ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT
OF THE PUBLIC ATTORNEY’S OFFICE
FOR THE YEAR 2017

Executive Summary

❖ Clients Assisted and Cases Handled
- Total No. of Clients Assisted 11,616,916
- Total No. of Cases Handled 906,251
- Average No. of Clients Assisted by Each Lawyer 5,794
- Average No. of Cases Handled by Each Lawyer 458

❖ Major Final Output: Free Legal Services to Indigent Clients and Other Qualified Persons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</th>
<th>TARGETS</th>
<th>ACCOMPLISHMENTS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI Set 1:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of cases under management.</td>
<td>851,062</td>
<td>906,251</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases with favorable judgment.</td>
<td>73.41% (223,812/304,880)</td>
<td>76.13% (240,109/315,401)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of requests for legal assistance/representation acted upon within three (3) working days from the date of request.</td>
<td>100% (1,201,580/1,201,580)</td>
<td>100% (1,246,462/1,246,462)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of hearings for which no postponement is sought by the PAO legal representative.</td>
<td>99.90% (487,000/487,416)</td>
<td>99.93% (583,637/584,055)</td>
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<td>PI Set 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of clients served (Non-Judicial).</td>
<td>4,995,530</td>
<td>7,248,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of legal advisories/counselling provided.</td>
<td>1,924,387</td>
<td>3,488,920</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of clients who rated the legal services of PAO as satisfactory or better.</td>
<td>99.99% (564,740/564,808)</td>
<td>100% (630,561/630,561)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Percentage of requests for assistance that are acted upon within two (2) hours.

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<tr>
<th>100% (2,341,464/2,341,464)</th>
<th>100% (2,477,936/2,477,936)</th>
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</table>

- Total No. of Winning Appealed Criminal Cases
  (For Court of Appeals and Supreme Court only)
  - Acquittals from Reclusion Temporal
    85
  - Acquittals from Reclusion Perpetua
    105

- Total No. of Winning Appealed Civil and Special Cases
  (For Court of Appeals and Supreme Court only)

- Acquittals and Other Favorable Dispositions
  (RTC & MCTC METC)

Accused Benefited from:
- Acquittal
  16,754
- Dismissal with Prejudice
  44,168
- Granted Motion to Quash
  1,185
- Granted Demurrer to Evidence
  2,745
- Provisional Dismissal
  43,568
- Conviction to Lesser Offense
  41,362
- Granted Probation
  4,446
- Won
  39
- Granted Lesser Award
  53
- Dismissal based on Compromise Agreement
  233
- Criminal Cases for Preliminary Investigation:
  - K.1. Case filed in court (Complainant)
    3,007
  - K.2. Dismissed (Respondent)
    584
- Pre-trial Releases and Other Favorable Dispositions:
  - L.1. Released on Bail (Non-bailable offense)
    592
  - L.2. Released on Recognizance
    707
  - L.3. Diversion Proceedings/Intervention
    687
  - L.4. Suspended Sentence
    532
  - L.5. Maximum Imposable Penalty Served
    476

- Limited Services
  686,072
  - Arraignment
    133,109
  - Pre-trial
    84,957
  - Promulgation of judgment
    61,339
  - Others
    406,667
  (as counsel de oficio, Direct or Cross Examination during trial in the absence of private counsel, Motion for Bail, etc.)
✈ Special Legal Services  
(Pursuant to Sec. 14-A of R.A. 9406 and MOAs)  

✈ Rendition of Quasi-Judicial Services  
Mediation and Conciliation  
Investigation (R.A. 9745 or Anti-Torture Law)  

✈ Instant Services  
Legal Documentation  
Oaths Administered  
Clients Counseled  

✈ Outreach Activities  
1. Inquest Investigation & Custodial Interrogation  
   • Total No. of Clients Assisted  
2. Barangay Legal Outreach Activities  
   • Total No. of Beneficiaries  

✈ Nationwide Monthly Jail Visitation of District Offices  
No. of Detainees/Inmates who were:  
A. Interviewed and Assisted  
B. Provided Legal Representation in Court  
C. Acquitted:  
   C.1. After trial  
   C.2. On appeal  
D. Released on:  
   D.1. Pardon/Executive Clemency/Probation  
   D.2. Motion to Dismiss/Motion to Quash  
   D.3. Inquest Assistance/Representation  
   D.4. Bail/Recognizance  
   D.5. After serving the possible maximum prison term  
   D.5. Released on other grounds (i.e. Motion for judicial determination of probable cause, and others)  

