

Presidential Communications Operations Office
News and Information Bureau

**INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE VIRTUAL PRESSER
WITH CABINET SECRETARY KARLO ALEXEI NOGRALES**

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Mga kababayan, magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat at sa mga kaibigan natin sa media, at sa ating mga magigiting at bayani nating mga frontliners.

Yesterday, the IATF resumed its meetings and immediately addressed several urgent issues and concerns. The following are the recommendations arrived at by the IATF with regard to the management of the government's COVID-19 response:

A. All medical and allied healthcare professionals with perfected and signed overseas employment contracts as of March 8, 2020 shall be allowed for deployment abroad as an exemption to the application of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration Governing Board Resolution No. 9 Series of 2020. Upon the execution of a declaration signifying their knowledge and understanding of the risks involved as advised by the Philippine government. Subject to the evaluation of the Department of Budget and Management, the Department of Health is directed to facilitate the emergency hiring of additional healthcare workers to assist in the local healthcare system.

Noong isang araw po, may announcement ukol sa temporary deployment ban ng ating medical health professionals tulad ng mga doktor at nurse. Nilinaw po natin na hindi po kasama dito sa ban, na temporary deployment ban ang mga doktor, nurse at iba pang medical health professionals na may mga kontrata na po as of March 8, 2020 para magtrabaho sa ibang bansa. Papayagan na po silang umalis. Kailangan lang po nilang pumirma ng deklarasyon na batid nila ang mga panganib sa paglipad papunta sa ibang bansa. Pinapaaral at pinapaayos na rin po sa DBM at Department of Health ang pagkuha ng mga karagdagang healthworkers para sa ating healthcare system.

The following recommendations of the National Task Force COVID-19, as revised and presented, are hereby approved. Aprubado na po ng IATF ang mga sumusunod na rekomendasyon ng NTF COVID-19:

1. Designating the Metro Manila Development Authority and the Chief Minister of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao as Chair of the Regional Inter-Agency Task Groups in their respective regions as established pursuant to IATF Resolution No. 12 Series of 2020. For all other regions, the Office of Civil Defense through its regional offices shall act as Chair.

Ang pagtalaga ng MMDA at Chief Minister ng BARMM bilang mga Chair ng kani-kanilang Regional Inter-Agency Task Groups. Sa iba pong rehiyon, ang mga regional offices po ng OCD ang tatayo bilang Chair.

2. Establishing a sub-task unit for the repatriation of Overseas Filipino Workers under the NTF Task Group on Response Operations. Sub-Task Group on Quarantine Facilities to facilitate the quarantine requirement of all repatriated OFWs, whether sea-based or land-based. The STU shall be composed of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration or OWWA as Chair, and the Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Health, Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Philippine National Police, the Department of Tourism, the Department of Transportation, the Philippine Coast Guard, the Bureau of Quarantine and such other agencies as may be determined by the NTF, as members.

Aprubado din po ang pagbuo ng Sub-Task Unit for the Repatriation of Overseas Filipino Workers sa ilalim ng NTF Task Group on Response Operations. Sub-Task Group on Quarantine Facilities para tutukan ang pag-quarantine po ng ating mga OFW na nakabalik sa Pilipinas. Kabilang po sa grupo na ito ang OWWA bilang Chair at ang mga sumusunod na ahensiya: ang DOLE, DOH, DFA, DILG, PNP, DOT, DOTr, PCG at BOQ.

C. Pursuant to the updated guidelines of DOH on the classification of individuals for the surveillance and management of the COVID-19 health event, all agencies and local government units are directed to apply said classification in all subsequent issuances related to COVID-19, as well as to update existing issuances in accordance therewith.

Lahat po ng LGU at ahensiya ng gobyerno ay inaatasang gamitin ang bagong klasipikasyon ng mga indibidwal na nasa ilalim ng surveillance batay sa mga bagong patakaran ng Department of Health.

D. The evaluation tool for the assessment of the demographic vulnerabilities of communities to the COVID-19 health event as presented by the Commission on Population (POPCOM) is hereby adopted. LGUs, including the BARMM, are enjoined to implement such tool to assess communities in their respective jurisdictions subject to guidelines as may be jointly issued by the DOH, DILG, National Economic and Development Authority and the POPCOM.

Ang evaluation tool na gamit sa pagsusuri ng mga komunidad ay in-adopt ng IATF. Lahat po ng LGU kasama na po ang BARMM ay inaatasang gamitin ang tool na ito para suriin ang kani-kanilang komunidad. Batay po sa patakaran na ilalabas ng DOH, DILG, NEDA at POPCOM. Mahalaga po ito para sa pagtukoy ng mga pamilyang makakatanggap ng tulong pinansiyal mula sa gobyerno.

E. The Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur is directed to coordinate with the Sabah National Security Council for the requested return of 38 stranded Malaysian nationals to Sandakan. In the meantime, the DFA is directed to submit the information of the Malaysian nationals to the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency or NICA.

