

The Cabinet of Cory Aquino

Committee Background Guide

General Crisis

New York University Model United Nations Conference

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Welcome Letters

Hello Delegates,

Welcome to NYUMUNC XV. My name is Hayden Dunson and I will be your crisis director for The Cabinet of Cory Aquino General Crisis Committee. I am a public policy major and a junior here at NYU and am part of NYUMUN's travel team. Since I was young, I always had an interest in history, politics, and global affairs, so MUN always seemed to be a place where I fit right in. I have been involved in MUN since I was a middle schooler in Austin, TX (with a two-year hiatus after entering NYU). During my high school years, I specialized in crisis committees and thoroughly enjoyed making quick decisions that would decisively impact the evolving situation. I hope you too experience that same joy while participating in this committee.

Upon reading up on the topic and writing this background guide that you are about to read yourself, I became intrigued with the vast history of the Philippines, as well as this incredibly important focal point in its history. I hope that such a unique and complex topic allows for delegates to come up with distinctive and unthought-of solutions during this committee, and I am very much looking forward to being your crisis director!

Best Wishes,

Hayden Dunson, Crisis Director

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Delegates,

Welcome to NYUMUNC XV! My name is Rahul Mahesh, my pronouns are he/him, and I will be your Chair in the Cabinet of Cory Aquino. I am a junior here at New York University studying Politics and Economics with a minor in Public Policy and Management. I'm hoping to later earn an MBA and Masters in Public Policy and work in international development (maybe at the UN). I'm originally from a small suburb in Connecticut, a stark contrast to NYC, other than for the bitter cold. Growing up, however, I spent many of my summers and winters in much warmer Chennai, India. During my freshman year, I studied away in Washington D.C., experiencing the center of American politics firsthand!

Regarding my Model United Nations experience, I joined during my sophomore year of high school and have joined the staff here at NYUMUN. Last year, I chaired the Global Trade War: USA committee at NYUMUNC, our college-level conference, and last semester I was the Crisis Director of our Stark Industries Committee at EMPIREMUNC, our high school conference. I've enjoyed collaborating with delegates from all walks of life, and I encourage you all to be open and collaborative during this conference, embracing both your characters' needs and the ideas of your fellow delegates. I look forward to meeting you all soon and seeing how you'll represent your interests at the Cabinet of Cory Aquino at NYUMUNC!

Best regards,

Rahul Mahesh, Chair

rsm526@nyu.edu

Statement of Diversity and Inclusion

Whilst NYUMUNC is committed to maintaining as educational and historically accurate an experience as possible, we recognize that any debate around historical events will incorporate sensitive issues. Delegates are expected to discuss these issues maturely and appropriately.

NYUMUNC is committed to promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion in line with NYU's values; in the spirit of this commitment, EmpireMUNC will not tolerate any bigoted symbols, statements, or attitudes.

Bearing this in mind, this specific committee may involve certain heavy topics regarding imperialism, illicit substances, and religion. NYUMUNC will not tolerate any form of bigotry or immaturity regarding these issues.

Committee Mechanics

This cabinet is meeting for the first time to help the newly elected president, Cory Aquino, to make policy decisions that will undoubtedly affect the people of the Philippines. It is your job to debate and recommend policy decisions to the president, who will be represented by the backroom.

This committee begins *before* the new constitution was ratified, therefore, the cabinet members will have a notable influence on how the constitution is created. For all intents and purposes, consider yourselves all part of the constitutional committee at the beginning of the committee. However, once the constitution has been established, the committee will be expected to follow the rules of that constitution, and the members who have violated it could face trial at the discretion of fellow cabinet members or the judiciary.

After the constitution is ratified, it is up to the cabinet members to heal a nation torn by corruption and violence. Time skips will be announced at the end of every session to keep the committee updated with unfolding situations and events, and to allow time for delegates to think of possible solutions in the interim.

