

**Philippines-MILF Peace Agreement A Boon For Malaysia, Dewan Rakyat Told  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 17 (Bernama) -- The government is optimistic that migration of people from southern Philippines to the country, especially Sabah, will slow down if the peace process under the framework peace agreement signed between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Manila on Monday proceeds smoothly.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman said in regard to the peace agreement which Malaysia helped broker, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had assured among others to assist the people in that country in development matters and vocational training.

"As mentioned by the member for Kota Belud (Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan) just now, we will continue with the effort for a lasting peace process to establish political stability as well as economic opportunities for the people of southern Philippines and we hope migration of people (to Sabah) will slow down.

"This is an agreement which affects our country," he said when winding-up debate on the Supply Bill 2013 for the ministry at Dewan Rakyat Wednesday.

The framework peace agreement ended more than 40 years of conflict in southern Philippines.

It marked the start of a new era in the peace process in Mindanao where the political upheaval there took nearly 150,000 lives.

Malaysia had acted as the facilitator for the two parties since 2001 until the initial peace agreement was reached in Kuala Lumpur on Oct 7.

In this regard, Anifah said during the official visit of the Prime Minister to the Philippines from Sunday to Tuesday, Najib had raised the need to open a Philippines consulate in Sabah with Philippines President, Benigno S. Aquino III.

"The Malaysian government also informed the Philippine government of the problems and challenges faced in Sabah as there was no Philippines diplomatic or consular representative in the state," he said.

Therefore, he said, the government hoped the country would be prepared to open a consulate office in Sabah.

The Dewan sits again tomorrow.

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