

**Speech of Sec. Teresita Quintos Deles, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process  
Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the Batasan Exhibit  
September 15, 2015**

First of all allow me to thank the House of Representatives for being such a gracious host for this exhibit in connection with our observance of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Peace Consciousness Month this September, themed "*Pagkakaisa tungo sa Patuloy na Kapayapaan at Kaunlaran.*" Our exhibit here today is just one of the many ways that show that our representatives in Congress are indeed united with us in our quest to find peace and progress for our country.

Please do not take this as an affront against your power over legislation if I am to call for the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law here today. After all, just as you are, I am here to represent a constituency: I am here to speak for those whose lives have been forever scarred by conflict, and they need your help. They are tired of war. They are tired of being neglected. They are tired of poverty. You, our elected representatives, are in the best position to help change all that.

It has been over a year since the Office of the President facilitated the transmission of the original draft BBL to these august halls. I know you have all been working hard on the bill, especially with the careful shepherding of

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the Ad Hoc Committee on the Bangsamoro headed by its hardworking vice-chairs and Chair Rufus Rodriguez. We thank you for your continued commitment to pass the law despite the challenges we have encountered along the way. We also thank House Speaker Feliciano Belmonte, all the Deputy Speakers, and Majority Floor Leader Neptali Gonzales II for ensuring the bill is constantly tackled in the plenary. Your brand of leadership is exactly what we need during the coming weeks as we near—Insha’Allah—the realization of the Bangsamoro dream for genuine self-determination within the framework of our Republic.

We will need to work even harder in the coming months—you in Congress most of all—because now, more than ever, the Filipino people are counting on you to indelibly imprint upon our great nation the peace and progress we have all endeavored to achieve over the past years.

It is now in our hands to forge a lasting legacy for peace and progress in the Bangsamoro, in Mindanao, and in the Philippines. We have the time and we have the strength to give succeeding generations a chance to live in a peaceful and progressive society.

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If we all do our part—as we must—I have no doubt that this dream will become reality in no time. And it must, if we want our children and their children to inherit a strong, united, and harmonious Republic that enjoys the blessings of peace.

And so let us continue to work and unite, that together we might show our country a better way forward: a way towards continued peace and progress for all, whether Muslim, Christian, or Lumad, whether in Luzon, in Visayas, or in Mindanao. Together, let us break the cycle of injustice, of poverty, and of conflict that has plagued our people for far too long.

Thank you and may we all have a meaningful and historic Peace Month.