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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE  
**BUREAU OF CUSTOMS**

*A modernized and credible customs administration that upholds good governance and is among the world's best*

24 April 2024

**CUSTOMS MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR**  
NO. 91-2024

**TO :** ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER  
ALL DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS  
ALL DIRECTORS AND DIVISION CHIEFS  
ALL DISTRICT AND SUB-PORT COLLECTORS  
ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

**SUBJECT :** ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER (AO) NO. 20 WITH SUBJECT:  
FURTHER STREAMLINING ADMINISTRATIVE  
PROCEDURES AND POLICIES, AND REMOVING NON-  
TARIFF BARRIERS ON THE IMPORTATION OF  
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

This has reference to the herein letter dated 18 April 2024 from Atty. Kamille N. Espino, Acting Director IV, Office of the President of the Philippines, with attached AO No. 20 dated 18 April 2024 from Lucas P. Bersamin, Executive Secretary, Office of the President of the Philippines.

Pertinent to AO No. 20 is the rationale stated as follows:

XXX

WHEREAS, while there are existing measures to streamline administrative procedures and policies on the importation of agricultural products and remove non-tariff barriers, it has been observed that administrative constraints and non-tariff barriers, that unduly add to the costs of importation and limit supplies, continue to persist, thereby increasing domestic prices of agricultural commodities.

WHEREAS, it is imperative to further streamline administrative procedures to foster transparency and predictability of policies on the importation of agricultural products in order to help ensure food security, maintain sufficient supply of agricultural goods in the domestic market, and improve local production.

XXX



Hence, AO No. 20 provided the orders and procedures under the following Sections, to wit;

- Section 1.** Further Streamlining Administrative Procedures and Removing Non-Tariff Barriers.
- Section 2.** Processing and Issuance of SPSIC for Agricultural Products.
- Section 3.** Guidelines for Importation of Sugar Products.
- Section 4.** Guidelines for Importation of Fishery Products.
- Section 5.** Expedite Unloading of Agricultural Imports.
- Section 6.** Reconstitution of the Surveillance Team.
- Section 7.** Reportorial Requirement.
- Section 8.** Implementing Guidelines.

Administrative Order No. 20 dated 18th April 2024 is hereto attached for ease of reference.

For records purposes, please confirm the dissemination of this circular throughout your offices within fifteen (15) days from receipt thereof.

For information and compliance.

**BIENVENIDO Y. RUBIO**  
Commissioner



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Office of the President  
of the Philippines  
Malacañang

MALACAÑANG RECORDS OFFICE

Manila, April 18, 2024

**COMMISSIONER BIENVENIDO Y. RUBIO**

Bureau of Customs  
Port Area, Manila

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit for your information and guidance, a certified copy of Administrative Order No. 20 dated April 18, 2024 entitled **"FURTHER STREAMLINING ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND POLICIES, AND REMOVING NON-TARIFF BARRIERS ON THE IMPORTATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS"**.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

*Kamille N. Espino*  
**ATTY. KAMILLE N. ESPINO**  
Acting Director IV

BUREAU OF CUSTOMS  
PORT OPERATIONS SERVICE  
**RECEIVED**

BY: *[Signature]* TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
ASSESSMENT & OPERATIONS COORDINATING GROUP (AOCG)

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BY: *[Signature]*  
DATE & TIME: 04-22-24

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BY: *[Signature]* G. BUNYAD TIME: 11:56



MALACAÑAN PALACE  
MANILA

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 20

**FURTHER STREAMLINING ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND  
POLICIES, AND REMOVING NON-TARIFF BARRIERS ON THE  
IMPORTATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS**

**WHEREAS**, Section 2 of Republic Act (RA) No. 7581 or the "Price Act," as amended, declares it a policy of the State to develop, adopt and promulgate measures to stabilize prices of basic necessities and prime commodities;

**WHEREAS**, Section 4 of RA No. 8178 or the "Agricultural Tariffication Act of 1996," as amended, removed the quantitative restrictions on the importation of agricultural products in the country and allowed certain products to be imported beyond the Minimum Access Volume (MAV), subject to applicable laws, rules and regulations;

**WHEREAS**, Section 2 of RA No. 9485 or the "Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007," as amended by RA No. 11032 or the "Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018," declares it a policy of the State to take appropriate measures to promote transparency in each agency with regard to the manner of transacting with the public, which shall encompass initiating and maintaining a program for the adoption of simplified procedures that will reduce red tape and expedite business and non-business related transactions in government;

**WHEREAS**, Section 3 of Executive Order No. 28 (s. 2023) established the Inter-Agency Committee on Inflation and Market Outlook (IAC-IMO) as an advisory body to the Economic Development Group on measures that would keep inflation, particularly food and energy, within the government's inflation targets;

**WHEREAS**, Administrative Order (AO) No. 13 (s. 2018) directed the Department of Agriculture (DA), Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), and National Food Authority, in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), to undertake immediate measures to remove administrative constraints and other non-tariff barriers on the importation of agricultural products;

**WHEREAS**, non-tariff barriers are policy measures, other than customs tariff, that restrict trade, including but not limited to quotas, import licensing systems, regulations, and red tape;

**WHEREAS**, while there are existing measures to streamline administrative procedures and policies on the importation of agricultural products and remove non-tariff barriers, it has been observed that administrative constraints and non-tariff barriers, that unduly add to the costs of importation and limit supplies, continue to persist, thereby increasing domestic prices of agricultural commodities;