Ang embahada natin sa Kuala Lumpur ay inaatasan na makipag-ugnayan sa Sabah National Security Council para makabalik ang 38 na Malaysian sa Sandakan. Inaatasan na muna ang DFA na ibigay sa NICA ang impormasyon ukol sa mga Malaysian nationals na ito.

Last. The interim guidelines for the granting of special authorization for the limited practice of medical graduates as presented by the Department of Health is hereby adopted; provided that special authorizations shall only be used or issued as a last resort; provided further that any authorization shall only be effective for the duration of the state of public health emergency in the Philippines, unless earlier withdrawn by the IATF upon recommendation of the DOH.

Ina-adopt ng IATF ang mga patakaran ukol sa pagbigay ng special authorization for limited practice ng ating mga medical graduate. Nililinaw lang po natin na ang mga special authorization na ito ay ibibigay lang bilang last resort, at ito po ay epektibo lamang habang tayo ay nasa ilalim ng state of public health emergency.

Bago po ako magtapos, nais ko lang banggitin na kahapon nagbigay po ako ng update tungkol sa ating mga quarantine facilities. Malaki po ang tulong ng mga nag-donate ng mga kagamitan dito, kasama na po ang 1,300 na kutson na ibinigay ng US Government sa ating pamahalaan.

Aside from turning over these 1, 300 cots, the US government also donated \$4 million to aid our efforts to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. For the 1,300 cots and the \$4 million donated by the US government to us, the Filipinos, maraming, maraming salamat po. Thank you, Ambassador Sung.

Nais din naming ipaalam na tuluy-tuloy po ang trabaho para ma-boost ang testing capacity natin. Ang DOH po ay nakikipagtulungan sa National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology ng University of the Philippines–Diliman para sa deployment ng mahigit na three hundred volunteer medical technologists, molecular biologists, lab technicians, at researchers na mag-a-augment ng staff sa ating mga laboratoryo. The additional manpower translates to longer laboratory hours and hence more tests.

Aside from this, the DOH also reports that more than 1,400 medical workers completed an online biosafety course in preparation for government expanding our testing efforts. Maraming, maraming salamat po sa Department of Health at sa University of the Philippines. Thank you po, UP.

Kahapon, ibinalita natin na mayroon na tayong 15 certified laboratories for COVID-19 testing. Sa report ng DOH, may 28 laboratories pa na ine-evaluate at sa mga ito priority natin ang mga labs mula sa Visayas at sa Mindanao para po mas mapabilis ang testing natin sa mga lugar dito.

Mga kababayan, kagabi po, pinaalala ng Pangulo ang kahalagahan ng social distancing at ang pagsunod sa patakaran ng Enhanced Community Quarantine. Isang buwan na po tayong nasa ilalim ng ECQ at may mga natanggap po kaming balita na habang tumatagal ay may mga kababayan po tayo sa iba't ibang lugar ang nakalimot na nasa gitna po tayo ng isang public health crisis. May mga nagtitipon-tipon sa daan at may mga nagsasabong pa nga.

We all want life to go back to normal. Lahat tayo gusto naman nating bumalik sa normal, hindi po ba? Bumalik sa dati ang buhay. Gusto natin makita ang ating mga kaibigan, mga kamag-anak, mga mahal natin sa buhay sa iba't ibang lugar dito sa Pilipinas, sa ating bansa. These, however,

will only be possible if we all remain vigilant and continue to take the necessary precautions to prevent the virus from spreading.

Magsisimula ang lahat ng iyan sa atin. Mag-mask po tayo kapag tayo ay lumalabas; practice natin ang physical distancing or social distancing; dalasan po natin ang paghugas ng kamay; cooperate with your local governments; stay home. Iyong pinapalabas lang naman iyong absolutely necessary. At kapag kayo ay lumabas, kailangan gamitin ang mga necessary precautions, but only if absolutely necessary. Siyempre, kapag nagpapakonsulta sa doktor, magpapatingin, magpapagamot, kailangan maging tapat tayo sa ating doktor; sabihin ang lahat, sabihin ang totoo.

Filipinos' lives are literally in the hands of each and every one of us. Tayong lahat, bawat isa po sa atin, nasa kamay po natin ang buhay at kaligtasan ng bawat isang Pilipino, kilala man natin o hindi. Iyon po ang riyalidad. Kailangan natin ang kooperasyon at tulong ng lahat upang malampasan po natin ang krisis na ito.

Sa tulong ng lahat, maililigtas natin ang buhay natin, ang buhay ng ating pamilya, ang buhay ng ating mga komunidad, ang buhay ng kapwa natin Pilipino sa ibang lugar, kahit sa mga probinsiyang hindi pa natin napuntahan.

Sa ating mga tahanan, ligtas po tayo kaya please stay at home. Bahay muna, buhay muna. Together, we can beat COVID-19. Together, we heal as one. Maraming salamat po.

