The Philippines:
In Search of a "Transformed" Society-
Building Peaceful Social Relations
–by, for, and with the People

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Introduction

Nine months ago, armed hostilities erupted between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) affecting close to 10,000 families in 73 barangays in mainland Sulu. Casualties of war from both warring forces were in significant numbers. While many of the affected civilian communities are still struggling to recover from the damage of the February war, fresh hostilities broke out in the municipality of Indanan a week ago, a stone's throw away from the capital towm of Jolo. The conflict can spill over to the whole Sulu mainland and the region unless halted now.

A half-page statement declaring a "A Call to Pursue Peace and Justice-Based Development in Sulu" came out in the 18 November 2005 issue of the most widely-read newspaper in the country. (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 18 November 2005). Excerpts are below:

> *The Sulu multi-stakeholders engaged in the* Pagtabangan BaSulTa[1] *process have begun to evolve alternative sustainable interventions to address poverty, conflict and marginalization within a human security framework. This has begun with a process of local ownership of the inequities and the solution of the same, and helping local leaders create new institutional arrangements that will provide people human security. Such pilot efforts towards institutional and societal transformation are often easily destroyed by armed conflict….. War deepens societal divides entrapped in a spiraling force of displacement of families and destruction of lives, worsening of conflict, resulting to development paralysis.*

> *We, the Pagtabanagan Sulu Convenors for Peace and Human Security, call on our local officials and our people of Sulu to help bring back the peace in* Lupah Sug *at all costs. Let us work together in guarding the peace in the true spirit of Islam that allows for authentic human development. This process can only begin with our own hands in our own land. ….*

> *This can begin with an authentic grass-roots based consultation with the people of Sulu on their vision and goals for peace.*

The search for peace in the troubled parts of this country began with the end of the martial law years. Two insurgencies – Communist and the Moro rebellion – continue to "exclude" portions of the Filipino population from development enjoyed by the mainstream society. In this

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1 An NGO working in the Basilan-Sulu-Tawi-tawi provinces of Mindanao. Fuller description is in this paper.

example, Sulu, remains the poorest province of the Philippines with a poverty incidence of 88.8 percent in 2003. Life expectancy at birth is 52.8 years, short of 17.2 years of the Manila resident 's 70 years. Only 1 out of 5 have finished at least six years of primary education. Only 2 out 10 have access to electricity. Basilan Sulu, and Tawi-tawi had long remained the "battleground" since the martial law years before President Cory Aquino.

This Paper is about these "troubled areas" and mainstream Filipino society. It is about the work of bringing in these communities, opening spaces for dialogue, building once more the social relations necessary for peace, rehabilitation and reconciliation .

Violent conflict recurs. Peace is fragile in areas where violent conflict had already existed. To build even tolerance for each other's beliefs, talking while even fighting may be necessary. Dialogues and multi-stakeholder processes, as described above, have been evolving as the conflict in both Mindanao (for the Moro insurgency) and the areas covered by the Communist insurgency go through conflict stages and national policy moves between an "all-out war" policy and "all-out peace" policy.

Dialogue is necessary in the process that seeks social transformation. The above "call" is not only for a cessation of hostilities but a serious multi-stakeholder, integrated initiative for social change that is reflected in a better and more secure life for the people.

Social integration does mean different things to different people, as the Meeting paper asserts. To some, it is a positive goal, implying equal opportunities and rights for all human beings. In this case, becoming more integrated implies improving access to life chances. To others, however, increasing integration may create pressures for conformity, for minimizing difference, diversity. And, to still others, the term in itself (as it does not necessarily imply a desirable or undesirable state at all) is simply " a way of describing the established patterns of human relations in any given society". For countries like the Philippines, social integration, the building of peaceful relations, after two decades of armed conflict – on the Mindanao front and the Communist rebellion – becomes doubly difficult at this time. Mass migration and the negative effects of globalization have exacerbated the "cleavages" brought about by the "fall-out" from the two insurgencies presently in the country.

But a common tradition of tolerance, acceptance, and respect for other cultures and communities provide our people the basis for change and the transformation of society we seek as a nation. Civil society organizations have largely been on the ground in pursuit of peace of justice-based development, especially in the case of the Moro insurgency affected areas.

The concept of social integration has deep relevance to the work of peace-building. Respect for human rights, respect for diversity, celebration for difference, equal opportunity and access, recognition, human security, non-discrimination, tolerance bond the two processes for a community, across communities.

This Paper is divided into the following : (1) an overview of the Armed Conflict Situation arising from the Communist and Moro insurgencies; (2) a description of the multi-stakeholder

processes at the national level that would serve as a "container" for the conversations at the national, regional and ground levels; (3) the different forms of multi-stakeholder processes at the local and regional that have developed in the last two decades in search of coexistence, initially, then reconciliation; (4) concluding thoughts.

The Armed Conflict Situation : the Communist and the Muslim Insurgencies

Whether or not one agrees with the particular ideologies and solutions they espouse, the communist and the Moro insurgencies cannot be ignored. They are undeniably based on real grievances. And changes, at the local and national levels, have not been fast and adequate enough to address these. One cannot ignore the huge economic, social and human costs they entail – not only by the combatants, but by the Filipino mainstream society as well. And the people in the spillover area of the conflict: the ASEAN neighbors.

Any form of dialogue or processes aimed at strengthening social cohesion, accelerating rehabilitation and reconciliation and justice-based development will need to address the "roots" of the armed conflict and , in so doing, interpret, together, truth, mercy and justice. Dialogue, therefore, in its many forms, must bring the communities into engaging at this level.

The Communist Insurgency

The armed conflict on the Communist front,.i.e. between the Philippine Government and the Communist rebel forces, has spanned more than thirty-five (35) years since the CCP was founded in 1968 and the New People's Army in 1969. It is contemporaneous with the armed conflict on the Moro front whose armed struggle was sparked by the Jabidah Massacre in 1968. There is no corresponding triggering event for the Communist front. The closest to a signal event is the First Quarter Storm of 1970, a Communist-led series of big, mainly student demonstrations in Manila against the Marcos dictatorship, which, partly due to the police brutality against the demonstrations, drew angry public attention to the national democratic movement and its issues.

