



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila



Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7963

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE USTADZ YUSOP T. ALANO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to institutionalize the Assistance for Security, Peace, Integration, and Recovery for Advancing Human Security (ASPIRE) Program as a national peace and development mechanism, designed to respond to the broader issue of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) proliferation and its destabilizing impact in conflict-affected areas across the country.

The ASPIRE Program is a community-centered initiative aimed at reducing armed violence, preventing the recurrence of conflict, and promoting human security through voluntary SALW disarmament, local peacebuilding, and socio-economic reintegration. Rooted in the lessons of past peacebuilding efforts, ASPIRE is guided by principles of inclusivity, civilian leadership, local ownership, and respect for the diversity of contexts across regions.

While the ASPIRE Program builds on previous pilot initiatives conducted in BARMM, including its formal launch in Basilan in 2023 with support from the Government of Japan and UNDP Philippines, it does not form part of the GPH-MILF peace agreement nor replace its formal mechanisms. Rather, ASPIRE seeks to address civilian-held SALWs and community-level vulnerabilities in a manner that complements but does not overlap with the normalization and decommissioning process under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB).

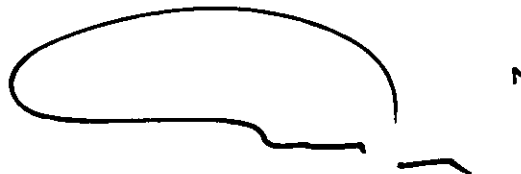
The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB), signed in 2014, affirms that the development and implementation of SALW reduction must be jointly undertaken by the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). In full recognition of this principle, this bill explicitly ensures that ASPIRE will operate outside the scope of the formal peace process and will not override or duplicate any mandate under the Joint Normalization Committee (JNC) or Independent Decommissioning Body (IDB).

This measure was carefully framed to ensure that peacebuilding programs do not dilute or compromise the integrity of joint mechanisms. Any implementation in BARMM or other regions covered by peace agreements shall proceed only through proper coordination and mutual consent with relevant peace panels and structures.

The ASPIRE Program offers a scalable model of voluntary disarmament and reintegration support for communities confronting the destabilizing effects of illicit firearms, particularly in areas where clan-based conflicts, politically motivated armed groups, and historical insecurity continue to undermine local stability and development.

Through institutionalizing this program, the government will be able to provide sustained resources for community disarmament and peacebuilding, improve public safety, promote inclusive development, and reinforce the enabling environment for other peace initiatives to succeed.

Approval of this bill is respectfully sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, rounded loop followed by a horizontal line and a small vertical stroke at the end.

USTADZ YUSOP T. ALANO



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7963

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE USTADZ YUSOP T. ALANO

AN ACT

**INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ASSISTANCE FOR SECURITY, PEACE,
INTEGRATION, AND RECOVERY FOR ADVANCING HUMAN
SECURITY (ASPIRE) PROGRAM AS A NATIONAL PEACE AND
DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Assistance
for Security, Peace, Integration, and Recovery for Advancing Human Security
(ASPIRE) Program Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote
sustainable peace and human security through inclusive, community-based
disarmament and peacebuilding initiatives in areas affected by the proliferation
of small arms and light weapons (SALWs). This Act affirms the importance of
civilian leadership, transparency, mutual respect, and the integrity of formal
peace processes.

1 This Act shall not duplicate or override the roles and mandates of
2 established peace process mechanisms, including the Joint Normalization
3 Committee and the Independent Decommissioning Body, and shall operate
4 independently from the decommissioning of any armed group party to a peace
5 agreement.

6 SEC. 3. **Objectives.** – This Act aims to:

7 (a) Strengthen national security by integrating ASPIRE Program into
8 the national policy as a strategic pillar of peace and development;

9 (b) Support the safe collection, registration, and disposal of small arms
10 and light weapons (SALWs) in post-conflict, violence-affected, and high-risk
11 areas to reduce armed threats and enhance community security;

12 (c) Provide livelihood and capacity-building support for former
13 combatants and affected communities;

14 (d) Strengthen local governance, community participation, and
15 peacebuilding mechanisms; and

16 (e) Promote collaboration among national and local government
17 agencies, international partners, and civil society organizations.

