



Republika ng Pilipinas
Kagawaran ng Katarungan
Tanggapan ng Manananggol Pambayan
(PUBLIC ATTORNEY'S OFFICE)

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ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2008

INTRODUCTION

Looking back at the traces of the significant events of 2008, the entire officialdom of the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) celebrates the approval and signing of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. No. 9406 (PAO Law) on **July 14, 2008**, following its signing into law by H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on March 23, 2007 and its subsequent effectivity on April 15, 2007. The PAO Law created the agency as an independent and autonomous office but attached to the DOJ for purposes of policy and program coordination.

With conviction and fervor, the agency is continuously discharging its legal mandate to extend free legal services to the indigents. Once more, the PAO has proven its dedication, competence and integrity owing to its crusade to vindicate the rights of the victims and relatives of the sinking of M/V Princess of the Stars on June 20, 2008, a vessel that is owned and operated by the Sulpicio Lines, Incorporated.

This is without mentioning the continuing effort of the agency to uplift the morale of inmates who have been languishing in jail and other penal institutions under a pitiable and desperate condition. The agency has embarked the challenges and exposures to the prevailing hazards in carrying out its free Legal and Medical Jail Visitation and Decongestion Program nationwide.

In spite of this situation, however, the lawyers and staff of PAO is truly inspired as they are always remembered by Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, for which the agency is resolved to remain a strong partner in the country's continuous quest for justice and peace.

More than anything else, the agency is humbled by the intensifying and fervent trust and confidence of the general public in the delivery of public services to the people.

I. THE OFFICE

The Public Attorney's Office maintains its Central Office at the DOJ Agencies Building, NIA Road corner East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, an edifice allotted for various agencies under the Department of Justice. The Regional and District/Sub-District Offices, on the other hand, are strategically located nationwide responding to indigent clients from 78 provinces, 117 cities and 1,494 municipalities which are in dire need of legal assistance.

At present, there are **17 regional offices** and **258 district and sub-district offices**. Most of the offices are situated in the Halls of Justice nationwide along with the courts and other offices involved in the administration of justice.

II. PAO LAWYERS AND THE COURTS

As of December 2008, the PAO has **1,049 lawyers**, who actively handle criminal and civil cases before **2,182 courts** nationwide and about **25 lawyers** devote themselves on appealed cases before the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court.

Below is a table indicating the number of existing offices and assigned lawyers in each region, and its proportionate relation to existing courts therein.

REGION	DISTRICT OFFICES	PAO LAWYERS	COURTS	RATIO
National Capital Region/Central Office	15	281	421	1.50
Cordillera Administrative Region	8	29	48	1.66
I Ilocos Region	21	67	140	2.09
II Cagayan Valley	13	48	118	2.46
III Central Luzon	23	90	211	2.34
IV-A CALABARZON	30	105	241	2.30
IV-B MIMAROPA	10	14	51	3.64
V Bicol Region	19	54	148	2.74
VI Eastern Visayas	17	54	160	2.96
VII Central Visayas	22	51	149	2.92
VIII Western Visayas	23	69	131	1.90
IX-A ARMM	6	15	74	4.93
IX-B Zamboanga Peninsula	9	26	62	2.38
X Northern Mindanao	13	43	108	2.51
XI Davao Region	9	42	63	1.50
XII SOCCSKSARGEN	9	37	76	2.05
XIII CARAGA	11	24	58	2.42
TOTAL	258	1,049	2259*	2.15

**yet to be updated*

The introduction of district offices in different regions of the country complements the agency's mission to provide litigants free access to courts, judicial and quasi-judicial agencies by rendering legal assistance. With the accessibility of the services of the PAO, justice could efficiently be delivered despite geographical fragmentation.

III. LANDMARK ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. CLIENTS ASSISTED AND CASES HANDLED

The statistical figures below show the total number of indigent clients assisted and the total number of cases (judicial and quasi-judicial) handled by the PAO and its proportionate relation to the **1,049 lawyers** for the year 2008.

Total No. of Clients Assisted	4,839,988
Total No. of Cases Handled	666,676
Average No. of Clients Assisted by Each Lawyer	4,614
Average No. of Cases Handled by Each Lawyer	636

B. ACQUITTALS AND PRISONERS RELEASED FROM JAIL

Despite overwhelming case load, Public Attorneys were able to represent indigent accused in court and for this year, were able to facilitate the release of **81,966** languishing prisoners and convicts after having been acquitted or for some other reasons as shown in the table below.

