

Peacebuilder's DIGEST



10th Anniversary
Comprehensive Agreement
on the Bangsamoro



By Sec. Carlito G. Galvez, Jr.
*Presidential Adviser on Peace,
 Reconciliation and Unity*

Greetings of peace and solidarity!

It is my honor and pleasure to present to you the first issue of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity's (OPAPRU) Peacebuilder's Digest. This publication, shall I say, is a labor of love for the men and women of our agency.

May you, dear reader, be inspired by the compilation of stories and testimonies of our peace partners and stakeholders, as we continue to forge ahead in our collective journey towards a just and lasting peace in our country.

This year is turning out to be another banner year for the comprehensive Philippine Peace Process and our agency for many reasons.

In March this year we commemorated the 10th year anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro (CAB). This is a major milestone in the Bangsamoro peace process, and a testament to the unwavering trust, faith and confidence built between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) over the past decade.

The government's peace process with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) likewise continues

to move forward with the implementation of the Transformation Program for MNLF members, as we help rebuild the lives of former rebels through the accelerated implementation of our Localized Peace Engagement (LPE) initiative and its Transformation Program.

We are likewise pleased to report that the peace processes with the Cordillera Bodong Administration-Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CBA-CPLA), and the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa ng Pilipinas-Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPMP-RPA-ABB), now called KAPATIRAN continues to gain momentum.

Meanwhile, peacebuilding and socioeconomic initiatives under our Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA) and Program Social Healing and Peacebuilding (SHAPE) programs are helping to help uplift the socioeconomic conditions of our fellow Filipinos in focus areas, as we heal the wounds of the past caused by violence and armed conflict by fostering peace, mutual understanding and solidarity.

Through our Normalization and Transformation Programs, which are being implemented in parallel with our Localizing Normalization Implementation (LNI) initiative, we are aiding former rebels and combatants make the successful transition to mainstream society. This is being carried out with the strong support coming from our local government units.

It is in each story contained in this digest that we learn and appreciate both the successes and challenges we have faced, and continue to face, in the implementation of the Philippine peace process. May these articles serve as a source of hope, motivation and empowerment for all of us peacebuilders, peace workers and peace advocates.

To our dear readers, through this digest, we are amplifying President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr's clarion call for peace, reconciliation and unity. This call is more than just a slogan but a mindset. Together, let us forge a path towards a "Bagong Pilipinas" — a nation of peace, progress, and shared prosperity.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay po tayong lahat!

Gawad Kapayapaan Highest Distinction Award

EDUARDO R. ERMITA



Starting his career as a gasoline boy in a small town in Batangas, Eduardo R. Ermita rose to become a highly respected civil servant and a prominent figure in our nation's quest for lasting peace. Throughout his government career, Ermita epitomized the roles of soldier, statesman, and peacemaker, playing a crucial role in establishing and strengthening the foundations of peace in our country. Having experienced the horrors of war firsthand, he developed a deep desire for peace, which led him to carve out a unique role as a peacemaker within the military, making it the focus of his service to the government and the people.

In February 1984, Ermita demonstrated exceptional bravery by entering the dense jungles of Basilan to reach a Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) camp. He was the first non-Muslim and the first military officer to do so at a time when the government and rebel forces were in intense conflict. Despite no truce in sight, Ermita's mission was to negotiate peace with one of MNLF's fiercest warriors, Gerry Salappudin, then the Chair of the group's Basilan Revolutionary Committee. During this meeting, Ermita outlined the national government's programs aimed at addressing the roots of the decades-long conflict and advancing peace negotiations between the Government of the Philippines and the MNLF.

Ermita's visit to the MNLF camp marked a turning point, enabling the government to engage in peace talks with top commanders such as MNLF Reformist Group Chair Dimas Puntado, MNLF Deputy Chief Abu Khayr Alonto, Commander Talib Congo, and Commander Ronnie Malaguio. Besides dealing with former rebels on the ground, Ermita was part of the Philippine delegation working to achieve recognition from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He joined the government team monitoring OIC ministerial meetings in West Africa, Iran, Morocco, Sudan, Tripoli, Karachi, and other OIC member-state capitals. This effort demonstrated the Philippine government's genuine interest in a peaceful settlement with the MNLF, opening doors for further peace negotiations.

Ermita, along with Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Ambassador Joey Syjuco, formed a crucial part of the government panel's secretariat, leading to the signing of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement with the MNLF. His direct dealings with rebels provided valuable insights into the perspectives of individuals and groups on the ground while acknowledging the history and culture of the Moro people in Southern Philippines. As a member of the National Unification Commission (NUC), Ermita was tasked with conducting nationwide consultations with all stakeholders, including rebel groups like the MNLF, the communist group, and the Philippine military and police, to develop a comprehensive peace for the Government of the Philippines policy.

In October 1992, President Fidel V. Ramos sent Ermita on a critical mission to meet with MNLF Chair Nur Misuari and convince him to return to the Philippines. Leading a three-member delegation, Ermita held preparatory talks with Misuari under the auspices of the Libyan government, successfully persuading the MNLF leader to resume negotiations with the Philippine government. Misuari shared with Ermita the origins, struggles, and aspirations of the MNLF, leading to the signing of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement, a significant milestone in the Bangsamoro peace process.



President Marcos leads 10th CAB commemoration ceremony

By: Mary Francis T. Rivera

BARIRA, MAGUINDANAO DEL NORTE – ***“Sa ikasampung anibersaryo sa paglagda ng CAB (Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro), ipinangako natin na hindi na tayo papayag na dadanas muli ng karahasan ang ating mga anak,”***

declared President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. as he led the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) on 29 April 2024.

“This is at the core of our policies towards transformative action that brings genuine change to the grassroots and this is the soul of the creation of the CAB,” President Marcos stressed.

The event took place at Camp Abubakar as-Siddique in this municipality, which experienced the ravages of all-out war in the early 2000s. It was the residence of MILF founder Ustadz Salamat Hashim and the first Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) camp.

The theme for the 10th anniversary is “CAB: Isang Dekada Tungo sa Mapayapa at Masaganang Bangsamoro.” This theme inspires all stakeholders to reflect on the major achievements made under the peace agreement and look ahead to what can be accomplished in the coming years.

President Marcos affirmed CAB’s transformative impact for the region’s development saying, “The CAB is a testament to our collective vision for sustainable progress and harmony, not only within the Bangsamoro region and Mindanao, but all throughout the archipelago.”

He reiterated that the Bangsamoro is now enjoying the fruits of the peace agreement, “As we gather

here today, we have earned the right to make this claim: the gains from 10 years of peace have undone many of the pains that have been caused by decades of war.”

“Kung dati, ito ay lugar ng labanan, ngayon lugar na ito ng kapayapaan. Kung dati, dugo ang dumadanak dito, ngayon kaunlaran ang dumadaloy,” he added.

In a stirring call to action, the President also emphasized the importance of civic participation in the upcoming Bangsamoro elections in 2025, urging the people to exercise their right to suffrage

“And I also take this opportunity to remind you to exercise your right to suffrage as you chart your political future in the forthcoming first BARMM elections in May 2025. This is the fulfilment of your democratic right to realize and achieve meaningful autonomy, as is enshrined in the CAB” he said.

President Marcos gave his assurance that the elections will be peaceful and orderly.

“Hindi lamang ako umaasa na malinis at payapa ang halalang ito, pero higit sa lahat, ang bawat kandidato ay tangan ang prinsipyo ng Bangsamoro--ang Bangsamoro Muna Bago Sarili. At titindig sa adhikain na Better Bangsa Moro.” the President said.

“As your President, I reassure that you will have an honest, orderly, and credible conduct of the electoral process,” he added.

This event was also attended by the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity Sec. Carlito G. Galvez, Jr., Interior and Local Government Sec. Benjamin “Benhur” C. Abalos, Jr., Budget Sec. Amenah F. Pangandaman, Special Assistant to the President Antonio Ernesto Lagdameo Jr., BARMM Chief Minister Ahod Balawag Ebrahim, Education Minister and MILF Implementing Panel Chair Mohagher Iqbal, Maguindanao del Norte Governor Abdulraof Macacua, civil society organizations, and members of the diplomatic corps.

A New Dawn in the Bangsamoro: Ebrahim, Galvez Steer Region Toward Lasting Peace and Progress

By: Kate Angela Ponio Saura

A decade after the historic signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB), the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has emerged as a testament to the transformative power of peace and collaboration. Chief Minister Ahod Balawag Ebrahim and Secretary Carlito G. Galvez Jr. stand at the forefront of this remarkable transformation, their leadership guiding the region toward unprecedented levels of unity and progress.



Under the administration of President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr., the BARMM has witnessed significant milestones, including the reunification of major Moro fronts and the integration of MILF and MNLF members into the region's leadership. These achievements reflect a shared commitment to a peaceful and prosperous future.