✈ PAO-Central Office Legal & Medical Jail Visitation and Decongestion Program  
• Total No. of Program Beneficiaries  
• No. of Beneficiaries of Legal Assistance  
• No. of Beneficiaries of Medical Assistance  
• No. of Beneficiaries of Dental Assistance  

2017 – PAO ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT  
(Executive Summary)
- No. of Beneficiaries of Optical Assistance: 1,337
- Total No. of Inmates Released: 2,291
  (from various jails in Metro Manila and nearby provinces visited by the PAO-Central Office and followed up by the field offices)

**Legal/Inquest Proceedings Assistance**

On their scheduled duties, the public attorneys and staff of the PAO-Central Office have alternately been providing legal and inquest proceedings assistance even during night time, weekends and holidays since October 2009. For this purpose, the PAO hotlines, 929-9436 (local 106 or 107 during office hours and local 159 after office hours) 426-2801, 426-2450, 426-2987, and 426-2683 are open to the public 24/7.

In September 2010, the coverage of this program was expanded to serve the people covered by the regional and district offices of the PAO, nationwide. Since then, the said offices have been rendering legal assistance (e.g. legal advice, attending to the legal needs of suspects in the police stations within the territorial jurisdiction of the concerned PAO regional/district offices) up to 10:00 P.M. everyday (including weekends and holidays). Further, the assigned PAO inquest public attorneys and staff therein remain on call, even beyond 10:00 P.M., to attend to inquest calls in police stations nationwide.

- Clients Served: 48,849

**Training Sessions and Seminars Attended**

- Training Participants
  - Lawyers: 4,854
  - Support Personnel: 1,103

**Case Load**

Out of 211,226 terminated criminal cases, there were 161,138 or about 76.29% favorable dispositions obtained by the Public Attorneys from representing indigent clients.

- Total No. of Criminal Cases Handled: 640,094
- Total No. of Cases Terminated: 211,226
- Terminated Cases Favorable to Clients: 161,138
- Total Percentage of Winning Criminal Cases: 76.29%
Out of **11,735 terminated civil cases**, there were **9,049** or about **77.11% favorable dispositions** obtained by the Public Attorneys from representing indigent clients.

- Total No. of Civil Cases Handled: 41,004
- Total No. of Cases Terminated: 11,735
- Terminated Cases Favorable to Clients: 9,049
- Total Percentage of Winning Civil Cases: **77.11%**

Out of **5,427 terminated administrative cases proper**, there were **3,399** or about **62.63% favorable dispositions** obtained by the Public Attorneys from representing indigent clients.

- Total No. of Administrative Cases Proper Handled: 13,807
- Total No. of Cases Terminated: 5,427
- Terminated Cases Favorable to Clients: 3,399
- Total Percentage of Winning Administrative Cases: **62.63%**

Out of **64,033 prosecutor's office cases handled**, **35,126 were terminated**.

- Total No. of Prosecutor's Office Cases Handled: 64,033
- Total No. of Cases Terminated: 35,126

Out of **27,905 terminated labor cases**, there were **23,253** or about **83.33% favorable dispositions** obtained by the Public Attorneys from representing indigent clients.

- Total No. of Labor Cases Handled: 44,630
- Total No. of Cases Terminated: 27,905
- Terminated Cases Favorable to Clients: 23,253
- Total Percentage of Winning Labor Cases: **83.33%**

With respect to cases involving violation of **Republic Act 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act)**, **36,067 cases were handled by the PAO**, among which **20,449 cases were duly terminated**.

- Total No. of Cases Involving Women Victims of Violation of R.A. 9262: 36,067
- Total No. of Cases Terminated: 20,449
On the other hand, with respect to cases involving Children in Conflict with the Law pursuant to R.A. 9344, 24,153 cases were handled by the PAO, among which 8,003 were duly terminated.

- Total No. of Cases Involving Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) 24,153
- Total No. of Cases Terminated 8,003

- Total No. of Clients Assisted by the PAO-National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) Sub-Station Located in Banawe, Quezon City 18,632

- Total No. of Research Work and Legal Opinions for Queries from the Public that were Directly Addressed or otherwise referred to the PAO 2,567

**Library Services**

- No. of legal books and reference materials distributed to regional and district offices 1,117

- No. of news releases from various broadsheets and tabloids concerning the Office, its cases, and various programs and projects 3,254

**PAO Equipment**

For the period covering January to December 2017, the following office equipment and semi-expendable properties were procured and distributed to various PAO regional and district offices as well as the Central Office, to wit:

