

[**PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 597, December 03, 1974**]

AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO REORGANIZE ITS DEPARTMENTS, OFFICES, DIVISIONS, SECTIONS OR UNITS, FIX THE SALARIES OF ITS OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES AND PROVIDE APPROPRIATION FOR ITS MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION EXPENSES.

WHEREAS, with the increased membership and the expanded functions and powers of the Commission on Elections under the new Constitution, there is need to authorize said agency to undertake a reorganization of its various departments, divisions, sections, offices and other units;

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections, by specific provision of Republic Act No. 5435, was not included in the reorganization of the government under the Integrated Reorganization Plan;

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections was last reorganized in 1963 by virtue of Republic Act No. 3808, and that since then no substantial changes have been made in the staffing pattern, administrative structure and organizational machinery of the said agency;

WHEREAS, Presidential Decree No. 203 transferred to the Commission on Elections the personnel, appropriations and properties of the various Electoral Tribunals, and for this reason there is need to empower the Commission on Elections to deploy through reorganization the Tribunal employees in appropriate departments, divisions, sections, offices or units where their services can be most useful;

WHEREAS, under the Transitory Provisions of the new Constitution, it is provided that priority shall be given, inter alia, to the reorganization of the Government; and the reorganization of the Commission on Elections would be a step in compliance with this provision of the new Charter;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND E. MARCOS, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution as Commander-in-Chief of all the Armed Forces of the Philippines and pursuant to Proclamation No. 1081 dated September 21, 1972, and General Order No. 1 dated September 22, 1972, as amended, do hereby order and decree:

SECTION 1. To promote maximum efficiency in carrying out its constitutional functions and powers and such other duties that may be entrusted to it by law, the Commission on Elections hereinafter referred to as the Commission is hereby authorized, within six months from the date of approval hereof, to reorganize all its departments, divisions, sections, offices or units.

SEC. 2. Any provision of existing law to the contrary notwithstanding and in order to accomplish the objectives set forth in Section One of this Decree, the Commission is authorized:

- a. To group, coordinate, consolidate or integrate departments, divisions, sections, offices or units according to functions;