

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

PRESS BRIEFING OF PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON HARRY ROQUE
September 21, 2020 (11:58 A.M. – 1:34 P.M.)

SEC. ROQUE: Maayong udto, Pilipinas. [DIALECT] sa City of Golden Friendship of the Philippines, Cagayan de Oro, sa probinsiya ng Misamis Oriental.

Punung-puno po tayo ngayong araw kaya iiksian lang po natin ang ating presentation para marami tayong matanong 'no. Kasama po natin ngayon ang Alkalde ng Cagayan de Oro City at Governor po ng Misamis Oriental, si Mayor Oscar Moreno and Governor Bambi Emano. Kasama rin po natin via Zoom si Iligan City Mayor Celso Regencia, si Housing Czar Secretary Eduardo del Rosario, at saka si Chief Protocol and Presidential Adviser on Foreign Affairs Robert Borje.

Narito po tayo sa Cagayan de Oro because the lone city and the lone province still under MECQ, Iligan City and Lanao del Sur are nearby from here in Cagayan de Oro City. At siyempre po, Marawi is also nearby kaya kasama po natin si Secretary del Rosario.

Well, umpisahan na po natin sa mabuting balita: Nakinig naman po ang Presidente sa hinaing ng mga nurses, so iyong mga mayroon na pong mga papeles at kumpletong documentation as of August 31, 2020, pinayagan na po ni Presidente na makaalis para sa kanilang trabaho abroad. Sang-ayon po kay DOLE Secretary, ito po'y makikinabang po ang 1,500 nurses and other health professionals.

Uulitin ko po, iyong mga health professionals na kumpleto po ang documentation as of August 31, 2020, pinayagan na po tayo ng Presidente na makaalis para sa inyong mga trabaho abroad.

COVID update naman po tayo. Unang-una po, ang total number po of COVID cases worldwide ay 30,881,522. Ang mga namatay na po globally is 958,493. Nangunguna pa rin po ang Estados Unidos – 6,794,499 cases, deaths of 190,469. Pumapangalawa po ang India – 5,400,619 cases; with deaths of 86,752. Ang Brazil po ang pangatlo – 4,528,240 cases, ang deaths po ay 136,532. Pang-apat po ang Russia – 1,098,958, with deaths of 19,349. At panlima po ang Peru – 762,865, with deaths of 31,389.

Sa Pilipinas po, mayroon na tayong 288,743 cases with deaths of 4,984; 1.7% pa rin po ang ating case fatality rate.

Mayroon na po tayong mga na-test na mga kababayan sa pamamagitan ng PCR na 3,164,830. Ito po ay ginawa sa 98 licensed RT-PCR laboratories at 30 licensed GeneXpert laboratories.

Mayroon na po tayong 51,894 active cases, at sa numerong ito, 8.7% po ang asymptomatic; 86.6% ang mild; 1.4% ang severe; at 3.3% po ang kritikal.

Dumadami po ang recoveries, 229,865; ang deaths po ay 4,984, nakikiramay po kaming muli.

Pagdating po sa critical care capacity, mayroon pa po tayong 50% available na ICU beds, 56% available na isolation beds, 53% available na ward beds at 74% available na ventilators. So nasa medium risk po ang ating critical care capacity nationwide.

Okay, dito po nagtatapos ang ating presentation. Unahin ko muna po ang Alkalde ng Cagayan de Oro City who has a press conference at 12 noon.

So, Mayor, tatlo lang po ang aking katanungan: Ano po ang status ng COVID dito sa Cagayan de Oro dahil dito po ang puntahan ng mga taga-neighboring provinces? Ano po iyong mga best practices ng Cagayan de Oro? At ano po ang kailangan ninyo sa national government? Mayor Oscar Moreno, the floor is yours.

CDO MAYOR OSCAR MORENO: Thank you very much, Secretary. Good morning and magandang umaga po sa lahat lalo na sa ating mga kababayan sa buong Pilipinas. Maayong buntag sa tanan.

Dito po sa Cagayan de Oro, the region, I think we're relatively okay, although ang ating local cases are on the rise. We have seen that as early as three, four weeks ago in the case of Iligan 'no. Ito iyong chart natin, Secretary.

Iyang green ho ang total cases sa region, ang pula are the local cases, ang blue are the ROF-LSI. Initially, ang ROF-LSI constituted 80% of all the positive cases, pero paakyat nang paakyat ang local cases. Umaakyat din po ang ROF-LSI but the rise of the increase sa local cases has been faster and in a shorter period 'no. Kaya ngayon, ang ating ROF-LSI already constitute 52% from 80% some two months ago, and ang local cases are already nearing 48%.

Now to me, ang local cases are a lot more disturbing than ROF-LSI provided ang ROF-LSI are attended to sa kwarantina. Tayo po sa city, mayroon na tayong city isolation units. Ito iyong rise ng local cases over the last three months. July 16, August 16 and September 20, [unclear] in the case of Iligan, ang local cases nila ngayon constitute at least 80% of all the local cases.

And in Cagayan de Oro, our local cases have already breached the 40% mark. And ganoon din po sa ibang LGUs, umaakyat. So ito po, sinasabi ko palagi, if we are not able to arrest this, soon enough, we will follow the trail of Iligan 'no – God forbids. Kaya importante po talaga ang minimum public health standards, importante rin po ang interventions ng mga LGUs just like iyong containment kung mayroong local cases, ang pangalawa, lalo na iyong ROF-LSI na makwarantina in a proper way.

Ito iyong sample ng ating CIU and temporary treatment. Ang ginagawa natin, Secretary, lahat ng arrivals, ROF-LSI, from the very beginning, sinasalubong natin sa airport or sa port facility. And from there, dinadala natin sa ating city isolation unit to stay there for five, six days, and then sina-swab para malaman kung positive or negative.

Sa awa ng Diyos, over 90%, I would say 93% of all ROF-LSI tested negative. Pero iyong less than seven percent, in the initial period, mas malaki kaysa local cases. Now, problema ngayon, kung ROF-LSI are allowed to roam around, hindi nakwarantina, sigurado most likely iyong seven percent ay maka-infect and iyan po ang nakakatakot dahil exponential ang infection sa virus.

So, I hope na ang ating kwarantina sa buong rehiyon will be attended to. And then, rest assured na dito sa Cagayan de Oro, we are even adding more CIU facilities; and kung positive na, doon sa temporary treatment monitoring facility – one of them, iyong facility ng Department of Tourism. And ako'y nagpapasalamat sa national government, kay Secretary Berna for making available that, together with the four or five other facilities 'no.

So laban lang po tayo, Secretary. Ako po'y nagpapasalamat sa national government, lalo na sa IATF and to all the members of the IATF for all the support and of course attention they have given to... not just Cagayan de Oro but to the region. Salamat po Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Mayor, because you have to leave, I just have a question po. Marami pong COVID-19 patients galing sa Iligan, sa Lanao del Sur, ang nagpapagamot dito sa Cagayan de Oro. Kumusta po ang critical care capacity ngayon ng Cagayan de Oro?

MAYOR MORENO: Lumalaban po. Although threatened dahil sa buong region it is actually Northern Mindanao Medical Center (NMMC) that is the apex hospital and at the same time the COVID referral hospital. Sinusuportahan po natin. So far, we have bought 4 RT-PCRs ang City or tulong and ang dalawa nasa DOH-Region X and the other two are with NMMC to be used starting October.

And tumulong din ho tayo sa procurement ng Polymedic Hospital at saka ng Maria Reyna-Xavier University ng RT-PCR nila. So, ang testing natin sa region is now mas leveling up. But hopefully by October we can still serve even BARMM and CARAGA Region, Mr. Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Since Mayor has to leave, siguro we can entertain a couple of questions intended for Mayor Moreno. Mayroon bang anyone from Zoom or local media that would like to ask a question because si Mayor has his own press briefing?

I'm sorry, Mayor, medyo na-late tayo huh... ang Pangako ko kasi he would be ready by twelve.

One or two questions intended for Mayor Moreno, please?

MODERATOR: Menzie Montes, please.

MAYOR MORENO: Ito si Menzie, suki ko ito sa press briefing din and... incidentally I'd like to acknowledge, Secretary, iyang suporta ng mass media dito sa Northern Mindanao.

MENZIE MONTES: Okay... Good morning, Secretary Roque, sir! Governor Bambi Emano, good morning, sir! Mayor Oscar Moreno... To Mayor Oscar Moreno: Sir, nandito na ngayon si Secretary Roque, anong gusto mong... ano iyong Tagalog sa pangayun?

