

JOINT STATEMENT

The 10th round of GRP-MILF Exploratory Talks ended today in Port Dickson, Malaysia with both Parties successfully wrapping up the consensus points of the ancestral domain issue, and placing the peace process on track for concluding the Ancestral Domain Aspect of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of June 22, 2001. The Ancestral Domain Agreement may be signed by late March 2006, simultaneously with the inception of the formal talks.

Among the consensus points reached were:

- Joint determination of the scope of the Bangsamoro homeland based on the technical maps and data submitted by both sides;
- Measures to address the legitimate grievances of the Bangsamoro people arising from their unjust dispossession and/or marginalization;
- Bangsamoro people's right to utilize and develop their ancestral domain and ancestral lands;
- Economic cooperation arrangements for the benefit of the entire Bangsamoro people.

During the two-day meeting, the Panels agreed to forge as soon as possible an overall framework for the forthcoming formal talks, together with an inventory of crucial issues to be tackled, the general procedures and parameters and the indicative timeline for the signing of a comprehensive agreement between the Government and the MILF before the end of the year.

The panels agreed to conduct joint advocacy drives on the ancestral domain issue to broaden public understanding and support for the GRP-MILF peace process. To achieve this objective, a joint committee was formed to draw up the guidelines, plan the advocacy campaign, and seek the participation of non-government organizations, people's organizations and civil society groups in advocacy activities.

Both parties reaffirmed the need to intensify capacity-building programs with the assistance and support of the international community and donor institutions, and they agreed in principle to the establishment of a Bangsamoro Leadership and Management Institute in Cotabato City as a capacity building center for emerging leaders and professionals.

The Panels expressed their appreciation to H.E. Prime Minister Dato' Seri Abdullah Bin Haji Ahmad Badawi for the Malaysian Government's continued role in facilitating the peace process, and the leadership of H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in the achievement of a durable, comprehensive and lasting peace in Mindanao.

The parties also conveyed their deep gratitude to Datuk Othman bin Abdul Razak who was recently appointed as Adviser to the Prime Minister, and whose responsibilities include the ongoing peace talks.



They likewise acknowledged the sustained efforts demonstrated by the GRP and MILF technical working groups whose hard work made possible the successful outcome of the talks.

Done on the 7th of February 2006 at Port Dickson, Malaysia.

FOR THE GRP:



SILVESTRE C. AFABLE, JR.
GRP Panel Chair

FOR THE MILF:



MOHAGHER IQBAL
MILF Panel Chair