Accused benefited from:	No. of Accused
A. Acquittal	9,859
B. Demurrer to Evidence granted	2,159
C. Case Provisionally Dismissed	30,035
D. Case Permanently Dismissed	12,830
E. Application for Probation granted	7,031
F. Motion to Quash granted	1,300
G. Motion for Released on Recognizance granted	4,258
H. Released on other Grounds	14,494
TOTAL	81,966

C. WINNING APPEALED CASES

Out of 1,049 lawyers in the PAO, there are about 25 who devote their attention in attending to appealed cases, particularly those pending before the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court. For criminal cases alone, a total of 100 favorable decisions were obtained for 2008. The table below shows the breakdown of figures, to wit:

Acquittals from Death Penalty	4
Acquittals from Reclusion Perpetua	25
Acquittals from Reclusion Temporal	63
Modification from Death Penalty to Reclusion Perpetua	5
Modification from Death Penalty to Reclusion Temporal	3
TOTAL	100

Aside from criminal cases, the Special and Appealed Cases Service also handles civil and special cases such as appeals from the decision of NLRC, SSS and GSIS. In those cases, a total of **310** favorable dispositions were obtained by PAO-SACS.

D. JAIL VISITATION AND DECONGESTION PROGRAM

Owing to the horrendous condition of jails in the country, the PAO, upon prior approval of the Hon. Justice Secretary Raul M. Gonzalez, has continuously carried out its nationwide free Legal and Medical Jail Visitation and Decongestion Program. The table below shows the output of the project for 2008, to wit:

	VISITED JAIL	DATE	NO. OF BENEFICIARIES FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE (ADVICE)	NO. OF BENEFICIARIES FOR MEDICAL/DENTAL ASSISTANCE	NO. OF READING GLASSES DISTRIBUTED	TOTAL NO. OF INMATES RELEASED
1	MOLAVE YOUTH HOME	January 10, 2008	36	165	n/a	115
2	MANILA YOUTH RECEPTION CENTER	January 15, 2008	132	114	n/a	17
3	NATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR BOYS	January 17, 2008	31	83	n/a	6
4	SAN JUAN CITY JAIL	January 22, 2008	38	263	Glasses distributed: 68 Consultation: 10	114
5	BASILAN PROVINCIAL JAIL	January 29, 2008	51	66	n/a	25
6	BASILAN CITY JAIL	January 29, 2008	42	199	n/a	33
7	ZAMBOANGA CITY JAIL	January 30, 2008	185	531	n/a	238
8	NBP (MAX SECURITY), MUNTINLUPA CITY	February 13, 2008	163	215	Glasses distributed: 75 Consultation: 9	399
9	NBP (MAX SECURITY), MUNTINLUPA CITY	March 28, 2008	33	54 *	n/a	130
10	CALOOCAN CITY JAIL	April 16, 2008	133	387	Glasses distributed: 146 Consultation: 18	1,085
11	NBP (MAX SECURITY), MUNTINLUPA CITY	April 18, 2008	88	187	Glasses distributed: 63 Consultation: 8	121
12	MANDALUYONG CITY JAIL	April 23, 2008	74	323	Glasses distributed: 111 Consultation: 23	203
13	MANILA CITY JAIL	April 25, 2008	556	198	Glasses distributed: 103 Consultation: 21	2,362
14	QUEZON CITY JAIL	April 30, 2008	300	167	Glasses distributed: 151 Consultation: 5	87
15	FEMALE DORMITORY MANILA CITY JAIL	May 7, 2008	335	194	Glasses distributed: 136 Consultation: 216	23
16	PASIG CITY JAIL	May 9, 2008	94	209	Glasses distributed: 108 Consultation: 48	382
17	ANGELES CITY JAIL	May 14, 2008	197	315	n/a	1,319

