

Rules Implementing the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 12 of Republic Act No. 6713, otherwise known as the "Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees", approved Dn February 20, 1989, and which took effect on March 25, 1989, conformably to Section 17 thereof, the following Rules are hereby adopted in order to carry out the provisions of the said Code:

Rule I

Coverage

Section 1. These Rules shall cover all officials and employees in the government, elective and appointive, permanent or temporary, whether in the career or non-career service, including military and police personnel, whether or not they receive compensation, regardless of amount.

Rule II

Interpretation

Section 1. These Rules shall be interpreted in the light of the Declaration of Policy found in Section 2 of the Code:

"It is the policy of the State to promote a high standard of ethics in public service. Public officials and employees shall at all times be accountable to the people and shall discharge their duties with utmost responsibility, integrity, competence and loyalty, act with patriotism and justice, lead modest lives, and uphold public interest over personal interest."

Rule III

Reforms on Public Administrative Systems

Section 1. Every department, office and agency shall, as soon as practicable and in no case later than ninety (90) days from the effectivity of these rules, start conducting value development programs for its officials and employees in order to strengthen their commitment to public service and help promote the primacy of public interest over personal interest in the performance of their duties. Such programs and other parallel efforts on value development shall include, among other things, the following subjects:

- (a) Ethical and moral values;
- (b) Rights, duties and responsibilities of public servants
- (c) Nationalism and patriotism;
- (d) Justice and human rights;
- (e) Democracy in a free and just society;
- (f) Philippine history. Culture and tradition; and
- (g) Socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country, especially in the depressed areas, and the need for a code of Conduct and Ethical Standards.

Continuing refresher courses and seminars and/or workshops to promote a high standard of ethics in public service shall be conducted.

Section 2. Professional, scientific, technical trainings and education programs shall enhance to the highest degree, professionalism, excellence, intelligence and skills in the performance and discharge of duties and responsibilities of officials and employees. These programs shall be conducted in all offices of the government and may include subjects that are enumerated in the preceding section.

Section 3. It is the responsibility of every head of department, office and agency to ensure that officials and employees attend the value development program and participate in parallel value development efforts.

Section 4. Every department, office and agency shall conduct continuing studies and analyses of their work systems and procedures to improve delivery of public services. Towards this end, such studies and analyses shall: (1) identify systems and procedures that lead or contribute to negative bureaucratic behavior; (2) simplify rules and procedures to avoid red tape; and (3) devise or adopt systems and procedures that promote official and employee morale and satisfaction.

Each department, office or agency shall develop a service guide or its functional equivalent which shall be regularly updated and made available to the transacting public. A workflow chart showing procedures or flow of documents shall likewise be posted in conspicuous places in the department, office or agency for the information and guidance of all concerned.

Upon request, the Department of Budget and Management shall assist departments, offices and agencies in the evaluation and adoption of work systems and procedures that will institutionalize a management climate conducive to public accountability.

Section 5. Every department, office and agency shall consult the public they serve for the purpose of gathering feedback and suggestions on the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of services. They shall establish mechanisms to ensure the conduct of public consultations and hearings.

Section 6. Every department, office and agency shall continuously conduct research and experimentation on measures and adopt innovative programs which will provide motivation to officials and employees in raising the level of observance of public service ethical standards.

Section 7. Every department, office and agency shall, appoint or designate a resident Ombudsman, who shall act immediately on all request for public assistance referred to him by the Ombudsman and his Deputies. He shall be held accountable for the disposition of all requests for assistance.

Section 8. Government officials shall make themselves available to their staff for consultations and dialogues.

Rule IV

Transparency of Transactions and Access to Information

Section 1. Subject to reasonable conditions prescribed by law, the State adopts and implements a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest.

Section 2. It is the responsibility of heads of departments, offices and agencies to establish measures and standards that will ensure transparency of and openness in public transactions in their respective offices, such as biddings, purchases, other internal transactions, including contracts, status of projects, and all other matters involving public interest.

