PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
NEWS AND INFORMATION BUREAU

INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES VIRTUAL PRESSER WITH CABINET SECRETARY KARLO ALEXEI NOGRALES; DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SECRETARY WILLIAM DAR; DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY SECRETARY RAMON LOPEZ; AND PCOO ASSISTANT SECRETARY JV ARCENA
MARCH 18, 2020 (10:42 P.M. – 12:21 A.M.)

ASEC. ARCENA: Magandang gabi Malacañang Press Corps at buong Pilipinas, live po tayo sa ating Laging Handa IATF Press Briefing; Kasama po natin sina Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, Agriculture Secretary William Dar at Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez. Now I'll turn it over to Secretary Nograles for the opening statement.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Maraming salamat. Mga kasamahan ko sa gobyerno, mga magigiting nating mga health workers at front liners, mga kaibigan natin sa media, mga kababayan, magandang gabi po sa ating lahat.

Since the implementation of the Enhanced Community Quarantine, the IATF-EID has taken steps to regularly inform and update the public about the necessary steps the government has been constrained to take to contain the COVID-19 outbreak that has already infected 202 individuals in the country and claimed 17 lives.

Ginagawa po natin ito dahil batid namin na marami sa inyo ang nangangamba sa kaligtasan ng inyong mga kaanak at nagnanais malaman ang mga hakbang na ating isinasakatuparan upang tugunan ang bantang ito sa ating kalusugan.

On March 16, 2020, by virtue of Proclamation No. 929, the President declared a state of calamity throughout the Philippines due to Coronavirus Disease 2019. Pursuant to Section 17 of Republic Act No. 10121, a state of calamity shall make mandatory the immediate implementation of the following remedial measures:

1. The imposition of a price ceiling on basic necessities and prime commodities by the President upon the recommendation of the implementing agency as provided for under the Price Act or The National Price Coordinating Council.

2. The monitoring, prevention and control of the Local Price Coordination Council of overpricing, profiteering and hoarding of prime commodities, medicines and petroleum products. Moreover under Section 6, paragraph 1 of Republic Act No. 7581 or the Price Act as amended, the prices of basic necessities shall automatically be frozen at their prevailing prices or place under automatic price control whenever said area is proclaimed or declared a disaster area or under a state of calamity.

Pursuant to this, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, yesterday, by authority of the President issued Memorandum Circular No. 77 which directs all government agencies, offices and instrumentalities, as well as local government units to implement and ensure compliance with the issuances of the Department of Health and Department of Agriculture on the prices of essential emergency medicines and supplies and selected agriculture and fishery commodities.

The DOH, the DA and the DTI have been directed to continuously monitor and review the prices of basic commodities within their respective jurisdictions and enact prices control measures pursuant to Section 6 of Republic Act No. 7581 or the Price Act as amended. The price freeze covering basic necessities is being done to ensure that food and essential goods remain affordable to all. It is also being done to ensure that no one takes advantage of anyone.

Nasa gitna po tayo ng krisis. Isang pagsubok na malalampasan natin kung tayo po ay magtutulungan. Gayunpaman, hindi po tayo papayag na pagsamantalahan ang krisis na ito para pagkakitaan ang taumbayan: Walang lamangan!

Sa pagkakataong ito para bigyan tayo ng mga detalye hinggil sa pagtugon ng gobyerno, narito po si Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon 'Mon' Lopez.

SEC. LOPEZ: Maraming salamat, CabSec Karlo. Para sa atin pong mga kababayan, allow me to read the Joint Memorandum Circular regarding price freeze under state of calamity throughout the Philippines due to Coronavirus Disease 2019. Allow me to skip the whereases and proceed to the objective.

The Joint Memorandum Circular aims to further enhance measures that shall continue a price freeze on all basic necessities under the jurisdiction of the herein implementing agencies, including those products considered essential by such agencies. The list of products for implementing agency referred to, the DA Administrative Circular No. 1 Series of 2020 and the DOH Department Memorandum Circular No. 2020-58 & 2020-58A and 58B and the DOH Circular 2020-142 and the DTI Published Suggested Retail Price Bulletin of 30 September 2019.

The provisions hereof shall apply to all persons, natural or juridical, including those using the internet platform or other medium, who sell or offer for sale all basic necessities.

Section 3 on Monitoring and Enforcement to ensure the adequacy of supply of basic necessities and prime commodities and the compliance of the mandated price ceiling for the products covered by this issuance, the implementing agencies herein shall create a composite team that will intensify monitoring and enforcement to prevent and control overpricing, profiteering, hoarding and cartel. The implementing agencies in coordination with the Department of Justice shall take appropriate actions against illegal acts committed as enumerated under Section 5 of the Price Act.

Section 4, Local Price Coordinating Councils – The implementing agencies, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government shall ensure that the Local Price Coordinating Councils are fully mobilized and operational.

Section 5, on automatic price control – Under the declaration of a state of public health emergency on 8 March 2020, prices of basic necessities were automatically frozen. Following the declaration of a state of calamity on 16 March 2020, prices thereof shall not increase in the retail market for any reason or for any purpose for the next 60 days upon its declaration or until 15 May 2020, unless sooner lifted by the President. During this period, the implementing agencies shall ensure that price freeze is strictly implemented and enforced. Likewise, during the same period, the implementing agencies may recommend the imposition of price ceiling on basic necessities at a level other than the prevailing price.

Section 6, mandatory price ceiling – The implementing agencies concerned may recommend to the President the imposition of a price ceiling on any basic necessity or prime commodity should the existence or effects of COVID-19 continue to persists beyond the 60-day period as set forth in Section 7 of the Price Act.

Section 7, charges and penalties – Under the price act, without prejudice to the penalties prescribed under relevant ordinances issued by local government units and other applicable laws, any person or entity found violating the price act shall be charged accordingly and shall be meted the prescribed fine ranging between P5,000 and P2 million and imprisonment of not less than 5 years but not more than 15 years. The JMC shall be effective immediately and applicable during the entire period of the state of calamity.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Sa pagkakataong ito, pakinggan naman po natin si Department of Agriculture Secretary Willam Dar.

SEC. DAR: Thank you, Cabinet Secretary Karlo. On the part of the Department of Agriculture, we continue to now enhance the implementation of the suggested retail price for 9 agriculture and fishery commodities. This has been issued as early as February 20, 2020 and let me mention the following basic commodities: pige or kasim, the suggested retail price is P190 per kilo; chicken fully dressed, P130 per kilo; raw sugar/brown, P45 per kilo; refined sugar, P50 per kilo; milkfish, caged/cultured P162 per kilo; tilapia—continue to really enforce the suggested retail prices or prices of these basic commodities being part of this joint effort to really freeze the prices of basic commodities. Thank you.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Ngayon naman po, uulitin ko lang din ang Luzon Enhanced Community Quarantine Basic Do’s and Don’ts Bulletin No. 1. dated March 18, 2020.

Mandatory home quarantine for everyone; Purpose is to contain the spread of the virus, prevent the virus from transferring from one place to another through a mobile host or carrier.

DO’S: Everyone must stay at home.

DON’TS: No classes at all levels. No reporting for work in government and private sector except for some exemptions.

WHO MAY GO OUT OF THEIR HOMES:

DO'S: Only one person per household would be allowed to buy or access basic necessities. Barangay captains to check compliance. Employees of establishments involved in the production, processing and distribution of basic necessities – food; supermarkets; groceries; convenience stores; wet markets; pharmacies; drug stores; banks or remittance centers; PNP, AFP and other uniformed personnel; personnel involved in health work, border control, emergency and other mission critical services; media, with authorization from PCOO.

Always bring and present the following at designated checkpoints: Identification card; proof of residence; certification of employment; delivery receipt for those transporting goods to and from the quarantine area and authorizations or certifications if applicable issued by authorized government offices.

DON'TS: Those who are most vulnerable should not go out. Kasama na po diyan ang seniors – 60 years old and above; those with preexisting medical condition like cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, COPD, cancer and others; and pregnant women. Do not ask non-exempted individuals to accompany you to your workplace. Do not loiter. Do not intimidate or resist persons in authority. Always remain calm and respectful.

WHAT OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS ARE OPEN:

DO'S: All basic utilities should continue to operate – water, electricity, internet, telecommunications.

Other critical services should remain open – garbage collection; funeral and interment services; gasoline stations; capital markets to open today, March 18; Business Process Outsourcing, BPO IT; and export-oriented establishments as long as they are provided temporary housing/shelter by their companies.

DON'TS: Casinos, gambling places including POGOs. Hotels shall not accept any new bookings.

FOR MASS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

DO'S: LGUs and employer should provide point-to-point transportation for people authorized to report for work, specifically health workers. Transportation from the airport may be provided by the DOTr or OWWA for OFWs. Walking or biking is allowed.

