

MALACAÑANG
Manila

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 163

**DIRECTING ALL CABINET MEMBERS AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED
AND CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE
CELEBRATION OF THE PEACE CONSCIOUSNESS MONTH THIS
SEPTEMBER 2008**

Pursuant to the thrust of the Government to instill greater consciousness and understanding among the Filipino people on the comprehensive peace process and to sustain institutional and popular support for and participation in the promotion of building a culture of peace, the month of September was declared as the "*National Peace Consciousness Month*."

Relative thereto, all Cabinet Members and Heads of the Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations are hereby directed to actively participate in the celebration of the Peace Consciousness Month, both at the central and at the regional/field levels. In particular, you are directed to undertake the following:

1. Placing of streamer(s) at conspicuous areas in respective offices (Please refer to attached design, referred to as Annex "A", and made an integral part hereof).
2. Mobilize personnel to actively participate in the "**Peace Festival**" at the opening for the month-long celebration on September 1, 2008 at the Quezon City Memorial Parks and Development at 8:00 am.
3. Conduct related activities/events with the theme, "*Sinimulang Ugnayan sa Kapayapaan...Pagtibayin!*" Such as releasing of peace doves at your respective agency's flag-raising ceremonies.
4. Organize productive peace activities to make the event meaningful. For your reference, attached is the concept paper of the 2008 National Peace Consciousness Month.

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) shall undertake the necessary coordination nationwide on the participation of government agencies.

SO ORDERED.

Manila, Philippines, 29 August 2008

By authority of the President:


EDUARDO R. ERMITA
Executive Secretary



4 feet



Official seal of the city government

The City of _____ in the partnership with the

Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP)

joins the nation in celebrating the

National Peace Consciousness Month

September 1 - 30, 2008

"Simulang Ugayan sa Kapayapaan... Pagtibayin!"

Theme:

Font color - blue

Largest font - 14pt

8 feet

5TH YEAR CELEBRATION OF THE NATIONAL PEACE CONSCIOUSNESS MONTH

September 2008

I. BACKGROUND

The continuing effort to secure peace as a lasting foundation, other than being a temporary option remains today a daunting task for key players from all fronts--government, peace stakeholders, interfaith groups, NGOs and CSOs, development organizations, including rebel groups wanting to forge peace.

While there exists a strong consensus from across broad sections of society towards bringing forth peace even as a guiding policy framework for development and social integration, much remains to be done to finally turn peace into a living reality.

Beyond mere absence of conflict or hostility, peace is a way of life for every person and for every community. It inspires people to work, removes despair and hopelessness, and encourages people of goodwill to help in creating a harmonious and productive living.

Hence, the challenge of attaining peace across the country rests not in the hands of peacemakers and peace-builders alone, but in every citizen whose stakes in the nation's march to progress are bound by much-needed support to the peace process.

Since 2004, the call to unify a nation and make everyone aware of his or her role in the promotion and attainment of peace has been embodied under Proclamation No. 675, which institutionalized the annual observance every September of the National Peace Consciousness Month.

This celebration enjoins all government institutions, civil society groups and even the private sector to initiate and participate in meaningful activities aimed at instilling greater public consciousness and appreciation for the culture of peace.

Coordinated by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, the National Peace Consciousness Month is anchored on several triumphs and milestones in the history of the nation's recent endeavor to pursue the peace process, some of which include:

- Signing of Peace Pact or "Sipat" by the Philippine government and the Cordillera People's Liberation Army on September 13, 1986
- Creation of National Unification Commission (NUC), through Executive Order No. 19 issued on September 1, 1992
- Issuance of P.O. No. 125 in September 15, 1993 by then Pres. Fidel V. Ramos which provided for the administrative and policy structure to pursue the NUC proposed comprehensive peace process agenda, including the creation of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process

- (Signed in 1996) of the Final Peace Agreement between the GRP and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

II. THEME

Promoting peace and environmental values at the same time tend to take a sideline in development work. Like peace and development, which mutually reinforces one another, peace and ecological well-being should likewise be seen as an essential tandem to advance human aspirations. Peace enhances environmental causes, while environmental stability moves the prospects for peace forward. But despite the apparent interrelatedness between the two, advocates have promoted these values independently of one another.

In the experiences of Indigenous Peoples, we see how depletion of natural resources exacerbated by increased competition could spill over into conflict (tribal wars or *tribo*). Rural communities who are dependent on nature for their livelihood are threatened by environmental damage and degradation, which also fuel the risk of disasters and in turn further the communities' vulnerability to conflict. In conflict-affected communities, deforestation or water pollution caused by armed clashes make it all the more difficult for poor families to recover as they struggle to reconstruct their farms for daily subsistence.

We further see this peace and environment link in the shortage of oil supply leading to a series of price hikes, drastic climate change laying our health on the line, and destruction of marine life resulting in drained food resources and surging prices in the market. All of those bring about higher poverty incidence, digging deeper for the roots of conflict to grow.

The synergistic relationship between peace and environment raises a very serious call for all stakeholders to reflect, act and reflect more on viable and creative ways on how to pursue both values. Although there has been a growing recognition in both movements, there is a need to take this advocacy to the center stage as our world is now confronted with alarming peace and environmental issues. This will be taken on as this year's National Peace & Consciousness Month theme.

III. OBJECTIVES

The celebration primarily sets sights on conscientizing the general public on the over-all comprehensive peace process, as well as creating awareness on the connection between peace and ecological stability as essential to pursuing peace and development agenda. It further aims to:

a) bring together peace and environment advocates of all sectors and ages, and engage them to act in promoting both peace and environment in their movements;

b) convey the continuing efforts of the Philippine Government and other various peace stakeholders including the international community, to fully implement the Peace Agreements and address continuing vital peace and development imperatives in the country.

efforts to build a peace and environment constituency/network among government, NGOs, and civil society organizations that will support and sustain the gains of the peace process; and

3. To encourage the stakeholders to participate in various activities that enhance their role in pursuing peace and environmental stability and enable them to act on these roles accordingly and effectively.

IV. HIGHLIGHT OF THE CELEBRATION

1. *Peace Festival (Ceremonial Ringing of the Peace Bell and Releasing of Peace Doves)*

The traditional ceremonial launching of the peace month celebration will be done at the Quezon Memorial Circle on September 1.

As part of the kick-off activity, inter-faith leaders will also be invited to promote and support the national peace celebration. Specifically, all churches will be invited to participate in the simultaneous ceremonial ringing of bells, as a manifestation of support to the call for peace across the country.