

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE  
NEWS AND INFORMATION BUREAU**

**CABINET REPORT SA TELERADYO – COVID-19 SPECIAL  
HOSTED BY PCOO SECRETARY MARTIN ANDANAR  
WITH  
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY GENERAL MANAGER MARCELINO  
ESCALADA, JR.  
JUNE 19, 2020**

**SEC. ANDANAR:** Mga kababayan patuloy ang laban natin sa COVID-19 at sa harap ng kasalukuyang pandemic, maraming Pilipino ang nasa Metro Manila ang nagpahayag ng interes na bumalik sa kanilang mga probinsya at magsimula ng panibagong buhay.

Ayon kasi sa tala ng Philippine Statistics Authority, sa isinagawa nilang National Migration Survey noong 2018, 1.7 million ang nag-migrate sa National Capital Region hanggang 2.9 million sa CALABARZON na mula sa iba't ibang rehiyon sa bansa sa nakalipas na limang taon.

Target din na mabawasan ang mahigit sa 12.8 million na populasyon sa Metro Manila, ayon sa pinakahuling record ng Census 2015 na inilabas ng Commission on Population and Development.

Sa demographic profile rin ng Komisyon, napabilang ang NCR sa third most populous urban area in the world kung saan pinakamarami ang bilang sa mga lungsod ng Quezon, Manila, Taguig at iba pa. Nakikitang problema rin ang kakulangan sa mga rural areas na mga sumusunod na aspeto gaya ng empowerment of local industries, food security, agricultural productivity, social welfare, health and employment at mga development of infrastructures.

Kaya ito ang nagtulak kay Senador Bong Go na muling buhayin ang Balik Probinsya program ng pamahalaan na sinimulan noong 1998. [VTR of SEN. GO]

May 4, agad na inaprubahan sa plenaryo ng Senado ang resolusyon ni Senador Bong Go at makalipas ang dalawang araw ay pinirmahan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte ang Executive Order No. 114 na opisyal na nagtatatag sa Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program, pangungunahan ni Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea ang Council katuwang ang iba't ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan. [VRT OF PRRD]

Layon ng program na magkaroon nang pantay-pantay na economic development, oportunidad at trabaho sa iba't ibang rehiyon sa bansa kaya isinama ito sa proposed 711 billion fiscal stimulus package ng economic cluster. Mabilis din na inilunsad ang website nito para sa mga nais mag-apply. Accessible ang online application at maari ring magtungo sa mga BP2 centers sa mga barangay ang mga interesado.

Naganap ang unang rollout ng programa noong Mayo a-beinte kung saan isandaan at labing-isang beneficiaries ang nabigyan ng pagkakataon na makabalik sa kanilang mga probinsya. Ang

mga umuwi nating kababayan ay inalalayan ng administrasyon sa pamamagitan ng iba't ibang programa at tiniyak na sumailalim sa COVID-19 rapid test at checkup.

Naghandog ng paunang P5,000 para sa transport allowance ang Department of Social Welfare and Development at masusundan pa ito ng grant na maaring umabot sa P15,000 para makapagsimula agad ng negosyo ang bawat head of the family.

Ang Department of Trade and Industry naman ay nag-alok din sa mga kuwalipikadong benepisyaryo. Magbibigay sila ng starter kit sa mga nais magnegosyo ng sari-sari store o kaya naman ay sewing machine at iba pa para may pagkakakitaan agad ang kanilang pamilya pagdating sa kanilang lugar.

Ang Department of Labor and Employment naman ang siyang nakatutok sa mga trabaho at oportunidad ng mga aplikante.

Pero nitong June 11 ay pansamantala munang sinuspinde ang programa ayon sa National Housing Authority dahil ito sa limitadong public transportation sa pag-iral ng community quarantine sa iba't ibang lugar sa bansa. Batay sa direktiba ni Pangulong Duterte, prayoridad na makauwi ang mga Overseas Filipino Workers, construction workers, mga turista at mga estudyante na stranded dahil sa lockdown.

