

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

PRESS BRIEFING OF PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON HARRY ROQUE
September 29, 2020 (12:03P.M. – 1:12P.M.)

SEC. ROQUE: Magandang tanghali, Pilipinas.

Nakipag-usap sa taumbayan si Presidente Rodrigo Roa Duterte kagabi. Ito po ang ilan sa mga salient points ng kaniyang Talk to the People Address:

Inaprubahan ni Presidente ang rekomendasyon ng IATF na ipasailalim ang Lanao del Sur including Marawi City sa Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine or MECQ sa buong buwan ng Oktubre. Simula Huwebes, ang Iloilo City ay inilagay sa ilalim ng General Community Quarantine. Matatandaan na unang nilagay ng IATF ang nasabing lungsod sa MECQ na mananatili hanggang bukas, September 30. Kasama rin sa GCQ ang Metro Manila at Batangas sa Luzon, Tacloban City at Bacolod sa Visayas, at Iligan City sa Mindanao. Ang mga probinsiya at lungsod na hindi nabanggit ay ililagay sa Modified General Community Quarantine o MGCQ sa buwan ng Oktubre.

Sa Talk to the People din umapela si Presidente sa mga telcos na i-improve ang kanilang serbisyo sa bansa sa gitna ng pagsisimula ng online classes. Ipinanukala rin ng Pangulo sa Kongreso ang pagbubuwag ng PhilHealth Corporation or PhilHealth.

Nagsabi si Presidente ng kaniyang kahandaan na humarap sa Kongreso at pag-usapan kasama ang mga mambabatas kung paano mapuputol ang korapsiyon at gawing simple ang ease of doing business sa pamahalaan.

Gusto ni Presidente na makipag-usap kasama ang Facebook matapos tanggalin ng social media giant ang ilan sa mga advocacy pages na pabor po sa gobyerno.

Balitang IATF naman po tayo. Inaprubahan ng miyembro ng IATF kahapon, September 28, ang mga rekomendasyon ng DOH para ma-operationalize ang Coordinated Operations to Defend Epidemic or CODE. Una, inatasan ang DOH at ang DILG na mag-isyu ng kinakailangang joint guidelines para mapalawig ang implementasyon ng CODE sa lahat ng local government units. Pangalawa, inatasan ang DTI at DOLE, in coordination with DOH and the DILG, nai-localize ang CODE sa iba't ibang workplaces at labor sectors sa pamamagitan ng institutionalization ng CODE plans bilang bahagi ng implementasyon ng minimum public health standards.

Ang inyong lingkod ay nanggaling, ngayon lang po, kaninang umaga sa Bagong Nayong Pilipino para pasinayaan ang ceremonial turnover ng Solaire-PAGCOR Mega Quarantine Center. Sa ngayon, ito po ang maituturing na pinakamalaking quarantine facility para sa mga asymptomatic at mga mild cases sa buong Metro Manila. Ito ay naipatayo sa tulong ng Razon

Group. Inabot lamang ng less than two months construction po ito – five weeks, actually. Mayroon walong barrack-tents para sa mga pasyente, bawat tent ay may pitumpu't limang kama. Sa ngayon, mayroon nang 180 beds na nailagay sa 600-bed capacity. Mayroon ding labindalawang support tents para sa healthcare workers. This will be manned by the AFP-Health Service Command.

Lahat ng confirmed COVID patients na—sino po ang pupuwedeng mag-stay dito 'no? Lahat po ng mga confirmed cases na mild at asymptomatic; mga pasyenteng ni-refer ng mga lokal na pamahalaan, mga ahensiya at ang One Hospital Command Center. Paalala lang po, no walk-in kaya makipag-ugnayan po tayo sa ating LGU at sa One Hospital Command Center. Inaasahan na sa Nobyembre ay magsisimula na ang operasyon nito.

Nagpapasalamat po tayo muli hindi lamang po sa Solaire kung hindi sa Prime BMD, sa Bloomberry, sa Meralco, sa Maynilad para po dito sa pinakamalaking quarantine facility – 600 bed capacity – sa Metro Manila ngayon. Maraming, maraming salamat po sa ngalan ng ating Presidente at ng sambayanang Pilipino.

Punta naman po tayo sa ating COVID-19 updates. Ito ang global update ayon sa Johns Hopkins University: Higit tatlumpu't tatlong milyon na po or 33,273,720 kaso na ang COVID-19 sa buong mundo. Mayroong higit na isang milyong katao naman or 1,000,555 ang binawian ng buhay dahil sa coronavirus.

Nangunguna pa rin po ang Estados Unidos na mayroong 7,147,241 cases; at mga namatay na 205,031. Pumapangalawa po ang India – 6,074,702; ang mga namatay po doon ay 95,542. Pangatlo po ang Brazil – 4,745,464; ang mga namatay doon po ay 142,058. Pang-apat pa rin po ang Rusya – 1,154,299; ang mga namatay doon po ay 20,299. At ang Colombia po ay panlima – 818,203; ang namatay po doon ay 25,641.

Dito naman po sa ating bayan, mayroon na po tayong mga na-test na 3,439,095 na mga indibidwal sa mga 104 RT-PCR laboratories at 32 licensed GeneXpert laboratories. Ang total pong active cases ngayon sa ating bansa ay 49,242. Sa numerong ito, ang asymptomatic po ay 8.7%, ang mild ay 86.4%, ang severe ay 1.5% at ang kritikal ay 3.4%.

Dumadami po ang mga nagri-recover o gumagaling – 252,665; ang mga namatay po ay 5,381; 1.75 po ang ating case mortality rate.

Dito po nagtatapos ang ating presentasyon ngayong tanghali 'no. Well, bago ko po puntahan ang question and answer, unahin po muna natin si Dr. Wong. Dr. John Wong, puwede ba hong paki-explain lang like we are 5-year olds kung paano po ngayon ang ginagamit nating guidelines pagdating po sa classification ng iba't ibang lugar sa Pilipinas. Dr. John Wong, the floor is yours.

DR. WONG: Good afternoon sir. Good afternoon, everyone. Can I have my slides, please?

SEC. ROQUE: Mukhang nawala si Dr. Wong.

DR. WONG: I'm here.

SEC. ROQUE: Go ahead, please.

DR. WONG: Can you increase the size of the slides?

SEC. ROQUE: Increase the size of the slides, please. Okay, go ahead, Dr. Wong, the floor is yours.

DR. WONG: I cannot really see the slides, too small.

SEC. ROQUE: Dr. Wong, it's the largest that we can do with your slides. Pasensiya na po.

DR. WONG: Okay. Yeah, I'll just base from my own set.

The DOH have revised its classification, we're using a new framework, that includes concept called gate-keeping. So why gate-keeping 'no? The priority of the government now is simultaneous, to control the epidemic but also open up the economy. But we know that opening up the economy entails more risk 'no than sheltering in place. Although the rest may be justified 'no, systems have to be put in place, preventive actions, detect cases, trace contacts, then isolate and quarantine cases and contacts 'no.

Having these public health capacities will serve as controls to manage the increased risk that comes with opening up the economy. On the other hand, without these capacities, communities are under risk on reverting to higher levels of quarantine and losing all of the economic gains.