Babasahin ko na po iyong mga katanungan mula sa ating media.

From Tina Mendez/Philippine Star: “The President said last night we have slowed down the spread of the virus during the one-month Enhanced Community Quarantine period. Secretary Dominguez also said the government’s lockdown probably saved around 100,000 lives. What are the statistics that back these claims? Are we over the hump? What’s the full picture in our fight versus COVID-19 when we have not reached the projected testing of 2,600 to 7,000 capacity at this point?”

Gaya ng nabanggit ko na po kanina, at noon nung mga press briefing po natin, may mga iba’t ibang mga scientists, epidemiologists, mathematicians na nagbibigay po sa atin, sa IATF ng mga sinasabing worst case scenarios or iyong possible peak ng bansang Pilipinas. So, siguro para maintindihan natin kung saan galing itong statements ni Secretary Dominguez at ng Pangulo—well, iyong kay Secretary Dominguez hindi naman iyan mula sa kaniya mismo pero galing po iyan sa mga nasa World Bank at even mula sa WHO.

Pero siguro para lang malaman ninyo kung ano iyong iniwasan natin, kung ang pag-usapan po natin iyong possible peak ng bansang Pilipinas, iyong pinaka-mataas talaga, ano ba iyong iniwasan natin para lubos nating maintindihan? Sinabi ko naman po sa inyo na mayroong tatlong grupo, in fact, more than three iyon na nagbigay po sa atin, sa IATF ng mga possible scenarios kung hindi po tayo mag-ECQ, mag-Enhanced Community Quarantine or kung hindi tayo mag-quarantine o hindi po tayo gagawa ng iba’t ibang mga hakbang para masugpo ang COVID-19 o para bawasan ang numero na maaaring ma-infect ng COVID-19.

So, ang mga estimate na ipinakita sa amin, iyong isang estimate ang sabi nila is ang maaaring potential peak ng Pilipinas ng infected COVID-19 kung papabayaang lang natin ito at wala tayong gagawin is 1.9 million Filipinos. Iyong isang estimate, sinabi aabot tayo ng peak ng 5.2 million Filipinos infected ng COVID-19. Iyong isa, sinabi aabot tayo ng 6.2 million Filipinos infected ng COVID-19. So ang mga estimates na ipinakita sa amin, iyong isang estimate ang sabi nila is maaaring potential peak ng Pilipinas na infected ng COVID-19, kung papabayaang lang natin ito at wala tayong gagawin is 1.9 million Filipinos. Iyong isang estimate, sinabi aabot tayo ng peak ng 5.2 million Filipinos infected ng COVID-19. Iyong isa sinabi, aabot tayo ng 6.2 million Filipinos infected ng COVID-19. Iyong isa sinabi, 8.3 million Filipinos infected ng COVID-19.

So kung iyan iyong sinasabi ng mga eksperto, epidemiologist, mathematicians, scientist, sa atin, sa amin sa IATF at kay Pangulong Duterte, kung piniprisinta ng IATF kay Pangulo ang mga worst case scenarios – iyon po iyong iniwasan natin. Iyon po iyong estimates nila, hindi namin. Hindi iyan mula sa amin, mga Cabinet secretaries, wala po iyan. Mula po iyan sa mga eksperto.

In fact, iyong unang estimate ng WHO dati was 75,000 ‘di ba, infected ang mangyayari sa NCR. So, ganoon po. Kaya nabanggit ni Secretary Dominguez na kung hindi agad tayo nag-lockdown, we would have potentially lost 100,000 Filipino lives. Kasi siyempre kapag ito po iyong peak, 1.9, 5.2, 6.2, 8.3 million Filipinos, i-multiply mo doon, ano iyong mortality rate ng COVID-19. I-check mo anong mortality o fatality rate ng COVID-19 across the world, doon mo ma-estimate how many potential lives of Filipinos are lost. Meaning to say, mga kababayan, kung papabayaang lang natin itong ganitong sitwasyon na wala tayong gagawin, hindi tayo mag-cooperate, hindi tayo magtulungan, kung hindi tayo gagawa ng hakbang, ganoon po ang mangyayari base sa mga estimates ng iba’t ibang mga scientists.

So ang tanong: Are we over the hump? Have we slowed down? Sabi ni Pangulo, we have slowed down. Ang basis niyan kasi siyempre gaya ng sinabi ko, every IATF meeting nagpiprisinta po iyong mga scientist, iyong mga nag-a-analyze ng mga numero ng positive cases ng COVID-19, nasaan na ba tayo, are we improving? Siyempre iyon ang lagi naming tanong sa IATF. So ang findings po nila based simula noong nag-umpisa po tayo ng ECQ, nasaan na ba tayo one month from then, so ang findings is iyong case doubling time natin. Ibig sabihin, how many days before mag-doble iyong cases ng COVID-19. Ang iniwasan natin na mag-case doubling time ng one day or case doubling time ng two days or case doubling time ng three days.

