VICTORIA P. CABRAL, PETITIONER, VS. THE HONORABLE COURT OF APPEALS, HON. ELIGIO P. PACIS, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, REGION III, DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM, FLORENCIO ADOLFO, GREGORI...

G.R. No. 101974. July 12, 2001*

Ponente: KAPUNAN, J.

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KAPUNAN, J.:

On January 16, 1990, petitioner Victoria Cabral filed a petition before the Barangay Agrarian Reform Council (BARC) for the cancellation of the Emancipation Patents and Torrens Titles issued in favor of private respondents. The patents and titles covered portions of the property owned and registered in the name of petitioner.

Petitioner alleged therein that she was the registered owner of several parcels of land covered by Original Certificate of Title (OCT) No. 0-1670 of the Registry of Deeds of Bulacan,[1] among which is a parcel of land described therein as Lot 4 of Plan Psu-164390. The petition further averred that as early as July 1973, petitioner applied with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) for the reclassification or conversion of the land for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. The application for conversion, however, was not acted upon. Instead, on April 25, 1988, Emancipation Patents, and, thereafter, Transfer Certificates of Title, were issued in favor of private respondents.

Petitioner sought the cancellation of the TCTs on the grounds that: petitioner had a pending application for conversion and reclassification; the lots covered by the emancipation patents included areas not actually tilled by private respondents; private respondents had illegally transferred their rights over the parcels of land covered by the emancipation patents; private respondents are deemed to have abandoned their rights over the properties; and the subject property was taken without just compensation.

On January 19, 1990, petitioner filed with the DAR itself another petition for the cancellation of the same Emancipation Patents and Torrens Titles.

On January 29, 1990, petitioner received a letter from the Municipal Agrarian Reform Office (MARO) of Sta. Maria, Bulacan, stating, among other things, that in order "that your petition be given due process by this Office, your petition will be forwarded to the legal section of this office for legal action."

On February 11, 1990, Regional Director Eligio Pacis issued an order dismissing the petition[2] for cancellation of Emancipation Patents, thus:

> WHEREFORE, premises considered, this Office hereby orders the DISMISSAL of the petition of Victoria P. Cabral for lack of legal and factual basis' likewise, this office request[s] that the annotation of the notice of lis pendens on the original copies of Emancipation Patents issued to petitioners covering the subject landholdings be CANCELLED by the Office of the Register of Deeds concerned.

SO ORDERED.[3]

The Regional Director likewise denied petitioner's motion for reconsideration dated July 11, 1990. Consequently, petitioner filed a petition for certiorari in the Court of Appeals questioning the jurisdiction of the Regional Director and claiming denial of due process. On January 8, 1991, the appellate court dismissed the petition for lack of merit. Petitioner's motion for reconsideration was likewise denied, prompting petitioner to turn to this Court for relief, alleging that:

(a)

THE HONORABLE COURT OF APPEALS ERRED IN RULING THAT THE DAR REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF REGION III ACTED WITH JURISDICTION WHEN IT TOOK COGNIZANCE OF AND RESOLVED THE CONVERSION APPLICATION AND/OR CANCELLATION OF CLT/EP PETITION OF PETITIONER-APPELLANT;

(b)

THE HONORABLE COURT OF APPEALS ERRED IN NOT HOLDING THAT OUTSIDE OF THE BARANGAY AGRARIAN REFORM COMMITTEE (BARC), IT IS THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM ADJUDICATION BOARD (DARAB) THAT HAS JURISDICTION OVER AGRARIAN REFORM CASES, DISPUTES OR CONTROVERSIES;

(c)

THE HONORABLE COURT OF APPEALS ERRED IN HOLDING THAT PETITIONER WAS NOT DENIED DUE PROCESS AS ALLEGEDLY SHE LOST HER OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD AFTER THE JUNE 27, 1990 HEARING.[4]-

On April 21, 1993, petitioner filed with this Court an urgent motion for the issuance of a temporary restraining order. Petitioner alleged that private respondent Gregoria Adolfo had conveyed the land awarded to her to the Aqualand Development Corporation and the Sta. Rita Steel Resources Corporation. These corporations, in turn,