“What began as a determined effort to address the Moro people's struggle for self-determination has evolved into a collective journey toward lasting peace,” states Secretary Galvez. This journey has been marked by landmark agreements like the Framework Agreement and the CAB, which have laid the foundation for the BARMM's current successes.

President Marcos Jr.'s unwavering support for the peace process has been instrumental in fostering stability and development in the region. His recent visit to Camp Abubakar and remarks during the 10-year anniversary of the CAB underscore his dedication to a unified and prosperous Bangsamoro.

A stronger BARMM means a stronger Mindanao, and a stronger Mindanao means a stronger Philippines, Marcos stressed, saying this vision brings the country closer to achieving its Prosperity Agenda.

The BARMM government, under Chief Minister Ebrahim's leadership, has implemented a comprehensive legislative agenda aimed at improving the lives of its constituents. Reduced poverty levels, enhanced security, and a surge in investments are just a few of the tangible outcomes of this transformative agenda.

He emphasized that the CAB's signing paved the way for the establishment of the BARMM government, which has resulted in a decline in poverty rates in the region.

He said that BARMM has increased investments to P3.7 billion and generated 1,155 jobs. It resulted in the opening of economic activities, and uplifted the lives of all the Bangsamoro people.

“The MILF-led BARMM has epitomized the virtues of moral governance in the region. We have one vision: the Bangsamoro that is united, enlightened, self-governing, peaceful, just, morally upright, and progressive,” Ebrahim said.

Galvez, for his part, highlights the success of initiatives like the Small Arms and Light Weapons Management Program and Localizing Normalization Initiatives, which built the capacity of former MILF combatants and facilitated their reintegration into society. These efforts exemplify the BARMM's commitment to a holistic approach to peacebuilding.

A total of 26,132 combatants were decommissioned as a result of the normalization efforts under the CAB and provided them with socio-economic assistance.

Ebrahim envisions a Bangsamoro that is “united, enlightened, self-governing, peaceful, just, morally upright, and progressive.” This vision is rapidly becoming a reality, as the region continues to make strides in governance, economic development, and social progress.

OPAPRU's Call for Legislative Progress

In a statement from the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU), Secretary Carlito G. Galvez Jr. emphasized the importance of expediting the passage of two critical legislative codes in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Galvez urged the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament to prioritize the Revenue Code and Indigenous Peoples' Rights, stressing that these laws are essential for effective governance and sustainable development in the region.



"To realize our common vision, I respectfully urge the BTA to expedite the passage of the two remaining priority codes. These codes are not merely legislative instruments. They are vital tools that will pave the way for more effective governance and sustainable development in the region," Galvez said.

Highlighting the significance of addressing key issues before the upcoming BARMM parliamentary elections, Galvez affirmed the OPAPRU's full support in resolving critical challenges and maximizing available resources for the region's benefit.

Galvez echoed the sentiments of BARMM Chief Minister Ahod Ebrahim and President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., emphasizing the pivotal role of the forthcoming elections in ensuring continued democratic resilience and advancing the gains of the Bangsamoro peace process.

To date, the BTA Parliament has successfully passed several crucial legislative codes, including the Bangsamoro Administrative Code, Bangsamoro Civil Service Code, Bangsamoro Education Code, Bangsamoro Electoral Code, and Bangsamoro Local Governance Code.

Papal Nuncio's Commendation

Papal Nuncio to the Philippines, Archbishop Charles John Brown, lauded the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. for the impressive economic progress in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Speaking during the Vin d'honneur in Malacañang, Archbishop Brown delivered the "collective and sincere best wishes" of the Diplomatic Corps on the 126th commemoration of Philippine independence.

"In this connection, the international community supports and indeed congratulates the Philippines for the impressive progress that has been made in these years through the Bangsamoro peace process," Archbishop Brown stated.



Archbishop Brown also recognized President Marcos Jr.'s noble aspiration to foster unity in the Philippines as the nation commemorated the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro. He shared his profound experience visiting Jolo, a place deeply affected by years of armed conflict, where he witnessed a remarkable sense of hope among its people.

The Papal Nuncio expressed the Diplomatic Corps' unwavering support for the upcoming first BARMM parliamentary elections.

President Marcos Jr. reiterated his commitment to ensuring the aspirations of the Bangsamoro people are realized, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, respect for international law, and upholding legitimate diversity to achieve lasting peace and prosperity.

MNLF reaffirms support to Bangsamoro peace process

By: Deorenzie Frances L Carreon

DAVAO CITY – The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) reaffirmed its support to the Bangsamoro Peace Process during the 3rd Convergence Meeting held last April 19, this city.

Top MNLF Officials under the leadership of Founding Chair Nur Misuari and Bangsamoro Minister of Labor and Employment and MNLF Chair Muslimin Sema gathered here and pledged to help ensure the full implementation of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the MNLF.

During the meeting, discussions focused on how to further improve the implementation of the MNLF Transformation Program, a cross-cutting initiative that aims to uplift the socioeconomic conditions of MNLF members, their families and communities.

MNLF Commitment of Support to Bangsamoro Peace Process

"We stand with the position that in order to succeed in the peace process, we must have a stable government," stressed Bangsamoro Member of Parliament, Atty. Randolph Parcasio, a member of the MNLF Peace Coordinating Committee under the leadership of Misuari.

"Therefore, the MNLF supports all measures and will do all it can to help this government in any way, maintain that stability," Parcasio said, adding that "it is only [through] peace and stability" that the vision of a prosperous Bangsamoro, Mindanao and Philippines can be achieved.

"We stand behind the leadership of President Bongbong Marcos and we appreciate his policies about the peace process, about the Bangsamoro. In fact, we hope that one day, we will come face to face with him to personally deliver this message of support," Parcasio remarked.

MNLF Management Committee Chair Uttoh Salem Cutan, who is under the leadership of Sema, emphasized that the group "will not stop in following up the full implementation of the [1996 Final] Peace Agreement."

"We are hoping that in this third convergence meeting, magkakaroon na tayo ng joint effort, to pursue the Transformation Program," Cutan said, pointing out that, "There is no reason that the [national] government will not support us."



"Bakit hindi natin i-grab ang opportunity? Kahit anuman ang gagawin natin, hindi natin kaya kung wala ang pagtutulong ng government," the MNLF leader said, as he expressed Chairman Sema's full support to the Transformation Program.

Bangsamoro Deputy Minister Nur Ainee Lim, a member of the MNLF Peace Coordinating Committee under Misuari, cited sincerity and honesty as the core values that have guided the MNLF in engaging its peace partners, especially with the national government.

"...the brand of leadership of Maas (Nur Misuari) is principled. So, we want na trust talaga ang core fundamental of [our] engagement with the government," Lim, the daughter of Misuari, said. She shared that MNLF members "are more than happy that we are engaging in such dialogues. They are happy to accept any projects, livelihood, socio economic in nature, as long as it is from the peace mechanism that we have set up."

OPAPRU's role in the MNLF Transformation Program's implementation

Bangsamoro Member of Parliament, Atty. Omar Sema, who is under the leadership of Muslimin Sema, highlighted the key role of the OPAPRU in ensuring the efficient implementation of the MNLF Transformation Program.

"The OPAPRU is the main instrument of the government as far as the peace process, as far as improving the lives of the former combatants, [are concerned]," Sema said,



emphasizing the need for the Transformation Program to be as holistic and inclusive as possible.

The MNLF Transformation Program's verification and socio-economic development assistance initiatives were launched last October 2023 in Basilan, and were later on implemented in MNLF communities in Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte, Maguindanao del Sur, Cotabato Province and Cotabato City.

Galvez underscored that the MNLF leadership's unwavering commitment to the peace process have led to major strides in uplifting the lives of MNLF members and fostering greater peace, progress, and stability throughout the region.

"This meeting underscores the vision, focus and determination of the MNLF leadership, who remain a driving force behind the organization's success," he said. "We are committed to sustaining this momentum in the years to come," Galvez continued.



"I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the MNLF under the leadership of MNLF Founding Chair Nur Misuari and MNLF Chair and Minister of Labor and Employment Muslimin Sema, for your steadfast commitment to push forward and build on the gains of the peace process between the national government and the MNLF," Galvez said.



No more jungle crawling: Former rebels transformed to 'unrestricted' lives

By: Stephanie Florida

BALER, AURORA — Pedro and Marshall (not their real names) were forced to live as nocturnals when they were still members of the Communist Terrorist Groups (CTG) based in this province.

According to Pedro, life was never easy as an active member of the CTG. They hid during the day and silently moved at night where they would have to crawl deep in the woods so as not to be detected by patrolling soldiers.

Pedro spent five years as a training squad leader of the New People's Army. He belongs to the Dumagat Tribe who are natives of the eastern coast of Aurora Province.

