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**Philippines Working Group (Asia-Pacific Working Group)  
of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation**

October 12, 2016

**An Open Letter to the  
The Negotiating Panel of the Government of the Philippines (GRP)  
The Negotiating Panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)**

We, members of the Philippines Working Group of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, welcome the resumption of the Peace Talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). We commend the Negotiating Panels of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) for holding a successful round of formal peace talks in Oslo, Norway last 22 to 26 August 2016.

As development and international solidarity organizations, we experience the challenges of undertaking development work in conflict-affected areas. Because of our work with partners around the world, we've witnessed how conflicts arise from conditions of poverty, inequity and repression. While alleviating poverty through measures that address the immediate needs of people, our work seek to address the roots of conflict.

We strongly believe that peace is not simply the absence of war. Genuine peace based on justice requires the resolution of the historical and structural inequities that underlie the problems of poverty and oppression faced by the majority of Filipino people. It entails substantive changes to structures of governance to ensure accountability and accessibility of those who are in power.

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We are encouraged that the next rounds of the GRP-NDFP talks aim at reaching agreements on social, economic and political reforms that address the root causes of the conflict. The challenges of negotiating on these substantive issues will be enormous. We laud the confidence-building measures taken by both Parties. We call on you to overcome the obstacles that could deter your efforts to end the conflict, bring about long-lasting peace based on justice and restore hope for the Filipino people.



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