



# BICOL AUTONOMY MOVEMENT CHARTER



# AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF A BICOL AUTONOMOUS REGION

## Preamble

We, the Bicolanos , imploring the aid of Almighty God, in order to establish a just and humane society and an Autonomous Regional Government that will embody our ideals and aspirations, within the authority of the Constitution and national sovereignty, in order to secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of autonomy, democracy, equality, justice and peace, do ordain and promulgate this Charter of the Bicol Autonomous Region.

## ARTICLE I

### Name and Purpose

Section 1. There is hereby created an autonomous region in Bicol to be known as the "Bicol Autonomous Region."

Section 2. It is the purpose of this proposed Charter to establish the Bicol Autonomous Region, 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 equality, justice and peace before the law of all the people in the Autonomous Region.

## ARTICLE II

### The Autonomous Region

#### AREA AND SEAT OF GOVERNMENT

Section 1. The area of the Regional Government shall be as follows:

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

(2) The plebiscite shall be conducted in the provinces of Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, and Sorsogon, and the cities of Iriga, Legazpi, Ligao, Masbate, Naga, Sorsogon, and Tabaco.

Section 2. Upon the approval of this Charter, a Regional Legislative Assembly shall be established and hereinafter referred to as the Regional Assembly. It, by the authority of law, shall fix the permanent seat of government of the Bicol Autonomous Region, taking into consideration geographical location, accessibility and efficiency in carrying out its mandate under this Act. Provided, that the provisional seat of the Regional Government shall be in Legazpi City, Albay.

## ARTICLE III

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

Section 1. The area of the Bicol Autonomous Region 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 proposed Charter upon the approval of the Congress of the Philippines through the recommendations of the Regional Assembly.

Section 2. The Regional Government shall adopt peaceful means of settling conflicts and renounce any form of violence and any form of cessionism as an instrument of redress.

Section 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.

Section 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.

Section 5. The Regional Government shall adopt measures for the democratic sharing of wealth, power and opportunities among the inhabitants of the Region regardless ethnic origin, creed, sex, language, political conviction, economic or social status.

Section 6. The Regional Government shall ensure the right of the people to participate and be equitably represented at appropriate levels of social, economic, political decision-making and in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of local, regional, and national priorities, plans, and programs.

Section 7. The Regional Government shall safeguard equal opportunities to all qualified citizens of the Region to run for public office; thereby prohibiting any form of political dynasty as mandated by the Constitution and in accordance with this Charter.

Effective, efficient, and transparent election shall be protected by the Regional Government to maintain the integrity of vote and the sanctity of suffrage.

Section 8. 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.

Section 9. The Regional Government shall endeavor to improve the well-being of all its constituents, particularly the marginalized, deprived, disadvantaged, underprivileged and disabled.

Section 10. Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and this proposed Charter, 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 these resources be put to optimum and sustainable use primarily for the benefit of the people.

Section 11. 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.

Section 12. The Regional Government shall safeguard the basic rights to life, liberty, and expression of all the inhabitants of the Region subject to the existing laws and the provisions of the Constitution.

Section 13. 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.

Section 14. The Regional Government shall provide, maintain, and ensure the delivery of basic health education and services.

Section 15. The Regional Government shall provide incentives for prompt payment of taxes.

Section 16. The Regional Government shall, in accordance with the Constitution and existing laws establish rules and guidelines for the development, management, and maintenance of all possible energy production, public transportation, and communication with the aid of contemporary technologies.

Section 17. The Regional Government taking into consideration the geographical location of the Region and its vulnerability to various natural calamities, shall establish a Bureau that will promote consciousness, initiate continuous studies and research, and maintain a modern observatory, as well as adequate equipage geared towards disaster preparedness and mitigation responses.

The same Bureau shall serve, under the supervision of the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) as the regional lead agency in strategic planning, calibrated trainings, information campaigns, pre-emptive evacuation as well as in post disaster scenarios, specifically in search and rescue, and relief and rehabilitation operations.