BENCHBOOK FOR TRIAL COURT JUDGES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Philippine Benchbook for Trial Court Judges, the first comprehensive practical guide for the judiciary published in the Republic of the Philippines, is the result of a unique combination of foresight, sensitivity, goodwill and determination, displayed by a group of eminent Filipino jurists, the authors and editors of the Benchbook, a committed development agency and consultants.

As the Philippine Benchbook for Trial Court Judges is presented to judges and members of the legal community of the Philippines, I would like, in my capacity as Project Coordinator, to express my deepest gratitude to all those who made this venture possible and this effort a gratifying success.

First and foremost, I would like to express my appreciation to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines, Honorable Hilario G. Davide, Jr., whose enthusiasm, from the outset, was critical in enlisting the support of concerned agencies and individuals in this bold, innovative endeavor. Such is consistent with the Davide Watch: Leading the Philippine Judiciary and the Legal Profession Towards the Third Millenium which sought the vigorous implementation of the programs of the Philippine Judicial Academy on continuing judicial education on a broader basis. Early on, the Chancellor of the Philippine Judicial Academy, Justice Ameurfina A. Melencio Herrera, concurred that such a publication would be crucial to improving the skills of the members of the Philippine Judiciary. Justice Alfredo L. Benipayo, Court Administrator, likewise endorsed the project and sought the inclusion of the section on Court and Case Management. Such support was, however, hardly necessary, to convince the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), which readily saw the timeliness and potential of such initiative to promote better governance and as a vehicle for judicial reform in the Philippines.

The Philippine Benchbook for Trial Court Judges is the work of several authors, senior and retired members of the judiciary: Justice Hilarion L. Aquino, Justice Alfredo L. Benipayo, Deputy Court Administrator Zenaida N. Elepaño, Professor Myrna S. Feliciano, Dr. Fortunato I. Gupit, Jr., Justice Hector A. Hofileña, Justice Oscar M. Herrera, Sr., Justice Camilo D. Quiason, Judge Jaime N. Salazar, Jr., Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval.

Throughout the drafting period, the Working Group was assisted by eminent jurists: Justice José Y. Feria, Justice Francis E. Garchitorena, Justice Ameurfina A. Melencio Herrera, Justice Bernardo P. Pardo, Justice Reynato S. Puno, Justice Ricardo C. Puno, Sr., and Justice Flerida Ruth Pineda Romero. Their timely inputs, erudite guidance and astute observations contributed immensely to the quality of the end result.

Illustrative of the foresight and innovative feature of this project is the production of the Benchbook in both printed and electronic format. The development of the CD-ROM and web-based versions of the Benchbook is largely the result of a successful partnership between the Television Education Network (TEN) headed by Robert Clemente and his Information Technology Specialist Jeremy Cotton.

Special mention must be made of the following persons who provided critical support throughout the production of the Benchbook: Fr. Ranhilio C. Aquino and Ms. Roshell Mercado of the Philippine Judicial Academy; Ms. Evelyn Toledo-Dumdum, Atty. Conrad S. Tolentino, Atty. Ricardo T. Paminutan, Ms. Cecile V. Dumdum and

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