

By the President of the Philippines

**PROCLAMATION NO. 503**

**DECLARING DECEMBER 24, 2003 AND JANUARY 2, 2004 (IN LIEU OF DECEMBER 30, 2003 WHICH SHALL BE A REGULAR WORKING DAY) AS SPECIAL (NON-WORKING) DAYS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND DECEMBER 26, 2003 AS SPECIAL (NON-WORKING) DAY FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ONLY**

**WHEREAS**, December 25, 2003 (**Christmas Day**), December 30, 2003 (**Rizal Day**) and January 1, 2004 (**New Year's Day**) are regular holidays throughout the country pursuant to Executive Order No. 292 [1987], as amended by Republic Act No. 9177 [2002];

**WHEREAS**, December 31, 2003 (last day of the year) is a nationwide special holiday pursuant to Executive Order No. 292 [1987], as amended by Republic Act No. 9177 [2002];

**WHEREAS**, December 24 has, in the past, been declared a special public holiday;

**WHEREAS**, by tradition, Filipinos celebrate the Christmas holidays by visiting their families, relatives and friends;

**WHEREAS**, to spur domestic tourism throughout the country, it is necessary to declare December 26, 2003 as special (non-working) day for government employees only and January 2, 2004 as special (non-working) day throughout the country, in lieu of December 30, 2003 (Rizal Day).

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, ALBERTO G. ROMULO**, Executive Secretary, by order of **Her Excellency GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**, President of the Republic of the Philippines, do hereby declare the following:

**SECTION 1. December 24, 2003** as special (non-working) day throughout the country;

**SEC. 2. January 2, 2004** as special (non-working) day throughout the country in lieu of December 30, 2003 (Rizal Day), which shall be a regular working day.

**SEC. 3.** All employees of government departments, offices, agencies or instrumentalities shall not be required to report for work on **December 26, 2003**, except that:

- a. The head of a department, office, agency or instrumentality may, if required by the exigencies of public service, require the employees of said department, office, agency or instrumentality to observe regular working hours and provide regular services to the public on the said date;

- b. Employees of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs and other government departments, offices, agencies or instrumentalities that impose deadlines on the transacting public for payment of taxes, fees or fines and for compliance with reportorial and other requirements, shall be required by the head of the department, office, agency or instrumentality to observe regular working hours and provide regular services to the public on the said date; and
- c. Employees of government departments, offices, agencies or instrumentalities providing police, security, fire protection, custodial, rescue, emergency, medical and other similar services shall be required by the head of the department, office, agency or instrumentality to observe regular working hours and provide regular services to the public on the said date.

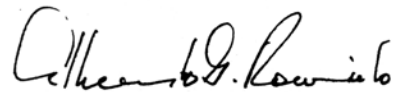
**SEC. 4.** Heads of government departments, offices, agencies and instrumentalities are hereby directed to issue the appropriate circulars to implement this Proclamation;

**SEC. 5.** Employers in the private sector, except those providing banking, financial, health security and other vital services to the public, have the option not to require their employees to report for work on December 26 and 27, 2003 and January 3, 2004: Provided, That such employers who opt not to require their employees to report for work are urged to make the necessary arrangements, which may include increasing daily work hours or allowing work on other days before and/or after the Christmas holidays, to ensure that daily paid workers are paid the equivalent of the wages or compensation that they would have earned on the said dates and that production schedules are met to maintain a continuous supply of goods and services.

The Department of Labor and Employment is hereby directed to issue appropriate circulars to implement this Proclamation for the private sector.

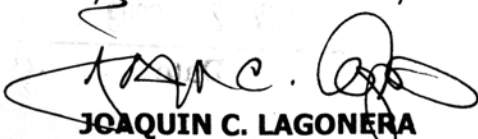
**DONE** in the City of Manila this 19<sup>th</sup> day of November, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Three.

By order of the President:



**ALBERTO G. ROMULO**  
Executive Secretary

By the Executive Secretary:



**JOAQUIN C. LAGONERA**  
Senior Deputy Executive Secretary



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