

**JOINT STATEMENT
ON THE SUCCESSFUL FOURTH ROUND OF FORMAL TALKS
BETWEEN THE GRP AND NDFP IN NOORDWIJK AAN ZEE, THE NETHERLANDS
April 6, 2017**

The Negotiating Panels of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), together with their respective delegations of negotiating bodies, consultants, advisers, resource persons, cooperators and staff held the fourth round of formal talks in Noordwijk aan Zee, The Netherlands from April 3 to 6, 2017. The fourth round was facilitated by the Royal Norwegian Government (RNG), in cooperation with the Dutch Government.

At the opening ceremonies on April 3, RNG Special Envoy to the Philippine Peace Process Elisabeth Slåtsum welcomed the two delegations. She commended the two Parties for their determination to move the peace process forward after a brief impasse in February and March and reiterated the commitment and continuing support of the RNG to the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

She congratulated both Panels and President Duterte for working through a tough crisis, and for showing perseverance, courage and genuine commitment to the achievement of peace for the benefit of the Filipino people.

The opening statements of the two Parties were made by the following: GRP OPAPP Secretary Jesus G. Dureza, NDFP Chief Political Consultant Prof. Jose Maria Sison, GRP Negotiating Panel Chairperson Silvestre H. Bello III and NDFP Negotiating Panel Chairperson Fidel V. Agcaoili.

Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Secretary Dureza hailed the Fourth Round of Formal Talks, saying that, "This is the farthest point that we have already achieved in our negotiations with the CPP-NPA-NDF." He noted that the Parties are "sharing common values and common aspirations for a better Philippines."

In his opening statement, Professor Sison expressed optimism that within this year, it is possible for the GRP and NDFP Negotiating Panels to forge and sign the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) and the consequent joint ceasefire agreement. He said that in reading and studying the drafts of the proposed agreements from the GRP and NDFP and the comparative matrices, he observed that there are enough concurrences and similar positions as common ground for forging the agreements. He stressed, however, that as a matter of principle, CASER should be a step ahead of the joint ceasefire agreement, unless these agreements can be signed at the same time by the Panels and then by the principals.

On the part of GRP Panel Chairperson Secretary Bello, he said that all negotiations, as in other peace processes elsewhere, are all about finding common ground in diversity.

[Handwritten signatures and initials in blue ink, including 'JG', 'FV', 'S', 'Bello', 'Sison', 'Dureza', and others.]

He stressed that forging a ceasefire agreement is not about giving in or giving up, it is about giving all for peace.

NDFP Panel Chairperson Agcaoili shared Professor Sison's positive views and reiterated the wisdom of securing the approval of the CASER ahead of any single joint ceasefire agreement, unless both agreements could be signed simultaneously. He said that the issue of ceasefire should not be pursued as an end in itself and that ceasefires, whether unilateral, bilateral or joint, are just a means to an end. Their main purpose is to create conditions conducive to reaching agreements on basic reforms that are satisfactory to both sides.

On Implementation of CARHRIHL and JASIG

The NDFP asked about the status of the complaints it submitted to the GRP during the Third Round in Rome in January. The GRP responded by saying that it has already forwarded the complaints to the concerned government agencies and is awaiting further developments. Both Parties submitted an additional set of complaints to their respective counterparts. They pledged to continue investigating the complaints submitted to them.

The NDFP submitted a formal letter of protest regarding the incident of surveillance and harassment on March 16, 2017, directed at NDFP Panel Member Benito E. Tiamzon, Political Consultant Wilma A. Tiamzon and a Legal Consultant.

On Release of NDFP Listed Prisoners

Pursuant to the Utrecht Joint Statement of March 11, 2017, the GRP Panel facilitated the release of rearrested NDFP consultant Ariel Arbitrario (also known as Edgar Arbitrario), enabling his participation in the Fourth Round.

The GRP reported that the Presidential Committee on Bail, Recognizance or Pardon (PCBReP) Secretariat has reviewed the status of 23 NDFP listed prisoners, 19 of whom (including 3 consultants) have been recommended for conditional pardon to the PCBReP.

Regarding the release of the rest of the prisoners, both parties committed to continue exploring all expeditious and acceptable legal modes for their release in consonance with all previous Oslo and Rome Joint Statements.

The NDFP reiterated that the bail of consultants and other JASIG-protected persons participating in the peace negotiations must subsist for the entire duration of the peace negotiations. The GRP will assist in the release of the two (2) consultants recently arrested.

The GRP will consider the concerns raised by the NDFP about the situations and welfare of the prisoners in Philippine jails.

