

PRESS RELEASE

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1st chairman of Competition Commission; 4 other members named

MANILA – Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan has been appointed chairman of the Philippine Competition Commission for a term of seven years, Malacañang Palace said Monday. Four commissioners were also appointed, two for a term of seven years and the other two, for five years.

According to Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa, appointed by President Benigno Aquino III as commissioners were: Stella Alabastro-Quimbo, Johannes Bernabe, Elcid Butuyan and Menardo Guevarra.

Quimbo and Bernabe will serve for seven years; and Butuyan and Guevarra, five years, Ochoa said.

DDG Esguerra is NEDA OIC

With his appointment to the PCC, Balisacan is resigning his post as director general of the National Economic and Development Authority effective January 31, 2016, according to an announcement in the NEDA website.

He will be replaced by Deputy Director-General Emmanuel F. Esguerra, who will serve as Officer-in-Charge of NEDA.

“Taking on the job as the first chairperson of the PCC for me, is a very compelling challenge that is hard to ignore. I see this as both a great responsibility and another privilege to steer the economy toward the right direction to realize all its growth potential,” Balisacan said in the NEDA website announcement.

Republic Act 10667, otherwise known as the Philippine Competition Act, which President Benigno S. Aquino III signed into law on July 21, 2015, created the PCC.

The commission is a quasi-judicial body that will enforce and implement the provisions of the Philippine Competition Act, including its implementing rules and regulations. Through this, it will ensure an efficient market competition in providing a



level-playing field among businesses engaged in trade, industry, and all commercial economic activities.

The PCC aims to protect consumer welfare and advance both domestic, and international trade and economic development. Also, it has the mandate to conduct inquiries, investigate, and penalize all forms of anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position, and anti-competitive mergers and acquisitions.

“We would want to address the problem of having a growing economy but with the benefits of such growth only for a small sector. Promoting fair and healthy competition among firms is a major factor in ensuring that the benefits of growth are properly shared,” said the new PCC Chief.

As Socioeconomic Planning Secretary and NEDA Director-General since May 2012, Balisacan was the first chair of the Philippine Statistics Authority Board and the Public-Private Partnership Center Board. Concurrently, he was chairman of the board for the Philippine Institute of Development Studies, Philippine Center for Economic Development, and the Philippine Statistical Research and the Training Institute.

Prior to his appointment to NEDA, Balisacan was Dean and Professor of the University of the Philippines School of Economics. He also served as the Director of the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture or SEARCA from 2003 to 2009, and Undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture in 2000, 2001, and 2003.

According to the official NEDA announcement, Balisacan – recognized as a leading development economist in Asia – is expected to bring to the PCC as its first chairman his expertise in development economics, international economics, and applied welfare economics.

Balisacan has been an Academician of the National Academy of Science and Technology since 2008 and an Adjunct Professor at the Australian National University since 2011.