

Conference: 40 years of HSF in the Philippines: Impact and Challenges
Message of Atty. Jehan Jehan Lepail
August 08, 2019, Dusit Thani Manila, Makati City

Good afternoon to all. I am Atty. Jehan Jehan Lepail, Deputy Executive Director of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos which has been working with the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the latter supporting the conduct of several fora and seminars with the intent of providing information and guidance to residents of marginalized Muslim communities in Southern Philippines for the latter to know their legal and other rights as well as access services provided by government agencies.

As a practicing lawyer and the NCMF Deputy Executive Director, we can attest to the positive effect of our partnership with the Hanns Seidel Foundation which support our organization's mandate to provide marginalized Muslim communities access to legal services.

The NCMF has limited personnel and mandated to provide legal services to as many Muslims who require such but cannot afford private counsel. Our work with the HSF allowed us to explore the possibility of having a core set of community-based personnel providing the correct information and guidance for the affected residents to identify, access and formulate workable solutions to their legal and other problems in the community.

Subsequently we are making adjustments to our overall strategy, program and/or operations to further community-based consultations and networking and resolving disputes at the community-level if at all possible. We are more cognizant of emerging legal issues and problems which affect residents of Muslim communities given the present political, social, and economic conditions.

In the future, we hope to do more, especially with more concerns emerging now with the efforts to institutionalize the Philippines' Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Again, thank you so much to the Hanns Seidel Foundation for the continued support.