


**FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF THE PHILIPPINES
Second Regular Session**

8 SEP -8 2015

**SENATE
S.B. No. 2608**

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Villar

Explanatory Note

The need for the creation of additional branches of the Metropolitan, Municipal and Regional Trial Courts which will handle exclusively cases involving violations of environmental laws, natural resources laws and some selected penal offenses which are intimately connected with the issues relating to the environment, is a need which has been neglected. An act that cannot now be allowed, what with the need, now more than ever, to act to protect the environment and preserve our natural resources, the only way to accomplish the same is by the creation of these additional courts.

The designation of environmental courts is not new to the Philippines. In 1993 the Supreme Court issued an administrative order designating certain trial courts in the country to hear all cases of forestry law violations within the identified priority areas.

The courts were located in areas where violations were rampant. With the current court system, aside from the forestry cases, other violations of environmental laws are not segregated, but are rather lumped together with other cases (e.g. criminal and civil).

Based on data, there are currently 3,120 cases filed in relation to violations of environmental laws. The regions with the highest number of active cases are Region 5 (Bicol Region combined) with 675, Region 6 (Western Visayas) with 498 and Region IV-B (MIMAROPA) with 482.

With the sheer bulk of cases handled by each trial court, the length of time needed to decide cases in the Regional Trial Courts and Municipal Trial Courts considerably vary. But with only 1,682 justices and judges in 2,153 courts in the country, the waiting time is expected to be long. In terms of environmental cases filed, out of the 3,102 cases, 109 were filed before 1998, roughly 3.5% of cases which are already a decade old, are still undecided. The length of time needed to decide cases in the Regional Trial Courts and Municipal Trial Courts considerably vary. In terms of environmental cases filed, out of the 3,102 cases, 109 were filed before 1998, roughly 3.5% of cases which are already a decade old are still undecided. Following William Gladstone's famous line, "justice delayed, is justice denied." And this cannot be more true than in the Philippines, in Philippine environmental cases none the less.

The overwhelming number of cases filed in relation to environmental violations, are not the only cases being handled by the concerned judges and their respective courts. Based on 2006 statistics, on the national scale, the total case load of the Judiciary is 745,360, with the Regional Trial Courts (RTC) handling 360, 402 cases, while the Municipal Trial Courts (MTC) handling 362,000. In 2004, each Regional Trial Court in the country on the average handles 464 cases while each first-level courts (MTC or MCTC) handles an average of 695 cases. There are even a few courts that have as much as 6,000 cases pending before them.

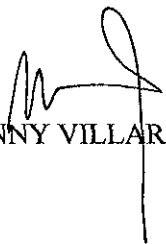
The most efficient way to establish environmental courts is to designate specific regular courts. Existing courts having heavy caseloads of environment-related cases based on data of the Office of the Court Administrator may be designated to sit as environmental courts in their areas. Since the judges in these courts have the experience in handling environment cases it would not be difficult for them to specialize and to undergo further training in environmental law. To ensure that regular courts designated as environmental courts would be able to dispose of cases speedily, special environmental courts should either be deloaded of their criminal and civil cases or not assigned new ones.

The need for special courts arise not just in the interest of speedy disposition of cases. There is also a special need to be addressed. Training judges and prosecutors in environmental law and exposing them to environmental issues are needed for them to understand the cases that are confronting them.

The designation of green benches serves as mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the right to a healthy and balanced ecology. Though the faster delivery of environmental justice is sought, it is not the be-all and end-all of environmental courts. A transgenerational guarantee of enjoying the benefits of ecologic rights is also being aimed at. The proper working of all state mechanisms in ensuring environmental sustainability is a necessary imperative in the environmental quality that the future will inherit.

To address the foregoing problem, this bill proposes the creation of additional trial courts each in both the Municipal/ Metropolitan/ Municipal Circuit and Regional Trial Courts per city or municipality to which the aforementioned cases may be assigned accordingly.

The immediate approval of this measure is earnestly sought.




MANNY VILLAR

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

8 SEP -8 1:5

SENATE

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Introduced by Senator Villar

AN ACT
TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO HEALTHY AND
BALANCED ENVIRONMENT AND INTER-GENERATIONAL ECOLOGICAL
RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH THE CREATION OF GREEN BENCHES, AMENDING
FOR THE PURPOSE, BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Environment Courts.