DON'TS: All public transportation are not allowed to operate such as tricycles, pedicabs, taxis, Grab, jeepneys, buses including MRT/LRT.

FLOW OF GOODS:

DO'S: Movement of cargo via air, land and sea shall be unhampered.

DON'TS: Cargo trucks and vans should not be blocked from entering the ports, expressways or highways.

EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR:

DO'S: Employers are encouraged to adopt a work arrangement that will not require physically reporting for work.

Employers should extend financial help or assistance to their employees; may grant pro-rated 13th month pay.

DOLE and DSWD will provide social amelioration packages for those affected by the work stoppage.

DON'TS: Unless the company is engaged in basic necessities or services, employers should not require their employees to report for work. Employers should not terminate their employees by reason only of not reporting for work because of the COVID-19 situation.

EMPLOYEES IN THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR:

DO'S: Employees in the Executive Branch should work from home except those rendering emergency frontline services. Those authorized to work should maintain only a skeletal force.

DON'TS: No travels, no events, no trainings allowed.

TRAVEL IN AND OUT OF THE PHILIPPINES:

DO'S: Filipinos abroad can return to the Philippines anytime including their foreign spouse and children. Other permanent residents of the Philippines may also return. All returning Filipinos and permanent residents from China, Hong Kong and Macau shall be subjected to 14-day quarantine in a quarantine facility. All other returning Filipinos and permanent residents arriving in Luzon shall comply with mandatory home quarantine.

DON'TS: Filipinos who will go out as tourist to any destination shall not be allowed to leave the country. No sendoff party will be allowed to accompany departing passengers.

Last: OFWs, balikbayans and foreign nationals will be allowed to leave the Philippines at any time as along as their departure is 24 hours from the time they leave their homes or hotels.

The President acknowledges and lauds the efforts of the private sector and private citizens that have all pitched-in during these trying times. They have exhibited the kind of bayanihan spirit that will help us confront the challenges we currently face. We appeal to everyone to follow their lead and do their share. In this war against this silent and tenacious enemy, everyone can contribute to the defeat of COVID-19 by staying home, by cooperating with authorities and assiduously following the advisories issued by government.

As the government and its instrumentalities work to contain COVID-19, there may be missteps and misunderstandings, confusion and conjecture, frustration and fear. We appeal for patience

and calm as we and the whole world face an unprecedented crisis, one that can be overcome if all of us focus at the singular task at hand – saving each other's lives.

Mga kababayan. sana sa susunod na araw, huwag po nating kalimutan – bahay muna, buhay muna. Atin pong tandaan ang mariing paalala ni Pangulong Duterte: Kung magkaniya-kaniya po tayo, hindi tayo magtatagumpay. Together, we can beat COVID-19. Together, we heal as one. Maraming salamat po!

MANNY VARGAS/DZBB: Sir, good morning po—ay, good evening pa pala! Sorry. Kay Secretary DAR, sir, papaano po natin mari-reconcile po iyong idea po na iyong iba po kasi ay bumibili sa mga talipapa, mas malapit sa kanila kaysa pumunta sa palengke na malayo, para mabasawan iyong travel. Pero po iyong mga talipapa ay kumukuha rin ng mga products nila sa mga palengke so higher po ang presyo nila. Papaano po iyong difference po sa SRP kasi may mga talipapa po na mas mataas talaga ang presyo compared sa palengke at mas mataas nga po sa SRP?

SEC. DAR: Iyong tanong ay will there be a big difference or a difference between the price sa talipapa and the public market?

MANNY VARGAS/DZBB: Yes, papaano po, sir, ang magiging treatment doon sa higher price po na lagpas sa SRP sa mga talipapa? Kasi po mas mahal sir, sa talipapa kumpara sa mga palengke, sir.

SEC. DAR: Well, the whole desire is we live within the suggested retail price per commodity. At the suggestion would be that those … iyong mga nagtitinda sa talipapa ay kukuha sila sa mga bagsakan areas para mas mura pa iyong pagtinda nila doon sa mga talipapa.

MANNY VARGAS/DZBB: So better po na doon sa mga vendor na rin po sa talipapa, sa bagsakan na lang po kumuha.

SEC. DAR: Opo.

MANNY VARGAS/DZBB: Okay. Sir, papaano po naman—CabSec, sir, iyong para po doon sa concern ng ilang LGUs na mayroon po silang pini-permit pa rin na mga tricycles, pedicab because iyon daw po iyong kailangan din ng mga residents nila para po, halimbawa, pumunta ng ospital for emergency needs.

SEC. NOGRALES: Sa tricycle 'no, let's address that. Concerned talaga ang gobyerno dito sa paggamit ng tricycle dahil hindi namin lubos na makita o maintindihan paano mag-social distancing sa tricycle 'no, number one.

Number two, kung ang concern po kasi ng LGU ay ganiyan, maaari naman gumawa ng mga initiatives iyong mga LGU with regard to vehicles na hindi naman kailangan tricycle ang gamitin. So may means po ang LGU na gumamit ng other means of transportation. Mayroon po silang mga sarili nilang sasakyan or maaari po silang gumamit ng sasakyan ng iba, makiusap, or other means 'no. Kasi kung—ano ba ang purpose? Ang purpose na i-open o ang tricycle dahil

may masakyan iyong health worker, ganoon po ba? So kung ganoon po iyong objective mo, then number one, may concern tayo sa motorcycle dahil mahirap po ang social distancing sa motorcycle, ganoon din ang problema natin sa tricycle – mahirap din po ang social distancing sa tricycle So anong other means of transportation?

So ang question is: LGU, mayroon ka bang ibang other means of transportation? Mayroon! May dyip ka or multicab ka or a four-wheel vehicle, either sa iyo o makihiram ka sa mga constituents mo or … something. So iyon po! So iyong ibang LGUs naman ay nagku-comply. Ito nga po iyong ano natin 'di ba, common ground rules po tayo, let's all stick to the common ground rules – Iyon po ang pakiusap namin, at ito ay ginagawa natin because it's based on a purpose. Ang purpose po natin, ayaw po namin na ang constituents ninyo po ay magkahawaan.

Health workers 'ika mo ang tinutulungan natin, okay. Hindi po ba dangerous kung ang health workers po natin ay mahahawa po at maging carrier po. At pagdating po sa health institution or health facility, sila po ay carrier, at sila ay nag-aalaga ng mga pasyente, paano iyong mga pasyente? And so on and so forth.

So hindi po kami sa gobyerno iyong gumagawa ng mga patakaran at mga rules dahil gust0 po nating pahirapan ang ating taumbayan. Ginagawa po natin itong lahat para po lahat ay pantay-pantay at lahat maproteksiyonan!

MANNY VARGAS/DZBB: Sir, last question lang po, dalawang sector po kasi ang nagpapatanong nito. Isa po iyong sa mga aviation industry workers, hinaharang daw po sila sa checkpoints dahil hindi raw po sila essential personnel. Isang question po iyon, papaano raw po sila.

And the other one, sir, iyong naitanong ko rin po yesterday, ito iyong mga veterinarian. According to them, iyong veterinary hospital po na may mga critical and emergency cases, iyong mga vets and volunteers na nag-assikaso po ng mga victims sa Taal; iyong mga katulong daw po ng government na para doon sa animal … sa African Swine Fever; and then iyong mga ginagamit din daw po, tumutulong, in regards doon sa Avian Flu, Bird Flu. So paano raw po treatment sa kanila kasi hindi sila kasama doon sa mga una nang nai-consider na mga medical professionals?

SEC. LOPEZ: Tamang-tama iyang tanong mo kasi napaka-importante nga sa operasyon ng … sa business. At nasabi po natin kagabi, ini-emphasize ho muna na may mga welfares. Ang ating default talaga dapat ay nasa bahay tayo 'no para maiwasan, mabawasan talaga mapatay na itong COVID, pagkalat ng COVID. Subali't binabalanse natin dahil kailangan din may kakainin tayo.

So having said that, mayroon po tayong in-allow, in-exempt, iyan iyong mga pinaka-basic. Talagang nahihirapan ho kami rito sa pagpapaikli, at kailangan kasi may mag-operate pa para sa pagkain at saka iyong basic necessities. As we discussed iyong pagkain at basic necessities, involved diyan iyong manufacturing. Pero iyong manufacturing, para maka-manufacture, kailangan may raw material at inputs. At iyong manufacture, iyong finished product, idi-deploy din; kailangan mo rin ng logistics, in other words.

So napaka-importante po, kaya dito po sa aming memorandum circular na drinaft para ma-specify iyong guidelines following the memorandum issued by the Executive Secretary on enhanced community quarantine of Luzon, dated 16 March 2020 and 18 March 2020, isa po sa nilagay namin na nilinaw natin na papayagan na mga staff or employees would be those working in enterprises and logistics companies allowed to operate shall be permitted to pass through control points – ito iyong checkpoints. So sinama na ho natin iyan, siyempre iyong magtatrabaho papunta sa mga cargo planes, sa land transport, cargo trucks at saka ganoon na rin sea transport and sea cargo.

