AHOD “AL HAJ MURAD” BALAWAG Ebrahím

Chief Minister of Bangsamoro Government
The creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has ushered in a new phase in the history of the Bangsamoro people. Today we rise from the ashes of a protracted war that has ravaged our land, depleted the strength of our people, and taken away precious time and opportunities from our children.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has taken the cudgel to bring the Moro struggle to a new era. A time of genuine self-determination and moral governance. While the stronger autonomy has liberated us from clutches of the remnants of colonialism, moral governance will free us from corruption and incompetence that is could tear us from within. This is the new Bangsamoro.

An essential part of moral governance is transparency. The Bangsamoro government will have to engage our people in a genuine democracy.

The Parliament represents the various stakeholders of peace and development in the Bangsamoro society. Our people and the rest of the world will be watching us as they expect more from us than the previous autonomous government.

I congratulate the editorial staff for coming up with this Parliament magazine. It is an invaluable tool to let the people know the workings and accomplishments of the Parliament in the pursuit of moral governance for peace and prosperity of the Bangsamoro. May the almighty Allah grant us the moral and spiritual strength to face the new and greater challenges ahead.

Wassalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi taala wa barakatoh.

AHOD BALAWAG EBRAIM
Chief Minister

The Bangsamoro Parliament, the first of its kind in our history as an unconquered people, is the litmus test of the Bangsamoro’s ability to chart its own destiny through peaceful and democratic governance. Still a few months in the transition period, the Parliament cannot afford to lose precious time in addressing the socio-economic and political development needs of the Bangsamoro thorough relevant policy and legislative interventions.

Our people will be expecting more from the Parliament, and the entire BARMM government as a whole, as we pledge to provide moral governance as the bedrock of our pursuit of meaningful autonomy for self-determination. We therefore have to pass the legislations necessary to fast track the normalization process and the strengthening of our democratic institutions.

If we are to succeed in governance, we have to win the hearts and minds of our people. We have to adopt a policy of transparency as a gateway for government-people partnership.

This maiden issue of The Parliament Magazine, coming out under my watch as the first Speaker, is a powerful tool for public information on the workings of this august body. I commend the magazine editorial staff for this initiative. This is a welcome addition to our efforts to bring the Parliament close to the people.

ATTY. ALI PANGALIAN M. BALINDONG
Speaker
fully operating Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) government is likely to happen next year following the approval of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament Friday, November 28 of the region’s 65.6 billion pesos budget for the fiscal year 2020.

BTA Cabinet Bill No. 31 entitled, “An Act appropriating funds for the operation of the Bangsamoro Government from January 1 to December 31, 2020, and other purposes” was approved by 48 members of the parliament who voted yes, 1 voted for no, while 5 abstained from voting.

Now signed by Chief Minister Ebrahim, the Bangsamoro Appropriations Act of 2020 is one of the most significant legislations of the BTA Parliament since it contains priority plans, programs, and projects of the infant Bangsamoro region.

The chief minister said, “Hindi ito para sa akin, hindi para sa mga ministers. [This is not for me. This is not for the ministers. This is for the Bangsamoro people.]”

Ebrahim stressed the success of this endeavor was the fruit of the more than five decades of struggle of the Bangsamoro.

In an earlier interview, Spokesman Naguib G. Sinarimbo stressed the urgency on the passage of the budget before the year ends to avoid disruption in government operation.

“If we fail to make appointments and comply with the publication requirements of the positions within December, we will have a situation where we will not have a government operating by January 2020, and we don’t want that to happen,” Sinarimbo said.

To date, the Bangsamoro region has 19 ministries and offices sharing for the 2020 budget: the Office of the Chief Minister; Office of the Wali; Bangsamoro Transition Authority; Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission; and the ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform; Basic, Higher and Technical Education; Environment, Natural Resources and Energy; Finance, Budget and Management; Health; Indigenous People’s Affairs; Interior and Local Government; Labor and Employment; Human Settlements and Development; Public Order and Safety; Public Works; Science and Technology; Social Services and Development; Trade, Investment and Tourism; and the Transportation and Communication. (GALao, BTA Parliament)
The Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament takes cohesive approach in giving aid to areas of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) under community quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members of the 80-seat BARMM parliament have spearheaded their respective dispersals of relief foods and basic medical supplies to their constituents affected by provincial lockdowns.

Residents of Boliao in Cotabato City and select barangays of Datu Odin Sinsuat on April 02 received food packs through the “Serbisyon Bangsamoro” program, an initiative of Education Minister Mohagher M. Iqbal and Health Deputy Minister Dr. Zul Qarney M. Abas. A day after, poor families of the Bangsamoro Communication Network or BCN – Cotabato City chapter also received food packs from the same program.

“It has been weeks since the Government of the Philippines (GPH), the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Government, and our respective local government units (LGUs) impelled critical measures to contain the spread of the Coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19. The urgency of the situation has obliged us to make adjustments in our daily lives, such as the closing of businesses, observance of physical distancing, postponement of social gatherings, including commemorations and activities related to the peace process and the imposition of checkpoints, curfews and community quarantines,” Iqbal said in a statement.

Iqbal said that the threat of COVID-19 has also affected vital peacebuilding efforts in conflict-affected areas, including those assisted by our longtime partners and friends in the Bangsamoro peace process.

“Despite the challenges and limitations brought by COVID-19, we assure you that we will work together in slowing the spread and flatten the curve of this pandemic,” Iqbal stressed.

In a separate interview, MP Maisara Dandamun-Latiph said that her volunteers have so far delivered 1,770 food packs and 1,060 hygiene kits to families and individuals within and outside BARMM.

Another lady Member of the Parliament Sittie Shahara “Dimple” Mastura distributed a whopping 19,000 dressed chickens to her constituents in the municipality of Sultan Kudarat.

This effort of the lady MP is in partnership with her husband, Mayor Datu Shameem B. Mastura. The couple also provides local residents with a daily supply of fresh vegetables.

“These fresh vegetables coming from our very own farmers in Sultan Kudarat are repacked for distribution to our constituents. We responded by urging the people to eat healthier especially during these times. Good thing, our farmers are also happy because even in this time of crisis they are still earning,” Mastura said.

As an act of care for the safety and protection of our front liners, the Office of MP Diamla Ramos conducted last April 02 the distribution of face shields to brave front liners such as health workers, BPATs, police, police mobile and army of Poblacion 6, Poblacion 7, Mother Barangay Poblacion, RH 1, RH 6, RH 7 and RH 10 in Cotabato City.

On April 5, face shields were distributed to front liners from 1st Maguindanao Provincial Mobile Force Company (MPMFC) in Datu Odin Sinsuat (DOS) and Barangay RH 8 of Cotabato City. Ramos also served the health workers with close to 500 packed lunches at the start of her dispersal.

Furthermore, MP Khadafeh Mangudadatu also gave lunch packs to front liners in Cotabato City and food packs to Pandag and other select towns in Maguindanao. The Member of the Parliament also distributed 200 facial masks, 50 PPE suits and 48 Alcohol donated by Sen. Christopher Bong Go.

Last March 31, the Office of MP Haron M. Abas extended food packs to some Barangay LGUs in Cotabato City and to...
NORTH COTABATO TURNS OVER 63 BARANGAYS TO BARMM

The province of North Cotabato officially turned over on Wednesday, November 20 the 63 barangays from its six towns to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) that previously voted yes to inclusion during a plebiscite held in February 2019.

The turn-over ceremony was headed by BARMM Chief Minister Ahod Balawag Ebrahim together with North Cotabato Acting Governor Emmylou “Lala” Taliño-Mendoza. Ebrahim received the symbolic “key of responsibility” from Mendoza during simple rites held at the Shariff Kabunsuan Cultural Complex.

They were joined by Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Deputy Speaker Hatimil Hassan and Ministry of Basic Higher and Technical Education Minister Mohagher Iqbal with Acting Vice-Governor Shirlyn Macasarte-Villanueva and first district Board Member Mohammad Kelie Antao.

The historical event, viewed as another milestone to the BARMM government, was also witnessed by various BARMM officials, employees and partner organizations. Earlier, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of North Cotabato has adopted a resolution to turn over 63 out of 67 barangays to the BARMM which opted to join the expanded Bangsamoro Autonomous Region. These barangays are located in the municipalities of Aleosan, Carmen, Kabacan, Midsayap, Pigcawayan and Pikit.

These are: Dunguan and Tapodoc in Aleosan; Kibayao, Kitulaan, Langogan, Manarapan, Nasapian, Pebpoloan and Tupig in Carmen; Buluan, Nanga-an, Pedtad, Sang gadong, Simbuhay, Simone and Taped in Kabacan; Damatulan, Kadingilan, Kapinpilan, Kudarangan, Central Labas, Malingao, Mudseng, Nabalawag, Olandang, Sambulawan, Tugal and Tumbras in Midsayap; Lower Baguer, Balacayon, Buricain, Datu Binasing, Datu Mantil, Kadingilan, LibunganTorreta, Matilac, Lower Pangangkalan, Upper Pangangkalan, Patand Simsiman in Pigcawayan; and Bagoinged, S. Balong, S. Balongis, Batulawan, Buliok, Gokotan, Kabasalan, Lagunde, Macabual, Macasendeq, Barangis, Bualan, Bulol, Fort Pikit, Gligli, Manaulanan, Nabundas, Nalapaan, Nunguan, Pamalain, Panicupan and Rajah Muda in Pikit.

NOT ABOUT SEPARATION, BUT JOINING TOGETHER

Minister Naguib G. Sinarimbo of the Ministry of the Interior and Local Government (MILG) expressed in his opening remarks that he is honored to receive the 63 barangays from North Cotabato.

“In behalf of the regional government and the people of the Bangsamoro, we welcome you here. We are extremely happy to work with the acting provincial governor of North Cotabato. Thank you for the very good partnership before, during and after the plebiscite. We shall forever treasure the assistance you have extended to us and we are truly grateful,” he emphasized.