18	ZAMBALES PROVINCIAL JAIL	May 15, 2008	55	136	n/a	125
19	OLONGAPO CITY JAIL	May 15, 2008		97	n/a	
20	CAGAYAN PROVINCIAL JAIL	May 27, 2008	57	95 *	n/a	
21	CAGAYAN CITY JAIL	May 27, 2008	29	135 *	n/a	
22	BACOLOD CITY DISTRICT JAIL	June 4, 2008	75	240 *	n/a	144
23	BACOLOD CITY PROVINCIAL JAIL	June 4, 2008	21	193 *	n/a	145
24	BACOLOD CITY JAIL	June 6, 2008	96	314 *	n/a	165
25	BULACAN PROVINCIAL JAIL	June 10, 2008	243	539	n/a	
26	BATAAN PROVINCIAL JAIL	June 11, 2008	98	594	n/a	336
27	SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA PROVINCIAL JAIL	June 11, 2008	210	270	n/a	25
28	NBP (MEDIUM SECURITY COMPOUND)	June 13, 2008	313	345	n/a	
29	BJMP, CALAMAGUI, ILAGAN, ISABELA	June 24, 2008	49	125 *	n/a	
30	CAUAYAN, ISABELA PROVINCIAL JAIL	June 24, 2008	50	136 *	n/a	
31	CAVITE PROVINCIAL JAIL	July 11, 2008	97	76 *	n/a	48
32	TRECE MARTIRES CITY JAIL	July 11, 2008	30	95 *	n/a	34
33	BJMP, NAIC MUNICIPAL JAIL	July 11, 2008	58	31 *	n/a	16
34	BJMP, BATAL, SANTIAGO CITY	July 22, 2008	144	127 *	n/a	58
35	SANTIAGO CITY POLICE STATION	July 22, 2008	15	130 *	n/a	0
36	CABARROGUIS, QUIRINO, DISTRICT JAIL	July 22, 2008	33	27 *	n/a	
37	ROXAS, ISABELA DISTRICT JAIL	July 22, 2008	40	48 *	n/a	45
38	NBP (MEDIUM SECURITY COMPOUND)	August 21, 2008		131 *	Glasses distributed: 73 Consultation: 17	
39	TAGBILARAN CITY DISTRICT JAIL	August 22, 2008		55 *	n/a	
40	PUERTO PRINCESA CITY JAIL	August 29, 2008		250 *	n/a	35

41	PUERTO PRINCESA PROVINCIAL JAIL	August 29, 2008		131 *	n/a	53
42	QUEZON CITY JAIL	September 19, 2008		328	Glasses distributed: 90 Consultation: 1	1913
43	CAMP BAGONG DIWA	September 30, 2008	115	428	Glasses distributed: 122 Consultation: 36	
44	MEDIUM & MAXIMUM SECURITY CMPDS	October 21, 2008	82	311	Glasses distributed: 120 Consultation: 3	
45	CIW MANDALUYONG	October 23, 2008	193	227	Glasses distributed: 139 Consultation: 6	
46	CAMP CRAME CUSTODIAL CENTER	November 18, 2008	23	88	n/a	
47	MALE & FEMALE DORMITORIES, MANILA CITY JAIL	November 25, 2008	253	367	n/a	
	MANILA YOUTH RECEPTION CENTER	November 25, 2008	194	169	n/a	17
48	Iloilo Rehabilitation Center	December 2, 2008	26	48	n/a	
49	BJMP Jaro, Iloilo City District Jail	December 2, 2008	21	64	n/a	
50	MARIKINA CITY JAIL	December 12, 2008	110	155	n/a	
51	NBP (MAX SECURITY), MUNTINLUPA CITY	December 16, 2008	119	82	n/a	
			5,337	7,864	1,415	9,818

based on partial reports

IV. CASE LOAD

STATISTICAL REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR THE YEAR 2007

KEY RESULT AREAS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	TARGET
I. REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENTS IN JUDICIAL CASES (CRIMINAL)	TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED	424,661	378,154
	A. CARRY OVER	228,061	
	B. NEWLY RECEIVED	196,600	147,774
	TOTAL NO. OF CASES TERMINATED	199,113	
	DISPOSITION RATE	46.89%	
	NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	225,548	

Out of the 199,113 terminated criminal cases, there are **147,583 or about 74 % favorable dispositions** obtained by the Public Attorneys from representing indigent clients in criminal cases alone.

KEY RESULT AREAS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	
II. REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENTS IN JUDICIAL CASES (CIVIL)	TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED	54,530	52,024
	A. CARRY OVER	36,982	
	B. NEWLY RECEIVED	17,548	
	TOTAL NO. OF CASES TERMINATED	18,757	14,698
	DISPOSITION RATE	34.40%	
	NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	35,773	

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	TARGET
III. REPRESENTATIO N OF INDIGENTS IN QUASI- JUDICIAL CASES (ADMINISTRATIVE CASES PROPER)	TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED	8,169	6,936
	A. CARRY OVER	5,097	
	B. NEWLY RECEIVED	3,072	
	TOTAL NO. OF CASES TERMINATED	2,487	1,790
	DISPOSITION RATE	30.44%	
	NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	5,682	

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	TARGET
IV. REPRESENTATIO N OF INDIGENTS IN QUASI- JUDICIAL CASE (PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE)	TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED	51,628	43,066
	A. CARRY OVER	23,554	
	B. NEWLY RECEIVED	28,074	
	TOTAL NO. OF CASES DISPOSED	25,090	19,266
	DISPOSITION RATE	48.60%	
	NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	26,538	