Introduction

For twenty years, President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines took decisive action that plundered his country into disarray. As Marcos kept centralizing his own power, he also removed many political opponents who sought to oppose his iron fist regime, leaving behind a trail of blood and disaster. A snap election took place in February of 1986, and this election would become a heated competition for the fate of the Philippines; the incumbent President Marcos would fight to keep his hold over the country against a rising political figure, Corazon “Cory” Aquino, a leading member of the opposition since her husband’s assassination in 1983. Many Filipinos, including former supporters of the Marcos regime, were fed up with the corruption and falsified results that declared Marcos the winner of the 1986 election, which led to the People Power Revolution later that month. The removal of the Marcos regime was vital for the reestablishment of democracy in the nation, but with it many challenges and uncertainty arose. In order to have some stability, a temporary provisional government has been set up by the newly elected President Aquino. It is the objective of this committee to serve as the cabinet for President Aquino, in hopes of creating a constitution for the Fifth Republic of the Philippines that will lead to the country’s brighter future. With many ongoing and newly emerging issues to resolve and answer, as well as international and domestic threats, the cabinet will certainly have its work cut out for them. The cabinet will first meet on the 25th February 1986, immediately after the inauguration of Cory Aquino as the 11th president of the Philippines.

Historical Context

The history of the Philippines that led up to the Congress of Cory Aquino is a long and complex one, going as far back as the 1500s.

Spanish Rule

In 1517, after an unsuccessful plea to the Portuguese Crown, famed explorer Ferdinand Magellan persuaded King Charles I of Spain to allow him to sail under the Spanish flag and locate a more profitable route for the spice islands of the East Indies. Following the perilous journey around the world, Magellan and his crew landed on the island of Homonhon in March of 1521 - the first recorded arrival of Europeans within the modern-day borders of the Philippines.

At the time of Magellan's "discovery", there was no entity known as "The Philippines" because there was no centralized unity among these particular islands in the South China Sea. Instead, there were various native groups living on the islands of the archipelago each with its distinctive culture; a culture which was a combination of indigenous traditions and their interaction over time with various other Asian powers. The inhabitants of each respective island called themselves by their own names but it was only upon Magellan's arrival that he named some of the islands, "Islas de San Lazaro". In a later expedition during the 1540s, another Spanish explorer, Ruy Lopez de Villalobos, named other islands as "Felipinas", a name given in honor of Prince Philip, which eventually was used as the name for the whole archipelago.

Spanish imperial ambitions to secure trade routes coupled with Magellan's desire to spread Catholicism to the native people of the islands resulted in a bloody and brutal conflict

between the militarily stronger Spanish soldiers and the societies that predated Spanish discovery. Despite the early victories that the Spanish claimed against a disunified and militarily weaker native population, one famous battle broke out between the soldiers under Magellan's command and the population of Mactan Island. Mactan's chief, Lapu-Lapu, rallied his forces against the Spanish invaders in a battle that killed Magellan and caused severe casualties to the Spanish, forcing the remaining soldiers to leave the archipelago. While Lapu-Lapu's tactical victory repelled the Spanish expedition, a symbolic event memorialized to this day, the Spanish forces returned decades later to claim their stake and assert full control over the islands.

Under the Spanish, the Philippine Archipelago was easily unified under one flag, partly as a result of infighting between native states from different islands before colonization. The Spanish introduced Catholicism to native Filipinos and successfully converted many of them, as well as bringing many Western customs and institutions into the archipelago. This included the Spanish education system, which vastly impacted language in the Philippines and economically advanced the then colony. Missionaries brought with them not only Catholicism, but advancements in agriculture which included cash crops such as sugar, coffee, and tobacco.

The colonization of the Philippines was not without its hiccups for the Spanish, as they often dealt with revolts from the native Filipinos. This would range from disorganized attacks to entire revolutions, the latter of which would take hold of the colony in the late 19th century. Seeing revolutionary success in the South Americas emboldened Filipinos who were against Spanish rule to rise up against their colonizers, and in 1896, a violent struggle against the Spanish colonial government was led by Emilio Aguinaldo. A rebel famed for his guerilla

tactics in the Philippines, Aguinaldo was temporarily allied with American forces in 1898, when the United States would begin its war against the Spanish and would take Manila. After the common enemy was overthrown and Aguinaldo was installed as president of the “First Republic” of the Philippines, a rift broke out between the independent Philippines and the United States, thus ending a short lived alliance of Filipino revolutionaries and the United States.