Environment Courts are courts of law created in the Municipal/ Municipal Circuit Trial/ Metropolitan Courts and the Regional Trial Courts to handle cases involving violations of environment laws, disasters in cases involving land, air and maritime disasters, and all cases of similar nature.

SECTION 2. Cases within the cognizance of these courts.

The Environmental Courts shall take cognizance of cases involving violations of the following laws:

1. The Revised Forestry Code (P.D. No. 705);
2. The Clean Air Act;
3. The Water Code and the Clean Water Act of 2004;
4. The Animal Welfare Act of 1998 (R.A. No. 8485)
5. The Fisheries Code (R.A. No. 8550)
6. The Pollution Control Law, P. D. No. 984
7. Cases involving natural disasters in land, sea and air.

SECTION 3. Section 14 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 14. Regional Trial Courts.

(a) [Fifty-seven] **SIXTY-FOUR** regional trial judges shall be commissioned for the first judicial region. there shall be:

[Two] **THREE** branches (branches i and ii, **AND LVIII**) for the province of Abra, with seats at Bangued;

[Eight] **NINE** branches (Branches III to X, and LVIX) for the province of Benguet and the city of Baguio, branches iii to vii, **AND LIX** with seats at Baguio city, and Branches VIII to X at La Trinidad;

[Nine] **TEN** branches (Branches XI to XIX, and LX) for the province of Ilocos Norte and the city of Laoag, Branches XI to XVI, **AND LX** with seats at Laoag city, Branches XVII and XVIII at Batac, and Branch XIX at Bangui;

[Six] **SEVEN** branches (Branches XX to XXV, **AND LXI**) for the province of Ilocos Sur, **BRANCHES XX AND XXI, AND LXI** with seats at Vigan, Branch XXII at Narvacan, Branch XXIII at Candon, Branch XXIV at Cabugao, and Branch XXV at Tagudin;

[Nine] **TEN** branches (Branches XXVI to XXXIV, **AND LXII**) for the province of La Union, Branches XXVI to XXX, and **LXII** with seats at San Fernando, Branches XXXI and XXXII at Agoo, Branch XXXIII at Bauang, and Branch XXXIV at Balaoan;

Two branches (Branches XXXV and XXXVI) for the province of Mountain province, with seats at Bontoc; and

[Twenty-one] **TWENTY-TWO** branches (Branches XXXVII to LVII, **AND LXIV**) for the province of Pangasinan and the cities of Dagupan and San Carlos, Branches XXXVII to XXXIX, **AND LXIV** with seats at Lingayen, Branches XL to XLIV at Dagupan, Branches XLV to XLIX at Urdaneta, Branch L at Villasis, Branches LI and LH at Tayug, Branch LIII at Rosalae, Branches LIV and LV at Alaminos, and Branch LVI and LVII at San Carlos.

(b) [Thirty-two] **THIRTY-THREE** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Second Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Twelve] **THIRTEEN** branches (Branches I to XII, **AND XXXIII**) for the province of Cagayan, Branches I to V, **AND XXXIII** with seats at Tuguegarao, Branches VI to X at Aparri, Branch XI at Tuao, and Branch XII at Sanchez Mira;

One branch (Branch XIII) for the province of Batanes, with seat at Basco;

Two branches (Branches XIV and XV) for the province of Ifugao, Branch XIV with seat at Lagawe, and Branch XV at Potia;

Nine branches (Branches XVI to XXIV, and XXXIV) for the province of Isabela, **BRANCHES XVI TO XVIII, AND XXXIV WITH SEATS AT ILAGAN,** Branches XIX and XX at Cauayan, Branch XXI at Santiago, Branch XXII at Cabagan, Branch XXIII at Roxas, and Branch XXIV at Echague;

Two branches (Branches XXV and XXVI) for the province of Kalinga-Apayao, Branch XXV with seat at Tabuk, and Branch XXVI at Luna;

Four branches (Branches XXVII to XXX) for the province of Nueva Vizcaya, Branches XXVII to XXIX with seats at Bayombong, and Branch XXX at Bambang;

Two branches (Branches XXXI and XXXII) for the province of Quirino, with seats at Cabarroguis.