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	TARGET
V. REPRESENTATIO N OF INDIGENTS IN QUASI- JUDICIAL CASES (LABOR CASES)	TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED	21,855	18,738
	A. CARRY OVER	14,825	
	B. NEWLY RECEIVED	7,030	
	TOTAL NO. OF CASES DISPOSED	6,728	3,772
	DISPOSITION RATE	30.78%	
	NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	15,127	

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	TARGET
VI. LIMITED SERVICES	ARRAIGNMENT	196,585	
	PRE-TRIAL	142,697	
	PROMULGATION	103,381	
	OTHERS	286,980	
	TOTAL	729,643	590,120

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	TARGET
VII. RENDITION OF NON-JUDICIAL SERVICES	LEGAL DOCUMENTATION	868,838	777,854
	CLIENTS COUNSELED	1,128,017	912,856
	OATHS ADMINISTERED	392,512	249,810
	MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION		
	NO. OF DISPUTES HANDLED	416,056	405,382
	A. CARRY OVER	95,294	
	B. NEWLY RECEIVED	320,762	
	NO. OF DISPUTES RESOLVED	319,055	319,370
	DISPOSITION RATE	76.69%	
	NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	97,001	

	INQUEST INVESTIGATION AND CUSTODIAL INTERROGATION	OUTPUT	TARGET
VIII. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES	TOTAL NO. OF CLIENTS ASSISTED	182,445	133,132
	JAIL VISITATION PROGRAM		
	A. NO. OF PRISONERS INTERVIEWED	232,968	188,832
	B. NO. OF PRISONERS PROVIDED WITH ASSISTANCE	222,833	162,328

LEGAL AID INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	TARGET
A. COMMUNITY LINKAGE	NO. OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION CONDUCTED/ATTENDED	2,266	3,000
B. TRI-MEDIA LINKAGE	NO. OF HOURS IN RADIO PROGRAM CONDUCTED/INITIATED	1,204	424
	NO. OF PRESS RELEASES/NEWS ITEM PUBLISHED	156	256

COOPERATION WITH OTHER LEGAL AID ORGANIZATIONS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	TARGET
A. IBP/OTHER LEGAL AID ORGANIZATIONS	NO. OF MEETINGS CONDUCTED/ATTENDED	1,327	1,098
	NO. OF REFERRALS RECEIVED	23,852	23,690
	NO. OF REFERRALS MADE	23,334	20,652
INSTITUTION BUILDING	NO. OF TRAINING PROGRAMS CONDUCTED/ATTENDED	968	1,340
	NO. OF PERSONNEL TRAINED	2,444	2,908
	TOTAL NO. OF TRAINING HOURS	4,973	3,640

With the advent of Republic Act No. 9262, otherwise known as the Anti-VAWC Law and Republic Act No. 9344 (R.A. No. 9344), otherwise known as the Juvenile Justice and Welfare System Act, as well as the subsequent issuance of Executive Order No. 633, the PAO is specifically mandated by the law to extend legal assistance to women and their children who are victims of violence and to facilitate the release of minor offenders from jail, particularly those who were fifteen years old or below at the time of the alleged commission of the crime.

This task the PAO has continuously put into action by devoting special attention to the cause of women and children in so far as the criminal justice system is concerned.

The table below shows the number of women and children assisted by the PAO for the year 2008.

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	TARGET
REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN CLIENTS	TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED	80,698	60,500
	A. CARRY OVER	39,965	
	B. NEWLY RECEIVED	40,733	
	TOTAL NO. OF CASES TERMINATED	41,300	23,800
	DISPOSITION RATE	51.18%	
	NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	39,398	

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	OUTPUT	TARGET
REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW (CICL)	TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED	17,565	15,500
	A. CARRY OVER	11,761	
	B. NEWLY RECEIVED	5,804	
	TOTAL NO. OF CASES TERMINATED	7,378	5,200
	DISPOSITION RATE	42%	
	NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	10,187	

In the end, in spite of the limited number of lawyers and support personnel of the agency, not to mention its meager budgetary allocation, the PAO has managed to carry out its mandate with rewarding output.

It is humbly submitted that the above data manifest and indicate the continuous trust and faith of the people in the performance of the agency.

Fervently, it is viewed that when the agency performs its duties and responsibilities with the highest standard of efficiency and dedication, it is in such a way that it gives its humble share in converting and transforming public apathy and chaos into trust and faith to the criminal justice system and ultimately to the entire administration.