The protracted people's war (PPW) and the counter-insurgency war (CIW) seem destined to go on for the foreseeable future unless there is some kind of a breakthrough like a paradigm shift in both parties' frameworks on war and peace – a remote prospect now, given the sharpened articulation of the contending ideological visions of the contending Parties: the Communist Party of the Philippines with its National Democratic Front and its New People's Army (CPP-NDF-NPA) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. The rebellion has its root structural causes but it is also very clearly, ideologically driven. *[UNDP Report ,96)].*

From a high of 25,500 guerrillas, 72 fronts and mass base of 7 million in 1987, the CPP-NDF-NPA strength stood by end- 2004 at 11,930 fighters, 128 fronts and recovered mass base. *[UNDP, 84].*

The post 9/11 "global war on terror" has fueled the local war situation, both the PPW and the CIW. In August 2002, President Arroyo issued the "Nine-Point Guidelines " which include:

2. *The CPP-NPA has engaged in terrorist acts against civilian targets....as part of the over-all aim to overthrow the duly constituted government and the democratic system;*

6. *The Government will maintain open lines of communication of communication with the CPP –NPA in the hope of ending the use of violence and terrorism as a means to attain political ends, and to achieve national unity and reconciliation under the Constitution;*

8. *The Government calls on other communist organizations that are not engaged in unlawful acts to condemn the violence and terrorism being perpetrated by the CPP-NPA;*

9. *The Government calls upon the entire citizenry to get involved in the fight against the CPP-NPA…*

Socio-economic, political and even constitutional reforms are needed --- but the GRP has declared its commitment to pursue these reforms on their own merits *outside* the peace negotiations and treated not as counter-insurgency measures, but as part of the broader peace process, to meet the needs of the people, to "serve the needs of the people." A major program, the *Kalayaan Barangay* (Freedom to the Village), has been endorsed for funding to Congress by the President which will bring roads, and the basic needs (to be decided on by the village people themselves) to the 500 Poorest *barangays* in the conflict areas.

Local initiatives for multi-stakeholder processes and dialogue modes continue with less national intervention.

The Moro Insurgency: "Changing the Course of History"

The contemporary armed conflict on the Moro front is the sharpest expression of the Moro or BangsaMoro problem: the historical and systematic marginalization and minoritization of the Islamized ethnolinguistic groups, collectively called Moros, in their own homeland in Mindanao (one of the three biggest islands of the Philippines, closest to Indonesia and Malaysia), by Spain (from the 16th to the 19th century); by the United States of America (the first half of the 20th century), and more recently by the successor Philippine governments (GRP) each with their own narratives of the conflict. *[UNDP, 65]*

For the Moro Liberation fronts, the struggle has been to regain the historical sovereignty of the independent Moro nation states ("sultanates") over their old homeland. For the GRP, it is to defend the territorial integrity of the country against secession and dismemberment. This has made the conflict one of " irresistible forces, immovable objects." And yet, the first Agreement is produced between the GRP and the Moro National Liberation Front, with negotiations on-going with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

In the Seventies during the martial law period, the Moro open rebellion was met by the government dual strategy of coercion and cooptation with the familiar tactic of divide and rule over Moro rebel groups and their leaders. [Ferrer]

In the late Eighties, the Aquino administration, faced with a military establishment averse to peace with the Moro and communist rebel groups, shifted to a new peace strategy called "the multilateral consensus-building approach which downgraded negotiations with rebel groups. The Mindanao Regional Consultative Commission in 1998 took over the work of engaging with the Mindanao population for drafting the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. [Campado, 180]

The Ramos Administration in 1992, starting on the right policy foot , viewed peace as essential to his economic development program to bring the Philippines to newly-industrialized status. He would create the National Unification Commission (see description of process below).

The Government and MNLF signed the final peace agreement in 1996 under the auspices of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its Committee of Six under the leadership of Indonesia. The peace accord seeks to address the political, social, cultural and religious underpinnings of the conflict in the southern Philippines within the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines. The agreement is a significant milestone in the peace process as it settles a Muslim separatist movement that beset the southern Philippines for decades. This milestone of the peace process teaches us that a peaceful settlement is attainable even given the deep cleavages in a community such as Mindanao. However, while the peace accord does complete the process for lasting peace, rather commences its more delicate and demanding part. Signing the agreement and implementing it are two separate components of the process. The latter does not automatically resolve all the cleavages as achieving lasting peace, especially the healing, reconciliation and resolution of deep seated cleavages in society, is a long, difficult and multi-level process. Social integration and peace-building processes do not end with the signing of the peace agreement. Violent conflict can recur, as it has done, should the "ground" remain cold and hard . As experience has borne out, participatory dialogue and changes in the causes of the "pain" may bring the spiritual healing as well to bring reconciliation.

Three tracks have emerged, parallel though sometimes converging, which now constitute the current evolution of the Moro conflicts: (1) the implementation of the first formal peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front; (2) the on-going GRP- MILF peace negotiations; (3) Post 9/11 terrorism and counter-terrorism on the Moro front.

The contemporary form of the Moro insurgency may best be described by the following "themes":

1. From 1972 to 1996, the MNLF was the standard-bearer to "secure a free and independent state for the Bangsa Moro people." Its main contribution has been to make the name "Moro" respectable to serve as basis for common identity and consciousness for 13 disparate ethno-linguistic states in their historical homeland.

2. In 1977, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front led by then MNLF Vice Chairman Hashim Salamat, left the MNLF . The Split was based on differences : in political strategy (armed struggle vs. peace negotiations); in objectives (independence vs. autonomy); in ideological orientation (secular-nationalist vs. Islamic revivalist); in leadership styles (centralized vs. consultative); in ethnic allegiances (Tausug vs. Maguindanao).

3. Today, with the unraveling of MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari and the implementation of the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement, the MILF has emerged as the standard – bearer of Moro aspirations. It has made a strategic decision to give peace negotiations a "chance." A ceasefire was signed in July 2003 with an international and civil society monitoring mechanism. This security aspect is supported by focused rehabilitation and development, in which projects are determined and managed by the MILF through its NGO, the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA). *The novel idea here is to have a truce not only for negotiations but also for development; and for rehabilitation and development to go hand in hand. " [UNDP.78])*

4. The growing civil society-led movement for peace in Mindanao, major sections of which have adopted the human security framework, is unique to this process. If a "political and lasting solution to this Bangsamoro problem" can be found with "respect for the identity, culture and aspiration of all peoples in Mindanao , then the GRP-MILF peace negotiations can then embrace the broader peace process as well as the fight against terrorism here.

5. Another bright spot in this "front" is the concerted efforts of official development assistance extended to Mindanao's "development".

Setting the "TABLE"; Containing the Efforts

This Section describes the "national" frame (orders and legislation) which served to "contain" the efforts for tolerance, coexistence, social cohesion on a journey to reconciliation and peace for both insurgencies. Over three decades, the GRP has broadened its perspective of peace, from a narrow view of "absence of armed conflict" (in relation solely to violence) to a "concept of peace as the condition of a **transformed** society characterized by social justice, equity, humanity, harmonious pluralism, the rule of law and sustainable development". *(Perspective on Media and Peace Reportage, Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Office of the President, Phil., November 2000)*

Six Paths to Peace

After the People Power Revolution in 1986, the peace process that evolved is best described as a comprehensive, multi-track program involving the *simultaneous* pursuit of six inter-related components known as "The Six Paths to Peace": reforms; consensus-building and empowerment; negotiations; reconciliation and reconstruction; conflict reduction and

transformation; and building a climate for peace through education and advocacy. The peace process is anchored on three principles, namely:

- A peace process must be *community-based*, reflecting the sentiments, values and principles important to all the Filipinos – defined not by government alone, nor by the different contending armed groups only, but by all Filipinos as one community;

- A peace process seeks to forge a *new social compact for a just, equitable, humane and pluralistic society* – where all individuals and groups are free to engage in peaceful competition for predominance of their political programs without fear, through the exercise of rights and liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, and where they may compete for political power through an electoral system that is free, fair and honest; and

- A peace process seeks a *principled and peaceful resolution* of the armed conflicts, with neither blame or surrender, but with dignity for all concerned.

