

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**TALK TO THE PEOPLE OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE  
ON CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)**

[24 July 2021]

**PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE:** So this will be a long night. Ikaw na lang ang moderator since you know the personalities who will talk here and their expertise, ikaw may alam. I'll give the baton to you to orchestrate tonight's discussion.

**DOH SECRETARY FRANCISCO DUQUE III:** Okay, sir. Maraming salamat po, Mr. President. We have the panel of experts and we can begin with Dr. Edsel Salvana to make his presentation with the clinical features of the Delta variant.

We can --- with your permission, sir, we would like to acknowledge Dr. Salvana to make his presentation. You have the floor Dr. Salvana.

**DR. EDSSEL SALVANA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good evening, Mr. President; good evening to the Cabinet and the members of the IATF. *[May I have the slides up, please?]*

Okay, Mr. President, this is actually an update of what I presented to you before about itong nakakatakot po natin na Delta variant. We know more about it now and what we are seeing is continuing to be scary.

We call Delta "the fastest and the fittest" virus po na na-produce ng COVID-19. It is 60 percent more transmissible than Alpha, 'yung UK variant, which is already 60 percent more transmissible than the old --- the original virus. It is three times more contagious than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus. It also seems to be deadlier and this will be worse if the healthcare system is overwhelmed. Patients also seem to get sicker and younger ages can also develop severe disease po, Mr. President. *[Next slide, please.]*

So ito po 'yung nakakatakot sa Delta kasi alam natin the original virus from Wuhan it can infect about 2.4 to 2.6 people. Iyong sa Europe, 3; iyong Alpha na UK variant, it can infect 4 to 5. Itong Delta up to 8 people po puwede niyang i-infect and those 8 can each infect another 8. Kaya nakikita po natin 'yung sa India, 'yung nakikita natin sa Indonesia ang bilis-bilis po talaga ng spread, exponential po talaga ang spread. *[Next slide, please.]*

So, ang nakita po there was an outbreak in China, and we know naman China has a very good healthcare system, nagkaroon pa rin sila ng outbreak of about 168 people pero mukhang na-contain naman po nila. But what they found was 'yung Delta has a thousand times more virus particles than the original virus kaya nakakahawa po talaga. There's also a longer duration of infectiousness. There is also a faster time from becoming infectious from the time you are exposed. Dati it takes about three days bago ka nakakahawa ng mga tao, ngayon mga 30 hours lang puwede nang makahawa.

And of course, there's a lot of virus so even asymptomatic pa lang nakakahawa na po. And 'yung sinasabi natin dati na close contact na at least 15 minutes, that is really out of --- nakita po

nila even in Australia and then China, minsan one, two minutes lang puwede na pong mahawa. So this is a very contagious virus po. *[Next slide, please.]*

So in summary po, we know Delta is more transmissible, it's potentially deadlier and can spread quickly faster. But it is beatable with our minimum health standard, face shield, face mask, physical distancing and, of course, we have to vaccinate everyone.

We just really need to make sure na mag-level up rin po 'yung ating compliance because the virus has really leveled up. The treatment remains the same. Deaths are going down in countries with high vaccination rates. So tama po 'yung ginagawa natin, continue to vaccinate.

We were more cautious with relaxing our measures. Iyong sa US nagtanggap na sila ng mask eh. Even though mataas 'yung vaccination rate nila, that was the wrong thing to do lalo na with Delta kasi puwede pang mahawa.

So I think at least in the short term until we can vaccinate more and more people, we should continue to vaccinate as fast as possible, use our face masks and our face shields, and hopefully we can avoid a surge that is really devastating our ASEAN neighbors po.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Thank you, sir. Dr. Duque...

**SEC. DUQUE:** Thank you, sir. After Dr. Salvana --- thank you, Dr. Salvana for your presentation. Sir, if I may be allowed that we recognize Dr. Cynthia Saloma, the Executive Director of the Philippine Genome Center. You are recognized, Ma'am Saloma. Thank you, sir.