"Nagsisisi nga ako na sumali ako 'dun sa kabila. Napakahirap. Sa umaga, tulog kami, nagtatago. Sa gabi, saka kami lumalakad patungo sa kabilang bundok. Minsan, nag-kakamang kami lalo na kapag may mga nagpa-patrol," he recalled.

"Wala naman kaming edukasyon. Nung ni-recruit kami at sinilaw sa mga bagay na kapalit daw, ganyan. Siyempre, nag oo naman kami. Hindi namin alam iba palang ideolohiya 'yung sa kanila," Pedro added.

Marshall, on the other hand, was a former political guide of the Domingo Erlano Command, which was operating in Casiguran, Aurora.

Walking the path of peace

Feeling exhausted from a life on the run, Pedro and Marshall decided to lay down their arms and

surrender to authorities in 2019.

They are among the 250 former rebels (FRs) who took part in the second phase of the Peace Orientation held in June 2022 at the Philippine Army's 91st Infantry "Sinagtala" Battalion (91IB) at Camp Jaime Bitong Jr.

The Peace Orientation is a collaborative effort of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

The OPAPRU supports the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) as the co-lead agency of the Localized Peace Engagement (LPE) Cluster, which is tasked to mainstream LPE and pave the way for the implementation the a Transformation Program (TP) for former CTG rebels, their families and communities.

Under the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration or (E-CLIP) Program of the government, the FRs will receive a socioeconomic assistance package which include Reintegration assistance (Php 21,000.00); firearms, explosives, and ammunitions remuneration; immediate assistance (Php 15,000.00); livelihood assistance (Php 50,000.00); livelihood materials and implements or employment assistance (Php 100,000.00); access to government services; medical and legal assistance; housing; modified conditional cash transfer; loan and market access; Alternative Learning System; psychosocial assistance; college tuition and stipend; and conditional transitional grant (Php 5,000.00).



Reaping the peace dividends

Marshall has received benefits under E-CLIP early in June 2022. He was given Php 70,000 in financial assistance plus a sack of rice and bags of groceries from the Department of Trade and Industry.

“Yung pera po na Php 70,000, wala pa po ‘yung mga baril ‘dun. ‘Yun po ‘yung katawan ko pa lang. Pinatayo ko po ‘yun ng bahay para sa pamilya ko at pang enroll po para makapasok ng eskwela ‘yung anak ko,” he shared.

“Ngayon masaya at maluwag na ang aming pamumuhay. Hindi na kami nagtatago. Malaya na namin nagagawa ang gusto namin. Di na kami gumagapang sa kagubatan sa gabi,” Marshall said.

Pedro and Marshall are now earning regular incomes as coconut farmers. They are among the thousands of former rebels who were “assisted in their reintegration into mainstream society through the LPE’s Transformation Program. According to them, they are now living an ‘unrestrained’ life after they were welcomed back into the community.



The LPE under the NTF-ELCAC has proven to be one of the most effective ways of addressing the decades-long communist insurgency, according to Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) Secretary Carlito G. Galvez, Jr. Galvez said the conduct of LPEs has enabled the government to decisively push forward the country’s peace and development agenda and achieve more

concrete results as compared to national-level peace talks that were held before.

“For more than 50 years and of all the mechanisms we have utilized to put an end to the communist rebellion, we saw that the LPE was indeed one of the most effective approaches in addressing the root causes of the armed conflict,” he pointed out.

Major Peace Agreements made under LPE

The national government’s peace process with the Cordillera Bodong Administration–Cordillera People’s Liberation Army (CBA-CPLA) is one of the most inspiring LPE success stories.

The government and the CBA-CPLA, which broke away from the Communist Party of the Philippines–New People’s Army (CPP-NPA), signed the Mount Data peace accord on September 13, 1986.

As a result of the peace pact, CBA-CPLA members have reintegrated themselves into mainstream society. In fact, many of them have enlisted into the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

“The CBA-CPLA and RPM-P/RPA-ABB members are a shining example of what can happen when people turn away from armed violence and walk the path of peace. Hopefully, they will inspire members of other rebel groups to do the same,” Galvez said.

The peace adviser added that with the strong support given by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to the NTF-ELCAC, the body will continue to carry out local peace engagements in order to sustain and build on the gains achieved during the previous administration.

“Clearly, LPE is the way and we are determined to use this as one of the key instruments in putting an end to the communist insurgency,” Galvez said.



SEAP clears the path of peace

Alleviating the family's financial constraints

By: Thara Leonor Darah A. Quilingin

Education is a universal human right, but for most, it often becomes a privilege – one that is not easily accessible. Many individuals, especially in poverty-stricken and post conflict-affected areas are still denied this right.

This is a concern that the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) is helping to address as it ensures that members of the Cordillera Bodong Administration-Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CBA-CPLA) and their families who used to be constrained by the armed struggle, are provided with the opportunity to start anew and uplift their lives.

Through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on the Special Educational Assistance Program signed by the OPAPRU and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) or the OPAPRU-NCIP SEAP, study grants are awarded to former CBA-CPLA members, their families, or their next of kin. This is part of the government's efforts to support the reintegration of CBA-CPLA members. The study grant program specifically aims to empower and capacitate beneficiaries to become self-reliant through advanced educational qualifications, technical/vocational courses, and skills development training.

Since its implementation in 2021, the OPAPRU-NCIP SEAP has benefitted 200 grantees, 10 of whom have successfully graduated from their respective courses.

Hermes Collin Boy-ag, 23, a former grantee of the OPAPRU-NCIP SEAP and now a graduate of BS Marine Engineering at the Northern Philippines College for Maritime, shared that he first learned of this opportunity from a staff member at the Capitol office.

"They invited us to the Capitol to apply, explained the benefits and process of the program, and also informed us why we were chosen as grantees for the program," said Boy-ag.

Meanwhile, Ian Dale Cortel, 24, a former grantee and now a graduate of BS Hospitality Management at Cagayan State University Andrews Campus, shared that his parents convinced him to apply to the program. His father, being a CBA-CPLA member, encouraged him to take advantage of the good opportunity for the sake of his future.

Cortel said that he applied to help improve the financial conditions of their family.

"Menos sa gatos at para makatulong na rin po ako na hindi na masyado hihingi ng pera sa kanila. Dati po 'nung nag-aaral pa ako tapos humihingi pa ako sa parents ko, naaawa po ako. Pero 'nung ini-introduce

sa akin ito ng OPAPRU, medyo gumaan na po pakiramdam ko na hindi na ako nanghihingi sa kanila [magulang],” Cortel said.



Boy-ag on the other hand, also mentioned that he applied for a scholarship “due to a shortage of allowance and many school expenses.”

Overcoming hurdles to harness opportunities

For both Boy-ag and Cortel, becoming OPAPRU-NCIP SEAP grantees came with both challenges and responsibilities. However, they used these as motivations and opportunities to better themselves.

“There were challenges. One challenge was managing the financial support to cover all expenses, like tuition, books, and daily allowances. To address this, I budgeted carefully and looked for part-time work to supplement the support I received. Balancing schoolwork with financial needs also required good time management and prioritization skills,” said Boy-ag.

Cortel bared, “nahihirapan ako medyo sa mga requirements dahil sa schedule sa school.” He also mentioned that they should maintain a grade of at least 80 and higher.

According to Boy-ag and Cortel, these challenges pushed them to study harder and maintain a good academic standing.

Boy-ag noted, “The program improved my academic performance by reducing financial stress, allowing me to focus more on my studies. With SEAP’s support, I could afford school supplies and resources, which helped me study better. This support also allowed me to join extracurricular activities and academic projects that enriched my learning experience.”

A new journey beginning

Today, Boy-ag and Cortel are starting a new chapter in their lives, as they pursue the careers they have long dreamed of.

“Right now, I’m focusing on getting the license for my chosen career and finding a job. This will help me apply my education in a professional setting and start contributing to my community,” said Boy-ag.

Meanwhile, Cortel bared that he is applying to join the Philippine Coast Guard.

“Nag-aapply po ako ngayon sa Coast Guard. Kung makapasok man po ako, I will take this opportunity para makatulong sa bansa,” he said.

Boy-ag and Cortel continue to remind their fellow Cordillerans and other OPAPRU-NCIP SEAP grantees to not waste the opportunities that are given to them.

Boy-ag said, ***“Spend the SEAP benefits wisely; it is a big help from our government. Make the most of this opportunity to improve your education and reach your goals.”***

“Mag-aral ng mabuti. Huwag niyong sayangin ‘yung binigay na opportunity sa inyo ng OPAPRU at NCIP,” Cortel stressed.

These stories serve as a testament to OPAPRU’s resolved to continue improving the socio-economic conditions of CPLA members, their families, and communities towards a progressive Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and to honor the 1986 Mt. Data Sipat agreement.