Although, kasabay ho nito sa request namin o sa paglagay natin dito sa memorandum circular, kasabay po dito ay iyong request natin na sana itong mga kumpaniya rin na ito ay kung puwedeng i-house na muna sila, bigyan ng accommodation within or around iyong vicinity ng negosyo na iyon para talagang wala nang masyadong movement at hindi magkahawaan. Talagang doon sila kung talagang gagawin po iyong operation na iyon. Iyon po iyong talagang pinaka-best arrangement para hindi na ho gumagalaw at hindi bumibiyahe ng malayo, hindi na sumasakay sa public at baka may makatabi pa. So iyon ho talaga iyong ating best scenario or best model.

Subalit, again, just to reiterate na hindi nating maiwasan na hindi sila mag-operate; kailangan silang mag-operate. So iyon lang ho ang nililinaw natin, maiwasan iyong pagalaw-galaw ‘no, iyong pag..(AUDIO CUT)

SEC. DAR: ... ni Secretary Lopez, kahapon ay ito iyong diniskas namin sa IATF meeting, iyong mga puwedeng gumalaw based doon sa exemption na na-isyu na ni Executive Secretary the other day. So kasama na po ang … naaprubahan na itong Memo Circular # 7 na inisyu ko kahapon din, at in-adopt na IATF. At let me read the relevant portion of this memorandum circular: Essential farm personnel that work at the production area, bearing proper documentation, are also requested to be accorded passage at the quarantine checkpoints, and these include veterinarians, farm-hands and other farm and fisher folks. So we will issue them the necessary ID in due time.

MANNY VARGAS/DZBB: Salamat po.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, Manny. Ang susunod na tanong mula kay Joseph Morong ng GMA-7.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Hi Task Force, sir. Kay Secretary Nograles, sir first question. How widespread do you think is the coronavirus, COVID-19 infection in Metro Manila?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Mahirap po sagutin iyan, pero may mga models po na dinevelop iyong WHO at ito nga po iyong naging trigger para sa amin to raise iyong alert level, tapos to raise the enhanced community quarantine ‘no. At based doon sa kanilang modeling, kung wala po tayong mga drastic moves, aabot daw po ng 75,000 Filipinos infected. Iyon po iyong base ng modeling ng WHO which ayaw naman po nating mangyari. So mahirap pong mag-determine ng anong level natin ngayon. Ang alam po lang natin is 202 po ang infected.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Okay. Sir, how many testing kits do we have right now?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Right now, according to the DOH, we have a thousand plus 'no. Pero mayroon po tayong mga incoming, may mga—iyong details niyan mas alam ng DOH 'no. But we have coming testing kits that are being donated; both donated and purchased by DOH, so mayroon po tayong mga ini-expect 'no. So hintayin na lang po natin, wala po akong clearance na magbigay ng mga actual figures ng mga testing kits na, including those that were donated to us by other countries. Pero it's a considerable number, but again I cannot disclose the amount unless I'm given clearance by the task force.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, the reason why I asked is how do we intend to use these testing kits, are you going to proceed and do an aggressive testing? Find out—because we're in quarantine, find out those who may be infected?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Kasi ang alam kasi—parang ang imagination po kasi ng karamihan ng ating mga kababayan, tingin nila iyong testing kits ay parang mobile pregnancy kits 'no, kaya nag-issue na nga ng statement iyong DOH 'no that—kung ang imagination po natin is parang pregnancy kits ito na you can bring it anywhere then you test and then malalaman ninyo na kung positive or negative ka – hindi po ganiyan ang testing kit. Kailangan po may lab pa and you need a PCR machine etcetera, etcetera.

That's why they've been equipping 5 sub-national facilities para ito po ay maging equipped na to test, to use the testing kits. Tapos kailangan din po iyong RITM to do another test or confirmatory test to those… So there's a whole process to that. And kung ano iyong ating ano, kung ano iyong, kumbaga procedure natin ay we will leave it to the DOH kung ano iyong pinakamagandang procedure na gagawin with all of those testing kits that we expect to come, in the days to come.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, konti na lang ha. May triage iyong DOH 'no kung sino iyong puwedeng i-test; if you're exposed to a person, na may travel history ka. But may mga complaints sa social media 'no na parang—they wanna be tested because they wanna make sure—even iyong mga health workers natin. Iyon ibang mga health workers natin, automatically they are priority, are a priority para sa testing if they want to be tested?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Ang alam ko kasi the protocol is, ang ite-test natin are those persons—iyong symptomatic 'no, iyong symptomatic, iyong persons under monitoring, iyong under investigation, so mayroon nang sistema or protocols 'no iyong DOH. Now with the arrival of new kits, either purchased or donated, then there is a chance that the IATF may change the protocols or update the protocols 'no given na—

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: To include?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Ayoko na munang pangunahan ang IATF. But sabihin natin na these are the protocols because ito iyong number of kits 'no. Ayoko pangunahan ha, because it's a task force right? So, ayoko pangunahan, pero ito iyong protocols! Now, with more kits coming, then perhaps there is a chance that we will be updating the protocols based on the number of kits that are—

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Availability?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Yes.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, may mga cases na po tayo na na-note sa mga provinces. Are you looking into establishing mga testing centers at least regionally or maybe province wide, sa mga probinsiya po?

CABSEC NOGRALES: All right. Now kasi sa Visayas, we have the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center 'di ba and the SPMC for Mindanao that have already been equipped and trained to do testing para hindi mo na kailangang ipadala sa RITM. Ganoon din iyong sa Lung Center, ganoon din sa UP-NIH at apart from the RITM at San Lazaro din 'no. So those are our subnational laboratories and hospitals that can do the testing. So kung may makukunan ng throat swab and nose swab, doon na ipapadala para mag-testing.

So iyon iyong magiging—kung ano iyong protocols and how many kits per region etcetera, etcetera. Again I'm sorry, it's the DOH who will be the one to elaborate more on those protocols.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir last question na lang plus… Puwedeng lumabas iyong mga OFW 'no pero walang public transport. So how do you solve that problem?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Kaya nga nakalagay po dito na OWWA, OWWA can assist our OFWs.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Can you use your private vehicle? Halimbawa ikaw driver lang, iyon din ang aalis? Puwede?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Ah, yes. Mayroon po tayo sa list natin na puwede—wala lang sendoff party ang iniiwasan natin. Puwede pong ihatid basta accompanied by one person only at hindi iyong maramihan or the usual sendoffs that we do para sa ating mga OFWs. So isa lang na maghahatid at pagkatapos ihatid sa airport ay uuwi na po iyong isang naghatid.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: All right, sir. Thank you for your time sir.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Salamat.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: Sir, good evening. Kay CabSec. Iyong OFW allowed to leave the PH papunta sa other country. Allowed din po ba iyong family members nila or dependents and family members to leave and travel with them?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Kasi 'di ba, pinagbabawal na natin mga turista to leave 'no. So iyong OFW kasi, siyempre essential iyong travel niya, so let's keep it na ganoon na lang po.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: So, hindi po sila puwede muna?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Kung ano ba ang—kumbaga ang visa niya. Kung hindi naman sila OFW or hindi naman sila magtatrabaho abroad, then hindi po sila puwede.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: They're not allowed, so they have to wait after ng ano na lang?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Opo.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: Okay. To Secretary Lopez, sir doon sa monitoring po ninyo ng implementation ng price ceiling, do you have enough manpower to monitor all these? Kasi hindi natin inaalis, marami pong mga scrupulous na negosyante na magsasamantala sa sitwasyon.

SEC. LOPEZ: We have enough manpower at isa pa, nagtulungan kami with the DA, with the DILG at saka—and the DILG katulong din diyan iyong pulis, mga kapulisan at saka NBI para may intel. Kasi wala kaming intel fund or intel work, so we have to partner with these agencies. So with that, we believe that we will be—we can intensify iyong effort natin sa pag-monitor, hindi lang iyon, even pag-enforce noong mga anti-profiteering, anti-hoarding na objective natin dito. So tulung-tulong iyong iba-ibang ahensiya, it's whole of government approach ngayon.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: So, hindi na kailangan sir na i-report directly sa office ninyo? 'Di ba may hotline kayo?

SEC. LOPEZ: Oo mayroon kami, 1384. Ire-report pa rin po nila, ng ating mga kababayan para may isang number. Pagdating sa price issue ay mag-report pa rin po sa 1384 at lahat noong complaint or iyong nakita nila na mga violation, at least may lead na kami at iyon po ang pinupuntahan. Kaya marami rin ho kaming nasita because of that.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: For example sir, ako pupunta ako sa palengke tapos ang taas ng presyo. Can I go directly to the police and report?

