



Republika ng Pilipinas
Kagawaran ng Katarungan
Tanggapan ng Manananggol Pambayan
(PUBLIC ATTORNEY'S OFFICE)
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ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR YEAR 2010

PREFATORY STATEMENT

Treading on the *“straight path of genuine public service”* is the norm by which the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) endeavors to practice always. This agency's standard is fortified even more with the thrust of H. E. President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III for the workforce of Philippine government bureaucracy to zealously work and walk in this path.

In the performance of its tasks, this principal law office of the Government in extending free legal assistance to indigent persons in criminal, civil, labor, administrative and other quasi-judicial cases, does its share in paving the road toward the attainment of the Aquino administration's quest for a nation that is *free from the shackles of poverty and claws of corruption*, whose realization requires *sacrifice, honest and effective governance* from the people in the bureaucracy.

His Excellency President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III's statements both inspire and challenge the whole workforce of the PAO to exceed their best performance yet as public servants. During his inauguration, His Excellency said, *“Our foremost duty is to lift the nation from poverty through honest and effective governance”*, and in his State of the Nation Address (SONA), he intimated, *“We must understand that now is a time for sacrifice. It is this sacrifice that will pave the way for a better future.”* These words are being heeded by the PAO officials, public attorneys and staff not only because the same reverberate with authority and moral ascendancy of His Excellency, but also because dedicated and selfless public service is ingrained in the Public Attorney's Office.

In consonance with the spirit of **sacrifice for the highest interest of public service** and to deter reported torture incidents, the incumbent Chief Public Attorney has come up with a new legal assistance program which enjoins all the *PAO regional and district offices* nationwide to require an assigned public attorney and staff in every scheduled duty to render *legal assistance* (night courts and inquest duties, e.g. legal advice, attending to the legal needs of suspects, persons detained or under custodial investigation in the police stations within the territorial jurisdiction of the said offices) *up to 10:00 p.m. everyday* (including weekends and holidays) but the said public attorney and staff remain on call for the rest of their respective scheduled duties ready to render legal assistance in inquest proceedings and custodial investigations. This program has been made available to the public since September 2010. *PAO-Central Office* also offers the same legal aid services. Its *hotline (929-9436)* has been opened to the public for *24/7 legal counseling* since October 2009. The *more than 1000 public attorneys* and *more than 900 support*

staff of the PAO *alternately attend* to their respective duties in conducting this legal aid innovation.

In line with President Aquino's call for *honesty* and *effective governance*, the PAO chief caused the *validation* on August 25-27, 2010, of the *Code of Conduct of Public Attorneys and Employees, PAO Operations Manual, and PAO Legal Forms Manual*. In connection thereto, PAO officials and public attorneys signed the *Commitment to PAO Core Values* on November 29, 2010. The printing of the said manuals will be funded by the American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative (ABA-ROLI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Aside from the aforementioned projects and legal dissemination information programs, the PAO leadership has accommodated the requests of three (3) private companies for tie-ups in rendering public service. This is in keeping with the Aquino administration's thrust on *public-private partnerships* in the interest of genuine and extensive public service. The said partner institutions are *Radyo Inquirer, TV5, and SM Supermalls*. *Radyo Inquirer* and *TV5* have given free air time to the Public Attorney's Office for the legal counseling radio program, *Kakampi Mo ang Batas*¹ and the reality based themed mediation-on-air television show, *Public Atorni*,² respectively. Aside from the latter, which is being mediated by the Chief Public Attorney, with the assistance of other selected public attorneys, *TV5* also features the Chief Public Attorney and selected PAO-Central Office lawyers as resource persons on *Face to Face*, a daily morning show that uses alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in resolving issues and reconciling the parties involved thereto. For the PAO's project with *SM Supermalls*, the Chief Public Attorney issued an Office Order on September 15, 2010 directing the assigned public attorneys to attend alternately to their duties in *rendering legal assistance to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) as well as to their dependents and beneficiaries* every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in every branch of *SM Supermalls* with a *Global Pinoy Center*, a one-stop shop for the needs of the said clients. The said program was conducted for the whole month of October 2010.

The abovementioned program initiatives as well as the other legal services of the PAO that have been implemented through the years and enhanced to be more responsive and relevant to the needs of the public especially the clients of PAO, are among the humble but earnest contributions of this agency to the strengthening of the criminal justice system and government service in the Philippines. The PAO is honored to share the same as part of the foundation of a thriving Aquino administration.

I. THE OFFICE

Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9406, entitled "An Act Reorganizing and Strengthening the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) Amending for the Purpose Executive Order No. 292 Otherwise Known as the Administrative Code of 1987," was passed by the 13th Congress, where H. E. President Aquino was then an illustrious member of the House of Representatives and signed into law on March

¹ Started airing on August 20, 2010, and is now being heard over *Radyo Inquirer* DZIQ 990 khz, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7:00-8:00 p.m.

² Showed its pilot episode on September 9, 2010, and is now being shown on *TV5* every Thursday night, after the late night news, *Aksyon Journalism*.

23, 2007. R.A. No. 9406 established the PAO as an independent and autonomous Office attached to the Department of Justice for the purpose of policy and program coordination. It 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 80 provinces, 138 cities, 1,496 municipalities and 42,025 *barangays* which are in dire need of legal assistance.