Sinarimbo said that more than 40 years ago, the empire Cotabato province was subdivided into several provinces. The Cotabato Empire, established in 1914 was dissolved in 1973 through Presidential Decree 341 issued by then President Fer...
In the pursuit of offering excellent delivery of public services in the Bangsamoro Region, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) BTA Parliament conducted a three-day training on ‘Parliamentary Rules and Procedures’ for its members and chiefs of staff on February 22 to 24, this city.

BTA Secretary-General Professor Raby Angkal said that the training was designed on the basis of Bangsamoro Government’s objectives, efforts and struggle to help attain the Chief Minister’s ‘Moral Governance’ in the BARMM.

Angkal also said that the training aimed at better understanding the basic concepts in parliament, composition in the parliament, and parliament related legislation and documents, among others.

The resource persons of the activity were Muhamad Jujairi Abdullah and Augustine Leonard, Secretary of the Senate and Research Officer of the Parliament of Malaysia, respectively, and Dr. Muhamad Sayuti, Senior Lecturer in the Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), Malaysia.

Meanwhile, BARMM Chief Minister Ahod “Al Haj Murad” Ebrahim expressed his gratitude to the Malaysian delegates in his speech read on his behalf by BARMM Executive Secretary Abdulraof Macacua.

“I would like to thank our Malaysian brothers who sincerely and dedicatedly help us in enhancing our capability in the field of legislation and for sharing with us the Malaysian setting on legislation matters,” the Chief Minister said.

“We are grateful that we are now seeing our colleagues in the BTA discuss and debate over issues that truly affect our homeland. We are now seeing a government that’s truly transparent and competent to carry out issues that have been long ignored,” he added.

The training was conducted in partnership with The Asia Foundation (TAF) and supported by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Australian Government through its project the “Cohesion, Advocacy, Resilience, and Expansive Engagement (CARE) for Peace. (RSolaiman, BTA Parliament)
The Flag of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) proudly waves in the sky, announcing the birth of a new era for the Bangsamoro people.

The official Emblem, prominently displayed in the institutions and offices, gives the imposing presence of the BARMM and the unequivocal assurance of moral governance under the leadership of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The BARMM Hymn, graceful yet forceful, gives inspiration to a gallant people whose aspiration for self-determination is an ever-burning fire.

The Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) approved in separate sessions passed Bangsamoro Autonomy Act (BAA) No. 1, BAA No. 2, and BAA No. 7, adopting the Bangsamoro Flag, Seal and Hymn, respectively.

The Bangsamoro Flag, Seal and Hymn are “reflective of its peoples’ identity, history, heritage, struggles, and aspirations.”

### THE BANGSAMORO FLAG

The Bangsamoro Flag was adopted on August 28, 2019. It symbolizes the “Bangsamoro people’s struggle and aspirations.”

The law provided for the description and interpretation of the Bangsamoro Flag, which contains “four distinctive colors, a Crescent, a seven-rayed Star, and a Kris.”

The green top side portion of the whole length of the Bangsamoro Flag “reflects the Islamic teachings and principles that majority of the population subscribe to.”

The middle white portion of the length of the Bangsamoro Flag “signifies peace, tranquility, and righteousness.”

The red bottom side portion of the whole length of the Bangsamoro Flag “symbolizes the blood of the fallen mujahideen who fought for the identity and self-determination of the Bangsamoro.”

In the middle of the white portion lies the Crescent and seven-rayed Star in golden yellow color. The Crescent “symbolizes the principles that guided the Bangsamoro who struggled for self-determination.”

The seven-rayed Star represents BARMM’s component five provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi; Cotabato City; and the other geographic areas that compose the Bangsamoro territory. The golden yellow Crescent and Star “signify the bright future that awaits the Bangsamoro.”

In the middle of the red portion is the Kris, in white color, which “symbolizes the protection and resistance of the Bangsamoro against oppression, tyranny, and injustice.”

### THE BANGSAMORO SEAL

The Official Seal reflects the policy of the BARMM “to establish itself as a political entity that recognizes the justness and legitimacy of the cause of the Bangsamoro people.”

Section 3 of Cabinet Bill No. 8 provided for the description and interpretation of the Bangsamoro Official Seal. The Seal is in circular design with the phrase “Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao” at the outer portion and the phrase “Official Seal” at the bottom, both inscribed in green.

The outermost part of the Seal is bordered by a golden yellow rope while in its center is a Crescent with a seven-rayed Star to its right, both golden yellow. The Rope “symbolizes unity as inspired by verse 3:103 of the Noble Qur’an which says, ‘Hold tight to the rope of Allah, together. And be not divided.’”

The Crescent “symbolizes the principles that guided the Bangsamoro who struggled for self-determination.”

The seven-rayed Star represents the five (5) provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi; the city of Cotabato; and the other geographic areas that compose the Bangsamoro territory.
BTA-CAD COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT GOES FULL STEAM AHEAD

The Legislative Staff Officers and Administrative Staff of the Committee Affairs Division have been swinging assiduously in their committee works these past months, before the COVID-19 screeched them to a halt—not only them but also the entire BTA parliament, the BARMM bureaucracy and practically the whole country!

Prior to the coronavirus scourge, the committee secretariat steered the course of most committee meetings and hearings within BTA grounds, around Cotabato City or in Marawi City (in the case of the Special Committee on Marawi Crisis).

Aside from the different important pieces of legislation that were crafted last year, there were three noteworthy ones that jumpstarted or later paved the way for some of the activities carried out by the different parliamentary and statutory committees, assisted by the CAD committee secretariat: the consolidation of the different Marawi Resolutions, the FY2020 Bangsamoro Appropriations Act, and the Enhanced BTA Transition Plan for the BARMM.

The first notable activity from last year is the consolidation of the different resolutions related to the Marawi Crisis. Last September 24, 2019, the Sub-Committee on Consolidation of Marawi Resolutions combined Proposed Resolutions No. 24, 28 and 47 into Resolution No. 41, “A Resolution Constituting a Special Committee to Look into the Status of the Marawi Recovery, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation Efforts.” It was adopted by the BTA Parliament during its 19th session on September 26, 2019.

The resulting Special Committee on Marawi have their first public hearing on January 15, 2020 at Ayala, MSU Marawi and January 16, 2020 at Social Hall, Provincial Capitol, Marawi City. During the event, the Committee invited Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and National Government Agencies (NGAs) to shed light on the status of the rehabilitation of Marawi City.

The IDPs expressed their desire to return to their houses located at the ground zero but the government, particularly the Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM), disallows the residents due to the unavailability of basic facilities like water and electricity there. They can, however, repair their houses but still stay at the temporary shelters where basic facilities are available.

The members of the Committee, the secretariat and staff visited the ground zero, after the public hearing. The Special Committee’s second public hearing was held on February 10-12, 2020 at the MSU CHARM Pavilion, MSU Marawi where IDP Camp Leaders, chairmen of the 24 barangays inside the Most Affected Area (MAA) and chairmen of 2 barangays in Less Affected Areas, and other NGAs concerned in the Marawi Rehabilitation were in attendance.

In this hearing, the IDPs requested to check the current status of their areas and urged for the immediate installation of water system, electrical supply and repair of roads in the ground zero, as they noted that no projects have been implemented inside the MAA three years since the Marawi siege. TFBM cited the problem on acquiring land to build the infrastructures needed in the ground zero as one of the reasons why the Marawi rehabilitation was not progressing as expected.

The third public hearing is planned to be held in Cotabato City where BARMM Ministers and International Non-governmental organizations (NGO) would be invited. After this hearing, the Special Committee on Marawi will consolidate all the data they gathered to come up with a recommendation and introduce it to the Bangsamoro Government to supplement the Marawi rehabilitation.

The second one was the Bangsamoro budget deliberations. Right after attending the Office of the Secretary General-sponsored legislative induction seminar entitled Capacity Building for Legislative Staff Officers and Committee Affairs Division last October 28-30, 2019 in Cotabato City—facilitated by committee secretaries from the Philippine Senate and House of Representatives—the newly-minted CAD staff’s baptism of fire were the meetings of the Committee.
A total of 4,014 vulnerable families in the 37 barangays of Cotabato City benefitted from the ‘Kadtag Bangsamoro’ project on March 28.

Kadtag Bangsamoro is a relief assistance initiative that aimed to support the most vulnerable families affected by the pandemic coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis which was organized by the Office of the Majority Floor Leader of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament.

Following the protocol of social distancing, a ceremonial distribution was conducted on March 28 at the office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR).

Lawyer Lanang T. Ali Jr. said they distributed the bulk of the relief goods “to (the) city residents through their respective village chairmen with utmost safety precautions by wearing mask and observing social distancing.”

Every family received five kilograms of rice, one kilogram of sugar and one-fourth kilogram of native coffee.

Kadtag Bangsamoro raised Php 1,155,500 fund as of April 1 from its partners like some members of the Parliament, Office of the Parliament Speaker, Office of the Attorney-General IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, and the League of Bangsamoro Organizations, Incorporated (LBO).

The following distinguished personalities also spoke at the seminar workshop: Ad Hoc Committee Chair MP Atty. Jose Lorena, MP Atty. Anna Tarhata Basman, MP Atty. Rasol Mitmug, MP Bai Intan Adil Ampatuan, Atty. Arlene Dada-Arnaldo and Atty. David Robert Amorin (Deputy Secretaries-General of the Committee Affairs Department and Legislative Operations Department, respectively, of the House of Representatives), Director Jennifer “Jeff” Baquiran (Technical Staff Chief, Committee on Rules of the House of Representatives), Dr. Edna Co (Professor of Public Administration at the University of the Philippines National College of Public Administration and Governance), and Atty. Jose Norel Garong of the House of Representatives Bill Drafting Services.
The Committee on Rules, as well as the other statutory committees, have been prolific in shepherding the lawmaking activities of the BTA. They have guided the deliberations and codification of many relevant laws and adopted several important resolutions.

Among the many bills and resolutions that emanated from the Committee on Rules, its joint sessions with the Committee on Finance, Budget and Management, and Committee on Labor and Employment since last year until recently were the following:


An Act Adopting the Official Emblem for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, approved on August 29, 2019 as BAA No. 2.

An Act Providing for the Mandate, Powers and Functions of the Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for other purposes, approved on December 20, 2019 as BAA No. 4.

