

The National Security Council considers the GRP-MNLF Agreement a success and has moved on to the second phase of its implementation.⁷ Accordingly, as of February 1998, the funding to foreign-assisted⁸ ongoing projects in the SZOPAD area was valued at P 25.6 billion, half of which was in infrastructure, 32 % in agro-industrial development, and 1 % development allocated towards administration.⁹ Another P 8.9 billion worth of projects have been undertaken within SZOPAD, including P 8 billion worth of projects implemented by government line agencies in infrastructure, energy development, and irrigation systems.¹⁰ Furthermore, specialized Government agencies spent some P 845 million for livelihood credit programs, aquaculture, housing, skills training, education and cooperatives in the MNLF communities.¹¹ Under the SZOPAD Social Fund, another P 18.7 million (funded by World Bank loans and counterpart funds from the Government) were spent for schoolbuildings, health centers and water systems for the same communities. An additional P 14.6 million were contributed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), and the SPCPD for livelihood projects and relief assistance.¹² Finally, from 1996 to 1997, P 198 million were released for the SPCPD's organizational and operating expenses.¹³

Despite these contributions, it is perceived that the high expectations regarding economic development in Mindanao have not been met. For instance, while Manila has allotted some US\$ 600 million from 1990 to 1999 for the autonomous region, it has little to show in terms of major infrastructure projects.¹⁴ It is only of late that President Joseph Estrada has approved about US \$ 25 million from the Department of Budget for the construction of the 162 km. Jolo Circumferential

⁷ *Official Reference on the Strategy of "Total Approach"*. Presentation of National Security Adviser, Secretary Alexander Aguirre before the Diplomatic Corps, Department of Foreign Affairs, 4 January 2000.

⁸ The international donor program is under the auspices of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the SPCPD and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and involves the implementation of livelihood projects, skills training, capability building and emergency assistance to the MNLF. Donors include the UNDP, World Bank Social Fund, USA Emergency Livelihood Assistance, Canadian International Development Assistance (CIDA), Japanese International Cooperation Assistance (JICA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), ADB Adult Literacy Program, and the Belgian, Australian, German humanitarian assistance programs.

⁹ *Six-Year Accomplishment Report: 15 September 1993 to 15 May 1998*, Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, p. 14.

¹⁰ A Triumph for Peace and Development, p. 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴ Antonio Lopez, "Mindanao's Chance" in *Asiaweek* at <<http://pathfinder.com/asiaweek/current/issue/nat4-2.html>>