

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6734, August 01, 1989]

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN ORGANIC ACT FOR THE
AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in
Congress assembled:*

PREAMBLE

The people of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, imploring the aid of Almighty God, in order to develop a just and humane society and establish an Autonomous Regional Government that is truly reflective of their ideals and aspirations within the framework of the Constitution and national sovereignty, as well as the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines, and to secure to themselves and their posterity the blessings of autonomy, democracy, peace, justice and equality, do ordain and promulgate this Organic Act through the Congress of the Philippines.

**ARTICLE I
NAME AND PURPOSE**

SECTION 1. The name of the Autonomous Region shall be the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao unless provided otherwise by Congress upon the recommendation of the Regional Legislative Assembly.

SEC. 2. It is the purpose of this Organic Act to establish the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, to provide its basic structure of government within the framework of the Constitution and national sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines, and to ensure the peace and equality before the law of all people in the Autonomous Region.

**ARTICLE II
THE AUTONOMOUS REGION**

Area and Seat of Government

SECTION 1. (1) There is hereby created the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, to be composed of provinces and cities voting favorably in the plebiscite called for the purpose, in accordance with Section 18, Article X of the Constitution.

(2) The plebiscite shall be conducted in the provinces of Basilan, Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Palawan, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, and Zamboanga del Sur, and the cities of Cotabato, Dapitan, Dipolog, General Santos, Iligan, Marawi, Pagadian,

Puerto Princesa, and Zamboanga.

SEC. 2. The Regional Legislative Assembly, hereinafter referred to as the Regional Assembly, shall fix by law the permanent seat of government for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, taking into consideration accessibility and efficiency in carrying out its mandate under this Act: Provided, That the provisional seat of the Regional Government shall be in Cotabato City.

ARTICLE III GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

SECTION 1. The area of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao shall remain an integral and inseparable part of the national territory of the Republic of the Philippines as defined by the Constitution and existing laws.

The people of the Autonomous Region shall uphold the Constitution as the fundamental law of the land and unequivocally owe allegiance and fidelity to the Republic of the Philippines.

The Autonomous Region shall be governed and administered in accordance with this Organic Act.

SEC. 2. The Regional Government shall adopt the policy of settlement of conflicts by peaceful means, and renounce any form of lawless violence as an instrument of redress.

SEC. 3. The Regional Government shall adopt a policy on local autonomy whereby regional powers shall be devolved to local government units where appropriate: Provided, however, That until a regional law implementing this provision is enacted, the Local Government Code shall be applicable.

SEC. 4. Highly urbanized cities within the Autonomous Region shall continue to be governed by their charters. Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to diminish the powers and functions already enjoyed by these cities.

SEC. 5. The Regional Government shall adopt measures to ensure mutual respect for and protection of the distinct beliefs, customs, and traditions among its inhabitants in the spirit of unity in diversity and peaceful coexistence: *Provided*, That no person in the Autonomous Region shall, on the basis of creed, religion, ethnic origin, parentage or sex, be subjected to any form of discrimination.

SEC. 6. The Regional Government shall adopt educational policies that are responsive to and reflective of the special needs of the people, with due respect to the beliefs, customs and traditions of the inhabitants of the Region.

SEC. 7. The Regional Government shall endeavor to improve the well-being of all its constituents, particularly the marginalized, deprived, disadvantaged, underprivileged and disabled.

SEC. 8. Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and this Organic Act, and national development policies and programs, the Regional Government shall have authority, power and right in the exploration, development and utilization of its

natural resources: *Provided*, That the indigenous cultural communities shall have priority rights in the areas designated as parts of the ancestral domain.

SEC. 9. The Autonomous Region shall provide manpower training programs, create livelihood and job opportunities, allocate equitable preferential rights to its inhabitants, and adopt laws that will safeguard the rights of workers.

SEC. 10. The Regional Government shall uphold and protect the fundamental rights of women and children. In no case shall women and children be exploited, abused or discriminated against.

SEC. 11. The Regional Government shall provide, maintain, and ensure the delivery of basic health education and services.

SEC. 12. The Regional Government shall provide incentives for prompt payment of taxes.

SEC. 13. The National Government shall provide financial assistance to the Autonomous Region by appropriating such sums as may be necessary to accelerate the development of the Region.

ARTICLE IV DEVOLUTION OF POWERS

SECTION 1. The fundamental rights and duties of the people in the Autonomous Region are those established in the Constitution and this Organic Act.

SEC. 2. The powers devolved to the Autonomous Region shall be exercised through the Regional Assembly, the Regional Governor, and the special courts as provided in this Act.