The United States and The Philippines

The conclusion of the Spanish-American War saw the ceding of the Philippines to the United States, marking the end of the Spanish Empire. Relations between Filipinos and Americans quickly fell through as the Americans made it clear that they were there to stay. Aguinaldo declared the first Republic of the Philippines in 1899 but the Republic would not last long as the Philippine-American War would quickly ensue and result in a Filipino loss. Aguinaldo would controversially submit to American pressure by stepping down, dissolving the republic, and even collaborating with the United States to eliminate former rebels that would pose a threat to American occupation.

The United States officially annexed the Philippines after the war and militarily occupied it. The United States would, however, change how Filipinos were represented in their own government fairly quickly. Under American occupation, Filipino citizenship was created and during the administration of Woodrow Wilson, eventual independence was guaranteed with the Jones Law of 1916. Lower levels of government in the Philippines were also taken over by Filipinos rather than being directly controlled by Americans. In 1935, under the Roosevelt

Administration, the Tydings-McDuffie Act was passed which created the Commonwealth of the Philippines with a Constitution and a set date for Filipino independence as July 4th, 1946.

Philippine independence was put on hold as the arms of fascism spread throughout the globe during the Second World War. Japanese imperial expansion was no secret following their invasion of China in the late 1930s and it was only a matter of time before the Japanese would make a move on the islands of the South China Sea. Just mere hours after the ambitious attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces invaded the Philippines on December 8, 1941, beginning the joint defensive campaign of Philippine and American military forces, led by US General Douglas MacArthur. While the Filipino forces valiantly defended their homeland for a surprising period of months, their lack of training and equipment proved inadequate to hold off the Japanese indefinitely.

The “independence” of the Philippines granted by the Japanese, also known as the “Second Republic”, was in reality, a three-year long severe occupation, defined by Japanese atrocities of human experimentation, torture, rape, and destruction against civilians and retaliatory Filipino resistance against the foreign invaders. The location of the archipelago made it a hotspot for resistance, political movements, military intelligence, and espionage for both the Axis and Allies; even Emilio Aguinaldo was working as a sympathizer for the Japanese occupiers. General MacArthur, as promised, helped lead the liberation movement against the Japanese, utilizing every resource of the Filipino guerillas he could to ensure a victory, yet the fighting to retake the Philippines would last until the end of the war in the summer of 1945.

World War II had a devastating effect on the Philippines and most alarming, over one million Filipinos died from the horrors of war. Much debate ensued following the defeat of the Japanese over whether the Philippines was still on track to gain their independence. Eventually, it was agreed that the proposed date from the Tydings-McDuffie Act would remain and that elections should be held soon. In April of 1946, the Philippines held their first election since the war and on July 4th, 1946, Manuel Roxas, the elected president of the Philippines, was sworn into office for the newly independent nation.

An Independent Philippines

The post-war period in the Philippines would be known as the “Third Republic”, an era divided into five presidencies throughout the years from 1946 through 1965. The election in April and independence of the Philippines in July was the beginning of the Roxas term, a brief two years cut short by Roxas’ death in 1948 and ushering in his vice president, Elpidio Quirino. Both Roxas and Quirino, prominent members of the Liberal Party, led administrations defined by their close ties to the United States. In exchange for a continued American presence on the archipelago’s array of military bases, the Philippines accepted much-needed financial aid given by the United States in hopes of rebuilding the war-torn country, drawing them even further into the American sphere amidst rising Cold-War tensions.

In an effort to retain strong influence on Philippine politics, the United States secretly helped fund Ramon Magsaysay, the former Secretary of Defense in Quirino’s administration who helped crush the communist insurrectionists, in his campaign against the incumbent Quirino. Despite his initial Liberal Party affiliation, Magsaysay was chosen as the candidate for

the Nacionalista Party and won the 1953 election. The new president continued the pro-American policy as shown by the creation of SEATO, a foundation established in Manila composed of other Southeast Asian countries to push back against growing communist aggression in the region. Magsaysay was a very popular figure among Filipinos and his presidency was famed for their corruption-free politics and reform, but due to his death in a plane crash in 1957, his vice president, Carlos Garcia, was elevated to the role of president. The Garcia years were a natural progression of the Nacionalista political agenda but were famed for a change in Philippine-American agreements, as shown by Garcia significantly limiting the time frame of American presence on military bases. Unfortunately for Garcia, the reduction of long-term American forces in the Philippines, his Filipino First economic policy, and an expansion of the railroad system were not enough to outweigh the claims of corruption that plagued his administration, and resulted in a defeat in the 1961 election to Diosdado Macapagal, the Liberal Party candidate.