SEC. LOPEZ: Yes, puwede rin. Kasi in-offer din ni Secretary Año iyan na kung may pulis diyan, puwedeng i-enforce ng pulis iyong SRP—iyong pag-follow sa SRPs, SRP compliance.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: Puwedeng maaresto kaagad or…?

SEC. LOPEZ: Hindi. May sistema naman din tayo, whether DTI iyan or DA or kapulisan, puwedeng mai-report iyan at iisyuhan muna ng notice of violation at mag-explain sila within 48 hours, pagkatapos saka sila bibigyan ng penalty or charge.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: Okay, thank you sir.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Gusto ko ring idagdag 'no, na apart from that mayroon din po silang Local Price Coordinating Council. So sa baba, nandoon po ang—ang composition po niyan, that's composed by the Provincial Governor or the City Mayor.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: LGU, sir.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Oo. So sa LGU, sa baba, mayroon din silang ganiyan. At based dito po sa calamity, because we're under a state of calamity, iyong monitoring, prevention and control of overpricing, profiteering and hoarding 'no, dapat binabantayan ng ating Local Price Coordinating Council na which is composed of the LGU.

SEC. DAR: Puwede kong idagdag iyong hotline ng DA para mas mabilis pa ang aksiyon – 09511443233 – so ito po ay hotline for all the major concerns including itong price freeze.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: Not only agri products and some fish ano …

SEC. DAR: Basically, yes – agri and fishery products.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE: Fishery products sir, so lahat-lahat na?

SEC. LOPEZ: Ang gusto naming i-encourage ay iyong paggawa rin ng composite teams at the local level. So we encourage iyong mga governor and mayors. So aside from the LPCC, mag-form din sila tulad ng finorm sa national ng DTI rep, DA, DILG, Police and NBI. Sa region ito, with the governors and mayors.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, Ms. Aileen. Our next question, Sir Melo Acuña of Asia Pacific Daily.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Good evening, gentlemen. Thank you for the time. For Secretary Nograles, I just have a question for you. It has something to do with the possible reprieve for people in the TNVS arrangement because they're worried, they have no trips; they may not be able to pay their amortization on time.

And for Secretary Ramon Lopez, how much has business lost in terms of in peso and dollar terms since the crisis began? And are there stimulus packages for micro, small and medium enterprises to survive? And have you gone over the letter of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry? And would you endorse the contents of this letter? Thank you very much, gentlemen. Thank you.

SEC. NOGRALES: Doon sa TNVS, my apologies 'no, mayroon tayong blanket prohibition po sa lahat ng mga public transportation. Pero siyempre naiintindihan naman po natin na karamihan po ng mga TNVS drivers po natin ay mayroon pong utang sa bangko. So makikipag-ugnayan po tayo sa BSP para pag-aralan kung paano ba natin puwedeng tulungan iyong mga may utang po sa bangko and hanapan natin ng paraan na, you know, maging mas magaan po para po sa kanila, lalung-lalo na na mayroon tayong state of calamity ngayon dahil sa COVID-19.

So, iyong mga ganiyang klaseng mga bagay, iyong sitwasyon ng ating mga kababayan ay naiintindihan naman po natin! Parang kumbaga ang first priority pa po kasi natin ngayon, nating lahat ngayon is just to survive this. And everything else, maaari naman nating hanapan ng solusyon ang lahat ng mga iyan!

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Thank you, salamat po, Secretary. For Secretary Lopez, please.

SEC. LOPEZ: Iyong doon naman sa tinanong ninyo, yes, iyong tulong po natin doon sa mga affected na maliliit na negosyo, in-announce po natin kahapon iyong 27 billion package na in-announce po ng economic cluster headed by Secretary Carlos Dominguez. At ang sa DTI part po doon, iyon po iyong …mayroon ho kaming Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso. Ito po iyong programa natin nila Pangulong Duterte na nagbibigay ng micro-financing.

So ang gagawin po namin, gagawa kami ng special loan program para dito nga sa COVID-affected companies, especially the micro and the small. At itong one billion – ang budget po namin this year, 1.5 billion – so we will allocate bulk of that one billion para ho dito sa special loan program sa micro, SMEs.

Aside from that, in-announce po natin kahapon din, of course with Secretary of DOLE, Secretary Bello, tungkol doon sa kanilang TUPAD Program kung saan nag-a-assist din ito ng mga affected workers; at magbibigay sila ng ayuda sa affected workers. Iyong iba-ibang ahensiya or government banks – DBP, LandBank – especially ay may mga programa para dito rin sa mga affected ng COVID-19. May mga special loan programs din silang hinanda.

SEC. DAR: Can I also mention—Melo, do you want to hear from DA?

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Of course, of course, Secretary.

SEC. DAR: Okay, a good friend. DA as part of the economic package, we have SURE Aid Loan Package from the Agricultural Credit Policy Council amounting to 2.8 billion. And additionally and because the rice farmers continue to be affected, so we are lining up a second batch of the rice farmer financial assistance with the budget of three billion pesos – this is on top of what is now being given presently with the budget also of three billion pesos.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Okay po, salamat po Secretary.

SEC. LOPEZ: May isang tanong pa siya tungkol dito sa PCCI, iyong mga—

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: At saka pinsala sa kalakal nitong COVID virus na ito.

SEC. LOPEZ: Oo kasi dito sa—tulad niyong sulat ng PCCI, ang isang malaking parte rin doon iyong dito sa, of course, sa continuation ng ating trade and industry, in particular iyong manufacturing.

So siguro I can read also our memorandum circular, parts of it, iyong relevant parts of it para lang mai-reiterate at ito po ay ipi-present din namin tomorrow sa Inter-Agency Task Force. It is about the unhampered movement of cargo and movement of people, of business establishments. So dito, sinasabi po natin ulit, niri-reiterate natin iyong nandoon sa Executive Secretary's memo, the movement of all types of cargoes within to and from the entire Luzon shall be unhampered. If

subjected to random inspection – ibig sabihin noon, with cargo or after na-deliver na, wala nang cargo, empty after delivery – the movement of cargoes shall not be delayed upon presentation of the cargo manifest or the delivery receipt indicating iyong destination, nature and quantity of the loaded goods and cargoes.

Number two, iyong sa movement of people, ito iyong mga exempted ‘no: Production, processing, distribution and sale of food, medicines and medical supplies and other essential products. Ibig sabihin po, ito po iyong ina-allow pang mag-operate and therefore, we should allow the movement of people.

Let me repeat, earlier I mentioned: Staff or employees working in enterprises and logistics companies allowed to operate shall be permitted to pass through controlled points. Enterprises and establishments shall operate with skeletal workforce, ensure safety protocols and social distancing in their respective work places; and establishments are also encouraged to implement alternative work arrangement such as work from home. For the skeletal workforce, also establishments are encouraged to provide shuttle services or temporary accommodation.

The skeletal workforce of covered enterprises and establishments shall be allowed to enter and exit quality controlled points upon presentation of any of the following: Valid company identification card; proof of residence, para iyong mga pauwi na; at saka certification of employment. To further facilitate transit of personnel of covered enterprises and establishments, an official IATF ID issued by the DTI shall be presented starting March 22. Kasama po ito doon sa resolution kahapon ng Inter-Agency na mag-iisyu na tayo niyong parang uniformed-looking ID, IATF, pero bawat agency will be issuing this to their respective constituents.

And then, pagdating lang po sa export and BPO companies, export and BPO companies shall be allowed to continue operations with a skeletal workforce subject to strict observance of social distancing measures and provision of appropriate temporary accommodation arrangements or shuttles service within the immediate vicinity of the work place; and where applicable, a work from home arrangement will also be encouraged.

The following shall be allowed—ito po, dapat ma-allow din po ito sa controlled points until end of 20 March, unless extended: The transfer of the necessary equipment of BPO and export-oriented establishments to facilitate work from home arrangement; for BPOs and export-oriented establishments to make arrangements with hotels for basic lodging; for purposes of the above personnel of BPOs and export-oriented establishments setting up the foregoing arrangement shall be allowed to travel para ayusin po itong mga arrangements na ito in the meantime, subject to the presentation of proof of employment, address of employer and residence.

So in other words, they will make arrangements for iyong temporary accomodation nila para hindi na ho sila, again, lumalabas-labas at bumibiyahe-biyahe.

MELO ACUNA: Secretary Nograles, baka daw po puwede pahabol lang. Ano daw po iyong protocol para sa mga Pilipino na pabalik ng Pilipinas na pauwi let say sa Bicol mula sa Estados Unidos. Sila daw po ba ay required na sumailalim pa sa quarantine? At kung sakali man na

dumating dito sa NAIA, may masasakyan daw kayang pauwi sa Bicol? Isang tanong pong pinarating sa akin ngayun-ngayon lang. Thank you.