Based on these principles, a comprehensive peace program was put in place with the following components:

1. Pursuit of social, economic and political reforms to address the **root causes** of the armed conflicts and social unrest;
2. Consensus-building and empowerment for peace;
3. Pursuit of peaceful, negotiated settlement with rebel groups;
4. Implementation of programs for reconciliation, rehabilitation and reintegration into the mainstream society of ex-combatants and civilian victims of the armed conflict;
5. Addressing concerns relative to continuing conflict; and
6. Building a positive climate for peace.

While the pursuit of the process may have been tumultuous over the years, it likewise generated significant insights and resources that reinforced and strengthened the process itself,(particularly in the Mindanao conflict) and would ultimately facilitate the process of building social relations in the society beset with the two insurgencies.

The National Unification Commission (NUC) and after

In 1992, President Fidel V. Ramos created the NUC to formulate and recommend, after consulting with the concerned sectors of society, a viable general amnesty program and peace process that would lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. It was composed of eight (8) members representing the Cabinet, legislature and the private sector.

The NUC embarked on a six-month nationwide program of public consultations to gather people's perceptions of the root causes of the armed conflict and social unrest, and their proposals for achieving peace. To help preserve the integrity of the process, members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the National Council of Churches of

the Philippines (NCCP) served as regional convenors, organized their own regional secretariats, and helped to form multi-sectoral provincial convenor groups. Consultations were completed in 71 out of the total 76 provinces of the country then. The results were presented and discussed in 14 regional consultations. Special direct consultations were held with representatives of the peace zone communities, organizations of the most marginalized sectors, the business sector, the military institution and various religious organizations.

The NUC was also tasked with coordinating various government peace efforts, including those towards the armed rebel groups. The NUC, made more legitimate by its own work at setting up the multi-stakeholder process at the Commission, engaged their authorized representatives on exploratory talks to lay the groundwork for formal negotiations.

During the NUC term, the discussions with the military rebels graduated into formal talks after exploratory talks in Libya and Indonesia with the MNLF. The MILF agreed to engage in exploratory talks but preferred to wait until after the conclusion of talks with the MNLF. After the Ramos-dispatched mission signed The Hague Joint Declaration with the Netherlands-based CPP-NDF leadership, the NUC continued to try to reach an agreement for a new round of exploratory talks.

 On 1 July 1993, the NUC submitted its final report on the pursuit of a Comprehensive Peace Process to the President and ended its term on 31 July 1993. As an offshoot of the NUC report, Executive Order No. 125 was issued on 15 September 1995, providing the policy framework for the government's comprehensive peace efforts, including the principles, components and administrative structure. It also defined the approach for the peace efforts:

- the goal of the government's peace process is not merely the end of internal armed conflicts, but a **transformed society** characterized by justice, equity, humanity, harmonious pluralism and rule of law;

- it recognized that achieving this goal requires the **participation and cooperation not only of government and armed rebel groups, but of all sectors of society on both national and local levels. At the same time, people's participation in the pursuit of peace must be empowerin**g;

Towards this goal, the NUC proposed the adoption of a comprehensive, multi-track and holistic approach; enumerated the six required paths or components which are equally important and necessary, to be pursued simultaneously. The 3 principles and 6 paths provided the <u>integrating</u> framework for all government and non-government peace initiatives, guiding its cooperation and partnership with civil society in the pursuit of peace.

Given this, the peace process is now more than just peace negotiations, or livelihood for combatants, or amnesty, which is only one element of the reconciliation path. The paths are not mutually exclusive but are interrelated and complement, support and reinforce each other. For example, major reforms are recognized as powerful confidence-building measures and may significantly improve the chances of a positive outcome of the peace negotiations. Therefore,

specific peace initiatives or program may include elements of several paths or contribute to specific objectives of more than one path.

The NUC - proposed approach also recognized the dynamism of the peace process, that it involves and shapes situations, even as it must respond to changing situations and contexts of peace and conflict. Thus, it accepted the possibility of, and even encouraged, new initiatives within the six paths, or even developing other paths.

Table 1. Critical Areas for Reform – *Root Causes of Armed Conflict and Social Unrest* – Identified during NUC Public Consultations
1. Massive poverty and structural economic equity, particularly in the distribution of wealth and control of the resource base for livelihood.
2..Structural inequities in the political system, including control by an elite minority, traditional politicians and political dynasties, and enforcement of such control through private armies.
3. Injustice, abuse of those in authority and power, violations of human rights, and inequity and delay in the administration of justice.
4. Poor governance, including lack of basic social services, absenteeism of local officials, corruption and inefficiency in government, and poor implementation of laws.
5. Exploitation/ marginalization of indigenous cultural communities, including lack of respect and recognition of ancestral domain and indigenous legal and political systems.
6. Other identified causes and concerns: ideological differences, foreign intervention, degeneration of moral values, environmental degradation and non-implementation of laws to protect natural resources, the conduct of counterinsurgency campaign, and the continuing hardships experienced by communities in the midst of armed conflict.

As a result of the NUC work and building upon the national, regional and local networks of support it had built, the following SOCIAL REFORM legislation was passed by Congress.

- Integrated Shelter Act (RA 7835)
- Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995
- Anti-Rape Law Act of 1997 (RA 8353)
- Family Courts Act (RA 8369)
- Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (RA 8371)
- Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act (RA 8425)
- Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Act (RA 8435)

The legislation reflects the strength of multi-stakeholder processes in the national reconstruction/unification process. The participation of civil society at ALL levels and sectors -- for example, the women's groups and the religious groups – is crucial in peacebuilding, as is

their capacity to participate. After all, civil society has the information and the capacity to make peace among warring parties and to bring in the "excluded."

The NUC was a statement about, as well as the mechanism for, a sustainable reconciliation process requiring all people of the nation enabled to participate in political decisionmaking, without fear. The electoral process, the protection of minorities, fair sectoral and regional representation , a perceived correction of disparities are policies that sustain such a process.

The Economic Summit and SPEED

In 1993, an Economic Summit was held and participated in by the "basic sectors" – farmers, fisherfolk, urban poor, indigenous peoples, women, youth and disabled led by the Government Peace Team. The major output of the Summit, the Social Pact for Empowered Economic Development (SPEED), embodied the NUC "doables" and agreements reached by government and the various sectors on the priority agenda for development, enunciating their commitment to work together toward economic reform, thus contributing to the peace process reform effort by achieving **multisectoral commitment to reforms.**

 The Social Reform Agenda (SRA)

The government's Social Reform Agenda (SRA) soon followed after the 1993 Economic Summit and a series of "basic sector" dialogues with the President, *to move the process from consultation and dialogue to action and reform*. Designed within the context of the peace effort to provide a unifying and systematic framework for social reform policies and program initiatives for the government, the SRA was also an affirmative action program for the "basic sectors" to balance the government's economic program toward global competitiveness.