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On Results of the Proceedings of the RWCs-SER

The Reciprocal Working Committees on Social and Economic Reforms (RWCs-SER) firmed up their agreement on distribution of land for free as the basic principle of genuine agrarian reform. This is the main message of the bilateral meeting of the RWCs-SER and an achievement of the Fourth Round of Talks.

Both Parties agreed to accelerate the process of concluding a Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER). The RWCs-SER exchanged their respective comparative color-coded matrices identifying the contentious provisions and those that are acceptable in principle in the NDFP and GRP drafts.

The RWCs-SER identified the contentious provisions in the NDFP and GRP drafts under Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ARRD) and clustered them into nine major topics: coverage, confiscation, compensation, lease/leaseback and plantations, international agreements/domestic law, political power/implementation mechanisms, land use, private insurance, and terminologies.

The RWCs-SER held initial discussions on the contentious provisions of the ARRD drafts. The RWCs-SER agreed to convene Bilateral Teams as defined in the Ground Rules agreed to during the Third Round of Talks. The teams will be composed of three (3) members each and supervised by RWC-SER members to work on the sections on the ARRD and National Industrialization and Economic Development (NIED). The bilateral teams agreed to hold meetings in Metro Manila, Philippines, or in any venue mutually agreed upon by the Parties.

The Parties agreed to the following schedules:

April 18, 2017 – Exchange of comments on the contentious provisions of the ARRD drafts;

April 20, 2017 – Meeting of the ARRD bilateral teams;

April 22, 2017 – Meeting of the editing team to reconcile the draft minutes of the Third Round of RWCs-SER bilateral meetings.

May 2, 2017 – Exchange of comments on the contentious provisions of the NIED drafts;

May 4, 2017 – Meeting of the NIED bilateral teams;

May 19, 2017 – Submission of reports of the bilateral teams to the RWCs-SER;

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– The GRP committed to submit to the NDFP their comparative color-coded matrices on Environmental Protection and Rights of the Working People and Livelihoods;

May 20, 2017 – Exchange of draft minutes of the Fourth Round of the RWCs-SER bilateral meetings.

In the next round of formal talks, the RWCs-SER shall discuss the remaining items under Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (Part IV), National Industrialization and Economic Development (Part V), Environmental Protection, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Part VI), and the outputs of the bilateral teams.

On Ceasefire

A significant step forward was achieved with the Parties signing an Agreement on an Interim Joint Ceasefire (Annex A). The Interim Joint Ceasefire aims to provide a conducive environment for the GRP and the NDFP negotiations, encourage the forging of a more stable and comprehensive Joint Ceasefire Agreement and provide an enabling environment for the eventual and early signing of CASER.

For this purpose, the two (2) Parties directed their respective Ceasefire Committees to discuss, formulate and finalize the guidelines and ground rules for the implementation of the Agreement, including rules governing the presence of armed units and elements of both Parties in local communities, the creation of buffer zones, the prohibition of hostile and provocative acts, and ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanisms.

The Interim Joint Ceasefire Agreement shall take effect upon the approval and signing of the ground rules, and shall be effective until a permanent ceasefire agreement is forged as part of the Comprehensive Agreement on End of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces.

Matters pertaining to a single governmental authority and taxation shall be discussed and resolved as part of the Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms within the framework of the proposed Federal Republic of the Philippines.

On Release of AFP and PNP elements in NPA Custody

The two (2) Parties agreed to undertake the measures necessary to effect the immediate, safe and expeditious release of AFP and PNP elements held captive by the NPA in Eastern Mindanao, with the captives held in SOCSKSARGEN to be released before Easter and those in Bukidnon and CARAGA after Easter.

On Socio-Economic Projects

To give flesh to the Joint Agreement in Support of Socio-Economic Projects for Private Development Organizations and Institutes, both Parties agreed to endorse the proposal

of Sowing the Seeds of Peace in Mindanao and the Mindanao People's Movement for a Just and Lasting Peace.

The GRP also submitted a concept note on the handling of a Peace and Development Trust Fund in conflict areas involving CPP-NPA-NDF forces.

On Enhancing Liaison between the Panels

Pending the effectivity of an interim joint ceasefire agreement, and without prejudice to the filing of complaints with the Joint Monitoring Committee under the CARHRHIL, the Parties agreed to make more efficient and effective a temporary liaison between the Chairs of the Negotiating Panels for the resolution of incidents in relation to acts allegedly committed by armed units and elements of either or both Parties.