V. THE CHIEF PUBLIC ATTORNEY

A. The Chief Public Attorney signed/answered 26,953 communications. The breakdown is as follows:

I. Communication to / from CPA Rueda-Acosta	<i>Total No. of Communications</i>	26953
A. Communication from Executive Division	1878	
1. Appointments	872	
2. Memorandum	430	
3. Memorandum Order	284	
4. Memorandum Circular	10	
5. Office Order	219	
6. Reassignment Order	57	
7. Travel Order	6	
8. Other Communications		
8.1. Signed by CPA	2956	
8.2. Signed by Executive Lawyers	3262	
B. Communication from Other Divisions	3586	
1. Administrative Division	1901	
2. Legal Research Division	616	
3. Field Services and Statistics Division	147	
4. Financial and Management Division	531	
5. Special and Appealed Cases Division	391	
C. Communication from Regional Offices	4333	
1. Region I	278	
2. Region II	159	
3. Region III	240	
4. Region IV	564	
5. Region V	407	
6. Region VI	401	
7. Region VII	400	
8. Region VIII	154	
9. Region IX / ARMM	227	
10. Region X	183	
11. Region XI	188	
12. Region XII	199	
13. CAR	101	
14. CARAGA	149	
15. NCR	683	
D. Communication from OP, OVP, Senate & HOR	480	
E. Communication from Other Offices	16616	
1. Department of Justice	265	
2. Supreme Court	2824	
3. Court of Appeals	9877	
4. National Labor Relations Commission	656	
5. Other Communications	2542	
6. Applicants	452	
F. Legal Opinion/s Published at Manila Times	60	

B. The Chief Public Attorney received the following prestigious awards, to wit:

1. **Award of Recognition** given by ABS-CBN's public service program, "Exklusibong Explosibong Expose (XXX)" on December 22, 2008;
2. **Outstanding Public Servant of the Year (2008) Award** jointly given by the United Filipino Seafarers (UFS) and *Tinig ng Marino* Maritime Newspaper on December 12, 2008 at the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Headquarters, South Harbor, Manila;
3. **Huwarang Pilipino Hall of Fame** jointly given by the Huwarang Pilipino Foundation, Inc., DZRB, Philippine Broadcasting Service, and NBN Channel 4 on November 25, 2008 at the Occupational Safety & Health Center;
4. **Gawad Sagisag Quezon** jointly given by the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Bulacan Chapter, and the Quezon City Academy on August 31, 2008 at the Patricia L. Monzon Studio, National Broadcasting Network, Diliman, Quezon City;
5. **Special Award for Community Service for the Year 2008** given by the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption at the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Commissioned Officers Club, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, on August 28, 2008; and
6. **Making A Difference for Women Award** given by the Soroptimist International on March 24, 2008 at Crown Royale Hotel, Capitol Drive, Balanga, Bataan.

C. Aside from the above-mentioned conferences and programs, the Chief Public Attorney also attended the following local trainings and seminars:

1. Participant, **Conference on the International Criminal Court (ICC)**, September 25-26, 2008, Renaissance Hotel, Makati City;
2. Speaker, **Media Relations Seminar**, conducted by the PNP Public Information Office, July 29, 2008, PNP Training School, Camp Crame, Quezon City;
3. Speaker, **Forum on Increasing Access to Justice: Bridging Gaps, Removing Roadblocks**, conducted by the Supreme Court of the Philippines, July 01, 2008, Court of Appeals Auditorium, Manila;
4. Speaker, **Conference on "Addressing the Appalling Humanitarian Consequences in BJMP Jails,"** hosted by the International Committee of the Red Cross, June 19, 2008,

Emerald Function Room, Crowne Plaza, Ortigas Center, Pasig City; and

5. Panelist/Reactor, **Multi-Sectoral Seminar-Workshop on Agrarian Justice in Region VI**, conducted by the Agrarian Justice Foundation, June 5, 2008, Sugarland Hotel, Singcang, Bacolod City.

D. The Chief Public Attorney personally handled the following cases, to wit:

- 1) The cases of the victims of the ***M/V Princess of the Stars maritime tragedy***. Forty (40) civil cases have already been filed against the owners and management of the Sulpicio Lines, Inc. (SLI) in Manila and thirty-four (34) in Cebu. Administrative and criminal cases have also been filed against the said respondents at the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) ;
- 2) Legal assistance to 72-year-old **Ms. Elena dela Paz, aide for 45 years of the late Philippine film icon, Ms. Nida Blanca**. As per DOJ Resolution dated November 11, 2008, signed by the Honorable Secretary of Justice Raul M. Gonzalez, Ms. Dela Paz was dropped as respondent in I. S. No. 2002-619, and the handling prosecutor was directed to cause her deletion from the Amended Information;
- 3) Hearings of **130 MILF suspected beheaders** of ten (10) marines in Basilan;
- 4) Release by Petition for Habeas Corpus of **six (6) babies detained** at the Chinese General Hospital from unpaid hospital bills; and
- 5) Release of **Norberto Manero, Jr.**

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS

The PAO, in the delivery of its mandated mission, is complemented by several administrative units, which render support role to its technical operations. Even with the limited personnel of the office, it has, however, managed to carry out its operations with utmost efficiency and dedication.