Launched in June 1994, after six months of interagency and multi-sectoral consultations, technical workshops and Cabinet-level discussions led by the Government Peace Team, the SRA presented a vision and a program to address the **perceived areas of inequity**, through systematic and coordinated government and private sector action. The SRA reflected and addressed the primary concerns of the most disadvantaged sectors of the Philippine society, through the implementation of the sector-focused and cross-sectoral flagship programs incorporating major policy reforms and program initiatives based on the "basic sectors" and NUC agenda.

The SRA "moved" the consultations forward to action with the following: (1) mainstreaming of the basic sector reform agenda; (2) institutionalization of basic sector representation in policy-making bodies and participation in *all* phases of program development and implementation; (3) creation of a forum for, and mechanism for, dialogue and non-violent resolution of controversial issues; (4) creation of a special Poverty Alleviation Fund; (5) implementation of a Credit-for-the-Poor Program; (6) accelerated implementation of an interim system for delineation of ancestral domain and awarding of Ancestral Domain Claims in anticipation of the passage by Congress of an ancestral domain law; (6) passage of affirmative action and social reform legislation

Indigenous People's Sectoral Agenda

Regional and sectoral summits followed the SRA. One example of such a dialogue was the Sectoral consultations around the Indigenous People's concerns. In 1995, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), supported regional and local congresses and dialogues convened by a core group composed of the President's nominees for IP sectoral representatives to Congress, the Ecumenical Commission for Indigenous Peoples and the National Peace Conference. This process produced consensus on an IP legislative agenda and draft legislation ensuring their rights, including ancestral domain. In 1997, Congress passed the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act.

Local-Level integrated, area-based peace development programs

Local-level integrated, area-based peace and development programs were designed according to the community's own vision of peace. These would vary in geographic coverage from a single community to a region, and in a manner in which various peace paths or elements are prioritized and put together, as determined by the concerned communities.

One such regional endeavor is the Mindanao Peace and Development Initiative (MAPD) which began as a joint government and private sector effort to respond to increasing tensions and violence that threatened to undermine the fragile peace and development in Mindanao in mid-Nineties. Through summits convened by the President himself, the initiative sought to mobilize a Mindanao-wide advocacy for unity and non-violence, and to promote a Mindanao Agenda for Peace and Development (MAPD).

Drafted by a multi-sectoral group of Mindanao peace advocates and submitted for consensus-building in the Summit process, the MAPD affirmed the shared desire for peace and solidarity, articulated the major concerns of sectors, faiths and cultural communities of Mindanao, and included concrete actions/ commitments responding to these concerns.

Guided by the MAPD, various groups pursued their own initiatives in such areas as peace advocacy and education, community-based peace-building, setting up of peace centers and secretariats, LGU-private sector partnership for environment protection and monitoring (such as the Social Compact for Watershed Protection in North Central Mindanao), mediation initiatives in areas identified as flashpoints or potential areas of conflict, peace and development agenda and programs, and tri-people (composed of Muslin, Christian and the indigenous peoples of Mindanao called "lumads") and inter-religious dialogues.

Mindanao peace advocates made significant contributions to the compromise formula that led to the final conclusion of the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement. Thereafter, efforts also focused on addressing public sentiments and concerns about the provisions of the Agreement and the emerging political order in the region, on participation or support for the successful implementation of the terms of the peace agreement, and on propagating a culture of peace in Mindanao through peace education and advocacy.

The Cordillera Peace and Development Framework

In the Cordillera region (north part of Luzon), a Cordillera Peace and Development Framework was put together by Cordillera peace partners through region-wide planning workshops along four major areas: ancestral domain; autonomy; cultural integrity; and healing and reconciliation for ex-combatants returning to their communities.

Within this context, NGO and People's Organizations' efforts aimed at expanding the organized peace constituency and validating the framework, as well as developing provincial and community level peace agenda and programs. For example, consultations and planning workshops of the Kalinga Bodong (peace) Council produced a three-year plan of action, with the "bodong" system providing the framework for community action on critical issues of peace, sustainable and equitable development, governance and economic rehabilitation.

 The Abra Culture of Peace Program, on the other hand, is a holistic program whose components include research on and enhancement of conflict management mechanisms, healing and reconciliation of former combatants, and capability-building. Among its activities are capability-building of organizations of former rebels and workshops on peace and development with tribal councils.

Abra and Cordillera are in the North of Luzon, in Communist insurgency areas .

National Program for Unification and Development

At the same time, the NPUD was also being implemented focusing on the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants and civilian victims of armed conflict. The program provided for the following: a package composed of subsistence allowance (P1,750) for ex-combatants and his family for 30 days; social preparation, including need assessment, profiling to determine preparedness for community life, and counseling; formation and development of cooperatives as a means to achieve empowerment and sustainability of livelihood projects; skills training and capability-building activities; P8,000 livelihood loan for each combatant, which is intended as start-up capital for income-generating activities; and assistance in both cash and kind in exchange for firearms and explosives turned in.

Local peace initiatives (such as those in Path 2) in which communities identified reconciliation and reintegration as critical components such as the one in Abra brought in participation and support from government and NGOs. This was an integrated area-based economic rehabilitation program for and by former rebels from Abra, Kalinga and Mt. Province, in cooperation with the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government, Assisi Development Foundation (private sector) and the Department of Trade and Industry Regional Office. Their indigenous worldview provided their reintegration framework – their social reintegration anchored on traditionally prescribed healing and reconciliation rituals, and their economic activities planned within the framework of protection and sustainable development of their ancestral domain.

COMMUNITY – LED PEACE ZONES , "Sanctuaries of Peace"

Path 2 of the Six Paths to Peace, Consensus-building and empowerment for peace, calls for making people's participation, responsive consultation and consensus-building a regular part of governance, by giving people and communities a voice and a choice on matters that affect their lives, thereby contributing to their empowerment. It means providing support for community peace initiatives on both national and local levels.

Ownership by the local community of social cohesion and conflict avoidance activities supported by sustained political dialogue supported the establishment of the "spaces" and sanctuaries of peace, as stories from the 40+ zones in Mindanao indicate. Government (national, not immediately necessary) with the civil society, with the private sector had provided the "net" for the dialogue to occur with the armed combatants. Bridging the divides that had separated the lumads and Christians and Moros meant not only a territorial joint "take-over" of the community but also "mining" into the communities' shared history through story-telling, searching and finding shared meanings, including those which engender a deep respect for difference and of peace.

