

Republic of the Philippines
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BANGSAMORO TRANSITION AUTHORITY
Cotabato City

Second Regular Session

BTA Bill No. 137

Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
Parliament
BILLS AND INDEX DIVISION
RECEIVED
Name: ADELAH DIRATUA Signature: 
Date: DEC 7 7 2022 Time: 11:04 AM

Introduced by:
MP MOHAMMAD KELIE U. ANTAO, AL HAJ

Co-authored by:
**MP MUDJIB C. ABU; MP. TAWAKAL B. MIDTIMBANG;
MP. SUWAIB L. ORANON; AND MP BASSIR D. UTTO**

AN ACT
INSTITUTING A MECHANISM TO REGULATE AND MANAGE THE LIGAWASAN
RESOURCES FOR BALANCED AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND
THEREBY CREATING THE LIGAWASAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY,
DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Liguasan marsh – or simply *Ligawasan* in the Maguindanao language, which this bill also endeavors to popularize in order to bolster the distinctiveness and historical significance of the place – is the largest wetland in the Philippines, comprising about 10% of the Mindanao river basin¹, covering a total area of 288,000 hectares spread across the provinces of Maguindanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat with approximately 100,000 families living therein.²

In the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, crucial portions of the Ligawasan biogeographic zone are areas of responsibility of eleven (11) local governments of the province of Maguindanao del Sur namely the municipalities of Ampatuan, Datu Piang, Talitay, Pagalungan, Datu Montawal, Buluan, Pandag, Mangudadatu, Datu Paglas, Paglat, and SK Pendatun; the three (3) municipal governments of the province of Maguindanao del Norte that include the municipalities of Mother Kabuntalan, Northern

¹Sarmiento, S. (2021, October 28). Philippine wetland oil riches untouched by war now up for grabs in peacetime. *MONGABAY, News and Inspiration from Nature's Frontline*. <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/10/philippine-wetland-oil-riches-untouched-by-war-now-up-for-grabs-in-peacetime/>

²UNDP (2004, October). The Wetland Biodiversity Component for Ligawasan Marsh Study A Project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) supported with a grant from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the World Bank, with supervision of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). <https://faspselib.denr.gov.ph/sites/default/files/Publication%20Files/Volume%20III%20-%20Project%20Brief.pdf>

Kabuntalan and Southern Kabuntalan; and a significant number of barangays of the Special Geographic Area (SGA) particularly those from the municipalities of Pikit, Midsayap and Pigcawayan that were annexed to the Bangsamoro autonomous region in the February 6, 2019 plebiscite.

The Liguasan complex is a distinct and unique region among the fifteen (15) biogeographic regions of the Philippines considering its significant number of fauna (vegetation) and flora (wildlife) species. Records show that the complex supports a variety of vegetation that includes species of endangered water-subsisting native trees, bushes, and other wild undergrowth species. It also is a haven of a significant number of wildlife species that include herons, egrets, rails, shorebirds, ducks and other wild waterbird genus; mudfish, catfish, eels and other classes of endangered native fishes; and the famous but vanishing Philippine crocodile, bats and other water habituated wild animals.³

The corpus of vegetation and wildlife genera in the Ligawasan enclave has historical significance to the Maguindanaon dwellers, being a part of their life for their social and economic survival since time immemorial; and the area itself as one of their major havens especially during the height of the contemporary Bangsamoro struggle to self-determination. However, the continuous exploitation and utilization of these natural resources by the dwellers without alternative actions to sustain their instinct existence is a threat to the preservation of the dwellers' historical existence in the area and its ecosystem. Hence, there is a need to protect these endangered fauna and flora species.

The Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR) drafted its "Management Plan for Liguasan Marsh Protected Area" in 2019.⁴ However, this attempt still remains latent until now, feasibly due to the fact that the marsh was a war-torn area for decades, and the absence of duly instituted and reputable Authority that shall regulate the use of these resources. In effect, the residents uncontrollably exploit the resources, especially the fishes, animals and water-surviving tree species as sources of their livelihood. Also, the utilization of the land by the farmer-residents with their traditional farming practices essentially disturbed the habitats of these biological species. Thus, there is a need to urgently address the problem so that these resources, in addition to their historical and environmental significance, will provide sustainable economic benefits to the constituents, the region and the country.