So ngayon, bumaba na po tayo doon sa case doubling time na three days. So ibig sabihin, mas mabagal na po ang case doubling time ng COVID-19 dito sa bansang Pilipinas. And that is more accurate now than before kasi mas marami na nga iyong mga tests na nako-conduct. Noon kasi, hindi tayo masyadong kampante dahil hindi ganoon kalawak ang testing natin. Pero ngayon, marami na po iyong na-testing natin.

Ang findings po, kung ipa-plot natin sa graph, iyong case doubling time ng Pilipinas ay bumagal na – it’s less than three days. Iyong positivity rate is also slowly decreasing and iyon percentage of new cases is bending downwards. So, ito iyong mga general findings ng mga eksperto tungkol sa nangyayari dito sa bansang Pilipinas.

“Please expound on DOF’s proposal to assist the 3.4 million middle income workers? Will the affected workers directly get the benefits of their companies? Will the affected workers directly get the benefits or their companies get to the subsidies? What’s the process?”

Okay, ganito po iyon, ito na rin ay pinag-usapan kagabi with the President, prinisinta ito kay Pangulo at nagbigay na siya ng go dito.

So the program is called “Small Business Wage Subsidy Program”. Ito po iyong sagot natin doon sa tinatawag na middle income workers natin. Ito iyong ... ‘di ba naalala ninyo, inatasan ni Pangulong Duterte si Secretary Dominguez at iyong team nila at iba’t ibang mga secretaries para pag-aralan kung ano iyong puwede nilang ibigay sa mga middle income para maka-benepisyo din sila ano.

So this Small Business Wage Subsidy Program ng Department of Health, gagamitin po natin dito iyong mga kumpanya, and these are small businesses. So out na dito iyong mga large businesses, iyong large, medium businesses, out na dito. So dito lang po tayo sa small businesses na currently registered at gumagamit ng SSS at registered sa BIR system natin. So ito muna iyong priority: Iyong gumagamit ng SSS at iyong BIR system.

So ang estimate po natin dito o ni Secretary Dominguez is, this will actually covers 1.6 million small businesses that have ceased to operate dahil sa ECQ or who are applying the skeleton or skeletal workforce para lang to stay afloat and ang potential na workers na makakabenepisyo dito is 3.4 million workers. So ang ating programa dito is we shall be giving the same 5,000 to 8,000 pesos na subsidiya sa mga empleyado o mga workers ng small businesses na ito.

So it’s the same, it’s 5,000-8,000 pesos depende sa minimum wage ng region na iyan. So kung anuman ang minimum wage, iyon din ang level ng ibibigay na subsidiya sa inyo – may 5,000, may 5,500, may 6,000, may 6,500, 7,000, 7,500 at 8,000. Okay. So ito, ibibigay sa mga empleyado na affected, but the employee must have been employed by the company as of March 1.

Number two, dapat hindi pa siya binabayaran ng employer niya. So for that month, hindi pa siya nababayaran.

Number three, lahat covered except iyong on leave and except iyong mga nag-avail na iyong SSS unemployment benefits. Ang priority natin are those businesses na registered and applying iyong SSS and registered sa BIR, that is our priority. But even those na hindi na sa SSS at doon sa BIR, hanapan din natin ng paraan. Okay?

Number four, dapat hindi na-retrench o na let go o finire out ng kumpanya iyong empleyado at iyong empleyado dapat hindi rin mag-resign.

So iyon iyong condition. Kasi ang point natin dito is ayaw natin mawalan ng trabaho iyong empleyado. We want to retain the employment status of the employee. And there will be two tranches, the first tranche will be paid out between May 1 to May 15; and the second tranche will be paid out on May 16 to May 30.

Ngayon, kung naaalala ninyo, mayroon tayong CAMP, iyong COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program under sa Department of Labor and Employment, hindi ba? So iyong covered ng CAMP at nabigyan na po ng DOLE ng P5,000 na financial assistance mula sa CAMP, hindi na tayong magbibigay ng one month nila kasi nabigyan na sila ng CAMP. Pero sa second month or sa second tranche, covered sila which is iyong May 16 to 30.

Kasi itong ating Small Business Wage Subsidy two months din ito, two months ang coverage nito. So kung ikaw empleyado ka nakatanggap ka na sa CAMP ng DOLE, hindi ka na kasama doon sa first tranche pero magka-qualify ka doon sa second tranche.

Okay, so ang gagamitin nating modes of disbursement para dito, hindi ito iyong tulad ng DSWD na Social Amelioration Program na nagha-house to house na nagbibigay tayo ng cash. So ang gagamitin na modes of disbursement, iyong high-tech na, iyong SSS UMID card enrolled as ATM, puwede nating i-course through doon; ang bank account ng empleyado, puwede rin nating i-course through doon; mayroon ding quick card ang isang bangko in partnership with SSS; mayroon ding PayMaya or e-wallet; at puwede rin iyong cash pick-up arrangement through remittance transfer companies. So ito na iyong gagamitin nating paraan ng pagbayad.