> x x x converted the parcel of land from agricultural to commercial and industrial and have constructed high adobe stone walls[,] commenced the construction of a steel finishing plant and other structures for the manufacture of steel products[,] and are putting in place more installations to complete all facilities necessary for their business. As a matter of fact, they have just applied for a building permit for the construction of a two (2) storey office condominium/business office building. xxx[5]

In a Resolution dated May 17, 1993, the Court issued the temporary restraining order prayed for. The Court enjoined Sta. Rita Steel Resources and Aqualand Development Corporation, its officers, agents, representatives and/or persons acting in their place or stead from continuing the construction of building and the like on the landholding of petitioner, pending final resolution of the petition.[6]

Petitioner contended before the Court of Appeals that jurisdiction over the case pertained to the Department of Agrarian Reform Agrarian Board (DARAB), not the Regional Director. Addressing this argument, the Court of Appeals held in its Decision:

> Relevant to the issue raised is Ministry Administrative Order No. 2-85, Series of 1985, effective July 24, 1985 (Annex 2, Comment) which empowers all DAR Regional Directors to hear and decide cases which include the issuance of Decisions/Resolutions, the recall and cancellation of Certificates of Land Transfers (CLTs) if such is the necessary consequence of the facts and circumstances of the case.
>
> A later directive, DAR Memo Cir. No. 5, Series of 1987 (Annex 3, Comment), clothed the Regional Directors as titular regional heads, with powers to hear and resolve cases involving lands in their respective jurisdiction

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> in order to achieve the expanded and comprehensive agrarian reform program of the present administration, and to tackle the issue of huge number and increasing backlog or unresolved cases in the DAR Central Office.
>
> Additionally, a memorandum dated September 14, 1987 (Annex 4, Comment) addressed to the Director, Bureau of Land Acquisition Development, by the then Director, Bureau of Agrarian Legal Assistance, contains a decisive opinion regarding the question on order of cancellation issued by the Regional Director, DAR Region III, to wit:
> "The Regional Director is now authorized to hear/investigate and hereby resolve cases arising from the implementation of CLT pursuant to PD 27 and amendatory and related decrees and letter of instructions, rules and regulations as well as conflict of claim in landed estates and resettlement areas and such other lands as have been placed under the administration and disposition of this Department."[7]

In its Resolution dated September 17, 1991, the Court of Appeals also made reference to Section 13 of Executive Order No. 129-A, which authorized the delegation of the adjudication of agrarian reform cases to regional offices. It further cited certain provisions of the DARAB Revised Rules of Procedure providing for, among others, delegated jurisdiction, and concluded that:

> x x x the Regional Director cannot be faulted with assuming jurisdiction over the case, considering that the powers and functions of the DARAB may be delegated to the regional office x x x.
>
> While it is true that the jurisdiction is vested with the DARAB, the Regional Director took cognizance of the instant case invoking the delegated powers and functions upon him.[8]

Evidently, the DARAB, in the Court of Appeals' view, had concurrent jurisdiction with the Regional Director over the case. Petitioner, on the other hand, maintains that the jurisdiction of the DARAB is exclusive of the DAR Regional Director.

Petitioner is correct. Whatever jurisdiction the Regional Director may have had over the cancellation of emancipation patents, it lost with the passage of subsequent laws.

Section 17 of Executive Order No. 229 (Providing for the Mechanism for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program)[9] granted DAR quasi-judicial powers to adjudicate agrarian reform matters, thus:

> Section 50. Quasi-Judicial Powers of the DAR.-- The DAR is hereby vested with quasi-judicial powers to determine and adjudicate agrarian reform matters, and shall have exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters involving implementation of agrarian reform, except those falling under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).
>
> x x x

Executive Order No. 129-A (Modifying Executive Order No. 129 Reorganizing and Strengthening Department of Agrarian Reform and for other purposes)[10] subsequently provided for the creation of the Agrarian Reform Adjudicatory Board, granting it the powers and functions with respect to the adjudication of agrarian reform cases:

> SECTION 13. Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board. There is hereby created an Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board under the Office of the Secretary. The Board shall be composed of the Secretary as Chairman, two (2) Undersecretaries as may be designated by the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary for Legal Affairs, and three (3) others to be appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Secretary as members. A Secretariat shall be constituted to support the Board. The Board shall assume the powers and functions with respect to the adjudication of agrarian reform cases under Executive Order No. 229 and this Executive Order. These powers and functions may be delegated to the regional office of the Department in

accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Board.