SEC. NOGRALES: Kung OFW tutulungan po sila ng OWWA na makasakay sila. Tapos iyong travel restrictions, alam naman po natin iyong mga travel restrictions natin. Doon sa binasa ko all returning Filipinos shall be subject to 14-day quarantine in a quarantine facility kung galing po ng China, Hong Kong and Macau. All other returning Filipinos arriving in Luzon shall comply with mandatory home quarantine.

Q: Good evening po to CabSec Nograles, affected po ba sa lockdown ang cargoes o balikbayan boxes po ng OFWs?

SEC. NOGRALES: No. Cargoes are... shall be unhampered and shipment of cargoes unimpeded, tuloy-tuloy po ang cargoes natin.

Q: Can you confirm po na magdo-donate daw ang Chinese government ng test kits, surgical mask at personal protective equipment.

SEC. NOGRALES: Wala pa hong clearance magbigay ng confirmation or statement tungkol po sa donations from China. Hintayin na lang po natin iyong IATF na magbigay ng announcement.

Q: Sir, i-clarify ko lang din po, kung paano po iyong guidelines if umabot po sa punto na magkaroon ng rationing of food supplies sa mga nasasakupan?

SEC. NOGRALES: Kaya nga po kung napansin ninyo, kagabi, sinabi po namin na isa sa mga hakbang na ginagawa ng IATF is that mayroon po tayong mga response clusters ng NDRRMC, national, regional and local levels at sila po ay magpa-plano na for the worst case scenario, tapos mayroon din po tayong rehabilitation and recovery cluster kung saan sila po iyong magde-develop ng resiliency and recovery plan. Lahat po iyan kasama doon sa National Disaster Risk Reduction Planning na ginagawa po natin. So, may protocols din po tayo doon at naumpisaan na po natin ang protocols down to the local level.

Q: Sir, ano naman po ang assessment ng Palace sa implementation ng LGUs sa community quarantine?

SEC. NOGRALES: So, far ano naman, nagpapasalamat kami sa lahat ng mga LGUs, na not only na sumusunod sila sa mga guidelines po natin, but gumagawa din po sila ng kanilang mga initiatives para matulungan ang kanilang mga constituents. Hindi namin magagawa sa national ito kung wala po ang tulong ng ating mga LGUs. Kaya paulit-ulit po kaming nagpapasalamat, lalung-lalo na si Pangulong Duterte nagpapasalamat sa ating mga LGUs, sa lahat ng initiatives at cooperation at support na binibigay po nila kay Pangulong Duterte at ang buong national government po.

SEC. DAR: Can I add something in relation to food supply. The Department of Agriculture is partnership with a good number of traders, farmers' cooperatives and association from the production areas, from the provinces. Mayroon kaming programa na Kadiwa o bagsakan dito sa

iba't-ibang lugar dito sa Metro Manila. So the LGUs can get or buy the food supply for their respective constituents. So, that is one of the responsibilities that we are trying to do para iyong pagpasok talaga, unhampered movement of agriculture and fishery commodities/products must not be really disturbed. They have to reach the destination in public markets in bagsakan area, para mas may mabili dito po sa Metro Manila.

Q: Secretary Lopez, puwedeng pa-clarify po, ano daw po ba iyong other essential product list?

SEC. LOPEZ: Ito iyong the likes of disinfectants, iyong mga clorox, sanitizer, alcohol, face mask.

Q: Tapos mayroon lang pong patanong dito. Ito ay involved sa food production. Since, hindi sila—makapasok agad iyong kukunin nilang supplies, puwede ba daw mag-pick up na lang doon sa lugar? For example, they are from Manila and then sila na lang magpi-pick sa Batangas. Is it possible daw po?

SEC. LOPEZ: Anong food supply iyon, ibig sabihin raw materials?

Q: Yeah, raw material po for food production.

SEC. LOPEZ: Actually puwede namang i-deliver ng taga-Batangas. Again, inuulit natin iyong unhampered. Nagkaroon lang talaga, admittedly may mga report sa atin na minsan hindi pinapadaan sa mga ibang controlled points. At iba-iba iyong applications, siguro hindi malinaw sa ibang controlled points na talagang naka-depende tayo sa pulis o army na nakabantay doon eh, iyong tao mismo, so minsan baka iba nakita nila or interpretation nila. But, inuulit po natin ngayon at kagabi kasama natin si General Archie Gamboa, nag-agree naman siya na talagang pagdating sa cargo eh patutuluyin na dapat iyan, wala nang tanong iyan except of course, babasahin nila kung saan ang delivery at saka ano iyong laman at kung tapos na iyong delivery wala nang laman, siyempre allowed silang pabalikin. So malinaw ho iyan na dapat unhampered na. Ngayon, kailangang ma-cascade ho itong mabuti sa lahat ng control points at iyon po napakaimportanteng ma-implement po iyon, iyong mga cargo natin at ia-allow po iyan.

SEC. DAR: Let me again add what have been mentioned. Kagabi nga mayroong decision ang IATF na talagang unhampered po iyong movement of cargoes, and we say agri products, fishery products, inputs na kailangan sa pagsasaka, lahat po iyon, iyong mg tao na involved ay kasama na rin na movement. But always be guided by the skeletal force, para we are preventing talaga iyong mga masyadong marami, but at the same time observing social distancing measures as well. Now let me mention na mayroon pa rin kami ginagawa na food pass plan na ibibigay dito sa mga truckers ng mga goods coming from the provinces at I understand, mayroon nang two lanes na ginagamit sa mga checkpoints na commuter lane at the same time, the other lane is cargo lane. So, this is a good improvement since yesterday and we really commend our partners, the DILG and the PNP, for implementing what have been approved last night.

SEC. LOPEZ: I may add also regarding the cargo. Napag-agree-han din namin kahapon na dahil nga if we believed na unhampered, so kailangan mabilis iyan so nag-agree din na puwedeng random checking. Ibig sabihin, hindi na lahat ng cargo tse-tsekin. Kaya

nagpapasalamat kami sa DILG, saka PNP and the army, I mean AFP, dahil kanina may mga balita rin naman, we are getting feedback na may mga mabilis na iyong galaw kaysa kahapon. Mas mayroong mga mabibilis na galaw pagdaan ng mga cargo in the controlled points kasi nagra-random checking na. At mayroon pa rin tayong mga report na may mga problema. Pero siguro today, mga tatlo o apat iyong na-received naming may problema, which I assumed generally speaking medyo mas mabilis na ngayon.

Q: Sir based doon sa recommendation ninyo na puwedeng, iyong mga workers na puwedeng ilagay na lang sa isang area or mayroong shuttle, which is better? Shuttle service para doon sa mga employees, Sir.

SEC. LOPEZ: OO puwede rin po. Ang first default, lalo na dito sa manufacturing sana ma-house na nila para wala nang bumibiyahe.

Q: So, mas maganda poi yon, kasi ang isang problem nila is saan sila makikipag-coordinate doon sa shuttle. Kasi dadaan din lahat iyong sa checkpoint.

SEC. LOPEZ: Okay. So, ganito... So, mayroon muna silang house arrangement nearby or inside the company premises or maka-arrange ng shuttle iyong kompanya nila. Maaaring may shuttle, may pick-up points sa mga critical areas at doon na lang sila susunduin. So, ini-encourage natin iyong mga companies na mag-ano niyan. Plus, also—we encourage also iyong mga LGUs nila na tulungan sila.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE TONITE: Yes, sir, iyong coordination nga daw po sir, kasi kapag pupunta sila sa isang area makaka – siyempre, may madadaanan silang checkpoints – so, kanino sila makikipag-coordinate?

SEC. LOPEZ: Doon sa checkpoints, again, ang requirement nila iyong ID. So, walang issue doon sa checkpoints kasi bawat tao hahanapan ng proof of employment, ID or certificate of employment. So, kahit nandoon siya sa shuttle bus or nasa sasakyan siya na nai-provide ng LGU, ganoon pa rin hahanapan, tatanungin siya kaya ho importante—ano iyon... iyong sa LGU, iyong resident na ang makikipag-arrange noon.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE TONITE: Sir, iyong companies magbibigay ng shuttle para sunduin iyong mga tao nila?

SEC. LOPEZ: Correct. Iyong company can also do that, iyong sinabi ko kanina. And also, the person involved can also coordinate with their barangay official – baka may barangay na sasakyan, or the mayor. Ayun, mayroong mga ganoon, baka mayroong point to point na mga paghatid. So, iyon ho iyong mga matutulong from the LGU; iyong kompanya rin can also provide for shuttle vehicles.

AILEEN TALIPING/ABANTE TONITE: Thank you, sir.

HUANG ZHENG ZHENG/CCTV: Hello, Secretaries! Thank you for taking my question. First, the question I would like to address to Secretary Nograles. You mentioned that WHO said

that we may have a worst scenario, so, if we are under this situation—right now, we have the Enhanced Community Quarantine, is the policy will be upgraded or we will have... extend one maybe, I mean, this will end on April so, maybe it will be extended to one more month something like that?

