RE: (A) REQUEST OF ASSISTANT COURT ADMINISTRATOR FOR UPGRADING OF THEIR RANK, SALARY AND PRIVILEGES UPON EFFECTIVITY OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9282 ELEVATING THE COURT OF TAX APPEALS ...

A.M. NO. 03-10-05-SC. July 20, 2006

Ponente: TINGA, J.

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TINGA, J.:

On 1 October 2004, the Court issued a resolution clarifying the application of Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9282 and R.A. No. 9227 on the rank, salary and privileges of the Assistant Court Administrators (ACAs), Assistant Clerk of Court (ACC) and Division Clerks of Court (DCCs) of the Court of Appeals (CA), and the Executive Clerks of Court (ECCs) of the Sandiganbayan. The dispositive portion of the Resolution reads:

> ACCORDINGLY, the request of the Assistant Court Administrators to upgrade their salaries and privileges to that of a Presiding Justice of the Court of Tax Appeals is DENIED.
>
> The following are hereby GRANTED the Special Allowance under Section 2 of Republic Act No. 9227 from November 11, 2003, the date of effectivity of said law, but subject to the availability of funds:
>
> (1) The Assistant Court Administrators, the allowance of a Regional Trial Court judge with the highest earned increment;
>
> (2) The Assistant Clerk of Court and the Division Clerks of Court of the Court of Appeals, and the Executive Clerks of Court of the Sandiganbayan, the allowance of a Metropolitan Trial Court judge.
>
> SO ORDERED.

The resolution led to the filing of requests by certain court officials for their inclusion in the implementation of the law, as well as the clarification and reconsideration of the resolution.

On 7 October 2004, Atty. Gemma Leticia F. Tablate, Chief Reporter of the CA, wrote a letter requesting that the implementation of the 1 October 2004 Resolution be extended to her. She alleged in her letter that her position as CA Reporter II had been upgraded from Salary Grade (SG) 27 to SG 28 and given the rank and privileges of a Metropolitan Trial Court (MeTC) judge in A.M. No. 99-5-18-SC[1], thus putting her in equal rank and footing with the DCCs of the CA.

A letter of the same nature dated 20 October 2004 was also filed by Atty. Elvessa P. Apolinario, Executive Clerk of Court (ECC) III of the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA). Atty. Apolinario contends that in A.M. No. 99-1-04-CTA,[2] her position in the CTA as ECC II with SG 27 had been upgraded to ECC III with SG 28, thus conferring upon her the rank of a MeTC judge.

These requests were referred to the Office of the Chief Attorney (OCAT) for study and recommendation. In separate reports, the OCAT recommended the granting of the requests.[3] Since the Court had earlier granted the

positions of Reporter II and ECC III the judicial rank of METC judge entitled to the same privilege as other officials in the CA with the same judicial rank, the OCAT recommended that the MeTC judge's allowance be extended to Attys. Tablate and Apolinario.

The recommendation of the OCAT is well taken at this point. As we had earlier stated in the resolution of 1 October 2004, the allowances granted under R.A. No. 9227 should be extended to holders of positions with the equivalent rank of METC judges, because although such officers do not perform the same functions as the METC judge, the law recognizes the substantial equality in the roles they play in the Judiciary as against judges and thus conferred upon them such rank. The positions of CA Reporter II and CTA ECC III should be placed at par, in rank, salary and privileges, with their counterparts in the Judiciary who have the rank, salary and privileges of an METC judge. Hence, it is but proper that the CA Reporter II and CTA ECC III be granted the allowance of an METC judge.

