

Joint Statement at the Conclusion of the Formal Round of Peace Talks in Oslo, Norway, 15 – 21 February 2011

Oslo Joint Statement of 21 February 2011

We, the Negotiating Panels of the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) successfully resumed the formal peace negotiations from 15 to 21 February 2011 in Oslo, Norway facilitated by the Royal Norwegian Government (RNG).

The formal meetings were opened with an introductory statement by Ambassador Ture Lundh, as head of the Third Party Facilitating Team, and a welcome statement by State Secretary Espen Barth Eide of the Royal Norwegian Government followed by the opening statements by Secretary Teresita Quintos-Deles, the GPH Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, and the NDFP Panel Chairperson Luis G. Jalandoni.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RNG, Jonas Gahr Store, met with the two Panels separately at the conference venue and expressed the support of his government for the GPH-NDFP peace negotiations.

Both Panels recognized the urgent need to resume the formal peace negotiations in order to resolve the armed conflict by addressing its root causes.

The two Panels exchanged credentials of the members of their respective Panels.

The two Panels agreed on the following:

Reaffirmation of Previous Agreements

The Parties reaffirm The Hague Joint Declaration of 1 September 1992 and all bilateral agreements entered into by the GRP, now GPH, and NDFP up to the Second Oslo Joint Statement of 3 April 2004.

The GPH submitted its separate and unilateral affirmation with qualifications dated 15 February 2011 while the NDFP submitted on the same date its rebuttal to said qualifications.

The aforesaid agreements are essential and instrumental in moving ahead and forging agreements on the remaining substantive items in the agenda on socio-economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms, and end of hostilities and disposition of forces.

Timeframe for the Peace Negotiations

The Panels agreed on a general timeframe for completing the draft comprehensive agreements on the remaining items of the agenda. The draft Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) may be completed and signed by the Panels in September 2011; the draft Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms (CAPCR) may be completed and signed by the Panels in February 2012; and lastly

the draft Comprehensive Agreement on End of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces (CAEHDF) may be completed and signed by the Panels in June 2012.

Reciprocal Working Committees (RWCs) on Social and Economic Reforms

The RWCs-SER reviewed the status of their work since 2001: a common draft on the Preamble and the Declaration of Principles, as well as the Guidelines for the Work of the RWCs-SER and their sub-committees, with unresolved points, were submitted in April 2004 to the Negotiating Panels for resolution and approval.

They agreed to have three (3) bilateral meetings to be held in the second week of June and the second and fourth weeks of August 2011, respectively. The first bilateral meeting shall discuss Bases, Scope and Applicability and the RWCs' counterpart sections on "agrarian reform and rural development" for the NDFP and "asset reform" for the GPH, and "national industrialization" for the NDFP and "industrial policy" for the GPH. They agreed to exchange their respective drafts of the sections scheduled for discussion two weeks before the first bilateral meeting.

The RWCs agreed to complete the common tentative comprehensive agreement on social and economic reforms for submission to the Negotiating Panels by September 2011, in accordance with the agreed time frame.

Working Groups on Political and Constitutional Reforms

The Panels agreed to form their respective Working Groups on Political and Constitutional Reforms (WGs-PCR) in order to pave the way for the eventual formation of the Reciprocal Working Committees on Political and Constitutional Reforms (RWCs-PCR). The RWCs will formulate the guidelines and agenda of their work.

The Working Groups shall be composed of a head and two members appointed by the Panels and shall also respectively nominate two independent cooperators.

They shall hold their initial session in April 2011 and every two months thereafter. Hopefully, the RWCs-PCR would be convened by October 2011.

The Working Groups/RWCs may avail of a Committee of Sages or resource persons, made up of an equal number of 3 to 5 members nominated by each side.

The Joint Monitoring Committee

After almost seven years, the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) for the CARHRIHL reconvened and discussed the Supplemental Guidelines for the operation of the JMC, with the view to submitting a common draft for the consideration of the respective Panels at a proximate future date.

Other related matters were likewise discussed such as a process for consolidation of the complaints thus far received and initial parameters for the possible conduct of joint investigations that would ultimately be fully clarified once discussions on the Supplemental Guidelines are completed. Various issues related to the implementation of the CARHRIHL were also discussed.

The JMC agreed to meet again in March 2011 and to schedule succeeding meetings.

JASIG and Confidence-Building Measures

The NDFP acknowledged the presence of NDFP Reciprocal Working Committee on Social and Economic Reforms (RWC-SER) members Rafael Baylosis and Randall Echanis. The GPH shall continue to undertake effective remedies to ensure their participation in the peace negotiations as well as those of NDFP political consultants Vicente Ladlad and Elizabeth Principe.

The NDFP also welcomed the recent release of NDFP Consultant Angelina Bisuna Ipong.

As a measure of goodwill, the NDFP released prisoners in the custody of the NPA. The GPH Panel acknowledged the release by the New People's Army of retired Sgt. Mario Veluz, PO3 Jorge Sabatin and PO2 Jervel Tugade.

Based on the Joint Notes dated January 18, 2011, the GPH shall continue to work on appropriate measures to effect the expeditious release of all or most of the fourteen (14) NDFP listed JASIG consultants and personalities before the second round of formal talks, subject to verification as provided in the JASIG Supplemental Agreement dated June 26, 1996, or on the basis of humanitarian and other practical reasons. The NDFP added four (4) names (Danilo Badayos, Leopoldo Caloza, Alan Jazmines and Ramon Patriarca), whose release shall be subjected to the same process.

The GPH as confidence-building measure reiterated its commitment to undertake steps for the release of prisoners and detainees, including those committed to be released as found in the Second Oslo Joint Statement of 2004.

To build confidence and create a favorable atmosphere on the occasion of the resumption of the formal peace talks after more than six years, each Party declared a unilateral, concurrent and reciprocal ceasefire during the formal peace talks from February 15 to 21, 2011.

Conclusion

The two Panels expressed satisfaction over the achievements of the first round of formal talks. They also expressed their determination to make progress in forging agreements on the remaining items of the substantive agenda on social and economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms and end of hostilities and disposition of forces.

Expression of Gratitude to the RNG

Both Panels expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the Royal Norwegian Government for its able facilitation, hospitality and continuing support for the GPH-NDFP peace negotiations. In particular, the Panels wish to acknowledge the following: Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Store, State Secretary Espen Barth Eide, Director General for the department of UN, Peace and Humanitarian Affairs Geir O. Pedersen, Deputy Director General for Section on Peace and Reconciliation Tomas Stangeland, Special Envoy to the Peace Process Ambassador Ture Lundh, Ambassador to the Philippines Knut Solem, Senior Advisers Frederik Steen, Aina Holm, Lisa Golden and Adviser Ida Marstein.

Signed in Oslo, Norway on 21 February 2011.

SIGNATORIES:

Alexander A. Padilla
Chairperson of the GPH Panel

Luis G. Jalandoni
Chairperson of the NDFP Panel

Pablito V. Sanidad
Member GPH Panel

Fidel V. Agcaoili
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WITNESSES:

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GPH Panel Legal Consultant

Jose Maria Sison
NDFP Chief Political Consultant

Amb. Ture Lundh
Third Party Facilitator
For the Royal Norwegian Government