

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

PRESS BRIEFING OF PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON HARRY ROQUE
October 15, 2020 (12:04 P.M. – 1:29 P.M.)

SEC. ROQUE: Magandang tanghali, Pilipinas.

Iyong napanood ninyo pong infomercial, ang infomercial na sinabi ni Secretary Galvez kung bakit bumababa po ang mga numero ng COVID-19 cases sa ating bayan dahil nagma-mask, hugas at iwas po ang ating mga kababayan. Maraming salamat siyempre po kay Presidente Rodrigo Roa Duterte dahil siya po ay pumayag na maging endorses ng mask, hugas, iwas.

Humarap pong muli kagabi ang ating Presidente Rodrigo Roa Duterte sa taumbayan para sa kaniyang ulat sa bayan ‘no o iyong tinatawag nating Talk to the People Address. Sinabi ng Pangulo ang kaniyang kagustuhan na mabakunahan ang lahat ng Pilipino laban sa COVID-19. Dagdag ni Presidente, uunahin na mabigyan ng libreng bakuna ang mga Pilipinong kasama sa listahan ng Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program or 4Ps.

Alam ninyo po, sang-ayon po doon sa ating Universal Health Care, pupuwede po talagang mabigyan ang lahat ng libre. Pero dahil alam natin na magiging limitado initially ang vaccine ay uunahin po natin ang mga mahihirap.

Pinuri rin kagabi ang mga Pilipino pati na ang mga pinuno ng mga lokal na pamahalaan dahil sa pagsunod at pagpapatupad ng health protocol sa gitna ng pandemya. Patuloy po tayong mag-mask, hugas at iwas.

Iniulat din sa Talk to the People Address na may mahigit walong bilyong piso na halaga ng shabu ang sinira bilang pagsunod sa kautusan ng Pangulo noong nakaraang linggo. Ini-report din kagabi na mayroong 41,068 qualified contract tracers, at sa bilang na ito, 34,057 na na-deploy sa iba’t ibang mga probinsiya.

Samantala, mahigit 254,000 Overseas Filipino Workers naman ang nai-repatriate at naibalik na sa kanilang mga probinsiya ngayong may COVID-19.

Sa ibang usapin, nagbigay ng pahayag ang World Health Organization na huwag iasa sa lockdown ang paraan para makontrol ang pagkalat ng COVID-19. Quoting Dr. David Nabarro of the WHO, he said, “The only time we believe a lockdown is justified is to buy you time to re-organize, recruit, re-balance your resources, protect your health workers who are exhausted, but by and large, we’d rather not do it.” Dagdag ni Dr. Nabarro, and we quote, “Lockdowns just have one consequence that you must never, ever belittle, and that is making poor people unlawful lot poorer.” Ito po ang dahilan kung bakit inaprubahan po noong huling meeting ng Gabinete ang bahagya pang pagbukas muli ng ating ekonomiya.

Dito po sa ating slide na makikita ninyo, ito po iyong ginamit na slide ni Secretary Chua 'no. At ito po ay nagpapakita na dahil nga po sa mga quarantine na ngayon po mayroon na tayong mga total cases na 300,000 plus, mga active cases na 42,000 plus, at mga COVID deaths na 6,000 plus, eh mas mabigat po ang naging halaga o danyos ng COVID pagdating po doon sa kagutuman. Na-estimate po natin na mas marami pong nagutom dahil nga po sa COVID – 23.7 million 'no. Ang additional poor po natin ngayon ay 4.3 million. Ang additional unemployed ay 2.3 million. At iyong all other deaths bukod pa po sa COVID ay napakataas na po 'no, sa 213,160.

So alam ko po nababahala kayo na baka naman dahil sa pagbukas muli ng ating ekonomiya – hindi naman po completely bukas iyan, pero mas bahagya pong binuksan pa – eh baka dadami po ang mga kaso ng COVID-19. Dadami po iyan kapag hindi tayo nakinig kay Presidente: Kinakailangan po mask, hugas at iwas.

Ito naman po ang ating COVID updates. Sang-ayon po sa Johns Hopkins University, tatlumpung walong milyon na po o 38,416,443 kaso ng COVID-19 sa buong mundo. Mayroong higit na isang milyong katao naman or 1,090,641 ang binawian ng buhay dahil sa coronavirus.

Nangunguna pa rin po ang Estados Unidos, pangalawa ang India na may pinakamaraming kaso ng COVID-19 sa mundo, sinundan po ito ng Brazil, Russia at—bago na po ang panlima, para pong Ms. Universe—Argentina, hindi na po Colombia.

As of October 14, mayroon na tayong halos apat na milyon or 3,976,980 total individuals na na-test na po using 112 licensed RT-PCR laboratories and 35 licensed GeneXpert laboratories.

Mayroon na po tayo ngayong 46,227 active cases sang-ayon sa October 14 case bulletin ng DOH. Sa mga kasong ito, 84.5% po ay mild, 10.5% ay asymptomatic, 1.6% ay severe at 3.3% ay kritikal.

Parami nang parami naman po ang mga gumagaling. Mayroon na po tayong 293,816 na nai-report na recoveries as of October 14. Samantala, malungkot ko pong binabalita na mayroon na po tayong 6,449 na na-report na binawian ng buhay dahil sa COVID-19.

Pumunta naman po tayo sa recent distribution of cases. Tingnan natin ang number if cases at growth rate ng cases sa Pilipinas at Metro Manila. Dito po sa slide na ito, bagama't maliit, makikita ninyo po na iyong average two-week growth rate ay bumaba po para sa buong Pilipinas. So mabuting balita po iyan and congratulations, Philippines, for the past two weeks ay bumababa po siya by 18% or -18%. Ang ating daily attack rate po ay 2.35. Mataas po iyan dati 'no, pero ang ninanais po natin ay maging one or mas mababa pa.

Sa Metro Manila naman po, bumababa po—napakalaki po nang binaba sa Metro Manila. Naku, salamat po sa pagtugon 'no sa mask, hugas, iwas ng ating Presidente, bumaba po ng 31% sa Metro Manila. Ang daily attack rate po sa Metro Manila ay 6.61% na napakalaki rin po

ang binaba. Gayun pa man, mayroon pong mga areas na tumaas, at sana po sa mga areas na ito ay gumawa ng hakbang para mapatupad lalo pa iyong mask, was, hugas.

Ito naman po, sa slide natin, ang confirmed deaths every week. Makikita ninyo po na mayroong tatlong araw na bahagyang tumaas pero ang trend po ay patuloy pong bumababa ang mga confirmed deaths on a weekly basis.

Sa critical care capacity po ng ospital, wala po tayo sa kritikal. Mayroon pa po tayong 52% available na ICU beds; mayroon po tayong 55% available na isolation beds; mayroon po tayong 57% available na ward beds; at 73% available na ventilators.

Now, ito po iyong Ro. Naalala ninyo po iyong Ro? Ang Ro po, ito iyong ilan iyong nahahawa ng mayroong isang positibo. At makikita po natin dito na bumababa na po ang ating Ro. Ito po ay mabuting balita. Ang objective po natin ay one or pababa – nakamit po natin iyan, nasa .98 po tayo. Napakaliit po ‘no, hindi natin makikita ‘no, pero .98. So patuloy po nating pababain ang ating Ro.

Okay. Sa ibang balita, naku, mabuting balita po at congratulations po kay Secretary Mark Villar, nakumpleto na po ang Metro Manila Skyway Stage 3 Expressway. Ibig sabihin, makukonekta na po ang NLEX at SLEX. Makikita ninyo po iyan sa video na ito. Ibig sabihin po, hindi na dadaan ng EDSA ang manggagaling ng NLEX papunta ng SLEX. At puwede na rin pong daanan iyan para doon sa mga tao na bibiyahe sa Quezon City na gustong umiwas sa EDSA.

Pangalawang mabuting balita po, maraming salamat po sa Senado dahil matapos ma-certify ng Presidente as urgent ang Senate Bill 1844, na-certify lang po ito at kung hindi ako nagkakamali kahapon lamang, aba, ay naipasa po ng Senate on third and final reading itong Senate Bill 1844.

Thank you very much Senate President Tito Sotto, thank you very much to Senator Bong Go and the other authors of this Bill. Nakasaad po sa Section 2 ng nasabi ng panukalang batas and I quote na, “Ang Presidente daw po ay binigyan ng awtoridad to suspend the requirements for national ang local permits, licenses and certifications and to streamline and expedite the process or issuance of permits and other government regulatory provisions.”

So, ibig sabihin po niyan, kapag ninais na ng Presidente, wala ng permit, permit, go na ang proyekto. Wala ng red tape na kagustuhan po ng Presidente. Ulitin ko po, maraming salamat sa Senado. Matapos lamang po ng isang araw, matapos ma-certify as urgent ng Pangulo ang panukalang batas na ito naipasa ng mga senador natin ang panukalang batas na ito.