Congress substantially reiterated Section 17 of E.O. No. 229 in Republic Act No. 6657, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Law of 1988 (CARL).[11] Section 50 thereof states:

> Section 50. Quasi-Judicial Powers of the DAR. -- The DAR is hereby vested with primary jurisdiction to determine and adjudicate agrarian reform matters and shall have exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters involving the implementation of agrarian reform, except those falling under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).
>
> x x x

CARL took effect on June 15, 1988, after it was published in two newspapers of general circulation.

In order "to achieve a just, expeditious and inexpensive determination of every action or proceeding before it," the DAR is mandated "to adopt a uniform rule of procedure" (Second par., Section 50, R.A. No. 6657), which is, at present, the DARAB Revised Rules.[12] The Rules were promulgated on December 26, 1988.

The provisions of Rule II (Jurisdiction of the Adjudication Board) of the Revised Rules read:

> SECTION 1. Primary, Original and Appellate Jurisdiction. - The Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board shall have primary jurisdiction, both original and appellate, to determine and adjudicate all agrarian disputes, cases, controversies, and matters or incidents involving the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program under Republic Act No. 6657, Executive Order Nos. 229, 228 and 129-A, Republic Act No. 3844 as amended by Republic Act No. 6389, Presidential Decree No. 27 and other agrarian laws and their implementing rules and regulations.
>
> Specifically, such jurisdiction shall extend over but not be limited to the following:
>
> a) Cases involving the rights and obligations of persons engaged in the cultivation and use of agricultural land covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) and other agrarian laws;
>
> b) Cases involving the valuation of land, and determination and payment of just compensation, fixing and collection of lease rentals, disturbance compensation, amortization payments, and similar disputes concerning the function of the Land Bank;
>
> c) Cases involving the annulment or cancellation of orders or decisions of DAR officials other than the Secretary, lease contracts or deeds of sale or their amendments under the administration and disposition of the DAR and LBP;
>
> d) Cases arising from, or connected with membership or representation in compact farms, farmers' cooperatives and other registered farmers' associations or organizations, related to land covered by the CARP and other agrarian laws;
>
> e) Cases involving the sale, alienation, mortgage, foreclosure, pre-emption and redemption of agricultural lands under the coverage of the CARP or other agrarian laws;
>
> f) Cases involving the issuance of Certificate of Land Transfer (CLT), Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) and Emancipation Patent (EP) and the administrative correction thereof;
>
> g) And such other agrarian cases, disputes, matters or concerns referred to it by the Secretary of the DAR.
>
> Provided, however, that matters involving strictly the administrative implementation of the CARP and other agrarian laws and regulations, shall be the exclusive prerogative of and cognizable by the Secretary of the DAR.

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> SECTION 2. Delegated Jurisdiction. - The Regional Agrarian Reform Adjudicators (RARAD) and the Provincial Agrarian Reform Adjudicators (PARAD) are empowered and authorized to receive, hear, determine and adjudicate all agrarian cases and disputes, and incidents in connection therewith, arising within their respective territorial jurisdiction.
>
> SECTION 3. Functional Relationships. - The Board shall exercise functional supervision over the RARADs; and the PARADs. For administrative purposes, however, the RARADs and the PARADs are deemed to form part of the DAR Regional Office where they are stationed, and as such, shall be given administrative support by their respective Regional and Provincial offices, in terms of office space, personal services, equipment and supply, and other facilities.
>
> SECTION 4. Role of the RARAD. - The RARAD shall be the Executive Adjudicator in his region directly responsible to the Board. As such, he shall coordinate and monitor the work of the PARADs in his region and see to it that their dockets do not remain clogged. He shall receive, hear, and adjudicate the following cases:
>
> a) Cases that cannot be handled by the PARAD on account of inhibition or disqualification;
>
> b) Cases brought directly before him which for some cogent reason, cannot be properly handled by the PARAD concerned;
>
> c) Cases of such complexity and sensitivity that the decision thereof would constitute an important precedent affecting regional or national interest; and
>
> d) Such other cases which the Board may assign to him.
>
> SECTION 5. Appellate Jurisdiction. - The Board shall have exclusive appellate jurisdiction to review, reverse, modify, alter or affirm resolutions, orders, decisions, and other dispositions of its RARAD and PARAD.
>
> SECTION 6. Enforcement Powers. - The members of the Board and its RARADs and PARADs are empowered to summon witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony, require submission of reports, compel production of books and documents and answers to interrogatories, and to issue subpoena, subpoena duces tecum, writs of possession, writs of execution and other writs to enforce its orders and decisions thru sheriffs or duly deputized officers.
>
> For such purpose, whenever necessary, it may call upon the police and military authorities for assistance in the enforcement and execution of its decisions, orders, writs and other processes.

In Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board vs. Court of Appeals,[13] this Court observed that:

> x x x the DAR's exclusive original jurisdiction [as set forth in Section 50 of the CARL] is exercised through hierarchically arranged agencies, namely, the DARAB, RARAD and PARAD. The latter two exercise "delegated authority," while the first exercises appellate jurisdiction over resolutions, orders, decisions and other dispositions of the RARAD and the PARAD.

On the other hand, Executive Order 129-A, in Section 24 thereof, defines the functions of the Regional Offices as follows:

> SECTION 24. Regional Offices. The Department shall have twelve (12) Regional Offices. Each Regional Office shall be headed by a Regional Director who shall be assisted by an Assistant Regional Director for Operations and an Assistant Regional Director for Administration.
>
> The Regional Offices shall be responsible for the implementation of laws, policies, plans, programs, projects, rules and regulations of the Department in its administrative region. For such purposes, it shall have the following functions.
>
> a)

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Prepare and submit plans and programs for the regions on:

1) Land acquisition and distribution;

2) Information and education;

3) Land use management and land development;

4) Agrarian reform beneficiaries development;

b)

Provide technical assistance to Provincial Offices and Municipal Agrarian Reform Offices in the implementation of approved plans and programs;

c)

Conduct operations research and evaluation of agrarian reform implementation within the region;

d)

Coordinate with other government and private agencies and farmers and farm workers' organizations at the regional level, to carry out programs/projects for the general welfare of agrarian reform beneficiaries;

e)

Maintain an information system in coordination with the established monitoring system;

f)

Review and evaluate reports and other documents submitted by the Provincial Offices and Municipal Agrarian Reform Offices and agrarian reform clientele;

g)

Submit periodic feedback as may be necessary in the service of the Department's clientele.

In addition, the Revised Administrative Code of 1987, in Chapter 5 (Field Offices), Book IV (The Executive Branch) thereof, provides:

SEC. 26. Functions of a Regional Office. - (1) A regional office shall:

(a) Implement laws, policies, plans, programs, rules and regulations of the department or agency in the regional area;

(b) Provide economical, efficient and effective service to the people in the area;

(c) Coordinate with regional offices of other departments, bureaus and agencies in the area;

(d) Coordinate with local government units in the area; and

(e) Perform such other functions as may be provided by law.

(2) x x x

SEC. 27. Duties of a Regional Director. - The Regional Director shall:

(1) Implement laws, policies, rules and regulations within the responsibility of the agency;

(2) Implement agency programs in the region;

(3) Exercise the management functions of planning, organizing, directing and controlling;

(4) Appoint personnel to positions in the first level and casual and seasonal employees; and exercise disciplinary actions over them in accordance with the Civil Service Law;

(5) Approve sick, vacation and maternity leaves of absence with or without pay, for a period not beyond one year;

(6) Prepare and submit budget proposals for the region to the central office, administer the budget of the regional office, authorize disbursement of funds pursuant to approved financial and work programs, and administer the budget control machinery in the region;

(7) Approve requisition for supplies, materials and equipment, as well as books and periodicals, and other items for the region, in accordance with the approved supply procurement program;

(8) Negotiate and enter into contracts for services or furnishing supplies, materials and equipment to the regional office involving an amount not exceeding fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) within a given quarter, provided that authority in excess of fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) may be further authorized by the proper department or agency head;

(9) Approve claims for benefits under existing laws;