A. HUMAN RESOURCES

1. PERSONNEL COMPLEMENT

The table below shows the number of authorized, filled, and unfilled positions in the PAO for the year 2008, to wit:

	Authorized	Filled	Unfilled
Lawyers	1,048	1,049	0
Support Personnel	802	802	0
Total	1,850	1,851	0

2. PERSONNEL MOVEMENT

While recruitment is high, the turn-over of PAO personnel especially its lawyers is likewise fast due primarily to their search for greener pastures either by engaging in private practice or by transferring to other government agencies such as the National Prosecution Service (NAPROSS), Ombudsman, and the judiciary.

The table below sets forth the movement of personnel in the PAO for the year 2008, to wit:

	Lawyer	Support Staff	Total
Recruited	992	28	1,020
Promoted	1,110	5	1,115

3. PERSONNEL ENHANCEMENT

The PAO has conducted series of seminars to enhance the capability, knowledge and professional skills of participants in order to mold them into efficient and truly competitive legal counsels.

i. SEMINARS AND TRAININGS

In 2008, the PAO conducted two (2) MCLE (Mandatory Continuing Legal Education)-accredited seminars and trainings on Forensic Science held in Iloilo City and Zamboanga City, which were both attended by Public Attorneys and dubbed as ***“PAO’s Advanced Training/Workshop in Forensic Medicine and Science”***.

Aside from that, lawyers and support personnel from PAO have likewise attended other trainings, seminars, workshops and conferences upon invitation of other government and non-government organizations.

From January to December 2008 there were about **172 seminars** attended by PAO personnel. A total of **925 lawyers** and **104 support staff** were registered in attendance.

Finally, a total of **19 Public Attorneys** from the District and Regional Offices were attended as Resource Speakers upon invitation of various sectors.

ii. RECOGNITION OF EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICE

* On September 30, 2008, the Civil Service Commission, in the implementation of its Public Service Delivery Audit (PASADA) Project, conferred a **Certificate of Recognition** to the **PAO-Regional Office No. II**, Public Attorney’s Office, for having garnered a rating of **Very Good** in exhibiting the value of customer care and meeting the expectations of the transacting public for prompt, courteous, responsive, facilitative and pleasant service.

* On September 22, 2008, the Civil Service Commission, in the implementation of its Public Service Delivery Audit (PASADA) Project, conferred **three (3) Certificates of Recognition** to the **Iloilo District Offices I and II, PAO-Regional VI**, for having garnered a rating of **Very Good** in exhibiting the value of customer care and meeting the expectations of the transacting public for prompt, courteous, responsive, facilitative and pleasant service, specifically in the following frontline services, to wit: 1. Outreach Services (Legal Assistance in Custodial and Inquest Investigation); and 2. Documentation/Notarial Services. The Office was also conferred another Certificate of Recognition for having garnered an **Excellent** rating for its Inquiry/Request for Legal Assistance/ Legal Counseling services.

4. UPGRADING OF SALARIES OF PAO LAWYERS

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 9406 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, the rank of incumbent public attorneys was upgraded to the rank equivalent to their respective counterparts in the National Prosecution Service. Salary differentials accruing to said qualified public attorneys were released by the Department of Budget and Management.

B. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In 2008, the office had an approved appropriation of Php 767,397,000.00. However, a total amount of Php 751,280,245.00 only was released by the Department of Budget and Management which included the payment of Terminal Leaves and Retirement Gratuities of 89 retired/resigned employees amounting to Php 13,281,343.97.

C. LIBRARY SERVICES

As the year 2008 ends, the PAO library is looking forward to giving better and more efficient means of assisting its clientele, the PAO lawyers, through modern and advance information-assisted technology such as the Internet, modern fax machines, and telephone units for a fast remittance of output.

Consequently, and in order to give flesh to this aspiration, several legal books and reference materials were distributed to all Regional and District Offices amounting to the aggregate amount of Php 1,256,092.00. On the other hand, a total amount of Php 217,952.00 was allotted to *Lex Libris* Subscription for the Central Office as well as to Regional Offices to facilitate research work.

On the other hand, the PAO Library, through its personnel, was able to collate a total of **1,020 news releases** which include the speeches of the Chief Public Attorney delivered in various occasions.