An Act Creating the Attorney General’s Office, Defining its Functions and Powers, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Related Purposes, approved on December 27, 2019 as BAA No. 5.

An Act Establishing a Bangsamoro Socio-Economic Planning System, Providing Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes, Approved on December 27, 2019 as BAA No. 6.

An Act Adopting the Official Hymn of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Approved on January 30, 2020 as BAA No. 7.


An Act Regulating the Operations of Local and Foreign Recruitment Agencies within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Approved on February, 2020 as BAA No. 9.

An Act Creating and Establishing the Bangsamoro Youth Commission, Defining its Powers, Functions and Responsibilities, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes, Approved on February 28, 2020 as BAA No. 10.

An Act Promoting the Development of Sports in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, Establishing the Bangsamoro Sports Commission, Providing Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes, Approval as BTA Cabinet Bill No. 27, on second reading and referred to Committee on Rules and Committee on Finance, Budget and Management. (Aliuden Haron, Committee Affairs Division)

The BTA-Cabinet Bill No. 28 or ‘Youth Commission of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Act of 2020’ was authored by BTA member Marjanie S. Macasalong.

BTA member Atty. Anna Tarhata Basman, underscored that the youth should be part of the leadership and governance in the BARMM.

“The purpose of establishing a youth commission is precisely for the representation of the youth, “ Basman said.

Under the bill, the BYC is to plan, implement, and oversee a regional integrated youth promotion and development program and extend and provide support or assistance to deserving youth and youth organizations including scholarship grants, among others.

It is the policy of the Bangsamoro Government to promote and protect the physical, moral, spiritual intellectual, and social well-being of the youth, to inculcate in them patriotism and nationalism, and to encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.

BYC will replace the Office of Bangsamoro Youth Affairs (OBYA), which was created during the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) administration.

(RSolaiman, BTA Parliament)

**VOICE OF THE YOUTH** --- MP Marjanie defends at the session hall the bill creating the youth commission.

The message also stated, “There is truly a special place for our women not only as they regarded as role models in our Islamic tradition, but they are also important figures in our personal lives on a daily basis. It is important that we engage both women and men as co-creators of the new Bangsamoro. I hope that we truly embrace and implement the Magna Carta for Women because we want to set an example of how a bureaucracy runs in consideration of women empowerment and gender equality.”

Meanwhile, other attendees during the activity were lady Members of the Parliament, Atty. Anna Tarhata Basman, Engr. Aida Silongan, Dr. Susana Anayatin and Sittie Shahara Matsu-ra.

The month of March is celebrated annually as “National Women’s Month” pursuant to Proclamation No. 227 series of 1988 and Republic Act 6469 series of 1990. March 06 of every year is declared as National Women’s Day. (GALao, BTA Parliament)
he Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), through its Bangsamoro Women Commission (BWC), officially started the celebration of this year’s National Women’s Month with the theme, “We Make Change Work for Bangsamoro Women”, through a parade last March 2, 2020 inside the BARMM Government Center, this city.

The parade, followed by a program at the Shariff Kabunsuan Cultural Complex (SKCC), was attended by officials and employees of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament together with the different ministries and offices.

In her message, BWC Chairperson and Member of the Parliament Hadja Bainon G. Karon said they want to show the world that the Bangsamoro women of today are stronger despite the challenges.

“We have to celebrate women’s achievements as partners in nation building and regional development. On this note, we invite everyone to participate in the lined-up activities,” Karon said.

Furthermore, Karon stressed that this year’s celebration is more meaningful since 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

In September 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action had an unprecedented 17,000 participants and 30,000 activists streamed into Beijing for the opening of the Fourth World Conference on

Women. They were remarkably diverse, coming from around the globe, but they had a single purpose in mind: gender equality and the empowerment of all women, everywhere.

Twenty years ago, the United Nations Security Council has adopted Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security. The resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

BTA Secretary General Prof. Raby B. Angkal, who represented Speaker Pangalian Balindong, extended his felicitations to all Bangsamoro women for having the “Bangsamoro Women Commission”, which was legally established very recently by virtue of the Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 08, otherwise known as an Act creating the Bangsamoro Women Commission of the BARMM.

“With the Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 08, women in the Bangsamoro are more strengthened and empowered. As they move for a change, they shall aim at excellent result both socially, economically, politically, morally and spiritually,” Angkal said.

On his behalf, Attorney General Sha Elijah Dumama-Alba delivered the keynote message of Chief Minister Ahod Balawag Ibrahim.
Member of Parliament Punduma Sani called for “Compensatory Justice” for those displaced by the 2017 Marawi Siege on February 20, 2020.

In his privilege speech during the regular session of the BTA Parliament, Sani said “the compensatory justice substantiates the non-violent solution to the armed struggle in the country.”

“It [compensatory justice] demands permanent shelter with basic amenities, just compensation of damaged properties, economic recovery and speedy return of IDPs [Internally Displaced Persons] to the most affected area [ground zero],” Sani said.

He emphasized that the psycho-social, health, education and spiritual concerns of the IDPs cannot be relegated to the background as they are part of the holistic recovery.

Sani said, “Internally displaced Maranaos deserve to redeem their human dignity through all feasible and sensible means,” adding, “only then will compensatory justice be truly served and enjoyed by the Marawi IDPs.”

He stressed that permanent solutions should be the rule of the day for them.

Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM)

As Marawi City is within the territorial jurisdiction of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Sani further called on President Rodrigo Duterte to let the BARMM be an integral part of TFBM or should even take over the challenging responsibilities.

“Being a BARMM component, it has the legal right to demand access to all resources available for its progress and development as provided for under the Bangsamoro Organic Law,” Sani said.

TFBM is a government inter-agency task force mandated to facilitate the rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction efforts in Marawi after its siege. (RSolaiman, BTA Parliament)
The Embassy of Japan, together with the United Nations Philippines, successfully hosted the “Bangsamoro Friends Forum” held at the Shariff Kabunsuan Cultural Complex on February 18, 2020.

The event was attended by Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament members, ministers, partner stakeholders, and representatives from the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).

The forum served as venue in sharing key developments related to the Bangsamoro Peace Process and of the BTA in order to identify the needs and the gaps.

For the Normalization Process, topics included the progress of decommissioning, security, socio-economic development, confidence building measures, transitional justice and reconciliation, and the Bangsamoro Normalization Trust Fund (BNTF).

Inter-Governmental Relations (IGR) Body was also tackled, while the BTA covered the First Bangsamoro Development Plan and Development Priorities and the Summary of Budget Appropriation.

Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Japan Yasushi Yamamoto has pledged to continue their full support for the BARMM through projects that will bring greater stability and prosperity in the region.

"Japan will always be devoted to help in the Mindanao peace process," Yamamoto said.

BTA Speaker Pangalian M. Balindong said that the avowed objectives of the BARMM must be centered around a common goal, which is to improve socio-economic condition such as better healthcare, more productive agricultural programs, better roads, bridges, sea and air ports, better educational programs with special program for Madaris and Islamic education, better communication portals and facilities, as well as wider variety of occupational opportunities for those who seek jobs.

"In order to address the needs and gaps encompassing such objectives and its dynamics, we must be able to adopt an achievable, doable, feasible program to address specific challenges and constraints within a specific time frame. If we begin correctly by adopting the appropriate programs and policies, we have by then installed a strong foundation from which succeeding administration of BARMM could base its socio-economic and political platforms," Balindong stressed.

Balindong added that with the steadfast involvement of all the ministries and offices, as well as active participation of international donors and partners, materializing all relevant initia-

"And who is better in religion than one who submits himself to Allah while being a doer of good and follows the religion of Abraham, inclining toward truth? And Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend. “[Quran, 4:125]
Many call him as the “Father of the BOL” for his sacrifices for the passing of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (RA 11054) since its onset as the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law during the 17th Congress.

Ghadzali Jaafar, whose real name is Hajji Salik B. Abu, spent most of his life in preserving the gains of the Bangsamoro people, both as Vice-Chairman for Political Affairs of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and later as Bangsamoro Transition Commission Chairman and member and the Parliament’s choice for its Speaker.

Born on May 6, 1944, Jaafar started as a young revolutionary, mobilizing the youth activism into the guerilla movement. He later became the vice chair of the MILF as it waged for decades a war for independence and later autonomy for the Muslim minority in the only Catholic country in Asia. When the MILF forged a peace agreement with the government of the Republic of the Philippines, Jaafar became one of the most prominent figures in the historic establishment of the Bangsamoro Region, seen to be a huge step towards bringing lasting peace in southern Philippines.

At a young age, Jaafar already showed his revolutionary fervor when he founded a youth group when in high school that nurtured the sense of activism among students and out-of-school youth alike in Cotabato City. Driven by his desire to fight for the rights of the Bangsamoro people, Jaafar dreamed of becoming a lawyer and took up Political Science at the Notre Dame College (which later became Notre Dame University).

Although known for his guerrilla fighter profile, Jaafar was a man of peace. He is recognized in his unwavering pursuit of peace in the Bangsamoro region. Under his leadership, the then rebel group MILF started peace dialogues with the Philippine government starting in 1997.

In 2017, Jaafar was named chairman of the 21-member Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) that was tasked to draft the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) which was widely seen to end the conflict in Mindanao. After two years, in 2018, the draft revised version Bangsamoro Organic Law was passed and Jaafar was appointed speaker of the parliament of the newly established Bangsamoro region.

Jaafar was one of the pioneers of the MILF, a key political personality whose strong character at times put him at odds with his fellow rebel leaders. He passed away just as the MILF was organizing the newly created BARMM -- the fruit of their struggle for decades.

As BTC chairman, Jaafar’s indomitable spirit steered the proposed BOL through Congress until it was passed into law as Republic Act 11054. His astute understanding of national and local political dynamics, coupled with his closeness to Mindanao politicians including President Rodrigo Duterte, allowed Jaafar to overcome the challenges to the BOL, even those coming from his colleagues who did not always agreed to his decisions.

