

# BANGSAMORO MISSION ON PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

## STUDY TOUR CONCEPT NOTE

### BACKGROUND

For generations the Muslim-majority areas of Mindanao in the southern Philippines have struggled with violent conflict and ineffective governance. Since 1972 the Philippine Government has been negotiating with various Muslim armed groups fighting for increased control. These negotiations have resulted in two major peace agreements – one in 1996 with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF); and another in 2014 with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The final implementation of these agreements lies in the passage of the landmark ‘Bangsamoro Basic Law,’ now under consideration by the Philippine Congress. This law would devolve an unprecedented level of government authority to the sub-national level. Interestingly, this is taking place simultaneously with a national discussion on shifting from a unitary (highly centralised) presidential to a federal system of government.

To seize the opportunities presented by this decentralisation, the Bangsamoro needs a cohort of leaders with a sophisticated understanding of various models of local governance and how governments at different levels can cooperate. For this reason, a delegation of Bangsamoro leaders will be travelling to Germany and Belgium to learn from the European experience of government. We hope that this will help them to effectively shape the nature of the new institutions and take leadership roles under the new government system.

### OBJECTIVES

From 8-14 October 2017 a group of leaders from the Bangsamoro community will visit Europe (Germany and Belgium) with three specific objectives:

1. Expose Bangsamoro leaders to models of democratic governance and options to ensure effective relations between national and sub-national governments.
2. Allow European stakeholders to enhance their understanding of the issues in the Philippines peace process and the important role being played by the European Union.
3. Build consensus among a broad group of Bangsamoro leaders about the most appropriate institutions for building a peaceful and democratic Bangsamoro. In particular, develop a shared understanding among representatives of the MNLF and MILF armed groups about their goals for Bangsamoro.
4. To help prepare decision-makers and civil society leaders for active engagement for the future political framework in the new Bangsamoro political entity by enhancing their leadership abilities through a comprehensive political exposure activities.

## PARTICIPANTS

There will be 20 participants to be drawn from leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, politics, women's organisations, indigenous people's associations, and youth groups. The participants will meet leaders from executive government, parliament, academia and civil society at both a national and a sub-national level in Germany as well as representatives from the European Union.

## ORGANISERS

The mission is supported by European Union's Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (ICSP) and is jointly facilitated by:

- **The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)** – A German political foundation, headquartered in Berlin that works to build democracy and justice in the Philippines, with a particular focus on Mindanao. Established in 1964, the KAS country office in the Philippines focuses on the promotion of the rule of law, civil society participation in politics, good governance and decentralisation, creating fair socio-economic frameworks and peace in Muslim Mindanao.
- **The Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG)** - A Mindanao based public policy center that specialises in research and capacity building on the issues of autonomy, federalism, good governance, and peace processes. Established in 2001, it publishes researches and policy reports and provides technical assistance to national and regional legislatures in the crafting of laws to promote sustainable peace and development in Mindanao and Cordillera region in the Philippines.
- **The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD)** – A Geneva-based foundation specialising in conflict mediation in peace processes. In the Philippines, it works to ensure an effective peace process and reduce violence. Under the ICSP, HD is mandated to assist the Bangsamoro armed groups (i.e. the MNLF and MILF) to work with government and community stakeholders towards the full implementation of the peace agreements by providing technical advice and support with focus on inclusivity and cooperation.

These institutions will work in synergy using their respective budget.

## **PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION**

The first element of the program will allow the participants to learn about how government functions in the Federal Republic of Germany. This knowledge will be particularly relevant as the participants are all influential in shaping the institutions and priorities that will govern the Bangsamoro. They will hear perspectives from national-level leaders in Berlin before listening to the viewpoints of a sub-national government when they visit Düsseldorf, the state capital of North Rhine-Westphalia.

The participants will then travel to Brussels to meet with representatives from the European Commission, European External Action Service, and the European Parliament. A series of meetings will allow a two-way exchange of information. The participants will explain current progress and challenges of the Philippines peace process, while European leaders will be able to provide the participants with an understanding of how national and subnational government arrangements – including intergovernmental relations - work in the diverse jurisdictions of the EU. While in Brussels, the participants will have a chance to meet with the numerous conflict and violence experts while exploring the Belgian model of federalism.

This mission will not only develop common notions of effective governance models, but also create spaces and opportunities for dialogue and enhanced cooperation between the participants.