They shall establish information systems that will inform the public of the following: (a) policies, rules, and procedures; (b) work programs, projects, and performance targets; (c) performance reports; and (d) all other documents as may hereafter be classified as public information.

Such information shall be utilized solely for the purpose of informing the public of such policies, programs and accomplishment, and not to build the public image of any official or employee or to advance his own personal interest.

Section 3. Every department, office or agency shall provide official information, records or documents to any requesting public, except if:

(a) such information, record or document must be kept secret in the interest of national defense or security or the conduct of foreign affairs.

(b) such disclosure would put the life and safety of an individual in imminent danger;

(c) the information, record or document sought falls within the concepts of established privilege or recognized exceptions as may be provided by law or settled policy or jurisprudence;

(d) such information, record or document compromises drafts or decisions, orders, rulings, policy, decisions, memoranda, etc;

(e) it would disclose information of a personal nature where disclosure would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(f) it would disclose investigatory records compiled for law enforcement purposes, or information which if written would be contained in such records or information would (i) interfere with enforcement proceedings, (ii) deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, (iii) disclose the identity of a confidential source and, in the case of a record compiled by a criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation, or by an agency conducting a lawful national security intelligence investigation, confidential information furnished only by the confidential source, or (iv) unjustifiably disclose investigative techniques and procedures; or

(g) it would disclose information the premature disclosure of which would (i) in the case of a department, office or agency which agency regulates currencies, securities, commodities, of financial institutions, be likely to lead to significant financial speculation in currencies, securities, or commodities or significantly endanger the stability of any financial institution, or (ii) in the case of any department, office or agency be likely or significantly to frustrate implementation of

a proposed official action, except that subparagraph (f) (ii) shall not apply in any instance where the department, office or agency has already disclosed to the public the content or nature of its proposed action, or where the department, office or agency is required by law to make such disclosure on its own initiative prior to taking final official action on such proposal.

Section 4. Every head of department, office and agency shall establish information systems and networks that will effect the widest possible dissemination of information regarding the provisions of the Code, and the policies and programs relative thereto.

Rule V

Incentive and Rewards System

Section 1. Incentives and rewards shall be granted officials and employees who have demonstrated exemplary service and conduct on the basis of their observance of the norms of conduct laid down in Section 4 of the Code namely:

(a) Commitment to public interest - Officials and employees shall always uphold the public interest over personal interest. All government resources and powers and powers of their respective departments, offices and agencies must be employed and used efficiently, effectively, honestly and economically, particularly to avoid wastage in public funds and revenues.

(b) Professionalism - Officials and employees shall perform and discharge their duties with the highest degree of excellence, professionalism, intelligence and skill. They shall enter public service with utmost devotion and dedication to duty. They shall endeavor to discourage wrong perceptions of their roles as dispensers or peddlers of undue patronage.

(c) Justness and sincerity - Officials and employees shall remain true to the people at all times. They must act with justness and sincerity and shall not discriminate against anyone, especially the poor and the underprivileged. They shall refrain from doing acts contrary to law, good morals, good customs, public policy, public order, public safety and public interest. They shall not dispense or extend undue favors on account of their office to their relatives, whether by consanguinity or affinity, except with respect to appointments of such relatives to positions considered strictly confidential or as members of their personal staff whose terms are coterminous with theirs.

(d) Political neutrality - Officials and employees shall provide service to everyone without unfair discrimination regardless of party affiliation or preference.

(e) Responsiveness to the public - Officials and employees shall extend prompt, courteous, and adequate service to the public. Unless otherwise provided by law or when required by the public interest, officials and employees shall provide information on their policies and procedures in clear and understandable language, ensure openness of information, public consultations and hearings whenever appropriate, encourage suggestions, simplify and systematize policy, rules and procedures, avoid red tape and develop an understanding and appreciation of the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country, especially in the depressed rural and urban areas.

(f) Nationalism and patriotism - Officials and employees shall at all times be loyal to the Republic and to the Filipino people, promote the use of locally produced goods, resources and technology and encourage appreciation and pride of country and people. They shall endeavor to maintain and defend Philippine sovereignty against foreign intrusion.