Posible naman ibalik sa susunod na buwan ang BP2 program sa oras na manumbalik na ang transportasyon sa bansa. Maganda ang adhikain ng programang ito para maiangat ang buhay ng bawat Pilipino, at ayon kay National Housing Authority General Manager Marcelino Escalada, Jr., inaasahang isang milyong residente na naninirahan sa Metro Manila ang mag-a-avail ng programa sa loob lamang ng anim na buwan.

Habang may buhay, may pag-asa – iyan ang kasabihan na dapat isinasapuso ng bawat Pilipino habang hinaharap natin ang mga hamon sa buhay. Marami ang nawalan ng trabaho lalo ang mga OFW na sunud-sunod na ang pagdating sa Pilipinas. Mayroon ding nawalan ng hanapbuhay dito sa Metro Manila, kaya ang solusyon ng pamahalaan ay ang Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program.

Magandang programa ito kaya nais nating ibahagi sa ating mga kababayan ang benepisyado nito at kung paano pa ito makakatulong sa marami. At para kuwentuhan tayo ng detalye ng Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa o BP2 Program, makakausap natin via Zoom si Marcelino Escalada, Jr., Executive Director ng BP2 at General Manager ng National Housing Authority.

Nagtapos siya ng Masters in Public Administration Major in Organizational Studies sa University of South Eastern Philippines kung saan PhD candidate din siya ng Development Management sa parehong pamantasan. Bukod dito ay kumuha rin siya ng Doctoral Degree in Human Resource Management sa Ateneo De Davao University.

Bago naging pinuno ng National Housing Authority ay naupo siya bilang City Administrator ng Davao City kung saan sa kaniyang mga hinawakang posisyon, doon ay nahirang ang lungsod na Best in Human Resources Practices. Bago dito, nagsilbi din siyang Department Head ng City

Planning and Development Office sa City Cooperative and Development Office ng Lungsod ng Davao.

Sa kasalukuyan, siya rin ang Secretary General ng Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council. Let's welcome GM Marcelino Escalada Jr. to the Cabinet Report sa Teleradyo. Magandang gabi po sa inyo, sir.

GM Escalada, para sa kaalaman ng ating mga kababayan, pakipaliwanag nga po ang pinakapapel ng NHA, ng HUDCC sa BP2 at sa pagbangon natin mula sa pandemyang dulot ng COVID-19.

**GM ESCALADA:** Salamat Secretary Martin sa tanong na iyan 'no. Ang key shelter agencies, these are all the agencies that are involved in 3 major [garbled] intervention. Number one is production, number two is financing and number three is securitization or secondary mortgage na sinasabi natin.

So of the five of us in the key shelter agencies, nandoon iyon ang pinaka... ating umbrella which is the Department of Human Settlement and Urban Development, and under the umbrella of the Department of Human Settlement and Urban Development, we have the National Housing Authority which is the sole production arm of government in terms of housing.

In terms of financing, nandiyan si PAGIBIG Fund as well as Social Housing Finance Corporation.

In terms of securitization, of course nandoon iyong—in the past, we have the Home Guaranty Corporation. Right now, it already goes to the Department of Finance. But we also have another financing arm which is the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation. So these are all the key shelter agencies involved in production, iyong NHA, securitization as well as financing.

So kami iyong pinaka-ultimate na government arm that will provide shelter for our homeless Filipinos. But there are two ways in which we provide, Secretary Martin, our housing intervention. Si NHA will be responsible for the informal sector families, meaning iyong hindi miyembro ng PAGIBIG Fund at saka iyong mga vulnerable sectors of the society and members of the calamity. So we produce housing for them.

**GM ESCALADA:** However, itong mga private developers natin that are engaged in production as well will create financing from PAGIBIG Fund and these are all production intended for private sector or the beneficiaries who are members of PAGIBIG Fund. So ito iyong major divide between the ISF, the Informal Sector Families and the formal sector requirements.

**SEC. ANDANAR:** Ano po ang pinagkaiba ng Balik Probinsya Program ngayon at noong panahon ni, halimbawa, Presidente Erap Estrada at iyong mga ibang mga administrasyon pa na sinubukan itong pag-decongest ng Metro Manila at pauwi ng probinsya?