Fifth Round of Formal Talks

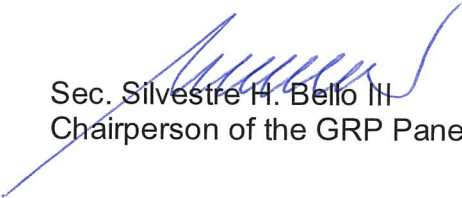
The Parties agreed to meet in Noordwijk aan Zee, The Netherlands from May 26 to June 2, 2017 for the Fifth Round of Formal Talks.

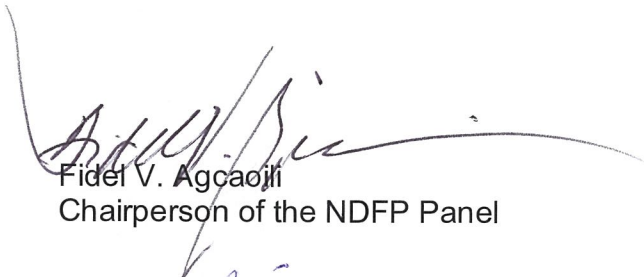
Expression of Gratitude to RNG

Both Panels reiterated their appreciation and gratitude to the Royal Norwegian Government (RNG) for its unrelenting support to and active facilitation of the peace talks which have allowed both sides to move these forward. They also thanked the RNG for the two (2) United Nations experts that they provided, who shared their insights on ceasefire, which the Parties find useful.

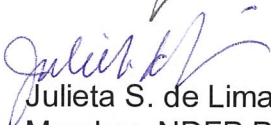
Signed on the 6th day of April 2017 in Noordwijk aan Zee, The Netherlands.

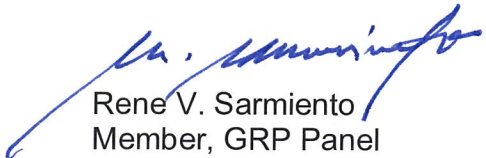
Signatories:


Sec. Silvestre H. Bello III
Chairperson of the GRP Panel

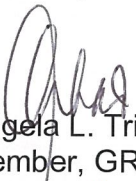

Fidel V. Agcaoili
Chairperson of the NDFP Panel


Hernani A. Braganza
Member, GRP Panel

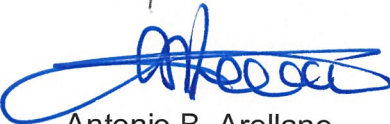

Julieta S. de Lima
Member, NDFP Panel



Rene V. Sarmiento
Member, GRP Panel


Coni K. Ledesma
Member, NDFP Panel



Angela L. Trinidad
Member, GRP Panel


Asterio B. Palima
Member, NDFP Panel


Antonio B. Arellano
Member, GRP Panel



Benito E. Tiamzon
Member, NDFP Panel

WITNESSES:


Sec. Jesus G. Dureza
Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process


Prof. Jose Maria Sison
NDFP Chief Political Consultant


Mayor Edgardo D. Pamintuan
Adviser, GRP Panel


Luis G. Jalandoni
Senior Adviser, NDFP Panel


Elisabeth Slåttum
Third Party Facilitator
For the Royal Norwegian Government

The GRP delegation was headed by Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Secretary Jesus G. Dureza with the following members: OPAPP Undersecretary Ronald I. Flores; Assistant Secretary Dickson P. Hermoso; Consultants Jose Christopher N. Fornier II and Dr. Joy A. Alcantara; Dir. John C. Raña, OPAPP Comms-Group; Mr. Irving DP Tan, Comms-Staff; GRP Negotiating Panel Chairperson Sec. Silvestre H. Bello III and Panel Members Hernani A. Braganza, Atty. Rene V. Sarmiento, Atty. Angela L. Trinidad and Atty. Antonio B. Arellano; Panel Adviser Mayor Edgardo D. Pamintuan; GRP Legal Counsel Atty. Efren C. Moncupa; GRP-Monitoring member DOJ Usec. Antonio T. Kho, Jr.; RWC-SER Chair Roberto M. Ador and members Prof. Eric Vincent C. Batalla, Atty. Marie Dinah Tolentino-Fuentes and Atty. Adel C. Abas; Resource Person NEDA Usec. Adoracion M. Navarro; RWG-EHDF Chair DND ASec. Teodoro Cirilo T. Torralba III; Working Group on JASIG/Releases Chair Atty. Vincent Paul L. Montejo; Ceasefire Committee Chair Prof. Francisco J. Lara Jr., PhD, and members Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip and Retired Col. Wilmer S. Panabang; Communications Group Chair Mr. Raul M. Francia; Social Mobilization Group Chair Atty. Sarah Buena S. Mirasol; Technical Committee Head Danilo L. Encinas, NSC ADG Ray D. Roderos, DOJ Atty. Berlin SM Berba, Col. Micheller S. Logronio, Col. Francisco Ariel A. Felicidadario III; Panel Secretariat Head Maria Carla Munsayac-Villarta and staff support team members Mr. Oscar B. Bathan, Ms. Fe Oaing-Doromal, Ms. Rosalyn B. Lachica, Mr. Allan Kristofer L. Pormento and Ms. Rhoda I. Espino; and Executive/Technical Assistants Ms. Jeliza Farrah D. Uy, DOLE Dr. Jesus Cruz Jr. and DND LtC Deborah Castillo (FA) AFP.

