

# The BDA and IOM sign the Amended Cooperation Agreement

## Strengthening the partnership for the peace and development of the Bangsamoro

On 19 December, IOM and the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA) signed the amended Cooperation Agreement. This amended agreement focuses on IOM's commitment to support the Bangsamoro people and the on-going normalization process as part of Government of the Philippines and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (GPH-MILF) peace negotiation. The amendment reinforces the first cooperation agreement that IOM and BDA had signed in 2013, which stated that IOM would provide various technical assistance, such as: advice on gender and youth aspects of the Bangsamoro Development Plan (BDP), deployment of IOM technical staff to BDA to conduct community-based assessment on the impact of BDA assistance to conflict-affected areas of Mindanao, and the roll-out of BDA Humanitarian Strategic Plan.

During the signing ceremony held at the BDA Conference Center in Cotabato City, Marco Boasso, IOM Manila Global Administrative Center (MAC) Director and Chief of Mission of IOM Philippines, said that IOM's commitment to the Bangsamoro remains steadfast and unwavering, and that the Bangsamoro Peace Process remains one of the top programmatic priorities for IOM.

In response, Dr. Saffrullah Dipatuan, BDA Chairman, expressed his appreciation for IOM's continuous support to the Bangsamoro people through the BDA. According to him, IOM is the first agency to respond to their call for cooperation and support after the meeting between BDA and UN agencies two weeks ago. He ended his remarks by saying that: "the renewal of the cooperation agreement between IOM and the BDA is a manifestation that the previous agreement has been successful".

IOM Philippines recently reached the midway point of the 'Children of Peace' project funded by European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) that supports quality education for children across Mindanao, including Moro and Indigenous People of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.



BDA and IOM personnel at the signing ceremony © IOM 2016



IOM Chief of Mission Marco Boasso giving a speech © IOM 2016