

## **Signing of Grant Agreement for the Programme for the Urgent Improvement of Socioeconomic Infrastructures in Bangsamoro Region**

### **Providing Better Opportunities for People in BARMM toward Sustainable Regional Development and Nation Building --- JICA moving forward further development and prosperity of BARMM as long standing partner---**

It is my great pleasure to inform that Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) signed a 1.8 billion Japanese yen Grant Agreement (G/A) for the Programme for the Urgent Improvement of Socioeconomic Infrastructures in Bangsamoro Region, dated on 8 June, 2022.

In addition to our proactive intervention for capacity development and governance improvement, improving socioeconomic infrastructure as part of peacebuilding is close to my heart. During my time served as the Chief Representative of JICA Iraq Office ten years ago, JICA had a similar cooperation geared towards rebuilding key industries like agriculture to create jobs and improve lives of people, which can lead sustainable nation building and more stable region.

Beyond this, JICA's experience in peacebuilding also includes thorough understanding the aspirations and challenges of our counterparts on the ground. For this project, JICA conducted a Bangsamoro Needs Survey from 2018 to 2019 to set the direction for this assistance. Following the Needs Survey, JICA and Filipino counterparts reached the consensus to reconstruct/ improve the Provincial/ City Manpower and Development Center (PCMDC) in Marawi City and the Regional Manpower Training Centers (RMTCs) in the Municipality of Sultan Kudarat and Basilan. We also agreed to include farm-to-market roads in selected conflict-affected areas, which are significant to create job opportunities and support the normalization process in the Bangsamoro region.

JICA projects aim to realize build back better society and generate high quality growth for the Bangsamoro people with the concept of sustainability, resilience and inclusiveness. The impact of the pandemic is greatest on vulnerable sectors, including conflict-affected areas which often find it difficult to cope with economic challenges for lack of resources.

Thus, we hope that this grant assistance project generates economic growth in the midst of changing times, while advancing peace and development in the Bangsamoro region which contributes to the stability and prosperity of the whole Philippines.

I would like to highly acknowledge the excellent partnership for this Project, particularly, with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Finance (DOF), the executive branch of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), the Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM), and other related government agencies based on our mutual understanding and mutual respect.

JICA will continue to help and support conflict-affected communities in the Bangsamoro region so they may achieve inclusive growth and realize the dividends of peace in their lives.

Rest assured that JICA has been and will be always the closest and the most reliable partner of you to shape your brighter future.

Thank you and I look forward to working with all of you.