In addition, the marsh is believed to have natural gas and oil deposits. Thus, the state-owned Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) with its Malaysian counterpart, the Petronas, conducted a joint exploration in 1990s and confirmed the presence of the hidden natural wealth. According to a report released by the investor now seeking to develop the gas fields, data from the Philippine Department of Energy (DOE) indicate that three (3) of the wells identified by the PNOC-Petronas joint exploration venture have combined estimated recoverable resources of 202 million barrels of oil (\$16.2 billion at current prices). Some 821 million cubic feet of natural gas reserves have been identified; and potential resources are estimated to amount to another six (6) billion cubic feet. With gas prices currently at around \$10 per 1,000 cubic feet, the marsh's proven reserves are likely to be worth around \$8 million.⁵

³Ibid (UNDP, 2004)

⁴DENR (2019). Proposed Ligawasan Marsh Protected Area: Management Plan. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service eLibrary, <https://faspelib.denr.gov.ph/node/1219> - Modified literature review and footnote styles.

⁵Flores, A. (2021, January 24). PNOC-EC still keen on probing Liguasan Marsh oil, gas potential <https://manilastandard.net/business/power-technology/345220/pnoc-ec-still-keen-on-probing-liguasan-marsh-oil-gas-potential.html>

In spite of the wealth opportunities in the Ligawasan enclave, its natural gas and oil deposits remained untapped until today for two evident reasons: (a) the marsh was a hotspot during the decades of conflict between the Philippine government and the major Bangsamoro revolutionary groups such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in most parts of the marsh, and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in some other portions of the area; and, (b) some fear this extractive activity will damage the ecosystem of the marsh, and possibly exacerbate land conflict in an area where land tenure is already complex and contested.⁶

The first problem such as the decades-old conventional armed conflict between the government and the revolutionary Moro groups might have been addressed, either partially or totally, by the fractional execution of the earlier GRP-MNLF agreements and the orderly implementation of the GPH-MILF peace pacts which led the MNLF and MILF, respectively, to join the Philippine government in instituting a paradigm shift of the Moro revolution from armed struggle to political exertion in fulfilling a truly self-determined Bangsamoro governance – a common impression as the best alternative solution at this time to reign justpeace and sustainable development in the homeland. Meanwhile, the second problem, i.e. the degenerating ecosystem of the marsh, can be essentially dealt with through the development and execution of sensible mechanisms and programs, and the creation of a government arm that shall spearhead the translation of the “natural resources founded” wealth-generating opportunities into corporeality.

In response to the foregoing ordeals, this bill has been proposed as a legal instrument to regulate and effectively manage the exploration and development of the natural resources (both fauna and flora) of the Ligawasan complex within the political expanses of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, including the rationalization, utilization, restoration and conservation of these resources; and eventually the attempt to reign balanced and sustainable development in the area where the entitlement of the affected communities for normal socioeconomic and cultural existence is protected and sustained, a complete ecological justice and environment quality are maintained, and equitable accessibility of these natural resources to the different sectors of the present as well as the future generations is guaranteed. Toward this end, a serviceable workplace such as the “**Ligawasan Development Authority**” as this bill proposes; and effective institutional and program control and management mechanisms, as also contained in this bill, shall be established to ensure timely preparation, proper administration, and rigorous coordination and collaboration of related programs, projects and activities that shall optimize the exploration and utilization of the Ligawasan natural resources, while ensuring their protection, preservation and sustenance at the same time.