Building Communities of Peace: The housing settlement program for KAPATIRAN

By: Thara Leonor Darah A. Quilingin

ANTIQUE– Housing units will soon rise for KAPATIRAN members in Culasi, Antique. This supports the implementation of the Social and Economic Reintegrated Component stipulated in the 2019 Clarificatory Implementing Document (CID) between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and KAPATIRAN.

During the turnover of 16 core shelter housing units in Ibajay, Aklan in March 2022, Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, Secretary Carlito G. Galvez Jr., emphasized the importance of assisting the KAPATIRAN members in their new beginning as transformed individuals and in support of their families and community.

“Ang pinakaimportante sa pamilya, ‘yung unang-una ay mayroon kang lote at bahay na masasabi mo na sa iyo. At ‘yun ang nakita natin na isa sa mga bunga ng kapayapaan,” said Galvez.

Two years since the turnover, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) remains steadfast in fulfilling its commitment in implementing socio-economic programs that would uplift the lives of KAPATIRAN members “by providing them shelter and ensuring peace and development in their communities.

On May 15, 2024, in preparation for the upcoming

construction of the new housing settlement site for KAPATIRAN members in Culasi, Antique, OPAPRU area coordinator Romulo Del Rosario, together with Culasi KAPATIRAN Chapter President Amazon Estoloso, CPT Alfonso Asidre of the 552nd Engineer Construction Battalion, Philippine Army, and OPAPRU coordinating staff Larry Italia, conducted a survey of the project site

The team carried out an actual mapping of the 16 housing units, delineated a perimeter fence, plotted the distance from the water source, and planned further developments in the site to support income-generating projects for livelihood activities.



The following livelihood projects were proposed by the KAPATIRAN members: corn and palay trading center, agricultural products and supply center, bamboo processing (plyboo making), and organic fertilizer making (lime).”

Del Rosario shared that KAPATIRAN leaders from Aklan and Antique, Jessy Batoy and Estoloso, respectively, expressed their gratitude for project.

“Natuwa ‘yung dalawang leader ng

KAPATIRAN from Aklan and Antique na maisasakatuparan na ang matagal na nilang minimithi na magkaroon ng bahay bawat isa sa kanila [dahil] sa pagpapatupad ng Clarificatory Implementing Document ng 2000 Peace Agreement between the KAPATIRAN and the Philippine government,” said Del Rosario.

OPAPRU has been working closely with the Local Government Unit of Antique and the KAPATIRAN members to ensure their needs are addressed. The peace agency is determined to fulfil its commitments under the peace process with KAPATIRAN as the group’s members have vowed to do the same.

Peacebuilding is a challenging process that takes time and effort. The transformed former rebels are a testament to this, as they are now reaping the seeds of peace they themselves planted.

The Philippine Agenda on Women, Peace and Security

By: Thara Leonor Darah A. Quilingin



The Philippines became the first Asian country to adopt its own National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAPWPS) in 2010. It is a testament to the country’s steadfast commitment to foster an environment that ***“uplifts the well-being of women and empowers them as agents of peace, development, and progress in their communities.”***

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU), together with the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), civil society organizations and the international development community launched the fourth generation of the NAPWPS 2023-2033 in December 2023. This is the Philippine government’s commitment to the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) No 1325, which calls for

women’s greater participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction.

Secretary Carlito G. Galvez Jr., Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, emphasized that the conversation on the gender-differentiated impacts of armed conflict has changed since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820.

Galvez said that women are “actively reclaiming space where they are meaningfully and substantively able to occupy.”

He noted that the NAPWPS took into account the views, experiences, and recommendations of all stakeholders, making it an amalgamation of ideas to ensure greater gender inclusivity in crafting more robust, effective, and responsive peacebuilding and development strategies.

Championing the NAPWPS on the ground

The OPAPRU, as the designated chair of the National Steering Committee on Women, Peace and Security (NSCWPS), is tasked to spearhead the implementation and localization of the NAPWPS by virtue of Executive Order 865.

During the first quarter meeting of the MIMAROPA Regional Gender and Development Committee (RGADC) on February 19, 2024, the OPAPRU, through its Social Healing and Peacebuilding Program (SHAPE), provided an orientation on NAPWPS 2023-2033. This led the MIMAROPA RGADC to pass three (3) resolutions in support of the localization of the NAPWPS– (1) Integrate the NAPWPS 2023-2033 in the RGADC MIMAROPA Strategic Plan and Mainstreaming Framework; (2) Integrate the NAPWPS 2023-2033 into the RGADC MIMAROPA Development Plan and; (3) Support the NAPWPS 2023-2033 implementation and localization in MIMAROPA.

Further, the OPAPRU, in cooperation with the UN Women, is also developing a more comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Framework and Plan to ensure a more robust monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning system that can track the progress, lessons learned, and the impact of the NAPWPS on the lives of Filipino women. This initiative promotes the sharing of best practices and fosters innovation in advancing the WPS agenda, while ensuring accountability among all stakeholders.

Women as active peacebuilders

In March 2024, during the learning and reflection session on Women, Peace and Security, Susana Guadalupe H. Marcaida, OPAPRU Executive Director On Local Conflict Transformation and Peace Sustainability, emphasized that the latest iteration of the NAPWPS enables women to ***“chart the course of their growth and development as individuals in light of today's emerging realities and fast-changing world.”***



In her remarks, Marcaida noted that there are situations wherein women are expected to only take on subordinate tasks despite being highly-qualified to carry out leadership roles. She noted that this is only one of the many situations confronted by women in the country.

In light of this situation, she reiterated the crucial role of NAPWPS, emphasizing that, “it highlights the fact that women are as capable of becoming active agents of peacebuilding and meaningful transformation rather than passive observers or victims of conflicts.”

Despite the challenges in mainstreaming gender responsiveness in various social contexts and in the agency's peace programs, OPAPRU remains committed in ensuring that the role of women is highlighted and strengthened in the peacebuilding and development process.

As Galvez underscored during the dialogue in championing the WPS agenda in the country, he said “Investing in women is an investment in peace. Genuine peace cannot be achieved without giving every girl and woman the opportunity to let their voices be heard.”

Better and Bigger, PAMANA Bounces Back

By: Stephanie Florida

CABADBARAN CITY, AGUSAN DEL NORTE– Members of the Mamanwa and Manobo tribes in Sitio Lusong in Cabadbaran City in Agusan Del Norte no longer have to walk for hours under the scorching heat of the sun to reach the main roads, transport their produce to markets and access essential government services.

This, after the Office the Presidential Adviser on Peace Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) turned over and inaugurated Php 1.4 billion worth of PAYapa at MASaganang PamayaNAn (PAMANA) Program infrastructure projects in Brgy. Puting Bato on July 28, 2023.

The amount covers 11 PAMANA projects for the four provinces of the CARAGA region, consisting of roads and bridges that connect far-flung areas to the main roads.

The infrastructure in Sitio Lusong was just among the hundreds of PAMANA projects being implemented in OPAPRU target peace and development communities across the country. To date, PAMANA has been expediting the peace investment fund from stakeholders through infrastructure, socio-economic interventions and construction of roads, bridges and peace centers.

For 2024, the Department of Budget of Management (DBM) granted the PAMANA Program with over P5 billion worth of peace investment funds for socio-economic interventions, particularly as the OPAPRU shifts its focus to post-conflict reconstruction, rehabilitation and transition to sustainable peace and development.

The PAMANA Program is a priority program of the national government that supports the peace negotiation track and contributes to the goal of attaining a just and lasting peace for all Filipinos and the country.

Among the PAMANA projects that are being implemented by the OPAPRU in partnership with national line agencies and local government units include agriculture productivity support, bridges, roads, and water systems and other community-level infrastructure.



These projects are primarily implemented in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable areas and remote, hard-to-reach communities that have been lagging behind in terms of economic development.

'Life-changing' roads

Datu Geronimo Agda, Manobo tribal chieftain, said the bridge in Sitio Lusong, which was among the 11 PAMANA projects turned over to their community, has been "life changing" in many ways.

According to Agda, their produce can now be easily transported from their farms to the town market in less than 20 minutes. This is a big relief considering the usual three-hour walk they used to endure for many years.

"Sa una, 'yung di pa napapatayo 'yang tulay sa amin, lahat ng taga rito nahihirapan idala ang kanilang produkto sa bayan. Kasi nahihirapan sila tumawid dito sa ilog, lalo na pag maulan. Lalo na 'yung mga estudyante, nahihirapan tumawid sa ilog pumunta sa eskwelahan," Agda shared.



(Back then when there were still no concrete roads and bridges here, it was very difficult for us to bring our farm products to the town market especially during the rainy season. The children could not cross the river going to the schools.)