At present, the PAO has 17 regional offices and 270 district and 10 sub-district offices. Most of the offices are situated at the Halls of Justice nationwide along with the courts and other offices involved in the administration of justice. However, some district offices are housed at rented office spaces like the PAO-Manila District Office, etc.

II. PAO LAWYERS, THE REGIONAL AND DISTRICT OFFICES, AND THE COURTS

For 2010, the PAO has a total of **1,404 public attorneys**, who actively handle criminal and civil cases before **2,187 courts** nationwide, and about **33** of them devote themselves to appealed cases before the Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court and the Office of the President. However, handling of criminal and civil cases and representation of clients in courts as above-stated is only a portion of the public attorneys' functions. They also appear in and handle administrative and labor cases, the so-called non-judicial cases, and such other limited and special cases and services as shown hereafter.

Below is a table indicating the number of existing offices and assigned lawyers in each region as follows:

| REGION | DISTRICT /SUB-DISTRICT OFFICES | PAO LAWYERS |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Central Office | | 103 |
| National Capital Region | 15 | 259 |
| Cordillera Administrative Region | 9/2 | 48 |
| I Ilocos Region | 21 | 82 |
| II Cagayan Valley | 13 | 60 |
| III Central Luzon | 24/1 (annex) | 93 |
| IV-A CALABARZON | 30/1 | 117 |
| IV-B MIMAROPA | 11 | 33 |
| V Bicol Region | 19 | 62 |
| VI Eastern Visayas | 18 | 94 |
| VII Central Visayas | 21, 1 (RSACU) | 76 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| VIII Western Visayas | 24 | 82 |
| IX-A ARMM | 2, 1 | 27 |
| IX-B Zamboanga Peninsula | 13, 1 (satellite office) | 48 |
| X Northern Mindanao | 18, 2 | 73 |
| XI Davao Region | 10 | 54 |
| XII SOCCSKSARGEN | 11, 1 (satellite office) | 54 |
| XIII CARAGA | 11 | 39 |
| TOTAL | 280 | 1,404 |

The establishment 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. The PAO envisions the establishment of adequate district offices to enhance the accessibility of services of the PAO, such that justice could efficiently be delivered despite geographical fragmentation.

III. SIGNIFICANT 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 their proportionate relation to the **1,404 lawyers** for the year 2010.

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Total No. of Clients Assisted | 4,802,494 |
| Total No. of Cases Handled | 632,524 |
| Average No. of Clients Assisted by Each Lawyer | 3,420 |
| Average No. of Cases Handled by Each Lawyer | 452 |

B. AQUITTALS/DISMISSAL OF CASES AND OTHER FAVORABLE DISPOSITIONS

In spite of their overwhelming case load, the public attorneys ably represented indigent accused in court and facilitated the release and favorable disposition of cases for indigent clients of PAO, by their acquittals, dismissal of cases, or for some other reasons, their cases were favorably disposed of, as shown in the table below.

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Accused benefited from: | No. of Accused |
| A. Acquittal | 12,562 |
| B. Demurrer to Evidence granted | 1,562 |
| C. Case Provisionally Dismissed | 40,029 |
| D. Case Permanently Dismissed | 31,151 |
| E. Motion to Quash granted | 1,142 |

| | |
|--|----------------|
| F. Released on Bail | 23,439 |
| G. Motion for Released on Recognizance granted | 9,116 |
| H. Released in accordance with Art. 29, RPC | 7,483 |
| I. Granted with Probation | 4,952 |
| J. Released on other grounds | 17,031 |
| TOTAL | 148,467 |

C. WINNING AND APPEALED CASES

Out of 1,404 lawyers at the PAO, there are about **33** of them who attend to appealed cases, particularly those pending before the Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court and the Office of the President. For criminal cases alone, a total of **154 favorable decisions** were obtained for the year 2010. The table below shows the breakdown of figures, to wit:

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Acquittals from Reclusion Perpetua | 81 |
| Acquittals from Reclusion Temporal | 73 |
| TOTAL | 154 |

Aside from criminal cases, the Special and Appealed Cases Service (SACS) also handles civil and special cases such as appeals from the decision of NLRC, SSS and GSIS. In those cases handled, a total of **175 favorable dispositions** were obtained by PAO-SACS.

D. JAIL VISITATION AND DECONGESTION PROGRAM

This outreach program for inmates has been strengthened by the PAO-Central Office Legal, Medical, Dental and Optical Jail Visitation Program. With prior approval of the then Hon. Justice Secretary Raul M. Gonzales, this program was started in 2007 and has been continuously conducted in various jails in the Philippines. The table below shows the output of the project for year 2010 to wit:

