

A CSO LETTER TO THE BTA

An Appeal for Unity, Solidarity and Common Actions for a Peaceful Transition and Beyond

Dear Esteemed Brothers and Sisters in the BTA,

Peace and Blessings of God be upon you.

Alhamdulillah! We are indeed happier to see the top leaders of the MNLF and the MILF in a unity meeting in the recent days. Those who led the revolution and fought for us are now given the opportunity to run our government in the BTA and other LGUs. In the same vein, we are glad to know the new composition of the BTA where the different revolutionary organizations are represented with other sectors coming from the IPs, Christian settlers, legal personalities, politicians, academe, etc. We are made to believe that this choice of the new membership of the BTA is anchored on the call for unity and inclusive development in the BARMM. We will be more than happy to see solidarity in actions in the BTA.

Brothers and Sisters, with the opportunity granted unto you and on the occasion of the inaugural session of the BTA, we, the CSO community, beg of you to put your acts together for the sake of the people in the Bangsamoro. The tasks ahead are gargantuan. Let it be known that in spite initial economic growth, we are still the lowest in the development threshold. The threat for peace and security are still around. Your constituents – your people have high expectations from you. We need to overcome all these challenges to pave the way for a political environment conducive to pursuing peace and development.

The road to recovery and sustainable peace remain long and winding, as we continue to face the challenges of inequitable access to dwindling resources, poverty, disunity within our communities, exacerbated by repeated disasters, pandemic and climate change. Reconstruction from the physical, economic and social fabric torn apart as a result of decades of violent conflicts require us to think out of the box and solidify government's convergence approach to inclusive development. There are no quick fixes. Our problems are systemic and inter-generational. We are still recovering from lost opportunities, eradicating prejudices and discrimination within our region and between our people and peoples of other faiths, cultures and religions so that we can foster healing and reconciliation.

Perfecting the art of good governance and remolding values are on-going challenges.

The BTA-BARMM trail blazes a decentralized governance approach in the country, and it is an opportunity as well as a challenge, with the National Government as well as other regions looking at how you translate your political will into good governance.

The parliamentary form of governance is meant to address our clamor for the right to determine our own socio-political-economic development. And so, as CSOs journeying with you, we put our trust and hope that you can overcome the various differences that divide us and work for the common good for the BM.

This is an opportunity to strengthen solidarity and unity of purpose. We pin our trust that the BTA can pursue its tasks to complete the transition process, requiring each honorable member of this august body to overcome personal interests and find common grounds for collaboration. At the end of the day, the temperature of your constituents will be your gauge for saying “we have led our people well.”

The combined wisdom of the revolutionary organizations and of those from the different sectoral representatives in the BTA and the support from international development partners and the local CSOs can make a difference in this extended transition.

To find peace, the power of love for the Bangsamoro must prevail over the love for power, love for wealth and love for fame. Only when we work together can we achieve our goal for peace. Durable solutions emanate from people who work together. This is not for us; this is for our children and the generations to come. This is the time to talk to each other, not about each other or against each other. Prove to all and sundry that with the available opportunities, you can make things happen. Show to the rest of country that indeed, with the opportunity, time, space and resources, you can make things easier to chart a better future for your people;

Our Appeal

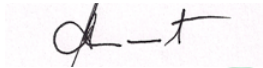
1. We appeal to you to work in solidarity towards passing relevant laws and programs to uplift the life of the people in the Bangsamoro;
2. Promote inclusive development so that no one is left behind;
3. Fight and resist corruption so that the resources intended for the well-being of the people are safeguarded;
4. Strictly follow the provisions of the ethics of good governance;
5. Put public service first before self;
6. Work towards building social cohesion, inter-tribal unity and promote justice, tolerance and understanding towards healing, reconciliation and national unity;
7. Listen to the legitimate grievances of the people, especially the poor;
8. We also appeal to the national government to sustain the gains of the peace process by faithfully abiding with the terms of the peace agreement even as we implore the sincerity of the MILF and MNLF to make their share;
9. Fastrack the rehabilitation and reconstruction of all areas destroyed by wars
10. We invoke the support of other armed groups and political leaders in our midst to give the political environment conducive for the people in the BTA to do their job;
11. Aggressively implement the provisions of the Normalization under the Peace Agreement
12. To the BTA members, show to the rest of the country that indeed, you are the right choice in the BTA;

We, in the Civil Society community will continue to accompany the work for peace in the best efforts we can make. We offer our organizations for constructive and peaceful engagements and partnership without losing our inherent role as watch groups.

If in unity and solidarity, you were able to achieve a high level of self-determination, it is also through unity and acting together that you will also achieve the ultimate goal of peace and development.

Into your hands, we entrust the well-being of our people. Do all your best (Jihad) and God will do the rest.

Wabillahi Taupik Wal Hidayah!



Guiamel M Alim
Chairperson
Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS)