**A. Acquired the following Property, Plant and Equipment and Semi-expendable properties:**

- 188 units Desktop Computer (Taken from 2015 Budget)
- 100 units Uninterruptible Power Supply (Taken from 2015 Budget)
- 486 MS Office 2016 License (Taken from 2016 Budget)
- 37 Air-conditioning unit
- 29 units Biometrics
- 21 units Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)
- 10 units Two-way radio
- 11 units Fax machine
- 1 unit Combination and Key lock vault
- 3 units Bookshelves
- 3 pcs Bench
- 57 pcs Office table
- 22 pcs Computer table
- 87 pcs Executive table
- 85 pcs Office chair
- 22 pcs Computer chair
- 226 pcs Executive chair
- 168 pcs Monobloc chair
- 208 pcs Filing cabinet
- 2 pcs Push cart

**B. For bidding at PS-DBM**
- 538 units Desktop Computer
- 538 units Printer
- 538 units Uninterruptible Power Supply
- 9 units Multifunction Printer
- 213 Multifunction Copier
- 145 Multi-user packs Anti-Virus

**C. Property distributed:**
- 244 units Desktop Computer
- 188 units Printer
- 231 units Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)

**The Office of the Chief Public Attorney**

- The Office of the Chief Public Attorney **received and answered 68,434 communications** from January to December 2017;
- The Office of the Chief Public Attorney served **28,831 clients** during this period;
- The Chief Public Attorney served as **resource person**, in the following seminars, trainings, and meetings, among others:

  **a. Guest Speaker, The Association of Government Accountants of the Philippines’ (AGAP) Annual Convention-Seminar** (Theme: "Transforming the Government Financial Sector in the Era of ASEAN Integration"),
October 18-21, 2017, Waterfront Cebu City Hotel, Salinas Drive, Lahug, Cebu City;


c. **Guest of Honor and Speaker**, Annual University Conference of the University of Makati, June 6, 2017, University of Makati Mini Theater;

d. **Guest of Honor and Speaker**, Public Installation of Elected and Appointed Officers of Araw Lodge No. 18, held on March 18, 2017 at the Scottish Rite Temple, 1004 Taft Ave., Manila;

e. **Guest of Honor and Speaker**, Public Installation of Elected and Appointed Officers of the Muntinlupa City Lodge 414, held on February 25, 2017 at the Muntinlupa Masonic Temple, Emerald Hills, Victoria Homes Subd., Tunasan, Muntinlupa City;

> The Chief Public Attorney *personally handled and/or led* the following cases, *and/or rendered legal assistance* to the following individuals, *inter alia*, to wit:

**a. John Bulluss's Hold Departure Order lifted**

Upon the request of the Australian Embassy, the Chief Public Attorney and PAO-Makati District Office assisted John Bulluss, an Australian citizen, in a criminal case for Estafa.

In an Order, dated March 14, 2017, the Regional Trial Court, Branch No. 57 of Makati City, through Judge Honorio E. Guanzao, Jr., granted the PAO's motion to dismiss the said case for failure to prosecute. Consequently, Bulluss's Hold Departure Order was lifted and he was able to leave the Philippines for Australia.

**b. Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino and companion, Yan Yi Shou, freed from detention**

The Petition for Review filed by the Chief Public Attorney and her legal team on behalf of Lt. Col. Ferdinand L. Marcelino, seeking the reversal of the *Resolution* dated September 15,
2016, was granted and the drug charges against Lt. Col. Marcelino and his companion, Yan Yi Shou, were dismissed.

The Department of Justice, in a Resolution dated May 17, 2017, ruled that Lt. Col. Marcelino and Yan Yi Shou were just performing their lawful duty when they were chanced upon by anti-narcotics agents inside an alleged clandestine laboratory in Manila.

In connection thereto, in an Order dated May 18, 2017, the Regional Trial Court, Branch No. 49 of Manila, through Judge Daniel C. Villanueva, granted the Public Attorney’s Office’s Motion to Withdraw Information against Lt. Ferdinand L. Marcelino and Yan Yi Shou and the two were ordered to be released immediately.

**c. Bonita Baran’s former employers found by RTC-Branch 77 of Quezon City guilty for the crime of serious illegal detention**

Since 2012, the Chief Public Attorney and her legal team have been assisting Bonita Baran in the latter’s cases against her former employers, Anna Liza Catahan y Tarrosa and Reynold Marzan y Tan, who maltreated and detained her.

In a Decision dated July 14, 2017, the Regional Trial Court, Branch 77 of Quezon City, through Judge Ferdinand C. Baylon, found Anna Liza Catahan y Tarrosa guilty of serious illegal detention and was sentenced to serve the penalty of Reclusion Perpetua while her co-accused, Reynold Marzan y Tan, was found guilty as an accomplice to the said crime and was sentenced to suffer the penalty of Prision Mayor Medium as Minimum to Reclusion Temporal Medium as Maximum.

