

**BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 370**

**CREATING THE INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

WHEREAS, the Philippines is deeply committed to the promotion of, respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms pursuant to the Constitution and to the international human rights instruments to which it is a party;

WHEREAS, as a founding member of the United Nations, the Philippines upholds the principles and purposes of that noble organization under its charter, among which is the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race, sex, language, religion or political beliefs;

WHEREAS, the Philippines subscribes to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, and is a party to the international covenants guaranteeing to everyone the enjoyment of those rights and freedoms;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a State Party to twenty (20) international human rights instruments, among which are: (a) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; (b) the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; (c) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; (d) the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; (e) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; (f) the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (g) the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; and (h) the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others;

WHEREAS, in becoming a State Party to these international human rights conventions, the Philippines undertook to harmonize and reflect in its laws, policies and practices the provisions of such conventions;

WHEREAS, being such a State Party, the Philippines is obliged to submit periodic reports to the various bodies or committees charged with monitoring the compliance by states parties with the provisions of those instruments;

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WHEREAS, there is a need to institutionalize an inter-agency coordinating committee whose task is to ensure the Philippines' compliance with its obligations to respect and promote human rights and to prepare up-to-date, coherent and comprehensive reports to the international human rights treaty-monitoring bodies;

WHEREAS, while the Philippines has managed to continuously improve its human rights record, it is imperative to present at all times a comprehensive, coherent, well coordinated and quick response to specific allegations of human rights violations emanating from UN human rights bodies and Philippine and international NGOs in order to maintain this positive image;

WHEREAS, under the category of relations between the people and the government in the field of human rights, the latter may generally be classified into the Executive, the Legislative, the Judiciary and the Commission on Human Rights; and among these four entities, it is the Executive that most requires continuing coordination and teamwork among its components to ensure (a) common standards of implementation, (b) interaction with the other government entities, NGOs and other sectors; and (c) timely reporting to international bodies;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FIDEL V. RAMOS, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

SECTION 1. An inter-agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights (CCHR) is hereby created, the members of which shall come from the following government offices as may be designated by their respective heads:

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|-----|---|---|----------|
| 1. | Department of Foreign Affairs | - | Chairman |
| 2. | Department of Justice | - | Member |
| 3. | Department of Interior and Local Government | - | Member |
| 4. | Department of National Defense | - | Member |
| 5. | Department of Labor and Employment | - | Member |
| 6. | Department of Social Welfare and Development | - | Member |
| 7. | Department of Environment and Natural Resources | - | Member |
| 8. | Department of Agrarian Reform | - | Member |
| 9. | Department of Education, Culture and Sports | - | Member |
| 10. | Commission on Higher Education | - | Member |
| 11. | Department of Health | - | Member |
| 12. | National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women | - | Member |
| 13. | National Commission for Indigenous Peoples | - | Member |

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14. Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor - Member
15. Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council - Member
16. National Housing Authority - Member

The Committee shall closely coordinate with the Commission on Human Rights and shall call upon the attached bureaus and agencies of the Committee members, and any other government offices, agencies and bureaus as it may deem necessary in the fulfillment of its functions.

SEC. 2. The CCHR shall have the following functions:

- (a) respond to urgent requests for information from UN human rights bodies, domestic and international non-government organizations and private individuals concerning human rights violations allegedly perpetrated upon individuals or groups in the country; and
- (b) prepare the Philippine periodic reports which are submitted to UN human rights bodies in accordance with international human rights covenants and, after consultations with non-government organizations, sectoral groups and other private sector institutions, to submit these reports in time for the treaty-required due dates,

SEC. 3. To accomplish these functions, the Committee shall be divided into two working groups, which shall be constituted as follows:

(a) Working Group on Civil and Political Rights

Department of Foreign Affairs	-	Chairman
Department of Justice	-	Member
Department of Interior & Local Government	-	Member
Department of National Defense	-	Member

(b) Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Department of Foreign Affairs	-	Chairman
Department of Labor and Employment	-	Member
Department of Social Welfare and Development	-	Member
Department of Environment and Natural Resources	-	Member
Department of Agrarian Reform	-	Member
Department of Education, Culture and Sports	-	Member

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Commission on Higher Education	-	Member
Department of Health	-	Member
National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women	-	Member
National Commission for Indigenous Peoples	-	Member
Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor	-	Member
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council	-	Member
National Housing Authority	-	Member

The Working Groups may call on other concerned departments and agencies as may be necessary in the performance of its functions.

SEC. 4. The Committee and the Working Groups shall formulate the Implementing Guidelines necessary to carry out its mandate and functions.

SEC. 5. An initial amount of Two Million Pesos (₱2,000,000) is hereby authorized to be set aside and made available from the lump-sum Organizational Adjustment Fund for 1998 for the operating expenses of the Committee during the first fiscal year of its establishment. Appropriations for the succeeding years shall be incorporated in the budget proposal of the participating agencies. Administrative expenses of the Committee shall be incorporated in the DFA appropriations subject to the usual budget process.

SEC. 6. All concerned government agencies, whether Committee members or not, are hereby enjoined to extend full support and cooperation and to make available such materials, data and other resources as may be necessary to ensure the successful implementation of this Order.

In view of the sensitive issues involving human rights that it covers, the Social Reform Council (SRC) is directed to coordinate with the Committee, and the Committee, in turn, is directed to collaborate with the SRC, on matters of mutual concern to facilitate the formulation of a comprehensive, consistent and well-coordinated Philippine position on human right issues.

SEC. 7. This Order shall take effect immediately. Any previous Presidential issuance which is inconsistent with this Order is hereby revoked or amended accordingly.



DONE in the City of Manila, this **10th** day of December in the year of Our Lord, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety-Seven.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to the President mentioned in the text below.

By the President:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. D. Torres', written over the text 'By the President:'.

RUBEN D. TORRES
Executive Secretary