ARTICLE V POWERS OF GOVERNMENT

SECTION 1. The Regional Government shall exercise powers and functions necessary for the proper governance and development of all the constituent units within the Autonomous Region consistent with the constitutional policy on regional and local autonomy and decentralization: *Provided*, That nothing herein shall authorize the diminution of the powers and functions already enjoyed by local government units.

SEC. 2. The Autonomous Region is a corporate entity with jurisdiction in all matters devolved to it by the Constitution and this Organic Act as herein enumerated:

1. Administrative organization;
2. Creation of sources of revenues;
3. Ancestral domain and natural resources;
4. Personal, family and property relations;
5. Regional urban and rural planning development;
6. Economic, social, and tourism development;
7. Educational policies;
8. Preservation and development of the cultural heritage;

9. Powers, functions and responsibilities now being exercised by the departments of the National Government except:

- a. Foreign affairs;
- b. National defense and security;
- c. Postal service;
- d. Coinage, and fiscal and monetary policies;
- e. Administration of justice;
- f. Quarantine;
- g. Customs and tariff;
- h. Citizenship;
- i. Naturalization, immigration and deportation;
- j. General auditing, civil service and elections;
- k. Foreign trade;
- l. Maritime, land and air transportation and communications that affect areas outside the Autonomous Region; and
- m. Patents, trademarks, tradenames, and copyrights; and

10. Such other matters as may be authorized by law for the promotion of the general welfare of the people of the Region.

SEC. 3. The Regional Government may exercise the power of eminent domain.

ARTICLE VI INTER-GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

SECTION 1. The President of the Philippines shall exercise general supervision over the Regional Government, including the local government units therein, directly or through the Regional Governor, to ensure that national and regional laws are faithfully executed.

SEC. 2. The Regional Government shall maintain close coordination with the National Government for the orderly management of the special courts within the Autonomous Region.

ARTICLE VII THE LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT

SECTION 1. The legislative power shall be vested in the Regional Assembly, except to the extent reserved to the people by provisions on initiative and referendum as provided by law.

SEC. 2. The Regional Assembly may create, divide, merge, abolish or substantially alter boundaries of any municipality or barangay in accordance with the criteria laid down by existing law subject to approval by a majority of the votes cast in a plebiscite in the political units directly affected. It may also change the names of such local government units, public places and institutions.

SEC. 3. The Regional Assembly shall approve the budget of the Autonomous Region.

SEC. 4. The Regional Assembly shall be composed of Members elected by popular vote, with three (3) members elected from each of the congressional districts.

SEC. 5. The Members of the Regional Assembly shall have a term of three (3) years which shall begin, unless otherwise provided by law, at noon on the 31st day of March next following their election.

No Member of the Regional Assembly shall serve for more than three (3) consecutive terms. Voluntary renunciation of or removal from office for any length of time shall not be considered as an interruption in the continuity of his service for the full term for which he was elected.

SEC. 6. In case of vacancy in the Regional Assembly occurring at least one year before the expiration of the term of office, a special election shall be called to fill the vacancy in the manner prescribed by regional law: *Provided*, That the Member elected shall serve only for the unexpired term.

SEC. 7. No person shall be a Member of the Regional Assembly unless he is:

1. A natural-born citizen of the Philippines;
2. At least twenty-one (21) years of age on the day of the election;
3. Able to read and write;
4. A registered voter of the district in which he shall be elected on the day he files his certificate of candidacy; and
5. A resident thereof for a period of not less than five (5) years immediately preceding the day of the election.

SEC. 8. Every Member of the Regional Assembly shall take an oath or affirmation of allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines before taking his seat.

SEC. 9. Unless otherwise provided by Congress, a Member of the Regional Assembly shall receive an annual salary of One hundred twenty thousand pesos (P120,000.00) except the Speaker of the Regional Assembly who shall receive an annual salary of One hundred forty-four thousand pesos (P144,000.00). They shall not receive during their tenure any other emoluments from the Government.

SEC. 10. Any Member of the Regional Assembly who accepts an appointment and qualifies for any position in the Government, including government-owned or controlled corporations or their subsidiaries, shall automatically forfeit his seat in the Regional Assembly.

SEC. 11. All Members of the Regional Assembly shall, upon their assumption of office, make a full disclosure of their financial and business interests, including those of their spouses and unmarried children under eighteen (18) years of age living in their households. They shall notify the Assembly of any potential conflict of interest that may arise from the filing of measures of which they are authors.

Any Member found guilty of non-disclosure as required under this section may be expelled by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all the Members of the Regional Assembly, without prejudice to his other liabilities under pertinent legislation.

SEC. 12. No Member of the Regional Assembly may personally appear as counsel before courts of justice or quasi-judicial and other administrative bodies. Neither shall he, directly or indirectly, be interested financially in any contract with, or in any