"Pero mula nang dumating ang tulay na ito, medyo gumaan at nabago na ang aming pamumuhay. Kasi mas mabilis na namin madadala ang aming mga produkto. Kahit anong produkto ay madadala na sa bayan dahil makakadaan na ang motor at sasakyan," he added.

(But when the bridge was constructed, our lives have become easier and better because we can now easily transport our products to the market now that we can access the roads using motorcycles and vehicles.)

According to the chieftain, the main produce farmers bring to the town market are vegetables and copra. They would usually carry the products on their backs and walk for three to four hours to reach the poblacion.

The PAMANA infrastructure projects in Sitio Lusong include two farm-to-market roads, five roads with bridges, two roads connecting the towns, and one road rehabilitation located in the four provinces of Caraga region.





No place too far

The PAMANA Program was launched in 2011 and continues to contribute to addressing issues of injustices and improve community access to socio-economic interventions; improve governance by building the capacity of national government agencies and local government units for a conflict-sensitive, peace-promoting, culture-sensitive and gender-sensitive approach to human rights promotion and development; and empower communities and strengthen their capacities to address issues of conflict and peace.

The province of Agusan has been considered a stronghold of insurgent groups, which for years have been gradually dismantled, Major General Jose Maria Cuerpo II, commander of the 4th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army, said.



"This only shows that success is already within reach. Because of these road projects, peace and order will surely be sustained. The Sitio Lusong can now be accessed easier, mas madali na pag byahe ninyo papunta sa siyudad, sa bayan kaya kami bilang inyong partner sa kapayapaan, we will support in whatever way we can ang pag-asenso ng inyong lugar at ng Agusan del Norte. Protektahan ninyo itong mga proyekto at gamitin sa kabutihan at huwag sa kasamaan." Cuerpo said.

Galvez said that nobody will be left behind in the peacebuilding and development process under the Marcos administration, as the national government is committed to maintaining the progress of peace not only in the CARAGA region but throughout the entire country.

"May kasabihan po tayo na ang insurhensiya ay nagtatapos kung saan nagsisimula ang kalsada. Buong-puso po akong sumasang-ayon dito. Ang aming ahensiya, ang Office Of The Presidential Adviser On Peace, Reconciliation and Unity o OPAPRU, sa pamamagitan ng PAMANA program, kasama ang DPWH at iba pang peace partners nito, ay patuloy na nagsasagawa ng mga proyektong imprastraktura sa iba't-ibang bahagi ng bansa," he said.



"Nagagalak kaming nasasaksihan kung paanong binabago ng mga proyektong ito ang buhay ng mga residente at ang sitwasyon sa kanilang mga komunidad," he added.

According to Galvez, these interventions are more than just public conveniences; they also present opportunities for enterprises to flourish; for families to regularly provide food on the table; and for children to not be denied the chance to learn, dream and grow.

"These interventions give back human dignity for those that have gone astray," emphasized said.

‘Stronger BARMM means a stronger Mindanao, a stronger Mindanao means a stronger Philippines’ - President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. (2024)



Pasay City – In pursuit of the Filipino people’s collective vision of achieving genuine and long-lasting peace, unity, reconciliation, and prosperity, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. underscored that a robust Bangsamoro region is an integral part of a “Bagong Pilipinas.”

“Bagong Pilipinas is incomplete without a Bagong Bangsamoro rising along and within it,” the President said during the 17th National Government-Bangsamoro Government Intergovernmental Relations Body (IGRB) meeting on Thursday, February 8, 2024.

“A stronger BARMM (Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) means a stronger Mindanao, and a stronger Mindanao means a stronger Philippines, bringing us closer to achieving our Prosperity Agenda,” he emphasized.

Under Section 2, Article VI of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, the IGRB was created to coordinate and resolve issues between the two parties through regular consultation and continuing negotiation in a non-adversarial manner. The President said that the IGRB meeting, the sixth under his administration, “reaffirms our shared commitment not just to peace, but peace with progress. It builds on the gains of the past, fueled by mutual trust, guided by lessons learned, and inspired by the many wins, which give us the confidence that our shared vision for the Bangsamoro will be fully realized.”

According to the Chief Executive, the joint efforts of the National and Bangsamoro governments have significantly contributed to the crafting of key legislations, such as the region’s priority codes. “This democratic hallmark of finding common ground – through consensus, not conflict – is what also led to the rich harvest of Bangsamoro enacted laws,” President Marcos said.

To date, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority has passed five of its priority laws which include the administrative, civil service, education, electoral, and local governance codes.

BARMM Chief Minister Ahod Balawag Ebrahim attributed the gains achieved by the BARMM to the “productive partnership between the national government and the Bangsamoro government, facilitated through the IGRB.”

“Indeed, this is the perfect forum to continue our noble work and advance our shared mission of peace and development in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region,” Ebrahim said.

He also stressed the urgency to “fast-track all pending work and beat the deadlines we have set, without compromising on the integrity of the hard-won peace agreement,” as he pointed out that this year leading to 2025 is the final stretch of the extended transition period.



As the election draws near, Ebrahim said that their vision of the BARMM government remains clear, which is, “the establishment of an autonomous region that is functional, ready, and thriving in an ever-changing and competitive society.”

For her part, Budget and Management Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman gave her full commitment to help sustain the progress made by the region.

“We will not leave our future vulnerable to threats that will undermine the developments that we have painstakingly pushed. We must not forget that democracy requires solidarity. It means that as we strive for a better future for our country, we – a nation united despite religious differences – are all in this together,” said the budget chief, who also serves as the IGRB’s co-chairperson for the national government.

Presidential Adviser for Peace, Reconciliation and Unity Sec. Carlito G. Galvez, Jr. said that Bagong Pilipinas is a clarion call for national unity and the moral transformation of society that guarantees equal opportunities for all Filipinos, and enables them to uplift their lives and reach their fullest potential.

“As envisioned by President Marcos, it is a masterplan for genuine development that benefits all our people,” Galvez said.

He emphasized that this mindset resonates with the ongoing work for peace and development being implemented in the region, “to unite and share a common goal of bringing the dividends of peace and development closer to our Bangsamoro brothers and sisters, ensuring that no one will be left behind.”

“Together, as one nation, we will be able to build and strengthen the foundations for sustainable peace

and progress not only in the Bangsamoro but also in Mindanao and the whole Philippines,” Galvez said.

“United and indivisible. Let us aspire to become radiant beacons, illuminating the once dark and war-torn Bangsamoro, to one that will show solidarity and diversity, and foster healing and reconciliation in the country,” he noted.

Anchored on the Bagong Pilipinas’ concept of a principled, accountable and dependable government, Galvez said the “OPAPRU continues to improve and develop as an organization that is attuned and responsive to the needs of the people and emerging realities on the ground with the ultimate goal of bringing long-lasting peace and sustainable development in the Bangsamoro region.”

The President stressed “the things that matter most to our people, for whom we are walking the hard but high road to peace.”

“Because peace is neither found in the documents we have exchanged, nor in the elegant prose of our agreements, nor in the minutes of these meetings,” he said.

“Peace to our people is found in jobs created, schools opened, farms irrigated, new hospitals opened, roads constructed, businesses launched,” he emphasized.

OPAPRU celebrates the successful expansion of Modified Shelter Assistance Project



Zamboanga del Norte - The Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU) led on August 18 the ceremonial handover of 100 new units under the Modified Shelter Assistance Project (MSAP), an initiative funded through the agency's PAYapa at MASagang PamayaNan (PAMANA) Program. This project is a testament to the collaborative efforts between the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Local Government Units (LGUs) of Sirawai and Tungawan, Zamboanga del Norte, reflecting a shared commitment to community development.

In a previous ceremony, the DSWD and LGUs had reached an agreement to extend the MSAP to additional barangays, a plan set into motion in 2023. The fruition of this plan was evident in Barangay Datu Tumanggong, where 50 MSAP units were successfully completed and handed over to the local residents, including 41 members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and their families. Additionally, 50 more units were allocated across two barangays: 30 in Barangay Lubok, with 22 designated for MNLF members and their kin, and 20 in Barangay Culasian, with 9 reserved for the same.

The event also marked a significant milestone with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the LGU of Tungawan and the DSWD, paving the way for 50 new housing units in Barangay Batungan, scheduled for completion in 2024. Moreover, Sirawai is set to benefit from an additional 150 MSAP units in the coming year, furthering the reach of this impactful program.

Galvez turns over P5M peace center fund as Zambo Sur celebrates 3rd anniversary as insurgency-free province



Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur – Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity Secretary Carlito G. Galvez, Jr. turned over P5 million to the provincial local government unit of Zamboanga del Sur as the entire province celebrated the third year of being free from communist insurgents.

Zamboanga del Sur was declared insurgency-free on April 21, 2021.