(c) [Seventy-five] **EIGHTY-SEVEN** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Third Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches I to V, **AND LXXVI**) for the province of Bataan, Branches I to III, **AND LXXVI** with seats at Balanga, Branch IV at Mariveles, and Branch V at Dinalupihan;

[Seventeen] **TWENTY** Branches (Branches VI to XXII, **AND LXXVII TO LXXX**) for the province of Bulacan (except the municipality of Valenzuela), with seats at Malolos;

[Eighteen] **TWENTY** Branches (Branches XXIII to XL, **AND LXXXI TO LXXXII**) for the province of Nueva Ecija and the cities of Cabanatuan, San Jose and Palayan, Branches XXIII to XXX, **AND LXXXI** with seats at Cabanatuan City, Branches XXXI to XXXIII at Guimba, Branches XXXIV to XXXVI at Gapan, Branch XXXVII at Sto. Domingo, Branches XXXVIII and XXXIX at San Jose, and **BRANCH XL, AND LXXXII** at Palayan.

TWENTY-TWO BRANCHES (Branches XLI to LXII, **AND LXXXIII TO LXXXIV**) for the province of Pampanga and the city of Angeles, **BRANCHES XLI TO XLVIII, AND LXXXIII WITH SEATS AT SAN FERNANDO**, Branches XLIX to LIII at Guagua, Branches LIV and LV at Macabebe, and **BRANCHES LVI TO LXII, AND LXXXIV AT ANGELES CITY**;

[Six] **SEVEN** branches (Branches LXIII to LXVIII, **AND LXXXV**) for the province of Tarlac, Branches LXVI, **AND LXXXV** at Capas, Branch LXVII at Paniqui, and Branch LXVIII at Camiling; and

[Seven] **NINE** branches (Branches LXIX to LXXV, **AND LXXXVI TO LXXXVII**) for the province of Zambales and the city of Olongapo, Branches LXIX to LXXI, **AND LXXXVI** with seats at Iba and branches LXXII to LXXV, **AND LXXXVII** at Olongapo City.

(d) [One hundred seventy-two (172)] **ONE-HUNDRED EIGHTY FIVE** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the National Capital Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Fifty-five] **FIFTY-SEVEN** branches (Branches 1 to 55, **AND 173 TO 174**) for the City of Manila, with seats thereat;

[Thirty-two] **THIRTY-FOUR** branches (Branches 76 to 107, **AND 175 TO 176**) for Quezon City, with seats thereat;

[Twelve] **THIRTEEN** branches (Branches 108 to 119, **AND 177**) for Pasay City, with seats thereat;

[Twelve] **THIRTEEN** branches (Branches 120 to 131, **AND 178**) for Caloocan City, with seats thereat;

[Fifty-eight] **SIXTY-FOUR** branches (Branches 56 to 74 and 132 to 170, **AND 179 TO 184**) for the Municipalities of Navotas, Malabon, San Juan, Mandaluyong, Makati, Pasig, Pateros, Taguig, Marikina, Parañaque, Las Piñas, and Muntinlupa, Branches 56 to 66, **AND 179 AND 132 TO 150, AND 180** with seats at Makati; Branches 67 to 71, **AND 181** and 151 to 168, **AND 182** at Pasig; and Branches 72 to 74, **AND 183, 169 and 170, AND 184** at Malabon; and

[Three] **FOUR** branches (Branches 75, 171 and 172, **AND 185**) for the Municipality of Valenzuela, with seats thereat. (As amended by EO No. 33, July 30, 1986.)

(e) [Eighty-two] **NINETY-SEVEN** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Fourth Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Fourteen] **SIXTEEN** branches (Branches I to XIV, **AND LXXXIII TO LXXXIV**) for the province of Batangas and the cities of Lipa and Batangas, Branches I to VI, **AND LXXXIII** with seats at Batangas City, Branch V at Lemery, Branches VI to VIII at Tanuan, Branches IX to XI at Balayan, Branches XII and XIII, **AND LXXXIV** at Lipa, and Branch XIV at Nasugbu;

[Nine] **ELEVEN** branches (Branches XV to XXIII, **AND LXXXV to LXXXVI**) for the province of Cavite and the cities of Cavite, Tagaytay and Trece Martires, Branch XV with seat at Naic, Branches XIV and XVII, **AND LXXXV** at Cavite City, Branch XVIII, **AND LXXXVI** at Tagaytay City, Branch XIX at Bacoor, Branches XX to XXII at Imus, and Branch XXIII at Trece Martires;