Through its tri-media linkages the PAO has continuously been rendering legal advice to the general public through the "Say Mo Attorney?" column in the *People's Tonight* tabloid, released every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. A total of **156 articles** were published and clipped into a file for the year 2008.

The effort to serve the greatest number of people was realized when the Chief Public Attorney intensified this endeavor by the daily publication of a legal advice column, "Dear PAO" in *The Manila Times*. This column started in November 2008, and at the end of the year a total of **60 articles** were published.

D. OFFICE EQUIPMENT

In 2008, the PAO purchased and distributed the following office equipment, to wit:

▪ Filing Cabinet	-	154 units
▪ Fax Machine	-	23 units
▪ Punching/Binding Machine	-	1 unit
▪ Computer Table	-	3 units
▪ Computer Chair	-	1 unit
▪ Senior Executive Chair	-	2 units
▪ Computer Printer	-	153 units
▪ Computer Monitor	-	5 units
▪ Bundy Clock	-	2 units
▪ Copier	-	25 units
▪ Airconditioner	-	8 units
▪ Safety Vault	-	1 unit
▪ Clerical Desk	-	1 unit
▪ Executive Chair	-	2 units
▪ Refrigerator	-	1 unit
▪ Computer Set	-	127 units

Since the date of assumption of duty, it has been the battle cry of the Chief Public Attorney to put into oblivion the traditional impression with public offices where there is a dearth of office supply and only obsolete and/or worn out office equipment are in place. With the purchase of the foregoing office furnishings, such as chairs, filing cabinets, computer tables, scanners, computers, and posture chairs, PAO personnel were able to perform their duties in a more office-friendly environment. Needless to say, it somehow contributed to the continuously swelling public trust to the services of the PAO.

In addition, the computerization program of the office saw the continuous upgrading of existing computer units in order to cope up with the fast changing times.

VII. TECHNICAL OPERATIONS

A. PAO-NLRC Sub-Station

By virtue of a Memorandum of Agreement, the PAO has been maintaining its sub-station at the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) located at Banawe, Quezon City.

The sub-station was established to facilitate the rendition of legal assistance to complaining workers before the NLRC and consequently to expedite the proceedings thereon. It was established to make justice readily and more accessible to complaining workers whose plight the PAO is vigorously concerned about.

The efficiency of the office has been proven for years and as a matter of fact, for the year 2008, a total of **5,488 clients** were accommodated and were extended legal assistance.

B. RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION

For the year 2008, the PAO, through the Legal Research Service, had a total number of **572 research works** that were duly accomplished. It includes legal queries from the public which were either directly addressed or otherwise referred to the PAO. The sudden upsurge in the number of research works was brought about by the increasing public trust coupled with consistent tri-media linkage as a means of education and information dissemination. The accessibility of the Chief Public Attorney herself for public services has for one reason spotted the great difference.

C. INTENSIFYING INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Aside from linkage to print media for public education and information dissemination, the PAO has also cooperated with the broadcast media (radio and television) to strengthen and sustain its legal services operations.

Towards this end, PAO lawyers provided on-the-air legal counseling to DZRV (Radio Veritas), DWIZ (Hustisya Para sa Lahat), DWDD-AFP (Ugnayan ng Anghel ng Masa), GMA 7 (Imbestigador and Unang Hirit), DZMM, ABS-CBN 2 (Aksyon Ngayon, Exklusibong Explosibong Expose (XXX), Umagang Kay Ganda), DZRH, DZRV (Radyo ng Bayan), DZBB "Oro Mismo" and almost all other radio and television stations. The same activity was also undertaken by selected PAO lawyers in the different regions.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS AGAINST PAO EMPLOYEES

For the year 2008, a total of **102** administrative complaints were received, out of which **116** were resolved and terminated through the PAO-Legal Research Services.

The PAO, through the fortitude of the Chief Public Attorney, has been trying to upkeep the integrity not only of the entire agency but of each lawyer and personnel appointed in the office.

VIII. PLANS AND PROGRAMS FOR THE YEAR 2009

A. 4th MCLE-Accredited National Convention of PAO Lawyers in compliance with the requirements of the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Committee of the Supreme Court;

B. Continuously carry out activities and outreach programs for the welfare of prisoners and inmates such as the PAO's free Legal and Medical Jail Visitation and Decongestion Program.