As observers, the following attended: Panel Consultant Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Rafael Mariano; Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Undersecretary Joel Maglunsod; Special Committee on Peace Reconciliation and Unity (SCPRU) Chairwoman Ruby M. Sahali, SCPRU Member Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, SCPRU Member Jose Henry Sy-Ong, and Committee Secretary Sarip Ellen A Cancio.

The NDFP Delegation was composed of *Panel Chairperson* Fidel V. Agcaoili and *Panel Members* Julieta S. de Lima-Sison, Coni K. Ledesma, Asterio B. Palima, Benito E. Tiamzon; *NDFP Chief Political Consultant* Prof. Jose Maria Sison; *Senior Adviser* Luis G. Jalandoni; *Consultants* Wilma Austria-Tiamzon, Vicente Ladlad, Rey Claro Casambre; *Legal Consultants* Edre U. Olalia, Rachel Pastores, Carlos Montemayor Jr., Edgar Carmona, Criselda Azarcon Heredia, Jose Begil Jr., Maria Kristina Conti; *Legal Resource Persons* Marie Francesca Yuvienco, Rom-Voltaire Quizon, Pamela Felizarta, Rolando Rico Olalia, Fatima Irene Purisima, Carol Kay Paquera; *RWC-SER Members* Alan Jazmines Jr., Randall Echanis; *RWC-SER Consultant* Renante Gamara; *RWC-SER Resource Person* Vivian de Lima; *RWC-SER Secretariat Members* Rita Sadorra, Pio Verzola Jr.; *Cooperators/Resource Persons* Carol P. Araullo, Saturnino Ocampo, Francisco Domagoso; *Ceasefire Committee Members* Rafael Baylosis, Ariel Arbitrario; *Media Team* Danilo Borjal, Winona Birondo; *Secretariat Head* Marissa P. Dumanjug-Palo, and *Staff Members* Levie Ebio, Alexander Birondo, Aldo Gonzalez.

ANNEX A

AGREEMENT ON AN INTERIM JOINT CEASEFIRE

The Negotiating Panels of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) hereby agree on an Interim Joint Ceasefire (IJC) and for this purpose:

1. To direct their respective Ceasefire Committees to meet even in-between formal talks, to discuss, formulate, and finalize the guidelines and ground rules for the implementation of this agreement.
2. To put into effect the ceasefire upon the approval and signing of the guidelines and ground rules as referred hereunder.

They further agreed on the following objectives:

1. To generate goodwill and trust in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.
2. To encourage the forging of a more stable and comprehensive Joint Ceasefire Agreement.
3. To provide an enabling environment for eventual and early signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms.

The said guidelines and ground rules shall include:


- a) Rules governing the presence of armed units and elements of both Parties in local communities and the creation of buffer zones;
- b) An agreement on prohibited, hostile, and provocative acts; and
- c) The ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanisms in relation to the implementation of the ceasefire and the handling of complaints and alleged violations.


Matters regarding a single governmental authority and taxation shall be discussed and resolved in forging the Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms within the framework of the proposed Federal Republic of the Philippines.

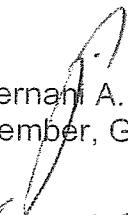
The interim joint ceasefire agreement shall be effective until a permanent ceasefire agreement is forged as part of the Comprehensive Agreement on End of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces (Final Peace Agreement).

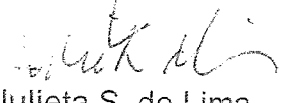
Signed on the 5th day of April 2017 in Noordwijk aan Zee, The Netherlands.

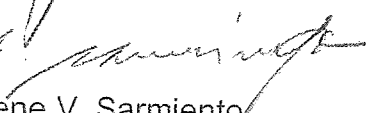
Signatories:

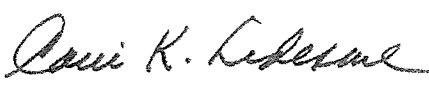

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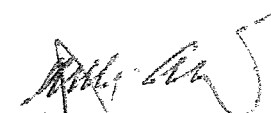

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