So iyon ang kaibahan nitong program na ito doon sa DSWD na social amelioration na namamahagi ng cash. So iyon po ang ating programa which the President approved also last night para sa middle income wage earners natin, at sagot iyan ni Pangulo para sa mga middle income wage earners.

“Can you please explain the President’s order to OCD to procure testing kits? Would that cover PCR kits or rapid testing kits or both?”

Both po, both.

“What is the timeframe?”

ASAP. ASAP po iyan. So kung naaalala po ninyo, ang una po nating ginagamit, hindi ba, was iyong PCR. Ito iyong lab-based kaya dinadamihan natin iyong mga laboratories na maaari nang magtanggap at mag-test. So dinadamihan na iyan, nasa fifteen na iyan pero mayroon pang twenty plus, thirty plus, forty plus na waiting to complete the assessment para sila ay mabigyan na rin ng pahintulot na maka-testing. Those are lab-based PCR testing.

Okay, that was the first. Iyong second, may mga nagsasabi na gamitin natin iyong rapid test. Okay ... so gumawa ngayon ng mga bagong protocols ang Department of Health together with their experts, epidemiologists, iyong technical advisory group nila, gumawa ng protocol. Ang protocol po is iyong rapid test kits, iyong rapid test kits na serum-based. Iyong dugo ang ginagamit para ma-test kung kayo’y positive or negative, ginawan natin ng protocol, hindi ba?

At kung naaalala ninyo, kasama doon sa protocols na iyan is, number one, dapat it has to be administered by a physician, or doktor ang puwede lang maaaring gumawa niyan. Hindi ninyo puwedeng tusukin ang sarili ninyo at gamitin iyon para sa rapid test kits – number one.

And number two, kailangan may confirmatory test doon sa PCR lab. So iyon ang swabbing, iyong sa ilong pati sa throat, iyon ang swabbing na ilalagay pa sa laboratory para to test para ma-confirm.

So ang desisyon kagabi ni Pangulo is, number one, we will use both in conjunction, okay? So parang dual testing na tayo. So gagawa na tayo ng protocol—may protocol na po tayo kung sinong puwedeng gumawa ng rapid test pero kailangan ang basic diyan. Ang gold standard pa rin natin is iyong lab-based test.

So now, basically, the President is saying, ‘Okay, let’s use both in conjunction and I am ordering the government through the OCD or the DBM to already now start purchasing those rapid test kits.’ Kasi noon, before that decision, tumatanggap lang tayo ng donated rapid test kits but now the President has given the go signal to already start purchasing rapid test kits at hindi na tayo magre-rely from donors ng rapid test kits. And we will use those rapid test kits in accordance with the protocols set out by our technical experts at ng Department of Health.

“On the IATF’s reconsideration of the POEA—this is from, sorry, this is from Julie Aurelio/Inquirer: On the IATF’s reconsideration of the POEA deployment ban on healthcare professionals, what factors were considered in recommending that healthcare workers be allowed to leave the country for overseas employment?”

Iyong may mga kontrata na. So there were health workers who are in the Philippines but they were already contracted or signed a contract to work abroad, so that contract was already perfected. So we allow those na may kontrata as of March 8, 2020. So because of the contract ... iyon, pinayagan nating umalis. Pero iyong wala pang kontrata or perfected contract, wala pang tickets, wala pang kontrata, they are covered by the temporary deployment ban.

“Has the President proved it or what were his thoughts on the matter?”

Nabanggit naman niya kagabi, hindi ba, na in ordinary times, may kontrata, you can travel; may right to travel ka. But these are extraordinary times so ... ayun. But you know—anyway, we found a win-win solution and that was what the IATF recommended.

“Does the IATF now consider the deployment ban ill-advised even if the POEA’s initial intention was to prioritize human resource allocation for the Philippine healthcare system amid the COVID-19 outbreak?”

Well, you know who the IATF members are, and all of us participated in the discussions. All of us were able to air our concerns. All of us were able to discuss it thoroughly, and at the end of the day, we all arrived at a consensus. So that was the consensus.

“Has the IATF decided whether or not to allow limited construction work of certain flagship projects of the Duterte Administration? What are the flagship projects that may be allowed to continue construction work? Is this the beginning of the slow gradual transition to the new normal even before the April 30 Enhanced Community Quarantine ends?”

That was not—it was not discussed in the agenda. Maybe in the next one.

From Ace Romero/Philstar: “Can we ask, CabSec, whether the President rejected the lifting of the deployment ban?”

No, the IATF recommendation was the solution. Iyong may kontrata as of March 8, 2020 will be allowed, and everybody else will be covered by temporary deployment ban.