| | VISITED JAIL | DATE | NO. OF BENEFICIARIES FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE (ADVICE) | NO. OF BENEFICIARIES FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE | NO. OF BENEFICIARIES FOR DENTAL ASSISTANCE | NO. OF READING GLASSES DISTRIBUTED | TOTAL NO. OF INMATES RELEASED |
|----|-------------------------------|---------------|--|---|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Baguio City Jail | Feb. 2, 2010 | 52 | 107 | n/a | n/a | 460 |
| 2 | Benguet Provincial Jail | Feb. 2, 2010 | 39 | 80 | n/a | n/a | 342 |
| 3 | La Trinidad District Jail | Feb. 2, 2010 | 27 | 53 | n/a | n/a | |
| 4 | NBP Medium Security | Feb. 21, 2010 | 141 | 211 | 29 | 152 | 6 |
| 5 | NBP Maximum Security | Feb. 21, 2010 | 22 | 56 | 4 | 27 | |
| 6 | Makati City Jail | Feb. 26, 2010 | 116 | 139 | n/a | n/a | 7 |
| 7 | Pasay City Jail | Feb. 26, 2010 | 96 | 252 | n/a | n/a | 299 |
| 8 | NBP Medium Security | Mar. 11, 2010 | 208 | 112 | n/a | n/a | Consolidated with Items 4 & 5 |
| 9 | Davao City Jail | Apr. 5, 2010 | 80 | 123 | n/a | n/a | 78 |
| 10 | Manila City Jail | July 21, 2010 | 148 | 409 | 75 | n/a | 577 |
| 11 | Manila Youth Reception Center | July 21, 2010 | 63 | 109 | 55 | n/a | 18 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------------------|
| 12 | Quezon City Jail | July 27, 2010 | 224 | 449 | 59 | n/a | 93 |
| 13 | Caloocan City Jail | Sept. 1, 2010 | 158 | 210 | 43 | n/a | 4 |
| 14 | Malabon City Jail | Sept. 1, 2010 | 479 | 213 | 22 | n/a | 7 |
| 15 | Navotas City Jail | Sept. 1, 2010 | 36 | 188 | 38 | n/a | 13 |
| 16 | Metro Manila District Jail | Sept.17, 2010 | 64 | 168 | 40 | n/a | 10 |
| 17 | Camp Crame | Sept.17, 2010 | | 77 | n/a | n/a | Data not yet available |
| 18 | Metro Manila District Jail, Camp Bagong Diwa | Oct. 29, 2010 | 147 | 156 | 13 | n/a | 20 |
| 19 | Taguig City Jail | Oct. 29, 2010 | | 133 | 25 | n/a | 44 |
| 20 | Metro Manila District Jail, Manila Sector | Oct. 29, 2010 | | 169 | 9 | n/a | 10 |
| 21 | NBP, Medium Security | Dec. 20, 201 | 156 | 356 | 40 | n/a | Data not yet available |
| 22 | CIW, Mandaluyong City | Dec. 21, 2010 | 211 | 378 | 28 | n/a | 25 |
| | TOTAL | | 2,467 | 4,148 | 480 | 179 | 2,013 |

E. LEGAL/INQUEST PROCEEDINGS ASSISTANCE

On their scheduled duties, the public attorneys and staff of the PAO-Central Office have alternately been providing legal and inquest proceedings assistance even during night time, weekends and holidays since October 2009. For this purpose, the PAO hotline, 929-9436, is open to the public 24/7.

In September 2010, the coverage of this program was widened for the benefit of the people that are being served by the regional and district offices of the PAO nationwide. Since then the said offices have been rendering *legal assistance* (night courts and inquest duties, e.g. legal advice, attending to the legal needs of suspects, detained persons or under custodial investigation in the police stations within the territorial jurisdiction of the concerned PAO regional/district offices) *up to 10:00 p.m. everyday* (including weekends and holidays) but the assigned PAO inquest public attorneys and staff therein remain *on call* for the rest of their respective scheduled duties ready to render legal assistance in inquest proceedings and custodial investigations.

From January to December 2010, a total of **6,534** clients benefited from the services provided by the PAO consisting of inquest assistance, legal advice/counseling and documentation at the above duty stations.

IV. CASE LOAD STATISTICAL REPORT AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

| KEY RESULT AREAS | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|---|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| I. REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENTS IN JUDICIAL CASES (CRIMINAL) | TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED | 405,025 | 393,508 |
| | A. CARRY OVER | 240,439 | |
| | B. NEWLY RECEIVED | 164,586 | |

| | | | |
|--|---|----------------|----------------|
| | TOTAL NO. OF CASES TERMINATED | 152,117 | 148,738 |
| | | | |
| | NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD | 252,908 | |

Out of the 152,117 terminated criminal cases, there are 112,133 or about **74% favorable dispositions** obtained by the Public Attorneys from representing indigent clients in criminal cases alone.

| KEY RESULT AREAS | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|--|---|---------------|---------------|
| II. REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENTS IN JUDICIAL CASES (CIVIL) | TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED | 50,607 | 49,753 |
| | A. CARRY OVER | 35,676 | |
| | B. NEWLY RECEIVED | 14,931 | |
| | TOTAL NO. OF CASES TERMINATED | 14,498 | 14,176 |
| | | | |
| | NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD | 36,109 | |

| | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|
| III. REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENTS IN QUASI-JUDICIAL CASES (ADMINISTRATIVE CASES PROPER) | TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED | 7,305 | 6,933 |
| | A. CARRY OVER | 5,719 | |
| | B. NEWLY RECEIVED | 1,586 | |
| | TOTAL NO. OF CASES TERMINATED | 1,313 | 1,184 |
| | | | |
| | NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD | 5,992 | |

| | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|--|---|---------------|---------------|
| IV. REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENTS IN QUASI-JUDICIAL CASES (PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE) | TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED | 51,948 | 49,310 |
| | A. CARRY OVER | 28,680 | |
| | B. NEWLY RECEIVED | 23,268 | |
| | TOTAL NO. OF CASES DISPOSED | 20,887 | 18,847 |
| | | | |
| | NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD | 31,061 | |

| | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| V. REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENTS IN QUASI-JUDICIAL CASES (LABOR CASES) | TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED | 20,130 | 19,108 |
| | A. CARRY OVER | 16,096 | |
| | B. NEWLY RECEIVED | 4,034 | |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|--------------|--------------|
| | TOTAL NO. OF CASES DISPOSED | 4,085 | 3,686 |
| | | | |
| | NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD | 16,045 | |

| | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| VI. LIMITED SERVICES | ARRAIGNMENT | 150,598 | 107,015 |
| | PRE-TRIAL | 94,487 | 66,884 |
| | PROMULGATION | 62,450 | 40,130 |
| | OTHERS | 327,483 | 231,867 |
| | TOTAL | 635,018 | |

| | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| VII. RENDITION OF NON-JUDICIAL SERVICES | LEGAL DOCUMENTATION | 862,050 | 612,909 |
| | CLIENTS COUNSELED | 1,060,072 | 749,110 |
| | OATHS ADMINISTERED | 656,135 | 476,706 |

| | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|---|---|----------------|----------------|
| VII. RENDITION OF NON-JUDICIAL SERVICES | MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION | | |
| | NO. OF DISPUTES HANDLED | 349,042 | 249,703 |
| | A. CARRY OVER | 97,496 | |
| | B. NEWLY RECEIVED | 251,546 | |
| | NO. OF DISPUTES RESOLVED | 247,700 | 181,602 |
| | NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD | 101,342 | |

| | INQUEST INVESTIGATION AND CUSTODIAL INTERROGATION | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|---------------------------|--|---------------|---------------|
| VIII. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES | TOTAL NO. OF CLIENTS ASSISTED | 93,749 | 67,320 |

| LEGAL AID INFORMATION DISSEMINATION | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------|---------------|
| A. COMMUNITY LINKAGE | NO. OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION CONDUCTED/ATTENDED | 1004 | 800 |
| B. TRI-MEDIA LINKAGE | NO. OF HOURS IN RADIO PROGRAM CONDUCTED/INITIATED | 132 | 100 |
| | NO. OF PRESS RELEASES/NEWS ITEM PUBLISHED | 117 | 160 |

| COOPERATION WITH OTHER LEGAL AID ORGANIZATIONS | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|--|---|--------|--------|
| A. IBP/OTHER LEGAL AID ORGANIZATIONS | NO. OF MEETINGS CONDUCTED/ATTENDED | 1399 | 600 |
| | NO. OF REFERRALS RECEIVED | 16,375 | 11,000 |
| | NO. OF REFERRALS MADE | 15,175 | 10,640 |
| INSTITUTION BUILDING | NO. OF TRAINING PROGRAMS CONDUCTED/ATTENDED | 501 | 200 |
| | NO. OF PERSONNEL TRAINED | 2,153 | 600 |
| | TOTAL NO. OF TRAINING HOURS | 2,304 | 1,680 |

Under Republic Act No. 9262 (R.A. No. 9262), otherwise known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children 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 pertinent issuances, 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.

To this mandated task, the PAO has continuously given 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 2010.

| | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------|--------|
| REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN CLIENTS | TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED | 74,154 | 72,208 |
| | A. CARRY OVER | 43,367 | |
| | B. NEWLY RECEIVED | 30,787 | |
| | TOTAL NO. OF CASES TERMINATED | 27,705 | 28,158 |
| | | | |
| | NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD | 46,449 | |

| REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW (CICL) | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | OUTPUT | TARGET |
|--|----------------------------|---------------|--------|
| | TOTAL NO. OF CASES HANDLED | 14,588 | 15,381 |
| | A. CARRY OVER | 10,531 | |
| | B. NEWLY RECEIVED | 4,057 | |

| | | | |
|--|---|--------|-------|
| | TOTAL NO. OF CASES TERMINATED | 3,405 | 4,601 |
| | | | |
| | NO. OF CASES PENDING AT THE END OF THE PERIOD | 11,183 | |

V. THE CHIEF PUBLIC ATTORNEY

A. The Chief Public Attorney signed/answered **43,498** communications. The breakdown is as follows:

| I. Communications to / from CPA Rueda-Acosta | <i>Total No. of Communications</i> | 43,498 |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------|
| A. Communications from Executive Division | 11,396 | |
| 1. Appointments | 515 | |
| 2. Memoranda | 436 | |
| 3. Memorandum Orders | 672 | |
| 4. Memorandum Circulars | 8 | |
| 5. Office Orders | 250 | |
| 6. Reassignment Orders | 36 | |
| 7. Travel Orders | 6 | |
| 8. Special Orders | 0 | |
| 9. Other Communications | | |
| 9.1. Signed by CPA | 5204 | |
| 9.2. Signed by Executive Lawyers | 8687 | |
| B. Communications from Other Services | 4804 | |
| 1. Administrative Service | 2417 | |
| 2. Legal Research Service | 985 | |
| 3. Field Operations and Statistics Service | 337 | |
| 4. Financial Planning and Management Service | 444 | |
| 5. Special and Appealed Cases Service | 621 | |
| C. Communications from Regional Offices | 4786 | |
| 1. Region I | 319 | |
| 2. Region II | 208 | |
| 3. Region III | 458 | |
| 4. Region IV | 585 | |
| 5. Region V | 609 | |
| 6. Region VI | 440 | |
| 7. Region VII | 291 | |
| 8. Region VIII | 193 | |
| 9. Region IX / ARMM | 246 | |
| 10. Region X | 146 | |
| 11. Region XI | 209 | |
| 12. Region XII | 246 | |
| 13. CAR | 176 | |
| 14. CARAGA | 166 | |
| 15. NCR | 914 | |
| D. Communications from OP, OVP, Senate & HOR | 442 | |
| E. Communications from Other Offices | 21401 | |
| 1. Department of Justice | 263 | |
| 2. Supreme Court | 2674 | |
| 3. Court of Appeals | 11394 | |