[Fourteen] **SEVENTEEN** branches (Branches XXIV to XXXVII, **AND LXXXVII TO LXXXIX**) for the province of Laguna and the City of San Pablo; Branches XXIV and XXV, **AND LXXXVII** with seats at Biñan, Branches XXVI to XXVIII, **AND LXXXVIII** at Sta. Cruz, Branches XXIX to XXXII at San Pablo City, Branch XXXIII at Siniloan, and Branches XXXIV to XXXVI, **AND LXXXIX** at Calamba;

One branch (Branch XXXVIII) for the province of Marinduque, with seat at Boac;

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches XXXIX to XLIII, **AND XC**) for the province of Mindoro Oriental, Branches XXXIX to XL, **AND XC** with seats at Calapan, Branches XLI and XLII at Pinamalayan, and Branch XLII at Roxas;

[Three] **FOUR** branches (Branches XLVII to XLVI, **AND XCI**) for the province of Mindoro Occidental, Branch XLIV with seat at Mamburao, and Branches XLV and XLVI, **AND XCI** at San Jose;

[Six] **EIGHT** branches (Branches XLVII to LII, **AND XCII TO XCIII**) for the province of Palawan and the city of Puerto Princesa, with seats at Puerto Princesa City;

[Thirteen] **FIFTEEN** branches (Branches LIII to LXV, **AND XCIV TO XCV**) for the province of Quezon and the city of Lucena, Branches LIII to LX, **AND XCIV TO XCV** with seats at Lucena City, Branches LXI and LXII at Gumaca, Branch LXIII at Calauag, Branch LXIV at Mauban, and Branch LXV at Infanta;

One branch (Branch LXVI) for the province of Aurora, with seat at Baler;

[Fourteen] **SIXTEEN** branches (Branches LXVII to LXXX, **AND XCVI TO XCVII**) for the province of Rizal except the cities and municipalities embraced within the National Capital Judicial Region, Branches LXVII to LXX, **AND XCVI** with seats at Binangonan, Branches LXXI to LXXIV, **AND XCVII** at Antipolo, Branches LXXV to LXXVII at San Mateo, and Branches LXXVIII to LXXX at Morong; and

Two branches (Branches LXXXI and LXXXII) for the province of Romblon, Branch LXXXI with seat at Romblon, and Branch LXXXII at Odiongan.

(f) [Fifty-five] **SIXTY-FOUR** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Fifth Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Eighteen] **TWENTY** branches (Branches I to XVIII, **AND LVI TO LVII**) for the province of Albay and the city of Legaspi, Branches I to X, **AND LVI TO LVII** with seats at Legaspi City, Branches XI to XIV at Ligao, and Branches XV to XVIII at Tabaco;

[Nineteen] **TWENTY-TWO** branches (Branches XIX to XXXVII, **AND LVIII TO LX**) for the province of Camarines Sur and the cities of Naga and Iriga, Branches XIX to XXVIII, **AND LVIII TO LVIX** with seats at Naga City, Branch XXIX at Libmanan, Branch XXX at Tigaoon, Branches XXXI to XXXIII at Pili, and Branches XXXIV to XXXVII, **AND LVX** at Iriga City;

[Four] **FIVE** branches (Branches XXXVIII to XLII, **AND LXI**) for the province of Camarines Norte, with seat at Daet;

[Three] **FOUR** branches (Branches XLII and XLIII, **AND LXII**) for the province of Catanduanes, with seats at Virac;

[Seven] **EIGHT** branches (Branches XLIV to L, **AND LXIII**) for the province of Masbate, Branches XLIV to XLVIII, **AND LXIII** with seats at Masbate, Branch XLIX at Cataingan, and Branch L at San Jacinto; and

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches LI to LV, **AND LXIV**) for the province of Sorsogon, Branches LI to LIII, **AND LXIV** with seats at Sorsogon, Branch LVI at Gubat, and Branch LV at Irosin.