In contrast to a SOMO declared by a direct party to the armed conflict, peace zones are declared by communities that ask for armed hostilities to be conducted elsewhere (rather than being suspended). As these communities become "off limits" to armed combatants of all parties, the absence of violence would provide the space for the community to engage in peace building and socio-economic development. Part of the official development assistance which flow into Mindanao's declared and potential peace zones provided support for rehabilitation services,capability building in the conduct of advocacy and mediation to ensure respect for peace zone declarations, for peace building activities and exchanges between peace zones.

How did they start? They started out as "Spaces for Peace." GRP Panel member R. Rodil recounts : *" It was a crazy idea. Helping a war-devastated community back to its feet in the midst of a raging war was an exercise in illogic. But to Ambassador Howard Dee, vice-chair of the Tabang Mindanao* (which is described in another section of this Paper*), it was precisely because of this war that there was a need to put up a symbol, that peace was possible even in war….It was an act of faith."* [Rodil,187]

Soon many other communities would adopt the "crazy" idea and even change the name to "sanctuaries of Peace." Why? It is told that in Dungguan, Limbalod and Inged in Carmen,Cotobato, the largely Muslim population expressed their preference for a name that would resonate with their concept of "Darussalam." Translated to English, "sanctuaries" seemed best fitted. (See Box 1 below).

Rehabilitation and the strengthening of social cohesion then followed. Ceasefire zones became Peace Zones as well.

Did the sanctuaries succeed? Yes. There have been no recorded atrocities committed by any armed groups (AFP and MILF) against the populace in the 40 + Sanctuaries of Peace. There were some community members who expressed skepticism about the program, but in time there

have been marked changes in their attitudes. Participation in community consultations are reported to have dramatically increased. The problems and concerns of the community are collectively discussed and decided while the leaders serve as facilitators. A common vision for a better future dominates any community sharing and discussion. But what better description of satisfaction than these words from one of the community leaders: *"Hindi kami nagkamali sa pagdeklara ng Sanctuary of Peace!"*(We were not mistaken. Our decision to declare our area as a Sanctuary of Peace is right). (Rodil,196)

But how does one sustain the peace zone? ***Makaorao Sarif***, Sultan sa Liangan and regular emissary during settlement processes, believes that to maintain the integrity of the peace zone, the *datus* (tribal leaders) must first of all agree. Every leader must discipline his followers and his subjects. When the datus agree among themselves, it means that they have one motive, which is to find peace for themselves and their followers. Leadership is very important. The leaders and datus' participation is very important to achieve this aim. (Rodil, 200)

From people immobilized by fear and anxiety arising from armed conflict, they were able to dialogue and negotiate with armed combatants and asserted their right to live in peace and dignity. Through their action, they were able to reduce harassment and threats from armed groups.

GRP Panel Member in the GRP-MILF Rodil talks best describes this outcome: *"I am thus inclined to say, after thirty years of study and observation, that the primary problem of our region is relationship; all others like economic and political come as logical consequences or accumulations of the lack of regard for the basic human dignity of the tri-people…" [Rodil, 166].*

Box Ⅰ. What inspired the creation of the Sanctuaries of Peace and what specific steps were taken in the process?

Ben Abadiano, the key organizer of Tabang Mindanaw, said that other communities were inspired by the success of the Nalapaan. But unlike Nalapaan where the Pikit parish and the Tabang Mindanaw played dominant roles, the leaders of other *sitios* and *barangays* were the ones who initiated their adoption of the Sanctuary of Peace concept. The difference in the major processes is important here. Nalapaan started by negotiating with the protagonists, the AFP and the MILF; their declaration of peace and formal launching came several months later. The case of the forty-three (43) was different.

The process starts with the formulation of a written Peace Declaration or Agreement by the community in their own language as a first step. Declaring their territory a Sanctuary of Peace, they also articulated their appeal to all armed groups not to engage combat within their space; that concerned agencies work with their cooperation for the full development of the community; and that certain practices for the promotion of peace be followed by those who reside in or simply visit the area. They made sure that everyone contributed in the articulation.

In instances where Lumad and Moro inhabitants had a long history of relationship, they would recall those times in the past where there were no prolonged conflicts, animosity and land disputes between their groups. This collective memory of a harmonious past served as the framework in their formulation of contemporary relationships. On the whole, the content of the agreements varies from area to area

because of the differences in local contexts. **What is constant in all cases, however, is the burning desire for peace and the commitment of local people to achieve it.** There was also a conscious effort to adopt the tri-people perspective where applicable.

Second step was Peace Dialogue and Negotiation with the AFP and the MILF. This was done at three levels. At the national level, Tabang Mindanaw officials facilitated the meeting between the AFP-Department of National Defense (DND) and the church partners of the Program as represented by the Bishop of the concerned communities. The areas which had been declared as Sanctuaries of Peace were identified and the military was asked that these *barangays* be recognized as such; the demands and requests of the people were also presented, and the top brass of the military were asked to inform their filed officers so that they would cooperate at the local level.

At the local level, the leaders of the concerned communities met with the local commanders of the AFP; Tabang Mindanaw, its church partners and other NGOs and Pos operating in the area, were present. The leaders presented their Declaration to the military and articulated their demands. The output of the meeting was an agreement between the two parties that the Declaration be recognized and that their obligations in the course of its enforcement be fulfilled.

The third level of negotiation was with the MILF to seek its recognition of the contents of the Declaration and their commitment to respect it.

Step three was community consultation and planning. But before this, a healing session was deemed necessary, consisting of recollection and processing of past tensions and differences, especially those triggered by the recent wars. Once psychological baggage had been removed, a visioning activity followed whereby they would visualize what kind of a community they wished to have. Then planning was done in accordance with the six program components.
In step four or implementation, the communities operated within existing structures, whether traditional or modern or a combination of both. Through mutual help, members of the community were and are also rebuilding their relationships.

Step five, monitoring and evaluation, is done regularly at least once a month. Step six or expansion and replication in other areas usually follows as a voluntary choice from other communities.

(Rodil,pp. 193-195}

It would be this kind of leadership and a deep sense of shared history and a deeper desire for a better future that would allow for Kauswagan to achieve another form of a Sanctuary of Peace. Through *Pakigdait ug Pag-uuma sa Kalinaw.* Below is the story of Kauswagan (as recounted by the GRP Panel Member R. Rodil in the GRP negotiations with the MILF) :

> *Like fourteen other towns, mostly along the coasts of Lanao del Norte, Kauswagan has experienced bloody clashes between Muslim Maranao and Visayan Christian settlers. The worst was in 1971 when the entire year from January to December was accentuated with massacres, indiscriminate killings on both sides, ambuscades, burning of homes, even kidnapping. Mindanao Scoop, a local newspaper recorded a total of seventy-nine incidents along the eleven Christian-dominated coastal towns. … These events have created an environment of mutual animosity and mutual distrust between the two major segments of the population. The MILG*

occupation of the Kauswagan town hall was merely an icing in the cake, as it were, and served to re-open old wounds.