**DR. CYNTHIA PALMES-SALOMA:** Good evening po, Mr. President and the members of the Cabinet. *[Can I have the first slide, please?]*

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Welcome, Ma'am.

**DR. PALMES-SALOMA:** So ngayon pong gabi we are going to report to you our national genomic biosurveillance effort.

If you remember last December 26 you urged us to join the efforts so that we can have a -- - handle as to the number of the variants that are entering our country. What is genome biosurveillance? I just would like to explain this po kasi maraming mga tao na akala nila part of care diagnostics 'yung genomic biosurveillance 'no.

So what is the purpose of our genomic biosurveillance effort? Number one, is to track how the virus is being --- their presence in the country and how they are being transmitted in the community as well as po in our healthcare facilities.

And of course as part of our effort, we also detect outbreaks and we try to see what are the variants of concern that seems to be associated with these outbreaks and, of course, we identify the presence of new variants both from our international incoming travelers as well as, of course, we want to determine local transmission of these variants that come from our international travelers in cases where *[garbled]*.

And, of course, we want to test whether the new variants change and how well our vaccines work and, of course, all this information will be very, very important to guide our response.

**SEC. DUQUE:** Sir, we will just have the third and last presentation before the Cabinet members may want to ask and, Mr. President, they will be answering your questions but perhaps it's best that we complete the presentation. One last presentation na lang po. Maiksi lang po ito kay Dr. Anna Ong-Lim of the Technical Advisory Group. Mr. President, can we yield the floor to Dra. Anna Ong-Lim.

**DR. ANNA LISA ONG-LIM:** Thank you, Secretary Duque and good evening po, Mr. President, members of the Cabinet, and the rest of the IATF team.

After listening to the presentations coming from Dr. Salvana and Dr. Saloma, I think the remaining question that we need to answer is: What is the appropriate response now that the Delta variant has been detected within Philippine shores?

So the first set of recommendations are actually focused on continued implementation of Doors 1 and 2 of our Four-Door Strategy. So despite the data showing that there is already local transmission, border control continues to be a very critical component that we hope will continue to slow entry of more individuals who are positive not just for Delta but also other variants of concern that may be discovered in the future.

Now after completing the 10-day facility quarantine, the LGUs are enjoined to continue enforcing their monitoring of the arrivals for the remaining four days of the standard 14-day quarantine. 'Pag nakauwi hindi po ibig sabihin na puwede na pong gumala 'yung ating traveler kasi hindi pa po tapos 'yung 14 days. Sampung araw pa lang po 'yung inilagi nila sa facility.

Also it's very important for the LGUs to implement strict lockdowns in cities or provinces as necessary. Given the economic impact of imposing region-wide lockdowns, the response strategies anchored on imposing localized or granular lockdowns. And this will happen at the household or barangay levels and with implemented targeted response strategies, we hope to be able to reduce transmission at the same time also reduce the economic strain of actually implementing these lockdowns. *[Next slide, please.]*

The second set of recommendations focuses on surveillance and improving our healthcare capacity. So ang strategy to manage a possible surge is to ensure that the healthcare system is actually ready regardless of the community quarantine classification. Hindi po 'yung mag-e-escalate po tayo at saka pa lang naghahabol. Dapat parating ready ang ating healthcare capacity. There should be sufficient TTMF and ICU bed capacity.

And as per IATF Resolution 104, we are calling on the hospitals to increase their COVID-19 bed capacity to 30 percent for the private hospitals and 50 percent for the public hospitals to ensure that should a surge happen, we will have enough beds available.

So to summarize, my key messages po, Mr. President, are disease surveillance, enhanced through whole genome sequencing will ensure that we will be able to detect our signals immediately and be able to keep one step ahead.

Second, with the confirmation of the local transmission of the Delta variant, we need to work on the premise that every case that's now detected is Delta so that we can act accordingly.