So, these are some of the indicators that we will be using 'no, some of these have used in the past 'no but the new figures is that we're using measures to the measures health system capacity as gate keeping criteria before we relax the community quarantine of any LGU. So, on the last slide you see output or outcome indicators. So, these are measures of where we are now in terms of number of cases, number of deaths, growth rate, positivity rate.

To the right side, using measures of health systems capacity. So, these are what we want the LGUs to put in place 'no before we de-escalate their community quarantine.

So, there are public health capacities like contact tracing and isolation and quarantine capacities and efficiency; and there are also the hospital system capacities – number of isolation beds and ventilators.

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So, this is the framework... this is the framework that we are using, so this is where the LGUs are now. So, we have frozen the community quarantine status of LGUs for this month and next month and then de-escalation will only happen using very stringent criteria of an LGU exceeding its healthcare utilization rate. So, this is to ensure that hospitals are not overwhelmed and [unclear].

On the other hand, the goal of every LGU is to try to lower their community quarantine status and reach the new normal.

So, de-escalation depends on several criteria, so we call this the gate keeping criteria. So, first is public health capacity. So, are the communities adherent to minimum health standards; do they have enough testing capacity; contact tracing; isolation and quarantine capacity and are they efficient on doing these processes.

Once that they have established or proven that they have these capacities, we measure their—these are the two new indicators: ADAR (Average Daily Attack Rate) and the 2-week growth rate (2WGR). So, once they meet again the cutoffs of these criteria then we allow them through the gate 'no to a lower level of community quarantine.

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So, these are the criteria for escalation 'no... if you look at the table, we've changed the cutoffs a bit. So instead of using the 30% and 70% cutoff we're using 60, 70 and 85% as cutoffs for de-escalating communities or LGUs from GCQ to MECQ to GCQ.

Next slide, please.

Just to explain our two new indicators. The first one, Average Daily Attack Rate or incidence rate – this is also incidence rate. Attack rate is just incidence rate in the context of an outbreak. So, this is just a number of new cases over a two-week period divided by the population of the LGU. So, this is the measure of risk of the population—risk of infection in a certain LGUs. So, high ADARs means if you live there your risk on getting the infection is high and vice versa.

For the second indicator, 2-Week Growth Rate, this is a measure of the growth of the epidemic in that area. So, we are comparing the number of new cases in the past two weeks to the number of new cases three to four weeks, for the two weeks previous to that and we measure it in terms of percentage. So, growth rate may be positive meaning epidemic is growing or it may be zero or negative meaning it's stable or shrinking.

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So, we've assemble these two criteria in a three by three table that shows the different levels of risk and the corresponding community quarantine status including the new normal. So, depending on the cutoffs 'no, for these two indicators we classify LGUs and they receive corresponding community quarantine status. However, let me emphasize that again, these

are output criteria but our focus now is to measure gate keeping criteria first before we even look at the output criteria.

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And these are just some examples of gate keeping criteria. So, as you see ‘no they measure input and process. So, for example, there’s a prevention the number of epidemiology or surveillance officers the number of BHERTs ‘no. In terms of detection, positivity rate, number of contact tracing teams, number of isolation beds.

So, there are many more criteria and we’re developing others to provide us a good measure that LGUs have a sufficient capacity to control any other outbreak once we exit to—or de-escalate to a lighter form of community quarantine or even to the new normal. Because without these capacities pretty soon we’ll have to escalate naman iyan and then lose all of the economic gains.

I think that is my last slide. Thank you.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you very much, Doctor John Wong.

Sir, considering the GCQ classification of Metro Manila, puwede bang ibalik natin ang dual criteria? Iyong dual criteria po bakit po nagkaroon ng recommendation na GCQ ang Metro Manila using the 2-pronged criteria?

Iyong table po ... Iyan ... iyan ...

Bakit po ang naging rekomendasyon ng IATF na nadeklara ng Presidente ay GCQ for Metro Manila?

DR. WONG: Sa two levels ‘no, if you look first at the gate keeping criteria before we look at the Attack Rates and growth rates ‘no. So evaluating the public health capacity, this LGU will show evidence that they have sufficient capacity in terms of testing, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine. So, if they have that criteria then we look at these two indicators to classify them in terms of community quarantine status.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Pero bakit nga po naging GCQ ang Metro Manila? Ibig sabihin ba niyan nasa medium tayo ng 2-week Growth Rate at tayo po ay nasa medium din ng Average Daily Attack Rate?

DR. WONG: Ah, yes ... yes.

SEC. ROQUE: Yes. So, tama po iyong sinabi ko kanina.

Maraming salamat, Doctor John Wong. I'm sure may iba pa tayong mga tanong kasama sa ating Malacañang Press Corps. Pinipilit din po natin ngayon isama sa ating press briefing ang representante po ng Solaire dahil nga po doon sa kaka-inaugurate lang natin na isolation facility, 600-bed capacity isolation facility pero habang kino-contact pa po ang representante siguro simulan na natin ang ating open forum.

USec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Good afternoon, Secretary Roque. Good afternoon, Dr. Wong. Question from Arianne Merez/ABS-CBN Online: Has there been any formal communication between the President or Malacañang and Facebook? What concrete action does the President expect from Facebook?

SEC. ROQUE: Wala pa pong concrete na aksiyon na ginawa ang Presidente. Kakaanunsiyo lang po niya iyan kagabi. Ang konkretong aksiyon po ay huwag pong supilin ang kalayaan nang malayang pananalita ng mga personalidad o mga pages na pabor po sa gobyerno. Kasi ang nangyayari po, kapag laban sa gobyerno hindi po tinatanggal ng Facebook; kapag sumusuporta sa gobyerno naitatanggal po. So matagal na pong naninindigan ang ating Pangulo para sa malayang pananalita, eh bakit naman dito sa physical personification, iyong physical personification ng free marketplace of idea ay sini-censor kapag kampi po sa gobyerno ang mga postings.

USEC. IGNACIO: Second question po ni Arianne: Should Filipinos be concerned of a possible Facebook ban in the Philippines following the President's pronouncements?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi naman po siguro dahil ang sabi ni Presidente kinakailangan mag-usap. Well, alam ninyo po parehong hindi mabuti iyan sa Facebook at sa Pilipinas 'no, number one po kasi sa buong mundo tayo sa Facebook 'no. So kung mawawala tayo, malaking kawalan po iyan sa Facebook pero at the same time dahil number one nga tayo, marami ring Pilipinong gumagamit ng Facebook na maaapektuhan din. So ang sabi naman ng Presidente pag-usapan iyan dahil pare-pareho naman silang sinusulong ang karapatan nang malayang pananalita at iyong malayang merkado ng mga idea.

USEC. IGNACIO: Last question from Arianne po: The President last night said he will begin shaking the tree sa PhilHealth. He also mentioned considering abolishing it. For now, what exactly does the President want to do or [want to] happen to PhilHealth?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, binigyan po ng hanggang bagong taon lamang si Attorney Gierran para linisin iyang PhilHealth na iyan 'no. So figurative po iyon, iyong sinasabi niyang 'shaking the tree'. Kinakailangan talaga tanggalin ang mga bulok diyan sa PhilHealth at kung hindi talaga magawa iyan by December, well kinakailangan ng batas para buwagin po iyan at palitan ng bago.