On 5 January 2005, the Fiscal Management and Budget Office (FMBO) submitted a Memorandum seeking clarification of the implementation of the 10 October 2004 Resolution. The FMBO had uniformly implemented the grant of Special Allowance for the Judiciary (SAJ) in amounts equivalent to 25% of the actual basic monthly salaries for the positions covered starting 11 November 2003 based on the salary grade levels of the officials. Hence, the SAJ granted to the ACC, DCCs and ACAs was computed at 25% of SG 30 plus the highest earned increment. However, the FMBO argues, if the 10 October 2004 Resolution would be followed, ACCs, DCCs and ACAs-who have the equivalent rank, salaries, and privileges of a Presiding Judge of the CTA with SG 30-should actually be receiving less than 25% of SG 30 since the Resolution orders that the ACA should be granted a distortion pay equivalent to the allowance of an RTC judge (who has SG 29)[4] with the highest earned increment. This results in a diminution of these concerned officials' salaries and benefits and consequently may constitute a violation of the constitutional right under Art. VIII, Sec. 10.[5] Per the FMBO's computation, there would be a discrepancy of P930.75 of the 11 November 2003 implementation of the SAJ for the ACCs, DCCs and ACAs. The FMBO then requested further instructions if the SAJ were incorrectly computed.

The FMBO's Memorandum was likewise referred to the OCAT for evaluation, report and recommendation. In its Report dated 10 March 2005, the OCAT recommended that ACAs Antonio H. Dujua and Ismael G. Khan, Jr., who occupied the positions of ACA even before the promulgation of the 1 October 2004 Resolution, be allowed to receive SAJ based on their actual salaries including earned step increments and longevity pay until they have moved out of their positions, with the Resolution applied only to the successors to their position, and that ACA Reuben P. de la Cruz be entitled to SAJ prescribed in the 1 October 2004 Resolution, that is, his allowance is to be computed based on SG 29. He should also not be required to refund the excess of the amount of SAJ he already received as he is deemed to have acted in good faith in receiving the excess. The OCAT further recommended a review of the judicial ranking for all Court officials as a whole.

In recommending that the SAJ of ACAs Dujua and Khan be computed based on their actual salaries including step increments and longevity pay, the OCAT relied on the Court's previous resolution[6] which clarified the term "basic monthly salary" to refer to the actual basic monthly salary of Justices and judges, including step increments and longevity pay, and excluding PERA, extraordinary allowance, RATA, and other forms of judicial compensation. Going by this definition, no two Justices or judges would receive the same amount of basic monthly salary and, consequently, SAJ, since the basis for the computation thereof would vary from the length of service of one official to the other. It would thus be unfair to grant ACAs a distortion allowance equivalent to the allowance of a RTC judge with the highest earned increment if that ACA has been in the judicial service for more than five years, the OCAT opined. In addition, since the Special Allowance has been interpreted by the Court as actually forming part of basic salary,[7] such special allowance may not be decreased in amount without violating

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Sec. 10, Art. VIII of the Constitution. Moreover, per the principle of vested right, ACAs Dujua and Khan have acquired a right to the amount of Special Allowance computed on the basis of SG 30 with earned step increments and longevity pay.

As to ACA de la Cruz, he was appointed to the position of ACA after the promulgation of the 1 October 2004 Resolution. Since he could not have been entitled to the allowance if he did not have judicial rank, the OCAT deduces that the Resolution of 24 October 1996, granting ACAs the rank, salary and privileges of the CTA Presiding Judge, has been amended by the Resolution of 1 October 2004 such that the ACAs now have the rank, salary and privileges of an RTC Judge. That the ACAs should have the rank, salary and privileges of an RTC Judge may be implied not only from the prescribed distortion allowance specifying SG 29 of RTC judges but also from the discussion of the Resolution of 1 October 2004 that proscribes the grant to them of a judicial rank higher than an RTC judge, the OCAT expounds.

Furthermore, the OCAT believes that a similar problem in the judicial ranking and computation of SAJ of other officials in the court, specifically the Assistant Clerk of Court and the Division Clerks of Court, exists which may necessitate a review of qualification standards and judicial ranking for these positions.

