

■ By ANALYN LEA TUBURAN-UGALINGAN

FOR THE first time after the recent eruption of conflict here in Mindanao, a Tri-Peoples' Peace Summit was conducted in the Islamic City of Marawi. Peace advocates came together to thresh out ways of advancing "democratic political options for peace in Mindanao." Four options were explained by resource persons and discussed in workshops. These four options will be proposed and presented in a UN-managed referendum being pushed by peace advocates.



CONVERGENCE FOR PEACE

THE 5TH MINDANAO PEOPLES PEACE SUMMIT

The 5th Mindanao Peoples Peace Summit, convened by the Mindanao Peoples Peace Movement (MPPM), the Southern Christian College-Community Education Research and Extension Administration (CEREA), and nongovernment organizations Sumpay Mindanao, Inc and the Tri-People's Organization against Disasters Foundation (TRIPOD), Inc., was held at the Institute for Peace and Development (IPDM) Convergence Hall, Mindanao State University, on December 12-16, 2008. According to Alvaro O. Senturias, MPPM chair, the summit focused on the current situation in Mindanao and the proposal for referendum for peace in Mindanao. This referendum has been advocated by MPPM since the 2nd Peace Summit held in Midsayap, N. Cotabato in December 2002. MPPM's proposal is to have the United Nations supervise, manage or facilitate this referendum, which will present four political options for peace: free association, au-

tonomy, federalism and independence.

Some 400 representatives of the Tri-Peoples (Katawhang

Lumad, the Bangsamoro and the Mindanao Migrants/Descendants), interfaith groups, students and the academe, and non-



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government organizations working on different development concerns such as peace, human rights, disaster relief and rehabilitation, and environmental concerns based in mainland Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan, affirmed their call for the conduct of the referendum.

Aside from the focal topic on the proposed referendum, thematic workshops were also conducted on the issues of ecology, migration and development, youth and young women, and the global financial meltdown.

Given the renewed eruption of conflict in Mindanao, peace and development were foremost in the minds of the summit participants. Adopting their

Marawi Declaration 2008

5th Mindanao Peoples' Peace Summit Declaration



5th MPPS Declaration (Marawi Declaration 2008), they called on all concerned parties to “assert the right to self-determination of the Tri-Peoples, build just and lasting peace, and work for genuine development in Mindanao.”

Representing the government at the Peace Summit was Undersecretary Dimasangkaya Pundato of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).

Representatives of revolutionary groups who spoke at the Summit were Bobby Alonto, member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front Negotiating Panel and Dr. Alepekre Basher, Secretary General of the Moro National Liberation Front-Bangsamoro National Parliament.

Other speakers were Rey Claro Casambre, executive director of the Manila-based non-

government organization Philippine Peace Center, who gave his insights on the peace process between the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front; as well as a representative from Cagayan de Oro-based Balay Mindanao, Inc., who spoke on the peace talks between the Philippine government and the Rebolusyonaryong Partidong Manggagawa-Mindanao.

Aside from ending the cycle of violence, the government and Mindanao Tri-Peoples are challenged to address other development concerns. These include the “lack of social services; lack of food sovereignty; continuing export of contract labor; threats to youth, women and children; environmental degradation and climate change; and the chronic economic crisis brought about by globalization.” ■



ASSERT THE right to self-determination of the Tri-Peoples, build just and lasting peace, and work for genuine development in Mindanao!

We, the Tri-Peoples (Katawhang Lumad, Bangsamoro, Migrants and Descendants) of Mindanao-Sulu-Basilan-Tawi-Tawi-Palawan participating in the 5th Mindanao People's Peace Summit in the Islamic City of Marawi, to discuss ways to advance democratic political options for peace in Mindanao—

Assert our collective fundamental right to self-determination and commitment to just and lasting peace and sustainable development in our Homeland, with full recognition of our socioeconomic, political, cultural and religious diversity;

Maintain that our right to self-determination can be served in many forms, such as free association, autonomy, federalism, and independence;

Uphold that the most peaceful and democratic way of resolving the issue of self-determination of the Tri-Peoples is the conduct of a United Nations-supervised/ managed/facilitated referendum on the above political options;

Believe that the government's total war policy threatens the achievement of just and lasting peace and creates a spiral of violence detrimental to our people and environment;

Propose that the way to peace and development requires the systematic resolution of political, economic, and socio-cultural problems, including long-held biases and prejudices that have prevented our genuine appreciation of each other's actual and potential contributions;

Commit ourselves to continue exploring ways to correct historical mistakes and misunderstandings that have led to the persistence of violence and destruction;

Call for an openness from the different peoples, as well as the various armed groups operating in our Homeland, to build communities of peace, to find their path to harmony and tolerance, and to resolve the fundamental causes of conflict;

Support efforts of all concerned parties to bring all forms of relief (physical, social, legal, political and spiritual) to the Tri-Peoples caught in the web of conflict;

Appeal to the Philippine government to resume peace talks with the armed rebel groups operating in Mindanao, to refrain from insisting on the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) framework; to stay the hand of war that has scuttled many initiatives from civil society groups; and, to address the valid concerns these armed groups raise;

Encourage the different armed rebel groups to go back to negotiations, with an openness and flexibility needed to facilitate a genuine dialogue and resolution of issues;

Emphasize the need for continuing consultations with all affected parties and communities and civil society groups, especially the Katawhang Lumad, in the conduct of all peace- and development-related processes; and,

Underscore that aside from ending the cycle of violence, the government and Mindanao Tri-Peoples are challenged to address the lack of social services; lack of food sovereignty; continuing export of contract labor; threats to youth, women and children, environmental degradation and climate change; and, the chronic economic crisis brought about by globalization.

With our resolve to pursue all peaceful means, we invite all peoples of goodwill around the world to join in this journey to just and lasting peace and sustainable development in our Homeland.

Done in the Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao (IPDM) Mindanao State University, Islamic City of Marawi
15 December 2008.

Signed:

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