Next, each component of the Four-Door Strategy should already, or is already in place and can still be intensified by continuing to implement our strict border control, not only at all airports, but also at sea ports. We've seen that our initial detections actually happened among seafarers.

We need to shorten case and close contact detection and implement --- immediately implement isolation and quarantine for these individuals. We need to fast-track vaccination and focus particularly on A2 and A3.

And as a last line of defense, we need to equip our hospitals by providing them with health human resources, with the appropriate equipment, with oxygen supply, and we will be able to maintain their capacity if we triage appropriately by providing enough TTMF facilities.

Maraming salamat po.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Thank you, Doktora. Anybody from the panel who would want to... Sonny?

**DOF SECRETARY CARLOS DOMINGUEZ III:** Yeah. Mr. President, just to follow up on your statement and also the statement of one of the experts, who said that vaccination is the top priority.

We just want to assure the public that we have --- through the first half of this year, we received 20 million vaccines. Okay? Actually, by yesterday, we already received 30 million vaccines.

We expect to receive around 65 million from July 1st until September 30 --- that's the third quarter --- and around 55 million by the end of --- by the end of the third quarter.

So the total we are expecting to receive this year is 171 million doses. So those 171 million is more than enough to vaccinate the entire adult population of the Philippines and the money is already available for that, okay. So there is no problem with the money for this year. Okay.

Now, for next year, we will just have --- we just had a meeting with Secretary Avisado and Secretary Duque yesterday, and we noted that we have in the budget for next year already 45 billion pesos for additional vaccinations.

Just to assure you --- yourself, Mr. President, and the health community, we do have the money for that. Now the question is: How do we use that money? Are we going to need booster shoots? Are we going to need another set of vaccinations? Whatever it is, please tell us so that we can --- we can properly allocate these funds.

So, Mr. President, I don't think we are good only until six months, I think we are good beyond 2022. Okay, so it's nothing to --- it is not going to be easy, but with the moves that you have made from 2016 to 2019, we are ready to handle this problem financially, and that is due to you, Mr. President.

So, again, to summarize: we will be --- by the end of this year, we will be able to vaccinate the entire adult population of the Philippines. Hopefully everybody will agree to be vaccinated.

Number two, for next year, we already have 45 billion pesos in the budget and already financed for whatever the DOH is going to recommend, Mr. President.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Ang problema ko, may isa pa. I keep hearing Senators Lacson, if I'm not mistaken, I forgot the others, Sotto, that we are underspending sa Bayanihan. Totoo ba ito? Is this true?

**SEC. DOMINGUEZ:** Mr. President, according to the DBM, we have already released 660 billion pesos. Okay, 660 billion. What they are referring to as "underspending" is 6 billion pesos or one percent of the total.

Now, we --- the Department of Budget and ourselves, are going to each department to see where the 6 billion is. But, Mr. President, this is one percent problem. This is not...

In relation to what we have released of 660 billion, this is one percent, okay, and we are sure that it will be released. But in the meantime, we are asking each department to really push the spend --- to really spend the money.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** The problem is, you know, one thing very wrong with Congress is that they are not listening when you are talking. So it would be better to give it a little shout. Totoo. Eh 'yang sa Bisaya "tira-pasagad", kung maski saan na lang tatama. Tell them that one percent.

Nakakaano kasi because you... The criticism is always on the Executive Department, tayo 'yung nage-execute sa laws. So when they say that you are not spending the money correctly because there is underspending, and it turns out it's only one percent, I'd like --- I'd like to tell Congress now that when Secretary Dominguez is talking to you, please listen.

Walang ano 'yan. There is no malice in that statement pero makinig kayo para hindi kayo --- 'yung Bisaya, "tira-pasagad", 'yung basta lang tatamaan 'yung buwan.

So is there any other guy in the panel who would like to... Secretary Roque.

**PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON HARRY ROQUE:** Thank you, Mayor. Itatanong ko lang po 'yung mga eksperto 'no, kasi ngayon po, ngayong mayroon ng local transmission na na-confirm ang Delta, nag-declare po tayo ng GCQ with heightened restrictions sa Metro Manila, sa apat pang mga probinsiya.