SEC. ROQUE: Hingi.!

MENZIE MONTES: Hingiin. Oo, sorry po, Secretary. Anong gusto mong hingin para maparating kay President Rodrigo Duterte, Mayor?

MAYOR MORENO: Nagkausap na kami ni Secretary kanina in private and sinasabi ko naman na ano naman...of course, naintindihan natin ang problema sa buong bansa and of course Metro Manila and Region IV-A together they contribute more than 2/3 of the national economy kaya sa atin, tinitingnan din natin iyan how we can help doon sa pag-welcome ng ROF (Returning Overseas Filipino).

Marami ... marami ang kailangan, of course lalo na iyong mga reagents, etc., lalo na iyong GeneXpert dahil ang GeneXpert, ang DOH lang ang puwedeng makabili niyan and nobody else.

So, alam ni Secretary iyan and I would not want to pressure him, alam ko naman tumutulong din siya in whatever way he can.

MODERATOR: Okay. Joanna—

SEC. ROQUE: Perhaps one more question for Mayor Moreno?

MODERATOR: Joanna, please.

Q: Mayor, good morning!

MAYOR MORENO: Good morning!

Q: Based po sa data natin, naungusan na po ng CDO ang Iligan sa most number of active cases ng COVID-19. What are you planning to do, Mayor, para ma-control iyong mga active cases sa CDO po?

MAYOR MORENO: Well, doon sa active cases ...actually, ang virus nawawala iyan after fourteen days, ang importante lang hindi maka-infect. Mawawala iyan kung hindi siya maka-infect. It will just die a natural death. So, the challenge really is how to prevent the virus from spreading. And the irony is kapag nag-spread, exponential iyan compared sa linear. And kaya iyan ang rason ngayon why lumalakas iyong ating local cases.

The problem with local cases, the main problem is kung may matamaan na may comorbidity sigurado sa hospital iyan and in fact... ano talaga iyan... Ngayon, more than 30 na ang patients sa Northern Mindanao Medical Center and tinutulungan din natin ang pag-procure ng mga equipment.

The idea really is, we know the national government is doing everything it can, and huwag naman tayong hingi nang hingi lang sa lahat sa kanila dahil we need to also to invest in health dahil iyan naman ay para sa lahat. So, tulungan lang, bayanihan 'ika nga.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you very much, Mayor Moreno. And thank you for joining us, I know you have to go a separate press briefing. Maraming, maraming salamat po! On behalf of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, thank you for your presence and thank you also to our provincial governor. Naipakita po natin sa buong daigdig, sa buong bayan, dito po sa Misamis walang pulitika kapag ang pinag-uusapan ay kapakanan ng sambayanan. Maraming salamat po sa inyong dalawa.

Kasama rin po natin si Misamis Oriental Governor Bambi Emano. Sir, same question po, kumusta na po ang COVID management natin, Ano pong best examples natin? Ano pong kailangan natin sa national government? At dadagdagan ko lang po, paano po iyong border control ninyo with Lanao del Sur and Iligan City considering that the two cities are the lone areas under Modified ECQ in the Philippines?

The floor is yours, Governor.

GOVERNOR EMANO: Thank you, Secretary Roque, ASec. Queenie, ASec. [unclear], national, local heads who are here, special mention [unclear], happy birthday, sir! To our friend in the media and of course to all the people watching us, sa tanan, entero Pilipinas, maayo kaayong udto.

Let me share by saying that Misamis Oriental had been successful in controlling COVID, I think because it's unique that only maybe in Misamis Oriental that we have a task force chief that is not headed by the governor. I specifically asked my PHO, Dr. Jerry Calingasan, to head the task force because, for one, he is the most technical person who knows the virus and understands the virus and who knows how to [unclear] medically.

In short briefer, I was given only very short time but I'll make it very short. I believe that one of the things that made us successful is that we work early against COVID. To date, we started January 15, [unclear] days and I believed that we are the first province to have declares state of calamity which is 197 days today. As of today, we only have 360 cases and over the weekend, we had 20 only.

And we were able to assist already LSIs and ROFs to a tune of around 6,464 individuals and we have been ready – thank you to the 424 barangays. We have now 30 municipal MIUs, thank you the mayors, which can hold 677 beds, and of the 470 barangay isolation unit, we have a holding capacity of 2,329. And so far, we have been working with the local chief executives, we'd like to thank Mayor [unclear] here, he is the one putting up a chokepoint in the province.

And we are helping all our frontliners in our checkpoints and chokepoints and so far, this is our isolation facility that we are building. Thank you, President Duterte, for the Bayanihan We Heal as One Act, it can hold ... it has 26 rooms and it can hold around 50 ... Hopefully patients in the future. It will be turned over to the provincial government by second week of October and hopefully we will be able to use it.

With regards to borders, Misamis Oriental is very unique because on the western part our boundary is Iligan City, which has the rising case. On our eastern part, our boundary is Caraga, Butuan City also has a rising case. And in the middle is the City of Cagayan De Oro, which has a rising case. That is why we have been very thankful to the local chief executives for implementing strict protocols to our choke points and we are also very fortunate that 24/7 and the local chief executive we were able to set aside politics and work together to protect the people of Misamis Oriental, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Governor 'no. Governor, thank you very much for making this press briefing in Cagayan De Oro possible, it was the provincial governor that provided the venue as well as all other amenities that we are enjoying, kung hindi po dahil sa inyo, we would not have been able to conduct this press briefing. Maraming-maraming salamat, Governor and to the people of Misamis Oriental.

Anyway, you can stay, Governor for the open forum later 'no. So, I would like to call on our other guest.

Siyempre po we would have wanted to go to the City of Iligan, but it's MECQ and we wanted to honor the protocols on inter zonal problem. But we have on zoom, Mayor Regencia, Mayor of

Iligan. Unfortunately, we could not invite Governor Adiong of Lanao Del Sur, because he is predisposed because of a medical condition.

But Mayor Regencia, the floor is yours. Same question po, kumusta na ang Iligan after about two weeks of MECQ at ano ang po ang mga steps taken natin para to reduce the number of COVID in the City of Iligan? I met Mayor Regencia the last time we were in Cebu to meet with the President, he was in the company of Secretary Avisado. Mayor Regencia, the floor is yours.

MAYOR REGENCIA: Maraming salamat po, Mr. Secretary. Maraming salamat po, magandang hapon po kay Governor Emano at saka kay Mayor Moreno ng Cagayan De Oro City. Sa lahat po ng nakikinig ngayon dito sa briefing natin ngayon.

Dito sa Iligan po, Mr. Secretary, ito ang record galing sa emergency operation center COVID cluster as of yesterday at 3:00 pm. There are 8 new cases of which seven are local and one from ROF. Masaya rin po kami dahil mayroong 19 recoveries, all from local.

As of now, Mr. Secretary, there are 151 total active cases and 44 were admitted, 106 are in isolation facility and there are 436 recoveries and 29 deaths. Twenty-nine na po ang namatay dito sa Iligan City, Mr. Secretary. At saka hindi ako nahihiya na humingi ng Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine dahil po sa recommendation ng ating Regional Director, si Dr. Adriano Subaan na noong August 13, 107 lang sana ito pero hindi napagbigyan iyong hiningi nating Enhanced Community Quarantine. So ... pagka-September 1 ay napagbigyan tayo ngunit ito ay Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine.

Ganoon pa man, nagpapasalamat ako dahil nadadagdagan iyon isolation facilities natin ngayon na ginawa sa local government unit, iyong 120-bed capacity. But the Department of Public Works and Highways is giving us the isolation facility with a bed capacity of 120 located in National Steel Corporation Gymnasium. So, sa tatlong barangay po, Mr. Secretary, Department of Public Works and Highways po ang gumagawa doon sa Barangay Akbat na mayroong na may 40-bed capacity, Barangay Poblacion, mayroong 40-bed capacity and in Barangay Tomas [unclear] 40-bed capacity. All in all, mayroon na kami dito sa Iligan ng isolation facilities na 360 bed capacity.

