



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
KAGAWARAN NG UGNAYANG PANLABAS

DEPARTMENT ORDER NO. 2021-005

**STRENGTHENING THE OFFICE OF ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS**

**SECTION 1. LEGAL BASES**

1. Section 7, Chapter 2, Book IV of the Administrative Code of 1987 (Executive Order No. 292, s. 1987) vests in the Secretary the powers to “establish policies and standards for the operation of the Department pursuant to the approved programs of the government,” “promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out department objectives, policies, functions, plans, programs, and projects,” and “promulgate administrative issuances necessary for the efficient administration of the offices under the Secretary and the proper execution of the laws relative thereto”;
2. Section 83 of the Philippine Foreign Service Act of 1991 (Republic Act No. 7157) provides that “The Secretary shall effect the organization of the Department and the Foreign Service in accordance with the provisions of this Act, and, for this purpose, he is hereby authorized to allot the funds provided for the Department in the General Appropriations Act”;
3. Section 5 of Department Order No. 19-2015 - “Phase I of the Institutional Strengthening of the Department of Foreign Affairs” identifies the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs as one of the principal offices of the Department;”
4. Strategic Goal 1, Objective 1.1. of Organizational Development section of the DFA’s Strategic Plan 2017-2022 states that the Department shall “ensure that, by 2022, all the department’s management systems and operational procedures support and are aligned with foreign policy goals and objectives and undertake a major review of the organizational structure to ensure that the existing structure is in tune with the Department’s evolving responsibilities and functions...”

**SECTION 2. OBJECTIVES**

1. To strengthen, rationalize and streamline the management of relations with the 46 countries and territories covered by the present Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs, which countries and territories are of prime importance and high priority for the Philippines in view of geographic proximity, their immense potential for trade, investments, tourism and other economic opportunities, and the fast-evolving regional geopolitical developments that have direct impact on the country.

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MAR 02 2021  
  
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Signing Officer

2. To further enhance the supervision of the 30 Embassies and Consulates General in the Asia-Pacific region and making them more responsive.
3. To have two supervisory Executive Directors/Deputy Assistant Secretaries managing the geographic offices covering the Asia-Pacific region that would allow for deeper strategic thinking, and expeditious policy actions and guidance to foreign service posts.

### **SECTION 3. SCOPE**

The Department Order shall apply to the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs (ASPAC) with respect to its substantive functions, operations, and funding support.

### **SECTION 4. AUGMENTATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

The Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs shall have two (2) Executive Directors/Deputy Assistant Secretaries assigned to oversee the various divisions, to be divided as follows:

#### **1. North and Northeast Affairs (NNOA)**

**Division I: North Asia** – China, Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR, and Mongolia

**Division II: Northeast Asia**– Japan, Republic of Korea, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

#### **2. Southeast, South and Central Asian and Pacific Affairs (SEASCAP)**

**Division III: Maritime Southeast Asia** – Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Timor-Leste

**Division IV: Mainland Southeast Asia** - Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam

**Division V: South and Central Asia** – Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

**Division VI: Pacific** – Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Island, Solomon Island, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Nauru and Pacific Island Forum

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## SECTION 5. FUNCTIONS

The aforementioned Executive Directors/Deputy Assistant Secretaries shall assist the Assistant Secretary in the conduct of the following functions:

1. The management of the objectives, strategies, programs, projects, and other activities in the implementation of Philippine engagements and cooperation with the countries under their coverage;
2. Coordination of all internal DFA and Foreign Service Posts' activities dealing with bilateral relations with the countries under their coverage;
3. Coordination with other Government Departments and agencies on matters such as negotiation of economic, trade, investment, science and technology, development cooperation, social development, labor, defense and security, law enforcement agreements, among other areas, with the countries under their coverage; and,
4. Other functions and responsibilities as assigned by the Assistant Secretary.

The Executive Directors/Deputy Assistant Secretaries shall be entitled to Representation and Transportation Allowances as provided by pertinent laws and regulations.

## SECTION 6. TRANSITORY CLAUSE

The Office shall utilize the allocations provided to it under the 2021 General Appropriations Act.

Augmentation for succeeding years shall be prepared by ASPAC and submitted to the Office of Fiscal Management Services for onward submission to the Department of Budget and Management.


## SECTION 7. REPEALING CLAUSE

This Department Order supersedes all other Department Orders, Department Circulars, and all other internal collective instructions issued, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Order.

## SECTION 8. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE


If any section or part of this Department Order is declared contrary to law or unconstitutional by a competent authority, the remaining sections or parts hereof shall remain in full force and effect.

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**SECTION 9. EFFECTIVITY**

This Order shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from the date of its deposit with the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR), University of the Philippines Law Center.

  
TEODORO L. LOCSIN, JR.  
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Pasay City,

MAR 02 2021

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