On a more personal note, Jaafar was a good father to his ten children -- two sons and eight daughters -- with Hadja Lucaya Compania Abu. His children are Noraida, currently a director of an NGO; Noraisa Abu-Baraguir; Norhana Abu-Evaristo, who is working at the DSWD; Mujiv, who was appointed as member of the BTA after the death of his father; Antisar Abu; Sandra Abu-Salidatan; Leah; Johari, who is a councilor of Cotabato City; Hunyn, a businesswoman; and Jamela. He is blessed with 18 grandchildren.

Jaafar served as Chair of the MILF Peace negotiating panel from 1996 to 1997. He was First Vice-Chair of the MILF Central Committee and Vice Chair for Political Affairs.

Jaafar will be forever remembered for his contribution to cause of the Bangsamoro homeland and people.

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Members of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority

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YACOB, MOHAMMAD S.  YU EKEY, NARCISO C.  JAFAR, GHADZALI B. (Deceased)  DATAYA, ABDUL (Deceased)
COURTESY VISIT — European Union (EU) delegates visited November 28 the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) to discuss a future project collaboration with the BARMM. Parliament Speaker Ali Pangalian Balindong welcomed the EU delegation led by team leader of the Development Cooperation for South East Asia Ewout Sandker (4th from left) together with head of Development Cooperation Enrico Strampeli, deputy head of Development Cooperation Mr. Louis Dey and programme manager Emily Mercado. They were also joined by some members of the parliament, Majority Leader Atty. Lanang Ali, Jr., Minority Leader Atty. Laisa Masuhud Alamia, Minister of Labor and Employment Romeo K. Sema, MP Rasul E. Esmael and MP Atty. Omar Yasser C. Sema. (GALao with photo by ZSDiolanan)

BTA DENOUNCES POLICE PROFILING OF MUSLIM STUDENTS IN MANILA

The Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) has condemned the discriminatory profiling of Muslim students in Metro Manila by the District Community Affairs and Development Division (DCADD) of the Manila Police District (MPD) through BTA Resolution No. 201 that was passed unanimously on Friday.

The BTA resolution was triggered by the memorandum issued on January 31 upon the direction of Police Brigadier General Bernabe M. Balpa to the DCADD of the MPD, ordering their station commanders to submit lists of Muslim students in high schools, colleges, and universities in Metro Manila.

Author of the resolution, BTA member Amilbahar Mawallil, said that the MPD implies that the young Muslims are potential violent extremists who require more scrutiny and attention from law enforcement group.

“The Muslim youth is subjected to this intrusion due to their religious affiliation, which is a form of discrimination,” Mawallil said.

Mawallil added, “The profiling measure targets young Muslims who enjoy the intended safe spaces provided by these educational institutions.”

“The BTA, a body of multicultural representation, denounces religious and all other forms of discrimination, which it deems disgraceful and unbefitting of any agency of government or personnel thereof,” Mawallil further said.

He also appealed to all public servants and the government institutions to which they belong to be more circumspect in introducing policies so that they promote inclusion and harmony instead of exclusion and disunity. (RSolaiman, BTA Parliament)
BTA CAD (from page 8)

on Finance, Budget and Management, chaired by MP Eduard Uy Guerra. The Legislative Staff Officers (LSOs) and Administrative Staff were assigned separately in the different sub-committees organized under the committee.

The sub-committees were assigned different ministries, as well as the Bangsamoro Transition Authority, Bangsamoro Commission on Human Rights, and the Office of the Chief Minister.

Saifulla V. Sicag and Mohammad Saleh Usman were assigned to the Sub-Committee A chaired by MP Safrullah M. Dipatuan, with the MBHTE, MOST and MIPA. The Sub-Committee B, headed by MP Abdulraof A. Macacua, was given the MPOS, MTIT, and MPW with Monaliza Bansuan and Bai Aleah Lingcob-Ayub as Committee Secretaries. Romaysa T. Angkal and Sittie Sarah Abubakar assisted MP Raissa Jurie, who led the Sub-Committee C that was assigned with the OCM, BHRC and the MFBM.

MP Mohagher Iqbal steered the Sub-Committee D with the MOH, MAFAR, and MHSD assigned to it with secretarial support provided by Arvin Abdon Sirad and Amr Mursalat Gampong, while the MSS, MILG and the BTA defended their budgets at the Sub-Committee D under MP Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong with Aliuddin Haron and Noraida Macapantar providing committee secretarial assistance. Lastly, MP Hussein Munoz spearheaded the budget discussions for the MOTC, MENRE, and the MOLE under the Sub-Committee F, assisted by Juhana Asi and Dari Esmael.

After lengthy deliberations, both at the sub-committee and committee levels, the Committee on Finance, Budget and Management on November 26, 2019 submitted to the plenary BTA Bill No. 31, “An Act Appropriating Funds for the Operation of the Bangsamoro Government from January One to December Thirty-One, Two-Thousand and Twenty and for Other Purposes”. It was approved by the Bangsamoro Parliament during its 25th session on November 29, 2019 as the Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 3.

The total budget for the BARMM for the fiscal year 2020 was ₱65.9 Billion: the source of funds broken down as ₱63.6 Billion (Block Grant), ₱2 Billion (projected as BARMM share in the National taxes within BARMM territories), and ₱282,391,688.46 (as Projected Local Taxes, Fees and Charges).

Shortly after the passing of the Bangsamoro Budget, the Committee on Rules chaired by the Majority Floor Leader started the deliberations on the BTA Transition Plan for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region In Muslim Mindanao on December 11, 2019, with the purpose of enhancing it while the Administrative Code is not yet filed in the Parliament.

The Bangsamoro Administrative Code is a critical piece of priority legislation that shall establish the rules and structures of governance in the BARMM as a regional parliamentary form of government.

Last August 8, 2019, Minister for Local Government Naguib Sinarimbo, who is also the BTA spokesman, said December 2019 was the deadline for the Bangsamoro Transition Authority, sitting as Parliament, to finish deliberating on draft codes, including the Administrative Code. “The directive from the Chief Minister is to complete it (codes) by end of September so that he can file it before the Parliament in early October,” Atty. Sinarimbo said.

Specific groups of Cabinet members or MPs are assigned to draft the respective priority codes. BTA Member Atty. Jose Lorena chaired the Ad hoc Committee on Administrative Code, whose members attended a seminar workshop held at the Marco Polo Hotel in Davao City on July 9-10, 2019 that aimed to equip them with knowledge and skills in drafting the code.

The BTA earlier planned to finalize the priority codes by the end of last year. They are supposed to be implemented this year when the BARMM has its new budget, new structure of the government, and receives its first block grant from the government.

Among the impressive roster of speakers was eminent legal scholar Laureate Professor Emeritus Cheryl Saun-
The Bangsamoro Communities Outside of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BCOBAR) Federation National Chairman Amroding D. Rasul (center) convenes the 2nd BCOBAR-BTA-CSOs Conference Wednesday, March 04 to further discuss the creation of the Office of the BCOBAR. He is joined in this photo by Office of the Parliament Speaker (OPS) Representative Norhaine Candao (right) and Bangsamoro Overseas Focal Person Roy Tamano (left). (MAMaguid, BTA Parliament)

The Bangsamoro Communities Outside of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BCOBAR) Federation together with the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament and select non-government organizations successfully conducted its second conference last March 04, 2020 held at the BTA Executive Lounge, Bangsamoro Government Center, this city.

The conference was led by BCOBAR National Chairman Amroding D. Rasul together with Parliament Speaker Representative Norhaine Candao and Civil Society Organizations Representative Selahuddin Yu Hashim of The Moropreneur, Inc.

The one-day activity discussed matters pertaining to the proposed issuance of the Executive Order by the Chief Minister creating the Office of the Bangsamoro Communities outside of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BCOBAR) and the Bill No. 15 authored by lawyer and Member of the Parliament (MP) Maisara C. Dandamun-Latiph and co-authored by MP Abdullah G. Macapaar.

MP Latiph has filed a bill late last year seeking to create a regional office that will address the needs of Bangsamoro communities outside the territory.

Bill No. 15 is "An act creating the Office of the Bangsamoro Communities Outside Bangsamoro Autonomous Region defining its powers, functions and responsibilities and appropriating funds therefor and for other purpose."

In a separate interview, Latiph said "the assistance to the Bangsamoro communities outside BARMM should not be optional."

Prior to the conference, BCOBAR and the CSOs look forward to the enactment of Bill No. 15 into law rather than pushing for an Executive Order.

Selahuddin Yu Hashim, Chief Executive Officer of The Moropreneur expressed optimism on Bill No. 15.

"Inshaallah, the bill shall be enacted into law soon and we hope it won’t take too long," Hashim said.

BCOBAR Federation National Chairman Amroding D. Rasul stressed to the members of the federation of their support even prior to the creation of the Bangsamoro Authority Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

“We have the bill now at least. Even before the Bangsamoro Organic Law and the Bangsamoro Basic Law, we’re already here since we are Mujahideens. Let us look back and let us not forget that. This endeavor is for the benefit of the Bangsamoro communities outside BARMN,” Rasul said.

Rasul also pointed out the very reason why they are in Mindanao and that is “to help their fellow Bangsamoro”.

“They needed our help. We must understand the reason why we are here and it is for the welfare of the Bangsamoro people,” Rasul added.

MP Latiph, who later joined the conference via phone patch, said the BTA Parliament fast tracks Bill No. 15 and she “believes it is also being supported by the chief minister.”
The Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) has called on the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to immediately cause the turn-over of Cotabato City to the Bangsamoro Government under the supervision of the Ministry of Local Government (MLG).

The BTA, through the Resolution No. 197 it passed last February 21, 2020, said the turn-over of Cotabato City is pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act 11054 or the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL).

The said resolution quoted Paragraph d Section 3 of the Article XV of the BOL which provides that “the city of Cotabato shall form part of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region if the majority of the votes cast in the city shall be in favor of its inclusion.”

It can be recalled that the people of Cotabato City affirmed its inclusion in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in the January 21, 2019 plebiscite with 36,682 ‘Yes’ votes versus 24,994 ‘No’ votes.

On January 25, 2019, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) sitting as National Plebiscite Board of Canvassers proclaimed and certified the results of the plebiscite for the ratification and inclusion of Cotabato City in BARMM.