**d. Estipona v. Hon. Lobrigo and People, G.R. No. 226679, 15 August 2017**

Salvador A. Estipona, Jr. was the accused in Criminal Case No. 13586 for violation of Section 11, Article II of R.A. No. 9165 (Possession of Dangerous Drugs) pending before Judge Frank E. Lobrigo of the Regional Trial Court (RTC), Branch 3, Legazpi City, Albay.

On June 15, 2016, Estipona, with the assistance of the PAO Legazpi City District Office, filed a Motion to Allow the Accused to Enter into a Plea Bargaining Agreement, praying to
withdraw his not guilty plea and, instead, to enter a plea of guilty for violation of Section 12, Article II of R.A. No. 9165 (Possession of Equipment, Instrument, Apparatus and Other Paraphernalia for Dangerous Drugs). He argued that Section 23 of R.A. No. 9165, which states “SEC 23. Plea-Bargaining Provision. - Any person charged under any provision of this Act regardless of the imposable penalty shall not be allowed to avail of the provision on plea-bargaining.”, violates: (1) the intent of the law expressed in paragraph 3, Section 2 thereof; (2) the rule-making authority of the Supreme Court under Section 5(5), Article VIII of the 1987 Constitution; and (3) the principle of separation of powers among the three equal branches of the government. After the prosecution filed its Comment or Opposition thereto, the RTC issued an Order denying Estipona’s motion. Estipona filed a Motion for Reconsideration but the same was denied by the RTC.

Thus, the Chief Public Attorney and her legal team, representing Estipona, elevated the case to the Supreme Court via a Petition for Certiorari and Prohibition and challenged the constitutionality of Section 23 of Republic Act No. 9165 for being violative of the constitutional right to equal protection of the law and the rule-making authority of the Supreme Court under Section 5(5), Article VIII of the 1987 Constitution, among others.

In its Decision dated 15 August 2017, the Supreme Court deemed it proper to declare as unconstitutional the prohibition against plea bargaining in drug cases, for being contrary to the rule-making authority of the Supreme Court under Section 5(5), Article VIII of the 1987 Constitution.

*e. Four (4) youngsters who died with indications of torture*

Kian Loyd Delos Santos, Carl Angelo Arnaiz, Reynaldo “Kulot” de Guzman, and Michael Angelo Remecio were four (4) youngsters who had indications of torture before they were killed and robbed of their promising lives.

The parents of the said youngsters sought the legal assistance of the Public Attorney’s Office (PAO), as well as forensic examination on the remains of their sons.
The case of Kian Loyd Delos Santos

Kian Loyd Delos Santos (Kian) was a 17-year-old minor who died on August 16, 2017 while certain members of the Caloocan Police were conducting an anti-illegal drug operation in Libis, Baesa, Caloocan City. According to the version of the police, Kian drew his gun against members of the police force, prompting a shoot-out, which eventually led to his death. However, a CCTV footage surfaced showing that Kian was accosted alive by the police and was apparently dragged to the place where he was killed. The forensic examination conducted by the PAO Forensic Laboratory also showed that Kian sustained three (3) gunshot wounds – two (2) in the head which may have been inflicted while he was on the ground on a prone position and one (1) in the back – contrary to the Philippine National Police (PNP) report that Kian only sustained two (2) gunshot wounds in the head.

On August 25, 2017, with the assistance of the Chief Public Attorney and her legal team, the parents of Kian lodged a complaint for Murder and Violation of the Anti-Torture Law against members of the Caloocan Police involved in the operation before the National Prosecution Service of the Department of Justice (DOJ-NPS). The status of Kian’s case, as of last year: Preliminary investigation at the DOJ-NPS.

The cases of Carl Angelo Arnaiz and Reynaldo "Kulot" de Guzman

Carl Angelo Arnaiz (Carl), aged 19 years old, and minor Reynaldo De Guzman (Kulot), aged 14 years old, were hanging out at the former’s house on the evening of August 17, 2017. They were last seen boarding a tricycle on or about midnight of August 18, 2017. Since then, the two (2) went missing.