This bill has the following salient features:

- (a) It promotes “**human resource localization**” where “**qualified**” bonafide residents of the Ligawasan enclave shall, whenever possible, be prioritized from top to bottom management positions in the LDA. This is to ensure occupational justice for them, and to expect the likelihood that they have the reflective commitment to sustain sound environment as they will be directly affected when it goes wrong.
- (b) It encourages “**participatory decision-making and management**”, as evidenced in the equitable representation of different sectors, including the participation of the concerned ministries and offices of BARMM in the Ligawasan Development Board (LDB) as ex-officio members. The bills assumes that adopting this strategy will result to increase in team morale, promote dynamic

⁶Loc. Cit. (Sarmiento, 2021)

collaboration, discover creative solutions, teams more readily accept decisions, and improve Authority-community relationships.

- (c) It attempts to “**generate sustainable income without sacrificing the environment**” for the benefits not only of the Ligawasan communities and the region but the country as well. This “**balanced development-environment mechanism**” is evident in the bill’s attempt to regulate and effectively manage the exploration and development of the natural resources of the Ligawasan complex and, at the same time, to rationalize, utilize, restore and conserve these resources; and, eventually to reign balanced and sustainable development in the area.

This bill is founded on the following provisions of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), either in their entirety or fraction thereof:

- (a) **Article XIII** of the BOL (pp. 77-78) particularly in
- **Section 9** (*Transfer Management of Existing Nature Reserves and Protected Areas*);
 - **Section 10** (*Exploration, Development and Utilization of Fossil Fuels and Uranium*);
 - **Section 11** (*Preferential Rights of Bona Fide Residents of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region*); and
 - **Section 12** (*Rights of the Indigenous People to Natural Resources*,
- (b) **Sec. 38, Art. VII** of the BOL (p. 30) granting the Bangsamoro Government the power to create offices and organize its own bureaucracy, and may establish offices and institutions necessary for the exercise of its functions and delivery of social services in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region

Program-wise, this bill supports the commitment of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) to sustainable peace and development in the region as manifested among others in the Bangsamoro government’s “**12-Point Agenda for 2023-2025**”⁷ particularly but not limited to the following items, either entirely or partly:

- (a) **Item No. 3** (*Revenue generation and economic comparative advantage*),
- (b) **Item No. 4** (*Agri-fishery productivity and food security*),
- (c) **Item No. 5** (*Investment in transportation, communication, and other strategic infrastructure*),
- (d) **Item No. 6** (*Energy security*), and
- (e) **Item No. 11** (*Peace, justice and security*).

Mindful of the significance of a well-regulated and managed Ligawasan natural resources to recuperate the political, social, cultural and economic existence of the constituents and communities in the Area, and the potential contribution of the Area to economic growth of the region and the country; and thinking further that normalization is now getting better in the Area in effect of the orderly implementation of the GRP-MILF agreements and other fulfilled accords between the government and the MNLF; and considering finally the legal foundations of this bill and its promising support to the

⁷**POLITOKO** (2022, June 15). CM Ebrahim cites BTA’s 12-point priority agenda for 2023-2025, Mindanao.politics.com/ph.<https://mindanao.politics.com.ph/cm-ebrahim-cites-btas-12-point-priority-agenda-for-2023-2025/> - Modified cross-reference style.

realization of BTA's 12-point Agenda for 2023-2025, it is the **PRAYER** of this proposed legislation for its expeditious passage in the Bangsamoro parliament. Hence, the support of the members of the Bangsamoro Parliament is earnestly sought.

Insha Allah, the realization of this bill will create breakthroughs in the institutionalization of justpeace, alongside with balanced and sustainable economic development in the Area and the rest of the Bangsamoro region being its domino effect, and consequently the rebirth of a normal Bangsamoro society particularly in the Ligawasan enclave and its peripheries.

