

Press Release

Church Group Welcomes Reconstituted GRP Peace Panel for Peace Talks with NDFP

Monday 25 October 2010, by [PEPP](#) (Date first published: 23 October 2010).

The Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP) a group composed of the country's major Christian bodies, welcomed the announcement yesterday made by Secretary Teresita Deles, Presidential Adviser on the peace process, that the government had reconstituted its panel for the resumption of talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, PEPP Head of Secretariat said the announcement of the reconstituted GRP Peace Panel is a welcome development. Iñiguez also expressed elation over the positive statement made by Prof. Jose Ma. Sison, NDFP Chief Political Consultant on the appointment of Alexander Padilla as government chief negotiator. The Bishop said it "was a good sign" and expressed optimism that the two parties can meet soon "to resolve the roots of the armed conflict towards a just and enduring peace".

Bishop Iñiguez said the PEPP is "looking forward to the two parties resuming in earnest the negotiations on the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER). CASER is the next agenda under The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992, which is the framework for the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. Negotiations under the CASER, Iñiguez said, will "hopefully result to the creation and implementation of policies that seek the equitable distribution of the country's wealth and the development of its natural resources primarily for the good of all citizens" as "of utmost importance are age-old issues of land reform, national industrialization and the protection of national patrimony."

"The church leaders are also looking forward to the reconvening of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) alongside the resumption of the formal talks," he said. The JMC is a mandated body to monitor the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHIHL), which was signed by both parties. In the same vein, the Bishop also expressed hope that the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) which was suspended by then President Arroyo, will be made functional anew. Bishop Iñiguez was also delighted at the statement of the new GRP Panel Chair that he was in favor of releasing some detainees, including the Morong 43.

For its part, the PEPP will continue promoting the peace process through peace education and peace building. The PEPP is composed of representatives from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC), the Ecumenical Bishops' Forum (EBF) and the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP). It works for a just and enduring peace to resolve the roots of the armed conflict and lends support to the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations based on previous mutual agreements. Its co-chairpersons are Archbishop Antonio J. Ledesma of Cagayan de Oro and Ms. Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz Duremdes, former General Secretary of the NCCP.

Reference:

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