On August 28, 2017, Carl was found by his family at a funeral parlor in Caloocan City. Reportedly, the cause of his death was due to gunshot wounds he sustained when he allegedly exchanged fire with the police officers who was about to arrest him for robbing a cab driver along C3 Road, Caloocan City. On the other hand, Kulot was found lifeless, riddled with stab wounds, and floating in a creek in Gapan City, Nueva Ecija on September 6, 2017, or nine (9) days after Carl’s body was found and identified by his family and nineteen (19) days after he went missing.
The testimonies of witnesses and the result of forensic examination conducted by PAO Forensic Laboratory, upon the request of the surviving families of Carl Angelo and Kulot, belie the claim of the involved police officers and indicate that the alleged shootout was merely "staged" and Carl was shot in an "execution style". The chain of circumstances attendant to the case and initial investigation also led to the conclusion that the culprits who killed Carl are likewise responsible for the death of Kulot.

Thus, with the assistance of the Chief Public Attorney and her legal team, the surviving families of Carl and Kulot filed complaints for Double Murder and Violation of the Anti-Torture Law against certain police officers involved in the alleged shootout before the National Prosecution Service of the Department of Justice on September 14, 2017. Complaints for Planting of Evidence were also filed against the same police officers.

**The case of Michael Angelo Remecio**

Acting on the request of the family of Michael Angelo Remecio (Michael) for legal assistance and forensic examination, the PAO Forensic Laboratory was able to confirm that the corpse inside a sack that was found along a stream in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan, was identified as that of Michael's. His hands were bound by a nylon cord, and based on forensic examination that was conducted by the PAO Forensic Laboratory on September 15, 2017, he was between 16 to 18 years old.

In all of the four (4) cases of the abovementioned youngsters, it has been proven that aside from the pro bono legal assistance of the PAO, Forensic Science, through the PAO Forensic Laboratory, has become an affordable tool for the poor who are seeking for justice.

**f. Policeman found guilty by NAPOLCOM in the case of John Dela Riarte**

Robert dela Riarte has been a client of the PAO since 2016. His brother John, was shot to death by two (2) Philippine National Police (PNP)-Highway Patrol Group (HPG) personnel, namely: PO3 Jeremiah De Villa (now deceased) and PO2 Jonjie Manon-og.
The late John Dela Riarte was involved in a vehicular accident which happened on July 29, 2016 at around 9:00 to 10:00 o’clock in the morning, along the southbound lane of EDSA-Estrella intersection in Makati City.

The Chief Public Attorney and her legal team assisted Dela Riarte in the filing of criminal cases for Murder, Robbery, Torture, and Violation of Republic Act No. 7438 before the Department of Justice on August 8, 2016, likewise in the filing of administrative cases against the said PNP-HPG personnel before the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) on the same date. Two separate Information for Murder/Robbery were filed before RTC 145 and 138, Makati City. Both cases are submitted for Decision. On September 28, 2017, the NAPOLCOM found PO2 Jonjie Manon-og culpable for grave misconduct and conduct unbecoming of a police officer.

g. Fifty-two (52) PAO retirees were paid by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) of their retirement gratuity differentials

In the case of Public Attorney’s Office (PAO) Retirees v. Department of Budget and Management, et al. (R-QZN-16-05464-CV), handled by the Chief Public Attorney and her legal team, Presiding Judge Maria Gilda Loja-Pangilinan, Regional Trial Court-Branch 230, Quezon City, on February 14, 2017, rendered a Decision directing the Department of Budget and Management “to cause the immediate release of the retirement benefits” of the PAO retirees, recognizing the vital role and significance of public attorneys in the administration of justice. In the words of the Honorable Judge Loja-Pangilinan, “[p]ublic attorneys retirees deserve to be provided the wherewithal to live a life of relative comfort, dignity and security after years of honorable service in the government.”

In connection thereto, Secretary of Justice Vitaliano N. Aguirre II, in a Letter dated April 17, 2017, addressed to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), reiterated his manifestation that he favors the immediate release of the retirement benefits of the PAO retirees and the same should be equal to those of their counterparts, pursuant to the PAO Law in relation to the NPS Law.

Secretary Aguirre recommended that the DBM submit to the Regional Trial Court’s (RTC) ruling that the DBM and GSIS
Joint Circular No. 2013-1 and Budget Circular No. 2013-1, which recognize the rights of PAO retirees to gratuities same as those of their NPS counterparts, stand; and that the PAO retirees already acquired a vested right to the said benefits because of a previous recognition by the DBM.