Nagpapasalamat din po ako kay Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr., ang COVID Czar, dahil noong humihingi kami sa kaniya ng tulong, hindi talaga nag-aatubili si Secretary Galvez na tumulong sa amin. At sa ngayon po, Mr. Secretary, talaga namang nagka-ano kami sa Cagayan De Oro, dahil wala kaming testing laboratory dito, hiningi ko pa rin iyong testing laboratory at hopefully maano ito ... maumpisahan na ito dahil nahihiya na kami diyan sa Cagayan De Oro na makadagdag pa sa sakit ng ulo ni Governor Emano at saka si Mayor Moreno. Pero ganoon pa man, iyong dalawang tao na iyon ay hindi nag-aatubiling tumutulong sa amin dito sa Iligan City.

Sa aside those isolation facility, Mr. Secretary, mayroon din tayong mga hotels na nirirentahan para magamit ng mga locally stranded individuals at saka iyong ROF natin. Ito po ay ang Infinity na sa ngayon ay mayroong 30 na naka-occupy ng mga LSIs at saka ROF. Ganoon din sa My Hotel, mayroon tayong 18, LSI and ROF. Sa [unclear] mayroon tayong 78 combined na ito sa LSIs at ROF, and sa Sakura Hotel na mayroong 22. All in all, 148, Mr. Secretary. And out of this 148, there are 55 local cases na waiting for the confirmation of their swab test. So, hopefully sa dalawang linggo na na-under kami ng Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine ay nabawasan natin iyong total active cases na 182 to 151.

So all in all, Mr. Secretary, from March up to yesterday, there are total confirmed cases 616, but there are also 436 recoveries in our city of Iligan. Iyon lang po, Mr. Secretary. Magandang hapon po sa iyo. Maraming salamat po.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Mayor, ipaparating ko po sa DOH ang pangangailangan ninyo ng sariling RT-PCR testing facility. At kung ano pa po ang kailangan ninyo, nandiyan din po si Secretary Galvez para makipag-ugnayan sa inyo.

Cagayan De Oro is literally po the entry point to Northern Mindanao. It is the entry point to the province of Lanao and the City of Marawi. Unfortunately po, dahil sa COVID medyo hindi na po natin nasubaybayan ang mas matindi ang pangyayari sa Marawi and the rebuilding of Marawi. But ngayon po we have the opportunity while in Cagayan De Oro City. We are joined by our Housing Secretary, wala pong iba kung hindi si Eduardo Del Rosario. Sec, kumusta na po ang rebuilding of Marawi?

SEC.DEL ROSARIO: Maayong hapon sa tanan, Secretary Roque at ang ating mga local chief executives, members of the media, again, maayong hapon.

Maganda naman po ang development sa ating Marawi rehabilitation. So, I would like to make a presentation of what is happening in Marawi City by providing the updates as of today, 2020.

Ang objectives po natin generally is to make the rehabilitation as the catalyst for growth and sustainable development, establish good governance and have peaceful environment even beyond the rehabilitation.

This is our timeline. We are following a methodology. Let us all remember that the Marawi siege was from May 2017 to October 2017 for a period of almost 6 months. And immediately after that, we conducted early intervention activities from November to September of 2018. And after that, we conducted the actual rehabilitation, which started with the phase 1, clearing of bombs and debris that started October 2018 until February of 2020. And after that phase 2 started which is the construction of horizontal and vertical infrastructure December 2019 and to be completed by December of 2021.

So, ito po ang mga projects natin na ongoing in the less affected areas and the most affected areas. In the less affected area, we have already completed construction of PNP Compact 1 and the Marawi Fire substation and ongoing are the transitory shelters, Marawi Police Station, Salintubig Reservoir, correction facility, transcentral roads and permanent shelters which are all ongoing.

In the most affected area, we have the following projects completed – the Mapandi Bridge, Banggolo Bridge and the Maritime Outpost.

And the following infra projects are ongoing: the Pumping Bridge, the Marawi Museum, the 4-storey building, School of Living Tradition, the Peace Memorial Park, the Grand Padian Market and the 24 Barangay Complexes.

Ito po iyong mga pictures ng mga projects na nagawa natin: The Marawi Fire Sub-Station; the PNP-COMPAC 1, completed; the Marawi Police Station, to be completed by December; the Salintubig Reservoir 13.89% accomplishment; and the correctional facility the perspective – it's now 33% accomplishment that will be completed on June 8 of 2021; Transcentral Roads being implemented by DPWH, 41.72%, 68.72 and 83.30% accomplishment in the three projects; Transitory Shelter in Shelter Site No. 1; Shelter Site 2 - 257 out of 300; Lake View - 1,050 out of 1,500 completed; Rororagus 1 - 100 out of 400; 250 out of 500 iyong Rororagus 2; Dulay - 150

completed out of 500; and all these transitory shelters will be completed by November of 2020, this year.

But the permanent shelter we are constructing a total of 3,500. This is the model, it's a 90-square meter floor area of 46 square meter; and it has 3 bedrooms, 1 living room, a comfort room and parking area. So maganda po itong ating permanent shelter facilities na gagawin. Ito iyong ongoing land development, 45.7% and 120 units are ongoing and all these permanent shelters will be completed by December of 2021 for a total of 3,500 housing units. The soldiers, iyong AFP Engineers po natin ay tumutulong sa construction sa Marawi.

On MAA Infrastructure Projects: The Mapandi Bridge completed already as of June 18, 2019; Bangolo Bridge completed December 9 of 2019; Pumping Bridge, it's 79.8% complete but suspended because of road right of way issue; Maritime Outpost completed last July of 2020; the barangay complex with health center, this is a perspective; another perspective model, we are building 24 of this kind.

Ongoing constructions are the following: In Brgy. Dansalan, Brgy. Datu Naga, Brgy. Moncado Kadilingan, Brgy. Sangkai Dansalan, Brgy. Tolali, and the Peace Memorial will also be constructed. It's now ongoing, 17.01% accomplishment. The School of Living Tradition, it's 6%, the foundation has been laid out – it will be completed by June; the Marawi Museum 24.28% accomplishment, it will be completed by March 10 of 2021; the Grand Padian Market with Ice Plant, it's 16.42% complete accomplishment. We have the 4-storey school building, 9.03% accomplishment.

And the Projects for Implementation for the year and in the first quarter of 2021 are the following projects and all of these will be completed by December of 2021. Ang Total Funding Requirement po natin ay 60 billion; ang nai-release na ng ating gobyerno ay 22.2 billion both for LAA and MAA Projects.

Ang atin pong mandato na binigay ng ating mahal na Pangulo, he said and I quote, "*I will see to it that Marawi will rise as a prosperous city again.*" That is our mandate and that is what we will do as Chair of TFBM together with the 56 implementing agencies that composed the Task Force Bangon Marawi.

Maraming salamat po.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. [Inaudible] and Presidential Adviser on Foreign Affairs. Usec. Borje, the floor is yours. Aasahan natin ang talumpati ng Presidente sa UN General Assembly [inaudible]. The floor is yours, sir.

USEC. BORJE: Hello. Good afternoon. Thank you. Mr. Spokesperson, can you hear me?

SEC. ROQUE: Yes. Go ahead po, the floor is yours.

USEC. BORJE: Thank you very much Spokesperson for the time [unclear] today. Daghang salamat sa atong mga local officials from Northern Mindanao including Cagayan De Oro for

hosting today's press conference. Daghang salamat sa tanang mga higala og mga igsoon sa Northern Mindanao for hosting us and thank you to all our friends in the media for covering this press conference. I will now deliver a press statement regarding the President's participation in the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly:

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte will participate at the High-Level General Debate of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly or UNGA. The High-Level General Debate will take place from September 22nd to September 26th, 2020. This will be the President's first time to address the UN General Assembly, the main deliberative board of the UN where all the 193 member-states are represented.

This year's UNGA is of historic significance as it marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. This is also the first time that the High-Level General Debate and other High-Level Meetings of the UNGA will be done virtually in view of the restrictions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The session's theme is: "The Future We Want, The United Nations We Need: Reaffirming Our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism" confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action. The High-Level General Debate will be presided over by His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir from Turkey who is the President of the 75th UN General Assembly.

Thank you.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you, Usec. Borje [inaudible] Usec. Rocky...

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Secretary, good afternoon. First question from Arianne Merez of ABS-CBN. Ito po iyong tanong ni Arianne Merez, Secretary: Cavite has banned late night karaoke or videoke. There are also some complaints online that karaoke or videoke disrupts work-from-home setups and online classes. What can the Palace say about possibly restricting or prohibiting videoke during quarantine?

SEC. ROQUE: [Inaudible]

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary, hindi po namin kayo masyadong naririnig. Siguro po dapat maayos muna iyong audio.