(g) Commitment to democracy - Officials and employees shall commit themselves to the democratic way of life and values, maintain the principle of public accountability and manifest by deeds the supremacy of civilian authority over the military. They shall at all times uphold the Constitution and put loyalty to country above loyalty to persons or party.

(h) Simple living - Officials and employees and their families shall lead modest lives appropriate to their positions and income. They shall not indulge in extravagant or ostentatious display of wealth in any form.

Section 2. The following criteria shall be considered in the conferment of awards:

- (a) Years of service;
- (b) Quality and consistency of performance;
- (c) Obscurity of the position;
- (d) Level of salary;
- (e) Unique and exemplary quality of achievement;
- (f) Risk or temptation inherent in the work; and
- (g) Any similar circumstances or considerations in favor of the particular awardee.

Section 3. Incentives and rewards to government officials and employees of the year may take the form of any of the following, as may be determined by the Committee on Awards established under the Code:

- (a) Bonuses; or
- (b) Citations; or
- (c) Directorships in government-owned or controlled corporations; or
- (d) Local and foreign scholarship grants; or
- (e) Paid vacations; and
- (f) Automatic promotion to the next higher position suitable to his qualifications and with commensurate salary; provided, that if there is no next higher position or it is not vacant, said position shall be included in the next budget of the office; except when the creation of a new position will result in distortion in the organizational structure of the department, office or agency. Where there is no next higher position immediately available, a salary increase equivalent to the next higher position shall be given and incorporated in the base pay. When a new position is created, that which is vacated shall be deemed abolished.

The grants of awards shall be governed by the merit and fitness principle.

Section 4. (a) The system shall be administered by a Committee on Awards for Outstanding Public Officials and Employees composed of:

- (1) Ombudsman Co-Chairman

- (2) Chairman CSC Co-Chairman
- (3) Chairman COA Member
- (4) Two (2) Government Members Employees to be Appointed By the President

(b) For this purpose, the Committee shall perform the following functions and responsibilities:

- (1) Conduct a periodic, continuing review of performance of officials and employees in all department, offices and agencies;
- (2) Establish a system of annual incentives and rewards to the end that due recognition is given to officials and employees of outstanding merit on the basis of standards set forth in Section 2, Rule V hereof;
- (3) Determine the form of rewards to be granted;
- (4) Formulate and adopt its own rules to govern the conduct of its activities, which shall include guidelines for evaluating nominees, the mechanism for recognizing the awardees in public ceremonies and the creation of sub-committees;

In the evaluation of nominees, the Committee may be assisted by technical experts selected from the government and the private sectors.

Section 5. The Civil Service Commission shall provide secretariat services to the Committee.

Section 6. Nothing herein provided shall inhibit any department, office or agency from instituting its own rewards program in addition to those provided by, but not inconsistent with these Rules.

Section 7. The budget to cover all expenses in the implementation of this Rule shall be incorporated in the appropriation of the Civil Service Commission.

Rule VI

Duties of Public Officials and Employees

Section 1. As a general rule, when a request or petition, whether written or verbal, can be disposed of promptly and expeditiously the official and employee in charge to whom the same is presented shall do so immediately, without discrimination, and in no case beyond fifteen (15) working days from receipt of the request or petition.

Section 2. In departments, offices or agencies that are usually swamped with persons calling for a particular type of service, the head of the department, office or agency shall devise a mechanism so as to avoid long queues, such as by giving each person a ticket number duly countersigned which shall specify the time and the date when the person, whose name and address shall be indicated, can be served without delay. Said person shall have the right to prompt service upon presentation of said ticket number.

Section 3. In case of written requests, petitions or motions, sent by means of letters,

telegrams, or the like, the official or employee in charge shall act on the same within fifteen (15) working days from receipt thereof, provided that:

(b) If the communication is within the jurisdiction of the office or agency, the official and employee must:

(1) Write a note or letter of acknowledgement where the matter is merely routine or the action desired may be acted upon in the ordinary course of business of the department, office or agency, specifying the date when the matter will be disposed of and the name of the official or employee in charge thereof.