On 10 January 2006, ACA de la Cruz submitted a Memorandum dated 3 January 2006 seeking clarification on the implementation of the 1 October 2001 Resolution on ACAs and ultimately asking that the resolution be reconsidered and set aside. ACA de la Cruz opined that although the salary of the ACA has been fixed by law at SG 30,[8] similar to the salary grade of a DCA, and the ACAs' entitlement to the special allowance in R.A. No. 9227 has been granted, de la Cruz believes that the ranking and category of ACAs remains undefined. He explains that the organizational ranking in the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) will be disturbed should ACAs be granted the rank and category similar to that of the Presiding Judge of the CTA, which, by virtue of R.A. No. 9282, has been elevated to the rank of the Presiding Justice of the CA. The effect is that the ACAs would be at par with their superior, the Court Administrator, which has the rank and privileges of a CA Presiding Justice and SG 31. Hence, he posits, there is a distortion in the hierarchy of officials in the Judiciary that may supposedly be remedied if the Court adopts the recommendations of the OCAT in their Memorandum[9] of 17 May 2004 to the Chief Justice, especially since the DCAs and ACAs actually perform parallel functions in assisting the Court Administrator in executing and implementing policies, orders, rules and regulations regarding administrative supervision of the lower courts. ACA de la Cruz then cites A.M. No. 98-7-01-SC dated 22 February 2005, Re: Resolution Providing for the Staffing Pattern of the Office of the Court Administrator, which defined the roles of the DCAs and the ACAs[10] and shows that the ACAs are vested with a heavier responsibility than the DCAs. The functions of the DCAs and ACAs actually have no substantial distinction since both provide support functions to the Court Administrator in his performance of his functions. ACA de la Cruz also stresses that it is important to clarify the ACAs' judicial ranking and privileges so as not to confuse them with those of the RTC judges who are under the ACAs' supervision. Finally, such need for the clarification is important in view of the proposed establishment of the Regional Court Administration Offices pursuant to Memorandum Order No. 43-2005 dated 17 August 2005. Hence, ACA dela Cruz prays that the Resolution dated 1 October 2004 be reconsidered and set aside and that the ACAs be granted the rank, salary and privileges of an Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals.

We deal with the requests of the FMBO and ACA de la Cruz jointly.

It would be best to trace the history of the creation of the CTA and OCA and the relevant positions under them in order to better understand their place in the hierarchy of courts. Thus:

The CTA was created by R.A. No. 1125[11] in 1954. The CTA's standing in the hierarchy of courts in our

jurisdiction, before its elevation to a collegiate tribunal by virtue of R.A. No. 9282, was that of a specialized court of limited jurisdiction.[12] It was not at the same level as the CA, since its decisions may be appealed thereto, and it was not also a trial court. Under Section 1 of R.A. No. 1125, the Presiding Judge of the CTA had the same qualifications, rank, category and privileges as the Presiding Judge of the Court of Industrial Relations (CIR) while the Associate Judge of the CTA had the same qualifications, rank, category and privileges of a member of the CIR. In Kaisahan ng mga Manggagawa sa La Campana v. Hon. Caluag,[13] the CIR was equal in rank with the Courts of First Instance. On 7 March 1994, President Fidel V. Ramos issued Executive Order No. 164[14] adopting the Compensation and Position Classification System under Joint Resolution No. 1, series of 1994, which assigned SG 30 to the Presiding Judge of the CTA.

Presidential Decree No. 828[15] created the Office of the Court Administrator and granted the Court Administrator the same rank, privileges, and compensation as those of the Presiding Justice of the CA. The three DCAs created were given the same rank, privileges and compensation as those of Associate Justices of the CA. Hence, the Court Administrator enjoyed SG 31 and the DCAs, SG 30.

On 20 June 1995, the Court en banc issued a resolution giving the Clerk of Court (COC) the rank, salary and privileges of an Associate Justice of the CA, the ACC and the DCCs the rank, salary and privileges of a Presiding Judge of a Specialized Court (CTA), and the Deputy COCs and Chiefs of Offices and Executive Officers the rank, salary and privileges of RTC judges.