From Virgil Lopez/GMA News Online: “May we know what will be the focus of President Duterte’s message for the two ASEAN Virtual Summit’s on COVID-19 Pandemic scheduled today? What prompted?”

Well, iyong—kaya ako naka-ganito kasi from here, I have to go and attend that Virtual Summit ng ASEAN. It’s about mga ASEAN leaders, different countries in the ASEAN will be talking about the COVID-19 pandemic that’s happening in all of our countries, all around ASEAN. So that’s scheduled today ,and balitaan ko na lang kayo or somebody from ano will talk about it after the Summit.

“What prompted government to exclude health workers with existing contracts abroad from the deployment ban?”

No, we just had a thorough discussion. Siyempre pinag-usapan iyong laws, iyong contracts, iyong needs ng bansa natin because we need the healthcare workers here. Kailangan natin, we are in a state of public health emergency, we need as much manpower as we can on one hand; on the other hand, there are already healthcare workers that have already existing contracts as of March 8. Nakapirma na iyan, they’re waiting to fly, their employers abroad are already expecting them. So we had to balance both and then we found a middle ground po dito.

Gen Kabiling/Manila Bulletin: “Is the proposed 50 billion wage subsidy assistance for MSMEs and their workers final?”

Yes, the President approved it last night.

“Where will the government get the funds?”

I think that’s why Secretary Dominguez was the one who presented because he is the one who will look for the funds for this.

“How soon can this be implemented?”

Like I said, first tranche is on May 1 to 15; second tranche is May 16 to 30.

“Please elaborate on treasury bureau’s arrangement with SSS on the proposed 45 billion wage subsidy assistance to employees of eligible businesses. How many will benefit from the program, when will this be implemented?”

If you're talking about this program, the Small Business Wage Subsidy, ang estimate is 3.4 million workers—no, sorry. Actually I don't have the data with me. Ang alam ko lang is about ... ang estimate was 3.4 million ang affected na workers. But iyong who will be eligible, I guess that's the reason why, number one, in-approve ni Pangulo ito; and number two, the DOF together with the different other agencies and departments, after the approval last night, they'll buckle down to work to identify kung sino iyong magiging potential.

So when we get the clearer number, we'll let you know kasi siyempre may ... itsi-check pa nila sino iyong mga CAMP beneficiaries 'di ba at sino iyong ... they'll look at the records ng SSS and BIR. That's easy kasi very clear naman iyan. But the next question is, what about those that are not currently registered sa SSS and BIR but otherwise nevertheless qualified? So that's why I can't give an exact figure yet 'no. Siguro as we go along, I'll be able to give you the figure.

From Joseph Morong/GMA7: “Are the testing in some cities in conjunction with the massive testing by the NTF? Isa lang ba iyon, sir, or magkaiba?”

Well, testing is being done naman all over the country, doon sa mga laboratories that are currently in operation right now. And even if, let's say Davao City – SPMC, iyan ang may testing capacity. But it covers not just Davao City but also the neighboring provinces. Kung mag-swab doon sa area, pinapadala sa SPMC. So, it's happening all over the country.

But perhaps if you're talking about—on the other hand, if you're talking about iyong sinabi ni Secretary Galvez, that's more in the realm of, iyong mga ipapasok na mga ... iyong mga PUIs na ita-transfer na natin at i-isolate na natin sa isolation and quarantine facilities. Gusto ni Secretary Galvez na magkaroon din ng testing doon. So iyon iyong sinasabi nga niya, iyong “mass testing” na sinasabi niya na mga PUIs.

But that's happening—that will happen and that's happening there sa isolation quarantine facilities. But at the same time, the other sub-national laboratories that have already started testing will continue its testing.

“Is it right to say that after the massive testing on April 14 we will see the real numbers, hence, the real situation?”

We'll have a more accurate determination of the number of COVID-19. Kasi I guess your question is—well, siyempre ideally, the more testing you have, the more you will know sino iyong PUIs na positive or negative. Be mindful of the fact na based on our numbers, sa lahat ng mga nagpapa-test sa ating mga laboratories, ang lumalabas na positive is about 17 to 18 percent. So meaning to say, the rest are negative. Iyong 17 to 18 percent ng lahat ng mga tini-test doon sa ating sub-national laboratories, RITM and all those labs, 17 to 18 percent lang po iyong positive, okay. The rest, negative po.

So you try to estimate that, so the more PUIs that you will test, then the greater, bigger na iyong number ng PUIs mo, so what is 17 to 18 percent of those PUIs? Iyong trend ganoon eh, 17 to 18 percent, so iyon din ang makikita mo. So necessarily, dadagdag iyon sa iyong number ng COVID-19 positive. But the important thing is to find out kung COVID-19 ba sila para

maagapan at agarang mabigyan mo agad nang sapat at tamang medical attention para hindi lumala ang sakit niya at hindi siya pupunta sa level na severe or critical na siya, parang too late ang medical intervention mo.

