

Stewardship not ownership: Let BBL facilitate “care for our common home”

PMPT'S CONCERNS REGARDING NON-MORO IP COMMUNITIES AND SCOPE OF NATURAL RESOURCES, AND CORRESPONDING OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL UNDER THE DRAFT BANGSAMORO BASIC LAW (BBL)

We are inspired with the release of the Papal Social encyclical
Laudato Si

. The call for an enhanced Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro-based BBL and the Pope's encyclical go hand in hand.

The Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc., as part of the All-Out-Peace movement, remains steadfast on its call in achieving lasting peace and sustainable development in Mindanao, through a Bangsamoro Basic Law that promotes inclusive, non-discriminatory and transparent access and benefit sharing.

ON NATURAL RESOURCES

As Pope Francis clearly expressed in
Laudato Si

, we must put pressure on our governments to develop more rigorous regulations in caring for our common home: to become stewards, and not owners, of our natural resources.

In pushing for a comprehensive BBL, we are upholding the rights of the communities in the Bangsamoro territories, who must be our principal dialogue partners.

Laudato Si

has recognized the marginalized people and the poor as lead stewards of the environment. The

Laudato Si

also has encouraged us to regain the conviction that we need one another and have shared responsibility to care for others and the world.

The Philippine Constitution articulates that the state has sole ownership of mineral resources in the country. With the current development framework as embodied in the Mining Act of 1995, however, the sustainable development of the Bangsamoro is far from reality: and so is peace.

ON FPIC AND THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Indigenous people's

fundamental rights must be protected through recognition of the free and prior informed and written consent or FPIC process, which is the minimum demand if we wish to protect IP communities from rampant plundering and desecrating of large-scale mining companies. The BBL can be a game changer for the mining industry, thus, legislation should focus on the protection of communities and establishment of mechanisms for safety and environmental safeguards compliance.

CAB-based BBL will aid development for all, including indigenous communities, by recognizing their rights over their ancestral domains and their authority over their natural resources. Pope, in his encyclical, has expressed confidence in the culture of IPs: Land, for them, is not a commodity but rather a gift from God.

The government has nine (9) months to put premium to the call to promote peace by pushing for authentic policies that will protect the rights of the marginalized sectors; to push for a development that protects our environment, while all are equally enjoying the benefits of our common home, exercising our rights, and performing our duties. To end tyranny of Creation through laws and policies, that genuinely address peace in our land. Let BBL facilitate “care for our common-home”.