

FOREWORD

Mindanao incarnates the many contradictory faces and phases of development. A land of promise it was and continues to be. But like any political birthing, the promise and potentiality are being fleshed out in the arena of contestation and conflict.

Mindanao is a constellation and condensation of historical circumstances and political forces unmatched in other parts of the country. Rich and fiercely independent cultural legacies have survived the ravages of the colonial past and today remain as the material and spiritual edifice of alternative visions of development and nationhood. At the same time, the entire geo-economic landscape of the region has been drastically reshaped and transformed by powerful transnational corporations. Pristine ancestral lands have long given way to plantations for export crops.

The entire region seethes with the encumbrances of the past and the sanguine struggles of the present. The contradictions have never been sharper. While the government works out its most ambitious projects and policies for Mindanao, the region continues to convulse from the two most determined armed mass movements against the regime.

The bulk of the papers published in this issue were read in a regional conference that paved the way for the organization of the Central and Northern Mindanao chapter of the PPSA. No more appropriate theme, *Development Politics in Mindanao*, could have been chosen for the occasion. Once again, we try to understand the complex and painful process of development to better arm us for decisive changes that will make of us and our people the creators and not the victims of development.

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