



Republic of the Philippines

Sandiganbayan

Quezon City

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 018-2022

DEFERMENT OF REQUIREMENT OF FULL IN-COURT HEARINGS UNDER A.O. NO. 017-2022 UNTIL FEBRUARY 28, 2022

WHEREAS, on February 14, 2022, and upon consultation with and approval of the Honorable Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo, Sandiganbayan Administrative Order No. 017-2022 was issued providing, among others, that all hearings in the Sandiganbayan shall be fully in-court, albeit only parties, their counsels and witnesses shall be allowed inside the court room and that hearings *via* video conferencing may be conducted only in exceptional cases, upon motion of either or both parties, or upon orders of the court, which shall schedule the said videoconferencing hearings;

WHEREAS, on February 14, 2022, the Presiding Justice issued a Memorandum reiterating the requirement of Antigen Testing for all lawyers, parties, and witnesses who shall participate in-court, which requirement was approved and confirmed by the Sandiganbayan *en banc* during its special *en banc meeting* last October 22, 2021;

WHEREAS, on February 15, 2022, the Office of the Presiding Justice received a letter from Special Prosecutor Edilberto G. Sandoval of the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB) requesting for a transition period until February 28, 2022 considering that (1) the OMB is still in the process of procuring antigen testing kits to be regularly administered to all employees including the prosecutors (2) some areas in the country are still under strict alert levels so that the intended witnesses of the prosecution may have some difficulties in travelling to the Sandiganbayan, and (3) the policy of the OMB is to allow only 50% of its workforce to report in-office in shifts;

WHEREAS, upon consultation with the Honorable Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo on the requested transition period above stated, the same was approved by the Honorable Chief Justice for all party litigants;


NOW THEREFORE, a transition period until February 28, 2022 for the requirement under Item 5 of Sandiganbayan Administrative Order No. 017-2022 that all hearings in the Sandiganbayan shall be fully in-court, is hereby **GRANTED** for the benefit of **ALL** party-litigants.

FURTHER, as also approved by the Honorable Chief Justice, the Divisions of the Sandiganbayan are hereby authorized to continue to conduct videoconference hearings within the said period of transition.

Should the Division Chairperson determine the need for in-court participation, the requirement for antigen testing for all lawyers, parties and witnesses who participate in-court shall be maintained.

Issued this 15th of February, 2022.

Quezon City.


AMPARO M. CABOTAJE-TANG
Presiding Justice