

Prospects for a lasting peace in Mindanao continues to gain headway as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) will turn over 75 cruiser weapons and high-powered firearms to the decommissioning body next year, according to Prof. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, chief of the government peace panel negotiating with the MILF.

“This will be a major event next year,” Ferrer told reporters during a dinner conference at the Privato Hotel in Pasig City Tuesday.

The ceremonial turnover ceremony of 55 high-powered firearms and 20 cruiser weapons will have a big impact in the peace process between the Philippine government and the MILF, she said.

The cruiser weapons include .50 caliber, .30 caliber machine guns, rocket launchers, rocket propelled grenades, and mortars.

Among the high-powered firearms are assault rifles such as M-16, M-14, AK-47, Uzi, Thompson, Garand, Carbine rifles and the like.

Ferrer did not say the exact date when the ceremonial turnover ceremony will take place next year.

Decommissioning is one of the difficult subjects to be resolved during the peace negotiations.

At the same time, Ferrer said that mine clearing operations in various parts of Mindanao are ongoing. However, she did not elaborate on how many unexploded landmines are to be deactivated.

The government will look into the modalities in six MILF camps that will be developed into

productive areas, she said.

Meanwhile, Peace Process Adviser Teresita “Ding” Deles said that rebel renegades belonging to the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) who have been conducting harassments will be dealt with law enforcement through police operations.