Maraming, maraming salamat po.

Dito po nagtatapos ang ating presentasyon pero bago po tayo pumunta sa ating open forum, weekly po natin kasama siyempre, walang iba kung hindi ang National Task Force natin, chief implementer Carlito Galvez, para po sa kaniyang update sa COVID-19.

Kasama rin po natin si LTFRB chair Martin Delgra kasi nga po maraming nagtatanong iyong in-approve ng Cabinet na every other seat kailan ito maipatutupad at safe ba ho ito ano.

Well, alam ninyo po bago magdesisyon ang Gabinete pinakinggan po ng mga Gabinete ang mga dalubhasa at sang-ayon po sa mga research na published ng leading medical journals, basta po sumusunod sa seven commandments – mayroong face mask, may shield, proper ventilation, regular disinfection, walang usapan, walang kainan – pupuwede naman pong maiwasan ang COVID-19.

Sabi nga po ng infomercial na kung saan ang endorser natin ay ang Presidente, kinakailangan lamang pag-ingatan ang buhay para makapaghanapbuhay.

Secretary Galvez, chief implementer of the National Task Force on COVID-19, the floor is yours.

SEC. GALVEZ: Sa ngalan po ng bumubuo ng National Task Force on COVID-19, isang magandang araw sa ating lahat. Bago pa man nagsimula ang implementasyon ng ating National Action Plan against COVID-19 Phase 3 ay ginagawa ng pamahalaan ang mga nararapat na hakbang upang tuluyang buksan ang ating ekonomiya.

Ibabalita po natin ngayon na talagang bumababa na po ang ating active cases. In fact, nakita po natin na from 88,000 noong kasalukuyan ng August 15, iyong pinakamataas na peak po natin, naipababa po natin ang active cases po natin na ngayon 46,000.

Sa Metro Manila po, kung malalaman po natin na ang ating Metro Manila more than 20,000 po ang active cases. Nag-report na po sa amin ang MMDA na si GM Jojo Garcia na ang kanilang active cases ngayon ay more or less 7,830 na lang. Meaning, from more or less 26% active cases, ngayon na sa 6% na lang po ang active cases nila. At nakikita po natin talagang negative growth po ang nangyayari sa lahat po ng Metro Manila mayors. At nakikita po natin iyong ano po... mahigit 12 cities ang mayroon pong more than 90% ang kanilang recoveries. Maganda pong pangitain po iyan dahil kasi po kapag po naitaas po nila ng 95 up to 97, lalong bababa ang active cases natin sa 5%.

At noon pong nagkaroon po kami ng Cabinet meeting noong Monday ay mayroon po tayong tinatawag na presentasyon ng mga experts na ang recommendation po nila ay magkaroon po tayo ng tinatawag na enforcement of the seven commandments. Nasabi na po ni Secretary Harry Roque na we have to wear proper mask, wearing of face shield, no talking no and eating and adequate ventilation, frequent and proper disinfection, no symptomatic passengers to be allowed doon sa mass transport and also appropriate physical distancing.

At nakikita po natin na marami na pong mga countries ang nakikita po natin na nagkakaroon po ng tinatawag nating appropriate distancing. Sa Japan nga po nakikita po natin na ang kanilang sitting arrangement ay magkakadikit pero ano po nila, they're observing iyong no talking at saka no eating at iyong no using of cellphone.

So, nakikita po natin sa ngayon sa ating pagbubukas ng ekonomiya, napag-uusapan po sa Gabinete na kailangang-kailangan talaga po nating buksan ang ating transportasyon. So, nakikita po natin sa ating susunod na mga hakbang ay talagang gagawa tayo ngistratehiya with the DOTr na magkaroon po tayo ng maximum na ano po ng ating mga sasakyan.

As we move forward sa Phase 3, we need to implement the following actions: I-implement pa rin po natin iyong ating re-vibrated Prevent, Detect, Isolate, Treat and Recovery and going to the new normal. Iyong Phase 3 po ito, ito ang magiging parang transition plan po natin para po sa new normal.

Dito po ang gagawin po natin, we will emphasize more on the prevention and detection side. Nakita po natin na iyong ating infomercial po na ginawa po ni sir Harry Roque na “Ingat Buhay Para sa Hanapbuhay,” at ang ating tinatawag na coordination with the business sector ito pong “Ingat Angat Tayong Lahat,” ay naging maganda po ang traction sa ating prevention side.

At sa ating detection, ginagawa po natin ay may mga CODE (*Coordinated Operations to Defeat Epidemic*) teams na po tayo sa ating mga barangay with the active case finding and syndromic surveillance. Ito po ay para po mahiwalay po kaagad ang mga may symptoms even without testing.

At sa isolation po talaga kailangan po natin i-implement po natin iyong no home quarantine at saka po iyong expanded Oplan Kalinga para po ma-extract po natin ang mga positive cases. At paigtingin po natin sa treatment iyong One Hospital Command.

At amin pong iminumungkahi na i-strengthen pa rin po natin ang ating quarantine measures and minimum health standards in business establishments and the workplace. Kapag nag-o-open po tayo, talagang kailangan po natin na mas maigting po ang ating minimum health standard.

And also ang strategy po natin is to open up our economy is to provide sufficient transportation for workers while ensuring health and safety ng ating mga kababayan. At ang po natin sinasabi nga po natin na we will encourage patients to avoid iyong no home quarantine through Oplan Kalinga.

And then also, mga lessons learned po natin especially sa Cebu, kailangan i-strengthen po natin talaga ang ating partnership with the LGUs, the private sector, and other stakeholders katulad ng ginagawa po natin sa tinatawag nating “Ingat Angat Tayong Lahat” campaign. At i-institutionalize po natin ang ating COVID response at the city, municipal and barangay levels. Kasama po sa istrategiya po natin sa NAP 2 na we have to localized our strategy.

And then we will also strengthen iyong Barangay Health Emergency and Response Teams (BHERTs) at ang ating barangay isolation centers as well as active case finding and

surveillance. Ito po, napakaganda po nito, ito po ang sinasabi po ng mga expert na mga pagkukulang po natin, iyong active case finding.

And then sa mga regions, ire-replicate din po natin iyong One Hospital Command referral system, together with the LGUs, health professionals, the business and the security and religious and other key stakeholders are working together in one stop shop. And then nakita po natin sa presentasyon po ng ating mahal na Secretary ng NEDA, na napakalaki po ng mga cases natin sa non-COVID. So, sa strategy po natin ngayon ay talagang palalakasin po natin ang ating healthcare system with the non-COVID patients.

And then we will carry out more aggressive contact tracing, testing and treatment and isolation measures so that we can bring down our active cases to the lowest manageable percentage.

And also nakikita po natin na hindi po natin maiiwasan na magkakaroon po ng tinatawag na pulitika sa ating COVID-19, so ang ginagawa po natin ay pumupunta po tayo and we bridge political divisions through the unity of effort and unity of command process. So, ang ginagawa po natin ay pinagbabati po natin ang mga iba at nakita po natin, ang mga experience po natin sa mga lugar na mataas ang kaso, ngayon po noong nagkaisa-isa po sila at nagtulung-tulong ay naging mabuti na po ang kalagayan ng kanilang mga lugar.

So, ang ano po natin to way forward, we have to reduce new cases and active cases and we have to minimize deaths and we have to increase iyong recoveries. Ito po ang mga strategy po natin at saka mga benchmark po natin. With all of these, I am confident that we can further reduce the transmission, gradually bring our vibrant economy back as we transition to the new normal.

Maraming salamat po at mabuhay po tayong lahat.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Sec. Galvez. Sec. Galvez, siguro po puwede nating irekomenda sa mga ospital na habang nasa 50% lang po ang ating utilization rate ng ating health facilities baka pupuwedeng pagbakasyonin iyong ilang mga frontliners natin para sa ganoon ay makapagpahinga habang hindi pa po kritikal ang ating critical care capacity.

Opo, gagawin po natin po iyan and we will recommend that to our One Hospital Command, kay Usec. Vega po.

Maraming salamat, Secretary Galvez.

Pumunta naman po tayo kay LTFRB chair Martin Delgra. Sir, paano na natin ipapatupad iyong inaprubahan ng Gabinete at ni Presidente na every other seat at ano pa ba... ano pa ba ho iyong mga additional transportation na papayagan natin dahil ang report nga po ni Secretary Chua, 58% of the economy ay bukas na and yet ang transportation po natin ay nasa 30 % lamang.

Chair Delgra, the floor is yours.