On 24 October 1996, the Court en banc issued a resolution reorganizing and strengthening the OCA and creating two positions of ACA with the same qualifications, rank, salary and privileges as the Presiding Judge of the CTA. On 22 June 1999, another resolution was issued creating another position of ACA as Chief of the Public Information Office, also with rank, salary and privileges of a CTA Presiding Judge. Hence, the COC, ACC, DCCs and ACAs enjoy the same SG 30.

R.A. No. 9282 elevated the rank of the CTA to that of a collegiate court with special jurisdiction in the same level as the Court of Appeals and such elevation necessitated the increase in rank, salary, and privileges of its Presiding Judge and Associate Judges to Presiding Justice and Associate Justices, respectively. However, such elevation of rank, salary and privileges of the CTA Presiding Judge to that of CA Presiding Justice did not translate to the elevation to the same level of other positions vested with the judicial rank of CTA Presiding Judge.

The 1 October 2004 Resolution which granted the ACAs a special allowance of an RTC judge with the highest earned step increment also did not lower the judicial rank of the ACA to that of an RTC judge, as interpreted by the OCAT.[16] Instead, it appears that the Resolution, in granting such allowance to the ACAs, CA DCCs and SB ECCs, intended to keep intact the judicial hierarchy in our courts while extending the coverage of R.A. No. 9227 to those who were excluded in the enumeration of entitled judicial officers, in violation of the equal protection clause.

The Resolution of 1 October 2004 also recognized that there is a difference in the functions performed by the DCAs and the ACAs. The DCAs' functions cover regions, while those of the ACAs cover cities and municipalities in the National Capital Region and in an assisting capacity to the Court Administrator. The DCA exercises greater responsibilities than the ACAs and are thus, according to the Resolution, granted benefits greater than those of ACAs. Consequently, the DCA was granted the special allowance of a CA Associate Justice, while the ACA the special allowance of an RTC judge with the highest earned step increment.

However, we cannot discount the fact that the law accords the DCAs and the ACAs the same SG 30 despite the difference in their rank and functions. There is thus, merit to the concerns expressed by the FMBO and the OCAT of diminution of salaries and benefits and distortion in the judicial hierarchy.

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Sec. 2 of R.A. No. 9227 clearly provides that the concerned officials shall be granted special allowances equivalent to 100% of the basic monthly salary specified for their respective salary grades under the Salary Standardization Law. Under the 1 October 2004 Resolution, it was held that the ACAs cannot be accorded an allowance equivalent to that granted the CA Presiding Justice (who has SG 31), for that is the allowance to be received by the Court Administrator (who has a rank equivalent to a CA Presiding Justice and SG 31), and that is also higher than what the DCAs will receive, which is equivalent to the allowance of a CA Associate Justice.

However, by the concept of vested right, ACAs can be granted a special allowance computed on the basis of their salary grade which is SG 30. A "vested right" is one which is absolute, complete, and unconditional, the exercise of which no obstacle exists, and which is immediate and perfect in itself and not dependent upon a contingency. To be vested in its accurate legal sense, a right must be complete and consummated, and one of which the person to whom it belongs cannot be divested without his consent.[17]

The Court had previously held that the basis of the computation of the "basic monthly salary" under R.A. No. 9227 is the actual basic monthly salary of justices and judges, including step increments and longevity pay, and excluding PERA, extraordinary allowance, RATA, and other forms of judicial compensation.[18] It had also declared that the special allowance under R.A. No. 9227 is intended to be part of the basic salary of justices, judges, and all other positions in the judiciary of equivalent rank.[19] It cannot be denied then that these concerned officials have acquired a right to the amount of special allowance computed on the basis of their actual basic monthly salary. Their entitlement to the special allowance equivalent to their actual basic monthly salary has become vested by virtue of the application of the law. Granting them an allowance lower than their actual basic monthly salary would even constitute a violation of the constitutional provision against diminution of their salaries and benefits.[20]

