

# MALACAÑANG

Manila

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 371

**PROCLAIMING A SPECIAL ZONE OF PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN  
THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES, AND ESTABLISHING THEREFOR  
THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES COUNCIL FOR PEACE AND  
DEVELOPMENT AND THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**WHEREAS**, the economic and social development of the country, especially the improvement of the living conditions of the underprivileged, is a primary task of Government;

**WHEREAS**, recent improvements in the standards of living and greater opportunities for economic development arising from our economic and social reform program have not fully benefited our brothers and sisters in some areas of the Southern Philippines;

**WHEREAS**, peace and development in the Southern Philippines will enable our people to enjoy their just share in the fruits of progress;

**WHEREAS**, the Government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) embarked on a peace process to attain a just, comprehensive, peaceful and lasting resolution of the internal armed conflict in the Southern Philippines;

**WHEREAS**, the peace process culminated in the signing of the Final Peace Agreement in Manila on 2 September 1996 between the Government and the MNLF thereby ending the decades-old conflict in Mindanao;

**WHEREAS**, there is a new window of opportunity to focus, promote and accelerate development efforts in the Southern Philippines arising from the signing of the Final Peace Agreement between the Government and the MNLF;

**WHEREAS**, the Final Peace Agreement calls for the establishment of a Special Zone of Peace and Development (ZOPAD) in the Southern Philippines wherein peace and development efforts shall be intensified;

**WHEREAS**, the Final Peace Agreement further calls for the establishment of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) and a Consultative Assembly (CA) that will coordinate, promote and accelerate the peace and development efforts in the ZOPAD; and

IN REPLYING, PLEASE CITE:

PFVR Letter # L961668



WHEREAS, Section 14 Article X of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that: "The President shall provide for regional development councils or other similar bodies composed of local government officials, regional heads of departments and other government offices, and representatives from non-governmental organizations within the regions for purposes of administrative decentralization to strengthen the autonomy of units therein and to accelerate the economic and social growth and development of the units in the region."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FIDEL V. RAMOS, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law and the Constitution, do hereby order the following:

SEC. 1. PROCLAMATION OF A SPECIAL ZONE OF PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT (ZOPAD) IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES. There is hereby proclaimed a Special Zone of Peace and Development (ZOPAD) in the Southern Philippines which shall be the focus of intensive peace and development efforts in the next three years. Investments shall be channeled to this area to spur economic activities and uplift the conditions of the people therein. The ZOPAD shall consist of the following:

The provinces of Basilan, Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Palawan, Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, South Cotabato, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, and Zamboanga del Sur; and

The cities of Cotabato, Dapitan, Dipolog, General Santos, Iligan, Marawi, Pagadian, Puerto Princesa, and Zamboanga.

SEC. 2. DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN THE ZOPAD. Within the next three years, the abovementioned areas covered by the ZOPAD shall be provided with the following development efforts:

Provision for basic services in the depressed areas of the ZOPAD, such as water, electricity, educational facilities, socialized housing, and health and sanitation, among others;

Provision for adequate infrastructure facilities to support the development requirements within the ZOPAD and enhance linkages with areas outside of it;

Promotion of investments and trade, both domestic and international, to generate employment and create opportunities for economic development;

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Provision for entrepreneurial development support, livelihood assistance, and credit facilities so that those in the ZOPAD, especially the vulnerable sectors such as women, farmers and fisherfolk, unemployed, urban and rural poor, among others, shall have greater control over their economic destinies; and

- (e) Provision for capability-building assistance for local communities and organizations, especially women's groups, to take full advantage of development programs and projects in the ZOPAD.

**SEC. 3. MEDIUM FOR DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN THE ZOPAD.**

Development efforts in the ZOPAD shall be carried out through the following:

Institutional mechanisms, such as the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) to be hereby established, the Cabinet Officer for Regional Development (CORD) system, area-specific development task forces, regional development councils system, regional peace and order councils system, Southern Philippines Development Authority, and other institutional mechanisms which may be established; and

Existing development programs, such as but not limited to the BIMP-East ASEAN Growth Area, Social Reform Agenda localization programs, flagship projects, and Presidential Council for Countryside Development (PCCD) programs for priority provinces.

