

## **Presidential Communications Operations Office**

### **Presidential News Desk**

# **MESSAGE TO THE NATION OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE ON CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)**

[24 March 2020]

It has been a week since we called for a Community Quarantine and its enhanced form in Metro Manila and various parts of Luzon. We in government continue to respond to the public's needs, mobilize resources and oversee developments. We are also addressing the COVID-19 pandemic challenges confronting our nation.

First, let me reiterate my sincerest gratitude to all our courageous frontliners in this war, especially our healthcare workers—our doctors, nurses, medical technologists, and other allied health professionals.

Maraming, maraming salamat. Asahan niyo ang suporta ng inyong gobyerno.

I am saddened by the news that the virus has claimed the lives of our doctors along the way. Lahat po sila ay bayani and not only that, talagang bumilib ako. Bihira akong sumasaludo ng tao pero 'pag mga doktor natin, mga health workers na nadisgrasya, talagang saludo ako sa inyo. Wala na kayo dito sa mundong ito pero ganun na lang ang pagtingin ko sa inyo.

To the able officials and staff of the Inter-agency Task Force on Emerging and Infectious Diseases, thank you for staying on top of this situation.

To the brave men and women of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police, thank you as well for ensuring peace and order in these trying times.

I also thank the rest of the frontliners who ensure that basic services are provided to our people, from those manning various government agencies, groceries, banks, food establishments, and delivery services, among others. Maraming, maraming salamat po.

To the gracious members of the private sector who are foregoing profit to alleviate the suffering of our people; to the valiant volunteers who are bravely supplementing our frontliners; [and] to the noble civil society organizations who are working tirelessly in calling for donations and performing charity work— Thank you very much for your kindness, compassion and generosity.

I especially thank Congress for granting the executive department with special powers --- through the Bayanihan to Head as One Act--- to the Bayanihan to Heal [*rather, I'm sorry*] to Heal as One Act --- to effectively respond to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

I particularly thank Senate President Vicente Sotto III and House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano for the strong and decisive leadership you have demonstrated in shepherding this measure to fruition during this critical time in our national history.

To the members of both houses of Congress who sponsored and voted for this measure, I express my sincerest gratitude to all of you for granting our most urgent requests. Finally, the Executive Department can move, decide and act freely for the best interest of the Filipino people during this health crisis.

The Department of National Defense and the Department of the Interior and Local Government, along with the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police, are now ramping up the implementation of the National Action Plan or NAP, as we speak, to reinforce the efforts of the Department of Health in containing COVID-19.

Alam mo tatlo lang 'yan sila eh: Department of National Defense, Department of Health, Department of --- 'yung kay Rolly, DSWD and the DILG --- some of the most important departments that are now in action.

Reports on our progress on the National Action Plan will be given regularly by the Secretary of National Defense, serving as the National Action Plan chair with the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government as vice chair.

To the Filipino people, rest assured that your entire government is working hand-in-hand to safeguard your health, safety and well-being in the face of the threat posed by COVID-19. We will address all the different issues brought about by this pandemic as well as ensure the protection of all of our people, especially those who are serving in the frontlines.

Supplies of food, water and other essentials will be provided to you throughout this ordeal. Financial assistance will also be extended especially to those in the margins and the vulnerable groups. Halos lahat ho makatanggap. Eh hindi naman lahat 'yung kagaya ni --- ni Bong Go. Hindi naman niya tanggapin 'yan.

Gagawin namin ang lahat. Hindi namin kayo pababayaan.

I now call on every Filipino to participate in this war by following the guidelines set by the national government and your local officials. Nothing is more important [now] than your cooperation.

I repeat: Stay home. Huwag matigas ang ulo. The outcome of this war depends largely on you as well.

I also call on relevant agencies to ensure the speedy delivery of basic medical supplies and equipment to health facilities. From the approval, importation and to the delivery, everything must go smoothly to make sure that we do not waste time.

I... Alam mo isang bagay talaga na alam ng lahat is itong pa-dilly-dally, patamad-tamara. Kailangan pagpasok ng papel, process mo kaagad. I-linya mo 'yung --- you line up the tables where the papers should go one after the other para madali. Cut red tapes. I do not want red tapes. I do not want so many questions. Pagka sinertify (certify) ng isang government employee 'yan, I said, do not commit a mistake and we will all be happy and comfortable. Huwag ninyong... Kung may... Kung gusto ninyong magluko, huwag ngayon itong panahon na ito.

To my fellow public servants, let us set aside our differences and work in solidarity to overcome this pandemic. We only have one common enemy and that is COVID-19. Our transparency, integrity, accountability and responsiveness are needed and I expect all of you to exercise all these in safeguarding our fellow Filipinos.

As President, I assure you --- I assure the public that the government will be on top of this situation at all times. We will not leave anyone behind.

Sabay sabay nating labanan ang COVID-19 para sa kabutihan ng lahat.

I ask the entire country for your patience, understanding and utmost cooperation. With your support, I am confident that we will emerge triumphant. Nothing is more formidable and resilient than the Filipino spirit.

Matindi ang kalaban. But we will not surrender. Hindi tayo susuko. Tayo ay lalaban.

Yes, things will not be easy. [But] we Filipinos are tough. Mas malakas ang Pilipino sa anumang hamon. Now, we all must do what we can and must. Para sa ating bayan.

I look forward to the day that we Filipinos can finally claim victory [in] this war and emerge as a stronger and more united Filipinos and Philippines.

Maraming salamat po. Usbon nako, ayaw mo'g kahadlok. Tagalugin ko: Huwag kayong matakot. Nandito 'yung gobyerno ninyo para kayo pagsilbihan at totoong pagsilbihan. Salamat po.

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