SEC. NOGRALES: No, the modeling done by the WHO was before the Enhanced Community Quarantine and before we declared the sub-level 2—red alert sub-level 2, so, because of the modeling and the data that were shown to us by the WHO, that was what prompted us to up our alert level 2—sub-level 2 and eventually the state of calamity and everything that ensued after that.

So, since then we haven't gotten a new modeling from WHO, based on our new quarantine procedures or the Enhanced Community Quarantine that we are implementing now

HUANG ZHENG ZHENG/CCTV: So, this Enhanced Community Quarantine is the highest level we have—

SEC. NOGRALES: Is it the highest? Technically – no, because even us—even in the barangays they could—we could have Enhanced Community Quarantine per barangays. Right now, it's an Enhanced Community Quarantine for the entire Luzon but based on some reports that I heard, there are some barangays that already declared an Enhanced Community Quarantine in their barangay. So, that would limit the—or target the Enhanced Community Quarantine on per barangay or per town basis. Okay.

HUANG ZHENG ZHENG/CCTV: And another one. I would like to also know about the hospitals because I heard in some news that we will have the Philippine Lung Center as a designated hospital, especially for the COVID-19 cases. So, this hospital, how many beds they can provide? Is it enough? If not enough, do we have any plan B?

SEC. NOGRALES: I don't know what the DoH is planning to do with the Lung Center. I have not heard anything from the DoH – the Department of Health, with regard to exclusively using the Lung Center for this.

HUANG ZHENG ZHENG/CCTV: Okay—

SEC. NOGRALES: Is that the question? You heard news that they will exclusively use the Lung Center?

HUANG ZHENG ZHENG/CCTV: Yeah, I heard that before, if I'm not wrong—

SEC. NOGRALES: Let me verify that but... Well, we have an Inter-Agency Task Force meeting tomorrow so, let me verify that report if ever that's true. I personally did not hear.

HUANG ZHENG ZHENG/CCTV: Okay. Thank you so much. May I have one more question about the supply for the face masks because during the stage when I do interview on the street, I saw most of the people even if they wear a face mask, but it's not the proper one, they wear the

cotton one. The cotton one is not the proper face mask, we need to wear the surgical face mask and N95 face mask. So, I would like to know how is the storage (Supply?) of the face mask right now in the Philippines? How many were left of the supply?

SEC. NOGRALES: The details for that, the DoH would know more. But as I know it, there have been donations of face masks that are coming in. Again, I'm not at liberty to divulge that, maybe after the IATF meeting tomorrow. We'll have more details with regard to that and we could probably share more of those details tomorrow.

HUANG ZHENG ZHENG/CCTV: Okay, thank you so much. Thank you!

SEC. NOGRALES: Secretary Mon Lopez would like to say something.

SEC. LOPEZ: I can give you an update because we are at least get—aside from what DoH is getting from various sources, we are also supplying DoH and the public by talking to the supplier based here in Bataan and that we have made arrangement that they will supply Philippines two million for the rest—two million face mask for the rest of March and another three million for April. We will have another request to increase the preposition and the allotment for Philippines, since we recognize that even these numbers are not enough to provide for all the Filipinos.

USEC. ARCENA: Okay. Thank you, Yellow. From Philippine Star, Ace Romero to Secretary Dar: Is there a chance na ma-expand pa iyong list of agricultural goods na may SRP? If yes, ano po puwedeng isama sa mga existing na? What would prod the DA to expand the list of products with SRP?

SEC. DAR: Well, the very rational for expanding it at all would be the actual situation in the market. But at the same time, we are already starting to review what we have, you know, for the last three months, so that in due time we will discuss this with the National Council. So, we are ready but we are still firming up our recommendations.

SEC. LOPEZ: Usec., about the mask, I just got an update about the mask. Out of the two million last week, three hundred thousand was delivered already to DoH and a hundred thousand tomorrow for DoH.

USEC. ARCENA: Thank you, sir. From Joyce Balancio of DZMM: Suggestion from a concerned citizen. Baka po puwedeng i-subsidized na lang ng government ang PUJs para sila na lang ang maghatid sa health workers. Two birds in one stone: Nakatulong kay Manong driver, makakahatid pa raw po ng health workers.

SEC. NOGRALES: Actually, parang iyon na iyong implied suggestion ko doon sa question doon sa tricycle, hindi ba? Implied suggestion for LGUs.

SEC. LOPEZ: In the—spox—spox na rin eh ano? (laughs) In the IATF yesterday I remember the AFP – the Philippine Army, will be providing also vehicles para tulungan iyong mga stranded na health workers. Kaya ngayon I think wala na tayong nakitang mga stranded ngayong

araw na ito, natulungan na sila ng mga buses ng Navy, Army, Air Force para—dito sa mga priority nga na health workers.

Yes. And I would also like to add, even the Department of Transportation po at ang MMDA din po ay gumagawa na rin ng mga initiatives. So, as far as the national government is concerned, mayroon naman pong mga initiatives ang national government. So, sa LGUs, ganoon din, soft ano rin po suggestion, as opposed to a tricycle.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, from Joyce Balancio pa rin po: Sa bank po na ma pasok, hindi po ba puwedeng gawin exempted sa papasukin ang may mga special condition gaya nang kapag buntis? Kasi mayroon daw pong isang bangko sa Cavite na pinapapasok daw ng employer nila dahil hindi naman sila exempted, pero ayaw sana ng employee dahil buntis daw siya?

SEC. LOPEZ: Siguro kailangang makausap ng DOLE iyong employer dahil—if I remember diniskas din ito na may priority na ibibigay doon sa mga buntis at may kundisyon na huwag silang i-require na magtrabaho sa panahong ito. So i-clarify lang natin with DOLE iyan.

ASEC. ARCENA: From Maricel Halili and Joseph Morong of GMA 7: Comment daw po on why certain personalities and politicians who are asymptomatic get tested anyway doon sa COVID daw po?

SEC. LOPEZ: So anong tanong, dahil personality sila?

ASEC. ARCENA: Yes, sir. Bakit daw po may mga senador, may mga personalities kahit na asymptomatic daw po ay pinayagan na mag-test kung limited talaga iyong test kit natin?

SEC. LOPEZ: Baka na-expose sila

SEC. NOGRALES: Yeah, hindi natin alam ang circumstances kasi, ang hirap sagutin.

SEC. LOPEZ: Baka na-expose o nagduda, baka nagpa-check.

ASEC. ARCENA: Okay, sir. From Racquel Bayan ng Radyo Pilipinas: For Secretary Lopez: DTI has been saying na enough ang alcohol supply natin. But until now ay maraming groceries and supermarkets ang walang alcohol, even face mask. Last month, Palace assured na mayroong mga local manufacturers na nag-pledge to double their productions but until now po ay may mga pharmacies pa rin and drug stores na wala pa rin daw pong supply.

SEC. LOPEZ: Racquel, admittedly, pagdating sa face mask, kahit—actually, iyong dating commitment ng local supplier ay 1.6 million – naalala ko iyon – ngayon ay ginawang five million. Kaya ngayon pa lang natin makikita itong parating na bigger quantity. But even looking at this quantity, naka-prioritize din po ito sa DOH at saka sa Red Cross for the health workers. Kaya ho iyong naa-allocate sa mga drug stores, medyo kaunti na lang po.

So we really need more sources. At ang ating PITC, iyong Philippine International Trading Corporation, may mga pending requests from India. So iyon po ang hinihintay natin ngayon para

maramihan na iyong orders. From what I heard, iyong sa India, over 2.5 million masks – wala pa nga lang dito pero tinatrabaho po natin. At ito po, hindi government ang bumibili, we're buying this in behalf lang of the Mercury and the South Star and TGP.

ASEC. ARCENA: Mayroon pa tayong isang tanong mula sa China Radio International, Ernest Wang. Good evening.

ERNEST WANG/CHINA RADIO INTERNATIONAL: Yes, good evening. As we know, during the enhanced community quarantine, I'm afraid that a lot of companies closed and maybe the temporary workers will lose their jobs. But during this period, you need money to pay for the electronic, to buy some medicine and some foods. So my question is: (Unclear), does government has any plan to help them not only in the food supply but for other areas? And if the quarantine will extend, do you have Plan B to help those low income families or jobless families? Thank you.

SEC. NOGRALES: Well, first of all, we've already made the pronouncement that employees should not be fired or terminated just because of absence due to COVID-19. That being said, as we announced yesterday, technical working group composed of involved departments has already been formed to create social amelioration packages. So this is composed of the different departments who will now discuss the best means to provide for those who are unable to work and have no means of support.