Pero iyong susunod pong tanong ni Arianne Merez ng ABS-CBN: Has the IATF decided on the resumption of provincial bus operations in Metro Manila? What is the decision? Secretary Roque?

SEC. ROQUE: The technical working group [inaudible]. Iyan po'y dini-discuss ngayon sa technical working [inaudible].

USEC. IGNACIO: Ang third question, Secretary Roque—I hope maayos po iyong audio ninyo Secretary, hindi po masyadong malinaw ang audio ninyo: What is President Duterte's reaction to the EU's possible revocation of tariff perks for the Philippines?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko na po uulitin other than, unang-una, iyan po ay result of misinformation at kung talagang magpipilit na magdagdag ng pahirap ang EU sa panahon ng pandemya, nasa sa kanila po iyan.

We go now to Joyce Balancio of ABS-CBN, please.

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: Yes, good afternoon po, Secretary Roque. Can you elaborate lang po doon sa decision ni President Duterte to keep the one-meter physical distancing in the public transportation? What were the President's considerations?

SEC. ROQUE: [Inaudible]

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: All right, Secretary. On my second question po, Secretary, dito po sa Manila Bay. This weekend po marami po iyong mga pumunta na mga kababayan natin to see iyong beautification of the Manila Bay, marami pong hindi nakasunod sa physical distancing. Ano po ang instruction or request ng Malacañang or guidance para po hindi na ito maulit? And who should be in charge of ensuring that health protocols will be followed?

SEC. ROQUE: [Inaudible] Manila Bay at tama naman po iyong desisyon ng DENR [inaudible]. Gayunpaman, dahil sa pandemya, nananawagan po kami sa taumbayan na kinakailangan po mag-social distancing dahil hindi po [inaudible]. Ang ating mensahe nga po na kinakailangan ingatan ang ating mga buhay para tayo po ay makapaghanapbuhay. [Inaudible] para ma-enforce po ang social distancing ay ang [inaudible] dahil ito po ay [inaudible] ang puwede lang po ay maximum of [inaudible] persons at a time at ito po maximum of [inaudible] para naman [inaudible] sa Manila Bay. [Inaudible] huwag kayong mag-alala wala pong [inaudible] so [inaudible]. Magkakaroon din po kayo ng pagkakataon ma-enjoy [inaudible] pansamantala na ipu-postpone po iyong pagbubukas niyan dahil napakadami nga pong gustong makarating diyan. So [inaudible] makakarating din po kayo diyan [inaudible]. Hinay-hinay lang po, social distancing [inaudible].

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: Opo. Last na lang po for me, Secretary Roque. It was President Duterte who brokered the 15-21 House Speakership agreement between House Speaker Alan Cayetano and Marinduque Representative Lord Allan Velasco. Is this agreement, up to now is the President still believe that it should be followed or is he in favor of extending the term of Congressman Cayetano? And also, can you elaborate what the President meant when he was quoted saying, "*Kawawa naman si Velasco*," during his meeting with Congress leaders. Some are interpreting that it's the President endorsing the extension of term of Congressman Cayetano.

SEC. ROQUE: Unfortunately [inaudible]. [Inaudible] pagdating po sa issue ng liderato ng Kamara [inaudible].

Thank you, Joyce. We now go to Franklin of PIA, our moderator for questions from local media please. Franklin, birthday boy, Happy Birthday! Nagbi-birthday ka on national TV ha with all the channels celebrating ha. Ibang klase ka, Franklin. Happy Birthday!

MODERATOR: Thank you. So next to ask question, Bobby Lacsá please.

SEC. ROQUE: Bobby, please identify your network or your paper please.

Q: Good morning, Bobby [inaudible]. Sir, ano iyong economic outlook natin sa Pilipinas ngayon? Ano iyong mga losses and how much is the government needed to invest to recover from the losses in the next, say, 2 to 3 years?

SEC. ROQUE: Siyempre po ang ating economic losses na naging dahilan kung bakit nga nag-shrink po ng 16.5 during the second quarter ang ating ekonomiya eh dahil sinarado po natin ang ating ekonomiya noong tayo'y nagdeklara ng ECQ at MECQ. Hindi po tayo nagsisisi doon dahil iyong pagdideklara natin gave us the time to prepare our hospitals para gamutin iyong mga magkakasakit 'no. It gave us the opportunity to beef up our critical care capacity, wala pong pagsisisi pero ngayon po kinakailangan nating buksan unti-unti ang ekonomiya kaya ang panawagan po natin – ingat buhay para po sa hanapbuhay.

At siyempre po nandiyan naman ang mga stimulus package natin, pauna lang po iyong Bayanihan to Heal as One II na naglalaan ng 165 billion, kasama na rin po sa stimulus packages natin ang 4.7 trillion national budget for 2021.

Sino na? Si Usec. Rocky siguro uli...

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Secretary, ulitin ko na lang po iyong mga tanong kanina kasi kanina po hindi po maintindihan iyong audio ninyo. So iyong tanong po ni Arianne Merez ng ABS-CBN ulitin ko po: Cavite has banned late night karaoke or videoke. There are also some complaints online that karaoke or videoke disrupts work-from-home setups and online classes. What can the Palace say about possibly restricting or prohibiting videoke during quarantine?

SEC. ROQUE: That's a legitimate exercise po of local government power. Sa ating New Civil Code po mayroon tayong provisions na tinatawag na 'abatement of nuisance,' ang malakas na pag-videoke po is a form of nuisance or nakakairita 'no at iyong abatement of nuisance po nasa kamay po iyan ng lokal na pamahalaan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Iyong second question po niya: Has the IATF decided on the resumption of provincial bus operations in Metro Manila? What is the decision?

SEC. ROQUE: Iyan po ay nasa technical working group, wala pa pong desisyon. Inaantay po natin iyong report ng technical working group ng IATF.

USEC. IGNACIO: Iyong third question po niya: What is President Duterte's reaction to the EU's possible revocation of tariff perks for the Philippines?

SEC. ROQUE: Nasagot ko na po iyan. Ang mga naririnig po ng mga European Parliamentarian are result of misinformation dahil malalakas po ang mga kalaban ng gobyerno sa Europe. Pero kung talagang gusto pong magpataw ng karagdagang pahirap ng mga European sa Pilipino sa panahon ng pandemya, nasa kanila po iyan, wala na tayong magagawa.

Okay? So after Usec. Rocky, we go to Maricel Halili please, of TV-5.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Hi, sir! Magandang hapon po. Sir, I will have to repeat the question of Joyce Balancio kasi hindi po namin naintindihan iyong audio ninyo kanina. Representative Paolo

Duterte threatened to force the change of leadership in the House allegedly because of the issue on national budget. Does it have the blessing of President Duterte considering na nag-mediate po si President before on House leadership? What's the guidance of the President po?

SEC. ROQUE: The Constitution is clear po, tanging ang mga miyembro lang ng Kamara de Representante ang pupuwedeng magdesisyon kung sino ang kanilang magiging leader. We leave that to the members of the House of Representatives.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Pero, sir, iyong House leadership, how will it affect po the government agenda - iyong change on the leadership if ever?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, uulitin ko po, rirespetuhin natin ang desisyon ng Kamara de Representante [garbled] natin, sana po patuloy po ang kooperasyon sa panig ng Kamara at ng Malacañang.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Sir, with the decision of the President to lift the deployment ban doon sa mga nurses na naka-complete ng documentation on August 31, ano po iyong naging consideration niya rito and what are the chances na magkaroon na ng total lifting ng deployment ban?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, ito kasi mga nurses na nakagastos na para i-process ang mag papel nila [garbled]. Hindi naman po ganoon karami ito, mga 1,500 po ang estimate ni Secretary Bello, so pinayagan na po iyan.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: And, sir, the total lifting, how soon will it be implemented or what are the chances?

SEC. ROQUE: Wala pa pong desisyon sa total lifting, pinagbigyan lang po iyong nakagastos na para sa mga papeles. So wala na pong pupuwedeng magreklamo na nagkaroon sila ng gastos tapos hindi sila nakaalis.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Sir, I have a question for Usec. Borje.

SEC. ROQUE: Yes, please go ahead.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Sir, mayroon po bang schedule si President Duterte to speak before the forum? And what will be the focus of his speech?