**GM ESCALADA:** Thank you, Secretary Martin. We must admit the fact that sabi ko nga doon sa ating mga literature as well as mga interviews, the Duterte administration pursuant to EO 114, we did not invent; we fully recognize the efforts of the previous administration in terms of Balik

Probinsya. However, under the Duterte administration, we put premium to Bagong Pag-asa that is why we call it 'Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa'.

Now what were the reasons, sabi ko nga I cannot also label it as failure because it would be very unfair to them Secretary Martin to label it as failure. Because for the longest time since the 1980's, 1990's and early 2000's, in the previous administration, marami nang attempts to get into the Balik Probinsya Program. However, isa iyong mga requirements o isa iyong mga nakita ko na dahilan and major reason for its seeming relatively failure or relative success is that, unang-una there was only a top down program of Balik Probinsya.

In short, it was just a program by the national government agency so it was solely and exclusively handled by the Office of the President together with the DSWD in the past. But right now sabi natin, even the 17 departments under the BP2 are not enough and therefore we expanded the membership of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Council to close to 37 members already and increasing because we would want to engage our private partners in the development of the program, in the realization of [garbled].

Now we need to involve our own association of urban farmers, association [garbled] wider base in terms of participation Secretary Martin. However in the past, isa lang talaga, it was just the Office of the President and the DSWD, that's the first. Second, is it only started and ended up at the national level, there was no project monitoring and evaluation at the regional level.

Right now, we have already adopted and we have approved that it will be the Regional Development Council that shall handle the project monitoring and project management of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa. Why? Why RDC? Kasi ang RDC is the most professional and most [garbled] at the regional level that can sustain permanently the implementation of [garbled] Council, Secretary Martin, kung paano ba natin—ilagay ba natin ito sa Governor or sa Mayor and we said that the term of the Mayor and the Governor is just 3 years, 6 years or 9 years to be exact in the three terms in succession. But we feel that the Balik Probinsya even goes beyond administration after administration.

And the last reason Secretary Martin that I saw why it also relatively failed in the past, because it was disbursed through cash. So lahat ng mga cash na binigay right after our beneficiaries will be able to receive it, natanggap nila so nag-party na ulit, then pagkatapos may birthday, may mga celebration and so they spent the money other than the purpose within which it was supposed to be spent.

But right now, it is more of non-cash and we shall give our allocation or benefit in tranches, in months. So meaning to say every month we will have an assistance for them so that in the next 6 to 12 months or 1 year to be exact, we are able to help them bounce back and overcome the kind of life in the province.

**SEC. ANDANAR:** Kamakailan ay pansamantalang sinuspinde ang implementasyon ng Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program para bigyang-daan ang pagpapauwi sa mga Locally Stranded Individual na gaya ng mga turista, mga manggagawa at mga estudyante. So habang binibigyan natin ng daan ang pagpapauwi ng mga LSI, ano po ang ginagawa ng inyong

pamunuan bilang Executive Director ng Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program; mayroon ka bang recalibration na ginagawa at kung mayroon man, ano ito?

**GM ESCALADA:** Thank you, Secretary Martin. For the information of everyone, we have not technically suspended the program, so baka magtaka iyong iba... so where is the Balik Probinsya right now or Bagong Pag-asa Program? Natigil na ba ito? The answer is, no. We only suspended the dispatch system. So since—tama iyong sinabi ni Secretary Martin that just to give way to the fore pressing concern of the LSIs, iyong mga stranded individuals natin, mga turista natin, estudyante as well as our mga OFWs na kababayan who are coming home to the country right now and the number is increasing so hindi natin sabayan.

On second ground, that we are just using our own assets of government. Therefore, so whoever—who would need more help right now, iyong mga LSI natin, iyong mg OFWs natin... so we give way. We suspended the dispatch system of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa, however tuluy-tuloy Secretary Martin ang ating enrollment, tuluy-tuloy ang ating assessment, tuluy-tuloy ang ating evaluation of the enrollees right now.

