

**DILIMAN GOVERNANCE FORUM /
PHILIPPINE COUNCIL FOR ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY FORUM**

***Political and Governance Options for the Bangsamoro:
Autonomy, Federalism and Independence***

Rationale

Bound by a common faith and distinct culture, the Bangsamoro people have long been engaged in the struggle for self-determination as a way to achieve lasting peace, stability and development in the Mindanao region. The struggle for self-determination dates back to the colonial period when the Bangsamoro resisted fiercely attempts at pacification and integration by the colonial masters. Unfortunately, after the country gained independence, the Bangsamoro's struggle has carried on in the form of armed conflict between the military and armed factions of the Bangsamoro resulting in a shaky peace and order situation and political and economic displacements of the people.

Amidst the tensions and widespread poverty in the south, the Bangsamoro are confronted with three possible political and governance options, namely, autonomy, federalism, and independence. Since the mid-1970s, the government and Bangsamoro through legislations and ensuing plebiscites have agreed on the autonomy option as a path towards self-determination. Yet, after years of experimenting with it, peace, stability and economic development have remained elusive. Current political developments, especially the looming possibility of a Charter Change have paved the way for federalism as another possible politico-governance option for the Bangsamoro. It promises yet expanded powers and authority to federated regions but still within the metes and bounds of the Constitution. The third option has remained to be independence especially for those who have firmly believed that only through a separate Bangsamoro Republic founded on the tenets of Islam can self-determination effectively prevail.

The 13th Diliman Governance Forum (DGF) with the theme *Political and Governance Options for the Bangsamoro: Autonomy, Federalism and Independence* is jointly organized by the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) and Institute of Islamic Studies of the University of the Philippines (UP) and Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy, with sponsorship from the Asia Foundation and United Nations Development Programme, and in collaboration with the Magbasa Kita Foundation.

Objectives

The 13th DGF aims to explore the rationale, principles and implications on each of the political and governance options, namely, autonomy, federalism and independence, in the continuing struggle for self-determination as a way towards lasting peace, stability and development of the Bangsamoro in Mindanao. Likewise, it aims to provide a venue for the articulation of views, opinions, analysis and insights on the possible form and

content of the enabling law and implementing guidelines governing any or a combination of these options. Moreover, it aims to bring the proceedings and records of the forum to a wider audience, specifically the policymakers in the hope that they can use them as reference in crafting policy solutions in Mindanao and the ordinary people who need authentic and unbiased information so that they can participate effectively in building a consensus towards their future.

Methodology

Three distinguished scholars have been invited to speak on each of the three options. An open forum will follow the paper presentations. Invited participants include the government agencies, academe, civil society, private sector, political leaders, Islamic embassies, foreign funding institutions, private sector, and press.

Venue and Schedule

The 13th Diliman Governance Forum will be held at the Assembly Hall, NCPAG, UP Diliman, Quezon City on 28 July 2006 at 9-12 in the morning.

Expected Output

Proceedings of the paper presentations and ensuing open forum will be prepared and edited. They can be accessed as reference materials in classes, researches and other related undertakings as well as possible publication in the future.