(g) [Sixty-three] **SEVENTY** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Sixth Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Nine] **TEN** branches (Branches I to IX, **AND LXIII**) for the province of Aklan, with seats at Kalibo;

[Four] **FIVE** branches (Branches X to XIII, **AND LXIV**) for the province of Antique, Branches X to XII, **AND LXIV** with seats at San Jose, and Branch XIII and Culasi;

[Eight] **NINE** branches (Branches XIV to XXI, **AND LXV**) for the province of Capiz and the city of Roxas, Branches XIV to XIX, **AND LXV** with seats at Roxas City and Branches XX and XXI at Mambusao;

[Eighteen] **TWENTY** branches (Branches XXII to XXXIX, **AND LXVI TO LXVII**) for the province of Iloilo, the subprovince of Guimaras, and the city of Iloilo, with seats at Iloilo City; and

[Twenty-four] **TWENTY-SEVEN** branches (Branches XL to LXIII, **AND LXVIII TO LXX**) for the province of Negros Occidental, and the cities of Bacolod, Bago, Cadiz, La Carlota, San Carlos and Silay, Branch XL, **AND LXVIII** with seat at Silay City, Branches XLI to LIV, **AND LXVIX** at Bacolod City, Branches LV and LVI at Himamaylan, Branches LVII to LIX, **AND LXX** at Kabankalan, Branch LXII at Bago City, and Branch LXII at La Carlota City.

(h) [Forty-six] **FIFTY** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Seventh Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Four] **SIX** branches (Branches I to IV, **AND XLVII**) for the province of Bohol and the city of Tagbilaran, with seats at Tagbilaran City;

[Twenty-five] **TWENTY-SEVEN** branches (Branches V to XXIX, **AND XLVIII TO XLIX**) for the province of Cebu and the cities of Cebu, Danao, Lapu-Lapu, Mandaue and Toledo, Branches V to XXIV, **AND XLVIII TO XLIX** with seats at Cebu City, Branch XXV at Danao City, Branch XXVI at Argao, Branch XXVII at Lapu-Lapu City, Branch XXVIII at Mandaue City, and Branch XXIX at Toledo City;

[Sixteen] **SEVENTEEN** branches (Branches XXX to XLV, **AND L**) for the province of Negros Oriental and the cities of Dumaguete, Bais and Canlaon, Branches XXX to XLIV, **AND L** with seats at Dumaguete City, and Branch XLV at Bais City; and

One branch (Branch XLVI) for the province of Siquijor, with seat at Larena.

(i) [Thirty-three] **THIRTY-NINE** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Eighth Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches I to V, **AND XXXIV**) for the province of Eastern Samar, Branches I and II, **AND XXXIV** with seats at Borongan, Branch III at Guiuan, Branch IV at Dolores, and Branch V at Oras;

[Thirteen] **FIFTEEN** branches (Branches VI to XVIII, **AND XXXV TO XXXVI**) for the province of Leyte, the sub-province of Biliran, and the cities of Ormoc and Tacloban; Branches VI and IX, **AND XXXV** with seats at Tacloban City, Branch X at Abuyog, Branch XI at Calubian, Branch XII, **AND XXXVI** at Ormoc City, Branch XIII at Carigara, Branch XIV at Baybay, Branch XV at Burauen, Branch XVI at Naval, Branch XVII at Palompon, and Branch XVIII at Hilongos;

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches XIX to XXIII, **AND XXXVII**) for the province of Northern Samar, Branches XIX and XX, **AND XXXVII** with seats at Catarman, Branches XXI and XXII at Laoang, and Branch XXIII at Allen;

[Three] **FOUR** branches (Branches XXIV to XXVI, **AND XXXVIII**) for the province of Southern Leyte, Branches XXIV and XXV, **AND XXXVIII** with seats at Maasin, and Branch XXVI at San Juan; and

[Seven] **EIGHT** branches (Branches XXVII to XXXIII, **AND XXXIX**) for the province of Samar and the city of Calbayog, Branches XXVII to XXIX, **AND XXXIX** with seats at Catbalogan, Branch XXX at Basey, Branches XXXI and XXXII at Calbayog City, and Branch XXXIII at Calbiga.

(j) [Twenty-four] **TWENTY-SEVEN** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Ninth Judicial Region. There shall be:

Two branches (Branches I and II) for the province of Basilan, with seats at Isabela;

Two branches (Branches III and IV) for the province of Sulu, Branch III with seat at Jolo, and Branch IV at Parang;

One branch (Branch V) for the province of Tawi-Tawi, with seat at Bongao;

[Six] **SEVEN** branches (Branches VI to XI, **AND XXV**) for the province of Zamboanga del Norte, and the cities of Dipolog and Dapitan, Branches VI to X, **AND XXV** with seats at Dipolog City, and Branch XI at Sindangan; and

[Thirteen] **FIFTEEN** branches (Branches XII to XXIV, **AND XXVI TO XXVII**) for the province of Zamboanga del Sur and the cities of Pagadian and Zamboanga; Branches XII to XVII, **AND XXVI** with seats at Zamboanga City, Branches, XVIII to XXII, **AND XXVII** at Pagadian City, Branch XXIII at Molave, and Branch XXIV at Ipil.

