

**JOINT AGREEMENT ON THE GROUND RULES
OF THE FORMAL MEETINGS
BETWEEN THE GRP AND NDFP PANELS**

February 26, 1995

This Agreement is entered into by and between:

The Negotiating panel of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, hereinafter referred to as the GRP Panel, represented herein by its Chairperson, Howard Q. Dee;

AND

The Negotiating Panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, hereinafter referred to as the NDFP Panel, represented herein by its Chairperson, Luis G. Jalandoni.

Pursuant to due authority, the two Panels hereby agree:

**ARTICLE I
GOVERNING PRINCIPLES**

Section 1. In their deliberations during the formal talks and in the interpretation of this Agreement, the GRP and NDFP Negotiating Panels shall at all times conform to the letter and spirit of The Hague Joint Declaration of 1 September 1992, the pertinent provisions of the Breukelen Joint Statement of 14 June 1994, the Joint Agreement between the GRP and the NDFP on Safety and Immunity Guarantees of 24 February 1995.

**ARTICLE II
CONDUCT OF PANEL NEGOTIATIONS**

Section 1. Venue and Schedule of Meetings. The GRP and the NDFP Panels shall hold their formal peace negotiations in the venue previously agreed upon under Section 6, Article III of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees. The two Panels shall mutually agree on the schedule of meetings. There shall be reasonable time for both Panels to consult their principals before any meeting.

Section 2. Subject Matter of the Meetings. The specific agenda for a meeting shall be agreed upon by the Panels. The Panels shall exchange detailed proposals and/or working papers on the issues for discussion within a reasonable period of time before the meeting in which such issues shall be discussed.

Section 3. Quorum. A majority of the composition of each Panel is required to be present at every meeting in order to constitute a quorum.

Section 4. Presence of Persons Other than Panel Members. The two Panel Chairpersons shall agree on the number of Advisers, Legal Counsels, Consultants, Secretariat staff, and security personnel, who may be present in the meeting room and in the vicinity.

Section 5. Presiding Officers. The two Panel Chairpersons shall act as co-presiding officers for the meetings of the two Panels.

Section 6. Procedures of Formal Meetings.

- a. The two Panel Chairpersons shall agree on the allocation of time for each agenda item.
- b. Each Panel shall have equal time and opportunity to present its side in meetings.
- c. Each Panel shall be given the opportunity to present fully, orally and/or in writing, its position, to propound questions, and to respond to the other Panel regarding any agreed agenda item.
- d. When no agreement has been reached on an agenda item within a reasonable period of time, such item may be deferred for further deliberation. Thereafter, the two Panels may proceed to the next agenda item.

Section 7. Format of Meetings.

- a. The Chairperson of each Panel shall speak on behalf of the Panel, but may designate Panel members, Advisers, Legal Counsels and Consultants to speak, when appropriate.
- b. When it is the turn of one Panel to speak within its allotted time, the other Panel Chairperson or Panel members permitted by him/her may interpellate or respond immediately to any point, with the permission of the Chairperson of that Panel.
- c. Each Panel may propose a draft on any agreed upon agenda item, which draft may become the basis for discussion and agreement.

ARTICLE III DOCUMENTATION

Section 1. Use of Audio Documentation. Audiotaping of sessions shall be allowed, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.

Section 2. Minutes. Each Panel shall be entitled to two documentors who shall take the minutes for their respective Panels. However, the two Panels may mutually adopt a common recording and documentation system and agree on an official record of the deliberations and minutes of the meetings. Limitations on access to or release of such records and minutes shall be mutually agreed upon by the Chairperson of the two Panels.

ARTICLE IV RESOURCE PERSONS

Section 1. Each Panel may avail itself of expert Consultants, who may or may not belong to their side, to assist the Panel.

ARTICLE V MEDIA COVERAGE

Section 1. Media coverage or the absence of it at any meeting shall be mutually agreed upon by the two Panel Chairpersons.

Section 2. The holding of joint press conferences or the issuance of joint press statements may, from time to time, be mutually agreed upon by the two Panel Chairpersons, taking into account the progress of the peace negotiations.

Section 3. It is the inherent right of either Panel to hold separate press conferences or interviews, and issue press statements as it may deem necessary or appropriate, taking into account the basic tenets of truth and fairness and the need to safeguard the on-going negotiations from being jeopardized. The Panel Chairpersons may mutually agree on the confidentiality of sensitive issues under negotiations.

ARTICLE VI GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Applicability. The provisions of this Agreement shall apply to the formal meetings of the two negotiating Panels. All other meetings of the Panels related to the peace process shall be considered as part of the consultation process.

Section 2. Amendments. The two Panels may from time to time mutually agree to amend, modify or supplement this Agreement as the circumstances may require.

Section 3. Effectivity. This Agreement shall take effect upon the signing hereof by the Chairpersons of the two negotiating Panels.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunder signed this Agreement this 26th Day of February 1995 at the town of Nieuwegein, The Netherlands.

**For the Government
of the Republic of the Philippines
Negotiating Panel**

**For the National Democratic Front
of the Philippines
Negotiating Panel**