Peace Center



On April 21, 2024, Galvez announced that a Peace Center would be established in Zamboanga del Sur, as part of the OPAPRU's commitment to support the transformation of former rebels or combatants.

"Ito ay isang mekanismo upang mas mapaingit natin ang pagpapatupad ng Transformation Program at iba pang mga inisyatibong pangkapayapaan dito sa probinsya," Galvez said in his speech during the celebration in the Provincial Government Center at Barangay Dao, Zamboanga del Sur province.

The P5M Peace Center fund was received by Zamboanga del Sur Governor Victor J. Yu, Zamboanga del Sur 1st District Representative Divina Grace Yu, and Zamboanga del Sur 2nd District Representative Jeyzel Victoria Yu.

Galvez also emphasized that OPAPRU is working closely with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the implementation of its Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA) Program intended for the former rebels of the CPP-NPA-NDF in the province.

"Hinihingi namin ang patuloy at buong-pusong suporta at partisipasyon ng mga mamamayan ng Zamboanga del Sur upang matagumpay nating maipatupad ang Transformation Program para sa ating mga FRs, kanilang pamilya at komunidad," he said.

Milestone for peace

Sunday's celebration was also attended by AFP Chief of Staff General Romeo S Brawner Jr, Zamboanga del Sur 1st District Representative Divina Grace Yu, Zamboanga del Sur Governor Victor Yu, Zamboanga del Sur 2nd District Representative Jeyzel Victoria Yu, and DND Undersecretary Angelito M De Leon.

In his speech, Brawner lauded the efforts of Zamboanga del Sur for reaching what he described as a significant milestone in the government's peace and development agenda.

"Let us continue to work together, hand in hand as one whole nation in order to guard our country from the resurgence of insurgency," he said.

AFP's Brawner handed-over a plaque of commendation to Col Jo-ar Herrera, former Commander of 53rd Infantry Battalion based in Zamboanga del Sur, as one of the highlights of the said event.

The event commemorated is a testament of the strong partnership between the provincial government of Zamboanga del Sur, local leaders, the security sector, and the people of Zamboanga del Sur in ensuring sustained peace and order in the province.

The program ended with a symbolic release of doves by officials and former rebels.

OPAPRU Celebrates the Success of PAMANA SLP Grants in Kabankalan



Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental - The OPAPRU participated in the ceremonial distribution of the 3rd Cycle PAMANA Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) Grants. The grants, each amounting to PHP 300,000.00, were awarded to four Sustainable Livelihood Program Associations (SLPAs) in Kabankalan, Negros Occidental, last January 23, 2024

The recipients of these grants were SLPAs from the barangays of Camingawan, Oringao, Salong, and Tagukon. The event was graced by Kabankalan Mayor Benjie Miranda, Vice Mayor Miguel Zayco, Sangguniang Panlalawigan Councilor Adolfo Mangao, SP Councilor Joan Cagape, and City Social Welfare and Development staff. Representatives from the Camingawan Vendors Association, Oringao Garments Workers and Producers Association, Salong Food Producers Association, and Tagukon Farmers Association also attended the event.

The contribution of the SLP Grants is among the interventions under the Community Peace Dividends Component of the 2019 Clarificatory Implementing Document to the 2000 GPH-RPM-P/RPA/ABB Peace Agreement.

The Government committed to provide Peace Dividends grants to communities to address poverty in areas identified by the RPM-P/RPA/ABB. Under the 2019 CID, 100 Community Peace Dividends (CPD) barangays were identified and shall be provided with resources to ensure greater peace, development and stability in beneficiary-communities.

In 2016, through the facilitation of OPAPRU, DSWD awarded a PhP50M livelihood cash grant to 100 Community Peace Dividend (CPD) associations under the DSWD Sustainable Livelihood Program. These SLPAs ventured into micro enterprise activities such as farming, livestock production, financing, among others.

The 100 CPD barangays were capacitated to implement their chosen livelihood projects. Regular monitoring on the operationalization of the SLPAs in the CPD Barangays in Negros and Panay Islands were conducted to ensure before sustainability of the program.

The ceremony was not only a distribution of grants but also a reaffirmation of the strong collaborative spirit that drives the community's progress and prosperity.

First-ever peace and development center in Northern Luzon rises in Baguio City



Baguio City– Sec. Carlito G. Galvez, Jr. and Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong led the groundbreaking ceremony and the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement for the construction of the first ever Peace Center in Northern Luzon on February 16.

The Php 50 million peace and development center, which will be built at the Upper Session Road will house Cordillera-based Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) personnel.

The facility will also serve as a peace knowledge and learning center in the city, as well as a convention center where meetings and seminars can be held. According to Mayor Magalong, the idea of establishing a peace center in the city started during a casual talk with Secretary Galvez at an event in the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) in September last year.

“Sec. Galvez and I have been together for a while, especially during the run of the National Task Force on COVID-19 where he was the vaccine czar while I was the lead in the nationwide contact tracing,” Magalong said.

“Sometime in September 2023 just last year, we were both guests at a PMA event. He was mentioning to me the different programs of OPAPRU and the funding for the programs. He also mentioned the peacekeeping and reconciliation programs to which we both agreed to suggest that we can put up a peace and development center here in Baguio City.” he recalled.

The proposed peace and development center was then included in the Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA) Program fund for fiscal year 2024. The successful inclusion of the project came after a site validation and assessment was made by OPAPRU personnel.

“We are looking forward to a very strong partnership and collaboration with regards to this joint venture and that is, the construction of a peace and development center, the first of its kind in Northern Luzon. I also heard that there would be more peace and development centers that will be put up in other parts of this country,” Magalong said.

For his part, Galvez said the peace center shall serve as a concrete symbol of OPAPRU’s recognition of the Cordillera Administrative Region’s “key role in peacebuilding that is deeply rooted in its rich culture and traditions such as the Bodong system, Pechen, Tung-Tong and Mediation.”

“This facility will not only house OPAPRU personnel, but more importantly, enable our office to make its presence more felt here in the region. Through the center, we will ensure that all local peace and development efforts will be well-monitored, well-coordinated and well-supported by OPAPRU through its close collaboration with other stakeholders in the region,” Galvez said.

He added that the physical presence of OPAPRU in the city will also help increase the people’s awareness of the agency, which is dedicated to promoting peace, conflict resolution, reconciliation, and the prevention of violence in the region.

The center, which has a 3,775 sqm floor area, will also serve as an avenue for the conduct of peace dialogues, capacity and skills training, women and youth peace and security seminars, and the practice of conflict resolution approaches that originated in the Cordillera.

Galvez was joined by LtGen. Fernyl Buca, PAF, Commander of Armed Forces of the Philippines-Northern Luzon; MGen. Audrey L. Pasia, Commander of the 5th Infantry Division; PAMANA Director J Anthony Peña and Dir. Christina Loren Umali of the RPA-CPLA Peace Process Office (RCPPPO). Mayor Magalong was joined by Baguio City Vice Mayor Faustino Olowan and other councilors of the city during the ceremonial groundbreaking and MOA signing.

Consultative Dialogue with Mangyan Tribe Advances IPH&R Program



Paluan, Occidental Mindoro - The Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) spearheaded a multi-stakeholder consultative dialogue for members of the Mangyan Tribe in Apis, Paluan, Occidental Mindoro on March 13, 2024. This event was supported by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)- MIMAROPA and the Provincial Local Government Unit (PLGU) of Occidental Mindoro. Apis was identified as a promising pilot area for the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Healing & Reconciliation (IPH&R) Program.

The dialogue revealed the need for a more structured organization within the Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) of Apis, Paluan. Despite having a secretary and a chieftain, the absence of clearly defined roles among the tribal leaders has led to operational challenges. The demographic composition of the tribe, with women making up about 60% of the population and the presence of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) among the 70 families, presents both challenges and opportunities for inclusive development.

In response to these concerns, the OPAPRU crafted a strategic plan to incorporate this area into the IPHR, which aims to fortify Indigenous People System (IPS) governance structures, drawing inspiration from the Agusan del Norte IP Women Organization (ANIPWO) model. This framework is being considered for its effectiveness in forming committees that will enhance the delivery of health, legal, social welfare, and livelihood services.

The Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) is also compiling registries for women, PWDs, seniors, and children to support this initiative. The Transformation Program (TP) in Occidental Mindoro, in conjunction with the consultation with the Mangyan Tribe, has established a robust foundation for the TP plan through a Social Healing and Peacebuilding-focused approach. With backing from NCIP MIMAROPA, legal experts, and other crucial stakeholders, the region is poised to become an exemplary setting for the rollout of the IPH&R Program.

Launching of Camp Abubakar's Master Development Plan marks historic peace achievement



Camp Abubakar, Maguindanao - The 1st Marine Brigade in Maguindanao hosted on January 23 the ceremonial launching and signing of the Master Development Plan (MDP) for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's (MILF) Camp Abubakar.

