

# NEW CONSTITUTION SHOULD BE 'BROAD, BRIEF AND DEFINITE'

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As a former political law professor in the UP College of Law, I cannot help but weigh in on the endeavor of President Duterte's Consultative Committee to draft a proposed revision of the 1987 Constitution. Whatever will be the new form of government to be established, my primary concern is focused on the manner and style by which the new constitution is to be written.

Admittedly, writing a constitution is no easy task. Whoever will write it must be equipped with the desired literary skill that ensures quality output.

More than anything else, it requires of the writer both the supreme creativity of organizing germane ideas and concepts that will be enshrined, as well as the rigorous discipline of articulating them in a readily understandable manner. Bearing in mind that the constitution is no ordinary statute because it is the basic and paramount law to which all other laws must conform, the writers should take care that it is written in a language accessible to laymen.

I urge the Consultative Committee to draft a new constitution that is broad, brief and definite. I learned in law school that these are the essential qualities of a good written constitution.

Equally important in relation to these qualities is my other concern for the length of the new charter. The writers must guard against crafting a constitution that is excessively long so as to make it appear like a codification or sound like a political speech. It should not include provisions that have no place at all in a constitution because they are appropriate only in implementing statutes to be enacted by Congress. Should this happen, we might be witness to the sorry spectacle of a constitution that is distinguished by its verbosity and prolixity that tend to deter people from reading and understanding its provisions. BARTOLOME C. FERNANDEZ JR., retired senior commissioner, Commission on Audit