LTFRB CHAIRMAN DELGRA: Salamat po, Secretary Harry Roque. Magandang umaga po, Secretary Charlie Galvez and USec. Ignacio. Salamat po at magandang umaga sa inyong lahat, pati na rin po sa mga kaibigan natin sa media at sa mga nanunood sa programang ito.

Unang-una, nagpapasalamat ako na inimitahan tayo at maipalathala natin sa mga nanunood at nakikinig patungkol sa ginawa at ginagawa ng Department of Transportation alinsunod na rin sa mga desisyon na ibinaba ng Gabinete noong nakaraang Lunes.

As a result of that, Secretary Tugade met us the following day to download the instructions that were already approved by the Cabinet and consequently also, nagpatawag po tayo ng – in so far as the LTFRB is concerned – nagpatawag po tayo ng special Regional Directors meeting the day after that. So, para lang maibaba at ma-instruct na rin po natin iyong mga Regional Directors kung anong gagawin nila doon sa regional level.

At having said that, may we be allowed to present a short presentation po sa mga ginagawa na po ng Department of Transportation sa pangunguna ni Secretary Tugade alinsunod na rin sa mga desisyon at direktiba ng ating Pangulo noong nakaraang Lunes po. May we be allowed, please?

SEC. ROQUE: Yes, please go ahead, the floor is yours.

LTFRB CHAIRMAN DELGRA: I'm sorry, but I have to see the slide. Can we have the full screen, please?

Unang-una, we already have received the instruction 'no na gagawin na pong one seat apart in all public transport. Natutuwa po tayo itong balitang ito, although it's still a challenge to address public health, we all know how it started, how this issue started because we need to address public health principally while we move the economy.

As you know, one mover of the economy for that matter is transportation and more particularly public transport.

And now that we understand na puwede rin pa lang maitaas iyong kapasidad ng ating mga public transport system without having to compromise public health so long as the other public health protocols are in place, we are happy that we would now be allowed to increase the capacity in our public transportation doon na rin sa direktiba ng Gabinete na puwede na pong one seat apart in all public transport vehicles or all public transport system.

As a result, we will be increasing public transport capacity and that there is also a directive to increase the number of units that would be running on the road.

I would like to note, however, that when we talked about operationalizing public utility vehicles, dalawa pong klaseng mode po ito. Iyong isa po, iyong tinatawag nating route-based public transport at saka iyong isa naman po, iyong non-route based transport.

Ang ibig pong sabihin nito iyong non-route based public transport po, wala po tayong moratorium, suspension or ceiling kung kailan at anong klaseng public transport ang puwedeng mag-operate. Examples of this, iyong non-route based public transport – iyong taxi, iyong TNVs, iyong shuttle service – and I would like to cite these things na iyong sa taxi at saka TNVS ang ginawa po ng LTFRB we have sought the assistance of the TNC, iyong Transport Network Corporations, iyong mga nagdi-develop at nagma-manager po noong mga tinatawag nating mobile apps because we already have required na installation of these mobile apps sa mga taxi at sa mga TNVS mainly because we need to put a contact tracing system in this type of public transport.

So, pinadaan po natin sa mga TNC, doon sa mga taxi na gustong magbiyahe at saka mga TNVS. They will submit to us the list, and that so long as they would follow the public health protocols that were already mandated by the IATF, iyong disinfection, iyong plastic barrier between the driver and the operator and the limited capacity that were already directed before. By the way, that capacity will increase with the recent announcement na puwede ng one seat apart.

Iyong sa shuttle service naman po, that has been a continuing discussion and forums like we would always announce and encourage private companies to get shuttle service for their employees. Dalawa o tatlong benepisyo po ang makukuha natin dito if private companies would get shuttle service for their employees:

Unang-una, dedicated po iyong serbisyo. Ibig sabihin iyong mga empleyado kukunin doon sa mga bahay nila at dadalhin doon sa workplace and therefore, pangalawa, makakasiguro ka that there is a dedicated service kung saan iyong risk of transmission of the virus would be limited.

Pangatlo, tulong na rin po ito sa ating mga empleyado. Kasi iyong shuttle service na ito, supposedly libre ito, added benefit ito sa ating mga private companies para mabigyan ng transport service ang ating mga empleyado. So, we do encourage and we continue to encourage itong paggamit ng shuttle service.

At madali lang po kumuha, doon sa mga public utility vehicles po, they can apply for special permit, online po ito, mabilis po itong proseso na ito, if they will apply in the morning, they would get it within the day so long as all the requirements are submitted.

Pero mayroon din po tayong ginawang paluwag dito sa pagkukuha ng shuttle service. So long as you would fall under the exception, kasi pinaluwag na po natin iyong requirement na puwede na rin po kayong hindi kumuha ng permit sa LTFRB so long as you have those requirements in place as set forth in the exceptions.

Ibig sabihin, among others, iyong company puwede na pong pumasok sa isang lease agreement with a private vehicle owner, pero iyong pagpapatakbo ng sasakyan para to provide public transport ang kanilang mga empleyado eh, iyong magmamaneho at mag-operate noong vehicle po, iyong employer or iyong leasee. At kailangan din po mayroong comprehensive insurance na gagawin. And the lease contract would be for three months. Actually, sa kasalukuyang direktiba po tinitingnan natin na hanggang December 31. Hopefully the environment in addressing the virus would ease up in the following year, hindi na natin—we would continue to see and monitor how it will be in the coming months.

Route-based public transport is concerned, mangyari po na mayroon po tayong mga kasalukuyang route rationalization. Ang pakay po rito, the whole idea of the route rationalization is we have limited transport and therefore we need to maximize the use of the capacity of these units on the routes that they are running.

SEC. ROQUE: Chair Delgra, paumanhin po ‘no, I will have to interrupt you kasi may mga questions na po tayo from the Malacañang Press Corps and gusto po nilang maitanong iyong mga questions. I’m sure iyong ibang presentation ninyo might be covered by the questions from our partners here in the Malacañang Press Corps. Okay lang po, let’s proceed now to the open forum.

LTFRB CHAIRMAN DELGRA: Yes po, thank you very much po.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you very much, Chair Delgra. We now go to our open forum, USec. Rocky please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Good afternoon, Secretary Roque, Secretary Galvez and Chairman Delgra.

From Evelyn Quiroz of Pilipino Mirror: You recently told the OCTA Research Team to stop publicizing suggestions on the pandemic response and just privately relay their recommendations to the government. Reading between the lines, doesn’t this put the government in a very bad light?

SEC. ROQUE: Ay, thank you, Evelyn, for that question. Unang-una, hindi ko po sila sinabihan; pinakiusapan ko po sila at pinasalamatan ko pa nga sila sa kanilang ginagawa ‘no, iyong mga datos na ishini-share nila sa public. Alam naman po ng OCTA group iyan ‘no, ilang beses ko na silang na-guest dito sa ating Public Briefing at instrumento po tayo doon sa naimbitahan sila sa Malacañang para magbigay ng briefing kay Presidente dahil kakilala ko nga lahat po iyang mga taga-UP.

Ang aking request po, gawing pribado iyong recommendation nila pagdating doon sa quarantine na classification na i-impose.

Bakit po? Well, tanging Presidente lang naman po ang may kapangyarihan mag-impose ng quarantine dahil this the exercise of police powers po 'no. Ang IATF does not have that power. IATF only has recommendatory powers to the President. So kung ang mga rekomendasyon po nila has to do with iyong quarantine classifications, kinakailangan i-address po iyan sa Presidente or kung ito po ay sa mga non-highly urbanized centers, i-address iyan sa mga gobernador dahil sa resolution po ng IATF, kung non-highly urbanized cities at mga municipalities at mga barangays, sa lokal na pamahalaan po iyan.

So kung gusto po talaga nilang makatulong doon sa rekomendasyon na iyon, i-address po nila sa tamang recipient – ang Presidente or ang mga lokal na pamahalaan.

Pangalawa po kasi, hindi po natin sinasabi na it puts government in a bad light. Bakit po? Wala pong data-gathering mechanism ang OCTA, tanging gobyerno lang po ang kumukuha ng datos. Binabase po nila iyong kanilang forecast sa datos din ng gobyerno. So wala po kaming tinatago, lahat po iyang mga datos na iyan nasa webpage po iyan ng Department of Health. Kaya nga lang po napakasensitibo po nitong classification at sa susunod na linggo nga po i-step-by-step ko kung ano iyong proseso na pinagdadaanan bago po makarating sa recommendation ng classification o quarantine classification.

Eh ngayon nga po iyong sa rekomendasyon ng OCTA Group, nagireklamo iyong mga lokal na pamahalaan. Ganiyan pong ka-sensitibo iyan, kasi 'pag sinabi mong mataas ang COVID sa isang lugar, nagiging political issue rin po iyan sa lugar na iyan para bagang lagot si mayor 'no, lagot si governor 'no. So—eh hindi naman po ganoon ang pakay natin 'no kung bakit tayo nagka-classification 'no. Ang pakay naman natin eh para pa nga po mapabagal iyong pagkalat ng sakit.