| | |
|--|------|
| 4. National Labor Relations Commission | 1176 |
| 5. Other Communications | 5541 |
| 6. Applicants | 148 |
| F. Legal Opinion/s Published in Manila Times/Bulgar And People's Tonight | 669 |

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

1. *Order of Lapu-Lapu Award* given by the Bureau of Immigration on June 28, 2010 at the Bureau of Immigration Lobby, Main Building, Intramuros, Manila;
2. *Gawad Francisco Balagtas* given by the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino on April 13, 2010 at the National Commission on Culture and the Arts, Intramuros, Manila;
3. *Up Close and Personal with Marissa del Mar 2nd Impact Awards (Awardee for Legal Service)* given by Millicent Productions on March 22, 2010 at Hotel Intercontinental Manila;

C. The Chief Public Attorney *attended* the following *local trainings and seminars* and/or served as *resource person*, thereto:

1. *Lecturer*, Seminar-Workshop on Combating Human Trafficking in the Philippines, Traders Hotel, Pasay City, November 2, 2010; Marco Polo Plaza, Cebu City, October 28, 2010;
2. *Lecturer*, 12th National Convention-Seminar of the Metropolitan and City Judges Association of the Philippines (METCJAP), September 22, 2010, Manila Hotel;
3. *Resource Person*, Foreign Service Officers' Cadetship Course (FSOCC) Batch XVII – Seminar on Selected Philippine Laws on the topic “Introduction to Philippine Criminal Laws,” July 16, 2010, Foreign Service Institute, Department of Foreign Affairs, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City;
4. *Speaker*, International Women's Month Celebration of the Philippine National Police-Calabarzon, March 29, 2010, Camp Vicente Lim, Calamba, Laguna;
5. *Speaker*, International Women's Month Celebration, March 8, 2010, National Labor Relations (NLRC), Banawe, Quezon City;
6. *Speaker*, Laws Essential to Junior Officers in their Role as the New Breed of Leaders-Protectors of Society and Republic Act No. 9745 (Anti-Torture Law), February 1, 2010, Philippine Military Academy, Baguio City.

D. The Chief Public Attorney and/or the Office of the Chief Public Attorney *handled* the following *major cases* and/or *rendered legal assistance* to the following individuals, to wit:

1. Legal assistance to Mr. Lauro Vizconde, now a jobless senior citizen, in filing a Motion for Reconsideration at the Supreme Court on December 29, 2010 in connection with the Vizconde massacre case;
2. Legal assistance to and release of *SPO2 Gregorio Mendoza*, who was accused of the crime of Serious Disobedience before the Metropolitan Trial Court-Branch 11, in Manila. He was indicted for the said crime due to his alleged act of penetrating the cordoned area set-up by the Manila Police District, during the Manila hostage crisis at the Quirino Grandstand, Luneta, on August 23, 2010;

3. The cases of the *relatives of the victims of the M/V Princess of the Stars maritime* tragedy (pursuant to Department Order No. 439, Series of 2008). As of December 7, 2010, **71** civil cases have already been filed against the owners and management of the Sulpicio Lines, Inc. (SLI) at RTC-Branch 51, Manila and as of December 7, 2010, **64** civil cases have already been filed against them at RTC-Branch 10, Cebu City. Administrative and criminal cases have also been filed against the SLI at the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and the Department of Justice. The criminal case for Reckless Imprudence is pending at RTC-Branch 5, Manila.

In connection thereto, exhumation and retrieval operations were also conducted by the PAO Forensic Team as part of the identification process on the human remains of the victims of the sinking of the *M/V Princess of the Stars*, at the PAO Forensic Laboratory. Thirty-eight (**38**) unidentified remains of said victims buried by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), MARINA, and SLI were exhumed by the PAO Forensic Team from the Carreta Cemetery in Cebu City on April 9 and 10, 2010, pursuant to an Order of Exhumation issued by Hon. Judge Soliver C. Peras of RTC-Branch 10, Cebu City. Another Order was issued by Judge Peras, directing the turn-over of five (**5**) bags of human remains to the PAO Forensic Laboratory by the Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes in Cebu City on May 18 and 19, 2010. The human remains of another forty-three (**43**) victims were retrieved in May 2010 by the PAO Forensic Team, in cooperation with divers from the Philippine Coast Guard and Royal Jessan Petromin Resources, Inc. from the wrecked M/V Princess of the Stars, 70 feet below sea level, off the coast of San Fernando, Sibuyan Island in the province of Romblon. The retrieval was authorized by Department Order No. 250, dated 16 April 2010, issued by Hon. Alberto C. Agra, Acting Secretary of the Department of Justice.

