

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 969, June 30, 1984]

CREATING THE OFFICE OF MUSLIM AFFAIRS AND CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS, under the New Republic, national development shall be pursued with renewed dedication and greater determination through a more efficient, effective and economical government;

WHEREAS, the circumstances of the times demand a more vigorous pursuit' of the Constitutional mandate that the State shall consider the customs, traditions, beliefs and interests of national cultural communities in the formulation and implementation of state policies;

WHEREAS, in furtherance of the Constitutional mandate, it is desirable to combine those agencies engaged in allied and complementary operations and activities relative to the development of the cultural communities in order to achieve better coordination, increased effectiveness, and unanimity of purpose in terms of ultimate results; and

WHEREAS, under Presidential Decree No. 1416 as amended, the President is empowered to undertake such organizational and related improvements as may be appropriate in the light of changing circumstances and new developments;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND E. MARCOS, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution and the authority vested in me by Presidential Decree No. 1416 as amended, do hereby order and ordain:

SECTION 1. It is the policy of the State to ensure the integration of national cultural communities into the mainstream of Filipino society with due regard for their beliefs, customs, traditions, and institutions, and to further enhance their contribution to national goals and aspirations as active participants in nation building equal in stature, dignity, and opportunity with all other citizens.

SECTION 2. There is hereby created an Office of Muslim Affairs and Cultural Communities, hereinafter referred to as the Office, through the merger of the Office of Muslim Affairs established pursuant to Executive Orders Nos. 697 and 711, and the Office of the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities referred to in presidential Decree No. 1414. Such merger shall include applicable functions, appropriations, records, property and equipment, and such personnel as may be necessary. The Office shall be directly under the President of the Philippines.

SECTION 3. The Office shall be primarily responsible for the development and implementation of the appropriate programs and projects in furtherance of the provisions of Section 11, Article XV of the Constitution as well as of Section 1 of this Executive Order.

SECTION 4. The Office shall have the following powers and functions:

- (1) Provide advice and assistance to the President in the formulation, coordination, implementation, and monitoring of policies, development programs and projects affecting cultural communities; when so authorized, represent the President on matters concerning cultural communities; serve as the link between the President and those agencies, both internal and external, involved in such programs and projects; and recommend such actions as may be necessary for their efficient and effective implementation;
- (2) Undertake, when so authorized by the President, development programs and projects for the advancement of cultural communities, including designing, implementing and maintaining settlements for Filipinos belonging to cultural communities, bearing in mind the avoidance of unnecessary overlapping or duplication of work with other agencies;
- (3) Act as the primary government entity through which cultural communities can seek government assistance; and serve as the instrumentality through which such assistance may be extended to cultural communities. For this purpose, the Office is hereby authorized to give grants-in-aid out of its appropriations or other funds from whatever source to cooperating government or private entities for such programs or projects geared to the development of cultural communities, and provide services including legal assistance, medical aid relief, and other forms of help as may be necessary for the socio-economic uplift of cultural communities;
- (4) Enter, subject to existing policies and guidelines, into such contracts, agreements or arrangements, with government or private agencies as may be necessary to attain the objectives of the Office, including the contracting of loans, subject to the approval of the President, to implement the provisions of this Executive Order from government financial institutions for which purpose they are hereby authorized to grant such loans;
- (5) Accept grants, donations, gifts, funds and/or property for the benefit of cultural communities in whatever form and from whatever source, and administer the same in accordance with the terms thereof, or in the absence of any condition, to administer the same in such manner consistent with the interests of cultural communities;
- (6) Undertake studies, establish and maintain ethnographic research centers and museums on the culture and institutions of cultural communities as may be necessary for policy formulation and program implementation as well as for the purpose of preserving their historical legacy, including preserving artifacts and other evidences of their lifeways;
- (7) Certify, whenever necessary, membership in cultural communities for purposes of establishing qualifications for appointments in government and for other benefits as' provided by law;
- (8) Initiate, subject to the approval of the President, eminent domain proceedings in pursuance of the aims and purposes of this Executive Order;