

Peace is Living Together
Religions and Cultures in Dialogue
for Peace and Reconciliation in Mindanao
Notre Dame University
Cotabato, June 6th and 7th, 2014
FINAL APPEAL

1. We, men and women of different ages, cultures and traditions, are gathered here in Cotabato for this important meeting. We come from different religious traditions, ethnic realities, languages and cultures, and political affiliations. Despite our own differences, we are all sincere seekers of peace. We, engage and re-commit ourselves to pursue peace building and development efforts for Mindanao – this wonderful island for too many years hurt by the violence of many conflicts. Today we feel that a new day is beginning: after the night of the war the new dawn of peace!
2. The historical signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, on 27 March 2014, embodies the fruit of peace negotiations between the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. This event fosters the concrete possibility to build-up peace. Each one can become an active worker in the construction of the common future. Each one can lend a hand to build the great building of peace, made of different apartments all important and necessary for living together.
3. Peace is not merely the absence of conflict and war: it is the implementation of principles and realization of promised roadmap. Peace is living together: religions and cultures in dialogue for peace and reconciliation in Mindanao! We firmly believe that Peace will be authentic if it will be peace for all! The inclusion of everyone is crucial, at a social and political level, majorities and minorities alike, but all with the same right to be citizen of Mindanao. We must all stand up and begin to walk together. And we walked together this evening, religious leaders and politicians alongside the new generations. We began to walk together towards the future!
4. During this two-day conference we talked about peace. We have addressed many different aspects all necessary for the construction of peace. We have started from the significant experience of the Peace Process on the Bangsamoro. We have listened to many witnesses of dialogue in Mindanao. We have talked about the challenges that the local political realities must now face in this island, without forgetting two fundamental aspects in building peace: education for a culture of peace and economic development.
5. This conference fosters a new deeper consciousness and stronger hope amidst the problem of division or conflict. With mutual trust through dialogue and sincere

collaboration, in each one of us, a new strength is born. Building peace is not easy and beckons us to live together. Living together is not easy but it is possible if we start from what unites us and not what divides us! Living together is possible if we have faith and trust to pursue the common good rather than self-interest. Living together is possible and it is wonderful!

6. As one people and one nation, we make our dream to sustain the momentum to achieve peace a reality. We refuse to believe that peace is not within the reach of our generation. With firm resolve, together we walk through ambivalent realities to that day when harmonious relationships founded on forgiveness and reconciliation shall flourish. We dream to persist in establishing justice, living together for truth, and continuing dialogue for the common future. We young turn to you, religious leaders and political representatives, and we ask you to continue to work with confidence to build a future of peace in Mindanao, in the Philippines and all over the world. We do not leave you alone, we will be with you! We will do our part!

This evening we have a dream. It is hard to live without a dream, even if many say it is too ingenuous, it is better not to dream. But when the dream becomes a common hope then gains strength and transforms the world.

We have a dream that one day the war could disappear from the lives of all people, that peace can be experienced by everyone as a daily reality.

We have a dream that many walls of division and separation are slaughtered and every man and woman, young or old, healthy or sick, citizen or foreigner, Christians, Muslims or Indigenous have the same rights and the same opportunities to live.

We have a dream that the new generations of our beautiful Country can experience the joy of living together and share the enthusiasm to work together for the common good, the happiness of an everlasting peace.

We want to work for this dream. We will not allow anyone to steal this hope.

We commit ourselves tonight to continue the dialogue begun in these days and to work every day with all our energies to the building of peace in our cities and in our country, knowing that "Peace is Living Together".

Cotabato, June 7th, 2014