Tapos kinansel (cancel) na po natin 'yung naunang IATF resolution na pupuwede nang lumabas ang mga bata. So hindi na naman po sila ulit pupuwedeng lumabas. At saka nag-impose na po ang MMDA ng curfew na mas mahaba, 10 to 4 'no.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Yes?

**DTI SECRETARY RAMON LOPEZ:** Mon Lopez. Permission to talk...

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Yes, go ahead.

**SEC. LOPEZ:** Okay. Good evening, Mr. President, mga kasama. Actually, ang --- the way we are handling this right now, I believe that we were willing to sacrifice a bit 'yung ating --- 'yung economic mobility by immediately doing this GCQ with heightened restrictions the moment it was reported to us na may --- dumami 'yung cases ng Delta variant.

Kaya nga po about two days ago, from what we just enjoyed na GCQ, umatras ulit tayo sa GCQ with heightened restriction. But we appreciate also the good balancing act of the IATF, with the help of the health expert, na 'yung ating restriction naka-focus lang karamihan dito sa mga non-essential activities na binabawasan natin, especially itong mga sinasabing superspreader events, bawal talaga at pinapahinto natin 'yung mga non-essential activities.

But what is important, to the extent possible, we are allowing economic activities to continue. I think that is very important, Mr. President.

Hindi naman natin ipinasara lahat ng mga operations ng mga exporters, mga BPOs, mga manufacturing. Tuloy-tuloy po ito and that is I think the balance that we are managing here, Mr. President. As long as they all follow minimum health protocol standards, mame-maintain natin hopefully itong momentum that we are enjoying right now na nakakabawi naman ang ating economy tulad po noong tinatanong niyo kanina, unti-unti na pong nakakabangon.

Ang at least with this quick reaction natin na magbalanse kaagad, umatras nang kaunti, wag --- para hindi umabot sa mas matagal or mas malalang situation tulad ng Delta variant sa ibang bansa ay hopefully ma-maintain natin itong balance and to allow the economy to continue at naka-focus 'yung opening sa economy, hindi po sa mga non-essential activities.

So iyon po 'yung I think the observation that we are trying to emphasize right now. It's really finding that balance and close working relationship with the experts and the economic team, Mr. President.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Anybody else?

**OFFICE OF CIVIL DEFENSE ADMINISTRATOR UNDERSECRETARY RICARDO JALAD:** I will discuss the effects of southwest monsoon enhanced by Tropical Cyclone Fabian as well as update on Taal Volcano situation and the earthquake early this morning is 6.7-magnitude earthquake with epicenter in Calatagan, Batangas.

First on the two hydro meteorological events that --- system that affected the archipelago. First is the southwest monsoon, which actually started way back in June and probably will extend up to sometime in October or November. And the southwest monsoon is bringing heavy rains to mostly the eastern --- western part of the archipelago or the western side of Luzon.

And the other weather event is Tropical Cyclone Fabian which is although the track is way, way north of the archipelago, its location is somewhere between Taiwan and Japan, it is enhancing the southwest monsoon thereby we are receiving more rains as --- than normal due to the southwest monsoon resulting to flooding in general parts of Luzon.

The... *[Next slide, please.]* This is the timeline for the development of Typhoon Fabian. It was detected by PAGASA last 16 July as low pressure area, which developed into tropical depression, then tropical storm, then severe tropical storm, and then into typhoon ultimately last 20 July.

And the track as shown is a --- from the development as an LPA within the Philippine Area of Responsibility, it traveled generally northwest towards the direction of Mainland China passing through the seas between Japan and Taiwan. But again, it enhanced the southwest monsoon that affected our archipelago.

*[Next slide, please.]*

This is the weather outlook we received from PAGASA for the next week. For Baguio, it will have rainy days up to Tuesday next week. And for Metro Manila, we expect to have fair weather starting tomorrow, Sunday. Laoag City will still have some rainy days up to Wednesday next week.