Macapagal was the last Liberal Party president during the Third Republic and he led a political campaign to reduce the corruption of the previous president and simultaneously attempt to boost the economy of the Philippines. His economic plan was no easy task as his political opponents in Congress prevented any radical shift, however Macapagal did devalue the national currency and introduce land reform that would in theory, improve the situation for farmers that were working for landlords. These liberal policies were highly criticized, unemployment rose, the economy fell short of the big expectations, and Macapagal failed to leave a lasting effect on the Philippines, all of which opened the door to a new candidate taking the highest office. While Macapagal struggled politically, his rival from the Nacionalista Party,

Ferdinand Marcos, assembled many allies and garnered popular support for the decisive, upcoming election in 1965.

In 1965, Ferdinand Marcos was elected to the presidency, running on a platform of aggressive economic development funded by foreign entities. Such a platform led to an economic crisis with inflation at the center during his second and third terms as president. During his first term as president, Marcos tried alleviating the Philippines' troubles with a desperate move to seize the oil-rich region of East Sabah, a contested Muslim-populated part of Malaysia. A planned military operation, codenamed "Project Merdeka", was drawn up during the Macapagal years, though the green light was only given by Marcos in 1968; its details and subsequent failure is largely unknown even to this day, but the main plot was for trained commandos to infiltrate parts of East Sabah and destabilize the region. One possible theory for the mission's downfall was that the group of commandos tasked with carrying out the operation were Muslims themselves, leading to a refusal to carry out orders. The mutiny of the Muslim commandos consequently meant that these commandos were executed in an highly censored event known as the Jabidah Massacre.

As a result of the Jabidah Massacre, as well as a rise in Communist sympathies within the nation and a Muslim separatist movement known as the Moro National Liberation Front, civil unrest and protests became more commonplace. Marcos was reelected to a second term due to his immense popularity with his Christian base, but circumstances began to worsen. Troubling times led to the Philippine Congress calling for a Constitutional Convention that aimed to make changes to the 1935 Constitution, whose legislation and power were believed to be outdated and abused by Marcos. The Constitutional Convention of 1971 had many

difficulties as intense debates and seedy corruption between the pro-Marcos and anti-Marcos factions showcased the terrible political situation of the Philippines. Bombings became a more frequent event in the early 1970s as attacks were made by political dissidents and the threat provided Marcos the ample opportunity to declare martial law in 1972. A new, pro-Marcos draft of the constitution was proposed, with an opposition silenced by fear of repercussions, and was approved in 1973 under suspicious circumstances, essentially giving Marcos unrivaled control over the Philippines government.

The institution of martial law rattled the Philippines and led to the closing of major news media outlets, and the executions and suppression of opposing political leaders and protestors. Through the 1970s, the country suffered from inflation due to Marcos' previous economic overhauls, further crippling the nation. Martial law was lifted in 1981, but Marcos still held an immense amount of power as a new constitution that went into effect in 1973 during martial law, allowed Marcos to remain in power for decades. Imelda Marcos, the "iron butterfly" and wife of Ferdinand Marcos, doubled as an asset helping secure support for her husband behind the scenes while maintaining a positive public image for the Philippines. Propaganda of the Marcos dictatorship and censorship hid the grim reality of the nation as corruption, economic downturn, and civil unrest spiked.

In the dark shadow of Marcos' oppressive regime, there were still voices that, despite all danger, spoke out fervently against the government. The most famous figure to emerge in the opposition to Marcos was Benigno Aquino, a member of the Liberal Party, descending from a long line of Filipino politicians. Since his days as a senator in the Philippine Congress, "Ninoy" Aquino was at odds with the severe actions and radical politics of President Marcos and the

rivalry only grew as the Philippines suffered a terrible fate under the current administration. As a member of the opposition, Aquino was arrested at the onset of martial law, found guilty in a sham court hearing, and subjected to death. After a commuted death sentence, Aquino struggled to run a political campaign for Congress from jail and after two heart attacks, he and his family moved to the United States for Aquino's surgery and planned exile.