Matagal ko na pong sinabi ito, pareho po kami talaga ng paninindigan ni Presidente pagdating sa bagay na ito. Noong sinulong po natin ang Universal Healthcare Law sa Mababang

Kapulungan, binuwag ko po sa aking bill iyong PhilHealth at pinalitan ng National Health Service pero ginapang po ng mga tiga-PhilHealth. By the time I was defending the bill in Congress, bumalik po ang PhilHealth at lalo pang napalakas.

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

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Punta naman po tayo kay Michael Ray Aquino, siya po ang magsasalita para sa Solaire Group. Sir Michael Ray Aquino, are you in the house?

MR. AQUINO: Yes, Secretary Roque, I'm here. Good to see you. Thank you for having me.

SEC. ROQUE: Sir, magkano po iyong ginastos ninyo para dito sa 600-bed capacity isolation facility dito po sa Bagong Nayong Pilipino?

MR. AQUINO: I think from the Razon Group, mga 225 million more or less, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Two hundred twenty-five (225) million. Bakit naman po gumasta ng ganitong kalaki para sa ganitong isolation facility?

MR. AQUINO: I think from the very start, our Chairman, Mr. Enrique Razon and the group of companies under him wanted to help/assist the government recover economy and open up our economy and help us flatten the curve with regard to fighting this pandemic, iyong COVID-19.

SEC. ROQUE: Opo. Now, doon po sa facility na itinayo, mayroon ba hong mga tents doon na para gamitin din ng Solaire Group or lahat po ito pampubliko?

MR. AQUINO: Lahat pampubliko. Now if ever na mayroon kaming kaso, we are welcome to use the facility. So iyon ang naging arrangement ng gobyerno at saka iyong Razon Group of Companies, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Oo. Ano pa po iyong mga na-donate ninyo na sa COVID-19 efforts ng Pilipinas bukod pa po dito sa 225-million 600-bed isolation facility?

MR. AQUINO: Medyo marami na rin, Secretary. Among them is iyong Ninoy Aquino Stadium quarantine facility, Rizal Memorial Coliseum quarantine facility, iyong testing centers doon sa may Enderun. Tapos iyong pag-distribute ng mga PPEs, gloves and other rapid test kits noong unang nagkaroon tayo ng COVID-19 outbreak at marami pang iba. Siguro mga humigit-kumulang ng 1 billion/1.5 billion, iyon ang estimate natin.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Well maraming salamat nga po dahil ang Office of the Presidential Spokesperson ay nabigyan po ng rapid test kits na siyang ginagamit namin sa aming mga kasama. Sir, if you can stay and join us for our open forum just in case mayroon pong tanong

ang ating mga kasama sa Malacañang Press Corps. And again, thank you very much to the Razon Group, Solaire sa Prime BMD, sa Bloomberg, Meralco ang Maynilad.

Next question is from Joyce Balancio please, ABS-CBN.

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: Yes. Good afternoon po, Secretary. Yesterday, si President Duterte, he admitted that he offered to resign because of endless corruption in the government. Can you give us more details as to when he made this offer to resign? Was it recent and who or what changed the mind of the President or up to this point, is he still considering or thinking of resigning?

SEC. ROQUE: Wala po akong detalye ‘no kasi narinig ko na po iyan. Hindi naman po kauna-unahang sinabi rin ni Presidente iyan. Pero sa tagal ng kaniyang panunungkulan bilang alkalde pa at vice mayor at ngayon ay Presidente, ang talagang frustration po niya kumbaga ay talagang hindi nawawala itong korapsiyon. Kaya nga po iyong mga nagdududa kung iyong aking mga pananalita laban sa korapsiyon lalo na iyong mga regulatory bodies ay nagdududa kung ako ay nagsasalita on behalf of the President, malinaw po ngayon talaga – zero tolerance po talaga ang Presidente laban sa korapsiyon.

Now, hindi po natuloy ang resignation ni Presidente, tingin ko hindi po siya magri-resign ngayon dahil dalawang taon na lamang natitira sa kaniyang termino. Pero igugugol po niya iyong natitirang panahon niya para talagang linisin ang mga iba’t ibang ahensiya ng ating gobyerno.

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: Okay, sir. Follow up lang po doon sa Facebook. Iyon nga po, yesterday President lambasted Facebook for allegedly laying down a policy for the government and he goes on saying and I will quote him: “*Pati iyong advocacy ng gobyerno tinanggal.*” So is this an admission from the President himself that the government is behind some of those accounts and pages that were taken down by Facebook?

And since the President mentioned na pati iyong advocacy ng gobyerno tinanggal, can you categorically label which pages are the part of advocacies of the government? Kasi mayroon po doon pages, may referral to the possible presidential bid of Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte, mayroong anti-communist pages, mayroon din pong pages on West Philippine Sea issue.

SEC. ROQUE: Alam mo pinaka-sensitive ang Pangulo doon sa Save Our Children [Hands Off Our Children] Page, okay, dahil iyon po ay pinangangalagaan po ang kapakanan ng ating kabataan. At sa larangan po ng international law, notorious po ang mga komunista in recruiting children as combatants despite iyong absolute ban on the recruitment of children as combatants ‘no. Eh iyan po iyong isa sa mga advocacy pages na natanggal. Hindi po iyan minimentina ng gobyerno pero iyan po ay tumutulong sa adbokasiya ng gobyerno na isulong iyong obligasyon natin sang-ayon po sa Geneva Convention at doon sa additional protocols ng Geneva Conventions at doon sa International Convention on the Rights of the Child ‘no. Eh bakit naman po nga tinanggal iyang ganiyang adbokasiya?

So malinaw po ang Presidente, kinakailangan pag-usapan ito at hindi po kinukunsinti ni Presidente ang censorship ng mga pro-government advocacies ‘no, kasama na po itong adbokasiya to protect the children against child enlistment as combatants.

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: How about, sir, nabanggit ko po na other pages like iyong those with referral to the possible presidential bid of Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte, anti-communist pages? How about those pages, Secretary?

SEC. ROQUE: Lahat po iyan ay advocacy groups ‘no. Ang punto dito, bakit kapag pabor sa gobyerno, tinatanggal; kapag pabor sa oposisyon, hindi tinatanggal ‘no. Bakit ang fact-checkers [ay] laban sa gobyerno? Sino pa dito sa bayan na ito ang magdududa na ang Rappler at ang Vera Files ay talaga namang kontra sa administrasyon ni Presidente Duterte? Bakit sila lamang ang kinuhang fact-checkers ng Facebook? Hello, kung hindi ka kumbinsido na laban sila sa gobyerno baka ikaw ay tiga-ibang planeta ‘no.

So anyway, ang iba’t ibang mga bansa po ngayon nagsisimula na iyong proseso na gobyerno na ang kumukuha ng fact-checkers. Sinimulan na po iyan sa Europa at pag-aaralan po natin kung dapat gawin na natin iyan, dahil hindi naman tayo makakapayag na ang fact-checkers eh tanging mga laban lamang sa gobyerno.