Author:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohammad Kelie U. Antao', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

MOHAMMAD KELIE U. ANTAO
Member of Parliament

Republic of the Philippines
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BANGSAMORO TRANSITION AUTHORITY
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Second Regular Session

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MP MOHAMMAD KELIE U. ANTAO, AL HAJ

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Be it enacted by the Bangsamoro Parliament Assembled:

SECTION 1. Title. – This act shall be known as the "Ligawasan Development Authority (LDA) Act of 2022"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – it is hereby declared the policy of the Bangsamoro government to regulate and manage, as well as to rationalize, utilize, restore and conserve the natural resources, both fauna and flora, of the Ligawasan enclave within the political expanses of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to accelerate the socioeconomic growth of the Area and the region in a way that the entitlement of the affected communities for normal existence is protected and sustained, a complete ecological justice and environment quality are maintained, and equitable accessibility of these natural resources by the different sectors of the present as well as the future generations is guaranteed. Toward this end, a serviceable workplace and effective mechanism shall be established to ensure timely preparation, precise administration, tolerant coordination and profound collaboration of related programs, projects and activities consistent with the regional and national peace and development agenda, as far as feasible and sustainable.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the term:

- (a) **Area** denotes the Ligawasan enclave or complex within the governmental areas of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.

- (b) **Authority** refers to the Ligawasan Development Authority or LDA.
- (c) **Balanced development** implies the manipulation and utilization of the natural resources of Ligawasan according to its capacity, deprived of forfeiting a sound ecosystem, so that the benefits of overall economic growth are shared with the inhabitants of the Area, and ultimately to contribute to regional and national growth and development.
- (d) **Culture sensitivity** refers to the awareness and respect of the Ligawasan inhabitants of each other's similarities and differences in belief and practices that do not yield detrimental effects on any of them, and as recognized by law. It also refers to the respect of the Authority to the culture of the constituents, and reciprocally the recognition of the latter to the Authority's "**constituent-friendly**" program management values and practices.
- (e) **Ecological justice** refers to empowered participation of the community in decision making particularly those that affect their existence, and those relate to sustainable use of the natural resources of Ligawasan. It also refers to putting the economy of the Area in its place as a subsystem within the regional economic sphere.
- (f) **Environment quality** refers to good surroundings manifested in the presence of clean air, water, and soil, adequate open space, abundant resources, as well as other environmental factors which ensure the health of individuals and contribute to building a healthy community in the Area.
- (g) **Equitable accessibility** also refers to wide-ranging convenience of present and future generations in the Area to socioeconomic and environmental benefits from the natural resources of the BARMM-covered Ligawasan enclave.
- (h) **Ligawasan resources** include the land, water, minerals, fisheries, wildlife, and other natural resources found in any parts of the Area recognized as geographical components of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.
- (i) **Justpeace** means a condition where social and economic parity, cultural sensitivity, and fashionable governance are present in the Area; and trust in and cooperation with the Ligawasan constituents in the LDA affairs are established, and become a medium to resilient the constituents from shocks brought about by conflicts, manage disputes and adapt to changes in their environments are at the most favorable level.
- (j) **Normal existence** refers to one's comfortable living in any parts of the BARMM-occupied Ligawasan enclave, manifested in his/her freedom to take part in and influence the decisions of the Authority on matters that affect his/her life – politically, economically, socially, spiritually and culturally.
- (k) **Related programs, projects and activities** refers to any endeavors of the Authority – either directly or in collaboration with other entities – associated to the regulation and management, as well as to the exploration, development, management, utilization, rationalization, restoration and conservation of the natural resources, both fauna and flora, in any parts of the Ligawasan enclave exclusive of BARMM's areas of responsibility.
- (l) **Social and economic parity** refers to equality or equity among the Ligawasan constituents and communities in their access to social, economic, cultural and political opportunities in the Area in accordance with established norms and laws regardless of their tribe, religion, gender and other legal considerations.

SECTION 4. *Creation of the Ligawasan Development Authority.* – The Ligawasan Development Authority (LDA), hereinafter referred to as the Authority, is hereby created to regulate and manage, as well as to rationalize, develop, utilize, restore and conserve the natural resources of Ligawasan within the areas of responsibility of BARMM in coordination and collaboration with concerned ministries and offices, nongovernment organizations and other affected institutions and groups.

