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A. Background

On the 27th of March 2014, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Government of the Philippines (GPH) signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB). As the culmination of 17 years of peace negotiations, the CAB paves the way for the just and peaceful resolution of armed conflict in Mindanao and the establishment of the Bangsamoro Government.¹

The CAB and its constituent parts have set in motion a process of transition from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) to a new Bangsamoro political entity. The Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) has drafted a Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) that, following Congressional and popular approval through a plebiscite, will lay the legal foundations for the autonomous region. Once the BBL is passed, a Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) will assume all devolved powers of the new political entity and function as the interim Bangsamoro government until elected officials can assume office following elections in May 2016.

Parallel to the political process of establishing a new institutional framework for governing the Bangsamoro will be a normalization process through which communities affected by the decades of armed conflict in Mindanao can return to a peaceful life free from fear of violence and crime. This will include systemic policing reforms, decommissioning of MILF forces,

and redeployment of units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Measures toward justice and reconciliation during the transition period, as well as comprehensive socioeconomic programs, will allow communities to “achieve their desired quality of life, which includes the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods and political participation within a peaceful deliberative society.”² The Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) further commits the Parties to “intensify...efforts for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of the Bangsamoro.”³ These processes are inherently political and are subject to continued negotiation between the Parties.

It is against this background that the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA)—as the MILF’s mandated agency to “determine, lead and manage rehabilitation and development efforts in conflict-affected areas,”⁴ and with more than a decade of experience in delivering development and humanitarian assistance across Bangsamoro areas in coordination with international partners—was tasked by MILF Chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim “to coordinate with donor and funding partners, to conduct needs assessment in the Bangsamoro immediately, and to expedite the completion of the formulation of the Bangsamoro Development Plan (BDP).”⁵ The directive echoes provisions in the FAB and the Annexes on the importance of the BDP as a development blueprint for the Bangsamoro.⁶

B. Objective

In formulating the Plan, the BDA is guided by the fundamental tenets of equity and inclusiveness. As reaffirmed by Chairman Murad in his statement at the signing of the CAB, the Agreement “is not only for the MILF. It is for the MNLF as well, as much as it is for all the Muslim ethnic tribes, the Christian settlers, and the Indigenous Peoples in the prospective Bangsamoro Government territory.”⁷ In this regard, the BDP has been crafted in close collaboration with national and regional government agencies, civil society organizations, and development partners, and based on extensive community-level consultations. The Bangsamoro Development Framework (BDF) is based on the frameworks of sustainable human development and peacebuilding, with the BDA core values as its value system and ethic.

As a plan crafted in the context of communities emerging from and still experiencing conflict, the BDP proceeds from a peacebuilding perspective. It recognizes that the usual approach⁸ to development planning cannot apply to the Bangsamoro’s specific situation, given serious market imperfections and market failures caused by the conflict. The primordial goal during the transition from violence to peace, therefore, is attaining stabilization and normalization—a precondition for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth in the subsequent years.

The primary objective of the BDP is to provide short- and medium-term vision, strategy, and recommendations for the socioeconomic recovery and development of the Bangsamoro during the transition period (2015 to mid-2016) and following installation of the Bangsamoro Government (mid-2016 and beyond). More specifically, the short- and medium-term objectives of the BDP are to enable the Bangsamoro to:

1. Provide a development plan for the people of the Bangsamoro;
2. Build mechanisms of local participation that will ensure sustainability and ownership of development planning and implementation;

3. Sustain the momentum of the peace process by providing strategic directions for regular delivery and basic services in Bangsamoro communities during and beyond the transition period;
4. Assist the BTA in taking a leadership role in the implementation of the post-conflict development process;
5. Help facilitate a seamless institutional transition that will take place in 2016 as provided for by the FAB; and
6. Identify and recommend priority projects to the BTA.

The focus of the BDP is on the Bangsamoro transition period, as the Bangsamoro Parliament, the entity mandated to identify and determine development programs and projects for the Bangsamoro area, will become operational in mid-2016.

C. Outline of the Plan

Against this background, guided by an assessment of the current situation in the Bangsamoro and informed by communities and stakeholders of the region, the BDP provides recommendations in six cluster areas, consistent with the BDF: (1) economy and livelihood; (2) infrastructure; (3) social services; (4) environment and natural resources; (5) culture and identity; (6) governance and justice as related to the goals of normalization and development.

Recommendations in each cluster area include policy and operational inputs on the key crosscutting areas of gender, youth, and peacebuilding.

The BDP is divided into 15 chapters:

- **Chapter 1** presents the background, objective, and outline of the Plan.
- **Chapter 2** provides a brief historical narrative of the Bangsamoro struggle and peace process as the context of the BDP.
- **Chapter 3** explains the methodology employed in the formulation of the BDP and its limitations; and presents the philosophy behind the BDF.

- **Chapter 4** assesses the current situation in the Bangsamoro area, including the regional development challenges and opportunities involved in breaking the cycle of conflict, poverty, and underdevelopment.
- **Chapter 5** presents the results of Community Visioning Exercises (CVEs) conducted by the BDA to determine the needs, aspirations, and sources of dissatisfaction in selected Bangsamoro communities. It also links to the current situational assessment in the Bangsamoro as an attempt to validate the findings.
- **Chapter 6** articulates a strategy to achieve the vision of the BDP and provides short-term recommendations and indicative directions for the medium term to realize the vision for the Bangsamoro.
- **Chapters 7 to 12** further break down the strategy into sectoral targets and recommendations for the six thematic areas of the BDF.
- **Chapter 13** outlines the proposed implementation arrangements and financing modalities to ensure that recommendations are effectively and efficiently implemented.
- **Chapter 14** identifies possible implementation challenges that will be encountered and proposes mitigating measures to address these risks.
- **Chapter 15** outlines a Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation system to track the progress of implementation and lessons learned.

Listings of priority programs are provided in **Annex A**.

NOTES

- 1 Through the Agreement, the MILF and the GPH commit “to protect and enhance the right of the Bangsamoro people and other inhabitants in the Bangsamoro to human dignity; reduce social, economic and political inequalities; correct historical injustices committed against the Bangsamoro; and remove cultural inequities.” Refer to the “Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro,” March 27, 2014.
- 2 “The Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro,” October 15, 2012.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 The BDA was established pursuant to the “Agreement on Peace Signed Between the GPH and the MILF on June 22, 2001,” which is known as the “Tripoli Agreement of 2001,” and the “Implementing Guidelines of the Humanitarian, Rehabilitation, and Development Aspects of the GPH-MILF Tripoli Agreement of 2001,” which was signed on May 7, 2002.
- 5 This was a directive from the MILF Central Committee to the Bangsamoro Development Agency Chairman Dr. Saffrullah M. Dipatuan on March 22, 2013.
- 6 The “Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro,” Section VII, 4C instructs the Bangsamoro Transition Commission to coordinate development programs in Bangsamoro communities with BDA, BLMI, and others; “Annex on Revenue Generation and Wealth Sharing,” Section XI stresses the need to formulate the BDP; and the “Annex on Normalization,” Section G, item number 6 mentions that socioeconomic interventions shall be aligned to the BDP.
- 7 Statement of Chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim at the signing of the “Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro,” Malacañan Palace, Philippines on March 27, 2014.
- 8 The orthodox manner of formulating development plans is anchored in the dynamics of the market, with sectoral concerns fleshed out based on a functioning market system. Such conditions cannot be presumed for many communities just emerging from a long period of conflict.