Old friends could not look each other in the eye afterwards and find the same trusting look. It was within this climate that some hardy souls, Muslims and Christians, mostly old-timers, drew their determination to re-think their situation and go out of their way to revive the good old days, not thirty years ago but even earlier, when Muslims and Christians of Kauswagan treated each other like brothers and sisters.

A few months after the outbreak of the all-out war, an attempt was made for a meeting between old-timers at a neutral venue in Iligan City. It did not work. The Christians who said yes earlier did not bother to show up. When queried later, they admitted that they did not feel the trust they used to have for Muslims. It would take a full year of incubation before a breakthrough of an idea could be made. This was when Pakigdait or, spelled out Pakigdait ug Pag-uuma sa Kalinaw was born. Religious leaders and old-timers on both sides formed the core.

In Cebuano Bisaya, pakigdait is not just a word, it is a gesture that carries a deep social significance. It means going out of one's way to be one with the other in the latter's moments of joy, sadness, work, play and so on. Pag-amuma is to nurture or care for. Kalinaw means peace or tranquility as in deep, clear body of water. So, the whole phrase would mean "uniting with one another in nurturing peace." With this, they did not have to call themselves a peace zone.

On the anniversary of the MILF capture of the town hall, two separate rallies convened, one to celebrate the town's survival and recovery, the other to deplore the event of the previous year. That was a good beginning for the peace advocates. In June 2001, Pakigdait adopted a Five-year Peace-building Program for the Municipality of Kauswagan. The goal was to facilitate healing and reconciliation in the municipality. The first year was for the mobilization of the religious groups, local government unit, civil society organizations and the young people, regarded as the four strategic pillars their work. They have special reasons for anchoring their peace-building work on these four pillars. The local government has a crucial role in crafting policies that would promote peace in the municipality. As a starter, th Sangguniang Bayan of Kauswagan passed a resolution declaring 17-21 March as the "Kauswagan Week of Peace".

Through slow meticulous work, two inter-religious assemblies were organized in 2001, and a peace summit was assembled in March 2002. In all these activities, the officials of the municipality actively participated. A loose federation was also established among the three neighboring towns of Kauswagan, Linamon and Bacolod. Assisting them were Davao-based CO Multiversity, specialist in capability building and the Local Government Support Program of Canadian Aid. Other funding and peace-oriented NGOs have also thrown in their funding assistance, CAFOD, VSO-TOSCADAR and Catholic Relief Service.

From all indications, it seems that the future of Kauswagan will be brighter and more peaceful. (Rodil,201-203)

Concluding Thoughts

First, a "violent past" or deep social cleavage need not preclude a people or community from taking on the work of peace – building. The idea of peace-building germinates and grows when and where the people are ready for it. Even if the initial concepts are introduced from the outside, the people who feel the need readily make it on their own and go on from there. A shared sense of history and a shared desire for a future provide the means to get past the "cleavage." The Kauswagan process highlights the transformation that occurs and the potential for violent conflict to recur. *Peace-building requires major changes in moral values. This is where the religious leaders can play a significant role. The civil society organizations, too, can initiate, as they have already done and still do, in the enhancement of the participation of the people in any peace-related activities in the community. Finally, by investing in the youth, the vicious cycle of violence, among others, can be checked and a new generation of relationship can be molded. Hand in hand with the young are the women, who as mothers have the natural inclination to nurture a life of peace in their children.[Rodil,203]*

Second, the people - the Lumad, Moro and Christian settlers - need not wait for top level negotiations between GRP and MNLF or GRP and MILF to come to terms. They know what kind of peace they want and they have proven that they can agree among themselves within the community.

Third, the self-sustaining energy that drives the zone forward flows from within. In the same token, self-regulation is an important ingredient initiating and sustaining a peace zone or a sanctuary of peace or a peace pact or *pakigdait*. But vigilance is also important as a constant demonstration of the stakeholders' political will.

Fourth, under the present circumstances, when external forces (mainly the protagonists in the war, the AFP and the MILF) remain a threat to its stability, recognition of and support from both protagonists and the civilian government is a must. Recognition by the national government is desired <u>but not immediately necessary</u>. As a member of the Bituan sanctuary said: "They had strength, they had security if they move in concert, not as individuals."

Fifth, relationship of equality, **respect for differences** among the tri-people of Mindanao takes primacy in creating a new Mindanao. The peace zones or peace pact area or the spaces for peace or sanctuaries of peace have demonstrated that such a relationship can be coaxed from the ashes of war. "*There is concealed deep within each of us a vast store of goodwill. Tickle it to the surface and a new Mindanawon shall be born, three stones supporting a single cooking pot that is Mindanao.*"[Rodil]

Multi-Stakeholder /Sectoral Activities

Multi-stakeholder and sectoral activities – as part of peace education and advocacy --- supported the process. In November 2000, a Mindanao Tripartite Youth Congress (composed of thirty

members each from the Christian descendants of settlers, Muslims and Lumads (Indigenous peoples) at Initao, Misamis Oriental, conceived among themselves a historic decision. Let us, they said, put a halt to this history , and make a new one, where we the peoples of Mindanao, will decide how we should relate to one another. (R. Rodil ,p. 183,)

This is exactly what has been happening since 1996. Never in the history of Mindanao has there been so many peace advocates, both individuals and NGOs that have been drawn deeply into this transformation. Consciously, they propagate they cultivate the culture of peace among the tri-people in assemblies, seminars and forums organized for the purpose. Some actually did peace-building work : peace zones as in Maladeg, Tulunan, and Bual; "space for peace" as in Nalapaan; "peace pact" as in Dungos; sanctuaries of peace like those being organized by Tabang Mindanaw ; "Sindaw Ka Kalintad (Flame for Peace), being assisted by an NGO; or simply a conscious tri-people arrangement as in Dinas, Zamboangadel Sur where community members pledge to help each other in times of need.

Some institutions focus mainly on dialogue, others on formal peace education. Churches and educational institutions usually go for a combination of formal and informal processes. In short, we have a Mindanao where more and more people and institutions, not yet enough, are into what may be called peace process at the people's level, thus contributing consciously to the overall effort to create a culture of peace in Mindanao.

Two institutions specialize on the young: Kids for Peace and Children of Peace Philippines. The former was founded in 2000 by a twelve year old girl then in the middle of the all-out war against the separatists. The latter was founded by a School Principal in Quezon City (close to Manila). While Manila based, it had conducted 14 peace seminars in the last 9 years in Mindanao.

The eight-year old Bishops–Ulama forum had changed the last word into "Conference", to reflect the shift from largely inter-religious interfaith dialogue to socio-economic activities. It has also sustained its investment in the future with culture of peace seminars among the youth. It has opened the way for the organization of the now very active Ustadz Priests Pastors Imams Forum (UPPIF) in the province of Cotobato.