Lawyer Naguib Sinarimbo, the MLG minister and BARMM spokesperson, said “since Cotabato City by virtue of the plebiscite has been constituted as part and parcel of the BARMM, no executive action may detach it from the autonomous region.”

“Under the law, the inclusion of Cotabato City is automatic and mandatory. No further action is needed and when people have spoken, it must be carried out,” Sinarimbo said. (RSolaiman, BTA Parliament)

BTA GIVES (from page 4)

the Special Forces Company Headquarters that were distributed to front liners manning the entry and exit points of the city.

“To our brave front liners, Shukran for your efforts and sacrifices in fighting COVID-19 and saving humanity. May Almighty Allah bless you with multi-fold and may He keep you and your families away from harm,” said Abas.


Earlier, it was learned that MPs from Lanao areas have contributed financially to provide the basic needs of vulnerable individuals in the province.

MP Hamid Barra gave 10 kilos of rice and 1,000 cash to select residents of Marawi City. MP Musa Diamla gave relief packs while MP Mohammad Bato spearheaded the distribution of medical supplies to select barangays of Lanao del Sur.

In addition, the Office of MP Abdullah “Commander Bravo” Macapaar distributed 10 kilos of rice plus five hundred pesos in cash to at least one hundred (100) families of Marawi City. During the distribution, they were assisted by the Office of MP Said Sheik.

On the other hand, the Office of MP Marjanie Macasalong delivered last April 06 relief goods to the most vulnerable sectors of Taraka, Lanao del Sur. Each family received 10 kilos of rice plus 500 pesos.

Last March 27, the Bangsamoro- Rapid Emergency Action on Disaster Incidence (READi) together with the Office of Deputy Chief Minister Alee Ali B. Solaaiman and Office of MP Macasalong turned over some medical supplies to Amai Pakpak Medical Center in Marawi City.

Medical supplies included face mask, alcohol, hand wash, hand sanitizer, thermal scanner, disposable hazardous material suit, reusable hazardous material suit, face shield, working gloves and goggles.

Meanwhile, a total of 4,014 vulnerable families in the 37 barangays of Cotabato City benefitted from the ‘Kadtag Bangsamoro’, a relief assistance program initiative of the Office of the BTA Majority Floor Leader Lanang Ali, Jr.

The program aims to support the most vulnerable families adversely affected by the COVID-19 lockdown within the BARMM.

Every family received five kilograms of rice, one kilogram of sugar and one-fourth kilogram of native coffee.

Kadtag Bangsamoro partners included some members of the Parliament, Office of the Parliament Speaker, Office of the Attorney-General, IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, and the League of Bangsamoro Organizations, Incorporated (LBO).
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT UNDERGO LEARNING SESSIONS ON ‘REVENUE CODE’

With the objective to further increase understanding about the revenue code, Members of the Parliament (MPs) of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) underwent learning sessions on the internal revenue code (IRC) from October 28-30 held at Seda hotel, this city.

This project is a partnership between three institutions, the University of the Philippines (UP) Law Center, Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU or also known as OPAPP), and the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA).

Resource speaker Atty. Abdel Jamal Disangcopan of the University of the Philippines (UP) Law Center said the two-batch learning session aims to introduce key legal and taxation principles.

“This activity served as venue for Members of the Parliament to share their experiences and drawing out their insights in the Bangsamoro context,” Disangcopan said.

Pangalian Ali M. Balindong, Speaker of the Parliament, said the learning sessions have shown deepened interest and engagement between and among the BTA MPs to comprehensively deal with the IRC. “The learning sessions were very helpful since it is one of the eight priority legislations of the BTA as provided in RA 11054. It was also a good opportunity for the MPs to further acquire essential skills in their role as legislators,” Balindong said.

As legislators, the MPs are given the authority to draft and deliberate on the IRC of BARMM as a priority legislative output of the BTA Parliament.

Furthermore, topics discoursed include Taxation in the Philippines, Capacitating the persons who carry out the legislative mandate of the BTA Parliament, Islamic Finance, Leadership and Good Governance in Islam, and the Natural Wealth Vis-à-vis the Internal Revenue Code of the BARMM.

The recently concluded session covered the first batch of participants. At present, there is an ongoing activity for the second set of participants, this time in Manila scheduled from November 4-6. (GALao, BTA Parliament)
BARMM PRESENTS ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC)

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) presented Wednesday, January 29 the accomplishments of the infant region to contingents of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) during their visit to the office of the Chief Minister.

BARMM Chief Minister Ahod Balawag Ebrahim together with Speaker Pangalian Balindong and cabinet members, met with the delegates from the OIC to discuss the current situation and achievements of the Bangsamoro Government since its inception in 2019.

The OIC delegates were composed of Dr. Hassan Abedin, Datuk Ibrahim Bin Abdullah, and Mr. El Habib Bourane.

During the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Asnin Pendatun reported the major accomplishments of the Bangsamoro Government for 2019.

Some of the notable accomplishments include the call for moral governance, approval and implementation of the transition plan, strengthened revenue collections, launching of BARMM full disclosure policy portal, Project TABANG (Tulong Alay sa Bangsamorong Nangangailangan), BARMM READI (Rapid Emergency Action on Disaster Incidence), “Kapihan sa Bangsamoro”, Radyo Bangsamoro, Integration of Shariah Bar, First Bangsamoro Energy Forum, BARMM war against the resurgence of polio virus, campaign to end violence against women, BARMM Tourism Stakeholders Forum, Messaging Peace Hub, BARMM sets high investments record, AMBAG (Ayudang Medikal Mula sa Bangsamoro Government) Program, Wage hike in the BARMM region, BARMM pushes for a more child friendly government, intergovernmental relations, launching of Bangsamoro Job Portal, capacity building for individuals and institutions, Integrated Bangsamoro Greening Program, implementation of quick impact projects, official turn-over of the 63 barangays located in North Cotabato, first BARMM Athletic Association (BARMAA), and the Bridging religion and medicine through launching of Fatwa on reproductive health and family planning.

For the part of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament, the Bangsamoro Seal, Bangsamoro Flag, Bangsamoro Appropriations Act, Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission, Bangsamoro Attorney General’s Office and the Bangsamoro Planning and Development Authority formed part of the enacted key legislations.

In a statement, Ibrahim said the Bangsamoro government declared its four major priorities.

“The four major priorities include education, health and medical services, social services and infrastructure programs,” Ibrahim said.

The OIC is an international organization founded on September 1969, which endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world. (GALao, OPS, BTA Parliament)

MESSAGE (from page 30)
in the Bangsamoro Government are made worthy of the trust reposed in us.

As we are just starting, there is so much for us to do to attain the ideal in so short a time. We begin by recognizing our differences as a people with diverse cultures and only by accepting those differences are we able to appreciate each other and open ourselves to the opportunity where we can all converge and unite above our tribes and political affiliations towards a common goal. Multiplicity in cultures and perspectives is a rich resource that can provide us with the most insightful of ideas once optimized through brokerage of dialogues and other meaningful exchanges. Diversity of viewpoints helps strengthen cultural and political growth and should be embraced and promoted as we fight against mutual prejudices, bigotry and hatred. We will not allow our experience as a people who have suffered to embitter us into closing our walls against the rest of the society. We can come out, as we are now coming out, to stand up for ourselves and to live harmoniously with each other amidst our diversity. What we can achieve through the Parliament is as great as the concerted efforts all of us can dedicate to and with a renewed determination to uplift that name that has been used for a long time to bear the fullest and truest nature of our identity, the Bangsamoro.
The Bangsamoro government steps another milestone following the visit of Consul General Yoshiaki Miwa to the Office of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament Speaker Thursday, January 30, 2020.

Miwa, who is the first Consul General of the Japan's Consulate General Office in Davao City was warmly received by Speaker Pangalian M. Balindong.

In his statement, Miwa proudly announced that from a simple Consular Office, the Japanese government has now upgraded to Consulate General since January 05, 2019.

Among the substantial benefits of the consulate general is the visa processing operations, where Mindanaoans including the Bangsamoro people and foreigners in Mindanao won’t be hassled by going to Manila to apply and process their Japanese visas. It covers the twenty-seven (27) provinces and thirty-three (33) cities of Mindanao.

“It’s an honor to serve Mindanao most especially the Bangsamoro, and that is why we upgraded from a simple Consular Office to Consulate General. The name is almost the same but organization-wise, it’s totally different. Now, we are directly connected to our headquarters,” Miwa emphasized.

Balindong expressed his gratefulness to the Japanese government for all the assistance they have extended most especially in this part of the country.

“I have never doubted your capability. We will forever be thankful to the Japanese people,” Balindong said.

Miwa replied when he thinks of the future, ‘the two government should be great partners’.

“We are Asian countries so we should be helping each other. Our intention is to strengthen our partnership with this region since you have established now the BTA. This is very vital for you to create a new stable system,” Miwa stressed.

During the opening of the Consulate General’s office last year, one of the guests was Moro Islamic Liberation Front chairman Al Hajj Murad Ibrahim.

It can be recalled that Japan is one of the countries strongly supporting the peace process in Mindanao and had been consistently supporting sustainable economic development of the Philippines.

Japan’s record of unfailing support for Mindanao spanning the peace process, development assistance, investments and cultural engagement has been unrivaled.

Today, the consulate general provides opportunities to further develop friendship between two countries since it is going to serve the people of Mindanao for many years to come. (GALao, BTA Parliament)

BRcebAR (from page 20)

“What we’ve talked about is a law and not just an Executive Order,” Latiph stressed.

Turn out of votes of members of the federation on whether they would want to push or cancel the request of an Executive Order (EO) favored to “cancel the request of EO”.

Accordingly, the bill gives life to Article VI, Section 12 of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), which urges the Bangsamoro government to enhance the economic, social, and cultural development of Bangsamoro people living outside the main BARMM dominion in Mindanao.