*[Next slide, please.]*

Then here are the effects from the southwest monsoon and Tropical Cyclone Fabian.

The magnitude 6.7 earthquake in Calatagan that occurred early this morning at about 4:49 in the morning, its epicenter was in Calatagan, Batangas. Its highest intensity recorded was, based on the PHIVOLCS earthquake intensity scale is V, which is categorized as strong.

It affected four regions namely: Region III, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, and NCR. And we did not receive any major damage, only minor ones from Lubang, such as a collapse of seawall and river wall and damages to two houses.

The local government units are still continuing the damage assessment and needs analysis. Also there was story convention for intervention from the national government agencies and even from the regional government agencies.

So this is my update, Mr. President, on the effects of southwest monsoon and Tropical Cyclone Fabian, on the status of Taal Volcano, and the effects of the 6.7-magnitude earthquake in Calatagan, Batangas. That's all, Mr. President, thank you.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Gusto ko lang malaman kay ano, when will be the new classification sa quarantine be published or...

**SEC. DUQUE:** Sir, may bago po tayong quarantine classification for NCR and four other provinces, Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, Davao del Sur, and Davao de Oro, to GCQ with heightened restrictions beginning July 23 to 31st. We will meet next week, Mr. President, for the August 1 to 15 community quarantine classification.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Ah, that's fair enough.

**SEC. DUQUE:** We will ask for your approval, sir.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Okay.

**SEC. DUQUE:** Thank you.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Now, I'd like to ask Charlie this time. Secretary Galvez, the one thing that I have noticed sa tawag lang, sa cellphone, those who can connect with me sa when I was in Davao, many local government units are desperately asking for additional bakuna. Nagka --- there's a strong upsurge of --- in places like Iloilo, Bacolod, Cagayan, Agusan.

So kindly tell us what we should be doing to --- hinihingi nila ng bakuna eh. Nagpapadagdag nga, Bacolod is one. The mayor there is asking for more. So when can we accommodate them with the sufficient vaccines at this time?

**NTF COVID-19 CHIEF IMPLEMENTER & VACCINE CZAR CARLITO GALVEZ JR.:** Sir, actually, sir, with the and with the clamor of many LGUs, we and we assessed that we need to increase our --- our and --- our monthly delivery from 20 to 25 because we saw that there is really a great uptake already for many LGUs and we saw that many and many provincial governors and also mayors are already prepared for the vaccination of their targeted individuals.

I have some and some presentation, Mr. President.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Go ahead.

**SEC. GALVEZ:** If you will allow me to present.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Yeah, go ahead.

**SEC. GALVEZ:** Sir, as you can see in the picture that our and our populace is really ready. Most of them are even lining... *[Can you --- can you give the first slide?]*

Sir, you can see in this picture, this is and this is one of the picture that we saw that they're lining up even --- even they are and --- ibig sabihin natin, sir, talagang nakikita natin rain or shine and day and night talagang wala pong letup 'yung delivery at administration ng ating mga vaccines.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Sir, may I cut you there? Actually, mukhang hindi tayo nagkulang sa bakuna. The problem is for the local governments to come up with a more sane process of vaccination than allowing people to queue as early as four o'clock in the morning and getting their shots at about nine o'clock in... It seems to be to me is not the way to vaccine --- to vaccinate people. Nakita ko 'yun kanina sa umaga, I was still awake.

I was signing the documents of government. Nakita ko na nag --- sa ano na iyong iba, well, the -- itong mga media, they'd always want to exploit news and they were already talking about leptospirosis.

Eh well, kasama 'yan but iyong --- 'yung cold --- people are exposed in the open, unprotected from the elements tapos waiting for a --- get a chance to have the shot. Mga three to four hours magtindig diyan, sir. Sabagay baha kasi ngayon eh. They could just have looked for another auditorium there or somewhere to do it.