Iyon po iyong gusto nating mangyari, kaya gusto natin test, test, test, test, test ... sure, para makita mo talaga—tama iyan, para makita mo talaga, ilan ba talaga ang numero natin ng COVID-19. But also more importantly, para maka-medical and health intervention ka, maagapan mo na agad, mabigyan mo nang tamang medical attention, ma-isolate mo na agad sa community para hindi magkahawahan doon sa kaniyang community and maka-recover agad siya. So iyon po iyong targets natin.

From Sofia Tomacruz/Rappler: “Can we get details of the IATF’s resolution to allow healthworkers with the existing contracts to leave the country?”

Yes. As I mentioned, those who have existing contracts as of March 8, 2020, we will allow them to leave. But otherwise, kung wala kayong existing contract as of March 8, 2020, then you cannot leave.

“What are the reasons?”

I already explained, it was a balancing act. We all pitched-in and aired out our reasons and that was the consensus.

From Rosalie Coz/UNTV: “Ano po ang detalye sa plano ng economic managers na maglunsad ng wage subsidy program para sa MSMEs, formal sector at middle class workers?”

Nasagot ko na po ito.

“Magkano po ang pondong ilalaan?”

Nasagot ko na rin po.

“Ano pong solusyon ng IATF sa ulat ng congestion sa mga morgue ng ilang ospital dahil sa pagpalya ng mga funeral homes na kolektahin ang mga labi ng nasawi simula ng COVID-19 pandemic?”

We’ve already issued ‘no, and it’s DILG who is on top of all of these. At sinabi na nga rin ni Pangulo na government will come in already. Hindi puwede itong—we have to honor iyong 12-hour rule natin for cremation. Huwag na nating isipin iyong lahat ng mga papeles or kung anu-ano pa at huwag na natin tingnan kung sino magbabayad nito. You know, this is already something that we are imposing already. And don’t worry, government will come in and step in dito.

Iyon na nga, nagkakaroon po ng delay dahil nire-require po umano ng funeral home na magkaroon ng certification kung COVID-19 positive ang cadaver o hindi. Taliwas po ito sa polisiya ng IATF na dapat po within 12-hour period, i-cremate na po.

“Ano po ang dapat na gawin ng mga lokal na pamahalaan kaugnay nito?”

Sumbong agad kayo. LGU, sumbong agad kayo sa DILG dahil may mga utos na po si Pangulo sa DILG. At para sa mga nasa negosyo nitong funeral, sundin na lang po ninyo iyong sinasabi ng DILG pati ng LGU. So kung may mga ganito pong mga pangyayari na aberya o nadi-delay o marami pang nire-require, etc., etc., paki—Number one: LGUs, please monitor the funeral homes that are in your locality. Please coordinate with them. Ask them to cooperate with the national government instructions at instructions ni Pangulo. Use your, you know, use your convincing powers. I mean, makipag-ugnayan kayo sa mga ... these funeral homes and explain to them na huwag na nating patagalin ito, we have to do this, we have to do that. Kaya naman ng LGU. We are confident that the LGUs will be able to handle the situation.

Ngayon, LGU, kung medyo matigas talaga, ayaw talaga then report to the DILG. The DILG knows what to do.

From Ace Romero/PhilStar: “Is the IATF done with the guidelines on data sharing? What will be done to ensure the privacy of patients?”

Like I said, the Department of Health is—so ang napag-usapan namin kagabi sa IATF, the Department of Health together with certain other agencies will be finalizing the guidelines for this and then we’ll report it – the guidelines, the proposed guidelines to the IATF; and then after that, we will make the announcements.

Number two: “Since the IATF already recommended the lifting on the ban on deployment of health workers, what measures will be done to ensure the country has enough health frontliners as it combats COVID-19?”

So now na alam natin na iyong mga may kontrata, we will allow them to leave the country; alam natin kung sino iyong mga maiiwan. And then like we said, ang IATF resolution dito is subject to the evaluation of the DBM. The DOH or the Department of Health is directed to facilitate the emergency hiring of additional health care workers to assist in the local healthcare system. So we know, we have an idea already of how many healthcare workers we need because currently, we are refurbishing and preparing already our isolation and quarantine facilities. We can safely project already how many COVID-19 patients we expect. So how many quarantine facilities we would need, how many beds iyan and that translate to how many health workers. So with those estimates, DOH and DBM will now workout magkano ba iyong para sa emergency hiring.

Additional questions from Joseph Morong/GMA: “Has the IATF or adviser from economic managers come up with financial help for the middle class?”

Nabanggit ko na po, iyong sa Small Business Wage Subsidy.

“The President says if anti-body medicine is available by May, then he will lift. But if medicine/cure is not available by May, what happens?”