The position of CTA Presiding Judge has been eliminated with the promulgation of R.A. No. 9282, but the entitlement to the special allowance under R.A. No. 9227 of the holders of positions with such equivalent rank has already been ascertained in the 1 October 2004 Resolution. ACAs should then be granted the allowance based on SG 30 in keeping with the instruction in Sec. 2, R.A. No. 9227 that the allowance be based on the basic monthly salary of the salary grade for the position. ACAs Dujua and Khan would then receive the same allowance at SG 30, and not the allowance of an RTC judge with the highest earned step increment at SG 29. ACA dela Cruz should likewise receive an allowance identical as ACAs Dujua and Khan's. This would visibly reflect his promotion from his previous position as Executive Judge with SG 29 to ACA with SG 30, since a promotion connotes not only an increase in duties and responsibilities but also in compensation and benefits. Similarly, the positions of SC DCCs and ACCs should also be granted the allowance at SG 30.

The Court cannot help but notice though that there is a need to review the hierarchy and ranking of court officials in view of the elevation of the CTA to a collegiate tribunal and the consequent abolition of the position of CTA Presiding Judge. There is confusion in the judicial ranking of some court positions resulting in disparity in their corresponding salaries and other emoluments. In this instance, the position of CTA Presiding Judge has become obsolete, but the positions which have the equivalent rank, salary and privileges of a presiding judge of a specialized court subsist and retain the same rank. There are other positions that were affected by the elevation of the CTA's level in the judicial hierarchy. For one, the Assistant Chancellor of the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA) was granted "the same compensation and benefits as a Presiding Judge of a specialized court,"[21] but since there are now two specialized courts in the same level of judicial hierarchy, namely the CTA and the Sandiganbayan, the use of the term "Presiding Judge" engenders doubt as to which court is being referred to, especially since the Resolution granting such compensation and benefits to the Assistant Chancellor was promulgated after R.A. No. 9282 was passed into law and therefore could not have referred to the CTA.

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Arguments have also been raised pertaining to the functions being served by the DCAs and the ACAs, in the main expressing the views that the two positions perform the same roles but have different ranks and salary grades. The OCAT had previously pointed out that while officials of the Court of Appeals have been granted the rank, salary and privileges of a MeTC judge, no official in the Supreme Court has been similarly privileged, evincing a piecemeal approach to the matter that brings down the morale of officials in the judiciary. The OCAT also especially mentions the suspension of the implementation of the Resolution dated 3 August 2004 in A.M. No. 04-6-08-SC entitled Re: Request of the Chief of Administrative Services for Clarification as to Judicial Ranking, Salary and Privileges of the Assistant Clerk of Court and Division Clerks of Court in view of the Effectivity of Republic Act No. 9282.

Verily, the matter of judicial ranking is a sensitive and important issue in the judiciary; hence, it has been periodically raised before the Court in other different administrative matters. The restructuring of the positions in the judiciary is the key to rectifying this problem of distortion. The reassessment of the proper hierarchical order of positions in the judiciary, including their ranks, salaries and privileges, is within the Court's administrative power and a consequence of the Judiciary's fiscal autonomy to allocate and utilize its resources with the wisdom and dispatch that its needs may require.[22]

Hence, a review of the Resolution Reorganizing and Strengthening the Office of the Court Administrator dated 24 October 1996 is in order, particularly in clarifying the rank of ACAs and other holders of positions with equivalent rank of CTA Presiding Judge, such as the ACC and DCCs, in view of the abolition of the position of CTA Presiding Judge with the enactment of R.A. No. 9282. A thorough study and cogitation of the overhauling of the hierarchy of positions in the judiciary must be considered as a more permanent solution. For this purpose, the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) is directed to make the review and submit its recommendations.