In 1983, Ninoy Aquino decided to return from the United States, where he had become an outspoken critic of the Marcos regime, and sought to once again institute democracy and save the Philippines from further suffering. He was assassinated at the airport upon his return, causing opposition to Marcos to gain serious traction in the coming years. It also catapulted his wife, Corazon "Cory" Aquino into the limelight as opposition leader, picking up the pieces where her husband left off.

With ongoing pressure from the international community, namely the United States, a snap election was announced by President Marcos to reaffirm his "legitimate" authority over the Philippines. A strong combination of internal and external support prompted Cory Aquino to run as a candidate and on February 7th, 1986, the election was held between Marcos and Aquino. The election declared that Marcos was the winner, but widespread evidence showed that the elections were tampered with. Surprisingly, some military officers and figures like Ricardo Vidal, the President of Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, called upon the Filipino people to speak out against the election results, resulting in a mass revolt. The United States Senate officially supported the sentiments made by Vidal, leading to much of Marcos' cabinet resigning, and subsequently, Marcos fled to Hawaii where he would live out the rest of

his life in exile. On February 25, 1986, three years after her husband's death, Corazon Aquino became the new president of the Philippines, striving to move the country forward.

Current Issues

Lack of Democratic Constitution

The constitution of the Marcos regime fails to fulfill its role for the new government.. Previously, it served as a tool for suppression and violence. Now, with a new president and a return to democracy, there are calls to reshape the government. As such, it is a pressing issue for the constitution to be amended or replaced.

Economic Disparity

Martial law and Marcos' economic policies sent the economy of the Philippines into a nosedive in the early 1980s. In 1982, the national debt was \$24.4 billion. In 1984 and 1985, the economy contracted by 7.3%. The 1985 poverty incidence for families was 44.2%.

Ongoing International Turmoil

With a new government comes a reborn state on the international stage. In 1986, the Cold War was still ongoing, with the Western Capitalist states engaged in various forms and types of conflict with the Communist East. Where the Philippines positions itself on these divides will be paramount for current and future international cooperation and engagements.

Internal Conflict

The ousting of Ferdinand Marcos did not resolve all the divisions within the country. Even in his absence, some loyalists remain and could be a threat to the new democracy. On top of this are the Muslim separatists in Mindanao.

Press Freedom and Media Suppression:

The years under Marcos saw the closing of major news media outlets, suppressing freedom of the press. The challenge now is to restore and uphold press freedom, ensuring a diverse and independent media landscape in the newly established democracy.

Reconciliation and Healing

The ousting of Ferdinand Marcos and the end of martial law left scars of political repression and human rights abuses. Achieving national reconciliation and healing is a crucial task for the new government, addressing past grievances and fostering unity among the Filipino people.

Questions to Consider

- What will be done with the current constitution that was instituted under the Marcos Regime? Should the 1935 Constitution be reinstated, should the current constitution be reformed, or should an entirely new constitution be drafted?

- How, as cabinet members, will you influence the drafting of a potential new constitution? How will the government be formed?

- Consider the Philippines' role within the regional and global community. How does it fit in a post-Marcos era? Should the Philippines rely on other nations for help, or maybe chart its own course alone?

- Should the Filipino government retain friendly relations with the United States? How would the country distance itself if not? Should the Philippines gravitate towards another powerful country?

- Should the government ask the United States to return Ferdinand Marcos from exile to face punishment? If they refuse, does this change the relationship with the United States? How could the cabinet pressure the United States to comply?

- How should the Philippines fix the broken economy, wrought with cronyism and corruption?

- How will this new regime deal with Muslim separatists in the Southern Mindanao region? Should the cabinet move towards reconciliation, or charge forward with retaking the area?

Character Lists

Vice-President, Prime Minister, and Minister of Foreign Affairs - Salvador H. Laurel:

- Salvador H. Laurel served as both Vice-President and Prime Minister. A key figure in the opposition against Marcos, his support was instrumental in the People Power Revolution. Laurel played a crucial role in the early stages of rebuilding the democratic government.

Presidential Executive Assistant - Joker Arroyo:

- Joker Arroyo, as the Presidential Executive Assistant, played a significant role in advising and supporting President Aquino. Known for his commitment to human rights, Arroyo contributed to the restoration of democratic principles.