So, hindi ko po sila sinusupil. Salamat nga po sa kanilang mga ginagawa. Naimbita ko na sila rito, I will invite them again and if need be, I will invite them again to the Palace.

Pero ang pakiusap ko lang po, dahil nga po sa mga recommendations naman nila ay tungkol sa classification, i-address nila doon sa tamang institusyon na gagawa ng desisyon – sa Presidente o sa mga lokal na pamahalaan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Question for LTFRB Chairman Martin Delgra, from Evelyn Quiroz po: When can the public expect the full operations of buses and jeeps in the country? Are there plans to do so in the near future?

LTFRB CHAIR DELGRA: Yes, po. Alinsunod na rin sa direktiba ng Gabinete ng Presidente, iyon na po ang ginagawa po natin sa ngayon. In fact at the eve of the Cabinet approval for the opening of more routes po, we already have opened up in Metro Manila 44 more routes – PUJ routes po ito covering almost 5,000 units. Tuluy-tuloy po iyong planning at technical team po natin na tinitingnan hindi lang po sa Metro Manila at in fact as I've mentioned earlier we had a special RDs meeting yesterday at binaba na rin po natin iyong instruction sa kanila na—iyong instruction po ng Gabinete ng Pangulo for them to also open up routes for that matter.

As I've mentioned earlier, for non-route based po, wala pong—it will not take that much time because there is no route to plan, there is no route to review, nor modify and approved for that matter. But for the routes that we have to look at, aside from the point of view of LTRFB on transport planning, ito po—in the context of containing the pandemic po, we are in close coordination with the LGUs for that matter. Whether it be an intra-city or intra-provincial route or whether it be inter-provincial route or inter-regional routes po we had to have close coordination with the LGU.

Because we all know that at the end of the day po, kung mayroon pong mga kaso na COVID doon sa mga nagbibiyaha na mga pasahero, the ultimate responsibility would rest on the LGU. Kaya maingat po tayo but at the same time we closely coordinate with the LGU for that matter.

Iyon pong nangyari pong pagbubukas ng provincial bus route was actually a product of our close coordination with DILG pati na rin po iyong Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines which is the umbrella organization of the local elected officials in the Philippines po.

But tuluy-tuloy naman din po, in fact if I may say, magpapalabas na po tayo din this week ng another set of inter-regional routes going into Metro Manila coming all the way from Davao City. Pinayagan na rin po ni Mayor Sara ang pagbubukas ng Davao City by way of land trips from Davao City to Metro Manila. So nagpapasalamat po tayo na bukas po iyong siyudad ng Davao to open up routes between Davao City to Manila. So aside from that po Mabalacat, Pampanga has already opened up that route.

So what I'm saying is tuluy-tuloy po iyong ugnayan natin dito sa ating mga local government units para mapabuksan pa natin iyong mga ruta na kailangan na buksan po. Thank you very much.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Chairperson Delgra.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you, Usec. Joyce Balancio please...

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: Yes. Good afternoon, Secretary Roque. Kagabi po sinabi ni Pangulong Duterte that there is rampant corruption in the DPWH. Now following the statement of the President, what is he planning to do next? Will he call for an investigation gaya po noong ginawa niya sa PhilHealth? And given his statements, does he still trust DPWH Secretary Mark Villar?

SEC. ROQUE: Ay, full trust and confidence po kay Secretary Villar dahil despite the corruption in DPWH naka-deliver po si Secretary Villar. It helps na mas marami pang pera ang pamilya ni Secretary Villar kaysa sa DPWH 'no. Pero aside from that point po ay hina-highlight lang naman po talaga ni Presidente iyong mga paghamon sa natitirang panahon ng kaniyang termino at ang pangako naman po ng Presidente, igugugol niya talaga itong natitirang panahon para

labanan ang korapsyon sa lahat ng departamento ng gobyerno lalung-lalo na siguro po sa PhilHealth at sa DPWH.

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: So, will he call, sir, for an independent investigation? Parang bubuo siya ng task force to look into corruption inside the DPWH as he allegedly said?

SEC. ROQUE: Posibleng gawin po iyan pero hayaan na po muna natin iyan dahil sa ngayon po eh nakatutok pa sa PhilHealth ang Presidente.

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: Opo. Nabanggit din po niya, Secretary, na ideally gusto ng Pangulo lahat ng mga Pilipino mabakunahan ng COVID-19. Is this target of his administration na bago siya bumaba sa puwesto ay lahat ng Pilipino mabakunahan po?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, ang sabi po niya, lahat ng Pilipino mabakunahan nang libre. I'm sure all of us puwedeng mabakunahan pero marami na po niyan na magbabayad para sa bakuna. Kaya nga po ang assurance ng Presidente sa mga mahihirap, huwag po kayong mag-alala, una po kayo sa prayoridad ng ating Pangulo. Hindi na kayo kinakailangan magbayad at gagawin niya ang lahat para mauna pa kayo sa mayaman na mabakunahan.

Pero actually kung titingnan mo naman talaga ang pharmaceutical industry, hindi po mahuhuli ang mga mayayaman. They can always buy it 'no dahil mayroon naman po silang pera to buy it.

Hindi naman po ganoon kamahal ang estimate natin sa bakuna. Ang estimate po ni Secretary Dominguez, 10 dollars per dose at kinakailangan dalawang dosage so 20 dollars per person. So 20 million initially po ang bibilhin natin para sa mahihirap at para po sa ating kapulisan at sa ating mga militar and mga frontliners.

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: Related question lang po sa bakuna. Secretary, nabanggit din ni Pangulo, interesado daw po ang Russia na magtayo ng pharmaceutical facility dito sa Philippines. Related also to COVID-19 vaccine, how will this affect our choice of vaccines given nga po na hindi lang po tayo sa Russia tumitingin ng possible supply ng bakuna?

SEC. ROQUE: Alam mo kasi Joyce, that's a very good use for us kasi nga ang problema ngayon, number one, magkaroon man ng bakuna, ilan ang mabibili natin given na iyong mga mayayamang bansa nag-invest na para maging una doon sa bakuna na madi-develop ng mga kumpanya. Ang mga kumpanya na hindi tumanggap ng ganiyang arrangements ay ang Russia at ang China kasi hindi naman sila capitalist economies 'no. So inaasahan natin na kung dito po sila magma-manufacture, hinding-hindi tayo mauubusan ng bakuna na dito sa Pilipinas gagawin.

JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM: Thank you, Secretary Roque.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you very much. Usec. Rocky again, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary, questions from Virgil Lopez of GMA News online: President Duterte said yesterday that the government now has the funds to buy COVID-19 vaccines and that he wants all Filipinos vaccinated. How much money has been set aside for vaccines? May we also know the source of funds?

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Do the Math po, kasi I'm bad in Math – it's 40 million doses at 10 dollars each. So, magkano ba iyon? Lyon po, at matagal na po nating naayos iyong ating funding scheme habang wala pa pong pantaunang budget for 2021, uutangin po natin iyan sa Landbank at saka sa DBP at i-angkat ng PITC. Pero pagsipa po ng 2021 at kung maipapasa naman po ang 2021 budget, napakapaloob na po itong halagang ito doon sa budget po na prinopose natin sa Kongreso.

USEC. IGNACIO: Second question po niya: UP Professor Ranjit Rye of the OCTA-Research Team said in interview yesterday that they expect COVID-19 cases to rise should the government further ease restrictions such as expanding the age group allowed to go out. Any comment on this?

SEC. ROQUE: May posibilidad po iyan. Pero naniniwala naman ako po na makikinig ang taumbayan, na iyon ngang endorser ng mask, hugas, iwas ay ang Presidente na mismo. At ang tingin ko naman ay hindi naman tayo nagkulang doon sa pag-educate ng publiko na madali naman pong maiwasan ang COVID-19 kung susunod lang doon sa mga minimum health protocols. Pero ganoon pa man, ang iniwasan po natin ay iyong mga magkakasakit ng malala na—pinapalakas po talaga natin ang critical care capacity natin dahil alam naman natin na mga 4% lamang ang magkakasakit na kinakailangan magpa-confine sa ospital. At sinisiguro natin na hindi tayo mauubusan ng bed capacity, hindi mauubusan ng gamot, hindi tayo mauubusan ng mga frontliners. Pinaghahandaan po natin iyan dahil ang katotohanan naman po ay habang hindi tayo nagbubukas ng ekonomiya, mas marami po ang nagugutom sa atin. Kaya nga po talagang maselan iyong classification na ito kasi hindi na po usapin ng health versus economics; ang usapin na po ngayon is health versus poverty.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, okay, doon po sa strategy natin ng gobyerno, iyong test, trace and isolate. Kagabi sa meeting, diyan ina-attribute ni Secretary Galvez iyong pagbaba ng cases, nagkakaroon ng [unclear] actions sa LGU. My question is, how much of the strategy is dependent or reliant on the Philippine Red Cross efforts, premise first?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, you know, by law, *sui generis* po ang PNR: It is not government, it is not private. It has a mandate; it has a legislative basis for its existence, but it is not a government agency. And, of course, right now, the primary contribution of Red Cross is in the provision of PCR test. Of course, they have also been active in donating some facilities to treat our COVID-19 cases. If I may ask, Secretary Galvez to also answer this question?

