

Philippines: 8th Mindanao Peoples' Peace Summit Declaration on Inclusive and People-Centered Peace Processes, Economy, Environment and Human Rights

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We, the three hundred sixty nine (369) grassroots human rights and peace advocates coming from the tri-people communities in mainland Mindanao and the island provinces of Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi gathered for the 8th Mindanao Peoples' Peace Summit at the Southern Christian College, Midsayap, North Cotabato from December 15-19, 2016, with the theme "Rekindling our Conviction for the Realization of a People-Centered, Just and Inclusive Society";

Mindful that the tri-peoples of Mindanao are now in a critical juncture with various challenges confronting us. For the first time in the history of the Philippines, we have a President from Mindanao. This has brought a renewed hope to us peoples in Mindanao who always felt behind in development from the rest of the country. With this renewed hope, we also feel the great responsibility to be more involved in shaping the programs and policies that the present administration will undertake that are more responsive to the needs and aspirations especially with our diverse and distinct peoples of Mindanao;

Recalling the positive developments in the peace negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the past years as we actively participated at all levels of said peace process. However, this was not carried through as the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) was not passed into law, thus, leaving the peoples of Mindanao in apprehension as we pinned our hopes in the culmination of the said process. This made us realize that we have to rekindle our commitment in strengthening our campaigns for a people-centered, just and inclusive society;

Acknowledging the present opportunities and challenges brought by the resumption of peace negotiations between the Government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). This development provides opportunity for the tri-people of Mindanao to engage the process and bring their concerns on the peace tables of the government and the NDFP;

Cognizant to the fact that trades and investments in the Philippines and the rest of the world are

always in favour of the economic elites but often impacts the lives of the majority. Trades and investments do not only concern economics but also shaped politics resulting to the huge gap between the rich and the poor, destruction of the environment, alienation of peoples from their communities, and pitted them against each other. Moreover, many of these trades and investments are monocrop agri-plantations, and extractive and exploitative in nature that caused the fast depletion of our finite natural resources. These also heightened human rights violations as militarization intensifies locally and internationally as global powers compete for dominance;

Seriously aware of the deteriorating state of our planet as manifested by extreme weather conditions leading to natural disasters like floods, long drought, strong and violent typhoons that caused famines, displacements, conflicts over scarce resources and deaths. Climate change impacts greatly the poor and vulnerable communities and sectors particularly women, children, the elderly and the indigenous peoples;

Conscious that landlessness has been an issue hounding the peasants, farmers, rural poor and indigenous peoples over the decades despite the law on agrarian reform and the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA). In the pursuance of their land claims, many were prevented and delayed by conflicting land laws and policies and harassed by landowners and agri-business corporations. Aside from the dispossession of their lands, traditional seeds, indigenous skills and knowledge, many have lost their lives in the defense of their land and ancestral domains;

Deeply concerned of the worsening climate of impunity in the country as manifested in the rising number of extra-judicial killings everyday as the government waged its war on illegal drugs. We are supportive of the campaign against illegal drugs, however, due process and rule of law should be observed and the human rights of every citizen should be respected at all times. Human life and dignity should be valued. Further, the government's militarist approach in resolving national security issues has the tendency to violate human rights;

With the above-mentioned premises, the general assembly hereby declare the following calls:

A. PEACE PROCESSES

1. Ensure genuinely inclusive processes where peoples and communities are involved and represented at all levels. Peoples' and community consultations and participation in the peace processes shall be institutionalized;
2. Genuine representation of IPs in the peace negotiations through IP representatives selected by the IPs themselves. To this end, a grassroots-led Independent IP Voice is strongly endorsed by this general assembly that should be recognized by the Government and revolutionary organizations currently undertaking peace negotiations. The Independent IP Voice should be mainstreamed at all stages of these processes;
3. For all progressive groups to stop using indigenous persons and communities in their activities such as rallies and mobilizations without their full knowledge and understanding of the nature of the activity;
4. For the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and revolutionary groups to cease and desist from recruiting civilians, especially indigenous peoples used as red bagani which put their security and lives at risk as well as cause deep mistrust and division in their communities;
5. For the Bangsamoro Fronts and armed groups (e.g BIFF) to unify their position pertaining to the

realization of their right to self-determination (RSD);

6. Increase participation and representation of women in the peace processes; and

7. For the government to lead the massive consultation and education on Federalism to provide the people a more informed and intelligent decision in charting their political future.

B. ECONOMY and SOCIAL REFORMS

1. For the government to adopt an economic framework that is people-centered, environmentally sound and sustainable. Promote sustainable ecological agriculture to bring back the life of the environment while at the same time address the issue of food insecurity;

2. Full implementation and strict compliance of land laws i.e., IPRA, CARP to respond to the problem of land dispossession and avoid conflicts among different claimants and communities;

3. Strengthened free, prior and informed consent thru consultations and dialogues in communities before any development projects will be implemented;

4. Respect IP's traditional knowledge, culture, systems and practices;

5. Develop local economy to increase work opportunities and lessen dependence on labor exportation; and

6. End to labor contractualization scheme, improve working condition and increase worker's salaries and benefits.

C. ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE JUSTICE

1. For the government to shift from extractive industries and fossil-dependent energy source to alternative and community-managed enterprise and energy sources;

2. For the government to break from coal-fired power plants, mega dams and hydro-power complexes, and other aggressive development projects that are detrimental to the health, physical well-being, security of the communities and to the environment; and

3. Demand reparation and damages for the environmental destruction and degradation caused by mining, logging operations, large agri-business plantations and other aggressive and destructive development projects.

D. HUMAN RIGHTS and SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. The government as the duty bearer has the obligation to promote and protect the human rights of its citizens. In its campaign against illegal drugs, due process and rule of law should be followed and upheld at all times. The securitization of the illegal drug issue such as Oplan Double Barrel in addressing the illegal drugs problems has been proven to be ineffective thus, the roots of drug addiction such as poverty and corruption should be addressed;

2. Demands for justice to all victims of extra-judicial killings and human rights violations including those who perished from the government's drug war and all human rights and environment defenders;

3. Public officials should respect women at all times and enforce laws that protect women and children.

E. SOLIDARITY of STRUGGLES

1. Understand the implications of global militarization in relation to the peace and security situation of the country;
2. Intensify campaign for the total abolition of nuclear weapons and projects;
3. Clearly define the foreign policy of the country especially on security and economy that promotes regional cooperation among countries and peoples reflective to their hopes and aspirations;
4. Protect and promote the welfare and well-being of climate refugees worldwide.

MPPM as a grassroots movement consistently and persistently advocated for the realization of peoples' right to self-determination. It has provided spaces and platforms for exchanges and open discourses to widen and deepen the understanding of the peoples' struggles. It has served as a space for movement of movements for sixteen years to build solidarity among and between these struggles and movements. With these we acknowledge all the other grassroots, national and international movements who journeyed with us and accompany us over the years and the years to come.