(10) Approve requests for overtime services;

(11) Promote coordination among regional offices, and between his regional office and local government units in the region;

(12) Provide housekeeping services for the regional office;

(13) Approve application of personnel for permission to teach, exercise a profession, or engage in business outside of office hours, in accordance with standards and guidelines of the Civil Service Commission;

(14) Issue travel vouchers authorizing employees to travel on official days within the region for a period not exceeding thirty days;

(15) Approve attendance of personnel in conferences, seminars, and non-degree training programs within the region;

(16) Authorize the allocation of funds to provincial/district offices; and

(17) Perform such other duties and functions as may be provided by law or further delegated by the head of agency or other proper authorities concerned.

Title XI of Book IV of the same Code, dealing specifically with the Department of Agrarian Reform, provides:

SEC. 18. Regional Office. - The Regional Office shall be responsible for supporting the field units and supervising program implementation of the Department within the region. It shall:

(1) Implement laws, policies, plans, rules and regulations of the Department in the regional area;

(2) Develop and implement a regional personnel management program;

(3) Prepare, submit, execute and control the budget of the region;

(4) Prepare and properly maintain books of accounts;

(5) Pay salaries and wages and other approved vouchers;

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(6) Provide administrative services to the regional and provincial offices;

(7) Prepare and submit plans and programs for the region on:

a. land tenure development

b. information and education

c. land use management and land development

d. legal services

e. agrarian reform beneficiaries development

(8) Provide technical assistance to the provincial offices and agrarian reform teams in the implementation of approved plans and programs;

(9) Extend effective legal assistance, advice or service to agrarian reform beneficiaries;

(10) Conduct operations research and evaluation of agrarian reform program implementation within the region;

(11) Coordinate with other government and private agencies and farmer organizations at the Regional level through the Agrarian Reform Coordinating Council, to carry out programs/projects for the general welfare of the agrarian reform beneficiaries;

(12) Coordinate para-legal services;

(13) Maintain a data-based information system in coordination with the established monitoring system;

(14) Review documents submitted by the Provincial and Team Offices or by the clientele;

(15) Submit periodic feedback and recommend policy changes and/or modification of procedures on program implementation; and

(16) Perform such other functions as may be necessary in the service of the clientele.

The foregoing provisions were already in effect when petitioner filed her petition in the BARC in 1990. And it is amply clear from these provisions that the function of the Regional Office concerns the implementation of agrarian reform laws while that of the DARAB/RARAD/PARAD is the adjudication of agrarian reform cases.

The first is essentially executive. It pertains to the enforcement and administration of the laws, carrying them into practical operation and enforcing their due observance.[14] Thus, the Regional Director is primarily tasked with "[i]mplement[ing] laws, policies, rules and regulations within the responsibility of the agency," as well as the "agency program in the region."[15]

The second is judicial in nature, involving as it does the determination of rights and obligations of the parties. To aid the DARAB in the exercise of this function, the Rules grant the Board and Adjudicators the powers to issue subpoenas[16] and injunctions,[17] to cite and punish for contempt,[18] and to order the execution of its orders and decision,[19] among other powers. The Rules also contain very specific provisions to ensure the orderly procedure before the DARAB, RARADs and PARADs. These provisions govern the commencement of actions, venue and cause of action,[20] the service of pleadings,[21] the presentation of evidence,[22] motions,[23] appeals[24] and judicial review.[25] Notable are provisions intended to prevent multiplicity of suits such as the rules on one suit for one cause of action,[26] the joinder of causes of action,[27] and the assignment of all incidents of a case to the Adjudicator to whom the case is assigned.[28] No such powers were granted or provisions adopted when the purported delegation was made to the Regional Director or since. The DARAB

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Rules grant broader powers to the Board and the Adjudicators and contain more detailed rules on procedure than those provided by the orders, circulars, memoranda and opinions cited by the Court of Appeals delegating jurisdiction to the Regional Director.

The Court of Appeals has underscored the fact that Section 13 of E.O. No. 129-A authorizes the DARAB to delegate its powers and functions to the regional office in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Board. The authority purportedly provides additional justification for the Regional Office's jurisdiction over the case. Precisely, however, the DARAB, through its Revised Rules, has delegated such powers and functions to the RARADs and the PARADs, which, under Section 3 of the Rules, "are deemed to form part of the DAR Regional Office where they are stationed."

