

**STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE COUNCIL OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES
ON THE GPH-MILF PEACE TALKS | March 27, 2013**

We give highest honor to God for the continuing progress in the peace negotiation between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

We commend the GPH and the MILF for their commitment to pursue peace through the completion of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro.

We stand behind the statement of President Benigno Simeon Aquino III to reach an inclusive peace process, when he said: "It is important to finish all the annexes, which requires reaching a meeting of the minds on these annexes. This will, in turn, help in the process of crafting a new organic act so that the final outcome will be legislation all stakeholders agree to, and will rally behind."¹

We express satisfaction over the understandings reached at the meeting of the GPH-MILF negotiating panels in Kuala Lumpur on March 25, 2013, namely:²

- Firm and mutual commitment to continue the peace talks in an expeditious manner;
- Discussion of the composition of the Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT);
- Discussion of the composition of the Independent Commission on Policing (ICP);
- Convening of the Transitional Commission in the first week of April 2013;
- Discussion of the Terms of Reference of the Task Force Sajahatra Bangsamoro; and
- Agreement to meet in the second week of April 2013 for the 37th Formal Peace Talks.

We recognize the positive role in the peace negotiation of the Malaysian Government despite the ongoing situation in Sabah.

We will continue to support the GPH-MILF peace negotiation through –

- Prayers for the members of the GPH and MILF peace panels;
- Presence and participation in the actions of the civil society organizations to support the peace talks;
- Provision of spiritual guidance and nurture to the people affected by the conflict;
- Extension of relief and other assistance to the suffering communities in Mindanao;
- Active leadership and involvement in the transformation of communities in Mindanao; and,
- Public advocacy to achieve peace and reconciliation in Mindanao.

We earnestly call on the GPH and the MILF to stay the path of peace, fulfill their agreements faithfully, and conclude the negotiation as soon as possible to achieve peace and reconciliation in Mindanao.

We strongly urge both sides to exert all efforts to improve the conditions and ensure the protection of the people of Mindanao, who have suffered enormously due to the armed conflict between the GPH and the MILF.

¹ Press Conference after his speech at the 5th Anniversary of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, CAAP Covered Court, Old MIA Road, Pasay City, March 25, 2013.

² GPH-MILF Joint Statement on Special Meeting (<http://www.opapp.gov.ph/news/gph-milf-joint-statement-special-meeting>)