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Media Release

For Reference: Fidel V. Agcaoili, Vice-Chair and Spokesperson, NDFP Negotiating Panel

Aquino should exercise political will to seal peace pact with NDFP

The Vice-Chair and Spokesperson of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) peace negotiating panel said President Benigno Simeon Aquino III should exercise strong political will in addressing the root causes of the armed conflict if it wants to achieve political settlement with the revolutionary forces in the Philippines led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing – the New People’s Army (NPA).

NDFP peace negotiating Vice-Chair Fidel V. Agcaoili issued the statement in view of the high level of optimism displayed by the Government of the Philippines (GPH) peace negotiating panel led by its chair Atty. Alex Padilla that the Manila government will soon come up with a peace deal with the NDFP in 18 months.

“The Aquino regime and its negotiating panel should exercise strong political will if they want to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Philippines. They should be ready to resolutely address the the roots of the armed conflict, exhibit patriotism, and respect the democratic rights and work for the well-being of the Filipino people.”

”They should not base their optimism on a set time frame but on their own willingness to assert national independence, carry out a genuine land reform program and adopt a program of economic development based on national industrialization and progressive and enlightened social policy.”

“Across the negotiating table, they should abandon the language and tactics of the previous Arroyo regime, adhere to all previously signed agreements especially The Hague Joint Declaration, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), and show determination to end the culture of impunity in the country,” Agcaoili told reporters covering the closing ceremony of the GPH-NDFP formal peace talks in the Norwegian capital.

“The root causes of armed conflict in the Philippines lie deep in the prevailing unjust social order dominated by the local ruling classes of big compradors and landlords supported by US and other imperialist powers. To forge a negotiated political settlement in 18 months would require the strong determination of both Parties to agree on basic economic, social and political reforms that would satisfy the national and democratic interests of the Filipino people,” Agcaoili stressed.

“If President Aquino and his GPH negotiating panel wish to accelerate the peace talks and clinch a political settlement with the NDFP ahead of the 18-month timetable, they should seriously consider the NDFP proposal for a Concise Agreement for an Immediate Just Peace issued by the NDFP National Executive Committee and submitted to the GPH on August 27, 2005.

“If President Aquino chooses the patriotic path to peace and accept this 10-point proposal for just and lasting peace, then we can have the peace agreement signed and sealed even ahead of the targeted 18-month peace deal,” Agcaoili added.

Agcaoili noted that the GPH negotiating panel had withdrawn the dates for the second round of peace talks. “If it were truly interested in achieving the set time frame, then it should have been

more determined to set the dates for the second round of talks where the two Negotiating Panels would receive reports on the work done by the Reciprocal Working Committees on Social and Economic Reforms and the Working Groups on Political and Constitutional Reforms in accordance with the timetable. . Instead, the GPH panel insisted on engaging in petty wangling in an attempt to impose its will on the NDFP, Agcaoili concluded.#