SEC. GALVEZ: Sa atin po, nakita po natin, gusto po nating magpasalamat kay Senator Gordon kasi iyong one third ng ating testing na more than 3 million or 4 million ay galing po sa Red

Cross. Nakita po natin noong last two weeks ago, they have iyong one million mark na surpass po nila. So iyon po ang napakalaking contribution ng ating Philippine National Red Cross, sila ang nagha-handle ng ating mga OFWs. Lahat ng one stop shop natin, ito sa Manila, sa lahat ng terminals ang nagha-handle po ng mga testing po niyan ay ang Red Cross. At ang Red Cross po ay kumukuha din po sa mga LGUs at saka tinatawag po natin na iyong mga private sector. So napakalaki ng tulong ng Red Cross.

Nakita rin po natin noong sumabog po ang kaso po dito sa Cebu ay tumulong din po sila. They have donated 14 tents doon po sa mga 11 hospitals po natin sa Cebu. And then, also sa ngayon, nakakatulong po ang Red Cross sa pagpreserba ng mga convalescent plasma. Maraming times na po na nakakuha po kami doon po sa kanila ng convalescent plasma na binibigay po natin sa mga severe patients. Iyon lang po at nagpapasalamat po kami sa Red Cross.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: The reason why I asked, Secretary Roque, Secretary Galvez, is that I am [unclear] of a press release from Red Cross that they are announcing that they are going to stop PhilHealth-base swab testing effective midnight October 14, and that will affect iyong ... hindi na daw po nila iti-test iyong OFWs, those arriving in airports and sea ports, individuals to mega swabbing facilities, frontline health and government workers at saka iyong mga nasa expanded testing guidelines because, allegedly, may utang pa raw po iyong PhilHealth sa Red Cross na 930 million pesos at hindi pa siya binabayaran. Now, sir, my question is that, what are the consequences kung halimbawa, consequences noong decision ng Red Cross to stop iyong testing natin, sir? At saka bakit hindi mabayad-bayaran iyong P930 million, sir?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, I'm flashing on the screen the number of licensed RT-PCR laboratories that we have, 112, and 35 licensed GeneXpert laboratories. So, of course I am not denying the fact that the Red Cross was our major partner particularly in testing 'no because they have already surpassed the one million tests. So, gaya ng sabi ni Secretary Galvez, at one fourth of our total test were done by the PNRC. So, malaking kawalan po iyan kung ititigil nila ang testing for PhilHealth. Pero ako naman po ay kampante na mayroon lang talagang mga internal problema ngayon ang PhilHealth na alam naman nating lahat.

So, humihingi po ako ng pasensiya sa PNRC on behalf of the President. At tingin ko naman po, after this press briefing ipararating ko po kay Atty. Gierran, the new President of PhilHealth, itong concern ng Red Cross. At bagama't one fourth ang testing na conducted by PNRC at marami na po tayong mga licensed RT-PCR at mga GeneXpert laboratories, siyempre po kinakailangan pa rin natin ang PNRC kung gusto pa rin nating ma-meet iyong ating target na 10 million tests. So, I don't know if Secretary Galvez has anything to add.

SEC. GALVEZ: Inaayos na po natin iyong problema po sa PhilHealth. Sa ngayon po, nag-uusap po si SND saka si Mr. Gierran and then also Senator Gordon, niri-resolve lang po iyong isyu, iyong sa MOA, dahil kasi iyong MOA po, napirmahan po iyon ng previous president. Sa ngayon lang po parang humihingi lang po ng comment sa DBM for the purpose na para at least clear po iyong napirmahan sa MOA, kasi po nag-change po iyong mga tinatawag nating mga prices. And the new President of the PhilHealth just wanted to make sure na all is in order.

Kapag po favorable ang comment po ng DBM po sa ano po, tuluy-tuloy na po iyon. Sa ngayon po, ang ginagawa po natin, mayroon po tayong high capacities na testing laboratories. So, inaano po natin na sa JB Lingad na mataas po ang capacity niya na 4,500 na temporarily kung just in case magkakaroon po ng pagtigil ng testing po ang Red Cross ay sa kanila na lang po muna sa Lung Center at saka dito po sa area ng JB Lingad at ang mga RITM iyong gagawin po natin na ibibigay iyong ating mga testing samples sa OFW.

Sa ngayon po inaayos po natin ngayon and I'm confident that the issue will be resolved immediately.

SEC. ROQUE: In other words, huwag naman pong mag-aalala ang ating mga kababayan makapasok pa rin po lahat ang OFWs because as I said, dati po iisa lang iyong testing facility – RITM – ngayon po, 112 RT-PCR laboratories and 35 GeneXpert laboratories. So, makapasok at makapasok po ang mga umuuwing OFWs.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, just a little bit on this before I go to just my last question. Sir, kasi how is this going to affect - maybe question to Secretary Galvez - iyong tracing and testing because... well, may mga nagti-test ng positive, but then iyong kasama sa household ay hindi ma-test because nga of this problem with PhilHealth and Red Cross. So how do we attack that kind of problem on the ground na natitigil or nadi-delay iyong paghahanap natin at pagti-test natin ng mga contacts ng mga positive cases?

SEC. GALVEZ: Can I answer, Spox?

SEC. ROQUE: Yes, please, Secretary Galvez.

SEC. GALVEZ: Kung titingnan natin, iyong Red Cross ay nakadikit po iyan talaga sa OFWs. Iyong ating mga LGUs may mga capacity na nang ng testing. So I believe iyong magiging major consequence ng pagtigil po ng Red Cross is only for the OFW. Pero iyong testing po ng mga first contact at saka second contact, may mga testing laboratory na po ang ating mga LGUs, at saka mayroon na po silang tinatawag na contract with civilian testing centers.

So I believe, sa ngayon nakikita ko iyong mga LGUs natin, they are now very resilient at saka mayroong tinatawag na self-reliant na sila sa testing. Mayroon lang tayong mga areas na ... lalo na iyong mga nandoon sa mga ibang regions na far-flung areas, iyong mga tinatawag nating [unclear], iyong mga isolated, iyong ang ginagawan natin ng paraan na mabigyan natin ng testing capacity as soon as possible time.

SEC. ROQUE: And if I may add, Joseph, iyong para sa OFW naman 'no, ang PhilHealth kasi pays both public, private and PNRC. So kung mawawala po iyong mga serbisyo ng PNRC sa ating airport, sa ating pantalan, pupuwede naman pong palitan for the time-being ng mga pribado or other public testing centers. But I do hope that the problem will be resolved because our goal is to have more people tested rather than less.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: All right, sir. Thank you, sir. Sir, last question, sir. Just two statements from the President's address last night. Iyon pong sinabi ni Presidente, "Andiyan na iyong bakuna," how should we take this? Kasi sabi rin niya na parang huwag kayong mag-aalala magka-COVID kayo, don't worry about it. Hindi ba, sir, ito might lead to a lax attitude on the part of our... the public na parang, 'Okay, nandiyan na daw iyong bakuna.' Just give us a parang context and just to measure iyong kumbaga manage expectations na kapag sinabi ni Presidente nandiyan na iyon bakuna, what does he mean?

Second, iyon pong sinabi ni Secretary Duque that we have potentially herd immunity. Is that true, sir? And is this based on science or based on fact?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, doon sa sinabi ni Presidente, iyan naman po intended to address iyong pandemic fatigue ng ating taumbayan. Alam ko, pagod na pagod na tayo dito sa pandemyang ito 'no. Pero may pag-asa po, iyon ang mensahe ng Presidente. Hindi po ibig sabihin na dapat itigil na ang pagma-mask, paghuhugas at pag-iiwas. In fact, nagsimula pa lang po itong infomercials na ito; hindi pa po iyan bayad ng gobyerno. Nagpapasalamat po kami sa pribadong sektor kasi lahat po ng mga umiere ngayon, lahat ng nakikita ninyo sa billboards, lahat ng naririnig ninyo sa radyo, libre pa po iyan.