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: Last na lang po for me, Secretary. Si Trade Secretary Lopez said that more businesses under GCQ should reopen fully and expand their operational capacity, iyong mga naka-50% daw po baka puwede na buksan up to 100%. Is this something that the IATF will approve and was it discussed during the meeting yesterday?

SEC. ROQUE: Again, ayaw ko pong pangunahan ang IATF. Pero ang alam ko po, noong huling pagpupulong ng mga mayor – at ako po ay sumilip sa meeting na iyon sandali lang, dahil I had four meetings ongoing via Zoom on a Sunday night – ay suportado naman po ng maraming mga mayor sa Metro Manila na bagama’t nasa GCQ tayo ay mas marami pang o mas malaking sector po ng ekonomiya ay buksan.

At ang ating kampanya nga po ngayon: We need to live with COVID and in spite COVID, kaya po iyan, pag-ingatan lang po ang ating mga buhay para tayo po ay makapaghanapbuhay.

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: Thank you, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Joyce. Christian Gonzalez is also on the line. Thank you very much. Mr. Gonzalez, are you on the line?

CHRISTIAN GONZALEZ: Yes, Sec., good afternoon. How are you?

SEC. ROQUE: Christian Gonzalez is number two in the Solaire Group of Companies.

Sir, my question is, you have spent in excess of one billion pesos to help the government in the COVID-19 pandemic, including ito pong huling proyekto na in-inaugurate natin kanina, iyong 600-bed isolation facility. Ang tanong po siguro ng marami, bakit ganito kalaking ginagastos ng Razon Group para sa COVID-19 response po ng ating bayan?

CHRISTIAN GONZALEZ: Sec., thank you for having me on. We realized from the very beginning and in many of our discussions with the government that this was always going to be a public-private sector effort against COVID. And we have been extremely committed to this together with the IATF and most especially on the Solaire side together with PAGCOR who was really been the leading agency in working with us to build this facilities, particularly the one in Bagong Nayong Pilipino.

SEC. ROQUE: Alam ko po, marami na kayong napagawa, in-enumerate na po ni Michael Ray Aquino – iyong World Trade Center, Rizal Memorial Coliseum, lahat po iyan ay ni-renovate ninyo para maging isolation centers. Pero ang tanong ko naman po: Titigil na ba ho ang Razon Group sa pagbibigay ng mga ganitong mga proyekto sa sambayan or mayroon pang aasahan po ang sambayan galing po sa Razon Group?

CHRISTIAN GONZALEZ: Kung ano ang kailangan ng ating bansa, Sec., gagawin talaga namin, whether it's through Solaire or through ICTSI or through multiple cooperation with our regulatory agencies, itutuloy pa rin namin iyan, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Well, again po, on behalf of the President and on behalf of a grateful nation, thank you very much to the Razon Group for all your donations in relation to our COVID-19 response, the latest of which is the 600-bed isolation facility. Thank you very much. And I hope you can join us also in case the members of the Malacañang Press Corps have questions. Yes, we go back to USec. Rocky, please.

CHRISTIAN GONZALEZ: Yes, sir. Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes, Secretary, from Gillian Cortez of Business World: Are there new instructions by the President to PhilHealth CEO Gierran regarding the President's address yesterday on wanting to reorganize PhilHealth?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, wala naman pong bagong instruction. Binigyan siya until December of this year, until end of the year to fix up the mess in PhilHealth, otherwise baka po palitan na by legislation ang PhilHealth para mas mabilis iyong pagtatanggal po diyan sa bulok. Iyon lang po ang intensyon ng Presidente.

Kasi po habang binubuwag ang PhilHealth, may mga Civil Service eligibility po iyong marami diyang nagtatrabaho and they are protected by Civil Service Law; matatanggal lang sila kung mayroong due process. Pero iyong problema po talaga sa PhilHealth, talagang masyado na pong systemic iyong problema, napakadami nilang dapat tanggalin, napaka-pervasive po ng influence nila, kaya iniisip ni Presidente baka mas mabuting i-abolish and start from scratch.

Iyong mga matitino naman po, wala kayong dapat alalahanin dahil alam naman po ng Presidente kung sino talaga ang bulok at sino ang matino. At naninindigan pa rin ang Presidente na marami pa rin pong mga mabubuting mga manggagawa ng gobyerno diyan po sa PhilHealth.

USEC. IGNACIO: Second question ni Gillian: Will the President kick more officials out of PhilHealth even before the investigations are over?

SEC. ROQUE: Sa tingin ko po, dahil nandiyan na po iyong initial report ng Task Force PhilHealth at nagsalita na rin po ang PACC na 40 pa ang kanilang kakasuhan. Asahan na po natin ang sibakan, malawakang sibakan diyan sa PhilHealth.

We go now to Maricel Halili of TV 5.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Hi, sir! Magandang hapon po. Sir, follow up lang po sa question ni Arianne kanina about Facebook. I understand the President is now eyeing to—or is not eyeing to ban Facebook in the country anytime soon. But how should we describe the message of the President last night about Facebook? Should we say that it is a warning, an appeal or a threat against the admin?

SEC. ROQUE: Wala po, malinaw po ang sabi niya, ‘kinakailangan mag-usap tayo.’ And alam ninyo, the President is not alone, hindi po nag-iisa ang Pilipinas dito. Eh, iyong Mark Zuckerberg nga, iyong founder ng Facebook mismo, talagang sinasabi niya na mas marami talagang malawakang reporma ang kinakailangan nilang gawin. Sinabi nga niya minsan, baka nga kinakailangan magkaroon ng kahit papaanong regulasyon sa Facebook at kinakailangan ma-identify talaga nila kung sino talaga iyong mga actors sa Facebook.

So ito po ay usapin na nangyayari sa buong daigdig. Nagreklamo ang maraming estado, hindi lang po ang Pilipinas, ang mga Europeans, dahil nga po doon sa fact checkers na piling-pili lamang at laban sa mga gobyernong pinipili nila. So, ito po ay kabahagi ng worldwide conversation na nangyayari.

Ang pinagsimulan po ng Facebook, kinakailangang ikonek nga iyong mga kaibigan at mga kamag-anak; pero ngayon po nagagamit na talaga siya sa pulitika. So, nagbabago iyong anyo ng Facebook. Kinakailangan din magkaroon po tayo ng mga bagong mga patakaran ‘no para naman po magkaroon ng level playing field diyan po sa Facebook.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Sir, just to reiterate: Will the President initiate the dialogue with the Facebook admin? And number two, nagti-trending po kasi ngayon – speaking of social media – trending po kasi ngayon sa Twitter iyong #paalamduterte following the statement of President last night that he offered to resign from his post. Your thoughts on that, sir?

SEC. ROQUE: Wala naman po, alam ko naman po kung sino iyong mga iyan. Alam ko po kung sino ang namumuno sa kanila. Alam naman natin kung sino ang kalaban ng gobyerno, iyong

mga gahaman po sa kapangyarihan, iyong mga hindi makaantay sa 2022, iyong mga nawalan ng hanapbuhay dahil ginagawang hanapbuhay ang gobyerno. Hindi po ako nasu-surprise.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Sir, on PhilHealth issue. Should the President push through with his plan to abolish PhilHealth, what will happen to ordinary employees of PhilHealth? And ano iyong assurance doon sa premium o iyong bayad po na ibinibigay ng mga members ng PhilHealth? Should they continue to pay for the premium?

