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MEMORANDUM ORDER NO. 63

PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF A SPECIAL TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS THE EMERGENCY SITUATIONS ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article XII, Section 5 of the Constitution, the State, subject to the provisions of the Constitution and national development policies and programs, shall protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to their ancestral lands to ensure their economic, social, and cultural well-being;

WHEREAS, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) was created, by virtue of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 (Republic Act No. 8371), to serve as the primary government agency responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies, plans and programs to promote and protect the rights and well-being of the indigenous peoples and the recognition of their ancestral domains as well as their rights thereto;

WHEREAS, under Administrative Order No. 26 dated January 11, 2002, the NCIP Commissioners were directed to plan and implement the reorganization of the NCIP to enable it to efficiently discharge its duties and functions;

WHEREAS, pending the reorganization of the NCIP, there is an urgent need for a mechanism to immediately address emergency situations adversely affecting the indigenous peoples and constituting potential and actual threats to the lives and properties of the indigenous peoples.

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

SECTION 1. There is hereby created a Special Task Force which shall immediately act to address the emergency situations affecting the indigenous peoples.

For this purpose, emergency situations shall refer to those cases adversely affecting the rights and welfare of the indigenous peoples, and requiring immediate action and remedial measures by the Government or such situations deemed by the President to be in need of an urgent response.

SECTION 2. The Special Task Force shall consist of the President of the Philippines, as Chairperson; the Presidential Adviser for Strategic Concerns, as Vice-Chairperson and Executive Officer; and the Lead Convenor, National Anti-Poverty Commission and the Chairperson, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), as members.

SECTION 3. The Special Task Force may call upon any agency of the Government for such assistance as may be necessary in the performance of its task.

SECTION 4. The concerned agencies of the Government shall consult the Executive Officer of the Special Task Force prior to issuing titles, licenses, permits and other forms of land use arrangements covering ancestral domains and lands.

SECTION 5. The Executive Officer shall submit periodic reports to the President on the status of actions and measures undertaken to address the emergency situations.

SECTION 6. The Special Task Force shall cease to exist after a period of one (1) year from the date of effectivity of this Memorandum Order. Thereafter, the NCIP shall complete its unfinished activities, if any.

SECTION 7. This Memorandum Order shall take effect immediately upon approval.

City of Manila, June 4, 2002.

(Sgd.) **GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**

By the President:
Acting Executive Secretary