It was also learned that the BCOBAR Federation maintains an online database of profiles of communities and the policies and issues that pertain to them. The knowledge product created can guide policy makers and project proponents in designing initiatives for the welfare of BCOBAR. (GALao, BTA Parliament)
The Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) inaugurated on March 29, 2019 almost a month after the turn-over ceremony from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) on February 26, 2020.

The first year of the BARMM has been a challenge for everybody especially with the Parliament whose role is to make the necessary laws to make sure that the foundation of the Region is solid.

The BTA has, then, held 33 plenary sessions and several committee meetings – filing 46 bills and 227 resolutions. As of date, the august body has approved 10 bills and 69 resolutions, while the rest are referred to their respective committees.

Several committees were created to fast track proposed bills and resolutions to avoid delay in legislation. The statutory committees, as mentioned in the BOL, are Committees on Basic, Higher, and Technical Education; Environment, Natural Resources, and Energy; Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform; Local Government; Health; Social Services; Labor and Employment; Trade, Investment, and Tourism; Transportation and Communications; Public Works; Human Settlements and Development; Public Order and Security; Indigenous Peoples Affairs; and Science and Technology.

There are also Parliament Committees – Committees on Audit, Ways and Means, Good Government, Accountability of Public Officers and Investigation (Blue Ribbon); Ethics and Privileges, and Codification of Laws.

Approved bills included the acts adopting the Bangsamoro emblem, flag, and hymn creation, structure of the BARMM; the act appropriating funds for the operation of the Bangsamoro Government for 2020; and the act regulating the operations of local and foreign recruitment agencies within the BARMM.

Acts creating and/or establishing commissions of the Bangsamoro Women, Bangsamoro Human Rights, and Bangsamoro Youth, Office of the Attorney-general as well as Bangsamoro Socio-Economic Development Planning System were also passed by the BTA.

The emblem and the logo are designed to represent Islamic teachings and principles that majority of the population subscribe to, signifies peace and tranquility, and the blood of the fallen Mujahideen who fought for the recognition of identity and self-determination of the Bangsamoro.

An Arabic version of the Official Bangsamoro Seal has been also made official.

An Act Adopting the Official Hymn of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) was also approved. The author stipulated in his proposal that the Act a mandatory need to recognize the visual existence and reflect the pride, courage, and unity of the Bangsamoro Region.

The first resolutions filed and approved were mostly organizational. During the inaugural session, the officers of the BTA Parliament were elected which has paved the way for the new and more organized internal and intergovernmental transactions that were needed to carry out financial or administrative activities.

Among the significant resolutions that were approved is the proposed transition plan of the BTA of the BARMM which was authored by Chief Minister Ahod “Al Haj Murad” Ebrahim. The Plan contains the process of the transition from ARMM to BARMM, the ministries, offices, and agencies’ organizational structures.

In order to ensure the smooth flow of the operation of the Parliament, the ministries and other offices of the BTA, the members have also approved a resolution authorizing Finance Minister Eduard Guerra to transact with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and other pertinent national agencies for the immediate release of the transition funds allocated for the BTA.

The resolution providing for Parliamentary Rules, Procedures, and Practices of the BTA was also adopted. This has contained the Preamble and the general provisions that govern the legislative procedures in the conduct of all sessions, committee hearings and meetings, and other similar activities of the BTA, provides for a set of methods and rules on legislation in the BTA that define the standard reference on parliamentary procedures for all local government units within the Bangsamoro.
A public forum and workshop on parliament and electoral systems was held on October 3 at Em Manor Hotel in Cotabato City.

The event, organized by the Ateneo School of Government through its Executive Education Program with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy based in UK, was attended by members of the Bangsamoro Parliament, non-government organizations, and civil society organizations.

Millard Lim, professor at the Department of Political Science of Ateneo De Manila University gave an introduction to parliamentary and electoral systems.

Lord Jack McConnell, former first minister of Scotland, shared his experience on building strong political parties in a parliamentary set-up.

For his part, Thomas Cormier, regional director of Westminster Foundation for Democracy, discussed about inclusive and collaborative policy-making. (MP Amir Mawallil)

NORTH COTABATO (from page 5)

Dinand Marcos, who, using his martial law powers, divided it into the provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat. Earlier in 1966, several towns of the Cotabato province were carved out to constitute South Cotabato. In 1992, several towns were carved out of South Cotabato to form Sarangani province.

“These provinces originally constituted the province of Cotabato. Today, we are honored to be reunited once again with our colleagues from the 63 barangays of Cotabato. Their return to us was held in a process and we are happy that they said yes to joining the Bangsamoro,” Sinarimbo said.

Sinarimbo stressed, this event is “not about separation, but rather joining together”.

“This is more of a connection between the Bangsamoro region and our neighbors in North Cotabato. For that, let us continue with our mission, building a better Mindanao and hopefully a better Bangsamoro homeland,” he said.

HOPEFUL

In her message, Mendoza expressed her profound gratitude to all Bangsamoro people whom for years have supported her administration as governor of North Cotabato.

“We are all witnesses in the years of struggle of the Bangsamoro people. I saw the hardships of our people. They fight for peace, unity and progress. Hence, I made a commitment to support the achievement of peace in this part of Mindanao. At last, this came into realization last February 2019,” Mendoza said.

The lady governor also shared her gladness on the success of this endeavor that was realized “during her term” as leader of the province.

“This is a continued reminder of a unified cooperation and love for Mindanao. Dear Chief Minister, please take care of our 63 barangays,” her emotional message.

Meanwhile, Ebrahim who welcomed the entry of the barangays in the BARMM, said the affair was not just about the official “turn-over”.

“This is about opening another chapter to the long history of our people in this historic province. We see a bridge that reconnects the 63 barangays to its Bangsamoro homeland. Today is all about the people. Before we reached this symbolic turn-over, we had to go through almost two decades of peace negotiations. A tiring yet fulfilling campaign during the plebiscite and on a more recent note, experiencing the challenges of transitioning from the battlefield to the government,” he emphasized.

But with the guidance of Almighty Allah, he added, they are hopeful for what is yet to come for the Bangsamoro and its proud people in the Cotabato province.

“Hindi po natin mararating ang tagumpay naito kung wala ang suporta ng taga-North Cotabato sapangununani Acting Governor Lala Talloño-Mendoza sampu ng kanyangmgakasamahansa provincial government at ng mga local napamahalaan,” he said.

Further, Ebrahim also assured to continue with its smooth coordination with the local government units in the province to further fast track the easy transition and transfer of the responsibility.

Accordingly, the 63 barangays will be constituted into a special geographic area under an administrator and will continue to receive Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA).

Based on the plebiscite results, BARMM comprises the five provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-tawi, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao, cities of Marawi, Lamitan and Cotabato and the 63 barangays in six North Cotabato towns. (GALao, BTA Parliament)
The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) is looking into possible consideration of a P200 million worth of project that will help develop and boost economic activities in the Bangsamoro communities.

The project, called the People Economic Advancement and Community (PEACE) Villages, was proposed by Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA) Administrator Abdulghani “Gerry” A. Salapuddin during his courtesy visit Monday, November 25 to the Office of the Parliament Speaker, Ali Pangalian M. Balindong.

Salapuddin said the peace villages is a viable and self-sustaining socio-economic development program intended for the elements of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) outside of the BARMM, but can be replicated in the areas controlled by members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Tungawan, a proposed community, is located in the province of Zamboanga Sibugay, which is not part of BARMM but a Muslim dominated community.

Furthermore, he added there are also proposed peace villages inside the MILF camps in partnership with the BARMM. At present, there is an administered peace village property located within the SPDA Wao-Bumbaran areas in Lanao del Sur.

In line with the mission of peace in Zamboanga peninsula, SPDA has previously conducted initial consultation meeting with the municipal government of Tungawan.

Accordingly, the peace villages will provide beneficiaries with homes and livelihood programs such as agriculture, aquaculture and commercial.

The prospective and potential plants and crops that may be planted in the idle lands are bana grass, ube, banana, coffee robusta, hydrophonic gardening, cassava, fruit-bearing trees, dress making for ready-to-wear, handicraft, printing shop and souvenir item, and fish caging (aquaculture).

In addition, the prospect peace village infrastructures and support facilities include an administration center, masjid or a mosque, a stage and an open space in the middle of peace village center, a multi-purpose center, training and skills development center, entrepreneurial and livelihood center, fabrication and repair shop, tourism and cultural, farmer’s cooperative store and market center, women and child minding, education, access roads to barangays, education and scholarship component, teachers/ ustadz building, dormitel and guest building, engine and power building, warehouses, cold storage and packaging department, standard and quality control department, safety and security department, human resources and training department, monitoring office of the government inter-agency task force (OGIA TF), field office and training center of the multinational agricultural companies, medical department, and the senior citizens department.

Salapuddin, a former three-term congressman, governor of Basilan and former top MNLF commander, said the project speaks for itself and for what it means and stands for.

“The project stands very clearly and that is what exactly this pilot project wants to achieve,” Salapuddin said.

For his part, Balindong said they look into the possibility of realizing the project in the region since it is a big boost to uplift the lives of the people from various Bangsamoro communities.

“The project is very similar to what we are doing now with the MILF communities following the decommissioning of the former MILF combatants,” Balindong stressed.

(GALao, BTA Parliament)
Various sector representatives and key process actors attended the multi-stakeholders peace forum on the status of Bangsamoro Transition on October 8 last year organized by the Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst (forumZFD) and Kutawato Multimedia Network.

The forum, held at the Shariff Kabunsuan Cultural Complex (SKCC) aims to engage different sectors in the Bangsamoro region to further clarify misconceptions and manage expectations, inform them of the broader public on the Bangsamoro Transition Plan, and to generate constituency of supportive communities to the Bangsamoro regional government.

In his message, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Asnin Pendatun who represented Interim Chief Minister Ahod Balawag Ebrahim said the latter kept reminding that ever ‘transition period’ has started, “whatever we do, we always put the people at the heart of our endeavors.”

Pendatun said the government service is not about them, not about the members of the parliaments, and much more not about the government officials in the BARMM. He said “it is always about the people.”

“Since the beginning of the Bangsamoro peace process and until now, different international and local non-government organizations continue their hard work and support to the Bangsamoro”.

