



Women Engaged in Action on 1325 WE Act 1325

WE Act 1325 Submits Women's Perspectives on Normalization to the Bangsamoro Transition Commission



Last March 6, 2014, members of the Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (WE Act 1325) who are part of the Women Working for Normalization team met with the Chairperson of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC), Mohagher Iqbal and other commissioners of the BTC, to formally submit the consultation results of the Women Working for Normalization (WWN) project which is supported by the Australian Government. The consultations focused on normalization-related issues such as decommissioning, addressing arms proliferation and misuse, and transitional justice.

Consulted were women from Maguindanao, Lanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-tawi, Zamboanga and Zamboanga Sibugay. Roughly 200 Moro, IP and Christian women in four separate consultations were given spaces to share their perspectives. Consultation among women of Maguindanao was co-organized with the Teduray Lambangian Women's Association and the Kutawato Council for Justice and Peace. The Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation, Inc. co-organized the consultation among women of Lanao. Meanwhile, consultation among



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women of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-tawi (BaSulTa) was done in collaboration with Nisa ul Haqq fi Bangsamoro, and consultation among women of Zamboanga and Zamboanga Sibugay was held with the help of Pinay Kilos (PinK).

WE Act 1325 members had an opportunity to discuss important concerns with members of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission. The highlights of these consultations are found below.

On Mechanisms to Protect Human Rights

Women consulted hope to see language in the BBL that recognizes identity of Indigenous Peoples (IP) and which respects IP delineated territory. They hope to see a CSO structure created that will monitor, document and report human rights violations with women as active participants. Furthermore, they would like to see human rights mechanisms created at the community level.

On Normalization and How to Achieve It

Women consulted wanted provisions included on decreasing arms and disarming existing armed groups. They want emphasis to be placed on the meaningful involvement of women and their proactive role in the return to stable conditions. The normalization process should take into account IP customary laws and traditions and Islamic-faith based teachings. Normalization, they said, can be achieved through regular dialogues between and among people of different faiths and ethnicities; hence, mechanisms for dialogue should be in place.

On Arms Control and Decommissioning

Women want to see a mechanism for controlling, reporting and monitoring of arms within the Bangsamoro region. Women want to be assured that just compensation and definitive programs such as livelihood, scholarships and other peace dividends will be available to those who will yield their arms. The security of those who will turn in their arms should also be ensured. Consultations should also be conducted regarding the perspectives of the former combatants regarding their preferred compensation. Such compensation may include sustainable livelihood, scholarship grants for the children of the former combatants and training for skills development. Women should be involved in the disarmament process such as in monitoring and reporting.



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On Policing Structure

The police force should be knowledgeable and respectful of IP customary laws, Shari'a Law and Islamic practices. It should also be well-trained, credible and fair in its administration of justice and implementation of the laws. Members of the Bangsamoro Police Force should be natives of the Bangsamoro region. The people from the different ethnic groups, cultures and religion should be adequately represented. Criteria for recruitment should follow a thorough and strict screening procedure.

Women should be involved in the police ranks and their role should be expanded beyond desk duties. Women police officers should be assigned to deal with female offenders and criminals to avoid incidence of violence against women (VAW) and harassment. There should be field assignments for women in the Bangsamoro Police Force.

They also want to see IP participation in the ranks of the Bangsamoro Police Force. They want the role of women incorporated in preventing conflicts. Police should be present in strategic areas of the conflict-affected communities.

On Conflict Resolution in Communities

Women said that they want customary and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms incorporated and strengthened whilst addressing any discriminatory practices involved therein. They hope that participation of women will be ensured in conflict resolution and mediation whether customary or otherwise, such as women arbiters and Shari'a judges.

On Transitional Justice

Women consulted hope to see a body created to look into the extent of injustices, assessing cases and identifying appropriate means to provide justice. This body should be composed of different representatives from areas concerned and the representation approved by the community.

On Healing the Wounds of Armed Conflict

Women want proper recognition of the struggles and history of the people in conflict-affected communities. They suggest promotion of reconciliation through alternative activities and spaces such as interfaith dialogues, fellowships, gathering and "bayanihan" activities such as sports fests and "salu-salo". Such activities would promote the conciliation of differences. They hope that victims and their families will be involved in the



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process. Compensation such as livelihood programs and scholarships should also be provided to the affected families. Women expressed the need for counseling, stress debriefing and reconciliation sessions for the members of the community. Education towards reconciliation and peace is also a pathway towards community healing.

On Representation and Participation of IP and Moro Women

Women, including IP women, should be represented in the Parliament and all levels of decision-making processes within the Bangsamoro government. Quotas should be introduced to make sure that seats will be reserved for women. The Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) should stipulate gender balance in the different mechanisms and structures of government. The awareness of the community should also be strengthened to appreciate the importance of women's participation. The call of community women for greater protection, participation and representation in the Bangsamoro Political Entity was emphasized.



This initiative is part of the project, Women Working for Normalization, led by the Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (WE Act 1325) in collaboration with Nisa ul Haqq fi Bangsamoro, Al Mujadillah Development Foundation, Inc., Teduray Lambangian Women's Organization, Kutawato Council for Justice and Peace and Pinay Kilos.

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