The event was graced by Secretary Carlito G. Galvez, Jr., Maguindanao Gov. Abdul Raof Macacua, Joint Task Force for Camps Transformation-Government of the Philippines (JTFCT-GPH) Co-Chair Engr. Baintan Adil-Ampatuan, National Housing Authority (NHA) IX Regional Manager Engr. Al-Khwarizmi U. Indanan, and Members of the Parliament from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

The MDP, crafted by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity's (OPAPRU) through its Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA) Program, is a visionary project designed to foster a sustainable and resilient community, with a focus on boosting agricultural productivity and economic development. This comprehensive plan aims to address socio-economic gaps and transform the former camp into a zone of peace and development.



According to Galvez, the MDP is a beacon of hope and positive change for the MILF, emphasizing the pivotal role of LGUs in the normalization process. The ceremony concluded with a unified pledge among stakeholders to build a peaceful, prosperous and more progressive for local residents.

OPAPRU attends P4P's Recommitment Ceremony for Bangsamoro Peace



Manila - The Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) participated in a “recommitment” ceremony last January 11, 2024 organized by the Principles for Peace (P4P). This global initiative aims to establish innovative principles and guidelines that will transform peace processes towards achieving enduring peace. The OPAPRU expressed gratitude to P4P for uniting key players of the Bangsamoro Peace Process in a ceremony that reinforces a dynamic peace community within the Bangsamoro.

Marking a decade since the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) on March 27, 2014, the ceremony's timing is significant. With the transition period of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) interim government set to conclude in 2025, fostering a robust peace constituency is crucial in sustaining on the gains of peace.

In a display of solidarity, the OPAPRU, P4P and other key stakeholders from Luzon to Mindanao, forged a ‘peace covenant’—a multi-sector pledge--to solidify their commitment to a just and lasting peace. This pledge to bring the Bangsamoro peace process to greater heights amidst the challenges being faced by the region.”



OPAPRU partners with Mindanao State University – Sulu to promote peace education

Jolo, Sulu – To boost peacebuilding efforts and promote peace education in the farthest corners of Mindanao, the OPAPRU, through its Policy Development, Strategy, and Knowledge Management Service, conducted a Peace Education University Tour at the Mindanao State University – Sulu on May 15, 2024.

The University Tour highlighted discussions aimed at taking stock of the gains of the comprehensive peace process, identifying challenges, and ways forward for the peace processes and continuing the dialogue for peace educators and stakeholders on further strengthening peace education, instilling non-violence among learners and individuals, and peacebuilding in communities.

“Investing in peace also means investing in the future that would guarantee the non-recurrence of armed conflicts or any form of violent extremism, and equipping individuals, especially the young learners, with knowledge, skills and attitudes to help prevent conflict, resolve conflicts peacefully, or create conditions for peace.” Executive

Director Andres S. Aguinaldo, Jr. noted as he represented Presidential Peace Adviser, Secretary Carlito G. Galvez Jr. during the event.

“OPAPRU, together with other national government agencies, aim to do this through the promotion and institutionalization of the culture of peace in the different learning institutions in the country,” Aguinaldo added

In her opening message, Professor Hadja Rohina S. Adju, Director for Administration and OIC-Chancellor of Mindanao State University – Sulu recalled the the key role that MSU-Sulu played in the signing of the Final Peace Agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

“MSU Sulu had a part in facilitating dialogues between the GRP and MNLF, in fact it was in this gymnasium (MSU Sulu Gymnasium) where Former President Fidel V. Ramos, together with late Secretary Manuel T. Yan, met with MNLF Chair Nur Misuari before the signing of the Final Peace Agreement in Malacañang. MSU Sulu will always be here to help and support the government, especially on matters related to peace in Mindanao and in Sulu in particular,” Professor Adju mentioned.

Solidarity messages were also delivered by Dr. Evelyn K. Kanain, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, MBHTE – Sulu, Dr. Khumaidy A. Tan, Jolo Municipal Administrator, PLTCOL. Kris Conrad M. Gutierrez, Deputy Provincial Director for Operations and PIO of Sulu PPO, BGen. Alexei C. Musngi, Assistant Division Commander, 11th Infantry Alakdan Division, and Sheikh Abdulmuhaimin Abubakar, Chairman, Sulu Ulama Council for Peace and Development.



The officers of the Peacebuilders' Club of MSU Sulu, composed of students taking up Fundamentals of Peace Education, took their oath and signified their commitment to continue being agents of peace and to promote the culture of peace and non-violence amongst their peers through projects that instill peace concepts and foster cooperation as well as camaraderie.

The event also highlighted an MOU Signing between OPAPRU and MSU Sulu. Areas of collaboration centered on sharing Peace Education resources and knowledge products and participating in Peace Education Learning and Reflection Sessions. The MOA signing was followed by a Ribbon Cutting and Launching Ceremony of the OPAPRU-MSU Sulu Peace Education Resource Nook (PERN) at the University Library.

The OPAPRU establishes peace education resource nooks in universities across the country to foster a culture of peace, mutual understanding and solidarity in educational institutions.

To date, OPAPRU has successfully established six Peace Education Resource Nooks in different Higher Education Institutions in the country: at Kalinga State University (26 August 2022), Mindanao State University – General Santos City (02 December 2022), Western Mindanao State University (04 December 2023), Bicol University (22 February 2024), Cotabato State University (20 March 2024) and Mindanao State University – Sulu (May 2024).



In the Gentle Breeze of Hope

By: Nelson Dino

As the sun gradually ascended over Jolo's vast and tranquil sea, I sensed the gentle breeze carrying whispers of hope amid the lush greenery that enveloped the island. Jolo's name has long been synonymous with unrest and turmoil, evoking fear in people's hearts who are unfamiliar with it. However, beneath its troubled past, a resilient community yearns for peace—a community with which I have been associated since elementary school, throughout my university education, and as a lecturer at a local university.

Recently, I strolled through the bustling streets of Jolo, where the vibrant lights of diverse cultures greeted me at every turn. The people's laughter and joy embraced me, defying the natural course of the day as if time wished to prolong the moment of pleasure. From the colorful fabrics adorning market stalls to the aromatic fruits from the mountains perfuming the air, each element spoke of a rich and unique heritage eager to be shared with the world.

Amid the sounds of laughter and chatter, progress' echoes reverberated through the town square, where I once rode my bike during elementary school. The government's new initiatives to foster dialogue and reconciliation had taken root, weaving threads of understanding among once-disturbed cultural communities. Through grassroots efforts

and inclusive governance, bridges were built, connecting hearts and minds to a shared vision for a brighter future.

As I ventured further into the heart of Jolo, the impact of this newfound peace became increasingly evident. I witnessed local businesses flourishing, fueled by renewed optimism and stability. From bustling cafes serving traditional delicacies to artisan workshops preserving age-old craftsmanship, economic opportunities blossomed, empowering individuals to shape their destinies. Yet, I felt the most profound transformation in the rhythm of daily life: children played freely in the streets like tomorrow's light appeared on the horizon, their laughter a testament to their newfound sense of security, and families gathered in peaceful coexistence, roaming the night's joy, nurturing bonds that transcended past misunderstandings.

As the sun descended, its golden fingers stretched across the sky, leaving behind a trail of fiery hues painted on the canvas of clouds to make me forget what was sad and remember what was joyful. It was a moment of pure bliss as I saw the sea mirroring the journey that brought me to this point. A once fractured community had charted a new course guided by shared peace, unity, and resilience values.

In the distance, I witnessed the silhouette of Bud Tumantangis standing as a silent sentinel, watching over the island with quiet dignity, caressed by the breeze from the Sulu Sea, which compelled me to immortalize the memories I had in Jolo before I left, looking for a better future that I could bring back home. As I gazed upon its majestic form, a sense of hope stirred within me. In the story of Jolo, I witnessed the transformative power of peace—a beacon of inspiration for a nation striving to build a future rooted in understanding and compassion that had addressed the fears of enjoying life after sundown, necessary for the benefit of the place and people.

After spending a few days soaking in the tranquility of Jolo, I bid farewell, carrying memories of a journey well-traveled and a renewed sense of purpose. Each thread of peace woven in Jolo serves as a reminder of the infinite possibilities within our grasp—if only we dare to dream and strive for a better tomorrow across the "Sulu Sea," which our ancestors traversed to live and lived to traverse, proudly translating to "sea of the sea currents."



Advancing Peace and Advocacy in the Philippines: A Reflection on Current Trends

By: Ray Basilisco Ganaganag

In a world marred by conflict and strife, the pursuit of peace stands as an imperative endeavor. The Philippines, like many nations, grapples with its share of challenges on the path to peace. However, amidst these obstacles, there exist compelling efforts dedicated to peacebuilding and advocacy. This essay aims to illuminate the latest trends in the Philippine peace process, showcasing the tireless endeavors towards fostering reconciliation, understanding, and sustainable peace.