Can I request the Secretary of Local Government to just enjoin them --- maybe a directive to enjoin them to be more circumspect and not to --- especially now that the southwest monsoon is passing the country na hindi ganito ang ano? It's not the way --- how to do it.

They have to be more proactive than just maybe setting a venue then without the mechanism of how to transfer it by --- and, at the same time, informing the people of the new site.

But itong ganito and waiting as early as four o'clock in the morning. Tignan mo 'yung... Para bang to me it is not a --- it's b\*\*\*s\*\*\* actually kapagka ganoon ang ginagawa mo sa Pilipino. If you cannot do it in a place where there is a roof to cover their heads and na hindi sila mabasa, not exposed to the elements, umagang-umaga, nako, Diyos ko po.



Bakit naman ganoon ang...? Why can't they just look for another last minute? I said the other --- at the end of the line is the government there na they should be flexible enough to immediately look for a place na which is dry and which can house so many people and dividing them into groups and make a head count of how many they can --- time and motion nila sa pagbakuna --- how many they can inoculate tapos pabalikin na lang ninyo ang iba rather than let them wait there.

It's a question of common sense eh. Hindi na nila ginamit doon na ano... Hinati na sana nila. They divide it into half and telling the others to report for another --- for their vaccines at another hour and look for a place, I said, where people are protected from the elements of the clim --- 'yung climates.

Nakakaawa naman 'to. I would say that I would question the mayor and the barangay captain kaya nga dapat talaga sa barangay captain because it is the barangay captain who would act as the marshal. Marshal ba na i-mar --- babantayan niya 'yung mga tao. It's the barangay captain there sa mga tao na...

Pero 'yung ganoon, I may also overshoot my comments there. Dito ho sinabi na basta open to everybody and anybody. Ang problema iyong crowding. People who would respond to the announcement that inoculation shall be given to those who are there on the site but not taking into account, I said, the amount of time and the motion to do it and making them go back. You come back at some other hour. And on top of that really, the most important thing, is to look for a dry place.

Iyan. Saan 'yan? Tama 'yan, leptospirosis, then you have the influenza, then you have the respiratory. 'Pag tinamaan pa 'yan ng ano o, pagka tinamaan 'yan ng a simple cold, it can deteriorate into a respiratory problem. 'Pag sinakyan ng COVID, patay na.

So I'd like to... I'd like to have a rule, sir, that to encourage them to not to use that kind of setup even if it is numbered in the inoculation or it is just given to anybody who's there who wants it, it has to take into account the weather now and the place that where they should be waiting or... That ought not to be repeated, I suppose. Kawawa 'yung tao.

Anybody else who would want to...? Del, murag... You have something? Well, you know, one thing going in our favor is really in other countries, they are having riots about the bakuna. In Indonesia, in some parts of iyong sa France.

But mabuti ito we are better off because our citizens are really law-abiding citizens and you can tell by the respond of the people. We have yet to see a ruckus there somewhere regarding the vaccination process. Wala tayong mga ano 'yun nagri-riot 'yung iba eh. Dito wala, naghihintay. Nakakaawa 'yung... The picture that you saw. That ought not to be repeated. I would task the Secretary of Local Government to --- I don't know how he would do it but find a solution to the problem.

So my pagpapasalamat. Utang na loob ko sa inyo na tinutulungan ninyo kami lalo na 'yung mga experts, the doctors, our scientists, and the people who have --- because we do not have enough time to... Si Secretary Lorenzana is --- keeps on looking at his watch *[laughter]* from my dito sa ano ko peripheral...

So kung wala na, maraming salamat po sa inyo and I hope that we can call upon you to this kind of... I know that it can be tiring, not boring.

But I said there are some other entities of government who should be made aware of so that they can make the preparations if things get really worse.

Eh alam mo, you know, you can set the date... You can propose but it is God who disposes. So let us pray that the weather --- the political weather and the weather of climate change will be kind to us.

Thank you very much. Good night. *[applause]*

**--- END ---**