

[OMB OFFICE ORDER NO. 05-14, S. 2005, January 24, 2005]

ETHICAL STANDARDS ON INTERACTION WITH FORMER OMB OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

As embodied in the Constitution, the Office of the Ombudsman, being itself a public office, is mandated to maintain public trust and promote the highest standards of ethics in public service. Along this line, the Office, having observed that its former officials and employees who now engage in the private practice of their profession and who, from time to time, visit the Office, its officials and employees, either officially or in their private capacity, finds it proper and necessary to prescribe certain ethical standards for its incumbent officials and employees in dealing with said former officials and employees. Accordingly, the Office hereby prescribes the following rules and guidelines:

Section 1. Prohibition against meeting, transacting or dealing with former officials and employees; Exceptions. Except as provided herein, in no instance or occasion, inside or outside the office, shall incumbent Ombudsman officials and employees meet, transact or deal, directly or indirectly, on any matter with former officials and employees of this Office who are litigants or counsel in any case or CPL matter pending before this Office, as well as, in any case pending before the Sandiganbayan. The same prohibition applies to any meeting, dealing or transaction with the counsel, agent or representative of said former officials and employees.

By way of exceptions to the foregoing prohibitions, the following circumstances may be considered regular and proper:

- a. *During official proceedings.* During trials, clarificatory hearings and/or formal hearings of cases under preliminary investigation or administrative adjudication and in cases pending before the Sandiganbayan, they may be allowed to interact with each other but only in a manner consistent with, or necessary in, the conduct of the said proceedings;
- b. *In representation of private complainants and prosecution witnesses and as volunteer lawyers.* Incumbent officials and employees may interact with former Ombudsman officials and employees in cases where the latter represent on record private complainants and prosecution witnesses, including their counsel and agents, and when acting as volunteer lawyers for the Office. In this regard, it should be emphasized, however, that their interaction with incumbent Ombudsman officials and employees should be limited to cases wherein they are assisting the prosecution;
- c. *During requests for assistance.* For requests for assistance, the Public Assistance Bureau (PAB) may extend assistance to former Ombudsman officials and employees on official business only; and
- d. *Meeting by chance or accident.* If due to some unavoidable circumstances, there is a meeting by chance or accident between incumbent Ombudsman