(2) Where the matter is non-routine or the issues involved are not simple or ordinary, write a note or letter of acknowledgement, informing the interested party, petitioner or correspondent of the action to be taken or when such requests, petitions or motions can be acted upon. Where there is a need to submit additional information, requirements, or documents, the note or letter of acknowledgement shall so state, specifying a reasonable period of time within which they should be submitted, and the name of the particular official or employee in charge thereof. When all the documents or requirements have been submitted to the satisfaction of the department or office or agency concerned, the particular official or employee in charge shall inform the interested party, petitioner, or correspondent of the action to be taken and when such action or disposition can be expected, barring unforeseen circumstances.

(c) If communication is outside its jurisdiction, the official or employee must:

(1) Refer the letter, petition, telegram, or verbal request to the proper department, office or agency.

(2) Acknowledge the communication by means of a note or letter, informing the interested party, petitioner, correspondent of the action taken and attaching a copy of the letter of the letter of referral to the proper department, office or agency.

The department, office or agency to which the letter, petition, telegram or verbal request was referred for appropriate action must take action in accordance with subsection (a), pars. 1 and 2 hereof.

The period of fifteen (15) working days herein provided shall be counted from the date of receipt of the written or verbal communication by the department, office or agency concerned.

Section 4. All official papers and documents must be processed and completed within a reasonable time from the preparation thereof. Reasonable time shall be determined in accordance with the following rules:

(b) When the law or the applicable rule issued in accordance therewith prescribes a period within which a decision is to be rendered or an action taken, the same shall be followed;

(c) When the law or the applicable rule issued in accordance therewith does not prescribe a period, the head of department, office or agency shall issue rules and regulations prescribing, among other things, what is reasonable time, taking into account the following factors:

- (1) Nature, simplicity or complexity of the subject matter of the official papers or documents processed by said department, office or agency.
- (2) Completeness or inadequacy of requirements or of data and information necessary for decision or action;
- (3) Lack of resources caused by circumstances beyond the control of the department, office or agency or official or employee concerned;
- (4) Legal constraints such as restraining orders and injunctions issued by proper judicial, quasi-judicial or administrative authorities; and
- (5) Fault, failure or negligence of the party concerned which renders decision or action not possible or premature; and
- (6) Fortuitous events or force majeure.

Section 5. Except as otherwise provided by law or regulation, and as far as practicable, any written action or decision must contain not more than three (3) initials or signatures. In the absence of the duly authorized signatory, the official next-in-rank or officer-in-charge or the person duly authorized shall sign for and in his behalf. The head of department, office or agency shall prescribe, through and appropriate office order, the rules on the proper authority to sign in the absence of the regular signatory, as follows:

- (1) If there is only one official next in rank, he shall automatically be the signatory;
- (2) If there are two or more officials next in rank, the appropriate office order shall prescribe the order of priority among the officials next in rank within the same organizational unit; or
- (3) If there is no official next in rank present and available, the head of department, office or agency shall designate an officer-in-charge from among those next lower in rank in the same organizational unit.

Section 6. All public documents must be made accessible to, and readily available for inspection by, the public during working hours, except those provided in Section 3. Rule IV.

Section 7. All heads or other responsible officers of departments, offices or agencies of the government and of government-owned or controlled corporations shall, within forty five (45) working days from the end of the year, render a full and complete report of performance and accomplishments, as prescribed by existing laws and regulations.

Another report of compliance with the provisions of the Code and these Rules shall be prepared and submitted to the Civil Service Commission. The Commission may require officials to provide additional information or furnish documents, if necessary.

Section 8. Officials and employees and their families shall lead modest and simple lives appropriate to their positions and income. They shall not indulge in extravagant or ostentatious

display of wealth in any form.