As we speak Secretary Martin right now, I think in our—we're based right now in the dashboard, it is almost 90,000 already. So this number is increasing every hour, every day as we speak. So ngayon I have already scheduled 15, 15 buses for rollout after the suspension of the dispatch in the next 30 days because I feel Secretary Martin that after 30 days from now, baka mag-subside na 'to lahat. Sabi ko nga, when the clouds are down and the skies are open and the borders are open, so there will be no more stranded individuals. And therefore, we shall continue the dispatch system of our own Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa.

**SEC. ANDANAR:** Para po sa kabatiran ng ating mga kababayan na gusto pong mag-Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program, ano po iyong mga available na mga probinsya ang pinoproseso po ng inyong tanggapan?

**GM ESCALADA:** Right now Secretary Martin, there are 50 provinces actually that have enrolled to the program and we said that we will prioritize the top 10 kasi iyong top 10 na 'to, these are all the preferred provinces that have been identified by our beneficiaries right now. So I'm speaking of Leyte, Samar, Northern Samar, Camarines Sur, Zamboanga Del Norte, Zamboanga Del Sur, Pangasinan, Bohol. So these are some of the top 10 Secretary Martin that have been identified to get the highest number relatively.

In fact Secretary Martin, Leyte tops in the list. In short, there are 10,500 already na gusto nang bumalik sa Leyte. So as we speak right now Secretary Martin, I have prioritized based on the readiness criteria of our own Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa.

So we have prioritized, number one, Leyte; number two, Camarines Sur; number three, Zamboanga Del Norte; and number four, Lanao Del Norte. Ito iyong apat na probinsya Secretary Martin that we feel and we see that the government, the local governments of Leyte, Camsur, Zamboanga Del Norte, Lanao Del Norte are ready to accept our own balikbayan or our Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa beneficiaries.

Kasi we said that when we picked these provinces, it was not by chance – it was by choice. Because they passed the readiness criteria that we set before them, and they have fully complied to the criteria set by the BP2 Council.

**SEC. ANDANAR:** Kahit sino po ba ay puwedeng magbalik-probinsya? Number two, kung ako po ay taga-Surigao pero ayaw kong magbalik-probinsya sa Surigao, gusto ko sa Camarines, puwede po ba iyon?

**GM ESCALADA:** Unang-una Secretary Martin iyong tanong mo kanina, kahit saan ba. Right now as we speak, we prioritize first the NCR kasi the objective of Balik Probinsya is to decongest Metro Manila. So in short, there are those applicants coming from Bulacan, from Bacoor, Cavite, Pangasinan and Clark, we said that they can still apply to Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa but they will be our second, third or fourth priority. Our first priority really are those from NCR na talagang gusto nang bumalik sa probinsya for the good, that's the first.

Second, iyong sinabi mo na saan ako puwede pupunta. The first definition Secretary Mart [garbled] kung saan [garbled] definition [garbled] right now. So in the case of person coming from Surigao, he can also go to Bataan because Bataan has 1,000 right now job opportunities waiting. And in like manner, in Palayan, Nueva Ecija, there are 500 BPO jobs waiting for them.

So your question is exactly correct, so saan ba ako pupunta? Una, is I can go back to the province of my origin. However, I can also go back or go to the province where there are opportunities right now and we only need to match the skills. Makikita natin Secretary Martin [garbled] are college graduates and college level, and therefore this is highly employable age. And so we only need to match this information where... kung saan na probinsya na may mga openings for them and we have the data for that.

**SEC. ANDANAR:** GM Jun, this is obviously a cornerstone project of the President na talagang nabigyan po ng atensiyon ngayong panahon ng pandemya. So he is very serious about this. Gaano po kalaking pondo ang inilaan po sa programang ito?

**GM ESCALADA:** The Executive Order 114 Secretary Martin is very clear, for 2020 that is our immediate response, is anything that is an available funding intended for Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa especially so that you already have—mayroon tayong existing programs to meet the objectives of Balik Probinsya, gamitin ninyo iyan, that is under EO 114. 'Pag maubos pa iyan, the EO 114 has also been reinforced by the opinion of our DBM Secretary Wendel Avisado that we can also realign.