The PAO Forensic Team went back to Romblon in June, August, October and November of 2010. This time, a total of **46** human remains were retrieved. On August 19, 2010, one human remains, wrongly identified and buried at the Cainta cemetery was exhumed by the team and is now undergoing biological profiling and identification at the PAO Forensic Laboratory.

Thus, a total of **133** human remains had already been exhumed and retrieved by the PAO Forensic Team. Twelve (**12**) of the said exhumed/retrieved human remains had been presumptively identified; six (**6**) of which had been positively identified and turned-over to their respective families/relatives; and

4. Legal assistance to the Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel holding the ranks of PO1 to PO3, who were involved in the EDSA-NIA Shoot-Out (pursuant to Department Order No. 106, Series of 2009). The said case was the subject of a Petition for Prohibition before the Court of Appeals, which granted the said petition filed by the PAO on behalf of the PNP personnel involved. The aforementioned petition assailed the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) Resolutions dated February 23, 2009 and March 30, 2009, respectively placing petitioner-clients of the PAO under preventive suspension and denying their motion for reconsideration.

On appeal before the Supreme Court, the NAPOLCOM assailed the Decision of the Court of Appeals in granting the Petition for Prohibition of PNP personnel

involved. The Supreme Court dismissed the petition filed by the NAPOLCOM for failure to show any reversible error on the part of the Court of Appeals.

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. Altogether, they 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 year 2010, to wit:

| | Authorized | Filled | Unfilled |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Lawyers | 1,407 | 1,404 | 3 |
| Support Personnel | 966 | 966 | 0 |
| Total | 2,373 | 2,370 | 3 |

2. PERSONNEL MOVEMENT

From January to December 2010, the movement of personnel in the PAO is shown here below:

| | Lawyer | Support Staff | Total |
|------------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Recruited | 351 | 106 | 457 |
| Promoted | 334 | 78 | 412 |

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.

It has been the Office practice to provide continuous seminars and trainings to its personnel specifically lawyers to keep them abreast with the recent development in law and jurisprudence. Thus, ensuring the efficiency and capability of the public attorneys in protecting the rights of the oppressed and indigents.

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

From January to December, 2010, there were about **111** seminars attended by PAO personnel. A total of **1,149** lawyers and **154** support staff were registered in attendance.

4. VALIDATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE PUBLIC ATTORNEYS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE PUBLIC ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, PAO OPERATIONS MANUAL AND PAO LEGAL FORMS MANUAL

The Code of Conduct for Public Attorneys and Employees of the Public Attorney's Office, PAO Operations Manual and PAO Legal Forms Manual were validated by the officials of the PAO, headed by the Chief Public Attorney in a validation workshop on August 25 to 27, 2010 in Cebu City.

While the Code of Conduct is aimed at preserving the public confidence in the activities of the PAO and protecting the integrity of the civil service, the PAO Operations Manual and PAO Legal Forms Manual are geared toward increasing the efficacy of the PAO's performance.

Mr. Scott Ciment, Esq., Country Director of the ABA-ROLI and Mr. Gerry Porta, Senior Civic Participation Specialist of the USAID were the PAO's special guests in the said event. The ABA-ROLI and USAID will fund the printing of the validated PAO documents.

5. SIGNING OF THE COMMITMENT TO PAO CORE VALUES

In connection with the abovementioned code and manuals, PAO officials and public attorneys signed the *Commitment to PAO Core Values* on November 29, 2010 at the Tent City of the Manila Hotel.

6. UPGRADING OF SALARIES OF PUBLIC ATTORNEYS

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 9406 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, the ranks of incumbent public attorneys were upgraded to the ranks equivalent to their respective counterparts at the National Prosecution Service. Salary differentials accruing to said qualified public attorneys were released by the Department of Budget and Management. RATA differentials were ordered to be charged from the agency savings.

B. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The approved appropriation for the Office for the year 2010 was **Php 880,076,000.00**. As the year 2010 ended, the total amount of **Php 1,346,369,505.29** was obligated to fund the existing and additional positions for public attorneys and support personnel. The amount of **Php 5,715,008.00** was utilized as payment for terminal leave and retirement gratuity.

C. LIBRARY SERVICES

The PAO, through its library services, envisions giving better and more efficient means of assisting its clientele, through modern and advance information-assisted technology such as the Internet, modern fax machines, and telephone units for a fast transmission of output.

In connection thereto, the PAO Central library was able to set up an **INFOLIB v. 1.0**, which is a stand-alone library system designed to provide library information management solutions for small libraries. In addition, a total of **694** copies of legal books and reference materials amounting to **Php 613,526.00** were purchased and distributed to all regional and district offices of the PAO. For this year, a total amount of **Php391,327.00** was allotted for *Lex Libris* subscription for the use of the PAO-Central Office as well as the regional offices nationwide.