**SEC. 4. PRIORITY AREAS AND PROJECTS.** Development efforts in the ZOPAD shall give priority to the following areas:

Provinces in the area belonging to the 20 poorest provinces in the country (namely Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi);

All 5th and 6th class municipalities in the provinces in the ZOPAD; and

Depressed communities within the towns and cities covered by the ZOPAD.

Projects to be implemented in the ZOPAD shall include the following:

Human development projects, including but not limited to health and sanitation services, educational development, and welfare services, to promote the well-being of families in depressed communities and enhance their capabilities to participate in economic programs;

- (b) Socialized housing projects to address housing backlogs in priority areas;

Water supply development to provide potable water especially to depressed communities in the ZOPAD;

Roads and bridges to connect depressed communities to centers of economic activities and improve mobility of goods and services within the ZOPAD and between the ZOPAD and other growth centers;

Airports and seaports to address the needs of commuters and facilitate transport of products in the priority areas;

Telecommunications and power/electrification programs to support the increase in economic activities in the ZOPAD;

Development and promotion of tourism to harness the tourism potential and enhance appreciation and awareness of history and culture in the ZOPAD;

- h) Environmental and marine resources improvement program to protect and conserve natural resources in the ZOPAD;

- (i) Enhancement of agricultural production through irrigation and post-harvest and marketing facilities;

Establishment of food processing facilities to generate employment and create forward and backward economic linkages;

- (k) Establishment of Provincial Industrial Centers and People's Industrial Enterprises to serve as focal points for business activities and generate additional economic opportunities; and

People empowerment programs to ensure greater participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in governance and in the determination of their political, economic, and social destinies.

**SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES COUNCIL FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT.** There is hereby established in the Office of the President, a Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) to serve as a special and transitory body to coordinate and promote the economic and social growth and development of the ZOPAD. The SPCPD shall be subject to the control and supervision of the President. The powers and functions of the SPCPD shall be derivative and extension of the powers of the President, i. e., those powers of the President that

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could be delegated under the Constitution and existing laws. The Chairman of the SPCPD shall submit to the President, in consultation with the Consultative Assembly, the SPCPD's plans and programs, annual development reports and other documents on the ZOPAD.

**SEC. 6. COMPOSITION OF THE SPCPD.** The SPCPD shall be composed of one Chairperson, one Vice-Chairperson and three Deputies. For the effective coordination of programs in the area, the Chairperson shall be designated by the President from among the governors in the ZOPAD, including the Governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The other members of SPCPD shall also be designated by the President from among the heads of departments or other government offices and representatives of non-government organizations within the ZOPAD.

**SEC. 7. FUNCTIONS OF THE SPCPD.** The SPCPD shall promote and coordinate peace and development efforts in the ZOPAD. In particular, the SPCPD shall have the following functions:

(a) ~~To take charge in promoting, monitoring, and coordinating the improvement of peace and order in the ZOPAD;~~

(b) ~~To focus on peace and development efforts more particularly in the depressed areas of the ZOPAD and cause the implementation of peace and development projects;~~

To provide support to local government units as necessary;

To exercise such other powers and functions necessary for the effective implementation of its mandate as may be delegated by the President;

(e) To assist in the preparation for the holding of elections, referenda or plebiscite and people's initiative in the ZOPAD as may be duly deputized by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC); and

To cause the creation of such offices or instrumentalities as shall be necessary for the effective and efficient administration of the affairs of the areas. There shall be approval from the Office of the President for budgetary purposes.

The offices or instrumentalities referred to above are those internal to the SPCPD such as administrative or support staff necessary for SPCPD to efficiently and effectively function, or such ad hoc committees that may be formed from existing government personnel and

representatives of non-governmental organizations or people's organizations to effectively promote the programs and projects in the ZOPAD.