It is evident from the foregoing that the DAR, like most administrative agencies, is granted with a fusion of governmental powers, in this case, a commingling of the quasi-judicial and the executive. The growing complexity of modern life, the multiplication of the subjects of governmental regulation and the increased difficulty of administering the laws have impelled this constantly growing tendency toward such delegation.[29]

In delegating these powers, it would hardly seem practical to allow a duplication of functions between agencies. Duplication results in confusion between the various agencies upon whom these powers are reposed, and in the public that the agencies are supposed to serve. It divides the agencies' resources and prevents them from devoting their energy to similarly important tasks. The intention to avoid this very situation is evident in the various laws' distinct delineation of the functions of the DARAB/RARAD/PARAD and the DAR Regional Office. Accordingly, the Court must reject the theory of concurrent jurisdiction between the former and the latter. We hold that the DAR Regional Office has no jurisdiction over the subject case.

In view of this conclusion, we need not resolve the issue of deprivation of due process allegedly suffered by petitioner in the proceedings before the Regional Director.

WHEREFORE, the petition is given DUE COURSE and GRANTED. The Decision and Resolution of the Court of Appeals is REVERSED and SET ASIDE. The restraining order issued per this Court's Resolution dated May 17, 1993 is hereby made permanent.

SO ORDERED.

Davide, Jr., C.J., (Chairman), Puno, Pardo, and Ynares-Santiago, JJ., concur.

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[*] This case was transferred to the ponente pursuant to the resolution in AM No. 00-9-03-SC.- Re: Creation of Special Committee on Case Backlog dated February 27, 2001.

[1] Renumbered as OCT No. 0-220 (M).

[2] Apparently, the Regional Director was acting upon the petition filed by petitioner before the BARC because it was only on March 14, 1990 that BALA Director Ruben Joel A. Puertollano referred the second petition filed before the DAR to the Regional Director. (CA Rollo, p. 38.)

[3] Rollo, p. 46.

[4] Rollo, pp. 4-5.

[5] Id., at 442.

[6] Id., at 455-459.

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[7] Id., at 48-49.

[8] Id., at 63. Underscoring supplied.

[9] Approved July 22, 1987.

[10] Approved July 26, 1987.

[11] Quismundo vs. Court of Appeals, 201 SCRA 609 (1991).

[12] Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board vs. Court of Appeals, 266 SCRA 404 (1997).

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ople vs. Torres, 293 SCRA 141 (1998).

[15] REVISED ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, BOOK IV, CHAPTER 5, SECTION 27 (1) AND (2). See also REVISED ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, BOOK IV, CHAPTER 5, SECTION 26; REVISED ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, BOOK IV, TITLE XI, BOOK IV, SECTION 18; and EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 129-A, SECTION 24, second paragraph.

[16] RULE I, SECTION 6.

[17] RULE X.

[18] RULE XI.

[19] RULE XII.

[20] RULE IV.

[21] RULE V.

[22] RULE VIII.

[23] RULE IX.

[24] RULE XIII.

[25] RULE XIV.

[26] Rule IV, Section 3. One Suit for a Single Cause of Action. - Multiple suits based on a single cause of action for the enforcement or protection of a right or prevention or redress or a wrong shall not be allowed. If a single cause of action is split and two (2) or more complaints or petitions are instituted for different parts thereof, the filing of the first complaint or petitioner may be pleaded as a ground for the dismissal of the others, and a judgment on the merits in any one of them may be availed of as a bar to the others.

[27] Rule IV, Section 4. Joinder of Causes of Action. - A complainant or petitioner having more than one cause of action against the same defendant or respondent arising out of the same questioned relationship, shall join all of them in one complaint or petition.

[28] Rule VIII, Section 3. Totality of Case Assigned. - When a case is assigned to a RARAD or PARAD, any or

all incidents thereto shall be considered assigned to him, and the same shall be disposed of it is the same proceedings to void multiplicity of suits. x x x.

[29] Rodrigo, Jr. vs. Sandiganbayan, 309 SCRA 661 (1999).

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