The PAO Library, through its personnel, was able to collate a total of **1,336** news releases from thirteen (**13**) various broadsheets and tabloids which include, among others, the following:

- The Regional Public Attorneys Validation Workshop, sponsored by the American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative (ABA-ROLI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), on August 25-27, 2010 at the Marco Polo Hotel, Cebu City;
- The jail visitations conducted by the Public Attorney's Office in several city jails including Manila, Quezon City, Caloocan, Malabon, and Navotas;
- The airing of the reality-based mediation program on television, entitled, "Public Atorni", on TV5 which started on September 9, 2010. Chief Public Attorney Persida V. Rueda-Acosta is the mediator in the said program;
- The airing of the legal assistance program entitled, "Kakampi Mo ang Batas", which is intended to educate the public on issues regarding their rights and the laws and offers free legal services. It is being hosted by Chief Public Attorney Persida V. Rueda-Acosta, authorized/assigned public attorney/s from PAO-Makati District Office and Marvin Javier of Radyo Inquirer DZIQ 990 AM. It is aired every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.;
- The case of M/V Princess of the Stars that sank on June 21, 2008. The relatives of the victims are clients of PAO;
- The ambush killing of PAO District Public Attorney in San Carlos City, Pangasinan on March 20, 2010;
- The "Gawad Francisco Balagtas 2010" Award given to the Chief Public Attorney on April 13, 2010 in celebration of the 222nd Birthday of Francisco Balagtas;
- The PAO's filing of a Motion for Reconsideration relative to the Vizconde massacre case, on behalf of Mr. Lauro Vizconde, who sought the assistance of PAO.

The PAO continuously renders legal advice to the general public through the newspaper columns *Say Mo Attorney?* in *People's Tonight*, released every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; *Dear PAO*, published in *The Manila Times* daily, and *Magtanong Kay Attorney*, also daily, in *Bulgar*. A total of **141** articles for *Say Mo Attorney?*, **362** articles for *Dear PAO* and **361** articles for *Magtanong kay Attorney* were published from January to December 2010.

D. OFFICE EQUIPMENT

For the year 2010, the PAO purchased and distributed the following office equipment, to wit:

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| * Airconditioner | - | 51 units |
| * Canon Lide 110 scanner | - | 1 unit |
| * Exhaust fan | - | 1 unit |
| * Computer monitor | - | 15 units |
| * Computer printer | - | 15 units |
| * Computer machine (with monitor & printer) | - | 121 units |
| * Laptop computer | - | 1 unit |
| * Copier | - | 1 unit |
| * Fax machine | - | 3 units |
| * Filing cabinet (4 drawers) | - | 116 units |
| * Filing cabinet (2 drawers) | - | 3 units |
| * Bookshelf | - | 63 pcs |
| * Bench | - | 2 pcs |
| * Whiteboard | - | 3 pcs |
| *Office chairs | | |
| Executive chair | - | 58 units |
| Clerical | - | 5 units |
| Visitor | - | 11 units |
| Swivel | - | 116 units |
| Monobloc | - | 256 units |
| Computer chair | - | 10 units |
| * Office tables | | |
| Executive | - | 44 pcs |
| Clerical | - | 3 pcs |
| Computer | - | 9 pcs |
| Typing | - | 3 pcs |

Since her assumption into office, it has been the battle cry of the Chief Public Attorney to put into oblivion the traditional impression with government offices where there is a dearth of office supply and 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 contributed to the delivery of better services to PAO clients.

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 and technology.

VII. TECHNICAL OPERATIONS

A. PAO-NLRC SUB-STATION

By virtue of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Public Attorney's Office and the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) located at Banawe in Quezon City, the PAO maintains its sub-station at the NLRC to serve its clients.

The sub-station facilitates the rendition of legal assistance to complaining workers before the NLRC and aims to expedite the proceedings; hence, it makes its services more accessible to complaining workers.

The efficiency of the office has been proven for years. For the period covering January to December 2010, a total of **6,530** clients were accommodated and given legal assistance.

B. GLOBAL PINOY CENTER

To make the services of the PAO available to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as well as their dependents and beneficiaries, the Office acceded to the request of SM Supermalls to render free legal assistance to these modern-day heroes and aforesaid beneficiaries every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in every branch of SM Supermalls with Global Pinoy Centers, for the whole month of October 2010. For the said period, a total of **104** OFWs and their dependents and beneficiaries were provided legal services by assigned public attorneys thereto.

C. RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION

For this year the PAO, through the Legal Research Service, had a total number of **889** research works that were duly accomplished. Out of 889 research works, **145** of them were published in newspapers of national circulation. It included legal queries from the public which were either directly addressed or 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 linkages as means of education and information dissemination of the PAO. The accessibility of the Chief Public Attorney herself for public services has, for one reason, makes a great difference.

D. INTENSIFYING INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Aside from its 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.

Toward this end, public attorneys continuously provide on-the-air legal counseling on DZIQ Radyo Inquirer (Kakampi Mo ang Batas), DZRV (Radio Veritas), Radio Mindanao Network (RMN), 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, DZRB (Radyo ng Bayan), DZBB (Oro Mismo), DZME, DZAR, TV 5 (Face to Face) and almost all other radio and television stations. The same activity is also undertaken by selected public attorneys in the different regions.

E. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS AGAINST PAO EMPLOYEES

A total of **116** administrative complaints were received and **86** cases were resolved and terminated through the PAO-Legal Research Service.

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

VIII. 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 compensation package and allowance given to its personnel, the PAO has difficulty in maintaining public attorneys in its fold. However, with the recent upgrading of salary grades for lawyers in the agency pursuant to R.A. 9406, the PAO is hopeful to retain most of its lawyers in the service until retirement age, more or less.

