MALACAÑAN
MANILA

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 7

PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF A PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT FOR REGIONAL CONCERNS SYSTEM AND DEFINING THE FUNCTIONS, POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the State to further decentralize the operations of the government down to the field in order to effectively ensure the delivery of basic services to the people;

WHEREAS, issues and concerns at the local level transcend provincial boundaries;

WHEREAS, under the Administrative Code of 1987, the President has the continuing authority to reorganize the administrative structure of the Office of the President to achieve simplicity, economy, and efficiency;

WHEREAS, this policy is implemented by, among others, grouping local government units and regions into areas of responsibility in order to allow greater coordination and more efficient administration;

NOW THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA. President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me, do hereby order:

Sec. 1. **Creation**. -- There is hereby created the Presidential Assistant for Regional Concerns (PARECOs). For this purpose, a Presidential Assistant (PA) shall be appointed to the following areas to serve as liaison officers of the Office of the President in the said areas:

1.   **Presidential Assistant for Northern Luzon** - The provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, and the cities of Laoag, San Fernando, Dagupan, San Carlos, Urdaneta and Santiago.

2.   **Presidential Assistant for Bicol Region** -- The provinces of Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, Sorsogon and the cities of Legaspi, Iriga, and Naga.

3. **Presidential Assistant for Eastern Visayas** – The provinces of Biliran, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar, Western Samar, Southern Leyte and the cities of Ormoc, Tacloban and Calbayog.

4. **Presidential Assistant for Central Visayas** – The provinces of Bohol, Cebu, Negros Oriental, Siquijor and the cities of Tagbilaran, Cebu, Danao, Lapu-lapu, Mandaue, Toledo, Bais, Canlaon, and Dumaguete.

5. **Presidential Assistant for Western Visayas** – The provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Guimaras, and the cities of Roxas, Iloilo, Passi, Bacolod, Bago,Victorias, Cadiz, La Carlota, San Carlos, Silay, Sagay, Kabankalan and Talisay.

6. **Presidential Assistant for North and South Eastern Mindanao** – The provinces of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, Compostela Valley Province, Camiguin, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon and the cities of Butuan, Surigao, Davao, General Santos, Tagum, Gingoog, Oroquieta, Ozamis, Tangub, Malaybalay, Cagayan de Oro, and the Island Garden City of Samal.

7. **Presidential Assistant for Western and Central Mindanao** – The provinces of Basilan, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Lanao del Norte, and Cotabato and all chartered and the cities of Zamboanga, Pagadian, Dipolog, Dapitan, Iligan, Kidapawan, Cotabato and Marawi.

The Regional Governor of ARMM, the Executive Director of the Cordillera Executive Board (CEB) and the Chairman of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) shall continue to serve as liaison of the Office of the President in their respective areas consistent with their mandate, as provided by law.

Sec. 2. **Abolition of OP Extension Offices and CORD System**. The extension offices of the Office of the President in Mindanao and Visayas created pursuant to Executive Order No.7, series of 1992, are hereby abolished. Likewise, the Cabinet Officer for Regional Development (CORD) System created pursuant to Administrative Order No. 55, series of 1988, as amended by Administrative Order No. 95, series of 1988, series of 1988, is hereby abolished.

All existing plantilla positions, equipment, vehicles, and other physical assets acquired by these offices are hereby transferred to the Office of the President.

Sec. 3. **Functions, Powers, and Responsibilities of the PA**. – The PAs shall have the following functions, powers, and responsibilities:

1. Pursue matters/issues in the field that are submitted to the Office of the President (i.e., socio-economic, political, programs/projects and others);

2. Monitor programs/projects/developments deemed critical to the Office of the President;

3. Undertake issue resolution as may be directed by the President and/or the Executive Secretary;

4. Provide assistance in the preparation and conduct of Presidential visits in the area; and,

5. Perform such other functions and duties as the President and/or the Executive Secretary may assign from time to time.

Sec. 4. **Rank and Emolument of the PAs.** Each of the Presidential Assistant for Regional Concerns shall have the emolument equivalent to an Assistant Secretary (Director V).

Sec. 5. **Operating Principles**. – The PAs shall not be another layer in the bureaucracy and shall therefore not duplicate the regular functions of any government agency, LGUs or existing regional bodies/councils and commissions, or as may be created by the President. They shall, however, be designated as members of these regional bodies as well as other inter-agency commissions and bodies existing in their areas of responsibility. The PARECO shall not, in any case, be appointed or elected as Chairman or Head of the Regional Development Councils (RDCs) and other existing regional bodies and commissions.

The PAs shall be under the administrative control and supervision of the Executive Secretary and will submit report to the President, through the Executive Secretary, copy furnished the Presidential Management Staff. The PAs shall have no line authority and supervision over other agencies and local government units.

To ensure coordination and the integration of development programs and projects in all regions, the Presidential Assistants shall meet every Monday of the first week of the month in Malacanang, with the Presidential Legislative Adviser/Head, Presidential Legislative Liaison Office and the Presidential Assistant for Political Affairs, to be presided over by the Executive Secretary.

Sec. 6. **Technical and Administrative Support**. –The PAs shall hold office at the regional office of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA). DBM and NEDA shall rationalize the eighty (80) plantilla positions allocated to the former extension offices of the President for the Visayas and Mindanao. These positions shall likewise be re-allocated proportionately to all PARECOs with the purpose of providing at most five (5) technical and administrative staff per PARECO office.

Existing vehicles, office equipment and materials acquired by the OP extension offices shall likewise be distributed equitably to all PARECOs.

Sec. 7. **Fund Requirement**. – The PAs will be provided with the fund balance of the existing budget for the extension offices of the President for Visayas and Mindanao, as provided in the 1998 General Appropriations Act and the CORD System, as approved by the previous President.
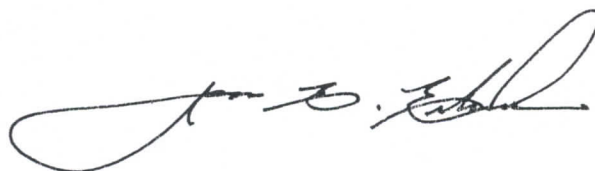
Appropriations to sustain the operations of the PARECOs for succeeding years shall be incorporated in the budget proposal of the OP, based on a budgetary program to be submitted by each PARECO for purposes of determining fund requirements, subject to the approval of the President.

Sec. 8. **Implementing Guidelines**. – The Implementing Guidelines to operationalize the PARECOs is hereby attached.
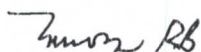
Sec. 9. **Repealing Clause**. – All orders, issuances, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Executive Order are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 10. **Effectivity**. – This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

Done in the City of Manila, this 30th day of September, in the year of Our Lord, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety Eight.

By the President:

RONALDO ZAMORA
Executive Secretary