved:

   a. Notation of previous Agreements
   b. Adoption and approval of the proposed talking points of the GRP-MILF peace talks as submitted by the MILF Technical Committee on January 7, 1997 and elaborated on February 25, 1997
   c. Adoption of confidence-building measures and proposals to strengthen all existing Agreements:
      1) Security and Identity Guarantees
      2) Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and Humanitarian Laws
      3) Tasking the Coordinating Committee on Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) to hasten the implementation of the GRP-MILF Agreement on September 2, 1999 and January 12, 2000
   d. Adoption of proposed agenda, schedule and venue of next meeting

3. Highlights of the meeting:

   a. Noted all previous agreements entered into by the GRP and the MILF
   b. Tasked the Coordinating Committees on Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) to hasten the implementation of the GRP-MILF Agreement on September 2, 1999 and January 12, 2000
   c. Assigned their respective Technical Committee to meet on February 7-8, 2000 in Cotabato City, to cluster the nine (9) talking points and to organize the Technical Working Groups of both Panels;
   d. Conducted discussions on the following proposed drafts of the MILF Panel:
      1) “GRP-MILF Comprehensive Agreement on the Security and Identity Guarantees”, and
      2) “Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and Humanitarian Laws”

4. The two Panels agreed that the 2nd Formal Peace Talks of the GRP-MILF will be on February 21-22, 2000 at a venue to be determined and agreed upon by the Chairman of both Panels.

5. The GRP & MILF Panels issued a Joint Communiqué embodying the above decisions.

Approved this 15th day of February 2000 at the Estosan Garden Hotel, Cotabato City.

FOR THE GRP:

ADG. ZENONIDA F. BROSAS
Acting Chairperson
GRP Technical Committee

FOR THE MILF:

SHEIKH MONER M. BAJUNAID
Chairperson
MILF Technical Committee

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

The GRP and the MILF held its 20th Technical Committee Meeting on 14-15 February 2000 at the Estosan Garden Hotel, Cotabato City.

During the formal opening of the meeting, Lt. Gen. Edgardco E. Batenga AFP (Ret.), the newly appointed Chairman, GRP Panel for Peace Talks with the MILF, stated that his task is to negotiate for peace that will serve the best interest of and benefit the entire Filipino nation. He requested the Technical Committees of both Panels to limit its discussions to substantive issues of the peace process and find common grounds acceptable to both the GRP and the MILF. On the other hand, Mr. Mohagher Iqbal, Chairman, Committee on Information and Member, MILF Panel, representing Mr. Alieen Abdulrazzak Mimbantas, MILF Panel Chairman, welcomed the appointment of Lt. Gen. Batenga. He emphasized the position of the MILF that in this era of globalization, the Bangsamoro problem can be resolved through dialogue. Mr. Iqbal further reiterated the commitment and sincerity of the MILF in negotiating with the GRP.

During the two-day meeting, both the GRP and the MILF Technical Committees agreed on the following:

1. Tasked the Quick Response Team (QRT), the Independent Fact-Finding Committee (IFFC) and Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) to look into the reported incidents in Carmen, Cotabato and Shariff Aguak, Datu Paglas and Talayan, all in Maguindanao;
2. Clustered the Agenda items of the Formal Peace Talks into six (6) aggregations and the creation of technical working groups;
3. Elevated the MILF Proposed Drafts on Security and Immunity Guarantees (ISG) and Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and Humanitarian Laws (CAR-HR-HL) to the GRP and the MILF Peace Panel for consideration and discussion and;
4. Proposed agenda for the 2nd Round of the GRP and MILF Formal Peace Talks on 21-22 February 2000 at a venue to be determined later by the Panel Chairpersons.

FOR THE GRP:

ADG. ZENONIDA F. BROSAS
Acting Chairperson, GRP
Technical Committee

FOR THE MILF:

SHEIKH MONER M. BAJUNAID
Chairperson, MILF
Technical Committee