18 SEC. 4. **ASPIRE Program.** The Assistance for Security, Peace,
19 Integration, and Recovery for Advancing Human Security (ASPIRE) Program,
20 hereinafter referred to as the “Program,” is hereby institutionalized. The
21 Program shall serve as a cornerstone of a national peace and development
22 strategy aimed at addressing sporadic conflicts driven by the proliferation of

1 small arms and light weapons (SALWs), transforming conflict-affected
2 communities through the reduction of armed violence, and promoting
3 sustainable, inclusive, and long-term peace and stability across vulnerable areas
4 of the country.

5 **SEC. 5. *Coverage and Expansion.*** – The ASPIRE Program shall be
6 implemented in conflict-affected and fragile communities nationwide, including
7 but not limited to BARMM, and shall expand based on technical assessments of
8 SALW-related risks and community readiness.

9 **SEC. 6. *Components of ASPIRE.*** – The Program shall have the
10 following components:

11 (a) *SALW Management* that aims to reduce the proliferation of SALWs
12 and promote safe communities. This involves:

13 (1) Conducting baseline surveys to identify loose firearms and
14 their sources;

15 (2) Registering firearms through official channels;

16 (3) Applying biometric-linked stenciling to track ownership;

17 (4) Decommissioning loose firearms through organized
18 ceremonial handovers;

19 (5) Launching community-based awareness campaigns on the
20 dangers of SALWs and available amnesty mechanisms; and

21 (6) Establishing SALW monitoring and evaluation units
22 composed of trained teams to track compliance and report violations.

(b) *Human Security Interventions* aim to strengthen civilian protection and build peace infrastructure through the following activities:

(1) Conducting community security assessments using risk mapping in collaboration with local leaders;

(2) Identifying conflict hotspots and vulnerable population groups for targeted interventions;

(3) Constructing peace infrastructure, including peace centers and early warning systems to support conflict prevention and response;

(4) Establishing local peace councils and mediation hubs to facilitate dialogue and resolve disputes at the grassroots level; and

(5) Strengthening civilian protection by training barangay and local peacekeepers in human rights and conflict sensitivity, and by developing rapid response protocols for crisis situations.

(c) *Socio-Economic Assistance* aims to provide sustainable livelihood and education opportunities for ex-combatants and affected families through the following interventions:

(1) Disbursing community-based livelihood grants and start-up capital, and providing support and incentives as alternatives to the use of illicit weapons or SALWs;

(2) Facilitating enterprise development through educational programs and TESDA-accredited trainings and scholarships for former combatants and affected families;

1 (3) Offering scholarships specifically targeted for youth and
2 women in conflict-affected areas;

3 (4) Providing infrastructure support for community-based
4 projects that promote peace and development;

5 (5) Supporting the formation of cooperatives and social
6 enterprises to foster economic growth; and

7 (6) Constructing community markets, farm-to-market roads, and
8 water systems to improve local access and productivity;

9 (d) *Peacebuilding and Civic Inclusion* aims to foster inclusive
10 governance, through the following interventions:

11 (1) Encouraging interfaith and intercultural dialogues;

12 (2) Strengthening the capacities of youth, women, and local
13 peace actors through targeted training and mentorship;

14 (3) Strengthening local governance and promoting the rule of
15 law through the conduct of workshops and policy forums; and

16 (4) Encouraging local government units (LGUs) to adopt and
17 implement inclusive policies that reflect community needs.

18 **SEC. 7. *Implementing Agency.*** – The Office of the Presidential Adviser
19 on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) shall lead the implementation of
20 the ASPIRE Program, and, in addition to its existing functions:

21 (a) Formulate and establish mechanisms for the attainment of the
22 objectives of this Act;

1 (b) Coordinate and collaborate with the national and regional
2 government agencies, local government units (LGUs), the private sector,
3 development partners both local or foreign, and other stakeholders to ensure the
4 effective implementation of this Act;

5 (c) Implement policies and regulations, and enter into contracts to
6 undertake the effective implementation of this Act, subject to existing laws,
7 rules and regulations;

8 (d) Arrange funding for the Program from any legitimate source,
9 whether private, government, foreign or domestic, including official
10 development assistance, donations, and bilateral or multilateral loans, subject to
11 existing laws, rules and regulations;

12 (e) Undertake the creation, establishment, construction, maintenance,
13 and operation of infrastructure, equipment, technology, systems or such other
14 requirements necessary for the implementation of this Act;

15 (f) Avail of the expertise of any particular employee or group of
16 persons in any bureau, office, or department of the national government whose
17 services are needed for the implementation of this Act;

18 (g) Establish regional offices, if the OPAPRU deems necessary, for the
19 attainment of the objectives of this Act;

20 (h) Include resource requirements for a nationwide implementation of
21 the Program in its annual budget priority and such other appropriate funding
22 sources as the Department of Budget and Management may identify; and

1 (i) Perform such other acts that are necessary for the effective
2 implementation of this Act.