After the abovementioned ruling of the Regional Trial Court-Branch 230, Quezon City, through Presiding Judge Loja-Pangilinan in the case Public Attorney's Office (PAO) Retirees v. Department of Budget and Management, et al., and the support of the Department of Justice, through Secretary Aguirre in the said Letter, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) rightfully paid the long-awaited retirement gratuity differentials of the fifty-two (52) PAO retirees.

h. Upholding the constitutional right of the accused to confront the witness of the prosecution: the case of Maria Christina P. Sergio and Julius L. Lacanilao

Maria Christina P. Sergio and Julius L. Lacanilao sought the assistance of the Public Attorney’s Office when they were charged with alleged Illegal Recruitment under Republic Act No. 10022 and Qualified Trafficking of Persons under Republic Act No. 8042 based on the Sworn Statement executed by Mary Jane F. Veloso, an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) who was convicted of drug trafficking in Indonesia.

The People of the Philippines (prosecution) filed before the Regional Trial Court in Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija, a Motion for Leave of Court to Take the Testimony of Complainant Mary Jane Veloso by Deposition Upon Written Interrogatories considering that Veloso is out of the country and that she will not be able to testify personally before the court.

In behalf of Sergio and Lacanilao, the Chief Public Attorney and her legal team opposed the aforementioned Motion mainly on the ground that depositions taken pursuant to Rules 23 and 25 of the Rules of Court are not designed to replace the actual testimony of the witness in open court and the use thereof should be solely confined to civil cases. It was emphasized and argued that the proposed method of taking Veloso’s testimony is violative of their right to confront the witnesses or meet them face to face as guaranteed under Section 14 (2) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.
The Regional Trial Court issued a Resolution on 16 August 2016 granting the prosecution’s Motion. Thereafter, the PAO filed a Motion for Reconsideration but the same was denied in a Resolution dated 03 November 2016. Hence, a Petition for Certiorari and Prohibition assailing the said Resolutions were timely filed by the PAO.

On 13 December 2017, the Former Eleventh Division of the Honorable Court of Appeals rendered a Decision in the case of Maria Cristina P. Sergio and Julius L. Lacanilao v. Hon. Anarica J. Castillo-Reyes, et al., CA-G.R. SP No. 149002, reversing the Resolution of the Regional Trial Court (RTC), stating that “the conditional examination of a prosecution witness shall be made before the court where the case is pending in light of the constitutionally enshrined right of the petitioners to meet the witnesses face to face or the right to confrontation and cross-examination. Especially since the cross-examination of a witness is an absolute right, not a mere privilege, of the party against whom he is called.”

i. Legal assistance, including forensic examination, of Dengvaxia victims, upon the directive of the Department of Justice

Deceased victim Anjelica is a ten (10) year old child who was inoculated with Dengvaxia, an anti-dengue vaccine manufactured by Sanofi Pasteur, Inc. that was used by the Department of Health (DOH) in its anti-dengue mass vaccination program, which was implemented in 2016 during the term of then DOH Sec. Janette Garin. On 29 November 2017, Sanofi Pasteur, Inc. issued an advisory or update information on Dengvaxia recognizing the risk it poses to those who are not previously infected by dengue virus, particularly, the occurrence of more severe disease.

A few months after inoculation, Anjelica died. Aggrieved by the loss of their eldest child, plaintiffs sought legal assistance from the Public Attorney’s Office (PAO). In response to the request of the parents of Anjelica and armed with the Department of Justice Department Order No. 792, s. 2017 directing the PAO “to extend free legal assistance in civil, criminal and administrative cases to all possible victims of Dengvaxia related injuries, illnesses and deaths”, the PAO forensic team conducted a forensic examination on the body of Anjelica.
At the time of writing, the parents of Anjielica Pestilos, together with the PAO legal team, are preparing to file a complaint against those responsible for the death of Anjielica.

- The Chief Public Attorney received the following prestigious **awards**, among others, to wit:

  a. **Medal of Excellence** conferred by the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC), during its 19th Founding Anniversary on August 16, 2017 at the Malacañang Palace, Manila;

  b. **Major Award for Government Service Institution (conferred also to the Public Attorney’s Office [PAO])** from the VACC, during its 19th Founding Anniversary on August 16, 2017 at the Malacañang Palace, Manila;

  c. **Plaque of Appreciation** from Araw Lodge No. 18 (under the jurisdiction of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines), on the occasion of the 109th Installation of Officers for the Masonic Year 2017 of the said Lodge, on March 18, 2017 at the Scottish Rite Temple, 1004 Taft Ave., Manila;

  d. **Plaque of Appreciation (For Extraordinary Service and Dedication to the Profession)** from the Muntinlupa City Lodge 414, F & A.M. on the occasion of the 3rd Installation of Elected and Appointed Officers of the said Lodge, on February 25, 2017 at the Muntinlupa Masonic Temple, Emerald Hills, Victoria Homes Subd., Tunasan, Muntinlupa City;