Iyong pera po na manggagaling sa kaban ng bayan, hindi pa po makalabas-labas – talaga pong may red tape. At mabuti na lang ay may bagong batas na ngayon na pupuwede nang sabihin ni Presidente, 'Ilabas iyang perang iyan.' At baka nga po kapag naisabatas ito, baka itong pera para sa infomercial ay unang-unang magiging beneficiary ng anti-red tape law dahil talaga naman pong I have personal experience now about red tape 'no.

So, iyon lang po. Ang sinasabi ng Presidente, huwag kayong mawalan ng pag-asa at mayroon na nga pong parating na lunas. Pero kinakailangang protektahan pa rin ang mga sarili dahil baka mamaya ay hindi ninyo abutin iyong paglabas ng bakuna. So patuloy po natin ang mask, hugas at iwas.

Pagdating po sa second question mo, I'll have to defer to Usec. Vergeire because that's a medical issue that I'm not competent to answer.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Okay, sir, last na lang. Clarification: Ano iyong sinasabi ni Presidente na lunas at saan ito galing, sir? Mayroon ba siyang information na some vaccines are already in advanced development, that we're going to get it, mga ganoon?

SEC. ROQUE: Alam mo, the President is veracious news reading. At iyong other day naman, I even asked here that a New Yorker magazine already announced that a Chinese company, I think it is CNBG, is about to conclude to its stage 3 clinical trials and is in the process of getting approval from the Chinese FDA 'no. So once that happens naman po, mabilis ang proseso kasi iyong minsan na nag-guest na po dito iyong ating FDA Director General, ang sabi naman niya, basta may FDA approval elsewhere ay madali na pong magkaroon din ng FDA approval dito sa Pilipinas.

So although mayroon pong tatlong kumpanya na magti-third phase clinical trial sa Pilipinas, apparently there's one vaccine that is about to conclude its third phase clinical trials, and this is a Chinese vaccine, produced by a company called CNBG.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Okay, sir. Thank you for your time, Secretary Galvez. Regards, Atty. Delgra.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you, Joseph. We go back to Usec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Question from MJ Blancaflor of Daily Tribune on vaccines: During the President's Talk to the Nation last night he said he is seeking additional funds to ensure that the entire Philippine population would be given vaccines since it is the ideal. May we ask if the President wants to make it free for all? Will he source out funds through loans or selling government properties?

SEC. ROQUE: Let me answer as the author of the Universal Health Care Law 'no: Dapat po malibre iyan. Kaya nga lang, hindi natin masisiguro nga kung may sapat na pondo ang PhilHealth, eh hindi nga po mabayaran iyong PCR test 'no. So kaya kinakailangan, maghanda ng karagdagang pondo ang gobyerno na hindi na manggagaling sa PhilHealth.

Panguna lang naman po iyong 20 million individuals na 40 doses at \$10 each. Magkano ba iyon? Na-compute ninyo na ba? More than two billion pesos 'no, so hindi naman po malaking masyadong halaga in relation to the total national budget of 4.5 trillion 'no. Kaya lang po, since we're a nation of 130 million more or less, medyo malaki-laking halaga iyon kung 20 million is already two billion. So roughly, we would need around 12 billion dollars kung ililibre natin lahat ang bakuna.

Pero I'm confident naman po, hindi kinakailangang ilibre ang lahat kasi marami naman pong can afford US\$20 for a vaccine.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Second question niya: How will the Palace address criticism that the President's vaccine promise is a political placebo?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi po. It is based on science. The fact na ang dami na pong nasa third clinical trial, means na nandiyan na po talaga ang remedyo; there is light at the end of the tunnel. So hinay-hinay lang po, hang in there, malapit na pong matapos ito.

Yes, Triciah Terada.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Good afternoon, Secretary and kay Secretary Galvez and Chairman Delgra po. Sir, balik lang po ako doon sa issue ng OCTA and at the same time, sir, mayroon din po kasing, I think, nagkakaproblema iyong DENR with expert opinion from the UP Marine Science. We have the DENR slamming marine experts, calling them as 'bayaran'.

Then, ito nga po, there comes the request for the OCTA team to refrain from putting out to public their opinion or their studies—

SEC. ROQUE: It's only their recommendations. Trish, let me correct you there. I welcome the information that they disseminate and I repeat it over and over again, iyong recommendation lang nila on quarantine classification is what I asked to be privately sent to the President because it's solely the President that can decide on that basis if it's a regional or highly urbanized city; and submit it to the local officials for cities and municipalities.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Okay. Sir, ito po, for example, itong nangyari sa DENR, what can Malacañang say about this or the government say about this in terms of how it reflects in the government kung paano po tinatanggap iyong opinyon ng mga eksperto?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, gaya ng sinabi ko po noong last briefing 'no, UP has a new charter. It is really a partner of government. And that is why I had to distance—in fact, I will go to the extent of I disagree with the statement of Usec. Antiporda, but he has already apologized for it. So, that's my answer.

Nasa batas po iyan na talagang partner natin ang UP bilang isang national university. And as a professor for 15 years in UP, ginawa po namin ang katungkulan din namin para tulungan ang gobyerno. In the field of law, we acted really as legal consultants to Congress 'no because the executive already has many legal offices.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILIPPINES: Sir, iyong doon naman po sa OCTA team. Can you help us understand, sir, ano po iyong problem with the UP-OCTA team making their recommendations public because in a way, sir, hindi po ba mas maganda na mas naisasapubliko itong ideas na ito because if they cannot directly channel their recommendations to the respective offices, mas maganda rin po na, kumbaga, may idea iyong mga tao about what was happening giving them you know a voice or at least the participation in the free space for public ideas po?

SEC. ROQUE: It's the same reason why the Metro Manila governors although they decide on certain matters and recommend to the IATF, keep their recommendations private. It's the same reason why the IATF, although it represents the entire nation approach consisting of doctors, statistician, mathematicians, health economists, sociologists, political scientists coming together to address the issue of pandemic privately recommending quarantine classifications to the President privately.

Number one, it's the President that makes the decision. So, you don't really need to address your recommendations to anyone else but to the person who will make the decision. And why only the President authorized to do so? Because this is an exercise of police powers. Of course, under our existing laws, police power is shared with local governments and that is why for cities that are not highly urbanized and all other local government units other than regions, and highly urbanized cities, the power vests in the local officials.

Now, bakit kinakailangan pribado? Eh, kasi nga po sensitive ang classification. It's an issue of health versus poverty and we don't want the decision making process to be mired by politics because recommendations when made public can form opinions and can have political effect. So, let's spare the decision making process from politics.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILIPPINES: Thank you, Spox. Sir, just one question for Chairman Delgra.

SEC. ROQUE: Yes, please.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILIPPINES: Thank you. Chairman, good afternoon!

ASEC. DELGRA: Triciah.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILIPPINES: Yes, sir. Sir, doon lang po sa usapin ng mga jeepney. Kasi I understand kasama po yata sa qualification ng pagbabalik or pagpayag or sa pagpayag sa pagbabalik ng mga jeepney iyong roadworthiness. Ito pong move na ito, sir, many are asking, is this LTFRB's way of pushing for the modernization of jeepneys because in a way nawawalan po or drivers barely have ha choice to return kasi marami po ang hindi roadworthy? Or sir, do they have the option na kung hindi sila roadworthy at this time, mag-comply sila doon sa mga bagay na hindi pumapasa, maybe change engines or what/not kung ano man po iyong hindi nila ma-comply ngayon? Kapag nasunod po ba iyon puwede na silang bumalik din sa kalsada?

ASEC. DELGRA: Opo. Magandang katanungan po iyan, Triciah but I'd like to put that in perspective on the premise that you have stated.

Hindi po... baka maiba lang iyong pag-unawa na iyong pagbabalik. Actually, pinapabalik na po natin at marami na po silang bumabalik at namamasada na po sa daan. I'd like to state that and clarify that statement on iyong pagbabalik po kasi nandoon na po sila. Ang tanong lang siguro doon iyong roadworthiness issue. Iyong road worthiness issue, sinasabi na rin po ito ni Secretary Tugade, pinapayagan naman din po iyong mga for example iyong mga PUJ so long as they are roadworthy.

Mahirap naman na hindi roadworthy iyan eh kung hindi ka naman mamatay sa COVID, baka mamamatay ka rin sa polusyon. Or for that matter, worst, it might be involved in an accident kasi hindi nga siya roadworthy. So, we also have the responsibility, pandemic or no pandemic, na iyong mga pampublikong sasakyan na tumatakbo has to conform to the minimum standard by which we would be able to measure road worthiness.

Patungkol naman po sa roadworthiness, ang pangunahing ahensiya po na nagsasabi kung roadworthy iyong sasakyan, iyong LTO. Kaya mayroon po sila iyong mga systems in terms of vehicle inspection, initial testing. So, doon po tayo, that is where we rely on the issue of roadworthiness for our public utility vehicle.