(k) [Thirty-two] **THIRTY-SEVEN** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Tenth Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches I to V, **AND XXXIII**) for the province of Agusan del Norte and the city of Butuan, with seats at Butuan City;

Two branches (Branches VI and VII) for the province of Agusan del Sur, Branches VI with seat at Prosperidad and Branch VII with seat at Bayugan;

[Four] **FIVE** branches (Branches VIII to XI, **AND XXXIV**) for the province of Bukidnon, Branches VIII to X, **AND XXXIV** with seats at Malaybalay and Branch XI at Manalo Fortich;

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches XII to XVI, **AND XXXV**) for the province of Misamis Occidental and the cities of Oroquieta, Ozamis, and Tangub, Branches XII to XIV, **AND XXXV** with seats at Oroquieta City, Branch XV at Ozamis City, and Branch XVI at Tangub City;

[Eleven] **TWELVE** branches (Branches XVII to XXVII, **AND XXXVI**) for the province of Misamis Oriental and the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Gingoog, Branches XVII to XXV, **AND XXXVI** with seats at Cagayan de Oro City, Branch XXVI at Medina, and Branch XXVII at Gingoog City;

One branch (Branch XXVIII) for the province of Camiguin, with seat at Mambajao; and

[Four] **FIVE** branches (Branches XXIX to XXXII, **AND XXXVII**) for the province of Surigao del Norte and the City of Surigao, Branches XXIX and XXX, **AND XXXVII** with seats at Surigao City, Branch XXXI at Dapa, and Branch XXXII at Dinagat, Dinagat Island.

(l) [Twenty-nine] **THIRTY-FIVE** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Eleventh Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Four] **FIVE** branches (Branches I to IV, **AND XXX**) for the province of Davao del Norte, Branches I and II, **AND XXX** with seats at Tagum, Branch III at Nabunturan, and Branch IV at Panabo;

[Three] **FOUR** branches (Branches V to VII, **AND XXXI**) for the province of Davao Oriental, Branches V and VI, **AND XXXI** with seats at Mati and Branch VII at Banganga;

[Fourteen] **SIXTEEN** branches (Branches VIII to XXI, **AND XXXII TO XXXIII**) for the province of Davao del Sur and the city of Davao, Branches VIII to XVII, **AND XXXII** with seats at Davao City, Branches XVIII and XIX, **AND XXXIII** at Digos, Branch XX at Malinta, and Branch XXI at Bansalan;

[Five] **SEVEN** Branches (Branches XXII to XXVI, **AND XXXIV**) for the province of South Cotabato and the city of General Santos, Branches XXII, XXIII **AND XXXIV** with seats at General Santos City, Branches XXIV, XXV and XXXV at Koronadal, and Branch XXVI at Surallah; and

Three branches (Branches XXVII to XXIX) for the province of Surigao del Sur, Branch XXVII with seat at Tandag, Branch XXVIII at Lianga, and Branch XXIX at Bislig.

(m) [Twenty] **TWENTY-TWO** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Twelfth Judicial Region. There shall be:

[Seven] **EIGHT** branches (Branches I to VII, **AND XXI**) for the province of Lanao del Norte and the city of Iligan, Branches I to VI, **AND XXI** with seats at Iligan City, and Branch VII at Tubod;

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches VIII to XII, **AND XXII**) for the province of Lanao del Sur and the city of Marawi, Branches VIII to X, **AND XXII** with seats at Marawi City, and Branches XI and XII at Malabang;

Three branches (Branches XIII to XV) for the province of Maguindanao and the city of Cotabato. Branches XIII and XIV with seats at Cotabato City, and Branch XV at Maganoy;

Three branches (Branches XVI to XVIII) for the province of North Cotabato, Branch XVI with seat at Kabacan, Branch XVII at Kidapawan, and Branch XVIII at Missayap; and

Two branches (Branches XIX and XX) for the province of Sultan Kudarat, Branch XIX, with seat at Isulan, and Branch XX at Tacurong.