SECTION 5. *Coverage.* – The Authority shall cover all the provinces and municipalities of the Bangsamoro region that hold a part or parts of the Ligawasan enclave as their respective areas of responsibility which include:

- a) The province of Maguindanao del Sur and the municipalities of Ampatuan, Datu Piang, Talitay, Pagalungan, Datu Montawal, Buluan, Pandag, Mangudadatu, Datu Paglas, Paglat, and SK Pendatun;
- b) The province of Maguindanao del Norte and the municipalities of Mother Kabuntalan, Northern Kabuntalan and Southern Kabuntalan; and
- c) The Special Geographic Area (SGA) comprised of forty-seven (47) barangays from the municipalities of Pikit, Midsayap and Pigcawayan that were annexed to the Bangsamoro autonomous region in the February 6, 2019 plebiscite.

SECTION 6. *Principal Office and Terms.* – The Authority shall have its main office in the Special Geographic Area (SGA) particularly in the municipality of Midsayap, North Cotabato; and shall have its term of existence of fifty (50) years from the effectivity of this Act, and renewable for the same period unless otherwise provided by law.

SECTION 7. *Powers and Functions.* – In the exercise of its mandate, the Authority shall perform the following powers and functions in coordination and collaboration, whichever is appropriate and necessary, with the BARMM ministries and offices and other institutions and groups, both public and private, that are primarily required to undertake or are carrying out similar and supportive programs, projects and activities in the Area.

- a) Account all available natural resources, both fauna and flora, in the Ligawasan area, and investigate or study their existence to establish a comprehensive and integrated database on the Ligawasan enclave needed for planning and decision-making;
- b) Design a holistic mechanism that shall promote proactive participation of all the stakeholders in the planning and management of the Ligawasan area development programs, projects and activities;
- c) Establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure the timely implementation of Area-wide, inter-provincial or regional projects, whenever necessary, as far as practicable, including but not limited to public-private partnership;
- d) Formulate an integrated development management framework for the Area consistent with the peace and development initiatives of the regional government, as far as practicable;
- e) Integrate, prioritize and implement Area-specific programs, activities and projects with potential multi-dimensional impact on the communities in the Area, including other foreign-assisted projects implemented therein, subject to such limitations prescribed by existing laws, rules and regulations;

- f) Supervise or administer or simply monitor, whichever is applicable, the operation, maintenance, and repair of all constructed, improved or refurbished infrastructures in the Area which involved government funds;
- g) Recommend to and, whenever necessary, call upon the proper ministries and offices of BARMM on the technical support, physical assistance and, generally, the level of priority to be accorded to agricultural, industrial, commercial, infrastructure, environmental, and technological programs and projects soliciting or requiring direct or indirect help from or through the regional government or any of its instrumentalities;
- h) Monitor, evaluate and formulate recommendations in the implementation of Area-wide inter-regional development programs, activities and projects;
- i) Advocate the elected Local Government officials and the constituents of the LGUs on Area-specific and regional policies that will foster the implementation of the "Balanced and Sustainable Development" concept in the Area;
- j) Promote and facilitate investments in any field that would enhance the socioeconomic development of the Area and uplift the living standards of the people and their socio-political activities;
- k) Extend necessary collaborative planning, management and technical assistance to prospective and existing investors, complementary and in support of regional ministries and offices primarily mandated to execute such functions; and
- l) Exercise other powers and functions that may be deemed necessary and as provided by law.

SECTION 8. *The Key Officials of the Authority.* – The Authority shall have five (5) principal officials that include an Authority Chief, a General Manager and three (3) Assistant General Managers.

- a) The **Chief** of the Authority shall be appointed by the Chief Minister for a period of three (3) years from the date of his/her appointment, unless sooner revoked by the appointing authority; and may be reappointed for another one 3-year term, also unless earlier retracted by the appointing authority. He/she shall be vested with the rank, rights, privileges, disqualifications, and prohibitions of a Regional Cabinet member such as a Minister.

The Authority Chief must be a holder of a master's degree or higher preferably in development studies or management, or any allied disciplines with, at least, ten (10) years of related experience in said fields, either in the government or nongovernment organizations.