TABANG MODEL: Multi-Stakeholder Program

The Tabang Mindanaw case presents a successful private sector–civil society-government (and media as well) collaboration, that transformed the Mindanao communities. And in so doing, it transformed itself as well. Tabang Mindanaw started out as a response to the food crisis in Mindanao in 1998 caused by the El Nino phenomenon that had brought hunger and deprivation to some 900,000 families in Mindanao.

The initial campaign raised over 93 million pesos and facilitated rice rations to help more than 255,000 families or 1.5 million persons, mostly *lumads*, survive the heavy drought months. Grains of rice were transformed into grains of life and hope. It also provided medical assistance to more than 60,000 individuals. The crisis that moved Tabang Mindanaw to be organized brought "reality" to the Filipino mainstream society's table: hunger is a constant threat to

lumads; for their long-term survival, the lumad families can no longer depend on the fast diminishing forest resources for their sustenance.

The project required sustained local consultations and dialogue to ensure its efficient implementation and continuing refinements to sharpen the project's responsiveness. Following these consultations and dialogue, Tabang was able to build local alliances, specifically with the Indigenous People (IP) desks and Social Action Centers of the Catholic Dioceses in Mindanao, to launch a long-term food security program through the practice of sustainable agriculture, complemented by basic services delivery (i.e. functional literacy, community-based health program and water systems development). Their implementation, slowly drawing in the communities to run and own the program themselves, transformed the program into a venue for cohesion among the stakeholders who in turn are empowered. The experience also deepened Tabang's approach to the problem : a more integrated sustainable development program of the indigenous peoples upholding their cultural integrity and human security.

In 2000, the armed conflict between the government military forces and the MILF escalated claiming the lives of thousands of civilians and displacing thousands more from their homes. Harnessing the established alliance in the area, Tabang launched an emergency response program (ERP) to meet the urgent appeal for help for thousands of internally-displaced persons (IDPs) mainly in Central Mindanao. Tabang brought in other business and civil society groups, including international funding agencies, in putting-up the empowered local communities' various programs to address the multifaceted problems: Integrated Emergency Health Management Program; Integrated Return and Rehabilitation Program; Medical and Health Program; Mindanao Emergency Response Network; and the Integrated Return and Rehabilitation Program.
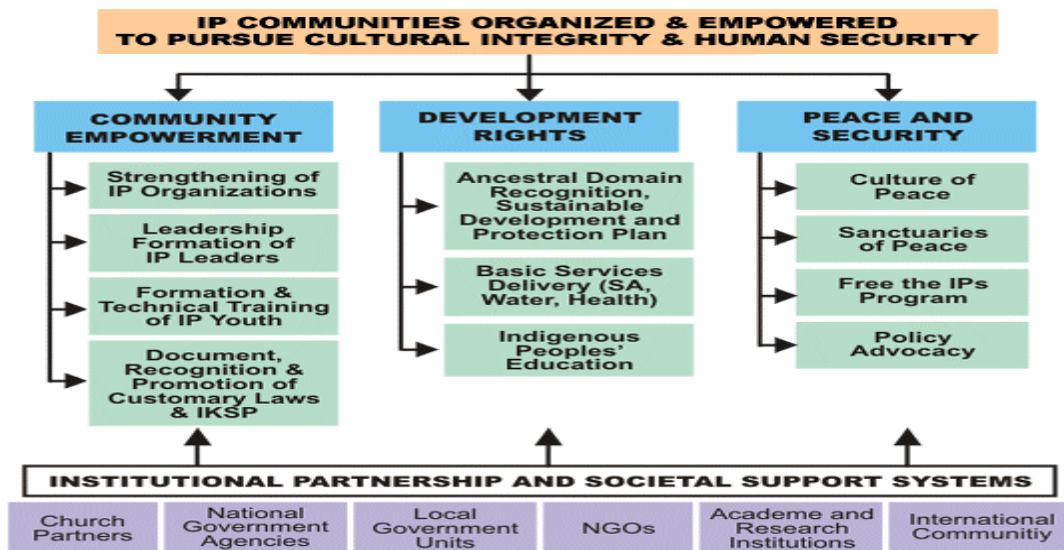
During the conflict, many left Mindanao. The diaspora had started during the martial law. Several months ago, the Malaysian government announced the deportation of the undocumented Filipinos, many of whom had gone there because of the war. Tabang brought them into its field of hope.

Tabang Mindanao III's Peace and Development Program is being launched in order to respond to the long term and more sustainable peace and development needs of the impoverished communities and marginalized sectors in the three poorest provinces of the country in Mindanao: Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi (BASULTA) in ARMM.

PAGTABANGAN BA-SUL-TA Model

This Program is the joint effort of initially ten private sector organizations to engage and support local leaders and multisectoral constituents of the provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi (BA-SUL-TA) in developing sustainable interventions to the problems of poverty, conflict and marginalization in the region. These organizations include the AIM (Asian Institute of Management--Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides; Consuelo Foundation; Philippines-Canada Development Local Government Support Program; Philippine Business for Social Progress; Philippine Development Assistance Program; Petron Foundation; Tabang Mindanaw; and WWF Philippines. The consortium is not exclusive and aims to expand its network of partners and is willing to engage in collaborative action for human security in the region with its institutional partners playing the lead role.

Pagtabangan BaSulTa was borne out of a series of discussions, which started in July 2004, convened by Tabang Mindanao and the Assisi Development Foundation, together with the AIM-Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides and the Synergos Institute. The group first met to review the findings of a study on human security and governance situation in Basulta, by the Ateneo Research Center of the Ateneo de Zamboanga University. Taking off from the co-ownership of the problems, the group agreed to undertake a *collective* response to the situation that will build on existing programs and initiatives currently undertaken in the provinces. Subsequent meetings and discussions led to the adoption of a Human Security Framework, the engagement process and an interim tasking of roles and responsibilities.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1.Making the Start and Commitment**.** Any form of dialogue or processes aimed at strengthening social cohesion, accelerating rehabilitation and reconciliation will need to address the "roots" of the armed conflict. Thus, the call for justice-based development. Communities and groups must, for themselves, think and interpret together what is truth, mercy and justice. Dialogue, therefore, in its many forms, must bring the communities into engaging at all levels.

A social transformation agenda that recognizes structural and systemic obstacles (such as the NUC agenda) to social integration is paramount in moving an understanding of the social integration process beyond dialogue. While local conversations are most necessary, higher levels of communication, cooperation and positive working relationships among the government, NGO, private sector and intergovernmental sectors need also to focus on addressing the "roots" of conflict.

Signing the agreement and implementing it are two separate components of the process. The latter does not automatically resolve all the cleavages as achieving lasting peace, especially the healing, reconciliation and resolution of deep seated cleavages in society, is a long, difficult and multi-level process. Social integration and peace-building processes do not end with the signing of the peace agreement. Violent conflict can recur, as it has done, should the "ground" remain cold and hard . As experience has borne out, participatory dialogue and changes in the causes of the "pain" may bring the spiritual healing as well to bring reconciliation.

