



SANGGUNIANG PAMBANSA NG MGA SIMBAHAN SA PILIPINAS

National Council of Churches in the Philippines

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STATEMENT ON THE JUST CONCLUDED FORMAL PEACE TALKS

Beautiful are the feet of those who love peace

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines expresses elation over the successful formal peace talks between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in Oslo, Norway from February 15-21, 2011. We congratulate both panels for the agreements reached as contained in their Joint Statement. We are jubilant on the note of optimism that the statement projects. We thank the Royal Norwegian Government for its unequivocal role as facilitator of the peace process and for their hospitality to all those directly involved with the peace talks from the Philippines.

Specifically, the NCCP is edified that both Panels "recognized the need to resume the formal peace negotiations in order to resolve the armed conflict by addressing its root causes." For too long, this has been the cry of justice and peace advocates as it was the cry of the church. This recognition puts to the fore of the peace talks the situations of the vast majority of the Filipino people. It is a declaration that the peace talks is for the people more than anything else. We take pride in this particular statement of both Panels.

We also rejoice that both Parties agreed to uphold all previous agreements so painstakingly crafted in the past. We support the statement that these are "essential and unilateral affirmations in moving ahead and forging agreements on the remaining substantive agenda...". We commend both Panels for setting up timeframes, for the work of the reciprocal working groups, and the equally important work of the Joint Monitoring Committee. We are encouraged as well by the forward-looking stance that the statement conveys. We lift all these efforts to God who loves all people and desires that not one be lost. Indeed, how beautiful are the feet of those who decide peace and salvation (cf. Isaiah 12.7)!

We look forward to the meetings of the Panels in the forthcoming months and assure them that the NCCP will continue to pray for the success of the peace talks and their continuing good health, each and severally. With vibrant hope, we urge all Filipinos, especially the constituency of the NCCP to be vigilant that we all remain focused on the way of justice and peace. We invite one and all to be of one mind in appreciating the issues that would lead to just and lasting peace. Let us be vigilant that no one or any group derail the peace process that it may draw ever closer towards a successful end. We owe that much to the future generations of this country. Above all, let us continue thanking God "for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us" (BCP).

Rev. Fr. Rex R.B. Reyes, Jr.
General Secretary – NCCP

Bishop Nathanael P. Lazaro
Chairperson