Action on the request of the ACAs to upgrade their salaries and privileges to that of a CTA Presiding Justice, and that of ACA de la Cruz that ACAs be granted the rank, salary and privileges of a CA Associate Justice, is deferred pending submission of the report and recommendations of the OCA.

WHEREFORE, the following are GRANTED the Special Allowance under Section 2 of Republic Act No. 9227 from 11 November 2003, the date of effectivity of said law, to wit:

> (1) The Chief Reporter or Reporter II of the Court of Appeals and the Executive Clerk of Court III of the Court of Tax Appeals, the allowance of a Metropolitan Trial Court judge; and
>
> (2) The Division Clerks of Court and Assistant Clerks of Court of the Supreme Court, the allowance equivalent to 100% of the basic monthly salary specified for the salary grade for their position which is SG 30.

The dispositive portion of the Resolution of 1 October 2004 is MODIFIED IN PART. The Assistant Court Administrators are GRANTED the special allowance under Section 2 of Republic Act No. 9227, to commence from the date of effectivity of the law or the date of appointment to the position, as the case may be.

The dispositive portion of the Resolution of 1 October 2004 granting the Assistant Clerk of Court and the Division Clerks of Court of the Court of Appeals and the Executive Clerks of Court of the Sandiganbayan the allowance of a Metropolitan Trial Court judge is REITERATED.

The Court orders the IMMEDIATE RELEASE of the amounts equivalent to the distortion pay the aforenamed concerned officials are entitled to, subject to the availability of funds.

The Office of the Court Administrator is DIRECTED to study and review the Resolution dated 24 October 1996 Reorganizing and Strengthening the Office of the Court Administrator with the end in view of addressing the distortions consequent to the abolition of the position of Presiding Judge of the Court of Tax Appeals with the

enactment of Republic Act No. 9282 and restructuring the hierarchy of positions in the judiciary and to SUBMIT a report and recommendations thereon within thirty (30) days from receipt of this Resolution.

SO ORDERED.

Panganiban, C.J., Puno, Quisumbing, Ynares-Santiago, Sandoval-Gutierrez, Austria-Martinez, Corona, Carpio-Morales, Callejo, Sr., Azcuna, Chico-Nazario, Garcia, and Velasco, Jr. JJ., concur.
Carpio, J., on leave.

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[1] Petition for Upgrading of Court of Appeals Positions; minute resolution dated 24 February 2003.

[2] Re: In the Matter of Upgrading or Reclassification of the Positions of Executive Clerk of Court II (SG 27) and Executive Clerk of Court I (SG 26), Court of Tax Appeals; minute resolution dated 18 January 2000.

[3] Reports dated 30 November 2004 and 14 January 2005.

[4] As prepared by the Department of Budget and Management pursuant to R.A. No. 6758, The Compensation and Position Classification Act of 1989.

[5]Art. VIII, Sec. 10 states: "The salary of the Chief Justice and of the Associate Justices of the Supreme court, and of judges of lower courts shall be fixed by law. During their continuance in office, their salary shall not be decreased."

[6] Resolution of 24 February 2004 in A.M. No. 03-12-04-SC, Re: Possible Means to Implement the Special Allowance under R.A. 9227 and to Increase the Judiciary Development Fund, which clarified the term "basic monthly salary" in Sec. 2 of R.A. No. 9227.

[7]Per Resolution dated 1 December 2004 in A.M. No. 04-11-06-SC, Re: Request of Retired Justices of the Supreme Court for the Upgrading of Their Retirement Benefits, which interpreted Sec. 6 of R.A. No. 9227. The pertinent portion thereof reads: "The special allowance is intended to be part of the basic salary of the justices, judges and all other positions in the judiciary of equivalent rank. The law itself categorically states that "the special allowance equivalent to the increase in the basic salary as may be provided by law shall be converted as part of basic salary.'"

[8]Per A. M. No. 99-5-08-SC dated 15 January 2002, Re: Resolution Creating an Additional Position of ACA, where the ACA shall have the same qualifications, rank, salary and privileges as the Presiding Judge of the Court of Tax Appeals.

