

04/08/2001

Arroyo: Peace accord catalyst for growth

MANILA Fri. - Philippines President Gloria Arroyo said today a positive outcome on a peace accord with the MILF would be the catalyst for economic development.

"There is much development in the ongoing peace talks and it would not be appropriate to comment at this juncture," Arroyo told a Press conference.

Asked about the 18-month timeframe set previously for the conclusion of the talks between the MILF and her Government, she said: "I dont believe in setting timeframes, and it is sufficient to note that there is much happening on the ground."

The ongoing discussions between representatives of the MILF and Manila is expected to see the MILF agreeing to a peace accord.

Meanwhile, in Kuala Lumpur, Wisma Putra said Arroyo will be in Malaysia for a three-day State visit beginning Tuesday, her first official trip since assuming the presidency.

She will be accompanied by husband Jose Miguel T. Arroyo and a delegation comprising the Senate President, Ministers, senior officials and businessmen.

The visit, at the invitation of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, is also part of her familiarisation tour of Asean countries.

Arroyo is scheduled to have an audience with the King and Raja Permaisuri Agong. She will also meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

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