SEC. ROQUE: Wala pong problema iyan, nakasaad nga doon sa—nauna ko nang pinayl, ito po iyong ginawang batas na universal healthcare na magkakaroon naman talaga ng screening para ang ma-retain lang po sa bagong i-establish para palitan ang PhilHealth ay iyong mga matitino. Sino ba ho iyan? Eh di iyong mga walang kaso. Sigurado naman lahat ng mga bugok diyan kahit papaano makakasuhan.

Ang problema, kapag hindi po in-abolish, kinakailangan patunayan pa bago sila matanggal. Pero kapag na-abolish na iyan ay pupuwede nang mas madaling magtanggap, kung mayroong bahid ng korapsyon puwede nang tanggalin.

Pero magkakaroon po tayo ng tinatawag na transitory provision, siyempre lahat ng bayad dapat patuloy pa rin dahil hindi naman po titigil ang PhilHealth kahit buwagin siya. Magkakaroon po iyan ng kapalit, sa aking panukalang batas ang pangalan ay National Health Service.

So, magkakaroon po iyan ng kapalit at tuluy-tuloy naman po iyong mandato ng PhilHealth o kung anuman iyong papalit. Sang-ayon po sa batas na isinulong natin, Universal Healthcare, siya pa rin ang primary purchaser ng lahat ng medical services and goods.

So, wala pong magbabago, mga mukha lang, matatanggal lang po ang korapsyon kapag nabuwag at bumuo ng bagong organisasyon na gaganap din ng ginagawa po ng PhilHealth.

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary, tanong mula kay Celerina Monte of Manila Shimbun: PRRD or President Duterte mentioned last night that the government will sell its property in Japan. Specifically which property? Why? And why does the government want to sell this property first and not the other government assets? How much does the government expect from the sale of that property?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, alam po ninyo, ito ay isang suhestiyon lang, kung kinakailangan pa natin ng pondo para sa COVID response. Pero fortunately maraming gaya ng Razon Group, nandiyan na rin po ang MVP Group, nandiyan na rin po iyong Ayala Group na tumutulong naman po sa gobyerno sa pagbibigay po ng mga pangangailangan natin sa COVID. So sana po hindi na kinakailangang magbenta ng mga assets.

Pero kung hindi po ako nagkakamali, at least dalawa po iyang assets sa Japan, nagkaroon na po ng desisyon ang Korte Suprema diyan, iyong Laurel vs. Executive Secretary [Garcia]. Ang

sabi po ng Korte Suprema, these properties constitute part of the national patrimony dahil nga po dahil nga po symbolic iyong pagbibigay ng dalawang property na iyan by way of war reparations 'no. At kinakailangan kung ibibenta iyan, hindi lang po Presidente ang sasang-ayon kung hindi pati po ang Kongreso. Ang kaso po pala ay Laurel vs. Garcia.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Usec. Going now to Tricia Terada, please.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Good afternoon, Secretary. Follow up lang po doon sa naunang question tungkol po doon sa pagbibenta ng properties. I think sir, the context was about nagbibenta ng properties to solve this problem, na pagkawala ng pondo dito sa PhilHealth. Sir, since natanong na po kung ano iyong properties that we're talking about, we're interested to know kung hanggang saan na lang po ba iyong pera o pondong mayroon iyong PhilHealth to support its current beneficiaries na umabot sa point na kailangan pong ibenta itong ilang real estate properties natin sa Japan? If I remember correctly, sir, DFA has also said na it may lead to legal problems ito pong pagbibenta. I think, iyong isa doon is Roppongi Property.

SEC. ROQUE: Well, dalawa nga po iyan 'no at mayroon ng desisyon ang Korte Suprema. Pero hindi naman sinabi ng Korte Suprema, imposibleng ibenta. Sinabi na ng Korte Suprema, kinakailangan magkaroon ng polisiya galing sa Presidente at Kongreso.

Now, ang problema po dito sa PhilHealth, sa tindi po ng problema na iyan, hindi natin talaga alam kung hanggang kailan lang ang pondo ng PhilHealth dahil nga walang namang nagsasabi ng totoo diyan eh dahil nga lantaran iyong naging nakawan. Iyong head ng IT diyan, kaya nga po dinemanda iyan ay dahil talagang kakulangan iyan ng IT department; dapat iyan, isang pindot natin alam natin kung nasaan ang PhilHealth.

Pero huwag po kayong mag-alala, dahil nga po sa Universal Healthcare Law, kung kulang po iyan ay tutustusan po galing sa kaban ng taumbayan. Kaya nga po, kung kinakailangan, ibibenta iyong mga properties na iyan. At hindi lang naman po Roppongi, marami pa tayong mga ibang properties na pupuwedeng ibenta 'no.

So in other words, sinasabi lang ni Presidente, 'Sagot ko ang inyong kalusugan,' dahil iyan ang batas na sinertify [certified] niyang urgent noong iyan po ay tinatalakay sa Kongreso, paninindigan po niya iyong obligasyon ng estado na pangalagaan ang kalusugan ng mga Pilipino. If it means having to sell assets, why not.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Sir, doon naman po sa issue ng Facebook. Since Facebook is a private entity and they are operating here in the country as a private entity, sir, in a way, hindi po ba entitled sila to parang conduct whatever they want to do with their own business, kumbaga, have their own screening with whatever they want to do with their business or their platform?

SEC. ROQUE: That is correct. Ang sinasabi lang ni Presidente, dapat maging patas sila. Bakit ang freedom of speech, binibigay lang nila sa mga kontra gobyerno; bakit naman sinusupil nila iyong boses ng mga kampi po sa gobyerno.

Now, ang sabi naman po ni Presidente, pag-usapan natin because the Philippine government has allowed Facebook to operate in the Philippines, as in fact, we are the number users of Facebook.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Secretary, mayroon pong retired government official that asked the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order to stop the IATF from imposing quarantine restrictions on senior citizens during the pandemic. Sinasabi po that it's inhumane and it violated their human rights. What is the IATF think of this? And maybe, sir, reiteration na lang po noong position ng IATF tungkol dito.

SEC. ROQUE: The IATF cannot be bothered by this suit. Karapatan niya iyan, pero naninindigan po ang IATF na iyong prohibition po sa galaw ng mga seniors is borne by science and medicine. Sa buong daigdig po, ang mga tinatamaan at namamatay sa COVID-19 ay ang mga seniors at mayroong comorbidities, and that is a scientific fact.

So itong kaso po, bagama't hindi natin pinapangunahan ang Supreme Court, tingin ko po ay wala pong mangyayari diyan dahil isa sa acknowledge powers of the state is the power of police power. At ang basehan po sa pag-exercise ng police power ay iyong pangalagaan ang kalusugan mismo ng mga seniors.

So to the petitioner, ito pong pagbabawal sa inyong movement outside of your residence except for work and to procure necessities is for your own benefit. It is to protect your lives amidst the proven fact po na ang mga namamatay sa COVID-19, karamihan po, senior citizens.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Thank you, Secretary. Salamat po.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Mayroon pa ba kayong tanong kay Dr. Wong because he has to leave at one? Do you have questions too for Michael Ray Aquino and Christian Gonzalez?

