**Mr Benedicto R. BACANI, Executive Director, Institute for Autonomy and Governance, Notre-Dame University, The Philippines**

Since 2002 Mr Benedicto R. Bacani has been the Founding Executive Director and then Executive Director of the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) based at Notre-Dame University, Cotabato City, Philippines. IAG is a policy institute that facilitates political dialogue and promotes peace, justice, human rights, and good governance in conflict and post-conflict affected areas in the southern Philippines. He directs the programme “Recognition of the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao for their Empowerment and Sustainable Development” (IPDEV), an EU-supported project that works for the development of indigenous communities in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). With the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), the European Union and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), he provides technical assistance to the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) that is drafting the Basic Law for the Bangsamoro. He was Dean, College of Law, Notre Dame University, Cotabato City and associate professor in Political, Administrative and Human Rights Law.

He has authored books and monographs on Mindanao autonomy and indigenous rights, among which:

* *State of Local Democracy in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao*, NCPAG/PCID, 2013
* *Beyond Paper Autonomy: the Challenge in Southern Philippines* (2004) that examined the causes of the failures and successes of Muslim Mindanao autonomy
* *An Evolving Autonomy: The Organic Law of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Annotated,* Institute for Autonomy and Governance and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2002

He has broad international experience in examining political solutions to conflicts and promoting the rights of minorities having been a senior Fellow of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington DC, USA and a Hubert-Humphrey Fellow at the University of Minnesota where he specialized in federalism and conflict management. He was a short-term consultant on constitution-making in Nepal. He was a visiting lecturer at the European University Centre for Peace Studies in Austria. He was based in the Netherlands and Hong Kong for four years as Asia Director of an international funding agency that provided grants to programmes on education and peace and reconciliation to 13 countries in the Asian region. He holds a degree in Philosophy from Notre-Dame University and an advanced degree in Law at Manuel L. Quezon University, Philippines.