

# What Women Want

## A Women's Agenda for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in the Philippines

From 28-29 March 2019, approximately 120 women leaders from the Bangsamoro and diaspora communities, civil society organizations working for women and peace, local governments and representatives from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), and the national government gathered in Davao City, Philippines to develop a women's agenda for the newly established political entity.

In the two-day summit, the participants identified actionable areas that the BARMM could adopt in its policies, plans and programmes in cognizance of the various gender-related provisions in the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL). Below is the summary of recommendations developed by the participants of the summit:

### **Create a Women's Ministry**

Participants called for the creation of a Women's Ministry that holds the same powers as that of other regional line agencies. Some of the responsibilities of the Ministry would include:

- Oversight in the implementation of women- and gender-related national and regional laws, policies, programmes and services
- Formulate gender-related policies and builds capacities of regional and local governments to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in their programmes, services and thematic or emerging areas confronting the region, with representation from among the core territories of the Bangsamoro and that of the various sectors.

### **Operationalize the gender and development budget (GAD budget)**

- Strengthen the role of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights and its regional counterpart to monitor the implementation of the Magna Carta of Women, especially in the BARMM
- Disseminate information on policies and guidelines pertaining to the use of the GAD budget to enable women to access and claim programmes and services
- Publicly disclose GAD budgets of agencies and its utilization to ensure transparency and accountability

### **Promote women's participation in the BARMM**

- Build capacities of women to enable them to participate in local and regional governance
- Secure a 40% quota for women in local development councils
- Develop criteria for the selection of female representatives to the reserved and sectoral seats in the Parliament to ensure that they will carry the voices and issues of women at the community level
- Set aside funds which women running for public office could access; provide incentives to political parties that support women candidates
- Create a Women's Advisory Council, composed of women from grassroots, community and civil society organizations that would serve as a consultative body and feedback mechanism on policies, plans and programmes affecting women in the Bangsamoro
- Ensure that the Bangsamoro Islamic Women's Auxillary Brigade (BIWAB) actively participates in the normalization process – from policy formulation to monitoring and evaluation

### **Enable women's participation in civilian protection and community safety committees**

- Train community and grassroots women on early warning, civilian protection and community safety measures

### **Respond to the differential impact of conflict on women and girls**

- Pass national and regional legislation on the protection of internally displaced peoples (IDPs)
- Evaluate and revise, if needed, national government policies and responses to conflict as applied in the context of the Bangsamoro – such as reporting cases of sexual and gender-based violence (and other forms of violence and abuse) and the provision of various types of assistance for victim-survivors such as psychosocial support, safe havens and shelter for women and children, including widows and orphans, and socio-economic assistance such as 4Ps (cash transfer programme) and universal health coverage under PhilHealth
- Establish feedback and accountability mechanisms to report discrimination, exploitation, and abuse, especially to women in especially difficult circumstances and corruption in the context of response, relief, recovery and rehabilitation in conflict-affected areas.

### **Promote gender-responsive transitional justice in the Bangsamoro**

- Ensure the proposed National Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission in the Bangsamoro, is informed by the leadership and participation of women to respond to the historical injustices, legitimate grievances, human rights violations and marginalization against women

### **Promote gender-sensitive recovery and rehabilitation of Marawi**

- Ensure the representation of women in the newly established BARMM in the Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) including the proposed Women's Ministry as well as internally displaced peoples (IDPs) and civil society organizations

### **Promote gender-responsive governance and engage with civil society**

- Build capacities of the newly installed officials and staff of the BARMM on gender-sensitivity and responsive governance
- Review and localize a GAD Code based on the current and emerging issues confronting Bangsamoro women
- Install enabling mechanisms for gender-responsive governance such as the GAD Focal Point System, GAD plans and budgets, GAD pool of trainers that would sustain and cascade gender trainings at the regional and local levels
- Establish mechanisms for civil society participation from policy formulation to monitoring and evaluation; support community-led monitoring, that engages women to provide feedback on the effects or impacts of development and humanitarian support
- Establish referral pathways that would enable, not just government service providers, but also non-government and private sector responses to women and community needs

### **Create sustainable livelihood and economic opportunities for women**

- Develop a roadmap for women's economic empowerment to include but not limited to:
  - Context-, needs- and resource-based analysis of livelihoods and economic opportunities for Bangsamoro women, including IDP women
  - Support for start-up women microentrepreneurs in the Bangsamoro and incentives for rising women microentrepreneurs
  - Inclusion of safety nets for women into livelihoods and microenterprises to protect them from socio-economic shocks such as armed conflict and natural disasters
  - Passage of laws or policies that will protect women from discrimination, abuse and harassment in the workplace

### **Implement of the Magna Carta of Women in the Bangsamoro**

- Raise awareness of grassroots and community women of their rights in the context of Islam and traditional/customary laws as well as those enshrined in the Magna Carta of Women; popularize these laws to enable women to assert and claim their rights
- Undertake evidence-based review of the impact of the Code of Muslim and Personal Laws (CMPL) on Muslim women