USEC. BORJE: Thank you very much for that question. Yes, the President is already inscribed His inscription is on the first day of the general debate and this is very important because he will be in the first set of speakers. The time block is 9:00 o'clock in the morning to 2:45 in the afternoon New York time. He is inscribed as the 12th speaker of 14th speakers for the morning session. The first speaker will be Brazil, followed by the United States, followed by the Turkey and then China and then Chile and then South Africa, followed by Cuba, the Russian Federation and then Jordan, the Republic of Korea, Qatar then Philippines followed by Iran and then France.

SEC. ROQUE: Sir, what will be the focus of the speech of the President? Will he touch on the issue of human rights?

USEC. BORJE: President Duterte will articulate principled positions of the Philippines on a wide range of issues and I do not want to preempt the President. But these are the ones of key

importance to the country and I will identify them. That will be global response to the coronavirus pandemic; peace and security including terrorism and geopolitical developments in the Asia-Pacific; sustainable development and climate change; the rule of law, justice and human rights, including the situation of migrant workers and refugees as well as peace keeping and United Nations reports.

SEC. ROQUE: Punta ulit tayo kay Franklin for the local media please.

MODERATOR: Okay, may I call on Sheryl Macale of Mindanao Daily.

MACALE/MINDANAO DAILY: Good noon po, Secretary, and of course to Governor Emano. Sec., COVID-19 has created panic and terror and, in fact, what comes after, it was really alarming and very disturbing. We are not ready for this outbreak, but are we ready for the next recession?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, ang sagot ko po diyan ay unang-una huwag na po tayong mag-panic, kilala na po natin ang kalaban and we now have the highest testing rate in the whole of South East Asia and probably the whole of Asia because we have surpassed Japan and South Korea. So, kilala na natin ang kalaban at alam natin kung nasaan ang kalaban, alam din natin kung paano labanan siya - sa pamamagitan po ng isolation, sa pamamagitan ng contact tracing at sa pamamagitan po ng treatment.

Pagdating po sa tracing, napakaganda po ng formula ni Mayor Magalong – 1:37. At ngayon po mayroon na rin po tayong oplan, iyong operation kalinga, Oplan Kalinga para po masigurado na magkaroon ng facility quarantine iyong mga walang sariling kuwatro at walang sariling banyo sa bahay dahil alam natin sa home quarantine po na wala itong mga ganitong bagay ay makakahawa pa rin. At pagdating po sa treatment, alam natin iyong mga proper management, iyong paggamit ng high flow cannula, oxygen cannula, which is more effective than ventilators. Alam na natin iyong available na gamot that can treat symptoms, kasama po ang Remdesivir at saka ang Avigan. At ngayon po ay nagki-clinical trial pa nga tayo para sa mga locally produced supplements na nakaka-manage pala ng symptoms kagaya ng virgin coconut oil, Tawa-Tawa at ang Lagundi.

So huwag na po tayong mag-panic, we are in control. At nakita naman po ninyo, now we are 22, 21 in the world, at ang deaths po natin ay mababa 1.7 lamang – iyan po ang importante. Kaya nga po ang panawagan natin, let us overcome the fear dahil if we do not overcome the fear, hindi po tayo makakabangon from the recession. Ang solusyon po sa recession, at if only the people of the Philippines can see Northern Mindanao, ay iyong tapang na ipagpatuloy [garbled]

MACALE/MINDANAO DAILY: [INAUDIBLE]

SEC. ROQUE: Sinabi na po ni Presidente iyan, we only have until December to [unclear]

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary, medyo hindi na naman bumalik iyong audio ninyo kanina na hindi masyadong maganda. Pero unang tanong po ni MJ Blancaflor/Daily Tribune, nasagot na ninyo. Iyong second question po niya or basahin ko na lang din po ulit. May we ask daw po Palace comment on this: The associated labor unions urged the government to address the issues raised by the European parliament last week. The Labor Union warned that about 200,000 Filipinos could lose their jobs, if the EU withdraw the trading perks it had granted to the Philippines.

SEC. ROQUE: Nasagot ko na po iyan, wala tayong magagawa. Desisyon nila iyan, eh sasabihin na lang natin sa desisyon gusto ng EU, salamat po sa karagdagang pahirap na ipapataw ninyo sa sambayanang Pilipino. What else can we say?

USEC. IGNACIO: Paayos po ulit ng audio ni Secretary Roque, please. Ang second question po niya, Albay Representative Edcel Lagman said, it is self-serving for the administration to prohibit the United Nations to look into the state of the human rights in the country in relation to drug war. How will the Palace respond to that?

SEC. ROQUE: That is a result of ignorance of how the United Nations, under the special mandate [unclear] of the human rights council, kinakailangan na pumayag po ang mga bansa bago makapasok ang mga special rapporteur [unclear] United Nations ang soberenya ng mga bansa. Hindi sila pupuwedeng mag-conduct ng investigation na walang consent ang mga independiyenteng soberenya ng mga bansa kagaya ng Pilipinas.

USEC. IGNACIO: May we ask for Palace reaction on Vice President Leni Robredo's suggestion to make periodic assessment on the government's pandemic response instead of extending the state of calamity until 2021?

SEC. ROQUE: Again, simply blind and deaf to the fact that the periodic reporting, all you have to do is go to the webpage of the DOH, all she has to do is to consult the regular report being submitted by the Office of the President to the Congress pursuant to the Bayanihan 1 and Bayanihan 2. Thank you very much for the suggestion Madame Vice President, [unclear].

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Hi! Good afternoon, Secretary. Sir, before I started my questioning, makikisuyo lang po sana kami with the audio and if there is a problem on our end, all of us were experiencing static and hindi po namin naririnig masyado iyong sagot, sayang naman po.

SEC. ROQUE: Statics? Is it better? Change ako ng microphone.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: May static pa rin po and super hina po.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay, go ahead.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Sir, first question. Nabanggit po kasi, sir, sa ilang article, during the meeting with Senate President Tito Sotto and House Speaker Alan Cayetano, the President was quoted as saying, "Kawawa naman si Lord." Sir, what does this mean "kawawa"? Does it mean kawawa because he won't able to sit as Speaker?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, I do not know, because I was not present. I was informed about the private meeting but not really about the details. I'd like to be informed or request to the Appointment Office that for future meetings they could invite me kasi I understand that the people have the right to know kung anong nangyari sa mga meetings na ito, but I cannot answer because I was not there.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Secretary, I understand, nirespeto po ni Pangulo iyong ... kumbaga, mandato ng Kamara. But what will it take, sir, for the President to step in lalo na ngayon, sir, na medyo nagkakaroon po ng problem iyong si Speaker Cayetano and Representative Velasco and somehow, the budget hearings affected?

SEC. ROQUE: All I can say is, the President leaves it to the individual members of the House of Representative [unclear] leader. Siguro po sa simula, because they were not yet organized, kinakailangan ng guidance from the President. But [unclear] ng mga miyembro ng Kamara.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Secretary, sorry, medyo nawala po iyong dulo. Nawala po ulit iyong audio.

SEC. ROQUE: Iyong una po siguro, kinakailangan ng direksiyon ng Presidente kasi hindi ma-organize iyong 18th Congress. Pero ngayon po after a year and a half, organized na po ang 18th Congress and the President leaves it to the discretion of the individual members of Congress to decide on the issue of leadership [unclear] of the House of Representatives.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Secretary, last question about the extra powers eyed for the President. Senators are planning to grant President Duterte temporary authority to quickly cut red tape in the government and sanction erring officials in a bid to entice more foreign investors in the country. Si Senate President Tito Sotto po said that the senators have already agreed to pass a measure instead of amending iyong Ease of Doing Business Act. What does Palace think of this, Secretary?

SEC. ROQUE: We appreciate the initiative of Senate President Sotto, and this was the main agenda when the President invited the leaders of both House of Congress. Kasi nga po, hirap na ang ekonomiya dahil sa pandemya, humahanap ng paraan ang Presidente para mapabilis ang ating pagbangon galing sa recession na ito at talaga pong problema pa rin ang red tape, at mukhang hindi sapat iyong Ease of Doing Business Act na naipasa noong isang taon.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Salamat po, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Salamat, Trish. Back to Franklin, please.

MODERATOR: Now we call on [unclear] of GMA.

Q: Good afternoon, Secretary, from GMA 1 Mindanao. Just one question po. Noong nakaraan ay nag-isyu po ang National IATF ng Resolution # 70 stating iyong closure po ng public and private cemeteries. For the information of the public po, ano na po ang update? Ano po iyong dapat gawin ng local chief executive? Ano po iyong bawal at saka iyong puwede?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko po naintindihan iyong question ninyo. Ano iyong inisyu ng IATF?