Tuluy-tuloy pa po iyong discussions namin sa IATF tungkol doon sa transition to a community quarantine wherein we will identify what industries, how many percentage of workers or the work force; iyong transport sector, ano ang gagawin natin; and all of these other factors that we will allow to slowly operate, then we will set very strict and stringent guidelines on what the new normal is. Iyon sinabi naman ni Pangulo ‘di ba, na nandiyan pa rin iyong mask, nandiyan pa rin iyong social distancing, iyong physical distancing, iyong personal hygiene, washing, all of these will be part of the new normal. So, that is still in the process of being finalized.

“Is it true what the President said that there is anti-body medicine being developed? “

Perhaps that’s something that was relayed to the President. But even sa amin, he didn’t discuss in detail, ano iyong natanggap niya na information.

“The 3.4 million registered in SSS, what kind of aid are we thinking of?”

Nabanggit ko na po, so this is the Small Business Wage Subsidy Program.

So sa ating mga kababayan, muli, maraming salamat po sa inyong pakikipagtulungan sa inyong pamahalaan. Like we said, kayo po, ang pamilya po ninyo ang first line of defense. Kung mananatili po tayo sa ating mga tahanan, if we stay at home, then we are safe. Kaya bahay muna, buhay muna.

Ganunpaman, iyong mga tulong na gusto nating ipaabot po sa inyo, lalung-lalo na iyong mga nahihirapan, I’m happy to report na iyong sa DSWD nag-a-accelerate na po; marami ng mga LGUs ang nakatanggap. At asahan din po natin na ngayong linggong ito, the next few days, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, mas marami pa po ang LGUs na makakatanggap dahil naka-comply na po sila sa kanilang pagpirma ng MOA at iyong kanilang pagbibigay ng budget proposal. Kaya mada-download na po o mabibigyan na po ng tseke sila, ang mg LGUS, para mapamahagi na po sa mga nangangailangan. Narinig naman po ninyo iyong sinabi ni Presidente Duterte na hanapin iyong mga na-exclude at hanapan natin ng paraan na sila rin po ay mapagbigyan basta sila po ay qualified.

At sinabi pa nga po, na promise ni Pangulong Duterte na he will also take care of doon sa middle income workers po natin na nangangailangan din po ng tulong, ito din po iyong sagot.

So, mga kababayan, nakikinig po ang inyong pamahalaan, ang inyong gobyerno. Nakikinig kami, nakikinig si Pangulong Duterte sa inyo. Kung mayroon man kayong mga suggestions and recommendations, tine-take into consideration po ang lahat ng iyan basta ito ay makakatulong sa ating mga kababayan.

At sinabi na nga po ni Pangulong Duterte na ayaw niya na may Pilipinong mamamatay sa gutom dito dahil naiintindihan po niya na ... siyempre kailangang tayong dumaan dito sa sakripisyong ito para lamang mailigtas natin ang buhay ng bawat isang Pilipino. Iyon po ang bottom line dito.

Pero siyempre, kasama sa pagligtas natin ng buhay ng bawat isa, alagaan natin ang bawat isa at hindi hahayaan ng gobyerno na may mamamatay sa gutom dito sa ating bansang Pilipinas.

Ngayon, ginagawan na din natin ng paraan at hakbang para doon sa after April 30. Gusto nating mangyari na may mga ibang mga sektor na makakabalik sa pagtatrabaho, may mga ibang industriya na makakapagsimula muli. Pero siyempre habang wala pa iyong bakuna, kailangan piliin talaga natin. Gagagawa rin tayo ng mga guidelines para hindi tayo magkaroon ng resurgence.

So, sa inyo pong lahat at lalung-lalo na sa ating mga kasamahan na kasama natin sa pagpapalaganap ng tama at napapanahong impormasyon sa iba't ibang media outlet, sa TV, radyo, diyaryo at online na naka-hook up po sa amin ngayon, maraming, maraming salamat po.

Muli, mga kababayan, ngayon na nakita naman ninyo na lahat naman ng puwede naming hanapan ng solusyon, hahanapan namin. Itong problema natin, hindi lang po dito sa bansang Pilipinas kaya nga po ngayong araw na ito, magkakaroon kami ng ASEAN summit, together with the leaders of the different nations under the ASEAN para pag-usapan itong common problem natin sa ASEAN – not just the ASEAN, but the entire world. Ito ay problema hindi lamang sa Pilipinas, problema din ito sa Malaysia, sa Indonesia, sa Singapore, sa Brunei, sa lahat, maging sa Europa, Africa, Amerika, lahat po tayo. Kung sa tingin po ninyo ay may mga sakripisyo po tayong ginagawa, ganyan din po ang ginagawa ng ibang bansa. Lahat po tayo ay magkasama dito. Kaya dapat nanatili tayong buo ang ating loob at kailangan po talaga nating magtulungan.

Maraming salamat po at magandang umaga po muli. God bless and protect each and every one of you and your families. Maayong buntag. Amping kanunay. Daghang salamat.

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