In the meantime, because we are under a state of calamity, the local government units can already tap-in to their Quick Response Fund. And it is up to the local government units to determine the process and way of providing relief and food assistance to their constituents who are affected. So, the system of providing and distributing the assistance to their respective constituents will be done, first, by the local government units, and this will be augmented by our national government through the DSWD.

So those are the three ways wherein we provide for those …our kababayan who need help the most.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, Ernest. Phone-in question from Ms. Tina Mendez of Philippine Star: For Sec Lopez, can cargo trucks, other than those carrying food, medicines and basic necessities, destined for grocery stores allowed on the road, for example, cargo of constructions materials?

SEC. LOPEZ: As of now, yes. In terms of when we say cargoes, all cargoes should be unhampered 'no, so they're allowed. But kanina lang mayroon ding nagtanong sa akin, trying to deliver cement, nagpaalam din sila, so sabi ko, as much as possible, kung cement iyan, huwag na para hindi na makadagdag sa mga tsi-tsek-apin ng kapulisan.

So ideally, those not connected with food, like they are not raw material or inputs to food production or medicine, medical product production, to help the country and not avoid the possible spread and transmission of the disease. Ito po … this really, you know, a difficult problem we're facing kaya po we are very, very careful. While we want to stay afloat pagdating

sa mga manufacturing ng basic essentials, beyond that, dapat talaga stay at home tayo para talagang mabawasan itong problemang ito.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, another phone in question: Can we include in guidelines not to allow seniors and children in supermarkets?

SEC. NOGRALES: Nasa do's and dont's, nakalagay po doon na no senior citizens should leave their homes for their protection. So senior citizen, 60 years old and above, number one.

Number two, siguro pasok na rin siguro sa guidelines iyong isa lang po ang puwedeng lumabas ng bahay para sa pagbili ng mga basic necessities 'no, at siyempre hindi naman puwede iyong bata na mag-isa ang uutusan mo para bumili ng basic necessities.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, from Jona (unclear) of Asahi Shimbun: Are there restrictions for the entry non-Filipino citizens, say, Japanese nationals, into the other parts of the Philippines? Are there any special requirements for inbound international travelers in the Visayas or Mindanao?

SEC. NOGRALES: Oo, kung ano lang iyong ano … kung ano lang iyong nararapat, based on the guidelines, we just follow that.

ASEC. ARCENA: Okay, sir. May isa pang tanong tayo from Guangming Daily, China. Mr. (unclear), good evening.

GUANGMING DAILY CHINA: Good evening. From Chinese newspaper, Guangming Daily. For Secretary Lopez, what do you think of the Chinese market during and after the epidemic? And how do you think it will affect the Philippine economy? Thank you.

SEC. LOPEZ: Can you repeat the last part? How it will effect?

ASEC. ARCENA: The Philippine economy.

SEC. LOPEZ: Okay, thank you. First, prior to all these moves to put the country in community quarantine, from general to enhanced, we were all happy to be hearing that some parts of China were recovering; they were going back to normalcy outside Wuhan and Hubei. There are so many provinces already opening up, and we heard that their back to about 80%, 90% capacity. And we're happy that we were hopefully solving already some supply chain constraints.

Unfortunately we have a different situation in the country and we are trying to avoid the worsening of this COVID-19. We don't want to reach the worse situation and we are trying to nip it at the bud, I mean solving it as early as possible. As the President said, time is of the essence, we have to do it now, before it gets to be at a thousand level or uncontrollable number and so frankly we cannot benefit from any recovery that China is experiencing, because the country is as mentioned as you would know is on enhanced community quarantine. I guess except those related to the food business, which again is still open for business.

Q: Do you have confidence on the Philippine economy on the future?

SEC. LOPEZ: Oh, yes definitely. But it's really important that we solve the issue now on COVID-19 and at least flatten the curb in term of number of cases and hopefully eliminate the COVID-19.Only then can we really work on the rehabilitation, the bouncing back so to speak, and implement all these programs. We have a very solid economic fundamentals before this happened and as you know, we were growing over 6% already and initially we were computing—the NEDA has the computation that the impact would be about 1 percentage points, but now things are different, we will have to make another computation because of the enhanced community quarantine. So, it's a different situation now. Now, health is of greater concern now.

ASEC. ARCENA: Phone-in question from DZXL-RMN, Angel Ronquillo: Paano daw po ba kung mapapaso na o mag-expire na ang rehistro ng sasakyan, hindi daw po ba iyon huhulihin o wala po bang penalty, kasi may ilang exempted po sa ECQ ang gumagamit ng sari-sarili nilang sasakyan?

SEC. NOGRALES: Siguro, I think, that's the least of our concerns now. I think, right now, ano naman iyan, we will make adjustment. Those are things na right now, puwede naman nating—iyong buhay muna, doon muna. Iyong buhay muna ng bawat Pilipino, iyon muna iyong focus natin.

ASEC. ARCENA: Question, sir from CNN Philippines: What measures are in place para hindi tayo malusutan ng contrabands like drugs, considering na random checking na lang ang gagawin.

SEC. NOGRALES: Nakita ninyo naman sa kalsada natin, even it's random checking makita mo iyong presence ng pulis, very effective. Pati kami, we go through those—kahit sabihin mo random checking, I think it's more effective pa nga eh!

SEC. LOPEZ: Noon walang ni random checking di ba sa land. Pero mayroong mga specific inspections ang mga PNP, PDEA sa iba-ibang lugar. I'm sure iyon ay tuloy-tuloy pa rin at lalo na sa Customs and other agencies.

SEC. NOGRALES: Alam ninyo kapag panahon ng eleksiyon nagkakaroon din ng random checkpoints at marami ring nahuhuling nagba-violate ng gun ban kapag eleksiyon. So I think it's a same set-up right now. Iyong kung ano ang practice nila kapag nagra-random checkpoint during election period, I think that is also what they are doing now. Well, huwag silang magkamali, papasok kayo ng kontrabando, mahuhuli ka talaga.

ASEC. ARCENA: Follow up question, sir. Is there a system like setting up lanes exclusive for cargoes?

SEC. NOGRALES: Nasagot na ni Sec. Dar, pero baka gusto niyang ulitin.

SEC. DAR: I think, I got reports from the field na dalawa na iyong linya, isang linya para sa commuters, isang linya for cargoes.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, may follow up questions lang si Joseph Morong of GMA7. Is the IATF looking at aggressive testing of COVID cases, meaning bahay-bahay lalo na sa mga may cases

na. And do we have the means to do so and how do you intend to impose social distancing measures in poor communities?

SEC. NOGRALES: Gaya ng sinagot ko kanina, ayaw kong pangunahan ang magiging desisyon ng IATF pagdating sa protocols. In fact, even with the IATF, I think DOH themselves can already update their own protocols depending on the need, depending on the urgency and depending also sa supply nila. So, hindi na siguro kailangang dumaan ng IATF, it's that DOH, sila po ang may expertise dito. Kami, walang doctor po sa aming tatlo, pasensiya na po. So, hindi po naming masasagot iyong the best way to do it, I think that expertise belongs to the DOH.

ASEC. ARCENA: For Secretary Lopez from Joseph. Statement on the BPO, puwede ba silang palusutin sa checkpoints, right or the workers?

SEC. LOPEZ: Oh yes, binasa po natin kanina. Iyong sa memorandum circular, pati doon sa IATF resolution na ina-allow po iyong BPO lalo na itong until March 20 na makapag-move in/move out sila, because we have asked BPO companies to make arrangement para sa kanilang either work from home or special accommodation within the area of the BPOs, para hindi na bumibiyahe ang mga BPO personnel.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, how do you intend to impose social distancing measures in 'poor communities' daw po?

SEC. NOGRALES: Iyong LGUs po ang aasahan natin diyan kung ano iyong pinakamainam at magiging paraan, kasi iba't-ibang LGU, iba't-ibang situation and circumstance 'no.

ASEC. ARCENA: Last skype caller from Paris, France, Dick Villanueva of PTV-Europe.

SEC. NOGRALES: Kumusta na po kayo diyan sa Paris?

DICK VILLANUEVA/PTV EUROPE: Hello good evening po. May pinapatanong ang mga kababayan natin dito, kasi po iyong nangyayaring enhanced community quarantine sa Pilipinas, which I believed hanggang April 14 Nagtatanong po ang mga kababayan natin dito sa France, kung puwede na silang bumiyahe sa Pilipinas after the said date. At kung sakaling puwede na po, mandatory pa rin po ba sila na sumailalim sa 14 days quarantine?

SEC. NOGRALES: Opo, unang-una sabi ni Pangulo lahat ng mga kababayan po natin, open po sa inyong umuwi dito sa Pilipinas, pero kailangan po nating – pagbalik po ninyo dito home quarantine po and we will strictly enforce iyong home quarantine.