Member of the Parliament (MP) Dr. Susana Anayatin and Ministry of the Interior and Local Government (MILG) Dir. Khalid S. Dumagay of the MILG BARMM also provided updates on the actions taken in by settlers community and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

Meanwhile, BTA Majority Atty. Lanang Ali Jr. Also presented the Bangsamoro Transition Plan. (SSRabas, BTA Parliament)

BTA GIVES (from page 21)

On March 30, the Office of the BTA Parliament Speaker through the Office of the Secretary-General distributed around 572 food packs to select residents of Cotabato City and Sultan Kudarat.

The food packs contain five (5) kilos of Sinandomeng rice, three (3) instant noodles, one (1) kilo of sugar and one (1) dozen of 3 in 1 instant coffee. (GALao, BTA Parliament)

MESSAGE OF BTA SGT-AT-ARMS/11 (from page 31)

platform to let the people have a glimpse of what the BTA have already accomplished in the past 180 days. It will also give them information of the future plans of the organization.

May the Bangsamoro people continue to support the BTA and may we always be reminded especially the BTA members that what we have now is the fruit of a decade-long struggle of Bangsamoro people and it took so many lives of our mujahideen and mujahidat. Lastly, may we all have an apparent optimism that the BARMM is Mindanao’s best chance for peace, self-sufficiency and genuine development, In shaa Allah.
The forming of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) is the culmination of the struggle of our people over the past four decades. It is the beginning of the harvest of the great sacrifices in which our people are very careful in order to make this new government a success!

It is our duty to pay great tribute to the immense efforts and sacrifices made by the great personalities of this nation and its martyrs, such as Shiekh Salamat Hashim and his colleagues in Central Mindanao; Shiekh Abdulaziz Mimbantas from Lanao region; Dr. Saleh Loong from the Sulu region and Mr. Ghazali Jaafar who have just left us as he passed away few days ago (may Allah protect him in Paradise) and many others. As well as the efforts and sacrifices of every sector of this nation which led to the establishment of this new government (The Bangsamoro Government under the leadership of the Amir Alhaj Murad Ebrahim, may Allah protect him). Equally important in all these are the strong political will, massive resources and great support from the Central Government (the Philippine Government) headed by His Excellency President Rodrigo Duterte) which will lead to the reign of security, peace, tranquility and harmony among the people of this nation and the consequent development and improvement in various spheres of life, Allah willing.

I would like to remind my brothers and sisters who are members of the Parliament and all those who are concerned with the plight of this people that one of the reasons behind our people’s backwardness is the lack of education which is the basis of progress. The ignorance and poverty among our people led to injustice and the spread of strife and enmity among its members.

SHEIKH KHALIFA U. NANDO
Wali of Bangsamoro

As the Majority Floor Leader of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BTA-BARMM), I would like to assure you that your honorable members of the Parliament will continue to craft and legislate effective and relevant laws which are responsive to the needs of the Bangsamoro.

Moreover, I urge everyone to have a strong faith and follow our leaders especially during these trying times due to the COVID-19 pandemic that affected most of the countries of the world. Together, with your strong support and the moral governance being implemented by the Bangsamoro Government, we can surmount this pandemic and be able to continue the reforms that we wish to undertake and the agenda set towards a sustainable peace and order for our beloved region. I wish everyone will always have a healthy body and sound mind amidst this crisis. May Allah (SWT) guide and protect us all.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the efforts and congratulate the BTA-BARMM employees who have initiated and produced the BTA magazine. Thank you and congratulations for the job well done. Shukran and, was-salam.

MP ATTY. LANANG T. ALI, JR.
Majority Floor Leader
Bangsamoro Transition Authority-BARMM
To my people, to our future. Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuhu. Three decades after the establishment of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, we now usher in the new Bangsamoro Government that is the product of unrelenting sacrifices and collective pains of many a Bangsamoro to enable us to pursue true peace and prosperity in our region. With the advent of RA 11054, also known as the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), as stated in its preamble, the region is now in a position and is given all the opportunities to establish an enduring peace in a balanced society on the basis of justice, with our people asserting our right to conserve and develop our own patrimony, reflective of our system of life as prescribed by our faith, and affirming our distinct historical identity and birthright to our ancestral homeland. Through the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) in a parliamentary form of government, we are mandated to lay down the groundwork in bringing our aspirations to life through legislation, policy-setting, and oversight of the implementation of the BOL.

It is the mandate of the Bangsamoro Parliament to legislate on the basis of justice, equity, equality, inclusivity, transparency, accountability, and moral governance. This is long overdue for those who have shed their blood and sweat fighting for the very same values and principles that we need to uphold now that the BARMM is already established. The Parliament is so enabled to enact laws so that the injustices suffered by the Bangsamoro people may be addressed according to the terms set by itself as representatives of the Bangsamoro with due consideration of the actual needs of the Bangsamoro communities, the historical injustices that we have suffered, and the direction where we are headed to. Indeed, we continue to see the long-term adverse effects of the decades-long armed conflict in the region amidst the poverty and utter lack of opportunities in the region, for the struggle for justice has never been just about waging an armed rebellion but a struggle that has encompassed almost all aspects of our lives, from education to career opportunities, from societal to familial relationships, from mental frustrations to spiritual exhaustion. This time, the pursuit of justice, equity, equality and peace will be more than just perspectives. These principles will be the cornerstones for all the laws that will be passed by the present Parliament and for the establishment of an entity that is premised on not just good governance but more importantly, on moral governance.

In ensuring good and moral governance in the region, it is important that transparency and accountability are made to operate at its optimum. Only when the Parliament and the Bangsamoro Government operate with transparency that reciprocal accountability can be realized and appreciated by the Bangsamoro people. When the Parliament and the Bangsamoro Government are called strictly to account by the people and the people themselves speak truth to power, legislation has the opportunity to be refined as to reflect accurately our true aspirations in a society respects and upholds the rule of law. Effective and efficient administration and management of public funds and programs are the indicators of good governance. This comes full circle when we the Bangsamoro communities are able to access the government’s services, are given opportunities to become active participants of the Bangsamoro society, and are able improve their way of life in peace.

As the Minority Leader of the Parliament, it is an honor to be made part of the efforts that would allow us to rebuild and significantly improve what we once had – the sovereign will of the Bangsamoro having substantial sway over our own region, that thriving cultural heritage before it was stifled by all the good and bad acculturation it went through since the Spanish conquest, and that fierce pride and honor in our identity as a Bangsamoro. It is at once my duty and privilege to make sure that bills are introduced into the Parliament which truly embody the Bangsamoro ideals and aspirations and are crafted with the best interests of the Bangsamoro people put at premium.

As it is, we continue to challenge and test ideas that best promote and protect our interests. Whether a law or policy clearly embraces a solution to a particular problem requires a more thorough methodology than mere desk work. Meaningful engagement between the Members of Parliament and the people at all levels of legislation, from public consultations to drafting and passage of laws to implementation, will bring about innovations to the forefront. It is this brand of unity in working together that we can move forward in this new stage that is the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. In the end, public service is a public trust. Before any major decision is taken, the approval of the Bangsamoro people should be considered and their interests catered to in the best way possible such that we in the Parliament and...
I wish to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Plenary Affairs Division’s personnel of the newly installed Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) for the earliest and timely coming up of the printing of the first publication of the series Magazine of the BTA Parliament. Insha Allah, it is my belief that the BTA Parliament Magazine shall become an instrument to people’s access to right and genuine information about issues, events and legislative undertakings of the BTA Parliament and the BARMM. Alhamdulillah, this provided me a great pleasure and honor to be part of the first and historic publication.

Allow me to take this rare opportunity to join the Bangsamoro people in thanking the president of the Republic of the Philippines, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte for his successful quest and aspiration to end the decades of Moro issues in Mindanao by championing the R.A. 11054, Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) through strong and unshakable political will that paves the establishment of the inclusive Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in the Bangsamoro territory.

As your humble servant in the public service and as the Secretary-General elect of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament, it is my cordial and strong appeal to the entire Bangsamoro that let us be united, bind ourselves toward common direction and consolidate our efforts in matters of helping the BARMM Interim Chief Minister, Hon. Al Haj Ahod B. Ebrahim in his sincere mission of establishing a “Moral Governance”, a kind of governance most dearer to Allah (S.W.T.).

Lastly, my sincere prayer to Allah (S.W.T.) to grant the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) officials good health, best guidance and more power as they serve the new path of struggle (jihad) in making the BARMM morally responsive to the social, economic, political and spiritual needs and aspirations of the people in the BARMM.

Wabillahi tawfiq wal hidaya, subhanakallhu mawabihamdika, nash hadu Allaa ilaa ha illa anta wanash taghfiruka wanatubu ilayhi.

Shukran.

PROF. RABY B. ANGKAL
Secretary-General

As a member of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament, I would like to extend my congratulations on the first publication of the BTA Parliament Magazine.

Over a hundred days have already elapsed since the overwhelming YES vote won in support of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and we are now enjoying the fruit of our long years of struggle. Finally, the Bangsamoro is now recognized before the law as a people with a distinct historical and cultural identity.

Transitioning from a revolutionary organization to the democratic governance is never an easy job. Expectations are high for the BTA among the community and it is putting a huge responsibility for the new parliament members to show results as soon as they can. In a recent study, about 76% of Filipino Muslims trust that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is capable of governing the BARMM as they become a dominant political force in the region since its members automatically comprised majority of the 80-member of BTA. There is a huge challenge to the MILF to build the foundations of the new Bangsamoro region. Our autonomous region may have just been established, and our officials have just assumed their respective posts but they are doing their best effort to deliver and give what the people have long dreamed of and that is to have a good and transparent government, a government that works for the best interest and welfare of the Bangsamoro people and the rest of the Filipino citizen within the region.

We, the appointed officers of the BTA parliament are committed to support this newly-installed government as we know that it is a product of hard work of people with the aspiration of achieving sustainable peace and development. The publication of this magazine is a good
The Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament successfully conducted on March 06-08, 2020 a ‘Strategic and Operating Planning Seminar Workshop’ held at the Century Park Hotel in Manila.