Basically, modest and simple living means maintaining a standard of living within the public official and employee's visible means of income as correctly disclosed in his income tax returns, annual statement of assets, liabilities and net worth and other documents relating to financial and business interests and connections.

Public funds and proper for official use and purpose shall be utilized with the diligence of a good father of a family.

Rule VII

Public Disclosure

Section 1. Every official and employee, except those who serve in an official honorary capacity, without service credit or pay, temporary laborers and casual or temporary or contractual workers, shall file under oath their statement of assets, liabilities and net worth and a disclosure of business interests and financial connections including those of their spouses and unmarried children under eighteen (18) years of age living in their households, in the prescribed form, Annex A.

(b) Contents of Statement

(1) The Statement of Assets and Liabilities and Net Worth shall contain information on the following:

(a) real property, its improvements, acquisition costs, assessed value, and current fair market value;

(b) personal property and acquisition costs;

(c) all other assets such as investments, cash on hand or in banks, stocks, bonds, and the like; and

(d) all financial liabilities and long-term.

(2) The Disclosure of Business Interests and Financial Connections shall contain information on any existing interests in, or any existing connections with, any business enterprises or entities, whether as proprietor, investor, promoter, partner, shareholder, officer, managing director, executive, creditor, lawyer, legal consultant, accountant, auditor, and the like, the names and addresses of the business enterprises or entities, the dates when such interests or connections were established, and such other details as will show the nature of the interests or connections.

(c) When to File

The above documents under the Code must be filed:

(1) within thirty (30) days after assumption of office, statements of which must be reckoned as

of his first day of service;

(2) on or before April 30 of every year thereafter, statements of which must be reckoned as of the end of the preceding year; or

(3) within thirty (30) days after separation from the service, statements of which must be reckoned as of his last day of office.

(d) Where to File

The Statement of Assets and Liabilities and Net Worth and the Disclosure of Business Interests and Financial Connections shall be filed by the:

(1) President, Vice-President and Constitutional Officials, with the National Office of the Ombudsman;

(2) Senators and Congressmen, with the Secretaries of the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively; Justices, with the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court; Judges, with the Court Administrator; and national executive officials such as Members of the Cabinet, Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries, including the foreign service and heads of government-owned or controlled corporations with original charters and their subsidiaries and state colleges and universities, with the Office of the President.

(3) Regional and local officials and employees, both appointive and elective, including other officials and employees of government-owned or controlled corporations and their subsidiaries and state colleges and universities, with the Deputy Ombudsman in their respective regions;

(4) Officers of the Armed Forces from the rank of Colonel or Naval Captain, with the Office of the President, and those below said ranks, with the Deputy Ombudsman in their respective regions; and

(5) All other officials and employees defined in Republic Act No. 3019, as amended, with the Civil Service Commission.

A copy of said statements shall also be filed with their respective departments, offices or agencies.

(d) All Statement of Assets and Liabilities and Net Worth, as of December 31, 1988, now on file with their respective agencies shall constitute sufficient compliance with the requirements of the Code and they shall be required to accomplish and file the new form as prescribed in these Rules on or before April 30, 1990, and every year thereafter.

(e) Every official and employee shall also execute, within thirty (30) days from the date of their assumption of office, the necessary authority in favor of the Ombudsman to obtain, from all the appropriate government agencies, including the Bureau of Internal Revenue, such documents as may show their assets, liabilities, net worth, and also their business interests, and financial connections in previous years, including, if possible, the year when they first assumed any office in the government.

(f) Married couples who are both public officials and employees may file the required statements jointly or separately.

Section 2. Every official or employee shall identify and disclose under oath to the best of his knowledge and information, his relatives in the government, up to the fourth civil degree of relationship, either of consanguinity or affinity, including bilas, inso and balae, in the prescribed form, Annex A, which shall be filed; (a) within thirty (30) days after assumption of office, the information contained therein must be reckoned as of his first day of office; (b) on or before April 30 of every year thereafter, the information contained therein must be reckoned as of the end of the preceding year; or (c) within thirty (30) days after separation from the service, the information contained therein must be reckoned as of his last day of office.