[9] This is a consolidated Memorandum submitted by the OCAT dealing with the effect of R.A. No. 9282 on the hierarchy of positions and judicial rank in the Court, in response to the request of ACAs Antonio H. Dujua, Ismael G. Khan, Jr., and Carlos L. de Leon that their salaries and privileges be upgraded in view of the effectivity of RA. No. 9282, and the request of Deputy Clerk of Court Eden T. Candelaria for clarification of the judicial ranking, salary and privileges of the SC Assistant Clerk of Court, SC Division Clerks of Court, and SC Assistant Court Administrators in view of R.A. No. 9282. In said Memorandum, the Chief Attorney opined that: "The court may therefore grant the Assistant Court Administrators the judicial rank of Associate Justice of the CTA, definitely not that of the Presiding Justice of the CTA, which is the judicial rank of the Court Administrator. However, by granting the Assistant Court Administrators the rank of Associate Justice of the CTA, they would be placed on the same judicial rank as the Deputy Court Administrators who enjoy the rank of Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals. Hence, there must be a valid reason for placing them on an equal level in the hierarchy of positions as the Deputy Court Administrators." One of the recommendations of the Chief Attorney was that the ACAs be

granted the rank, salary and privileges of an Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals. This was not adopted by the Court in the now assailed Resolution dated 1 October 2004.

[10] The relevant portions of the resolution provide:

- Deputy Court Administrators

2.1. Assist the Court Administrator formulate and implement policies and standards for the internal operations of the four (4) OCA Offices and the lower courts in the regions assigned to them;
2.2. Assist the Court Administrator act on administrative disciplinary matters concerning judges and lower court employees stationed in the regions assigned to them;
2.3. Exercise direct control and supervision over the judicial supervisors assigned to them, including the conduct of their judicial audit;
2.4. Perform such other functions as may be delegated or assigned by the Court Administrator of the Supreme Court.

- Assistant Court Administrators

3.1. Assist the Court Administrator formulate and implement policies and standards for the internal operations of the four (4) OCA Offices and the lower courts;
3.2. Assist the Court Administrator oversee the operational activities of the Court Management Office (CMO), Legal Office (LEGO), Financial Management Office (FMO) and Office of Administrative Services (OAS-OCA);
3.3. Assist the Court Administrator act on administrative disciplinary matters concerning judges and lower court employees in specified stations;
3.4. Assist the Court Administrator in all liaison and coordination activities with the Executive and Legislative Departments; and
3.5. Perform such other functions as may be delegated or assigned by the Court Administrator or the Supreme Court.

[11]An Act Creating the Court of Tax Appeals, 16 June 1954.

[12] Philippine Ports Authority v. Fuentes, G.R. No. 91259, 16 April 1991, 195 SCRA 790, 796.

[13] 112 Phil. 700 (1961).

[14] 91 O.G. 4.

[15] Creating the Office of the Court Administrator in the Supreme Court and Providing Funds Therefor and For Other Purposes, 18 November 1975.

[16] Report dated 10 March 2005, p. 19.

[17] Development Bank of the Philippines v. Court of Appeals, No. L-28774, 28 February 1980, 96 SCRA 342, 359.

[18] A Resolution Clarifying "Basic Monthly Salary" Under R.A. No. 9227, A.M. No. 03-12-04-SC, 24 February 2004.

[19] Re: Request of Retired Justices of the Supreme Court for the Upgrading of their Retirement Gratuities, A.M. No. 04-11-06-SC, 1 December 2004.

[20] See CONST., Art. VIII, Sec. 10.

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[21] Per the resolution Clarifying and Strengthening the Organizational Structure and Administrative Setup of the Philippine Judicial Academy, A.M. No. 01-1-04-SC, 24 February 2004.

[22] Bengzon v. Drilon, 208 SCRA 133 (1992).

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