Evolving Landscape of Peacebuilding Efforts: The Philippine peace process has witnessed significant developments in recent years, reflecting the nation's commitment to addressing long standing grievances and forging pathways towards peaceful coexistence. One notable trend is the diversification of peacebuilding initiatives, encompassing various sectors of society. From government-led negotiations to grassroots community engagements, the landscape of peacebuilding has evolved to embrace inclusivity and collaboration.

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) stands as a testament to this evolving landscape, marking a historic milestone in the pursuit of peace in the southern Philippines.

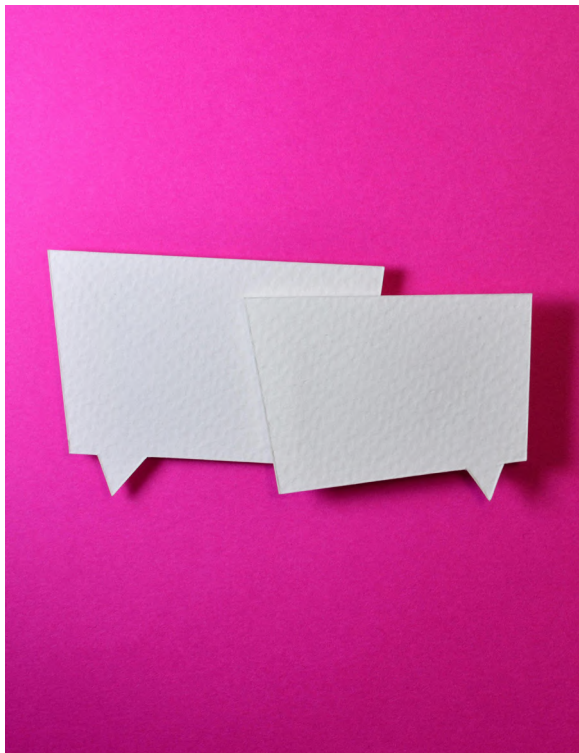
The establishment of BARMM underscores the government's commitment to addressing the aspirations of the Bangsamoro people, promoting autonomy, and fostering socio-economic development in the region. Moreover, the successful ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law signifies a triumph of diplomacy and dialogue over decades of conflict, laying the groundwork for lasting peace and stability.

Innovative Approaches to Advocacy: Advocacy plays a pivotal role in amplifying the voices of marginalized communities and advocating for their rights and aspirations. In the Philippines, innovative approaches to advocacy have emerged, harnessing the power of technology, media, and grassroots mobilization to effect positive change.

Social media platforms have become instrumental in shaping public discourse and mobilizing support for various peacebuilding initiatives. Hashtags such as #KapayapaanNewsletter and #PhilippinePeaceProcess serve as virtual rallying cries, galvanizing individuals and organizations to engage in dialogue, advocacy, and action. Through online campaigns, awareness-raising efforts, and digital storytelling, advocates are able to transcend geographical barriers and amplify their message to a global audience.

Furthermore, grassroots mobilization efforts continue to drive change at the local level, empowering communities to become active participants in the peace process. Civil society organizations, faith-based groups, and youth networks play a vital role in fostering dialogue, promoting reconciliation, and advocating for inclusive governance. By harnessing the collective power of communities, these grassroots initiatives contribute to the consolidation of peace and the building of resilient societies.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the latest trends in the Philippine peace process reflect a dynamic landscape characterized by resilience, innovation, and collaboration. From the establishment of BARMM to the proliferation of digital advocacy campaigns, efforts towards peacebuilding and advocacy continue to evolve and adapt to the changing realities of the modern world. As we navigate the complexities of conflict and strive towards a more peaceful future, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to dialogue, understanding, and solidarity. Together, we can build a nation where peace reigns supreme, and all communities thrive in harmony and prosperity.



Tara, usap tayo

By: Mary Francis Rivera

In February and March, I had the honor of interviewing people who have been pillars and movers of the Bangsamoro peace process—individuals from both sides of the fence, who fiercely fought for their dreams and aspirations, for the restoration of their legitimate rights, for self-identity and self-determination; and who dedicated their lives in advancing and sustaining peace and development in the region.

One of the lessons that immensely resonated with me is the power of openness and understanding—being able to communicate, to discuss, to truly engage in dialogue about painful, uncomfortable, complicated, difficult, and deep-seated issues and problems.

The simple act of talking about these matters may sound easy, but in reality, it's always challenging to actually sit down and discuss, to articulate issues, let alone adhere to these principles especially if the parties involved are hurting.

The natural human response when people are oppressed, aggrieved or hurt is to fight or flee. These reactions are deeply ingrained in our biology and has been a survival mechanism throughout human history.

But what also makes us more human is our ability to find connections and to have bravery in facing adversities and challenges head-on. So, how do you keep moving forward in such situations?

The people I interviewed have the same answer: they aim to know and understand the position as well as the concerns behind the positions of all parties involved. And this requires the simple act of talking, of starting a conversation, and being courageous enough to face their perceived enemies, with the goal of finding solutions to these problems—solutions that are mutually beneficial to all.

That is why I'm always in awe with all the people behind the peace process in the Bangsamoro. The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro would not reach its tenth anniversary if the people behind it did not agree to talk; it is also due to their unflinching commitment and determination to continue walking the path of peace why the implementation of the peace agreement remains strong to this day.

Their stories reminded me why I'm fortunate enough to communicate peace, that the advocacy for peace goes beyond the walls of our office and areas of responsibilities – it's a commitment that can be echoed even through simple interactions and efforts that can make life a little bit easier for other people.

This may also be a reminder to everyone to catch up with your dear old friends, check up on your siblings or parents, or strike up a conversation with the newly hired colleagues in the office. All we have to do is to say the first word and take the first step.



Ang mga CABabaihan at CABataan sa Kasaysayan ng Kapayapaan

1st Place: Manata, Louise Kenneth C.

Artwork Title: The Unchanging Heroism Throughout History of Peace Making

The illustration signifies that in every part of history, there are women and youth who have played significant roles in peacemaking. From tirelessly campaigning about what must be voiced out, to serving various roles contributing to ending the nation's conflicts; they are accomplishments that must be recognized, inspiring many young generations about what they could also do to contribute to peace without resorting to any violent acts.

The elements feature a dreamy-like atmosphere where a young woman witnesses how history tells that women and youth constantly play a crucial role in making peace within the nation possible. The book signifies history, while the forming of a pink ribbon from it signifies peace and femininity.

The doves also symbolize peace while the clouds are associated with lightness and serenity. Lastly, the sun symbolizes that hope will never cease to exist and it reminds us about bright possibilities ahead of us.



CAB: Isang Deakad Tungo sa Masagan at Mapayapang Bangsamoro

1st Place: Sadumiano, Vonne Orly. O.

Artwork Title: A Decade of Peace and Prosperity

This postcard design showcases and celebrates the decade of peace and prosperity in the Bangsamoro region.

In the foreground, two people shake hands in a powerful symbol of unity. This handshake marks the signing of the Comprehensive Bangsamoro Agreement (CAB), a turning point that brought peace and a chance for a brighter tomorrow for the Bangsamoro people.

Plants also flourish, representing growth, just like the prosperity that blossomed in the Bangsamoro. Nestled amongst the leaves is a fruit with the symbol of peace and a dove with wings outstretched for the harmony that has taken root in the region. At the top, symbols of CAB and its 10th anniversary were represented by a crescent moon, star, a mosque, and a kris. These symbols represent Islam and signifies the deep connection between the CAB and the Bangsamoro people's faith and cultural identity.



STRATEGY MAP 2028

Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity

IMPACT

PEACEFUL, DEVELOPED AND

POSITION

A model peace process agency in the global arena for resolving armed conflicts and sustainment of peace

CORE
PROCESS

POLITICAL TRACK
(Negotiation / Management)

PEACE
(Political and

SUPPORT
PROCESS

INTERNATIONAL TRACK
(Business Process/Systems In

MISSION

To manage, direct, integrate, and supervise the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Process including initiatives that promote and reinforce national reconciliation and unity

conciliation	VISION	A just and lasting peace for the nation and for all Filipinos
AND RESILIENT FOCUS COMMUNITIES		
Global community through the ending of all internal the gains of the comprehensive peace process		
NORMALIZATION / TRANSFORMATION PROCESS (Security, Confidence-Building, Socio-economic, TJR/SHR)		
SUSTAINABILITY (Socio-economic Reforms)		
AL MANAGEMENT (Improvements, Organizational Effectiveness)		
ation of the omote and	CORE VALUES	Integrity Inclusivity Justice



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