C. Continuation of the “PAO-UNICEF Seminar on Violence Against Women and their Children Act (R.A. 9262), Comprehensive Juvenile Justice and Welfare System Act (R.A. 9344) and Other Related Laws”;

D. Continuation of the “PAO’s Advanced Training/Workshop in Forensic Medicine and Science”;

E. Formulation and adoption of Citizen’s Charter for the PAO in keeping with the mandates of Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007 (Republic Act No. 9485);

F. Continuous promotion of good governance, professionalism, and anti-corruption measures.

G. Continuously carry out improvement of communication facilities and other office equipment.

H. Vigorous efforts to implement compensation scheme and financial incentives of the PAO lawyers to further motivate them in discharging their duties pursuant to R.A. No. 9406 (PAO Law);

I. Continue the enhancement of the skills and competence of PAO lawyers and staff through the holding of workshops and seminars.

J. Increase the number of lawyers and support staff assigned in each of the Regional and District Offices for a more effective and efficient delivery of services pursuant to Republic Act 9406 (PAO Law).

K. Continuous coordination with the tri-media for the advancement of the PAO outreach activities, more particularly, dissemination of free legal advice and counseling.

L. Vigorously pursue the rendition of prompt, effective and adequate legal services to the indigent sector.

M. Maintain programs and policies in achieving virtues of excellence, integrity, professionalism and moral values of all PAO lawyers and staff.

N. Endeavor to meet the ideal situation of one PAO lawyer being assigned to one court for a more effective and efficient representation of clients.

O. Continuous active participation of the PAO in the on-going pro-poor programs of the government.

IX. ISSUES AND CONCERNS

A. FAST TURNOVER OF PAO LAWYERS

The high turnover rate of PAO lawyers is primarily due to the following reasons:

- (1) Resignation to engage in private law practice;
- (2) Transfer to the National Prosecution Service (NAPROSS);

- (3) Transfer to the judiciary;
- (4) Transfer to other government owned and controlled corporations;
and
- (5) Heavy workload.

Due to uncompetitive pay and allowance given to its personnel, the PAO has difficulty in maintaining the stint of PAO lawyers in its fold. However, with the recent upgrading of salary grades for lawyers in the agency, the PAO is hopeful to retain its lawyers in the service until retirement age, more or less.

B. HEAVY WORKLOAD

On the average, a PAO lawyer is assigned from two (2) to four (4) courts while a prosecutor is assigned only to one (1) court. The PAO has only 1,048 authorized *plantilla* positions for lawyers.

This unfair advantage in the number of prosecutors over PAO lawyers is due to the provision of P.D. No.1275 which states that “whenever there is an increase in the number of court salas, there shall be a corresponding increase in the number of assistant provincial/city fiscal positions at the ratio of two fiscals to a sala.”

It is also worthy to mention that aside from handling criminal and civil cases, PAO lawyers are likewise mandated to handle: (1) preliminary investigation of cases before the Office of the Public Prosecutor; (2) labor cases before the National Labor Relations Commission; (3) administrative cases before administrative bodies like DARAB, PRC, COMELEC, Bureau of Customs, DECS, PLEB, Insurance Commission, etc.

Yet, the PAO managed to handle a total of 666,676 cases involving about 4,839,988 clients, for the year 2008. These figures show that every Public Attorney handles an average of 636 cases and rendered assistance to an average of 4,614 clients for 2008.

C. SCARCITY OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Despite the procurement of some office furnishings, such as chair, filing cabinets, computer tables, scanners, computers, and posture chairs, the PAO still greatly lacks computers and typewriters which are necessary in the immediate preparation and submission of pleadings with the courts and other judicial bodies. This problem continues on account of the insufficiency of funds.

D. LACK OF ATTRACTIVE RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Earnest efforts had been exerted to improve the retirement scheme of the PAO employees but up to now the same remains a dream. This is the reason why the PAO finds it difficult to hold on to its lawyers, who naturally want to retire in an office that offers attractive retirement benefits. This problem was addressed in the PAO law.

CONCLUSION

The PAO will forever be thankful to the Almighty God for all the outpouring success He has bestowed upon the agency and for continuously strengthening its administration.

We resolve to revitalize our commitment to defend our name and fight for the cause of the marginalized sector in the society, free from any egocentric motives. We shall continuously struggle to stand as a strong pillar in the government bureaucracy in order to promote justice and secure peace and order in every community. We fervently hope that in our own little way and within the premises of our mandate, we can contribute something to redirect the perception of the people and convince them to have faith in the government administration despite the prevailing moral decadence.

The overwhelming clamor of the people for reform in the government will forever be a challenge to the PAO to improve the delivery of its services to the public with utmost efficiency and free from any form of corruption.

We are deeply elated to celebrate the end of year 2008, another milestone in the history of PAO that brought us new hope, renewed strength and reaffirmed conviction. With this, we are prepared to face the coming challenges with a smile in our hearts, honesty, and sincere dedication to the delivery of public services.

PERSIDA V. RUEDA-ACOSTA
Chief Public Attorney