B. HEAVY WORKLOAD

On the average, a public attorney is assigned to two (2) to four (4) courts while a prosecutor is assigned only to one (1) court. Sometimes even two (2) public prosecutors maybe assigned to one (1) court. The PAO has only 1,407 authorized *plantilla* positions for lawyers which are not enough to cover every court in the Philippines.

This unfair advantage in the number of prosecutors over public attorneys 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 prosecutor positions at the ratio of two fiscals to a sala.” This automatic creation of positions of prosecutors has been maintained in Republic Act No. 10071 or “The Prosecution Service Act of 2010”. At this stage, while PAO is thankful for the passage of the PAO Law, the agency has yet to fully experience its effect until its full implementation.

It is also worthy to mention that aside from handling criminal and civil cases, public attorneys 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 and DOLE; (3) administrative cases before administrative bodies like DARAB, PRC, COMELEC, Bureau of Customs, DECS, PLEB, Insurance Commission, POEA, SSS, etc. and (4) complaints of hospital-confined patients in coordination with the Department of Health.

Yet the PAO for the year 2010 managed to handle a total of **632,524 cases** and **4,802,494 clients**. These figures show that every public attorney handles an average of **452 cases** and rendered assistance to an average of **3,420 clients** for the same period.

C. NEED FOR ADDITIONAL OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Despite procurement of some office furnishings, such as chair, filing cabinets, computer tables, scanners, computers, and posture chairs, the PAO still needs additional computers which are necessary in the immediate preparation and submission of pleadings with the courts and other quasi-judicial bodies.

IX. CONTINUING PLANS AND PROGRAMS

A. Compliance with ISO 9000 and the Government Quality Management Systems Standards (GQMSS), pursuant to Administrative Order No. 161 dated October 5, 2006;

B. Maintain and upgrade the PAO Forensic Laboratory for the furtherance of investigation being conducted relative to cases handled by this Office, pursuant to Republic Act 9745 (Anti-Torture Act of 2009), Republic Act No. 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004, Republic Act 8353 (Anti-Rape Law) and other existing laws mandating the PAO to assist the victims or accused on a first come-first served basis;

C. Open a Medical and Dental Clinic at the PAO-Central Office for the health benefit of its employees;

D. Organization and establishment of PAO Choir and PAO Band as creative channels of artistry and musicality to discover/enhance PAO talents and boost the morale of its employees;

E. 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;

F. 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" under the revised training modules;

G. Continuation of the "PAO's Advanced Training/Workshop in Forensic Medicine and Science" pursuant to DOJ Memorandum Circular No. 1, dated January 7, 2008, as part of manpower capacity building;

- H. Continuous promotion of good governance, professionalism, and anti-corruption measures;
- I. Continuous improvement of communication facilities and other office equipment;
- J. Organization, establishment and maintenance of database, case management, and monitoring system for all cases handled by PAO nationwide;
- K. 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);
- L. Continuous capacity building, enhancement of the skills and competence of PAO lawyers and staff through the holding of workshops and seminars;
- M. 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);
- N. Continuous coordination with the tri-media for the advancement of the PAO outreach activities, more particularly, dissemination of free legal advice, counseling, and mediation;
- O. Vigorously pursue the rendition of prompt, effective and adequate legal services to the indigent sector;
- P. Maintain programs and policies in achieving virtues of excellence, integrity, professionalism and moral values of all PAO lawyers and staff;
- Q. Endeavor to meet the ideal situation of one PAO lawyer being assigned to one court for a more effective and efficient representation of clients;
- R. Empowerment of the PAO's capacity in promoting Gender and Development (GAD) Program of the government;
- S. Continuous active participation of the PAO in the on-going anti-corruption, pro-poor and social justice programs of the Aquino administration; and
- T. Continuous cooperation with the courts in the case decongestion program being spearheaded by the Supreme Court.

CONCLUSION

Republic Act 9406, the law which strengthens the PAO, bolsters the latter's capacity to serve its clientele. Since its approval on March 23, 2007, the PAO has

been consistently serving more than four (4) million clients and handling more than five hundred thousand (500,000) cases yearly. However, there is no room for complacency at the Public Attorney's Office.

The whole workforce of this agency keeps in mind His Excellency's words during the first one hundred days of his administration. President Aquino said that no one should be left behind. Hence, for the year 2011, the PAO envisions to provide its free legal assistance programs and projects within the ambit of RA 9406, to a greater number of people. While the PAO strives to do just this, its officials, public attorneys and staff never forget that service goes beyond statistics. Although figures are vital in setting a record of a sterling public service, quality is as valuable if not more important.

In the year 2011, with the full implementation of R.A. 9406 or a substantial part of this law, the PAO shall realize the attainment of an almost magical amalgam of quantity and quality in all its legal aid services and other endeavors related thereto. The straight path of genuine public service, no matter how noble, is strewn with challenges and even some roadblocks to success. But the PAO's commitment in carrying out its mandate shall never wane. More so now, that as President Aquino has said: we shall never give up on the straight path for gradually our dreams are being fulfilled.

PERSIDA V. RUEDA-ACOSTA
Chief Public Attorney

Quezon City, Metro Manila
January 24, 2011