Section 3. (a) Any and all statements filed in accordance with the preceding sections shall be made available for public inspection at reasonable hours;

(b) Such statements shall be made available for public inspection at reasonable hours;

(c) Any duly authorized person requesting a copy of a statement shall be required to pay a reasonable fee as may be determined and prescribed by the Civil Service Commission to cover the cost of reproduction and mailing of such statement, as well as the cost of certification.

(d) Any statement filed under the Code shall be available to the public, subject to the foregoing limitations, for a period of ten (10) years after receipt of the statement. The statement may be destroyed after such period unless needed in an ongoing investigation.

Rule VIII

Review and Compliance Procedures

Section 1. The following shall have the authority to establish compliance procedures for the review of statements to determine whether said statements have been properly accomplished:

(a) In the case of Congress, the designated committees of both Houses of Congress subject to approval by the affirmative vote of the majority of the particular House concerned;

(b) In the case of the Executive Department, the heads of departments, offices and agencies insofar as their respective departments, offices and agencies are concerned subject to approval of the Secretary of Justice.

(c) In the case of the Judicial Department, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; and

(d) In the case of the Constitutional Commissions and other Constitutional Offices, the respective Chairman and members thereof; in the case of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman.

The above officials shall likewise have the authority to render any opinion interpreting the provisions on the review and compliance procedures in the filing of statements of assets,

liabilities, net worth and disclosure information.

In the event said authorities determine that a statement is not properly filed, they shall inform the reporting individual and direct him to take the necessary corrective action.

The individual to whom an opinion is rendered, and any other individual involved in a similar factual situation, and who, after issuance of the opinion acts in good faith in accordance with it shall not be subject to any sanction provided in the Code.

Rule IX

Conflict of Interest and Divestment

Section 1. (a) An official or employee shall avoid conflict of interest at all times.

(b) Conflict of interest occurs:

(1) When the official or employee is:

- (a) a substantial stockholder; or
- (b) a member of the Board of Directors; or
- (c) an officer of the corporation; or
- (d) an owner or has substantial interest in a business; or
- (e) a partner in a partnership; and

(2) The interest of such corporation or business, or his rights or duties therein, are opposed to or affected by the faithful performance of official duty.

(c) A substantial stockholder is any person who owns, directly or indirectly, shares of stock sufficient to elect a director of a corporation. This term shall also apply to the parties to a voting trust.

(d) A voting trust means an agreement in writing between one or more stockholders of a stock corporation for the purpose of conferring upon a trustee or trustees the right to vote and other rights pertaining to the shares for certain periods and subject to such other conditions provided for in the Corporation Law.

Section 2. (a) When a conflict of interest arises, the official or employee involved shall resign from his position in any private business enterprise within thirty (30) days from his assumption of office and/or divest himself of his share-holdings or interests within sixty (60) days from such assumption. For those who are already in the service, and conflict of interest arises, the officer or employee must resign from his position in the private business enterprise and/or divest himself of his shareholdings or interests within the periods herein-above provided, reckoned from the date when the conflict of interest had arisen. The same rule shall apply where the public official or employee is a partner in a partnership.

(b) If the conditions in Section 1 (b) concur, divestment shall be mandatory for any official or employee even if he has resigned from his position in any private business enterprise.

(c) Divestment shall be to a person or persons other than his spouse and relatives within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity.

(d) The requirements for divestment shall not apply to those specifically authorized by law and those who serve the government in an honorary capacity nor to laborers and casual or temporary workers.