So, I hope I have addressed that question in so far as the public utility vehicle is concerned.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILIPPINES: Salamat po, chairman. Thank you, Secretary and of course kay Sec. Galvez po. Salamat po.

ASEC. DELGRA: Thank you din po.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you, Trish. Back to Usec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Question from Leila Salaverria: *How does the government intend to fund the vaccines to be purchased for Filipinos? Will this be funded by loans or new taxes? What is the estimated amount that the government plans to raise?*

SEC. ROQUE: Nasagot ko na po iyan. Kung lumabas ang bakuna ngayon, uutangin po natin; kung lumabas ang bakuna next year, from the National Budget.

USEC. IGNACIO: From Miguel ng GMA News Desk to Attorney Delgra: *May monitoring ba ang LTFRB kung gaano talaga karami sa mga allowed units ng PUV sa Metro Manila ang talagang bumibiyaha? Sa PUJ halimbawa, ilang percent ng 27,000 ang nasa kalsada same with modern PUJs, PUVs, UV Express, taxis, at TNVS?*

ASEC. DELGRA: Magandang katanungan po iyan. Unang-una, mayroon pong monitoring, iyon ang ginagawa po natin sa kasalukuyan. How widespread is that is the challenge. Ganito po iyong issue dito, the issue really is whether it's one seat apart or whenever routes that we're going to open is an issue of capacity, increasing capacity for that matter.

Because there is a limited maximum capacity as of now due to the pandemic, kahit na we would allow public utility vehicles to run on the road, mayroon pa rin iyong alinlangan for that matter or mababa iyong kumpiyansa kung kikita ba sila kung tatakbo sila sa daan.

So, having said that, we need to monitor the numbers of what has been allowed to the number of actual units that are running. Ongoing po iyong monitoring na iyan from all types of public transport. But to ensure na iyong in-allow po na mga units ay tatakbo, if you would recall, mayroon po sa Bayanihan II iyong paglalaan ng pondo patungkol dito sa service contracting.

Ang ibig pong sabihin nito, na iyong serbisyo ng ating mga driver at saka mga operator would be subsidized by the government but the subsidy is based on what we call performance-based. Mayroon pong mga indicators na kailangan nating mailagay sa sistema for which they will conform. What is that? Dalawa pong bagay ito: Unang-una, iyong nasa batas na po, tulong para sa mga driver – P5.58 billion, three billion of which is actually for the PUJ drivers.

Now, pangalawa, mas maganda na may resulta itong pagpupulong sa mga driver/operator doon na mismo sa ating tinatawag na ultimate stakeholders, iyong mga mananakay. Ibig sabihin, we're trying to raise a level o predictability and reliability on our public transport. For example, iyong number of operating hours kailangan ang nakalagay po doon sa programa ng service contracting. So, tatakbuhan po nila iyong number of operating hours, itong mga drivers and operators, to ensure continued service for our commuters.

On the side of the drivers po, alam natin na because of the reduced capacity and there is reliance principally on ridership as a basis for their daily income, minabuti po, after so much discussion with our planning and technical team kasama na rin po iyong DOTr planning, na gagawin po nating net service contracting. Na iyong pamasaha na kikitain ng driver at saka iyong driver mismo, sa kanila na po iyan pero alam natin kulang. So, ang sistema po, may dagdag na ibibigay iyong gobyerno from the service contracting program para tataas iyong kumpiyansa ng mga driver na tuluy-tuloy iyong pamamasada nila sa daan.

So, iyon po iyong gusto natin – iyon po ang pinaplano at iyon po ang mangyayari. We are looking at October rollout of this program po hanggang Disyembre sa ilalim ng Bayanihan II Act po.

Thank you very much.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you. We call on Pia Rañada, please.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Yes, sir. Good afternoon! Sir, just to pursue the topic on the OCTA Research Groups, your comments on it. Sir, because you justified kanina iyong appeal ninyo for them to not publicize their results or the recommendations, I'm sorry, the quarantine recommendations by saying that it will fluster politicians, it will pressure the President. But sir – and this is also similar to how Usec. Antiporda justified his outburst – but, sir, is the peace of mind of government officials and their reputation more important than the people's right to know the recommendations of these scientists?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, number one, Pia, I don't think I said the same thing na sabi ni Antiporda. I'm sorry to my good friend, Benny Antiporda, but he has apologized for it.

Number two, again, I can only say it's the same reason why IATF does not publicize its recommendations. Only one person can make or can determine the quarantine classification and their recommendation must be made to that person, no one else. This is not part of political discourse, it is a political decision – yes, but it is not subject to an opinion poll.

The President must be made or given the leeway to make the right decisions. It's the same constitutional framework as the concept of executive privilege. While there is freedom to information, it's not absolute because the President and policymakers must allow to make correct, even if unpopular decisions.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: But, sir, why would publicizing quarantine recommendations interfere with Duterte making a decision? Kasi, sir, many things are politicized and many public interest issues are very political. But isn't it the President's job precisely to make decisions even amid highly politically-charged atmosphere such as the pandemic?

SEC. ROQUE: Yes. But a pandemic is different. It involves fear, it involves lives, it involves poverty, it involves all norms that we hold dear at the highest level because it's an issue of life or death. So hayaan na muna natin na magkaroon ng leeway ang Presidente magdesisyon and it's not just on the basis of what the health experts say, it's also on the basis of what the health economist say, what the private sector says, what mathematician say, what's statistician say.

Second point that I want to highlight is, we are already employing the whole-of-nation approach in the IATF and that is why any contributions that they want to make, they're welcome to contribute it to the IATF and it goes through the process of analysis of all experts in different fields.

So ang sinasabi ko lang naman, yes, dahil anyway wala naman sila talagang data-gathering capacity, galing din naman sa gobyerno iyan. Whatever it is that they want to disseminate, they're welcome too. Kaya nga iyan ang dahilan 'di ba, Pia, ako pa nag-imbita sa kanila rito. Ilang beses ko na silang naimbita rito? Ako pa ang nagpaimbita sa kanila sa Palasyo para mag-briefing kay Presidente 'no.

So it's not I discount public discourse on data, because that's widely available for the people to see, but as far as the recommendations are concerned, let the policy-maker make the correct decision regardless of public opinion.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: But, sir, shouldn't the public also be involved in this decision-making because even if the President has the power to change the quarantine classifications, it's the people in the end who are affected by the decision? And so I guess, the OCTA Research Group's recommendations by publicizing its [unclear] iyong being public with this decision and it's something also that the President can take into consideration when he makes his own decision 'di ba, how the public you know, parang sees the data provided by the scientist.

But, sir, moving on, sir, iyong another issue I would like to ask about—

SEC. ROQUE: I don't know. Wait a minute! You're arguing. You're not asking a question and I'm going to answer that first. While the people have a right to the data, they do not have the power to make a decision on the quarantine classification – only the President and the local officials have. That's clear.

But the data is there, we share it with the people, we tell them this is the data that is why you must continue to wear mask, wash your hands, observe social distancing.

I think you have asked three questions already, correct?

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Sir, just on River Mae Nasino, sir. Iyong Baby River lang sana.

SEC. ROQUE: But you've asked three questions. Let's see if we have time for round 2, okay? To be fair 'no to everyone. Ina-accuse na nga ako favoritism dahil may mga ilan daw na nakakaapat na questions and that includes you and Joseph Morong. *[Laughs]* I hope you understand, okay. Next question please. Usec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Secretary, from Ivan Mayrina ng GMA-7 for Chairman Delgra: Chairperson Delgra in terms of percentage, how much of an increase are we planning to implement if we are currently at 50% with buses and jeeps? How about daw po iyong trains and when are these going to be implemented?

LTFRB CHAIR DELGRA: Magandang katanungan galing kay Ivan. Unang-una, as I have mentioned ano, the instructions has already downloaded and among other things as I have said, in terms of increasing capacity for provincial buses, we will be opening up additional routes this week. Pagdating naman po doon sa porsiyento, actually medyo mababa iyong sinabi ni Ivan na porsiyento. Umaabot na po tayo sa mga... if I'm not mistaken mga 68 or 69 percent of our public utility vehicles dito sa Metro Manila po ha. But in so far as the other regions are concerned, as I have said, we work closely with the LGU in having to increase capacity.

Now the timeline is there and in fact it is ongoing and that we would be able to significantly increase if I may say the number of vehicles as well as increase capacity, I would like to emphasize that.

Kasi isang aspeto in increasing capacity is adding more units but the other aspect is also having that unit run on the road longer than they would want to or they would need to. Kasi nga walang kumpiyansa sa pagpapatakbo either because of lack of passengers or for that matter—at during times of the day ano, at certain times of the day or lack of prospective income 'no in terms of reduced capacity.