So in short Secretary Martin, for 2020 we have enough funds from DSWD, from DTI, DOLE, NHA, Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform. We have funds for 2020. However for 2021, I think the budget call will be out already and therefore we shall now start proposing for new, new proposals, new programs, new suggestions that will impact to the achievement and to the realization of Balik Probinsya in 2021 until 2022. So there is a sizeable and reasonable amount, Secretary Martin, with respect to funding.

**SEC. ANDANAR:** GM Jun, panghuling tanong na lang po. Ano po ang inyong maipapayo sa ating mga kababayan na talagang nais nang magbalik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program pero medyo kinakabahan, eh nagdadalawang-isip? Mayroon po ba kayong sistema na puwedeng i-break in muna o bigyan muna nang konting seminar para hindi po matakot o kabahan iyong gustong magbalik-probinsya?

**GM ESCALADA:** Tama Secretary Martin. Actually the process is very clear, now the website is open, so that's balikprobinsya.ph; kung mayroon kayong smartphone, mayroon kayong net, so you can enroll. And on the other hand 'pag wala namang net, walang smartphones, we can enroll you manually via our own barangay offices. There are [garbled] in our barangays right now because I have coordinated this with the DILG.

So if and when—'pag may reservation ka pa, may takot pa sa sarili mo... actually when you enroll, that the basic premise dito Secretary Martin is that it has to be willing, voluntary and with consent. So walang pilitan ang Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa, we operate on that premise na dapat this is voluntary, willing and with consent. However, if the programs are not clear to you, si DSWD, Secretary Martin, after enrollment in the next 10 days, you will receive a call and that call will be the... tinatawag nating social preparation.

Our DSWD workers will socially prepare our beneficiaries and help them finally decide. Kasi once they are able to decide Secretary Martin that is where we start processing their application to us. So hindi naman siya automatic kaagad, baka may mga reservations sila na bakit mag-enroll ako, tatanggapin na ba ako o hindi pa. So that is just an enrollment to the program, but after the enrollment to the program, within 10 days, the DSWD will call you for an assessment. And after that, you will also be asked kailan ka ready to go or to proceed to the province.

Sabi natin, may category na 'ASAP,' iyong gusto mong aalis within the next 10 days. Mayroon namang category na 'SOON' na gusto kang umalis within the next 20 days and mayroon ding category na 'LATER' na gusto mong umalis for the next 30 days. Kasi ang nakita ko Secretary Martin ganito eh, why I categorized the ASAP, SOON and LATER. Kasi may mga attachment sila sa mga properties nila in Metro Manila. For example motor, so paano, hindi niya madala ang motor sa probinsya, sa Leyte. So naghanap pa siya na puwedeng ibenta or may bibili ng motor niya. Iyong ref niya, so alangan naman dala ho niya iyang ref sa probinsya.

So these are all belongings and attachments to their decision, so we allow them to decide when. Sila ang mag-decide – ASAP, within the next 10 days; SOON within the next 20 days; and LATER, within the next 30 days. And then finally, we schedule the dispatch and we already send them to the provinces of their choice.

**SEC. ANDANAR:** Maraming salamat po sa inyong panahon GM at Executive Director ng ating Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program Marcelino 'Jun' Escalada, Jr. Mabuhay po kayo.

**GM ESCALADA:** Thank you, Secretary Martin. Good evening.

**SEC. ANDANAR:** Sa gitna ng krisis na hinaharap ng buong mundo, bawat tulong na ibinabahagi natin sa kapwa ay nagbibigay pag-asa anong klaseng tulong man ito. Sa ganitong

panahon din natin kailangan ang ating pamilya, kaya malaking bagay ang makauwi ang ating mga kababayan sa kanilang mga lalawigan para makapiling ang pamilya. There is no place like home ika nga.

Tayong mga Pilipino kahit walang-wala, basta kasama ang pamilya ay kinakaya ang lahat ng hamon sa buhay.

Sama-sama po tayong labanan ang COVID-19 para sama-sama rin tayong babangon sa bagong pag-asa.

Ito po ang inyong lingkod Secretary Martin Andanar ng Presidential Communications Operations Office at ito po ang Cabinet Report sa Teleradyo, a COVID-19 Special.

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