The Chief shall also be the Chair of the Ligawasan Development Board (LDB); and therefore, he/she shall perform functions and tasks related to top-level organizational resource management, policy-making administration and program operations control.

- b) The **General Manager** of the Authority, who shall be appointed by the Chief Minister with the consent and concurrence of the Authority Board, shall assist the Authority Chief in the performance of the latter's functions and responsibilities. He/she shall also spearhead the setting of the operational policies and budget of the Authority, monitor the daily operations of the institution, assume overall supervision of the personnel, and perform other required or necessary duties and responsibilities of a General Manager.

The General Manager must be a holder of a master's degree or higher preferably in development management, or public administration, or in any allied disciplines with, at least, five (5) years of experience in said fields, either in the government or nongovernment organizations. He/she shall be vested with the rank, rights, privileges, disqualifications, and prohibitions of a Regional Director III.

- c) The three (3) **Assistant General Managers** – one each for Finance and Administration, Planning, and Operations – all of whom shall be also appointed by the Chief Minister with the consent and concurrence of the Authority Board, must have completed their master's degree or higher particularly those degrees that directly relate to their respective positions; and they should have, at least, five (5) years of experience in the exercise of their professions, either in the government or nongovernment organizations. They shall be vested with the rank, rights, privileges, disqualifications, and prohibitions of Assistant Regional Director I.

The three (3) Assistant General Managers shall help the General Manager to ensure that day-to-day business operation of the Authority runs smoothly. Thus, they shall perform their functions and responsibilities inherent to their respective positions.

SECTION 9. *Security of Tenure and Employment Benefits.* The key Authority officials shall enjoy security of tenure except the Chief who may be co-terminus with the Chief Minister. However, The Chief Minister may terminate any or all of the officials anytime for a cause or causes in accordance with law.

All of the aforementioned key officials of the Authority shall regularly receive their month salary; and also be entitled to allowances, per diems and other incentives in accordance with existing policies, rules and regulations on the matters.

SECTION 10. *The Ligawasan Development Board.* – The advisory and policy-making body of the Authority shall be called the “**Ligawasan Development Board (LDB)**”. The Board shall be composed of a chairperson, a co-chairperson, 14-16 regular members, and a group of technical people to constitute the Board's technical consultants.

- a) The Chairperson of the Board shall also be the Authority Chief as articulated in Section 6(a) hereof.
- b) The Co-chairperson of the Board, who shall be in a part-time capacity, shall be the most technically equipped permanent senior official of the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Energy (MENRE) designated by the Chief Minister through the endorsement of the ministry's head, with a term of office similar to the Chairperson of the Board which is three (3) years unless sooner revoked by the appointing authority.
- c) There shall be fifteen to seventeen (15-17) regular voting members of the Board as follows:
- i. Two (2) Planning and Development officers of the provinces of Maguindanao del Sur and Maguindanao del Norte;
 - ii. Two (2) Municipal Planning and Development Federation Presidents of the provinces of Maguindanao del Sur and Maguindanao del Norte;
 - iii. Administrator of the Special Geographic Area Development Authority;

- iv. Three (3) Presidents of the Federation of Barangay Captains (PFBC) in the two (2) provinces of Maguindanao del Sur and Maguindanao del Norte, and the 63-barangay Special Geographic Area of BARMM; and
 - v. Seven to nine (7-9) resident-representatives from the traditional leaders, Ulama, mainstream education professionals, businessmen or entrepreneurs, farmers, women and youth, and Christians and Indigenous Peoples, if any.
- d) There shall also be a group of technical individuals representing concerned ministries, offices, organizations and groups to constitute the Board of Consultants. These consultants can participate in the deliberation of businesses during Board meetings. They shall also be expected to provide practical advises and assistance to the Board, subject to necessities.