**SEC. 8. ROLE OF SPCPD WITH RESPECT TO DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS.** With respect to development concerns in the ZOPAD, the SPCPD shall undertake the following additional tasks:

Promote, coordinate, and monitor development efforts in the ZOPAD, including the encouragement of domestic and foreign investments, subject to existing laws, especially from the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations;

- (b) Network with government and other development institutions to generate resources and economic opportunities for the ZOPAD; and
- (c) Coordinate for the Office of the President with concerned departments and local government units in the promotion and the implementation of the programs and projects of the following agencies, namely: the Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA), the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA), and the Office of Southern Cultural Communities (OSCC), only insofar as their respective offices or projects located in the ZOPAD are concerned; and the Basilan Development Task Force, the Central Mindanao Development Task Force, the Sulu Development Task Force, and the Special Development Planning Task Group.

**SEC. 9. ROLE OF SPCPD WITH RESPECT TO PEACE AND ORDER CONCERNS.** The SPCPD shall promote, coordinate and monitor the improvement of peace and order in the ZOPAD, as follows:

Monitor the implementation of peace and order and public safety measures in the area;

Hold consultative meetings and disseminate vital information pertaining to peace and order in the area;

- (c) Conduct advocacy and public information drive to enhance public support for law and order in the area;

Keep itself informed of peace and order programs and situation obtaining in the area, through coordination with military and police forces, and request such police or military forces to address specific contingencies in accordance with law, provided however, that the control and supervision of the police and the military forces shall remain and continue to be vested in their respective chains of command under existing laws; and

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Submit reports and make recommendations to the President on matters pertaining to peace and order in the ZOPAD, in coordination with the Consultative Assembly.

**SEC. 10. SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN THE ZOPAD.** All departments, agencies, and instrumentalities of government, including government-owned and controlled corporations, are hereby directed to provide the necessary support for the successful and timely implementation of the above-mentioned programs, projects and concerns in the ZOPAD, in coordination with the SPCPD.

**SEC. 11. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY.** There is hereby established a Consultative Assembly to serve as an advisory body to the SPCPD in the development of the ZOPAD. The Assembly shall be transitory and shall be under the control and supervision of the President.

**SEC. 12. COMPOSITION OF THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY.** The Consultative Assembly shall be composed of the following:

Chairperson of the SPCPD, who shall be the presiding officer of the Consultative Assembly;

The Governor and Vice-Governor of the ARMM and fourteen (14) Governors of the provinces and nine (9) City Mayors in the ZOPAD; and

Fifty-five (55) members from various sectors, including recommendees of non-government organizations (NGOs), and people's organizations (POs).

**SEC. 13. FUNCTIONS OF THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY.** The Consultative Assembly shall have the following functions:

To serve as a forum for consultation and ventilation of issues and concerns;

To conduct public hearings as may be necessary and to provide appropriate advice to the SPCPD; and

To formulate and recommend policies to the President through the Chairperson of the SPCPD and adopt rules and regulations to the extent necessary for the efficient and effective administration of the affairs of the area.

The rules and regulations referred to above pertain only to the internal affairs and procedures of the SPCPD and the Assembly, in order to promote the

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efficient, effective, and orderly performance of their functions. Such rules and regulations shall be submitted to the President for approval.

**SEC. 14. DURATION OF EXISTENCE OF THE SPCPD AND THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY.** The SPCPD and the Consultative Assembly shall exist for a period of three years from the effectivity of this Order unless extended by the President.

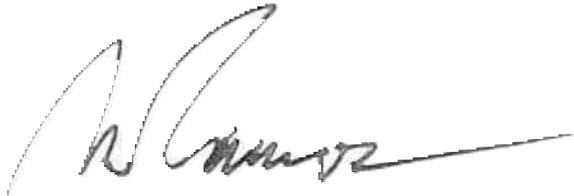
**SEC. 15. EFFECT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS.** Nothing in this Executive Order shall affect the existence or diminish the powers and functions under existing laws of all local government units in the ZOPAD, including the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

**SEC. 16. FUNDING.** Funds for the operations of the SPCPD and the Consultative Assembly shall be sourced from the Office of the President and from such other funding sources as may be recommended by the Department of Budget and Management.

**SEC. 17. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE.** If any part or provision of this Executive Order is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other parts or provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and effective.

**SEC. 18. EFFECTIVITY CLAUSE.** This Executive Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two newspapers of national circulation.

DONE, in the City of Manila, this 2nd day of October, in the Year of our Lord, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety-Six.



By the President:



**RUBEN D. TORRES**  
Executive Secretary



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