

**BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 37**

**ABOLISHING THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON MARITIME AND OCEAN AFFAIRS  
(CABCOM-MOA)**

**WHEREAS**, the Philippines is a signatory or a party to various international agreements on the seas and oceans, principally the 1982 United Nations Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) which entered into force on November 16, 1994, as well as non-binding instruments such as the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21;

**WHEREAS**, the seas and oceans have in recent times continually increased in importance as the primary source of food, minerals, petroleum and ocean energy, and other resources, as well as the focus of many economic uses as transportation and tourism;

**WHEREAS**, the present administration is resolutely committed to win the battle against poverty in one decade and has directed all concerned agencies to gear their programs to utilize marine and other resources wisely and equitably towards achieving that over-arching objective;

**WHEREAS**, Cabinet Secretaries should do less cluster and inter-agency committee work so that they can concentrate on running their department:

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested upon me by law, do hereby order:

**SEC 1.** The Cabinet Committee on Maritime and Ocean Affairs. The Cabinet Committee on Maritime and Ocean Affairs (CABCOM-MOA) is hereby abolished. The functions thereof shall be exercised by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

**SEC 2.** With regard to maritime and ocean affairs, the DFA shall have the following functions:

- a. Oversee and coordinate the implementation of the National Marine Policy and periodically evaluate and update it as necessary;
- b. Formulate and recommend programs and special projects to enhance the integrated and coordinated management of maritime and ocean interests of the Philippines, particularly in:
  - (1) the protection of the archipelago, including promotion of maritime security in relation to the national territory and maritime jurisdictions and the development of national capabilities to preserve and manage its marine resources;



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- (2) the prevention of the degradation of the marine environment and ocean resources through the proper management of human activities within its maritime jurisdiction;
  - (3) the development and promotion of Philippine interests in shipping, seafaring, fisheries exploitation and extraction of mineral and energy resources, and other ocean-based industries.
- c. Identify and develop policy options in implementing international agreements on the oceans, as well as non-binding instruments, to which the Philippines is a party or signatory;
  - d. Recommend policies, programs, and special projects necessary to advance the national interest and fulfill international commitments relative to the sustainable use of ocean resources and marine scientific research;
  - e. Source foreign technical and other assistance for projects, in coordination with relevant agencies of the government on the small-scale use of marine resources by subsistence fishermen and their associations to further improve methods of fishing, fish-farming, aquaculture, and marine-related industries which directly help them augment incomes while conserving resources and protecting the environment.
  - f. Formulate programs, coordinate and/or undertake activities to promote the archipelagic consciousness in the country.

**SEC 3.** Maritime and Ocean Affairs Center (MOAC). – The Law of the Sea Secretariat under Executive Order No. 738, Series of 1981, and designated as an attached agency of the Department of Foreign Affairs, pursuant to Section 19, Chapter 6, Title I, Book IV of the Revised Administrative Code of 1987, renamed, reconstituted and established as the “Maritime and Ocean Affairs Center” under EO 132, series of 1999 is hereby upgraded and expanded with the following functions and responsibilities:

- a. Serve as the Secretariat to the Department of Foreign Affairs on maritime and ocean affairs and provide assistance and administrative support to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs with regard to maritime and ocean matters;
- b. Promote the development of national capabilities and institutions including human resources, for maritime and ocean affairs;
- c. Undertake, or cause to be undertaken, the following:
  - (1) consultations with any government agency, concerned maritime and ocean sectors, non-government organizations, academe, and/or the general public, on any maritime related matters as maybe deemed necessary;



