



**Message of the BTC Chairman Ghazali Jaafar
During the Signing of Memorandum of Agreement between
The COMELEC, OPAPP, and BTC
on the Conduct of Plebiscite for the BOL**

Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Aalameen. Wassalatu wassalaamu 'ala nabiyyina Muhammad, wa 'ala 'aalihi, wa ashabihi, wamantabi ahum bi ihsanin ilaa yawmideen, wa ba'd.

Commission on Elections Chairman Hon. Atty. Sheriff Abas, Presidential Adviser on Peace Process Secretary Carlito Galvez, COMELEC-Commissioner-in-Charge Commissioner Al A. Parrenio, Committee on the Bangsamoro Plebiscite Ustadz Datuan M. Lumambas, Pastor Raul Bautista, domestic and international observers, and our friends in media who are our fellow workers for freedom, ladies and gentlemen,

assalaamu alaykum warahmatullahi wabarakatuhu and good morning.

The Bangsamoro Organic Law is the legal embodiment of the commitments stipulated in the Comprehensive Agreement in the Bangsamoro and other negotiated peace agreements.

It is a product of the seventeen (17) long years of peace negotiation between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Government of the Philippines (GPH), whose purpose is to solve the Bangsamoro question, problems, and issues brought about by the loss of the Bangsamoro self-governance first during the conquest of Cebu in 1521, and then the conquest of Manila in 1571, and then the inclusion of Mindanao in the sale of the Philippine territory through the Treaty of Paris in 1898. And finally when the Philippines was granted independence in 1946, Mindanao was included in the Philippine state without the plebiscitary consent of its native inhabitants. These institutionalized the political, economic, social and cultural marginalization and deprivation of the Bangsamoro people and resulted to the dispossession of their vast lands and making them landless, poorest of the poor, and second class citizens.

The Bangsamoro Organic Law resolves the political question, addresses historical injustices, and responds to the legitimate grievances of the Bangsamoro people. The MILF believes that it is our best legacy for the future generations. It will transform the adversarial relationship between the Philippine Government and the Bangsamoro people into sustainable partnership for a just, dignified and long-lasting peace and development. It embodies the principles of democracy and allows the people of the region to freely participate in the political processes within its territorial jurisdiction. And it recognizes the distinctive historical and cultural heritage, economic and social structures, and the justness and legitimacy of the cause and the aspiration of all peoples in the region.

Through the BOL, the Bangsamoro Parliament will be empowered to adopt policies, plans and programs that will protect human rights, promote social justice, maintain the rule of law, advance the welfare of all peoples in the Bangsamoro. It will ensure that our long-held vision of just and dignified peace will be realized and that we will be able to catch up with the development and improvement of the rest of the country.

The signing of the Memorandum of Agreement on the Conduct of Plebiscite for the Bangsamoro Organic Law between the Commission on Elections, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process, and the Bangsamoro Transition Commission is another milestone. We are guaranteeing the credibility, orderliness, and acceptability of the plebiscite.

For these reasons, and on behalf of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, the leadership of the Moro National Liberation Front, the leadership of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Bangsamoro people, the indigenous people, and the settler communities, we are wholeheartedly expressing our sincere thanks and gratitude to our partners – the Commission on Elections, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process, the domestic and international monitoring bodies, and our friends from the media.

Maraming salamat po.


GHAZALI B. JAAFAR
Chairman