Rule X

Grounds for administrative disciplinary action

Section 1. In addition to the grounds for administrative disciplinary action prescribed under existing laws, the acts and omissions of any official or employee, whether or not he holds office or employment in a casual, temporary, hold-over, permanent or regular capacity, declared unlawful or prohibited by the Code, shall constitute grounds for administrative disciplinary action, and without prejudice to criminal and civil liabilities provided herein, such as:

(a) Directly or indirectly having financial and material interest in any transaction requiring the approval of his office. Financial and material interest is defined as a pecuniary or proprietary interest by which a person will gain or lose something;

(b) Owning, controlling, managing or accepting employment as officer, employee, consultant, counsel, broker, agent, trustee, or nominee in any private enterprise regulated, supervised or licensed by his office, unless expressly allowed by law;

(c) Engaging in the private practice of his profession unless authorized by the Constitution, law or regulation, provided that such practice will not conflict or tend to conflict with his official functions;

(d) Recommending any person to any position in a private enterprise which has a regular or pending official transaction with his office, unless such recommendation or referral is mandated by (1) law, or (2) international agreements, commitment and obligation, or as part of the functions of his office;

These acts shall continue to be prohibited for a period of one (1) year after resignation, retirement, or separation from public office, except in the case of paragraph (c) above, but the professional concerned cannot practice his profession in connection with any matter before the office he used to be with, within one year after such resignation, retirement, or separation provided that any violation hereof shall be a ground for administrative disciplinary action upon re-entry to the government service.

(e) Disclosing or misusing confidential or classified information officially known to him by reason of his office and not made available to the public, to further his private interests or give undue advantage to anyone, or to prejudice the public interest;

(f) Soliciting or accepting, directly or indirectly, any gift, gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan or anything of monetary value which in the course of his official duties or in connection with any

operation being regulated by, or any transaction which may be affected by the functions of, his office. The propriety or impropriety of the foregoing shall be determined by its value, kinship or relationship between giver and receiver and the motivation. A thing of monetary value is one which is evidently or manifestly excessive by its very nature.

Gift refers to a thing or a right disposed of gratuitously, or any act of liberality, in favor of another who accepts it, and shall include a simulated sale or an ostensibly onerous disposition thereof.

Loan covers both simple loan and commodatum as well as guarantees, financing arrangement or accommodations intended to ensure its approval. Commodatum refers to a contract whereby one of the parties delivers to another something not consumable so that the latter may use the same for a certain time and return it.

This prohibition shall not include:

(1) Unsolicited gift of nominal or insignificant value not given in anticipation of, or in exchange for, a favor from a public official or employee or given after the transaction is completed, or service is rendered. As to what is a gift of nominal value will depend on the circumstances of each case taking into account the salary of the official or employee, the frequency or infrequency of the giving, the expectation of benefits, and other similar factors.

(2) A gift from a member of his family or relative as defined in the Code on the occasion of a family celebration, and without any expectation of pecuniary gain or benefit.

(3) Nominal donations from persons with no regular, pending, or expected transactions with the department, office or agency with which the official or employee is connected, and without any expectation of pecuniary gain or benefit.

(4) Donations coming from private organizations whether local or foreign, which are considered and accepted as humanitarian and altruistic in purpose and mission.

(5) Donations coming from government to government entities.

As to gift or grants from foreign governments, the Congress consents to:

(i) The acceptance and retention by public official or employee of a gift of nominal value tendered and received as a souvenir or mark of courtesy;

(ii) The acceptance and retention by public official or employee of gift in the nature of a scholarship or fellowship grant or medical treatment; or

(iii) The acceptance by a public official or employee of travel grant or expenses for travel taking place entirely outside the Philippines (such as allowances, transportation, food and lodging) of more than nominal value if such acceptance is appropriate or consistent with the interests of the Philippines, and permitted by the head of office, branch, or agency to which he belongs.

Nothing in the Code shall be construed to restrict or prohibit any educational, scientific or

cultural exchange programs subject to national security requirements.