3 SEC. 8. ***Program Office.*** – The OPAPRU is authorized to create the
4 ASPIRE Program Office, and to select, appoint, and fix the compensation of its
5 officers and personnel as may be necessary to carry out its powers and
6 functions.

7 The ASPIRE Program Office shall be headed by a Program Director who
8 is vested with executive powers to manage the affairs and carry out the
9 objectives of the Program.

10 The Program Director shall be appointed by the President of the
11 Philippines upon recommendation by the majority of the ASPIRE Inter-Agency
12 Council (AIC) created under Section 10 of this Act, subject to civil service
13 laws, rules and regulations.

14 SEC. 9. ***Powers and Functions of the Program Director.*** – The Program
15 Director shall have the following powers and functions:

16 (a) Execute, administer, and implement the policies, plans, programs,
17 and projects approved by the AIC;

18 (b) Manage the day-to-day operation and administration of the
19 Program;

20 (c) Submit for consideration of the AIC such other duties and
21 measures, which the Program Director believes to be necessary to carry out the
22 purposes and objectives of this Act;

1 (d) Subject to the guidelines and policies set by the AIC, prepare the
2 staffing pattern and fix the number of subordinate officials and employees of the
3 Program Office in accordance with civil service laws, rules and regulations, and
4 evaluation and approval of the Department of Budget and Management;

5 (e) Appoint, subject to civil service laws, rules and regulations, all
6 subordinate officers and employees, who shall enjoy security of tenure and may
7 be removed only for cause in accordance with law;

8 (f) Prepare the annual budget for the operation of the Program for
9 submission to the AIC;

10 (g) Arrange, negotiate for, facilitate, or accept donations, grants, gifts,
11 loans, and other funding from domestic or foreign sources to carry out the
12 purposes of this Act;

13 (h) Prepare at the close of each calendar year an annual report on the
14 operation and status of the Program, including its latest financial statement, for
15 submission to the AIC;

16 (i) Represent the AIC in all dealings with offices, agencies and
17 instrumentalities of the government and with all persons and other entities,
18 public or private, domestic and foreign; and

19 (j) Perform such other functions as may be necessary for the effective
20 implementation of this Act.

1 SEC. 10. *ASPIRE Inter-Agency Council.* – The ASPIRE Inter-Agency
2 Council, herein referred to as the AIC, is created under the Office of the
3 President, to oversee the management and implementation of the Program.

4 The Council is composed of the following:

5 (a) Secretary of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace,
6 Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU), as chairperson;

7 (b) Secretary of the Interior and Local Government;

8 (c) Secretary of National Defense;

9 (d) Secretary of Social Welfare and Development;

10 (e) Chairperson, National Commission on Muslim Filipinos;

11 (f) Two (2) representatives from peacebuilding NGOs

12 (g) One (1) representative each from the women sector and youth
13 sector.

14 The representatives from the NGOs, women sector, and youth sector shall
15 hold office for three (3) years from the date of appointment and shall be eligible
16 for reappointment upon completion of the term.

17 In areas where formal peace agreements are in force, the AIC shall
18 coordinate with joint mechanisms such as the Joint Normalization Committee.

19 The cabinet-ranked *ex officio* members of the AIC shall each designate a
20 representative in case of failure to attend its meetings. The designated
21 representative of any of the Cabinet-ranked members of the AIC must hold a
22 position not lower than a bureau director.

1 The chairperson and members of the AIC or their respective
2 representatives are entitled to receive *per diem*, allowances, and incentives, for
3 each meeting actually attended at such amount as may be fixed by the AIC
4 subject to existing laws, rules and regulations.

5 The AIC shall call upon the participation of any government agency from
6 time to time to attend its meetings to assist in clarifying issues and finding
7 resolution to problems that concern their respective offices pertinent to the
8 implementation of this Act.

9 **SEC. 11. Relationship with Peace Agreements.** – In areas covered by
10 formal peace processes, such as the GPH-MILF Comprehensive Agreement on
11 the Bangsamoro (CAB), the ASPIRE Program shall not replace or assume the
12 functions of joint SALW programs under the peace agreement. In such cases,
13 ASPIRE interventions shall proceed only upon consultation and coordination
14 with the relevant joint peace mechanisms.