  e. **Certificate of Appreciation (For Excellence in Leadership)** from the Best of the Philippines, Co., during its 26th Anniversary (with the theme, “Honoring the Leaders”), given on February 23, 2017 at the Rockwell Club, Amorsolo Drive, Makati City;

  f. **Rotary Golden Wheel Award (in the field of Social Justice)** from the Quezon City Government in partnership with the Rotary International District 3780, conferred on February 4, 2017 at the Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria, Quezon City on the occasion of the 5th Rotary Golden Wheel Awards Night.
VI. OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

a. Assistance to drug dependents regarding documentation, representation, and rehabilitation

From January to June 2017, four thousand nine hundred forty-seven (4,947) individuals have availed of the pro bono services regarding documentation and representation – for rehabilitation purposes in relation to Oplan-"Tokhang" - of the PAO through its Regional and District Offices nationwide.

For FY 2017, the PAO handled two hundred ten thousand eight hundred sixty-three (210,863) drug-related cases, fifty-five thousand three hundred thirty (55,330) of which were disposed/terminated. Moreover, for the year 2017, the PAO was able to assist one hundred eighty-six thousand two hundred twenty-six (186,226) clients in its non-judicial services (i.e. documentation services, administration of oaths, legal counseling, assistance during custodial interrogation, and inquest investigation) relative to cases involving the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 or R.A. 9165.

b. The Public Attorney’s Office as a member of the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs (ICAD)

The PAO is a member of the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs (ICAD) which was created by the President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Roa Duterte, through Executive Order No. 15, dated 06 March 2017.

The Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs (ICAD) is divided into four (4) clusters namely:

a. Enforcement Cluster
b. Justice Cluster
c. Advocacy Cluster
d. Rehabilitation and Reintegration Cluster

The PAO is under the Advocacy Cluster, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Cluster, and Justice Cluster. Under the latter, the PAO is specifically tasked to ensure “protection to individual’s rights, such as in instances of voluntary surrenders and warrantless arrests during anti-illegal drug operations”.

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The Public Attorney's Office has religiously attended all the meetings called by ICAD and submitted all the required reports.

c. PAO employee who voluntarily submitted himself for drug rehabilitation, now back at the PAO-Central Office with full vigor

An employee of the PAO, voluntarily submitted himself for drug rehabilitation on April 12, 2017 at Camp Bagong Diwa, Bicutan, Taguig City. He was thereafter temporarily discharged on October 19, 2017, and was required to undergo an After-Care Follow-up Treatment for a period of not exceeding eighteen (18) months upon the date of actual discharge.

He consequently resumed his post at the PAO-Central Office, and was immediately transferred to another service in the same place/building, pursuant to the grant of his request dated October 24, 2017, addressed to the Chief Public Attorney. He currently discharges his duties as a fulltime staff with full vigor, exemplifying more interest in work, and in a conduct of healthier lifestyle, observable among his peers/colleagues in the service.

d. For the "Tanay Bus Tragedy Victims," a successful compromise agreement with Bestlink and Panda Coach

The "Tanay Bus Tragedy Victims," some of whom were the students-survivors and relatives of the deceased, involving the February 20, 2017 vehicular tragedy in Tanay, Rizal, sought legal assistance from the PAO — Central Office. They sought justice for the death of fourteen (14) students and injuries sustained by forty-seven (47) passengers. They believed that the same were caused by negligence in transporting the students to Tanay, Rizal by a Panda Coach Bus, which was sub-contracted by Harana Tours, in relation to the students’ medical and survival training as part of the National Service Training Program, which was sanctioned by Bestlink College of the Philippines.

Verily, the PAO-Central Office conducted a Pre-Litigation Conference, wherein some of the students-survivors had successfully entered into a compromise agreement with Bestlink and Panda Coach.

With respect to the relatives of the deceased, the PAO-Central Office represented them in the following cases: (a) administrative case for the preventive suspension of Panda Coach’s Certificates of Public Convenience pending before the Land Transportation
Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB); and (b) civil case for Damages pending before the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City, Branch 223.

e. For some of the relative-clients of victims in the "Resorts World- Manila Attack," a successful compromise agreement with the Resorts World Manila

On June 2, 2017, the gaming area of the Resorts World Manila in Pasay City was caught on fire hours after a gunman went on a rampage in the casino complex; hence, claiming the lives of thirty-eight (38) individuals.

