

Message from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
for the Philippines Development Forum 2014

Your Excellency Benigno S. Aquino III, President of the Republic of the Philippines,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend my heartfelt congratulations on convening the 2014 Philippines Development Forum.

I would like to welcome the signing of the historic Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in March and the recent announcement of the Bangsamoro Development Plan (BDP). I am deeply impressed that the Comprehensive Agreement and today's forum resulted from the dialogue and trust that was cultivated at the one-on-one meeting between President Aquino and the MILF Chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim in Narita back in August of 2011.

It is expected that the peace process in Mindanao will serve as a valuable precedent for various peace-building efforts in the world. Having hoisted the banner of "Proactive Contributor to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation, Japan is making numerous efforts aimed at active contribution to the regional and international peace, stability and prosperity more than ever. The support for the peace process in Mindanao is one of the concrete endeavors in Asia.

The Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development, the so-called J-BIRD, has focused on capacity building, community development and mid-term regional development. The assistance under this initiative amounted to more than 15 billion Japanese yen. Considering the discussion at this Forum, the Government of Japan stands ready to strengthen assistance for comprehensive growth in Mindanao.

In closing, I would like to hope that all the people in the Philippines including people in Mindanao would be able to enjoy “the dividends of peace.”

November 2014

Prime Minister of Japan
Shinzo Abe