SECTION 4. Section 27 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“*SEC. 27. Metropolitan Trial Courts of the National Capital Region.* – There shall be a Metropolitan Trial Court in the National Capital Region, to be known as the Metropolitan Trial Court of Metro Manila which shall be composed of ninety-six branches. There shall be:

[Thirty] **THIRTY-THREE** branches (Branches I to XXX, **AND LXXXIII TO LXXXVI**) for the city of Manila with seats thereat;

[Thirteen] **FIFTEEN** branches (Branches XXXI to XLIII, **AND LXXXVII TO LXXXIX**) for Quezon City with seats thereat;

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches XLIV to XLVIII, **AND XC**) for Pasay City with seats thereat;

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches XLIX to LIII, **AND XCI**) for Caloocan City with seats thereat;

One branch (Branch LIV) for Navotas with seat thereat;

Two branches (Branches LV and LVI) for Malabon with seats thereat;

[Two] **THREE** branches (Branches LVII and LVIII, **AND XCII**) for San Juan with seats thereat;

[Two] **THREE** branches (Branches LIX and LX, **AND XCIII**) for Mandaluyong with seats thereat;

[Seven] **NINE** branches (Branches LXI and LXVII, and XCIV to XCV) for Makati with seats thereat;

[Five] **SIX** branches (Branches LXVIII to LXXII, **AND XCVI**) for Pasig with seats thereat;

One branch (Branch LXXIII) for Pateros with seat thereat;

One branch (Branch LXXIV) for Taguig with seat thereat;

[Two] **THREE** branches (Branches LXXV and LXXVI, **AND XCVII**) for Marikina with seats thereat;

Two branches (Branches LXXVII and LXXVIII) for Parañaque with seats thereat;

One branch (Branch LXXIX) for Las Piñas with seat thereat;

One branch (Branch LXXX) for Muntinlupa with seat thereat;

Two branches (Branches LXXXI and LXXXII) for Valenzuela with seats thereat;

SECTION 5. Section 29 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 29. *Municipal Trial Courts in cities.* ♦ In every city which does not form part of a metropolitan area, there shall be a Municipal Trial Court with one branch, except as hereunder provided:

Two branches for Laoag City;

[Four] **FIVE** branches for Baguio City;

Three branches for Dagupan City;

Five branches for Olongapo City;

Three branches for Cabanatuan City;

Two branches for San Jose City;

Three branches for Angeles City;

Two branches for Cavite City;

Two branches for Batangas City;

Two branches for Lucena City;

[Three] **FOUR** branches for Naga City;

[Two] **THREE** branches for Iriga City;

[Three] **FOUR** branches for Legaspi City;

Two branches for Roxas City;

Four branches for Iloilo City;

Seven branches for Bacolod City;

Two branches for Dumaguete City;

Two branches for Tacloban City;

Eight branches for Cebu City;

Three branches for Mandaue City;

Two branches for Tagbilaran City;

Two branches for Surigao City;

Two branches for Butuan City;
[Five] **SIX** branches for Cagayan de Oro City;
[Seven] **EIGHT** branches for Davao City;
Three branches for General Santos City;
Two branches for Oroquieta City;
Three branches for Ozamis City;
Two branches for Dipolog City;
Four branches for Zamboanga City;
Two branches for Pagadian City; and
Two branches for Iligan City.

SECTION 6. Section 30 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 30. *Municipal Trial Courts.* In each of the municipalities that are not comprised within a metropolitan area and a municipal circuit there shall be a Municipal Trial Court which shall have one branch, except as hereunder provided:

Two branches for San Fernando, La Union;
Four branches for Tuguegarao;
Three branches for Lallo, and two branches for Aparri, both of Cagayan;
[Two] **THREE** branches for Santiago, Isabela;
Two branches each for Malolos, Meycauayan and Bulacan, all of Bulacan Province;
Four branches for San Fernando and two branches for Guagua, both of Pampanga;
[Two] **THREE** branches for Tarlac, Tarlac;
Two branches for San Pedro, Laguna; and
Two branches each for Antipolo and Binangonan, both in Rizal.

SECTION 7. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, letters of instruction, executive orders, rules and regulations, or any part thereof inconsistent with this Act shall be amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,