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: I have for Dr. Wong.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay, please, Dr. Wong. Go ahead, Joseph.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Sir, good afternoon, Dr. Wong. Sir, iyong sa data na lang, during the decision making process of the IATF, what is our ADR, Metro Manila and our two-week growth rate? Can I just get the figure?

DR. WONG: I don't have it on my fingertips 'no. I'll have to look it up. Maybe I'll just send it to you.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Okay, sir. Sige po, I'll just wait for it. Thank you, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. So, Dr. Wong, thank you very much for joining us, since there are no more questions for you. Sa uulitin po.

DR. WONG: Thank you.

SEC. ROQUE: I'll call now on Usec. Rocky again.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Secretary, tanong mula kay Haydee Sampang ng DZAS: Humihingi po ng saklolo ang mga magsasaka dahil sobrang bagsak ang presyo ng palay. Mas mura pa nga raw ang palay ngayon kumpara sa face masks. Posible rin daw lalong pang bumaba ang buying price ng palay dahil kapag tag-ulan ay bumababa rin ang kalidad ng aning palay. Dahil dito, may mungkahi na bigyan din ng ayuda ng gobyerno ang ating mga magsasaka.

SEC. ROQUE: Mayroon naman po talagang pinapautang ang ating Department of Agriculture at iyan po ay nakasaad din sa Bayanihan II. At mayroon pong regular na programa na nagbibigay nga po ng tulong ang DA maski po walang pandemya, nandiyan na po talaga iyan.

Now, ano po ang ginagawa ngayon? Nagtutulungan po ang NFA, ang DA at ang mga lokal na pamahalaan para sila na po ang bumili nang mas, kahit papaano, mas mataas na presyo sa ating mga magsasaka dahil alam natin na napakadaming Pilipino ang nakasandal po sa pagsasaka, lalung-lalo na po ng bigas para sa kanilang hanapbuhay.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Punta naman tayo kay Melo Acuña.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Good afternoon, Secretary. Binanggit po ng World Bank na iyong COVID-19 shock ay magiging dahilan ng pagkakaroon ng mga bagong mahihirap. Ito iyong tinagurian nilang “new poor”. At iyong mga dating nailigtas na sa poverty through the poverty alleviation programs ng pamahalaan ay maaaring mahulog ulit sa kahirapan. Mayroon po kaya tayong paraan para malaman kung sinu-sino ang mga ito?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, sa akin po ‘no, bagama’t ako po ay hindi talaga ekonomista – undergrad degree lang ako in economics – dahil po sa pandemya, talaga pong hard-hit iyong ating turismo at hard-hit din po iyong ating mga OFWs. At ito po iyong mga tinatawag nga ng World Bank na dati-rati ay naisalba na natin sa kahirapan.

So ito po ang dahilan kung bakit unti-unti po nating binubuksan ang turismo dahil nga alam natin na napakadaming mga kababayan natin na nakadepende sa sektor na iyan ‘no. At ito rin po ang dahilan kung bakit ang TESDA, ang DA, ang DTI ay hindi lang nagpapautang sa mga OFWs na napauwi kung hindi sinusuportahan din po natin sila na magkaroon sila ng re-tooling

kumbaga 'no para magkaroon sila ng alternatibong hanapbuhay. So malungkot pong katotohanan, pero talagang turismo at mga OFWs po, hard-hit by the pandemic.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Nabanggit din po ng World Bank na iyong darating na halalan sa 2022 ay maaaring makapagpaangat ng ekonomiya sa ikalawang bahagi ng 2021 hanggang doon sa 2022. Ano po ang projections ninyo?

SEC. ROQUE: Alam ninyo naman ang halalan is always good for the economy, and that's why no Filipino will ever consent na walang halalan. Three years lang sila diyan 'no, every three years lang sila. Tapatan na 'no, every three years lang sila makikinabang sa mga pulitiko 'no.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Okay. Pahabol lang: Kung bubuwagin po ang PhilHealth saan mapupunta iyong pera?

SEC. ROQUE: Doon sa papalit po sa PhilHealth. Mayroon namang papalit diyan eh. Paulit-ulit kong sinasabi, iyong bersiyon ko dati, ang binubuo natin na bago ay national health service. So ililipat lang po siya doon sa bagong organisasyon na gagampanan din ang mga responsibilidad ng PhilHealth.

MELO ACUNA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Maraming salamat po. Thank you!

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you, Melo. Back to USec. Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary, tanong mula kay Rose Novenario ng Hataw: Ano po ang reaksiyon ng Palasyo sa pahayag ni Bayan Secretary General Renato Reyes Jr. na dapat atupagin ng gobyerno ang problema sa pandemya hindi ang pagbabalik ng mga fake pages at accounts sa FB, tigilan na nila ang paggamit ng pondo at rekurso ng gobyerno para sa disinformation?

SEC. ROQUE: Eh, kapuwa bulag po yata si Renato Reyes gaya ng ating VP at hindi alam kung anong ginagawa ng gobyerno sa pandemya, although nagtataka ako bakit hindi sila magkakampi din. Anyway, hayaan na po natin sila. Hayaan mo silang mabuhay sa kanilang mundo na walang ginagawa ang gobyerno kung kaligayahan nila iyan.

Joseph Morong, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you.

SEC. ROQUE: Joseph Morong, please. Wala kang audio.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Sir, hello!

SEC. ROQUE: Ayan, ayan.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Okay. Sir, iyon munang sa MGCQ kasi mayroon ka yatang interview kanina sa Unang Hirit that you've mentioned 200% iyong two-week growth rate? I asked si Doctor—

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi lang po ako naging malinaw siguro pero hindi po iyon ang intension ko. Ibalik mo iyong screen.

Dini-describe ko lang po kung anong iyong bagong classification system at ang binabasa ko po—in fact, ito iyong binabasa ko. Iyong sa 2-week growth rate kapag 200% or less – medium; kapag high, it is in excess of 200.

Now, kanina po sinabi rin ni John Wong na tama naman po ako, it's between 0 to 200% ang ating 2-week growth rate at iyong ating attack rate ay moderate, under medium one to seven per 100,000 kaya ang naging classification ay GCQ. So, iyon po iyong 200%. It's not a 200%, it's between 0 to 200%.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Okay. So, you gave me already the—

SEC. ROQUE: Sandali po, itatanong ko. Mayroon ka bang slides diyan on Metro Manila?

Wala po sa amin iyong actual figure, so it's—ang growth rate po natin over two weeks is between 0 to 200 and then ang ating attack rate is moderate because there's one to seven per 100,000 na mayroon pong attack rate.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Yeah, okay. All right, sir. Sir, parang medyo—using this matrix or data analytics, mukhang medyo mahirap at matatagalan tayo to graduate to MGCQ kasi parang medyo ... this is a very ... what ... stringent measure?

