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New COA Commissioner prioritizes gender and development

March 18, 2013- As the nation celebrates Women's Month, the third woman to complete an all-women Commission on Audit (COA) aptly promised to give priority to gender and development.

Newly appointed COA Commissioner Maria Rowena Amelia V. Guanzon, known as a litigation lawyer in the pioneer field of gender discrimination and violence against women, took her oath of office before Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes P. A. Sereno today.

"My priority is to monitor the utilization of gender and development budget in the bureaucracy," Commissioner Guanzon said during her oath taking.

Chief Justice Sereno, for her part, expressed the hope that the new Commissioner's term will be historic and meaningful knowing that her intention is to purely serve the nation.

President Benigno S. Aquino III signed Commissioner Guanzon's appointment on March 8, 2013. She joins COA Chairperson Ma. Gracia M. Pulido Tan and Commissioner Heidi L. Mendoza, making the Commission an all-women agency.

Gender and development has long been a passionate cause of the new Commissioner. According to the website of the University of the Philippines (UP) College of Law where she is a professor, Commissioner Guanzon has written three books connected to the subject: "Engendering the Philippine Judiciary" published by the United Nations Fund for Women and the UP Center for Women's Studies Foundation, "The Davide Court: Its Contributions to Gender and Women's Rights" published by The Asia Foundation and UP Center for Women's Studies Foundation, and "The Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act."

She has published articles on the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act in the Journal of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines. She also wrote A Primer on The Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children and the Barangay Protection Order, published by the U.P. Law Center. She is a founding member of the Asia Cause Lawyers Network, Gender Justice Network, and CEDAW Watch.

Commissioner Guanzon graduated in the top ten of her Class in the UP College of Law and has a degree in Economics also from the UP. She has a Master's degree in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government where she was an Edward Mason Fellow and Class Marshal.