The three-day activity, sponsored by The Asia Foundation in partnership with the Australian Aid, the European Union, and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), aimed to develop the BTA’s mission, vision, core values, strategic plan for 2020 – 2023, and operating plan for 2020. Speaker Ali Pangalian Balindong said the seminar workshop intends to capacitate the Members of the Parliament in identifying its respective priorities.

“We identified strategic goals that would lead to the performance of the mission and attainment of the vision. It was also a perfect time for us to foster camaraderie and solidarity,” Balindong said.

Accordingly, the vision, mission, core values, and strategic goals were aligned with the Philippine Development Plan (2017-2022) and the Ambisyon Natin 2040 to ensure that the BTA as an organization is in line with the goals of the Philippine national government.

The BTA strategic plan shall serve as a guide in the formulation of operating plans of the Parliament on a year to year basis. During the development of the vision, mission, core values, and strategic goals, the participants took into consideration the chief minister’s top priorities as well as the impact on the BTA and BARMM stakeholders.

The following are the common answer of the participants in identifying the BTA Core Values: God Fearing, Excellence, Accountability, Integrity and Transparency.

Majority Floor Leader Atty. Lanang Ali, Jr. presented the BTA Parliament’s schedule of rough plan targets for 2020-2022. Furthermore, the Members of the Parliament as well as the participants have also identified top priorities that the BTA needs to give attention such as the legislation/enactment of priority bills, lack of office space for the MPs and the BTA structure (recruitment of personnel based on merit and fitness).

They targeted that all priority bills and codes shall have been enacted by June 2021. A united BTA with strengthened leadership is seen as well as the merit-based human resource management system in place, fully operational and strengthened.

The BTA shall also focus on developing useful and functional communication and information systems. Infrastructure is also one top priority where a permanent home of the BTA Parliament shall be constructed by 2021. (GALao, BTA Parliament)
With the rising number of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic cases in the country, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament postponed schedules of the next BTA regular sessions.

This is in compliance with the guidelines set by the COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (COVID-19 IATF-BARMM) to take preemptive measures against the spread of the deadly COVID-19.

The Task Force said “all activities involving mass gathering shall be cancelled or postponed until further notice.”

COVID-19 IATF-BARMM was created on March 13 to formulate policies and design guidelines on practical measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19.

BMP MASTURA LAUNCHES ‘LIMO’ PROGRAM

About 500 residents from Barangay Nuyo of this town have benefited various services on September 27 through the Livelihood, Intervention on Women, Medical Assistance and Oplan Assistance (LIMO) program initiated by BARMM Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) member Sittie Shahara “Dimple” Mastura.

LIMO, a Maguindanaon word which means "care" was launched by Mastura in Buldon to bring together programs for the Bangsamoro people.

“Our services included free legal consultation and acquiring simple affidavit, medical consultation and assistance, livelihood assistance, feeding program, and haircut. We also gave slippers, socks, and t-shirts,” Mastura said.

“We also gave children food packs from Jollibee. They were very pleased and we can clearly see so much joy on their faces. Most of these kids said it was the first time they have tasted Jollibee chicken joy which they often watch only on television. Nuyo is a far-flung barangay of Buldon and to be there and personally see the happiness in their eyes is truly indescribable,” she added.

The lady member of the parliament also went to Mahas Markaz Nur Al-Islamie, a Madrasah where she distributed school supplies and slippers since one of her goals is to improve the condition of Madrasahs across the region.

Mastura stressed that she is delighted to have been given the opportunity to serve the Bangsamoro people.

“This is only the beginning and there’s more to come. Expect LIMO to visit other municipalities as well,” she said.

Meanwhile, Buldon Mayor Abolais A. Manalao expressed his gratefulness since the lady minister have chosen Buldon as early recipient of her locally initiated program.
BTA-Parliament Secretary-General Prof. Raby B. Angkal, as guest speaker, imparted peace communication on Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) updates during the “Assembly of Buayan Provincial Committee of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Bangsamoro” held on July 21, 2019 in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao.

The event, headed by Sheikh Hairudin Abdulwahab with the support of the Municipal Mayor and other constituents, was attended by different sectors of the Provincial Committee of Buayan – Arabic and religious, da’wah and tarbiyah, business and economic, health, and women, among others.

The assembly aimed to establish peace communications on the present status of the BARMM through the BTA’s secretary-general.

In his speech, Angkal discussed the historical background of the Bangsamoro People in attaining the present peace and governance. He emphasized that Jihad for the sake of Allah is the pillar of the creation and establishment of the BARMM, and the main reason why the Bangsamoro people were able to overcome sacrifices, difficulties, fears, and had not surrendered until it succeeded.

“Di magaga mamalas sa kulta su dalpa, su kangiubilno, su kabangagi nu mga wata, su mga babay, a napantiali nu kinangjihad nu MILF, ya di tabya no su Allah (SWT) bu i makagaga lun mamalas” [No amount of money can’t reward/suffice the homeland, governance, the children’s welfare, the women’s security which the MILF Jihad has gained except by the will of Allah (SWT)], he said.

The Secretary-General imposed that the greater Jihad of the Bangsamoro People now is how to deal with the present situation. He advised that everyone must not give in to human desires or personal interests (Jihadun nafs) pressured upon them under the present BARMM governance.

He also discussed legal bases of the establishment of the BARMM, its inclusivity and fiscal autonomy stated in the R.A. 11054, also known as the “Bangsamoro Organic Law”. He also talked about the Transition Fund and Transition Plan which were all still in the process.

Secretary-General Angkal also spoke about the BARMM leadership where he expressed his gratitude to the leaders of the BARMM Government. He said that Chief Minister Ahod “Al Haj Murad” Ebrahim is a Muslim leader, a Mujahideen, and a companion and a brother in Islam. He also mentioned Education Minister Mohagher Iqbal and the late Gazali Jaafar (Allaahu Yarhamhu) who served the Bangsamoro people through Jihad for more than 40 years; and that these leaders were the successors of the late Founding Chairman of MILF, Sheikh Hashim Salamat (Allaahu Yarhamhu). These current Bangsamoro leaders took their oath in front of the holy Qur’an to establish a moral governance in the BARMM- a government that will operate by the Will of Allah (SWT).

Further, the people were also informed about the chief minister’s first filed bill in the Parliament, the “Social Services and Development”, using the available former Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) infrastructure appropriation amounting to P10 Billion that was evenly distributed to the BARMM provinces.

Furthermore, the BTA Parliament, as mandated by BOL, prioritized the legislation of the different codes required for the operationalization of the BARMM.

The secretary-general also informed the audience about the fast tracking of the Normalization Process, through the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) decommissioning, where surrenderees have and will receive livelihood program and other social services amounting to PhP50 Billion.

Before ending his speech, Secretary-General Angkal assured the Bangsamoro People that the operation of the BARMM Government will be in full swing in 2020 and that his hopes and prayers go to everyone, and that his intentions will always be for the sake of ALLAH (SWT).
The World Bank (WB) assured its commitment to support the Marawi rehabilitation process during its courtesy visit to the office of the Parliament Speaker Wednesday, January 29, 2020.

Speaker Pangalian M. Balindong received Ditte Marie Fallesen, Senior Social Development Specialist, Mr. Marcelo Jorge Fabre, Senior Conflict and Violence Specialist, Mr. Victor Dato, Senior Infrastructure Specialist, and Michael Frank Alar, WB Consultant.

The World Bank has been providing technical assistance to the Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) since 2018. The purpose of the visit is to consult with the Parliament’s “Special Committee on Marawi”, chaired by Deputy Chief Minister Ali B. Solaiman.

As part of the BTA Parliament’s efforts to understand the current status and as well as to solicit recommendations for the Marawi rehabilitation, Speaker Balindong said that the Special Committee on Marawi held a two-day public hearing and consultation from January 15-19, 2019 participated by concerned government agencies.

Participating national government agencies during the activity include the Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).

“The government agencies provided reports on the status of internally displaced persons and the assistance given to them,” Balindong said.

The BTA passed a resolution constituting a Special Committee to “look into the status of the Marawi recovery, reconstruction, and rehabilitation efforts.”

The resolution is a consolidation of resolutions relevant to the Marawi Siege. The creation of the Special Committee comes 23 months after President Rodrigo Duterte declared Marawi “liberated from the terrorist influence” on October 17, 2017.

Resolution 112 states that the Special Committee on Marawi Recovery, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation or the Special Committee on Marawi, will be the BTA’s mechanism for “gathering data on and monitoring the status of the recovery, reconstruction, and rehabilitation efforts planned and/or implemented for Marawi City and offering recommendations for the Bangsamoro Government’s appropriate action in relation thereto.”

The BTA’s Special Committee, according to the resolution, aims to complement the efforts of the TFBM, the multi-agency body tasked to oversee the recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation of Marawi and other affected areas.

During the hearing, one of the issues tackled was the need for the remaining IDPs to return to their homes after the devastating 2017 siege.

Balindong said there are homeowners in Marawi who have the capability to reconstruct their homes.

“The leaders, datus, sultans, most of them settle in Marawi. These are the people who can rehabilitate their homes. So why not allow them to go back?” Balindong stressed.

Balindong also pointed out why the Meranaws are not well represented in the TFBM.

“Most of them are from Manila so how can they react and participate? This is one of the concerns,” he claimed.

Fallesen expressed her frustration to see that not much has happened in the last two years.

“We’re very keen to hear from the special committee since they are currently doing a review on the support for Marawi and the way the rehabilitation is moving forward. So we’re keen to understand what their plan is and how we can work with them,” Fallesen said.

Fallesen added that they need to know the programs and projects that are by the different ministries and the support from the BTA’s side and see if there’s some way they can potentially work with the BTA.

“It happened in 2017, and now it’s 2020. I think 30 or 40 percent of the homeowners are now ready to go back but they are not allowing us,” Balindong said.

Meanwhile, it was learned that the committee also requested TFBM to provide the overall status of projects especially roads, water, electricity, and telecommunication in the most affected area (MAA).

To date, there are 12,079 IDPs in evacuation centers, community-based centers, and home-based. (GALao, BTA Parliament)
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