(g) Obtaining or using any statement filed under the Code for any purpose contrary to morals or public policy or any commercial purpose other than by news and communications media for dissemination to the general public;

(h) Unfair discrimination in rendering public service due to party affiliation or preference;

(i) Disloyalty to the Republic of the Philippines and to the Filipino people;

(j) Failure to act promptly on letters and request within fifteen (15) days from receipt, except as otherwise provided in these Rules;

(k) Failure to process documents and complete action on documents and papers within a reasonable time from preparation thereof, except as otherwise provided in these Rules;

(l) Failure to attend to anyone who wants to avail himself of the services of the office, or to act promptly and expeditiously on public personal transactions;

(m) Failure to file sworn statements of assets, liabilities and net worth and disclosure of business interests and financial connections; and

(n) Failure to resign from his position in the private business enterprise within thirty (30) days from assumption of public office when conflict of interest arises, and/or failure to divest himself of his shareholdings or interests in private business enterprise within sixty (60) days from such assumption of public office when conflict of interest arises, the official or employee must either resign or divest himself of said interests within the periods herein-above provided, reckoned from the date when the conflict of interest had arisen.

Rule XI

Penalties

Section 1. Any official or employee regardless of whether or not he holds office or employment in casual, temporary, holdover, permanent or regular capacity, committing any violation of the Code shall be punished with a fine not exceeding the equivalent of six months (6) salary or suspension not exceeding one (1) year, or removal depending on the gravity of the offense after due notice and hearing by the appropriate body or agency. If the violation is punishable by a heavier penalty under another law, he shall be prosecuted under the latter statute. Violations of Section 7, 8, or 9 of the Code shall be punishable with imprisonment not exceeding five (5) years, or a fine not exceeding five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) or both, and in the discretion of the court of competent jurisdiction, disqualification to hold public office.

Any violation hereof proven in a proper administrative proceeding shall be sufficient cause for removal or dismissal of an official or employee, even if no criminal prosecution is instituted against him.

Private individuals who participate in conspiracy as co-principals, accomplices or accessories,

with officials or employees, in violation of the Code, shall be subject to the same penal liabilities as the officials or employees and shall be tried jointly with them.

The official or employee concerned may bring an action against any person who obtains or uses a report for any purpose prohibited by Section 8 (d) of the Code. The Court in which such action is brought may assess against such person a penalty in any amount not to exceed twenty five thousand pesos (P25, 000.00). If another sanction hereunder or under any other law is heavier, the latter shall apply.

Section 2. Administrative proceedings for violation of these Rules shall be in accordance with Civil Service Law and Rules.

Rule XII

Free Voluntary Service

Section 1. (a) Free voluntary service refers to services rendered by persons who are in government without pay or compensation.

(b) The requirements of free voluntary service are as follows:

- (1) Issuance of an appropriate document;
- (2) Fitness and suitability for the duties and responsibilities of the particular position; and
- (3) Compliance with rule on nepotism

(c) The following are the functions or services that volunteers can perform:

- (1) Advisory
- (2) Consultancy or counseling
- (3) Recommendatory;
- (4) Professional Services;
- (5) Staff work such as planning or research; or
- (6) Humanitarian.

(d) Those who render free voluntary service to the government are covered by the following:

- (1) Laws on rewards and incentives;
- (2) Norms of conduct and ethical standards;
- (3) Duties and obligations of public officers and employees;

(4) Prohibitions and sanctions enumerated in these Rules; and

(5) Civil and criminal liability.

(e) Those who render free voluntary service are, however, liabilities and net worth and financial disclosures, the requirement on divestment and the appropriate eligibility requirement, for their designations, and shall not enjoy security of tenure.

Unless otherwise provided in the terms of their designations, volunteers are prohibited from:

(1) Exercising supervisory functions over personnel;

(2) Exercising functions of position involving national security;

(3) Having access to confidential or classified information unless authorized by proper authorities;

(4) Occupying regular plantilla positions;

(5) Having such services credited as government service and availing themselves of retirement benefits;

(6) Using facilities and resources of the office for partisan political purposes; and

(7) Receiving any pecuniary benefits such as honoraria, allowances and other perquisites of office.

Rule XIII

Amendment

Section 1. The Civil Service Commission may amend or modify these Rules as may be necessary.

Rule XIV

Effectivity

Section 1. These Rules shall take effect thirty (30) days following the completion of their publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.