These technical members of the Board shall include competent representatives from the following ministries, offices, and other instrumentalities and groups:

- i. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (MAFAR);
- ii. Ministry of Public Order and Safety (MPOS);
- iii. Ministry of Higher, Basic and Technical Education (MHBTE);
- iv. Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD);
- v. Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST);
- vi. Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism (MTIT);
- vii. Ministry of Public Works (MPW);
- viii. Area-based Philippine National Police;
- ix. Area-based Armed Forces of the Philippines;
- x. Area-based Moro Islamic Liberation Front;
- xi. Area-based Moro National Liberation Front; and
- xii. Other individuals or representatives of other groups who shall serve as resource persons, as the need arises.

The aforementioned officials shall be provided with allowances, per diems and other incentives appropriate to their posts in accordance with existing policies, rules and regulations on the matters.

Except for the consultants of the Board who may be changed from time to time by their respective superiors depending on their expertise on the business under deliberation by the Board, the other members shall have a three-year term as Board members, although the Chief Minister may terminate any or all of them anytime for a cause or causes in accordance with law.

SECTION 11. *Functions of the Ligawasan Development Board.* – The Authority's overall directions and thrusts shall be afforded and approved, unless provided otherwise in this Act, by the Ligawasan Development Board.

Specifically, the Authority Board shall have the following functions:

- a) Stipulate the roadmap, regulations and guidance for the Authority's works and thrusts for the Ligawasan enclave and communities;
- b) Guarantee that the goals, policies and strategies of the Authority are coherent to the overall regional and national development goals and objectives;
- c) Ensure that the programs, projects and activities of the Authority are consistent with the regional and local development plans, programs and projects and vice versa for purposes of harmonization;

- d) Develop area-based policies, rules, regulations and management mechanisms harmonized with or supportive to the general development plans of the regional and national governments;
- e) Explore sources of funds for priority Ligawasan-wide and community-specific inter-local plans, programs, projects and activities;
- f) Create appropriate committees or task forces as may be deemed necessary in the accomplishments of the functions and duties of the Authority enumerated in Article 6 hereof;
- g) Determine schedules, establish voting procedures, criteria for the constitution of a quorum and other rules and regulations in the conduct of Board meetings;
- h) Assist the Bangsamoro Parliament in the preparation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this Act; and
- i) Perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the mandate and functions of the Authority enumerated in Sections 2 and 6 hereof.

SECTION 12. *Organizational Structure.* – The Authority Chief shall determine the organizational structure, staffing pattern and operation mechanism subject to scrutiny and approval by the Board, including pay scales of the Authority subject to existing civil service and compensation laws. The Chief may reorganize the Authority, and may create or abolish departments or offices as the exigencies of the affairs of the Authority may require, also subject to the approval of the Board and confirmation by the Chief Minister.

SECTION 13. *The Merit System.* – All officials and employees of the Authority shall be selected and appointed on the basis of merit and fitness in accordance with civil service law, rules and regulations. The recruitment, transfer, promotion, and dismissal of all its personnel including temporary workers shall be governed by merit system that shall be established by the Authority, through the Board, in compliance with existing national and regional laws, rules and regulations.

SECTION 14. *Transitory Provision.* – The Republic Act No. 9996, otherwise known as the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) Act of 2009, particularly Section 4 thereof and other corresponding laws, shall be complemented, if not abolished as may be allowed by law, with this Act. Thus in case, there are budgetary appropriations, finances, properties, records, equipment, rights and other assets earmarked by the national government and MinDA for the Ligawasan enclave within the political expanses of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region by virtue of R.A. No. 9996 and other existing laws, as well as liabilities are hereby transferred to the Authority.

SECTION 15. *Appropriations.* – The Amount necessary to finance the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current available funds of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region. Thereafter, the budget for the Authority shall be included in the 2024 Annual Regional Appropriation Act.

SECTION 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Authority shall adopt rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within sixty (60%) from the date of its approval.

SECTION 17. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 18. *Separation Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue to remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 19. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following completion of its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of regional circulations.

APPROVED, _____

AUTHOR:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antao', with a large, sweeping flourish above it.

MOHAMMAD KELIE U. ANTAO
Member of Parliament