- (2) research programs and policy studies on any and/or all maritime sectors as may be needed including those for regulatory, governmental, strategic, or maritime security purposes;
  - (3) initiate steps to harmonize and/or update domestic legislation and rules and regulations with international agreements or non-binding instruments to which the Philippines is a party;
  - (4) research, data gathering, information acquisition, and preparation for any negotiation or other modes of dispute settlement with other countries in matters concerning the delineation/delimitation of territorial and maritime boundaries, fisheries, energy and mineral exploration, and exploitation in the ocean, or other agreements relating to the conservation, exploration, exploitation, protection, development, and/or management of marine resources within the archipelagic waters, territorial seas and exclusive economic zone as well as areas adjacent to the latter.
- d. Create and maintain a central database on maritime and ocean affairs, as well as an information-gathering system in the form of the MOAC-GIS, in support of maritime and ocean policy and decision-making and implementation;
  - e. Identify, network with, and mobilize national and/or international expertise and institutions in support of or to assist the Government in maritime and ocean policy and decision making and implementation;
  - f. Undertake, or cause to be undertaken, activities necessary to raise the national archipelagic consciousness and communicate, and publicize in a coordinated manner, national maritime and ocean interests and issues;
  - g. Coordinate the participation of the appropriate agencies of government in international fora, meetings, and conferences that are relevant to the maritime and ocean interests of the Philippines.
  - h. Render a regular report to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, on all activities undertaken by the Center.
  - i. Source out and avail of grants, endowments or donations from foreign or local entities in accordance with existing laws to be applied to projects or programs and studies to implement the policies or directives of the Department of Foreign Affairs in connection with maritime and ocean affairs.

#### SEC 4. Organization of the MOAC

- a. The MOAC shall be headed by a Secretary General, who shall head be appointed by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs. The Secretary General is hereby authorized to hire and determine remuneration of consultants and other experts and to request the detail and secondment of personnel from other government agencies and institutions in accordance with the Civil Service law, rules, and regulations.



- b. The Secretary General shall designate an Executive Director who shall serve as the Chief of Staff of the Center and provide overall supervision of the substantive work flow and administrative and day-to-day operations of the Center.
- c. The Secretary General shall designate Directors for six Divisions to assist the Secretary General in the performance of his functions. The six divisions will be organized as follows:

- Division I - Territorial and other Maritime jurisdictions; Archipelagic Sealanes and Sealanes of Communications; Cartography
- Division II - International Seabed Authority (ISBA); Exclusively Economic Zone; Continental Shelf
- Division III - Fisheries; Marine Environmental Protection; Marine Scientific Research
- Division IV - Oceans Law and Policy; Research and Preparation of Negotiating briefs in various issues on UNCLOS and other fora or bilateral negotiations; International Dispute Settlement Procedures
- Division V - Other Law of the Sea issues; Piracy and Sea Robbery
- Division VI - Law of the Sea Library; Information dissemination; Records; Conference and Secretariat Services

- d. Reorganization, realignment of functions, or creation of new divisions or units shall be authorized by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs upon the recommendation of the Secretary General.

**SEC 5.** The Center for Maritime and Ocean Affairs shall have an appropriate site for its offices. For this purpose, it is hereby authorized to coordinate, arrange and occupy at no cost any appropriate area under the administrative control of any agency or government-owned and controlled corporation, subject to the approval of its governing board; or construct/lease such building as may be necessary to house the Center, subject to the approval of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

**SEC 6.** Funding. – Subject to the usual auditing and accounting rules and regulations, the Center shall be provided with an initial annual allocation of Ten (10) million Pesos (P10,000,000) to be drawn from funds to be identified by the Department of Budget and Management.



Appropriations for the succeeding fiscal years shall be incorporated in the General Appropriations Act.

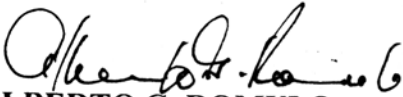
**SEC 7. Repealing Clause.** – The provisions of Executive Order No. 738 (1981) Establishing the Cabinet Committee on the Treaty on the Law of the Sea; Executive Order 328 (1988) Reconstituting the Cabinet Committee on the Law of the Sea; Executive Order No. 186 (1994) Expanding the Coverage of the Cabinet Committee on the Law of the Sea and Renaming It As the Cabinet Committee on Maritime and Ocean Affairs; and Executive Order No. 132 (1999) Strengthening the Cabinet Committee on Maritime and Ocean Affairs and its Supporting Mechanisms, Establishing its Technical Committee and for Other Purposes, that are inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed and superseded.

**SEC 8. Effectivity.** – This Order shall take effect immediately.

Done in the City of Manila, this *24<sup>th</sup>* day of *September*, in the year of Our Lord, two thousand and one.



By the President:

  
**ALBERTO G. ROMULO**  
Executive Secretary



  
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