SEC. ROQUE: May pag-asa naman po as reported by UP OCTA Group. Ang growth rate naman po natin ay bumagsak din tapos iyong ating attack rate ay bumabagsak din. So, there's always hope.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Sir, can I go to the statement of the President last night to resign. He was mentioning this in the context of his frustration over corruption. I remember there was a meeting on September 16 with the congressional leaders, si SP Sotto and then si House Speaker APC. Iyong offer to resign niya, was that made during that meeting? And was the offer made to the leaders of our legislative branch?

SEC. ROQUE: I can say that it was not made there. I think, it was made a lot earlier.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: A lot earlier, hindi po iyon iyong reference natin. Okay, sir—but this is not the first time the President has said this, but last night sabi niya parang sasabihin ko ito or hindi but he said it. Is the President serious about his offer to resign?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, let's just say it's a—he's serious about his expression of exasperation. Seryoso siya kasi pikang-pika na po siya sa korapsyon.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: But he's not going to resign, right?

SEC. ROQUE: Mukhang hindi naman po dahil gagamitin nga niya iyong natitira niyang dalawang taon para linisin ang gobyerno.

So again, iyong mga—the persons I have called their attention to, at sinabi naman ni Presidente may isang tanggapan na talagang papahiyain niya by the end of the year, huwag po kayong magkamali that I don't speak for the President. Marami na po ang nagkamali in thinking it's just Harry Roque talking about corruption.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Okay. Sir, can I go to Facebook. Categorically, sir, kagabi sabi niya, what is life after Facebook. First off, what does he mean by that?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko po alam. Just take the President from what he has said. Alam ninyo naman ako, ang policy ko kapag nagsalita ang President, I don't need to annotate. Ang sabi niya kinakailangan mag-usap kami ng Facebook – mag-uusap po sila ng Facebook.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: That's not a threat to shutdown?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi naman po, mag-uusap po sila. Dahil sabi nga niya, hindi ko nga alam kung anong kaya kong gawin eh. Kasi alam mo, hindi naman techie ang Presidente, so hindi niya alam ang full extent ng pupuwedeng gawin ng estado pagdating sa Facebook. So, ang sabi lang niya pero kinakailangan talaga pag-usapan ito. Hindi naman pupuwede na kapag pabor sa gobyerno, tinatangal nila.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Sir—okay. Last na lang. You said that the President is offended by the action of Facebook to takedown iyong mga pro-government pages. But some of those pages, some may say that are troll pages. What is your position—

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko po alam.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: And do you want Facebook to restore iyong mga tinakedown nila na pro-government pages?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko po alam. Basta ang alam ko, ang galit na galit hindi lang ang Presidente kung hindi ang iba pang mga ahensiya ng gobyerno, iyong Save our Children [Hands Off Our Children], kasi nga po obviously talagang iyan po ay tinitira ang NPA for their notorious recruitment of children which is an international crime. Sa ICC po ang dami na pong na-convict diyan for the criminal recruitment of children as combatants and yet pati iyon tinanggal ng Facebook.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: But you are fine with troll pages?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko po alam kung troll sila eh, kasi ako naman ang dami ring trolls na umaatake sa akin ini-ignore ko lang tapos ban them 'no.

Ano iyon? It is Hands Off—

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Hands Off Our Children.

SEC. ROQUE: Hands Off Our Children is the name of the page.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Thank you, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Thank you, Joseph. Back to USec. Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Question from Sam Medenilla of Business Mirror: Nakapag-report na po kaya si PhilHealth Dante Gierran regarding his previous commitment to reshuffle the personnel of PhilHealth? If yes, ano po ang highlights of the said report? Maglalabas or nakapaglabas na kaya si President Rodrigo Duterte ng any issuance for the reorganization of PhilHealth?

SEC. ROQUE: Wala pa po akong alam diyan but I will personally meet with Attorney Gierran on Friday.

USEC. IGNACIO: Second question po niya: Mayroon na kayang tentative date kung kailan makikipag-meet si President Duterte with representatives of Facebook? Nag-order na kaya si Presidente sa DICT or other government agencies to investigate Facebook; if yes, ano ang mga nasabing agencies?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, alam ninyo po, I think I will be involved there kasi noong unang nagkaroon ng usapin sa panig ng gobyerno at ng Facebook, ito po iyong bago sila pumili ng mga fact checkers. So, napasama po ako sa usaping iyan, pero pinamunuan po iyan ni then Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano. So, I think it is the same group that would initiate contact again with Facebook.

USEC. IGNACIO: Ang third question po niya: Since nag-take effect ang Bayanihan II, nakapag-submit na kaya ang Malacañang ng report to Congress regarding the use of its allocated funds? Will the said report be released to the public and the media like in the case of the Bayanihan 1?

SEC. ROQUE: Sa Lunes po ang kauna-unahang report under Bayanihan II and, of course, we will report it to the public, ipa-publish po namin iyan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Then we call on Pia Rañada, please.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Hello, sir! Good afternoon.

SEC. ROQUE: Good afternoon.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Sir, just on Facebook again. Sir, kasi earlier you were saying that it's unfair for Facebook to be taking down supposedly only Facebook pages that are pro-government. But Facebook already explained that they actually took down these pages not because of their content but because of the inauthentic behavior that they observed with these pages. So, basically parang may coordinated inauthentic behavior that's why tinanggal sila hindi dahil sa content ng posts. So, sir, can the Palace explain why the government is so involved or is so at least, at the very least, supportive of a network flagged by Facebook for coordinated inauthentic behavior?

SEC. ROQUE: Because we believe in freedom of speech. They may use as justification inauthentic behavior but the effect is censorship kasi iyong ideya na laman ng page na iyon nabura. This is a worldwide debate, Pia, so we cannot actually finish this issue now. It's a debate ongoing not just in the Philippines but worldwide.

And I welcome in fact the possibility that itong children's group na tinanggal ng Facebook, I welcome them and I urge them, bring this to court because the entire planet is waiting for jurisprudence in this regard. Eh tayo naman talaga namang nangunguna tayo pagdating sa jurisprudence whether be it IHL o whether be it freedom of speech. Iyong criminal libel as contrary to freedom of speech is because of a Philippine submission.

So, I encourage iyong mga grupo na pro-government pumunta po kayo sa hukuman at tingnan po natin kung ano ang magiging ruling ng ating hukuman.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Sir, the network kasi is being accused of spreading false news and even dangerous news like red tagging certain lawmakers and groups and even journalists. So sir, parang Facebook is saying this violates their policies and it also causes harm to democracies and even people's safety. So, sir, are you saying that Malacañang believes that fake news and red tagging is protected speech?

SEC. ROQUE: Again as I was saying, unang-una 'no iyong sa tanong mo ibig sabihin talagang content-based restriction iyong ginagawa ng Facebook. Tini-turndown sila because of the content and as you know in freedom of speech jurisprudence, content-based restriction is presumed to be unconstitutional. Number two, iyong—ano nga ba iyong tanong niya kanina? Nawala tuloy ang aking thought 'no. Iyong mga fake news 'no.