So tuluy-tuloy po ito in so far as this one is concerned. You would be able to see a significant increase perhaps in the next two to three weeks but definitely December would be too far off already in so far as the timeline is concerned.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Thank you, Chairperson Delgra. For Secretary Galvez, question from Sam Medenilla: Ano na daw po ang update sa pilot testing ng antigen testing sa Baguio? I-implement na po kaya ito sa other areas po sa bansa like Boracay? For Secretary Galvez po.

SEC. GALVEZ: Sa ngayon po, ongoing pa rin po ang testing po natin at hindi pa po tapos iyong evaluation. So I cannot speak more on the evaluation side because it's the DOH that can have this. And sa ngayon po nag-usap po kami nila Mayor Magalong, ongoing pa rin po iyong kanilang pilot testing.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary Galvez.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. So one last, Melo Acuña please.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Good afternoon, Secretary Harry. Good afternoon to all the other guests. Kalakhan po ng ekonomiya natin ay nakasalalay sa paggastos ng mga mamamayan. Binalita po ng Bangko Sentral kaninang umaga na bumaba iyong remittances. Ano po kaya ang paraan para mayroong magastos ang mga mamamayan at mapasigla ang ekonomiya, Secretary Harry?

SEC. ROQUE: Well kaya nga po importante itong ating 2021 budget ‘no dahil bukod pa sa mga stimulus na prinovide natin sa Bayanihan I at sa Bayanihan II, napakalaking stimulus po napaloob diyan sa 2021 budget ‘no.

Nandiyan raw po iyong mga additional na pautang para magkaroon ng hanapbuhay ang ating mga mamamayan, galing po iyan sa Small Business Corporation, galing po iyan sa DTI, galing po iyan sa DOF, galing po iyan sa DA, galing po iyan sa Department of Labor at sa Department of Agriculture ‘no.

Nandiyan po iyong mga pinaplano pa rin pong mga suporta sa mga kritikal na mga industriya ‘no gaya ng aviation ‘no at nandiyan din po iyong ating mga programa pa na nagbibigay ng pera in exchange for work gaya ng TUPAD, AKAP at CAMP na pinatutupad po ng Department of Labor.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Opo. Mayroon pong dineklarang curfew iyong ibang bansa sa Europa, mula alas nuwebe ng gabi hanggang ala sais ng umaga. Ano po kaya ang pulso ng IATF sa curfew sa Pilipinas?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, ang rekomendasyon po ng Gabinete sa mga local government units ay paikliin ang curfew. Siguro iba lang karanasan natin sa Europa ‘no, kasi sa Europa talaga namang hindi sila nag-istrikto ng pagku-quarantine ‘no. Kung pupunta ka nga sa iba’t ibang lugar ng Europa na matataas ang kaso, hindi sila nagsusuot ng mask ‘no at hindi sila nag-alcohol ‘no at nagkukumpul-kumpulan pa rin sila, bukas ang mga bars.

Let’s just say, well, policies have their ramification. Tayo po, habang tayo’y nagbubukas ng ekonomiya para mabawasan ang mga nagugutom, patuloy po ang ating kampanya – mask, hugas, iwas at saka wala pa rin pong pagtitipon.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Yes. Secretary Harry, for Secretary Galvez. Good afternoon, Secretary Galvez. Foreign Secretary Teddy Locsin and State Councilor Wang Yi agreed over the weekend to come up with a fast lane for Chinese and Filipino workers. I asked DFA about the operationalization of this. However, DFA said it will depend on implementing

agencies and the recommendations and guidance of the IATF. Have you considered anything like to operationalize the fast lane?

SEC. GALVEZ: Sa amin po kasi sa NTF, iyong mga ganoon po na inano po namin, case-to-case basis po kasi iyong ginagawa po namin sa National Task Force. So—pero iku-consult ko po kay Secretary Locsin ang ano po nito dahil kasi sa kanila po talaga ang clearance po nito.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Okay. Maraming salamat po. Thank you. Thank you, Secretary Harry.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you. Usec. Rocky, do you have more questions?

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes Secretary, may tanong pa po dito. Galing kay Sam Medenilla for Secretary Roque: May timeline na po kaya ang government kung kailan magkakaroon ng significant improvement sa economy after ma-implement ang recommendation ng economic managers? Will this happen during the last quarter of the year or next year na po?

SEC. ROQUE: Well alam ninyo po pagpasok ng ‘ber’ months, ito po traditionally ang pinakamalakas pagdating po sa retail ‘no. So inaasahan po natin na nagbubukas tayo nang sapat para magkaroon po ng maximum opportunity ang merkado na makabawi ‘no doon sa napakalalim pong pagbaba ng ating ekonomiya.

So sana po itong buwan ng October, November, December, we can somehow catch up nang hindi naman po ganoon kalaki ang naging contraction ng ating ekonomiya. Dahil sabi nga po noong isang bangko ‘no, we will suffer the worst contraction ‘no in the whole of Southeast Asia kaya humahabol po tayo. Pero siyempre po kaya po nating gawin ito, pangalagaan lang natin ang ating buhay para tayo’y makapaghanapbuhay.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. For Chairperson Delgra, from Kris Jose of Remate: Posible po kaya na ang provincial buses ay makapasok pa within Metro Manila kasi ‘di ba sa ngayon ay hanggang PITX lang po sila? Salamat po.

LTFRB CHAIR DELGRA: Okay. I think there two aspects doon sa tanong na iyan, Usec. Unang-una, iyong polisiya na magbubukas na iyong Metro Manila for the provincial buses. Nandoon na po, we already have opened up the initial 12 provincial bus routes coming in and from Metro Manila. Right now ito po iyong sa mga neighboring provinces ng Region III and Region IV. As I have said earlier, tuluy-tuloy po iyong pagrirepaso at sa pag-uugnayan sa mga LGU para mabuksan pa at dadami pa iyong provincial bus route na papasok sa Metro Manila.

Now I think in so far as the second part of the question is concerned, kung hanggang PITX lang po ba? Iyong pagpapalano po natin dito at the start when we resumed public transportation in June 1 po, we also have revised the routes, the existing routes for buses and the UV Express and the PUJ po.

So what we are saying is that, we have spread out these routes of different modes of which minarapat—pinaghandaan po natin na ‘pag magbubukas na po tayo ng provincial bus routes po.

Ang hihinto na lang po sila doon sa mga... iyong tinatawag po nating integrated terminal exchanges na na-inspect na po hindi lang po sa LTFRB at DOTr, kasama na rin po iyong MMDA. So we have inspected 4 or 5 integrated terminals na to up the north and then there’s one in the middle, in Cubao, as well as in the two others dito po banda sa south ‘no, Alabang ang also PITX as mentioned earlier.

So ganoon po iyong sistema na gagawin po natin dito kung saan iyong pagpapasok at pag-aalis ng mga provincial buses po would be coming from these integrated terminals and would end up in these terminals. That way, considering that we are also addressing public health here, iyong mga public health protocols are also in place in these integrated terminals.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Chairperson Delgra. Thank you Secretary Roque, Secretary Galvez.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat. Dahil wala na po tayong mga tanong, mayroon lang po tayong mensahe sa mga magulang, mga tatay, mga nanay at mga chikiting. Habang wala pa pong bakuna laban dito sa Corona-19 virus, eh mayroon naman po tayong mga bakuna laban po sa mga sakit gaya ng measles, rubella at polio. So huwag po tayong matakot, gamitin na po natin itong mga tried and tested na mga bakuna laban sa measles, rubella at polio ‘no at ito po ay gagawin, iyong pagbakuna sa lahat ng ating health centers mula October 26 hanggang November 25. Isang buwan po iyan, October 26 to November 25, libreng bakuna laban po sa measles, rubella at polio sa lahat ng ating mga health centers.

Bago po tayo magtapos, maraming salamat po sa inyong pagtangkilik sa ating press briefing. Salamat po sa mga miyembro ng Malacañang Press Corps. Salamat kay Usec. Rocky. Maraming salamat sa ating naging panauhin – Secretary Galvez at LTFRB Chair Delgra.

At siyempre po ‘no, bago po tayo magtapos ulitin ko lang po – habang nagbubukas po tayo ng ekonomiya para maiwasan ang mas marami pang Pilipino na magutom, kinakailangan po pangalagaan ang ating mga buhay para tayo’y makapaghanapbuhay.

Sa ngalan po ng Presidente natin, Presidente Rodrigo Roa Duterte, ito po ang inyong Spox Harry Roque nagsasabi: Kaya natin ito. We will heal as one at panoorin po natin ang video ng DOH para sa libreng bakuna from October 26 to November 25.

###

--

News and Information Bureau-Data Processing Center