

Women's Voices

A Conference on
Gender Issues In Post Peace Agreement
Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

December 9-10, 2004
Marco Polo Hotel, Davao City

Organized by the
MINDANAO COMMISSION ON WOMEN and the
MOTHERS FOR PEACE MOVEMENT
in cooperation with the
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER FOR THE PEACE PROCESS

CONFERENCE STATEMENT

We, the women of Mindanao, gathered here for “Women’s Voices: A Conference on Gender Issues in Post Peace Agreement Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation” held in Davao City on December 9-10, 2004, reaffirm our commitment to take up the challenge of achieving lasting peace in Mindanao. As the talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front are about to resume, we gather here to analyze, so we can better understand, the gender issues in post conflict situations. From the experiences of women leaders from Cambodia, East Timor, Sri Lanka, and Papua New Guinea, as well as from the Moro National Liberation Front, we are able to shed light on how post-war reconstruction processes influence the reconfiguration of gender roles and positions in the wake of war, and how women’s actions shaped or are shaping the construction of post-war social, economic and political structures.

We, the women of Mindanao,

Recalling UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that specifically addresses the impact of war on women, and women’s contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace;

Recalling also the commitments of the Beijing Platform Platform for Action and the outcome document of the 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first century”, in particular those concerning women and armed conflict;

Bearing in mind that in a world of continuing instability and violence, the implementation of cooperative approaches to peace and security is urgently needed;

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peace-building in their homes and in their communities;

Reaffirming also the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights laws that protect women and girls during and after conflicts;

Recognizing that by understanding the impact of armed conflict on women and children, effective institutional arrangements that guarantee their protection can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of peace and security;

Expressing our concern that the armed conflicts in Mindanao has resulted in immense social, political and economic disruption, affecting women and children most adversely; and

Expressing further our concern that women's social, political and economic marginalization may continue even after a peace agreement is reached because of the absence of appropriate interventions for improving their positions as a result of the changed situation;

We, therefore, commit ourselves collectively to undertake two actions:

- 1) mount a DISARMAMENT CAMPAIGN to reduce, if not the eliminate violence in our communities and families, by ridding our communities of firearms the use of which has bred a pervasive culture of violence; and
- 2) take a lead role in reducing violence wrought by *rido* which not only severely affects women and their children but also, oftentimes, leads to the escalation of violence to the level of the government armed forces and the MILF, thus fueling the armed conflict.

We also

Urge the President of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) to immediately appoint two women to fill the vacant slots in the Government of the Republic of the Philippines panel negotiating peace with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF);

Strongly urge the leaders of the MILF to ensure the meaningful participation of women in peace making and peace building, including membership in the technical committees and implementing structures;

Call on both the GRP and the MILF, when negotiating and implementing the Peace Agreement, to adopt a gender perspective that will consider (a) measures to ensure the protection and respect for human rights of women and girls, (b) support women's peace

initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, (c) increasing women's access to resources for reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation;

Call for both peace panels to approve the creation of a separate Fund for Women in their peace agreement as already recommended by the Mindanao Commission on Women;

Urge the peace panels, national government, local government units, donor agencies, the military, the legislature and judiciary and other sectors of society to adopt the attached policies and programs earnestly recommended by this Conference.

Adopted this 10th day of December, 2004 in the City of Davao.