Iyong mga fake news alam mo iyang mga iyan, talagang responsibilidad nila na magpili kung ano iyong fake news. Pero remember, in this instance hindi nila sinasabi nagpapakalat ng fake news iyan. Ang sabi nila 'inauthentic behavior', so hindi issue ngayon ang fake news Pia 'no,

ang issue rito is anong epekto noong pagtatanggal ng mga pages na iyan and Philippine government submits, it's a form of censorship.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Sir, by inauthentic behavior, they mean po, sir, fake accounts being used to spread certain propaganda or messaging in a very coordinated widespread manner. So, sir, fake accounts. Does the government agree with the use of fake accounts to spread a certain message to the people?

SEC. ROQUE: In the first place, we don't know if it's fake account. We do not have access for Facebook making that conclusion. Pero alam mo in constitutional litigation there is such a thing as symbolic action too. So perhaps what they referred to as a coordinated inauthentic behavior may be a form of symbolic speech too. I'm just saying it's a possibility 'no and I'm saying that we are now opening jurisprudence in this regard and I think every country in the world will have to deal with this particular issue because obviously Facebook and their fact-checkers now have assumed the role as guardians of truth.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: So, sir, you think deception of people using fake accounts is protected because it's symbolic?

SEC. ROQUE: You have concluded that they are fake accounts...

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: It's deception—

SEC. ROQUE: No, you have concluded.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: [Overlapping voices]

SEC. ROQUE: Well, you know, Pia, this press briefing is not intended to debate with you 'no. We are not conceding that these are fake accounts. We do not know what basis Facebook had in classifying them as fake accounts. All we know is that the effect is that it is suppressing pro-government pages – which should not be.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Okay, sir, last question. Sir, lastly, given that in the findings of Facebook that Army Captain was behind these pages, some of these pages, what kind of investigation will Malacañang call for, if any? How deep will you go in investigating this? And are you concerned about this links to the Army?

SEC. ROQUE: I don't think there's any law violated by an individual exercising his freedom of speech against known enemies of the government. Okay?

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: So, sir, no investigation by the Palace?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, unless there is a complainant, how do we investigate? Okay? Usec. Rocky, please. Thank you, Pia.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Question from Tina Panganiban-Perez ng GMA-7: A group of jeepney drivers is set to file a petition before the Supreme Court today to ask that IATF and DOTr resolutions on jeepney routes be invalidated for being discriminatory. The group says 60 to 80 percent of their members have not plied their routes since March. Any reaction daw po?

SEC. ROQUE: We will respect the decision of the court. But if their allegation is discriminatory, then the claim is, it is violative of equal protection clause – napakahirap pong pruwebahan iyan, from my experience as a constitutional litigator. Okay?

USEC. IGNACIO: From Jonah Villaviray ng Asahi Manila, iyong tanong pa rin sa Japan: The President announced last night the government is selling Philippine properties in Japan. How far along in the process are we? And which properties are we eyeing to sell? How much in dollars do we hope to get out of the sale?

SEC. ROQUE: Ang alam ko lang po iyong isang property is valued at 4 point something billion Yen ‘no. Ewan ko ba, I’m not really sure but as I said ‘no, premature to talk about it because we would need the imprimatur of both the President and Congress ‘no. I think one of the properties is valued at 2.8 billion but I don’t know what currency [laughs] kasi if it’s Yen, that’s not much. Okay?

Now, iyong tanong po ni Joseph Morong, I have the answer now from Dr. Wong. Paki-flash uli iyong ating matrix. Ang sabi po ni Dr. Wong, ang GCQ for Metro Manila is because ang ating two-week growth rate po ay 45% kaya nasa medium tayo, 0 to 200. At ang ating average attack rate is 5.8 kaya talagang nasa medium tayo. Okay? Ulitin ko po, daily attack rate is at 5.8 per 100,000 – moderate and our two-week growth rate is at 45%. So talagang medium tayo and moderate GCQ.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Secretary, question from Julie Aurelio: What was the IATF’s reason for extending the GCQ in Metro Manila contrary to the business sectors’ desire to ease restriction and continue opening the economy?

SEC. ROQUE: Kasasagot ko lang po, dahil po dito sa criteria for deescalation or escalation using this latest LGU risk matrix. Ang two-week growth period natin ay 45%, ang attack rate po ay 5.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Question from Ace Romero: You talked about naming government representatives as fact-checkers. How can we ensure that they will be credible given that they cannot say something critical about the government?

SEC. ROQUE: Same way that we can be sure that Rappler and Vera Files will not say anything favorable to the government.

USEC. IGNACIO: From Ace Romero pa rin po: President Duterte wants to talk to Facebook. He asked the social media giant about his purpose and I quote: *“If we can’t find a solution; I’m sorry if a ban is not being considered.”* Is the administration considering imposing restriction on Facebook? Will this not curtail the free flow of information?

SEC. ROQUE: Lyon nga po ang pinaglalaman natin, free flow of information eh kasi tinatanggal nila iyong pabor sa gobyerno ‘di ba po? Iyan talaga ang issue rito. Bakit kapag pabor sa gobyerno tinatanggal? Now, malinaw po ang sabi ni Presidente, hindi ko alam kung anong magagawa ko pero dahil binigyan natin sila ng pagkakataon na mag-operate sa Pilipinas, dapat mag-usap.

USEC. IGNACIO: Tatlong question na lang po, Secretary. From Karen Lema ng Reuters: What was your basis for saying that Facebook is shutting down pages that favor government and skipping those that are critical of the government? Can you cite instances when this happened?

SEC. ROQUE: Lyon na nga po, iyong children’s advocacy group.

USEC. IGNACIO: Second question po niya: When you said kailangan ng bagong patakaran para magkaroon ng level playing field, are you saying there’s a need for more measures to regulate Facebook content? Will this require legislation?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, it could, but you see even the founder of Facebook recognizes that there may be need for regulation.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Ang tanong po ni Alvin Baltazar ng PBS-Radyo Pilipinas at ni Ace Romero ng PhilStar ay pareho po: May meeting po ba later si President Duterte with Speaker Cayetano and Velasco? Will the meeting with Speaker Cayetano and Representative Velasco push through? Ano po ang magiging posisyon ni Presidente?

SEC. ROQUE: 6 P.M. tonight. Nasabi ko na po ang posisyon ni Presidente: *“I hope they honor the agreement pero wala siyang magagawa kung walang boto si Congressman Lord Allan Velasco.”* Quote – end quote po iyan para wala pong magalit sa akin [laughs].

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Yes. Kung wala na pong tanong, as expected, marami po tayong tanong sa Facebook. Ulitin ko lang po, we are moving on new territory as far as freedom of expression, like jurisprudence is concerned, and I welcome the remarks of the President because it seems that the Philippines again will be primarily responsible for the formation of new norms on internet freedom of expression.

So dahil wala na pong tanong, maraming salamat po sa ating mga panauhin – si Dr. John Wong, si Michael Ray Aquino, si Ginoong Christian Gonzalez. Maraming salamat sa mga miyembro ng Malacañang Press Corps. Maraming salamat sa iyo, Usec. Rocky.

At sa ngalan po ng ating Presidente Rodrigo Roa Duterte, let me just quote what has been in our jurisprudence. *“The true test of truth is the power of a thought to be accepted in the free marketplace of ideas.”* Sa ngalan po ng ating Presidente Duterte, ito po ang inyong Spox Harry Roque nagsasabing: Magandang hapon, Pilipinas, and keep safe.

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