

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 697, May 28, 1981]

CREATING THE MINISTRY OF MUSLIM AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, it is mandated by the Constitution that the State shall consider the customs, traditions, beliefs and interests of national cultural communities in the formulation and implementation of state policies;

WHEREAS, it is recognized that a significant aspect of Philippine culture is Islamic in character and influence and that Philippine history cannot be appreciated in its fullest dimensions without an examination of its past and present relations with the Islamic world, including its traditions, customs, and institutions;

WHEREAS, the complete and full integration of Muslim Filipinos into the body politic will further strengthen and enrich our aspirations for national unity and identity without sacrificing their individual beliefs, culture, traditions and institutions;

WHEREAS, the centuries-old crises in Muslim areas which marked various stages of Philippine history have brought about international and national concern as well as the painful awareness of the inadequacies of the past; and have underscored the crucial need to take measures that would result in the more active participation of Muslim Filipino in the mainstream of national life and nation building; and

WHEREAS, under Presidential Decree No. 1416, 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, do hereby order and ordain:

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state to ensure the integration of Muslim Filipinos into the mainstream of Filipino society with due regard to 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.

SEC. 2. Creation. – There is hereby created a Ministry of Muslim Affairs, hereinafter referred to as the Ministry, to implement the policy of the state concerning Muslim Filipinos. It shall be headed by a Minister who shall be assisted by a Deputy Minister.

SEC. 3. Powers and Functions. – The Ministry shall have the following powers and functions:

a. Assist and, when so authorized, represent the President on matters concerning Muslim Affairs;

- b. Provide advice and assistance to the President in formulation, coordination, and implementation of policies affecting Muslim Affairs;
- c. Serve as the link between the President and agencies and entities, both internal and external, that are involved in the administration or pursuit of operations, activities and projects involving Muslim Affairs;
- d. Coordinate for the President all development programs on Muslim matters being implemented by various government agencies and entities;
- e. Recommend to the President development programs and projects on Muslim matters, including their implementation schemes;
- f. Implement whenever authorized by the President development projects for the advancement of Muslim communities;
- g. Monitor for the President all development programs being implemented, whether public or private, concerning Muslim affairs as well as recommend such actions as may be necessary for their efficient and effective implementation;
- h. As the primary government entity through which Muslim communities can seek government as well as private assistance and serve as the instrumentality through which assistance from both the government and the private sector may be extended to the Muslim Communities. For this purpose, the Ministry 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 Muslim communities;
- i. 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 Ministry;
- j. Accept grants, donations, gifts, funds and/or property for the benefit of Muslim 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 Muslim communities;
- k. Provide such assistance and services including legal assistance of whatever nature, medical aid, relief and any and all other forms of help as may be necessary for the socio-economic uplift of Muslim communities;
- l. Design, implement and maintain settlements and development projects as may be authorized by the President for Muslim Filipinos consistent with the declared policy of the State;
- m. Undertake studies, establish and maintain research centers and museums on Muslim culture and institutions as may be necessary for policy formulation and program implementation as well as for the purpose of preserving and promoting their rich historical legacy;