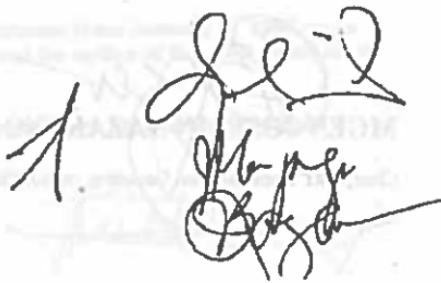


JOINT PRESS RELEASE

IN AN HISTORIC INITIAL MEETING AT THE DA'WAH CENTER, CROSSING SIMUAY, SULTAN KUDARAT, MAGUINDANAO TODAY, JANUARY 7, 1997, MEMBERS OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES (GRP) AND THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT (MILF) TOOK A STEP TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN MINDANAO.

THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES ON AGENDA SETTING OF THE GRP PANEL AND MILF PANEL DISCUSSED AND REACHED A CONSENSUS ON THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THEIR ASSIGNED TASK - TO IDENTIFY AND CLARIFY THE ISSUES AND CONCERN WHICH SHALL BECOME THE AGENDA FOR THE FORMAL PEACE TALKS BETWEEN THE GRP AND MILF PANELS.

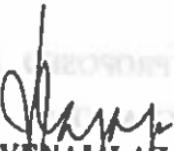
THE MILF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE PROPOSED A SINGLE TALKING POINT - "TO SOLVE THE BANGSAMORO PROBLEM". ANOTHER MEETING WAS SET FOR FEBRUARY 25-26, 1997 AT THE SAME VENUE FOR THE MILF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO EXPOUND ON ITS PROPOSAL AND FOR THE GRP TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO PRESENT ITS POSITION.



THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES ON THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, EXCHANGED POSITION PAPERS ON THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES, WHICH ARE INTENDED TO GENERATE A FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE FORMAL PEACE TALKS. THEY AGREED TO MEET AGAIN ALSO ON FEBRUARY 25-26 1997 FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THEIR FINAL RESPECTIVE POSITIONS AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH THEIR PRINCIPALS.

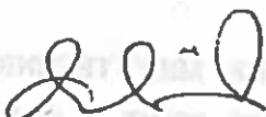
THE MEETING WAS VERY CORDIAL, WITH THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES EXPRESSING THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR ASSIGNED TASKS AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE:



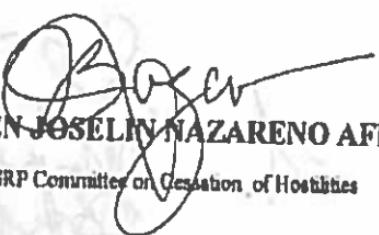
**ASEC JOVENTAL LAZAGA**

Chair, GRP Committee on Agenda Setting



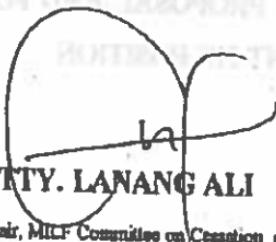
**PROF. MONER BAJUNAID**

Chair, MILF Committee on Agenda Setting



**MGEN JOSELIN NAZARENO AFP**

Chair, GRP Committee on Cessation of Hostilities



**ATTY. LANANG ALI**

Chair, MILF Committee on Cessation of Hostilities