

Summary of “Peace Lens: On the Bangsamoro Power Sharing” roundtable discussion

At the time of the roundtable discussion (27 September 2013) and the writing of this summary, the GPH-MILF Peace Panels are still in the process of discussing on the aspects which will form the Annex on Power Sharing, the reserved powers of the central government; the exclusive powers of the Bangsamoro Government, and the concurrent powers to be shared by both.

Lead discussant *Guamel Alim of the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society/Kadtuntaya Foundation* opined that the operating values in the issue of power-sharing is mutual trust, the development of mechanisms for national unity and reconciliation and the spirit of partnership. For this, it is important that the Bangsamoro government will be given powers which will enable it to address the challenges present in the current ARMM. According to Alim, a framework of unity and reconciliation can be a way for settling the differences between the national government and the Bangsamoro.

The panels are now in a difficult stage of the talks, with two of the remaining annexes, including the one on power sharing, still not having been signed. In light of the possible issues that both panels could consider in their negotiations, the discussions after the talk of the lead discussant Guamel Alim revolved around the following:

The future Bangsamoro government must show a difference. The challenge is on how shared power will address the social inequality, correct injustices and provide genuine development in the Bangsamoro areas. Institutions that will be created should be able to address inequity, corruption, poverty and other social, economic and political ills. This process needs to start with creating institutions that will ensure more democratic way of choosing leaders. This also means changing people's mindsets in terms of what they expect from the new Bangsamoro government and its institutions.

To look at power-sharing on the horizontal level. The relationship between the national government and the regional non-state actors can be expected to improve after the signing of the agreement (vertical relationship). The potentially more critical relationship is the horizontal level. Thus, aside from looking at the sharing of powers at the vertical level (between the Central Government and the Bangsamoro Government), there is a need to reflect on how the unity and sharing of powers could also be possible among the Bangsamoro people, i.e., the Maranaos, Tausugs, Maguindanaos, Iranuns, and other non-Moro groups. The new Bangsamoro government should ensure that there will be no group monopolizing the governance structure. In the same way, there should be a conscious effort to ensure that the dividends of the peace process will be enjoyed by all people in the Bangsamoro.

Building Bangsamoro unity as a condition for national reconciliation. How would you bring these leaders and stakeholders together so that they have a common agenda for the Bangsamoro people? The first ten to 20 years of the Bangsamoro government will have a lot to do with building the foundation for unity and reconciliation which means efforts related to reconstruction, rehabilitation, narrowing the prejudices among the people.

Reforming traditional leadership in the Bangsamoro governance structure. The Bangsamoro government would need to appreciate the positive aspects of traditional leadership and reform it with ingredients of the new form of ministerial (or parliamentary) government. In reality, the traditional leaders still hold the greater influence in terms of number of followers who will support them.

Dominance of a single school of thought in Islam. There are growing concerns among groups who are practicing other school of thought in Islam, like Sufi, that they might be marginalized when the Bangsamoro government will be established since the MILF adheres to one particular school of thought in Islam which might increase in its dominance. There are fears that in the next years, as much as half of the cultural practices might become extinct because a particular school of thought in Islam could dominate the Bangsamoro areas.

How can indigenous peoples' rights in the Bangsamoro areas be respected in the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL)? With the ARMM at the moment, there is no legal impediment for the implementation of IPRA in the ARMM. At the moment, there are efforts being done to delineate the territories of the Teduray-Dulangan-Lambangian tribes in the ARMM. If this will happen, will the delineation be respected in the BBL? Can they continue to practice their traditional governance and judicial system? Or will they be subsumed in the Bangsamoro governance?

A lot of research has been done to surface issues of IPs in the Bangsamoro areas. In these attempts of IPs to express their voices and assert for their rights, they were being heard of but most of their documents, statements and petitions are always being considered as informal documents.

The FAB says that the rights of the IPs be respected but without clear mechanisms how it will be done. Specifying these mechanisms in the basic law might make things more clear. Another way could be through adopting in the basic law the definition of the IP and the ancestral domain from the IPRA. The IP members who are in the Bangsamoro Transition Commission could see how they can be harmonized or they can opt to let their traditional governance and justice systems operate independently.

Rethinking of the Filipino identity? The construction of the Filipino identity so far tended to prevail over other sub-identities present throughout the countries. With the future Bangsamoro making a clear reference to the identity of its people in the region's name, there could be a window of opportunity to rethink the Filipino identity from a perspective of unity in diversity.

Bangsamoro as a strong regional government. A key element of strong regional government is that the delivery of services rests at the regional level. If the Bangsamoro will become successful in this, it could also become a model for governance reforms and revisiting the federalism discourse in the whole country.

Video of Guiamel Alim's talk available for viewing at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyR-5AfVqNM>

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