The common tradition of tolerance, acceptance, and respect for other cultures and communities provide our people hope, and the basis for change and the transformation of society we seek as a nation. Sanctuaries were opened by the "old" members of the communities of the tri-people sharing their recollection of the time they all lived peacefully with each other. The reservoir of good will and a shared sense of what a future might look , given a past marked by such traditions have allowed the dialogues to be sustained through the different phases of the conflict.

It is also important to understand different phases of conflict and adjust the right mix of dialogue and reconciliation processes and mechanisms.

2. Ownership of the Process. The primary task after the signing of the peace agreement is deepening of the ownership of the accord on the stakeholders in the community. No settlement of the political, social, cultural and religious cleavages is possible when major parties and stakeholders in the community are alienated. The owning process involves more than the signatories of or the parties they represent in the agreement. The accord needs to find a home in the hearts and minds of the people in the community. Involvement and participation of the people, including the local government units and the civil society, in the owning process is a must for achieving social integration, if not a minimal sense of coexistence. This is true in the examples of the sanctuaries of peace where the search for common ground, the work to forge a n inclusive arrangement, and the humility required to accept reconciliation may be more forthcoming at the LOCAL levels, or on the "ground."

The growing civil society-led movement for peace in Mindanao, major sections of which have adopted the human security framework, is unique to this process. If a "political and lasting solution to this Bangsamoro problem" can be found with "respect for the identity, culture and aspiration of all peoples in Mindanao , then the GRP-MILF peace negotiations can then embrace the broader peace process as well as the fight against terrorism here.

Related to ownership, capacity building and skills training in the processes with the stakeholders in their own and across communities provide more effective results to address the community's "divides", including the pain and anger of "history." Changing the "history" will require courage and energy, as Muslim Christian and B'laan youth and women set up the "bridges" for understanding and consequently, cohesion and reconciliation.

3. The Right Information. Basic to the owning process is the information dissemination on the agreement, or non-agreement to the peoples of the southern Philippines and the progress (non-progress) being achieved in the peace negotiations. People in the GRP and in the MNLF apparently have differing understanding of the agreement. Bureaucrats in government line agencies and MNLF field commanders are alike on the details of the transitional phase of the implementation in this case. Worse, the general public in the southern Philippines does not have proper information on the peace agreement. People are divided on the issue of the Special Zone for Peace and Development or SZOPAD and the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCD) without fully understanding their meaning. The "ground" today, however, both in Mindanao and the Filipino mainstream society, are better prepared in understanding and living within the spirit of a possible MILF agreement.

The basic lack of information and proliferation of information and wild notions about the final peace agreement and its transitional mechanisms has exacerbated the cleavages in the Southern Philippines. It is tragic that in an age characterized by major advances in information technology, little time and few resources have been invested in an information campaign about the accord among the stakeholders in the Southern Philippines and in the national government. It is tragic and revealing that, seven years after the historic signing of the final peace accord, the country's legislators confess that they have yet to read it. *[Mercado]*.

4. Bridges. The cleavages in the Southern Philippines are not only very real but also emotional and passionate. The divide is historical as well as real. The suspicion, fear and even hostility are deeply rooted in history. The roots of misunderstanding are also found in the very psyches of two faith cultures and worlds. This legacy is still very much alive, and it continues to enslave present-day consciousness that prevents Christians and Muslims from embarking on a new relationship of trust and relationship.

There is an urgent need to bridge the communities through programs of rehabilitation, reconciliation, reconstruction, and healing. This does not only simply refer to material rehabilitation, indemnification, reconstruction, and healing of physical wounds. What runs deeper is the psychological, emotional, cultural and religious "woundedness" and alienation brought about by war traumas and the politics of separatism. Unless this divide is squarely addressed, the integration process will always fall short. There is no way of shoving the dirt under the rug.

5. Stakeholders. Peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding constitute a process. That process must continue, for the sake of peace, and it must involve **all** stakeholders. The key words for stakeholders are involvement, participation, responsibility, accountability and transparency. They must be responsible for, or at least feel responsible for, charting the peace journey. Above all, their demands for accountability and transparency in both governance and the stewardship of the assistance funds must be addressed.   The Sanctuaries of Peace testify to the need for inclusivity for communities to start to live together and work out their futures together.

6. Visionary leadership. Resources will always be limited. The journey will always be difficult. Casting off old paradigms is not easy. When everything is said and done, the peace process needs visionary leaders and stewards who can lead and inspire. A shared powerful vision of change that would bring development, security, democratisation in an integrated and holistic manner is needed for all, not exclusively for one group or sector. It is a vision that can be a basis for a new pact – a real partnership working toward rehabilitation and reconstruction not only of the economy and the physical infrastructure but also of communities. Leadership must be visionary as well as focused on achieving a collaborative problem-solving spirit to energize the dialogue and work of change at the different levels.

More than a vision, leadership is the collective art form for a group or system to create collectively. [*Douglas*] The dialogue processes used at the NUC and Mindanao sanctuaries of peace (which include rites and symbols of tradition) sought to open such "fields of creation." Related to this, our grassroots peace builders must be supported by the other sectors of this society to aspire not just for coexistence but for reconciliation, collaboration and cohesion.

7. Relationships. Focus must be on RELATIONSHIPS. Space for a community to work on this must be provided, even in armed conflict. A process like a dialogue can help us see to see that there are aspects of all of us in each one of us: I am in the world, and the world in is in me. What is needed to day is more than individual transformation , but a shift of a completely different order : a process of dialogue that can help individuals experience firsthand the degree to which the world is in them and how responsible they are for their experience. The challenges people face in organizations and in communities are not merely personal, but they are systemic – in a way they are everywhere and nowhere. We share much more than we might realize or like to admit; we share a common ecology or network of thought. [Isaacs, 153].

Training and capacity-building (dialogue, mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms, for example) must be provided even before interventions are implemented.

8. Dialogue processes act as a "safe" container that is jointly owned and shared by all participants in a climate of mutual respect; conditions that sustain listening and participation ("leveling" of the ground that requires that one not act in an official role); production of a common text that anyone can edit; a focus on interests, not positions, both of which support suspension and reflection; and the creative brainstorming of options in a climate where no one can be quoted without permission, to encourage the speaking of one's voice." --- such gatherings bring out new or shared meanings. *[Isaacs,373]* The sanctuaries of peace, both old and new ones, form a network of associates, a "container" deliberately nurtured for years. This

is essential for difficult regional and national problems, a way to bridge differences. Such "associates" have the resilience to "hold steady" amid rising tensions and include others in their individual and collective thinking.

10. Stages of conflict or post-conflict situation are not always progressive or linear. There may be movement back and forth across the stages with cross-cultural differences significantly affecting dialogic approaches most suitable to local contexts.

Dialogue and multi-stakeholder processes are indispensable to peace-building and the journey to a "transformed society."

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