**WHEREAS**, it is imperative to further streamline administrative procedures to foster transparency and predictability of policies on the importation of agricultural products in order to help ensure food security, maintain sufficient supply of agricultural goods in the domestic market, and improve local production; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 17, Article VII of the 1987 Constitution vests in the President the power of control over all Executive departments, bureaus and offices, and the mandate to ensure the faithful execution of laws;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND R. MARCOS, JR.**, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution and existing laws, do hereby order:

**Section 1. Further Streamlining Administrative Procedures and Removing Non-Tariff Barriers.** The DA, in coordination with the DTI and/or Department of Finance (DOF), is hereby directed to undertake measures to further streamline administrative procedures and policies on the importation of agricultural products, and remove non-tariff barriers. For this purpose, the aforementioned government agencies shall, among others:

- a. Streamline procedures and requirements in the licensing of importers, minimize processing time of applications for importation, and exempt licensed traders from submission of registration requirements, subject to existing law, rules and regulations;
- b. Subject to consultation with the National Economic and Development Authority Committee on Tariff and Related Matters, facilitate importation of certain agricultural products beyond the authorized MAV and reduce or remove administrative fees relative thereto, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations;
- c. Streamline procedures and requirements for the issuance of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearance (SPSIC); and
- d. Take concrete steps to improve logistics, transport, distribution and storage of imported agricultural products.

**Section 2. Processing and Issuance of SPSIC for Agricultural Products.** The DA and its bureaus, attached agencies and instrumentalities, shall process and release SPSIC applications, and formally notify applicants of their action and the basis thereof within the period prescribed in their Citizen's Charter. All SPSIC applications not acted upon within the prescribed period shall be deemed approved pursuant to Section 10 of RA No. 9485, as amended, provided, that all documentary requirements have been submitted and all required fees have been paid, as indicated in their Citizen's Charter.

**Section 3. Guidelines for Importation of Sugar Products.** Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Order, the SRA shall streamline and standardize existing guidelines for importation of sugar in the country, taking into consideration the need to reduce uncertainty in the sugar import regime and allow more traders to participate in the sugar import program. The Guidelines shall provide for, among others, rules and regulations on the classification or automatic classification of imported sugar, as well as direct importation of sugar by SRA-registered industrial users, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations.

**Section 4. Guidelines for Importation of Fishery Products.** Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Order, the DA shall review and revise existing rules and regulations on the importation of frozen fish and fishery/aquatic products for wet markets during closed and off-fishing seasons or during calamities, particularly the provisions that impose quantitative restrictions on fish imports, limit competition and participation in international trade, and restrict the species allowed for importation, in accordance with Section 61(c) of RA No. 8550 or the "Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998," as amended.

**Section 5. Expedite Unloading of Agricultural Imports.** Subject to Section 419 of RA No. 10863 or the "Customs Modernization and Tariff Act," and other applicable laws, rules and regulations, the Bureau of Customs (BOC) shall prioritize the unloading and release of imported agricultural products.

**Section 6. Reconstitution of the Surveillance Team.** The DA, DTI, BOC, Philippine Competition Commission, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Justice, National Bureau of Investigation, and Philippine National Police shall form a Surveillance Team tasked to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of this Order. For this purpose, the Surveillance Team shall, among others:

- a. Monitor importation and distribution of imported agricultural products to ensure efficient and complete distribution thereof to warehouses and retail outlets;
- b. Prevent illegal acts of price manipulation and other forms of unfair or anti-competitive commercial practices;
- c. Take appropriate remedial measures to address unlawful acts, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations; and
- d. Formulate specific guidelines for the implementation of this Section, which shall include, among others, a mechanism to facilitate information sharing and enhance transparency and accountability of concerned government agencies.

The DA shall lead the Surveillance Team. The heads of the member-agencies of the Surveillance Team shall designate their respective representatives who shall be fully authorized to decide for or on their behalf. The designated representatives shall have ranks not lower than an Assistant Secretary or its equivalent.

**Section 7. Reportorial Requirement.** The DA, DTI, DOF, SRA, and BOC are hereby directed to jointly submit to the President, through the Office of the Executive

Secretary and IAC-IMO, a quarterly report on the status of the implementation of this Order.

**Section 8. Implementing Guidelines.** Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Order, the DA, DTI, DOF, SRA, and BOC shall formulate the guidelines necessary for the effective implementation of this Order, which shall include, among others, the rules and regulations for extension and/or suspension of processing of SPSIC applications under Section 2 hereof.

**Section 9. Separability.** If any section or part of this Order is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

**Section 10. Repeal.** AO 13 is hereby repealed. All orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Order, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**Section 11. Effectivity.** This Order shall take effect immediately.

**DONE**, in the City of Manila, this 18th day of April, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Twenty-Four.

*[Handwritten signature]*  
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By the President:

*[Handwritten signature of Lucas P. Bersamin]*  
**LUCAS P. BERSAMIN**  
Executive Secretary



Office of the President  
MALACAÑANG RECORDS OFFICE  
**CERTIFIED COPY**  
*[Handwritten signature]*  
ATTY. RAYVILLE N. ESPINO  
4-18-2024, ACTING DIRECTOR IV