Minister of Agrarian Reform - Heherson T. Alvarez:

- Heherson T. Alvarez, as Minister of Agrarian Reform, was tasked with addressing land-related issues in the Philippines. His role was vital in implementing reforms to benefit farmers and promote social justice.

Minister of Agriculture and Food - Ramon Mitra, Jr.:

- Ramon Mitra, Jr. served as Minister of Agriculture and Food, focusing on agricultural policies and food production. His efforts aimed at revitalizing the agricultural sector during a crucial period of economic recovery.

Minister of Budget and Management - Alberto Romulo:

- Alberto Romulo, in his role as Minister of Budget and Management, was responsible for financial planning and management during a challenging economic period. His expertise contributed to stabilizing the country's fiscal situation.

Minister of Economic Planning - Solita Monsod:

- Solita Monsod, as Minister of Economic Planning, played a key role in formulating strategies for economic recovery. Her insights and planning were essential during a time of economic transition.

Minister of Education, Culture and Sports - Lourdes Quisumbing:

- Lourdes Quisumbing, as Minister of Education, Culture and Sports, focused on reforms in the education sector. Her efforts aimed at rebuilding the educational system and promoting cultural development.

Minister of Finance - Jaime Ongpin:

- Jaime Ongpin, serving as Minister of Finance, played a crucial role in addressing economic challenges and implementing financial reforms. His expertise contributed to stabilizing the country's financial situation.

Minister of Health - Alfredo Bengzon:

- Alfredo Bengzon, as Minister of Health, focused on healthcare reforms and improving the country's healthcare system. His contributions were vital during a time of rebuilding public institutions.

Minister of Local Government and Community Development - Aquilino Pimentel, Jr.:

- Aquilino Pimentel, Jr. played a key role in local governance and community development. His efforts aimed at empowering local communities and promoting participatory governance.

Minister of Justice - Neptali Gonzales:

- Neptali Gonzales played an essential role in legal reforms and upholding justice during the transition period and the first year of the new government.

Minister of Labor and Employment - Augusto Sanchez:

- Augusto Sanchez, as Minister of Labor and Employment, addressed issues related to labor rights and employment. His role was crucial in rebuilding a fair and just labor environment.

Minister of National Defense - Juan Ponce Enrile:

- Juan Ponce Enrile, as Minister of National Defense, played a significant role in the defense and security of the country during a period of political transition.

Minister of Natural Resources - Ernesto Maceda:

- Ernesto Maceda, as Minister of Natural Resources, focused on environmental and resource management during a time of rebuilding.

Minister of Public Works and Highways - Rogaciano M. Mercado:

- Rogaciano M. Mercado, as Minister of Public Works and Highways, contributed to infrastructure development and reconstruction efforts.

Minister of Tourism - Jose Antonio Gonzales:

- Jose Antonio Gonzales, as Minister of Tourism, played a role in promoting tourism as part of economic recovery and international engagement.

Minister of Trade and Industry - Jose Concepcion:

- Jose Concepcion, serving as Minister of Trade and Industry, focused on trade policies and industrial development during the recovery period.

Minister of Transportation and Communications - Hernando Perez:

- Hernando Perez, as Minister of Transportation and Communications, contributed to the development of transport and communication infrastructure.

Presidential Spokesperson - Rene Saguisag:

- Rene Saguisag served as the Presidential Spokesperson, providing official communication and representing the president to the public and the media.

Presidential Legal Counsel - Rene Cayetano:

- Rene Cayetano served as the legal advisor to President Aquino, providing legal counsel on various matters, including constitutional issues and policy decisions.

Secretary of the Interior and Local Government - Rafael Alunan III:

- Rafael Alunan III oversaw local governance and internal security, playing a key role in maintaining law and order during Aquino's presidency.

Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces - Fidel Ramos:

- Fidel Ramos, a key figure in the People Power Revolution, played a significant role in maintaining security. Later, he became an important ally to Aquino, contributing to her government's stability.

Chairman of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - Jovito Salonga:

- Jovito Salonga led the PCGG, tasked with recovering ill-gotten wealth amassed during the Marcos era, contributing to the pursuit of justice.

Chairman of the Commission on Audit - Teofisto Guingona:

- Teofisto Guingona was appointed as chairman of a constitutionally-created commission responsible for overseeing and checking the financial capabilities of the country.