15 **SEC. 12. Powers and Functions.** – The AIC shall:

16 (a) Formulate, draft, and implement national policy guidelines for the
17 Program, particularly on SALW reduction, human security, and livelihood
18 programs;

19 (b) Call on any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality
20 of the government, private entities and organizations, for cooperation and
21 assistance in the performance of its functions;

1 (c) Approve the establishment of offices, formulate organizational and
2 administrative structure, and staffing pattern for its effective administration;

3 (d) Approve salary ranges, benefits, and other terms and conditions of
4 service for all officers and employees of the Program, which shall, as far as
5 possible, be competitive with those offered in the private sector, subject to
6 existing laws, rules and regulations;

7 (e) Recommend to the Senate and House of Representatives of the
8 Philippines such matters that may require legislation in support of the objectives
9 of this Act;

10 (f) Submit annual reports to the Senate and House of Representatives
11 on the progress and impact of the Program;

12 (g) Approve and allocate funds for priority peace and reintegration
13 projects; and

14 (h) Promulgate such rules and regulations and exercise all the
15 functions and powers necessary or incidental to attain the objectives of this Act.

16 SEC. 13. ***Quorum.*** – A majority of the members of the AIC shall
17 constitute a quorum for the conduct of business.

18 SEC. 14. ***Partnership Building.*** – The AIC shall facilitate partnerships
19 between public and private stakeholders and program participants to strengthen
20 the implementation of the Program through complementary or supplementary
21 interventions. The partnerships aim to sustain the Program's initiatives,

1 providing support, develop community-based life skills, and offer technical
2 assistance.

3 **SEC. 15. *Data Banking Responsibility.*** – The AIC shall create and
4 maintain a databank of individuals who have availed of benefits under the
5 Program to serve as directory and guide for the effective implementation of this
6 Act: *Provided*, That the information collected and maintained under this Act
7 shall only be used for the purpose for which it was intended, and no other
8 individual aside from the authorized data keeper shall have access to such
9 databank, pursuant to Republic Act No. 10173, or the “*Data Privacy Act of*
10 *2012*,” including its implementing rules and regulations.

11 In accordance with said law, the Program must institute and maintain
12 organizational, physical, and technical measures designed to ensure the security,
13 integrity, and lawful processing of personal data.

14 **SEC. 16. *Data Sharing.*** – Data sharing between government agencies
15 for public function or provision of a public service must be covered by a data
16 sharing agreement. All information collected in the implementation of the
17 Program may be made available to the stakeholders, institutions, government
18 agencies, departments, and non-governmental agencies, subject to the
19 provisions of the “*Data Privacy Act of 2012*.”

20 **SEC. 17. *Benefits and Incentives.*** – The AIC shall establish benefits and
21 incentives that may be extended to individuals who will participate in the
22 Program, in accordance with other existing laws, presidential decrees, executive

1 orders, rules and regulations or other issuances promulgated for the purpose of
2 accelerating the normalization and reintegration process.

3 SEC. 18. ***Approval of the ASPIRE Program.*** – Within three (3) months
4 from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the OPAPRU shall submit the
5 proposed Program to the President for approval.

6 SEC. 19. ***Monitoring and Evaluation.*** – The AIC shall assess the
7 Program and make an annual report, the results of which shall be utilized to
8 stimulate more dialogues and policy discussions, and generate inputs for the
9 improvement of the Program. Mechanisms for promoting third-party
10 monitoring and evaluation by other government agencies and private
11 organizations may also be established.

12 The AIC shall submit the report to the President of the Philippines,
13 Senate President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives detailing the
14 Program's accomplishments, disarmament outcomes, peacebuilding activities,
15 financial utilization, and challenges encountered. The report must be published
16 and regularly updated for the information of the public.

17 SEC. 20. ***Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the initial
18 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's
19 appropriation of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation
20 and Unity. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued
21 implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General
22 Appropriations Act.

1 SEC. 21. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90)
2 days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the Office of the
3 Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU), in
4 coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government and other
5 relevant government agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and
6 regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

7 SEC. 22. ***Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is declared
8 invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected
9 remain in full force and effect.

10 SEC. 23. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive
11 orders, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of
12 this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

13 SEC. 24. ***Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
14 its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

15 Approved,