Q: Resolution # 70 po stating the closure of private and public cemeteries.

SEC. ROQUE: Opo, we provided guidance na from 29 October to 4 November, sarado po ang lahat ng pampubliko, pribado, columbarium. At before the 29th and after the 4th, hanggang 30% capacity lang po sa lahat ng sementeryo, columbarium both private and public.

Q: Paano po iyong papasok talaga iyong mga tao na pupunta talaga sa sementeryo, ano pong dapat gawin?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, from 29th to 4th, wala po talagang [garbled]. Pero before that period [garbled]. Mga kaibigan, tuloy pa rin po ang pag-aalala ng ating mga mahal sa buhay, hindi lang sa araw [garbled]. Ang gagawin lang natin, hindi tayo lahat magdadagsaan sa sementeryo, puwede naman tayong dumalaw before 29 of October and after 4 November.

Usec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Secretary, paayos po ulit ng audio please, kasi may static po kasi. From Rose Novenario of Hataw: Ano po ang reaksiyon ng Palasyo sa napaulat na bilyones na

anomalya sa LTO sa mga biddings sa plaka at RFID stickers na naging sanhi upang magkaroon ng delay sa distribusyon sa motorista?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, lahat naman po iyong mga sinasabi nilang anomalies ay dumaan po sa bidding, at ito po iyong supply ng mga plaka para sa motorcycle plates at RFID stickers.

So ang pagkakaalam ko po, dumaan po iyan sa bidding; dumaan po iyan sa proseso; na-publish po iyan. So kung ang kuwestiyon ay doon sa bidding process itself, dapat po sumunod doon sa government procurement act. Iyong natalong bidder, dapat po nag-file siya ng protesta 'no. Pero hindi ko po alam kung may ganiyang protesta, kung wala po ay wala na tayong magagawa 'no dahil dumaan po iyan sa proseso.

Ganoon pa man, alam ko po may mga anomalya diyan sa LTO. Mayroon po akong isang malaking anomalya na baka isumbong na kay Secretary Tugade dito po sa Visayas, pero pinagbibigyan muna po natin iyong tao na affected na i-rectify iyong kaniyang mga pagkakamali. So nananawagan po ako – kilala niya kung sino siya, pero diyan po sa Visayas, iyong isang kurakot na regional director – clean up po because the President will not tolerate corruption, not even a whiff of corruption. And I think he knows who he is.

USEC. IGNACIO: Ang second question po ay from Argyll Geducos of Manila Bulletin: Former Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio insisted that allowing 100 foreign ownership in telecommunication firms in the country is illegal without a constitutional amendment. Reaction daw po.

SEC. ROQUE: Tama po iyan. Hindi ko po alam kung sino ang nag-allow ng 100 [unclear] dahil ang alam ko po, ang DITO, ang Globe at ang Smart ay complying [unclear].

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo, Secretary, hindi po masyadong narinig iyong naging sagot ninyo, nagkastic po, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Tama po iyan na kinakailangan majority owned ng Pilipino ang telecoms at ang media at ang broadcasting. At iyan po ang dahilan kung bakit ang DITO, ang Smart at ang Globe, sila po ay majority owned by Filipino.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Melo Acuña, please.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Secretary, greetings to you and to your friends and associates. I have a couple of questions for Secretary Borje, please, if you will allow me.

SEC. ROQUE: Yes, please, Usec. Borje.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Good afternoon, Usec. I'm just concerned and I am also wanting to know—I want to know whether the President will also address the concerns of the Philippines between China and United States in the South China Sea. There are seems to be a battle for alliances here in ASEAN. Would he be able to address the concerns?

USEC. BORJE: Yes, thank you for that question. Indeed, the President would be able to address. As I said earlier, the President both articulate principled Philippine positions on peace and security which includes [unclear] and geopolitical developments in Asia and the Pacific.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Okay. Another question on a similar topic, it has something to do with the European Union. Will you not recommend a review of our commitments to the European Union for them to grant us the GSP free privileges or GSP plus? What are our commitments because these commitments may have pinned us down if at all?

USEC. BORJE: Thank you again for that question. It's something that should be discussed between the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Trade and Industry. As we've said before, the Philippines is a country that partners with other countries and other blocks. But it's also important to respect the principles of sovereignty and the non-interference – that's very basic in international law—

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Would you recommend a review?

USEC. BORJE: A review of the positions?

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Of the commitments that we have.

USEC. BORJE: A review is always on detail when it comes to statement such as this. But you will have to also acknowledge and recognize the different nuances in the EU. The EU Parliament is one part of the EU; the European Commission is another part. And it takes the entire machinery of the EU to make things happen. And it's something that our Department of Foreign Affairs, again, the Department of Trade and Industry will be at the best position to [unclear]

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Yeah. Thank you very much. Thank you and good afternoon. Thank you, Secretary Harry.

Q: [UNCLEAR]

SEC. ROQUE: The victims asked for that. And I think the decision is correct because [garbled] when the 30 plus journalists were killed in the Maguindanao massacre.

Q: Sir, follow-up. Sir, regarding po doon sa LTO—

SEC. ROQUE: Ano? Regarding sa?

Q: LTO na issue, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Sa LTO issue.

Q: Ito ba iyong sa Region VII na issue, sir? Iyong Regional Director namin doon—

SEC. ROQUE: Alam mo, pinagbibigyan po natin ang lahat. All I'm saying is huwag po sanang magkamali dahil marami na pong nagkamali when they said that I speak without authority from the President.

The President has zero tolerance for corruption. Ilang opisyal na po ang nagkamali na sinasabing Harry Roque does not speak for the President on issues of corruption. Hindi ko na po iisa-isahin kung sino sila but I'm warning po that LTO Regional Director in the Visayas shape up po dahil the President will never tolerate corruption no matter kung saan level po iyan.

Q: Thank you, Sec.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you po.

USec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary, question from Keith Calayag of Manila Times. Ang tanong po niya: May development na po ba doon sa sinubmit [submitted] na proposal ng Department of Health na ceiling price for swab testing? Pag-uusapan po ba ito ng IATF this week?

SEC. ROQUE: Wala pa pong development diyan pero iaanunsiyo ko po na kung gusto ninyo ng murang RT-PCR, P1,100, pumunta po kayo doon sa mga donated machines at donated testing kits. I promise you tomorrow po I will provide the complete listing of those that received donated RT-PCR machines and test kits para makapunta kayo. It's P1,100 po ang sinisingil lamang dito sa mga RT-PCR labs na ito.

Ang isa po diyan ay iyong Children's Hospital, donated po kasi iyan ng Project ARK, at ibibigay ko po lahat noong mga listahan ng mga laboratoryo na ganito lamang po ang singil para hindi na po kayo pupunta doon sa mga mahal.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Question naman ni Julie Aurelio, follow-up lang po daw ito, sir: Will President Duterte appeal to Congress to set aside squabbles daw po to pass the budget on time given that the country cannot afford to have the budget delayed due to funds needed for pandemic response, recovery and rehabilitation?

SEC. ROQUE: Let's just say, because the 2021 budget is also our biggest stimulus package, not negotiable po kay Presidente, kinakailangan maipasa po iyang budget on time.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Question for USec. Borje. USec. Borje, tanong po mula kay Genalyn Kabling ng Manila Bulletin: What made the President decide to participate in this year's UN Assembly?

USEC. BORJE: Thank you very much. The participation of the President has always been considered since the beginning of his term but of course, this year takes on special significance because it's the 75th anniversary. But more than just the milestone landmark commemoration, it's the intensity and the urgency needed to address local issues. The President recognizes that the Philippines cannot do it alone and the United Nations is the world's biggest platform where one country can articulate a country's principal position on many items and many issues and this is why he decided to join the UN General Assembly this month.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Her second question, USec.: Will he raise the country's claims in the West Philippines and the equitable access to corona vaccine?

USEC. BORJE: I do not want to preempt the statement of the President again but as I said earlier, the President is certain to raise the issue on the global response to the corona virus pandemic and also geopolitical developments in the Asia Pacific.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, USec. Borje.

USEC. BORJE: Thank you.

SEC. ROQUE: Franklin of PIA.

MODERATOR: Okay. We have one more question from the local media—

Q: Good afternoon, Secretary. [garbled] na ginagawa ngayon sa gobyerno?