Some of the relatives of the deceased sought legal assistance from the PAO-Central Office. Consequently, the latter conducted a Pre-Litigation Conference, wherein some of the victims had successfully entered into a compromise agreement with the Resorts World Manila.

f. Permanent appointment of the Chief Public Attorney and the Deputy Chief Public Attorneys

In Career Executive Service Board represented by Chairperson Bernard P. Abesamis, et al. v. Civil Service Commission represented by Chairman Francisco T. Duque III, et al. (G.R. # 197762, March 7, 2017), the Honorable Supreme Court ruled that the Chief Public Attorney and the Deputy Chief Public Attorneys are not required by law to be Career Executive Service Officers (CESO) before being qualified as permanent appointees. Otherwise stated, they cannot be removed from their respective positions if the sole reason for such is the lack of Career Executive Service eligibility.

g. Empowerment of the PAO Employees

The Public Attorney’s Office, in its commitment to empower, re-orient, and keep its employees abreast, conducted a series of seminars on the Revised PAO Operations Manual and Code of Conduct. For the year 2017, all lawyers and staff of the following Regions attended the said seminars:

1. Public Attorneys:
   A. NCR - January 30 - February 1
   B. Central Office (1st batch) - February 20 - 22
   C. Central Office (2nd batch) - February 27 - March 1
   D. Region 4A & B - March 15 - 17
E. Region 3 - March 20 - 22
F. Region 5 - April 3 - 5
G. CAR, Region 1 and 2 - April 19 - 21
H. Regions 6 to 8 and NIR - April 24 - 26
I. Regions 9A, 9B, 10, 11, 12, 13 - May 3 - 5

2. Support Staff:
   A. Regions in Visayas - May 22 - 24
   B. Regions in Luzon - July 3 - 5
   C. Regions in Mindanao - July 12 - 14

h. The 6th Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Accredited National Convention of Public Attorneys: A milestone

The 6th Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Accredited National Convention of Public Attorneys was conducted on September 18 to 22, 2017 at the Tent City, Manila Hotel, One Rizal Park 1099, Roxas Boulevard, Ermita, Manila. This was the first convention to be conducted by the Public Attorney’s Office (PAO) under the administration of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, the Keynote Speaker during its Opening Ceremonies. Thus, this MCLE-accredited activity of the PAO, was not just another convention, it was a milestone!

In the said convention, the PAO endowed freely more or less 1,500 public attorneys the required 36 hours of continuing legal education activities. As in the previous conventions, this was duly approved by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Likewise, in the past years (2003, 2006, 2009, 2011, and 2014), when the PAO held its five (5) MCLE-accredited conventions, it offered therein free legal education activities as prescribed by the Supreme Court, to its lawyers, the PAO being an MCLE provider since 2002.

i. Renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Public Attorney’s Office (PAO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

In January 2013, the PAO and the UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding and since then have become partners in providing free legal assistance, counseling and representation to refugees, stateless persons, and those seeking recognition as refugees or stateless persons in the Philippine context.
The PAO was able to provide free legal aid consisting of over 5,000 judicial and non-judicial services to refugees, asylum-seekers, and persons at risk of statelessness from different parts of the Philippines, while the UNHCR facilitated capacity building activities and provided technical assistance to PAO.

Last April 6, 2017, the said Memorandum of Understanding was renewed and the partnership between the PAO and the UNHCR was extended for two (2) more years.

The extension of the agreement for another two years is in line with President Rodrigo R. Duterte’s policy to accept displaced persons.

**j. Memorandum of Agreement of the Public Attorney’s Office (PAO) with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and National Housing Authority (NHA) relative to the design of the New PAO-Central Office Building**

On 09 May 2017, the Public Attorney’s Office, Department of Public Works and Highways, and National Housing Authority entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with regard to the design of the new PAO-Central Office Building. The new building intends to address the serious congestion problem of PAO Central Office which has no sufficient area for: a. Office provision of its existing 500 employees and additional manpower, b. Receiving and interviewing guests and clients respectively, c. Personnel employment records and court case records, d. Training new employees, e. Seminars and meetings, f. Official events and functions.

**k. National Women’s Month Celebration 2017**

In connection with the celebration of the National Women’s Month held on March 31, 2017 at the Malacañang Palace, San Miguel, Manila, the Chief Public Attorney, attended the one-day event entitled "D-Day for Women - Digong’s Day for Women".

From the PAO, the Chief Public Attorney was joined in the said event by 161 women lawyers and staff of the PAO-Central Office, two selected district offices of PAO-NCR and the Regional Office of PAO-MIMAROPA Region.

The PAO lawyers who attended the said event rendered free legal consultation to some women attendees with legal problems.