

# DSWD, OPAPRU renew commitment for MILF Normalization Program



*Left Photo: DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian (left) and OPAPRU Acting Secretary Isidro Purisima lead the renewal of partnership in the implementation of socio-economic interventions under the MILF Normalization Program on Tuesday, May 2, at the DSWD Central Office.*

*Right Photo: (From left to right) DSWD Undersecretary for Inclusive-Sustainable Peace and Special Concerns Alan Tanjusay, DSWD Secretary Gatchalian, OPAPRU Acting Secretary Purisima, and Presidential Assistant for Bangsamoro Transformation David Diciano present the newly signed partnership agreement.*

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian and Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU) Acting Secretary Isidro Purisima signed an agreement on Tuesday, May 2, renewing the agencies' convergence mechanisms towards the fulfillment of the government's normalization commitments for the former members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The ceremonial signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the two agencies entails a transfer of OPAPRU funds amounting to Php396 million to the DSWD.

The allocation will fund the intended implementation of socio-economic programs for the MILF Decommissioned Combatants (DCs). Under this agreement, 3,300 MILF DCs will receive Php100,000 each in transitional cash assistance and livelihood grants which they could use for their reintegration into mainstream society.

Both heads of the agencies expressed their commitment to strengthening their partnership to continue the normalization program while exploring other possible areas of collaboration

to serve conflict-affected individuals and families and disadvantaged areas towards an inclusive, sustainable and peaceful community.

“We will make sure that inclusive and sustainable peace is an initiative that is not just written on paper but is actually funded and manned properly,” Secretary Gatchalian said.

The DSWD Secretary likewise shared that development initiatives on the side of the peace process are set by the Department to let the “constituents feel the embrace of the national government.”

Acting Secretary Purisima said the OPAPRU immensely appreciates the DSWD’s continued support in the decommissioning process, especially in providing other interventions that complement the government’s efforts in attaining the peace agenda.

“Nagpapasalamat kami sa inyo because of the support, especially sa SLP (Sustainable Livelihood Program) na nakatutulong para ma-sustain ang initial gains natin as far as the normalization is concerned (We thank the DSWD for its support, especially its SLP that help sustain our initial gains in the normalization process),” Acting Secretary Purisima said.

The DSWD, as part of its social welfare and development commitments to the normalization program, conducts the needs assessment and case management of the MILF DCs, measuring their responsiveness to the programs, and their progress in the normalization process. Programs available for the MILF DCs include livelihood assistance through its Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP).

The DSWD and the OPAPRU continue to envision the development of inclusive, sustainable, and peaceful communities as a by-product of mutual successes of the Normalization Program. #