SEC. ROQUE: Ang panawagan po natin, unang-una, iyong mga provider ng impormasyon dapat mayroon na po silang sistema para maiwasan ang fake news.

Ang Facebook po ngayon at saka ang Google may ginagawa sila kasi responsibilidad po nila iyan eh. Kumikita naman sila sa kanilang medium, kinakailangan tanggapin nila iyong katungkulan at obligasyon na salain kung ano iyong mga fake news. At ganiyan din po ang panawagan ko sa lahat ng media installation dahil mayroon tayong mga obligasyon na magparating ng impormasyon sa taumbayan, tanggapin din po natin iyong responsibilidad na huwag magpakalat ng fake news.

Thank you.

Okay... So, balik tayo kay USec. Rocky. Mayroon ka pang question, USec. Rocky?

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes, Secretary. Question from Joyce Balancio: Can you elaborate, sir, why the President decided to keep the one-meter physical distancing? What were his considerations?

SEC. ROQUE: Joyce asked it and I answered it earlier.

USEC. IGNACIO: Sir, iyong audio po yata hindi maganda, so kailangan po ng magandang audio.

SEC. ROQUE: In the end decided in a manner that would uphold public health over and above all other considerations.

USEC. IGNACIO: Second question po ni Joyce Balancio: This weekend po dinagsa po ang Manila Bay ng mga gustong makakita ng beautification project, hindi nasunod ang physical distancing sa dami ng dumating. Any guidance or instructions from Palace as to how this should be avoided? Who should be in charge of ensuring the health protocols in GCQ are enforced?

SEC. ROQUE: [garbled] ng tao diyan ay naintindihan po natin iyan dahil talagang iyan naman po ay nagpapatunay na tama ang naging desisyon ng DENR at ng siyudad ng Maynila na lalo pang pagandahin ang Manila Bay. Ang panawagan lang namin sa taumbayan, the surest way po para kayo ay magkaroon ng COVID, huwag kayong mag-social distancing. Kaya nga po nananawagan din po kami sa kapulisan na sana po ay ipatupad natin ang social distancing.

Now, ang white beach naman po diyan is around 7,000 square meters, it can accommodate 50 people at one time. At para naman po mapagbigyan ang lahat, kung pupuwede po five minutes per group lang diyan, sapat na po iyan para singhutin ang hangin at saka mag-picture-picture, mag-selfie-selfie. Huwag na tayong mag-bathing suit diyan dahil baka lalong matagalan ang mga tao diyan. Five minutes lang po per group, fifty persons per group.

Si [unclear], hindi ka puwedeng pumunta doon dahil kapag ikaw ay nandoon baka magkagulo ang tao, lalong hindi magkaroon ng social distancing at lalong-lalo na huwag kang magba-bathing suit doon at baka mamaya talagang magkaroon ng stampede. Okay?

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Thank you, Secretary Roque.

SEC. ROQUE: Finally! Joseph Morong!

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Hi, sir! Sir, kapag medyo nag-ano iyong audio mo, maybe we try iyong ginagamit noong host o kaya iyong sa... iyong independent microphone para medyo mas malinis nang kaunti.

SEC. ROQUE: Independent microphone baka magalit si Joseph Morong...

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Hindi, sir... sayang kasi iyong soundbite.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay... Heto na, heto na gamitin natin, Joseph Morong. Magtanong ka na.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Okay, sir. Sa healthcare workers ban sir. Clarification because last time noong pinayagan iyong mga... I think March 9 iyon ano but the BID had a kind of misinterpretation kasi naghahanap sila rin ng 'visa.'

So, ngayon in terms of the requirement, we you say completed documents, ano iyong dapat hawak na ng ating mga nurses so that they'd be allowed as long as it is be—on or before August 31st.

Thank you, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Well, kung ang desisyon po ng BID is kasama na ang visa, dapat po may visa na. Kasi kaya lang naman ito pinayagan ng Presidente kasi nga po eh nagrereklamo sila na nagkagastos na sila at kasama na iyong halaga ng visas ano. So I think, to be consistent eh sundin rin po natin iyong interpretasyon ng Commission on Immigration and Deportation.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Okay. Sir, the President is in Davao and he's going to elaborate more on this decision, tama ba? And then a related question, we have nine days left for the present community quarantine, si DTI Secretary Mon Lopez is saying after six months of CQs eh baka naman prepared na tayo for a more relaxed community quarantine like MGCQ. Do think that it's possible on October 1?

SEC. ROQUE: We're still data-driven and guided by science. What I can say though is it will not be the same kasi ako mismo nagmungkahi at nag-agree naman ang IATF na there will be areas na mayroong zero transmission in the past month na pupuwede nang ideklara as under the regime of new normal. So with that magkakaroon tayo ng mga bagong classification, magkakaroon tayo ng new normal bukod sa MGCQ.

As to whether or not Metro Manila can move away from GCQ, eh mayroon po tayong requirements diyan 'no, kinakailangan ang case doubling rate if I'm not mistaken around 7... ano ba iyon? (garbled) days 'no if I'm not mistaken. And right now, I think we are on 13 to 14 days 'no so medyo malayo pa iyong tatahakin natin para po magkaroon ng further classification ang Metro Manila.

But we will see kasi ang importante po diyan, tingnan din natin iyong critical care capacity. We recently completed 600 isolation rooms in the location for Nayong Pilipino is. Tingnan natin kung

natapos na rin po iyong sa Quezon Institute, iyong mga bagong kama rin sa PGH, iyong mga bagong kama rin sa Quirino Memorial baka naman po pupuwede. Pero let's wait for the data, antayin lang po natin.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, can I go to—sir, si Presidente mag-public address tonight from Davao?

SEC. ROQUE: Yes...[inaudible]

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Okay, sir. Sir can I go to Secretary Borje, please?

SEC. ROQUE: Yes, please.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, si Presidente at the start of his term said that there is a proper time 'no to raise the arbitral award of the Philippines against China and you said that he is going to touch on it. Will the message be the same na—or it's going to be more assertive in the sense that we are going to capitalize on the arbitral win in his message to the UN? And second question is: will he be addressing criticisms of his drug war?

SEC. ROQUE: Usec. Borje...

USEC. BORJE: Thank you for those questions. For the first question, we will leave it to the people to judge how strong the statement will be. It's not for us to characterize the statement that the President will say. But as I said before, he will articulate the principled position of the Philippines from this and many others.

And the second question, I'm sorry, I didn't quite get it.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, kasi 'di ba, in the context of iyong criticisms of the EU, now the President an international forum via the United Nations no less. Will he be addressing personally criticisms of this drug war?

USEC. BORJE: Let me clarify 'no, this is again the UN General Assembly and the biggest platform of the world to engage our friends and partners and [unclear]. And yes, that could be part of the President's speech. He will address issues on human rights and justice as I said earlier.

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

USEC. BORJE: Thank you. I would encourage everyone to watch the President and not just the President but all of the speakers who will be engaged in the High-Level Debate and that begins tomorrow, 9 A.M. New York time; but for the Philippines, that's 9 P.M.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: 9 P.M, tomorrow, sir.

USEC. BORJE: 9 P.M. tomorrow. And again, the President is in the first block of speakers. He is inscribed as the 12th speaker for that session. This is the first day of the High-Level Debate and he in effect is the 12th speaker of 196 speakers.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Thank you, sir.

USEC. BORJE: Thank you.

SEC. ROQUE: Usec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary—

SEC. ROQUE: [Garbled] question. Kung wala ng local—oh, go ahead more local question. And afterwards I will ask for two questions for Governor Emano. Hindi, but I will ask two questions. Kailangan patas 'no, ano ka baka sabihin mo hindi ako patas eh [laughs]. Okay...

Q: Secretary, again, good afternoon -- from RMN Cagayan De Oro City. And, Governor Emano, sir, good afternoon.

Secretary, narinig mo kanina iyong report, iyong si Mayor Oscar Moreno sa status ng Cagayan De Oro at saka sa report din ni Governor Emano sa status ng Misamis Oriental on COVID-19. Ano sa tingin ninyo sir, [garbled] ba iyong Northern Mindanao or iyong Region [garbled] nasa strict quarantine from MGCQ to GCQ, Secretary?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, I understand si Governor Bobby Emano asked for that 30 days 'no and I will follow up with the IATF 'no. And of course the problem is a bit more complicated kasi nga you share boundaries with areas that are MECQ. At saka iyong critical care capacity kasi dito nagpupunta sa inyo iyong mga nagkakasakit na mga areas under MECQ. So I would certainly relay the request of Governor Emano to the IATF and—but it will be decided upon by the IATF. Because under existing regulations, the Governor can impose even ECQ on municipalities and barangays but only the IATF National can declare a whole province under a declared classification.

