

MALACAÑANG
Manila

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 626

STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT'S INTERFAITH PROGRAM
THROUGH THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the Philippine Constitution articulates a policy of peace, cooperation and amity with all nations as well as maintain peace and order in the country for the enjoyment by all of the blessings of democracy;

WHEREAS, the Government affirms the individual's right to freedom of religion and worship as well as the free exercise thereof as enunciated in the 1987 Constitution, and that the country's participation in interfaith and its related activities does not, in any way, favor or discriminate against any particular religion;

WHEREAS, the Republic of the Philippines is currently at the forefront of interfaith dialogue in the world community, elevating the latter as a legitimate tool for peace and understanding in the United Nations through the successful lobbying and passing of UN Resolution A/RES/59/23 (Promotion of Interreligious Dialogue);

WHEREAS, there is a need to consolidate, rationalize, and ensure consistency of the country's policies and position in the various interfaith initiatives and fora in and outside the country;

WHEREAS, interfaith initiatives are crucial in the promotion of peace and harmony, cultural tolerance, ethical standards and human rights, as well as the development of moral, spiritual and intellectual capacities for the upholding and enhancement of human dignity;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPGAL ARROYO, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order the following:

Section 1. Creation of the National Committee on Interfaith Cooperation. There is hereby created the National Committee on Interfaith Cooperation, which shall perform the following functions:



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1. Formulate, consolidate, rationalize and recommend Philippine policies and position on various interfaith initiatives in and outside of the country;
2. Articulate and ensure the consistency of the Philippine policy and position in the different local and international fora, as well as in all related activities on interfaith dialogue;
3. Ensure that the Philippines is well represented and maintain its continued leadership and effective participation in the various interfaith initiatives and activities in the international arena/fora;
4. Establish, strengthen and sustain linkages and partnerships with various faith-based and interfaith organizations throughout the country. In this regard, regular consultations shall be conducted with civil society groups and religious sectors;
5. Facilitate the development, implementation and monitoring of the Philippine Plan of Action on Interfaith Cooperation; and,
6. Exercise such other functions as may be assigned by the President.

Section 2. *Composition.* The Committee shall be composed of designated officials from the following departments or agencies:

Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)	-	Chair
Office of the Presidential Adviser on The Peace Process	-	Co-Chair
Presidential Council on Values Formation-		Secretariat

Section 3. *Support Structure.* Other Government offices/agencies may be tapped as necessary to assist the Committee in the preparation of the country's participation in interfaith initiatives, as well as in the formulation of the Philippine positions and recommendations.

Section 4. *Creation of Interfaith Desks and Focal Points.* All departments, bureaus, offices, agencies and instrumentalities of national government, including government owned or controlled corporations and government financial institutions are hereby enjoined to establish interfaith desks and designate focal points who shall:

1. Undergo orientation and training on interfaith cooperation;
2. Take charge of interfaith-related programs and projects in their respective offices;



3. Coordinate with and support the Committee in all its undertaking as necessary;
4. Facilitate the establishment of interfaith prayer centers in their respective offices.

Section 5. *Funding.* The Department of Budget and Management is hereby directed to release an initial amount of Five Million Pesos (Php5,000,000.00) from the President's Contingent Fund to initially cover the expenses of the Committee. Fund requirements of the Committee for the succeeding years shall be included in the OPAPP Budget.

Section 6. *Repealing Clause.* All issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof, inconsistent with this Executive Order are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 7. *Effectivity.* This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

Done in the City of Manila, this 4th day of June, in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Seven.

By the President:

Gloria M. Arroyo



EDUARDO R. ERMITA
Executive Secretary