DICK VILLANUEVA/PTV EUROPE: Okay po, iyong mga pauwi sa Pilipinas after 14th of April, puwede na po silang salubungin ng buong pamilya nila sa airport lalo na po iyong mga nanggaling sa malalayong probinsiya?

SEC. NOGRALES: Sorry, hindi ko nakuha iyong tanong, so it's after the community quarantine iyong tanong?

DICK VILLANUEVA/PTV EUROPE: Iyon po.

SEC. NOGRALES: Ah sorry.

DICK VILLANUEVA/PTV EUROPE: Kung puwede na po silang salubungin ng pamilya nila sa airport.

SEC. NOGRALES: Sorry, I will answer iyong first question, muna. Iyong regarding sa pag-uwi po ninyo during the quarantine period, okay siyempre, kung after the quarantine period lalong okay po. Iyong after the quarantine period po, hopefully kapag tapos na po ito at wala nang problema, siyempre magsi-change po iyong rules no. Kung okay na, so siguro ang sagot ko diyan, kapag nandoon na tayo sa point na malapit na pong matapos iyong quarantine period natin, sabihin natin ng April 14, April 13, siyempre magmi-meet po iyong IATF.

Everyday naman kaming nagme-meeting, mag a-assess naman po tayo. And during that assessment sasabihin po namin, ibabalita na lang siguro namin sa lahat kung ano iyong mga nagbago na protocols natin. So, hindi ko po talaga masasagot iyong katanungan kasi wala pa po tayo sa point na iyon, kasi day to day po iyong assessment po ang ginagawa natin. Kaya abangan na lang natin ang day to day assessment po na ginagawa ng IATF, kaya nga kahit na medyo midnight na po ngayon ay nagbibigay po kami ng mga updates sa ating mga kababayan kahit late na po at alam kong puyat kayo.

Pero ginagawa namin ito para malaman ng ating mga kababayan kung ano iyong pinaka-latest na mga hakbang, mga guidelines o mga alituntunin o iba pang mga rules na gusto po nating iparating sa ating mga kababayan.

DICK VILLANUEVA/PTV EUROPE: Mayroon pa pong isang tanong. Kasi mayroon ditong associations, mga organizations na sila po iyong mga tumutulong sa mga pamilya ng mga nasawi rito, iyong mga natural deaths na ibinabalik sa Pilipinas. Iyon daw pong, halimbawa nasawi sa COVID-19 or natural death na OFW, tapos ongoing pa iyong enhanced community quarantine sa Pilipinas. Papapayagan ba na maiuwi sa bansa natin iyong mga labi?

SEC. NOGRALES: Wala naman pong bawal po, wala po naman kaming sinasabing bawal. Wala po naman sa aming ipinagbabawal iyong mga iyon.

DICK VILLANUEVA/PTV EUROPE: Haimbawa iyon pong pamilya na magdadala ng body, required po ba siya na sasailalim din po ba sa 14 days quarantine during the enhanced community quarantine?

SEC. NOGRALES: Opo, kailangan pong sumunod sa mga quarantine protocols po natin, home quarantine po, iyong home quarantine na inuutos. Iyong sinasabi na mga labi, kasi nakalagay nga po sa do’s po natin, iyong maaring gawin, iyong funeral po at internment services ay patuloy pa rin naman po.

DICK VILLANUEVA/PTV EUROPE: Okay, marami pong salamat

SEC. NOGRALES: Mag-ingat po kayo diyan sa Paris, lalo na.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir may patanong po. May nagpapatanong lang sana, regarding the IDs given its impending effectivity. Are ban-exempted private entities included and that their employees should also apply with PCOO, if so are there guidelines already?

SEC.LOPEZ: Iyong kanina, at least bawat agency iyong constituents po namin, we will be issuing IDs, I think in three days or four days. So, we are getting right now iyong list ng skeletal force ng bawat companies that are allowed to continue iyong mga food, iyong mga binanggit nating very essential, the basic food, medical products. So kukunin po iyong listahan na ito at saka of course the list of the companies pati iyong mga pangalan nung mga employees na papasukin nila and bibigyan po natin ng ID iyon. In the meantime, dadalhin nila iyong kanilang mga corporate ID.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir last question na. How is Secretary Duque. Is DOH operations affected noong report na may DOH senior official affected daw po ng COVID?

SEC. NOGRALES: Siyempre tuloy-tuloy pa rin po ang trabaho ng Department Health, hindi lang ng Department of Health, kung hindi lahat po ng mga ahensiya at departamento, ang mga kagawaran po ng gobyerno ay patuloy pa rin naman pong nagpa-function at nagta-trabaho. Ang nangyari lang naman sa executive branch is work from home. Pero, we made sure na iyong mga essential and frontline services po natin ay patuloy pa rin po. In-ensure din po natin na kahit frontline po iyan, skeletal workforce para ma-practice pa rin iyong social distancing. So government is still effective, government is still functioning, your government is still working, kaya nandito po kaming lahat to show to the public that we are doing our jobs po to the best that we can.

Q: How true daw po na nag-self quarantine si Secretary Duque?

SEC. NOGRALES: Siguro kung may mga announcements po na ganyan, hintayin na lang po natin iyong announcements.

Q: May we get the Palace statement, lalo na taga-DOH na iyong nag-positive sa COVID, iyong isang director nila?

SEC. NOGRALES: Hindi ko kasi alam, usually kasi mayroon tayong privacy of patients

Q: But parang naglabas ng statement ang DOH eh?

SEC. NOGRALES: Well, if naglabas po ng statement, naglabas ng statement. So, hintayin na lang po natin. I cannot speak on behalf of DOH kasi. So pasensiya na po.

ASEC. ARSENA: Iyon na po iyong huling katanungan. Sir, may closing statement po ba kayo?

SEC. NOGRALES: Gaya ng sabi ko patuloy pa naman tayo sa ating trabaho. Nagpapasalamat kami sa ating mga nasa private sector, nagpapasalamat po tayo sa ating mga kaibigan sa media

na nagpupuyat ngayon at talagang todo ang trabaho para maibalita sa ating mga kababayan ang totoong balita ‘no, at no to fake news. Again and again paulit-ulit po nating sasabihin, ang mensahe ni Pangulo kung magkanya-kanya po tayo hindi po tayo magtatagumpay, ang sabi ni Pangulong Duterte, together we can beat COVID-19, together we heal as one. Maraming salamat po.

SEC. DAR: Assuring again our constituents in the agriculture sector that movement of agri-fishery inputs, commodities and products are unhampered. We would like you to report, if there are still problems in terms of getting in to Metropolis, 09511443233, let me also mention that to really continue to stabilize prices in relation to this price freeze, we need to ensure the free movement of these commodities, so that there will be enough supply of food and other products in the Metro Manila. And again, nandiyan po tayo, ang Kagawaran ng Pagsasaka ay tumutulong para sa ganoon, during this crisis, in regard to COVID ay we will continue to work with the farmers, farmers cooperative and associations para continuous po iyong production and to have enough food supply today and in the future.

SEC. LOPEZ: One last appeal na pakiusap natin talaga sa lahat ng ating kababayan, pati dito sa mga na-exempt din na economic activities na nilimitihan sa foods, medicines, medical supplies: While kayo po ay ina-allow mag-operate pakiusap po namin doon sa may malalaking imbentaryo if you don’t have to manufacture at mabawasan muna iyong bumibiyahe sa kalye at iyong pagpasok ng mga employee, actually we will encourage you to stop operations and let iyong inventory ninyo, iyon muna ang mag-supply sa requirements ng mga supermarkets.

Malaki po ang maitutulong ninyo sa pagbawas ng population na lumalabas pa. Kasi ideally stay at home. So, iyong mga may one month, two month inventory ng finished goods, I suggest mag-holiday muna ang kumpanya at hayaang iyong imbentaryo ang lumabas, para makabawas na tayo sa operations sa labas. At siyempre ganundin doon sa mga raw material inputs ng mga nagsu-supply dito sa mga food manufacturing. At doon naman sa walang connection at all in these basic products – food, medicine, again medical products – iyong appeal natin ay talagang huwag na kayong munang mag-operate, hintayin na natin, no urgency, hintayin ninyo po iyong one month, para talagang wala nang lumalabas na kababayan natin.

Again para talagang mahinto na itong, it’s not the normal, kailangan po talaga makiisa tayo kung gusto nating masugpo ito. Because we don’t want to see na after 30 days ay magkakaroon pa at mayroon pa tayong COVID dito sa ating bayan. So kailangan po talaga maghinto na tayo. Iyong mga hindi importanteng gawain, huwag na nating ipilit lumabas. Thank you.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you Secretary Lopez, Secretary Nograles and Secretary Dar. Thank you MPC at sa lahat po ng mga kapatid natin sa media, thank you. That concludes our press briefing.

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Source: PCOO-NIB (News and Information Bureau-Data Processing Center)