Q: Oo. Sa ibang bagay po, Secretary, last po. Sinabi ng WHO noong isang araw yata kung hindi ako nagkamali na kailangan daw iingat natin iyong mga health workers natin kasi sa data daw po nila lalong tumaas iyong mga healthcare workers na affected po ng COVID-19. Now anong mandatory ni Presidente Duterte sa IATF na puwedeng dagdag proteksiyon sa mga frontliners po natin, Secretary?

SEC. ROQUE: Unang-una, mayroon po tayong protocol na sinusunod para naman ingatan po ang kalusugan ng ating mga health workers, ang ating mga bagong bayani. Hinihikayat ko po ang lahat na sumunod sa mga protocol.

Pangalawa, lahat po ng pangangailangan ng mga health workers para ingatan ang kanilang sarili gaya ng PPEs at mga masks at goggles, iyan po'y binibigay naman po ng gobyerno, libre po sa ating mga frontliners. Dahil kung mawawala nga po ang frontliners, sinong mag-aalaga sa atin?

Pangatlo po, nakita ninyo naman lahat ng hiling ng frontliners ibibigay po ng Presidente. Humingi sila ng timeout, binigyan po natin sila ng time. So we recognize the sacrifice and the importance of our frontliners, they enjoy topmost priority as far as the President is concerned.

Q: Thank you po, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Usec. Rocky, mayroon pa bang questions?

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes, Secretary, may tanong pa po. Mula kay Celerina Monte, pahabol niyang tanong: Some groups like Karapatan said that on 40th anniversary of Marcos martial law, they said 'end Duterte's de facto martial law'. Is there really a de facto martial law now?

SEC. ROQUE: Ay, naku po. Alam ninyo po, ako lumaki ako sa martial law, nag-law school po ako, walang Saligang Batas, Constitution lamang.

Ang masasabi ko po ibang-iba na po ang konteksto ngayon, dati-rati po naisasara ang Kongreso, naisasara ang Supreme Court. Ngayon po, wala nang ganiyang kapangyarihan ang Presidente at ang deklarasyon ng martial law ngayon pupuwedeng kuwestiyunin sa Kongreso, pupuwedeng kuwestiyunin sa hukuman dahil nga po natuto na tayo sa mapait na karanasan natin sa martial law noong 1970.

Now Usec. Borje, another question for you.

USEC. BORJE: Yes, thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Usec. Borje, from Johnna po ng Asahi: How did the Philippines get the 12th slot in the UNGA? Ano po ang process in lining up speakers?

USEC. BORJE: Thank you very much. We're very pleased with the inscription number of the President. As I said, it's going to be on the first day of the first block. Dalawang blocks po kasi iyan – isa sa umaga at isa sa hapon. At nakasama si Pangulong Duterte sa very first block. It's a 5-day high level general debate. And of course, we're pleased at this. And we're happy that the Department of Foreign Affairs has worked for the best placement for the President.

The United Nations describes it as a complex algorithm. It takes into consideration the seniority of the heads of states or the royalty or the heads of government, and it also includes when a particular nation chooses its [unclear]. And for this particular general assembly, the 75th as a matter of fact, umayos po ang lahat ng kundisyon sa circumstances to put the President at the very top of the list. And this gives him a prime spot in the high-level debate. This is the most desired speaking slot during the high-level debate. Of course, everybody will listen to everyone who will be speaking over the course of the entire five days. Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Usec. Borje.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Mela Lesmoras of PTV.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Good noon, Secretary Roque. My first question is about state calamity po. Para lang sa kaalaman ng ating mga kababayan, anu-ano po ang nagtulak kay Pangulong Duterte para palawigin ang state of calamity? At paano po ba ito makakatulong sa COVID-19 response ng mga LGUs, national government at pati na rin sa ating mga simpleng kababayan?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, ang pananaw po ng Presidente, habang walang bakuna, habang walang gamot ay nandiyan pa rin po ang banta ng COVID-19 kaya minabuti po niya na pahabain pa iyong declaration of state of calamity dahil talaga namang mayroon po tayong state of calamity habang nandiyan ang banta ng pandemya. Ang ibig sabihin po nito, magagamit na ng mga lokal na pamahalaan ang kanilang mga calamity funds para sa mga hakbang po para labanan po ang COVID-19.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Opo. Sir, what would be the deciding factors po kaya for the President to lift, if ever, the state of calamity?

SEC. ROQUE: Eh kung mayroon na pong bakuna at mayroon ng gamot, ibig sabihin [unclear] na sa pandemya.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Opo. Sir, last question po kay Sir Borje lang please. Sir Borje, can you hear me po? Opo. Para lang malinaw, kanina kasi nagkakaroon tayo ng problema sa audio, kailan po, particularly iyong mga days ng participation ni Pangulong Duterte sa UN General Assembly? Mayroon po bang pagkakahati-hati iyong mga topics per day ng mga nabanggit ninyo po?

USEC. BORJE: Maraming salamat. Para lang klaro sa lahat, the high-level debate and this is the moment of the heads of state and heads of government will run through a course of five days – September 22nd until September 26th. And lahat ng mga speakers will be speaking on the theme which is the *“The future we want, the United Nations we need: Reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism - confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action”*. So over the five days na iyan, there are 196 total speakers, a lot of them will be heads of government and heads of state. But the President being a head of government and state and he [unclear] also worked on, his inscription will be among the very first. Fourteen for that morning block, and then he is the 12th speaker.

And for so long as the statement or the speech of a leader conforms to the theme of course, then that will be discussed in what is called “the high-level general debate”. So inaanyayahan ko po ang lahat na manood dahil the UN will only commemorate its 75th year once. It’s like our ASEAN, it’s only commemorated only once, that was the 50th, the golden anniversary which also fell under the administration of President Duterte.

So I could enjoin and encourage lahat, inaanyayahan lahat na makinig sa Pangulo, at kung ano ang idi-discuss niya sa mga kasama niyang mga leaders also and to address the global community on what he feels at core issues that are important to the Philippines.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Thank you, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Salamat Mela. So, wala na po tayong katanungan. So, bago po tayo matapos perhaps, closing remarks from Governor Bambi Emano.

GOV. EMANO: Thank you, very much Secretary. First and foremost, let me thank you, the people of Misamis Oriental, especially in Northern Mindanao. Thank you for coming to Northern Mindanao, to check [unclear] in Region X. And RITM record would show that for Region X, Cagayan De Oro has the most positive case, Iligan, Lanao Del Norte then Misamis Oriental. Even if we are on the fourth, we requested for a MECQ and thank you for IATF permission that as much as possible, we don’t want it to [unclear] anymore, there really a short time for our people. And I hope that we can get the sooner response. We sent a letter last September 10, it’s September 21 and hopefully we will be given the opportunity [unclear] boundary control and thank you for coming and we hope [unclear]. Thank you very much and God bless po.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you very much, Governor Emano. As I said, our briefing today here in Cagayan De Oro was made possible through Governor Emano and the provincial government of Misamis Oriental. Thank you very much.

Since we have no more questions. I would like to thank all our guests today, Cagayan De Oro Mayor Oscar Moreno. Misamis Oriental Governor Bambi Emano, Iligan City Mayor Celso Regencia, Secretary Eduardo Del Rosario and, of course Chief of Protocols and Presidential Adviser on Foreign Affairs Robert Borje.

I would like to thank the local media of Cagayan De Oro. Thank you very much for your participation. And also, Franklin of PIA, thank you very much for agreeing to be moderator. Thank

you kay Usec. Rocky. At siyempre po nagpapasalamat din po ako kay Gingoog Mayor Erick Cañosa of Gingoog. At saka happy anniversary po kay Vice Mayor Senior Pedro Unabia. And thank you very much to the men and women of the Malacañang Press Corps. To the province of Misamis Oriental, to the City of Cagayan De Oro and to everyone, thank you very much for watching our press briefing.

Again po, on behalf of the President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, ito po ang inyong Spox Harry Roque na nagsasabing: Maraming salamat. Keep safe, Philippines, and we will heal as one.

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