

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

PUBLIC BRIEFING #LagingHandaPH
HOSTED BY PCOO SECRETARY MARTIN ANDANAR
AND USEC. ROCKY IGNACIO
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SEC. ANDANAR: Magandang umaga, Pilipinas. Ngayon pong araw ng Biyernes, mga balita't impormasyon na makakatulong po sa ating pagharap sa pandemya ang muli nating ihahatid sa inyo, ako po ang inyong lingkod, Secretary Martin Andanar. Magandang umaga sa'yo, Usec. Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Good morning, Secretary Martin. Makakasama rin natin sa pagbibigay-linaw sa iba't ibang isyu ang mga opisyal ng pamahalaan kaya tumutok lang po kayo sa ating programa, ako naman po si Usec. Rocky Ignacio mula sa PCOO.

SEC. ANDANAR: Simulan na natin, Rocky, ang talakayan dito sa Public Briefing #LagingHandaPH.

Matapos ang dalawang linggo, ilalagay ang Metro Manila sa Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine simula bukas hanggang sa mga nalalabing araw ng Agosto. Pamahalaan tiniyak naman ang patuloy na mahigpit na pagpapatupad ng PDITR strategy at pagbabakuna kontra-COVID-19. Ang ulat na iyan mula kay Mela Lesmoras:

[NEWS REPORT]

USEC. IGNACIO: Lumuwag man ang quarantine status sa ilang lugar, Senator Bong Go hinimok ang publiko na huwag magpakampante at sumunod pa rin sa mga ipinatutupad na health protocols dahil malaki pa rin aniya ang banta ng COVID-19. Narito ang report:

[VTR]

SEC. ANDANAR: Una nang nabanggit ni Vaccine Czar Carlito Galvez, Jr., ang pagkakabinbin sa pagbili ng bakuna na nasa ilalim ng tripartite agreements na pinasok ng national government sa ilang grupo, kasama na diyan ang mga lokal na pamahalaan. Ang epekto nito sa bakunahan sa mga lalawigan at ang isinasagawang COVID-19 response ng Marinduque ang ating pag-uusapan kasama si Governor Presbiterio Velasco, Jr., ang presidente ng League of Provinces of the Philippines. Magandang umaga po sa inyo, Governor.

MARINDUQUE GOV. VELASCO: Good morning po, Secretary Martin, Usec. Rocky.

SEC. ANDANAR: Governor, unahin po natin pag-usapan iyong pagkaka-hold ng tripartite agreements para sa pagbili ng bakuna ng mga LGUs. Ano po iyong nakikita ninyong epekto nito sa vaccine rollout ng mga probinsiya sa kalagitnaan ng pagtaas ng COVID cases sa bansa?

MARINDUQUE GOV. VELASCO: [Garbled] report po sa amin, nagkaroon po kami ng meeting kahapon with [garbled] at Usec. Vergeire at Usec. Myrna Cabotaje ay hindi naman po problema talaga iyong pagpirma ng tripartite agreement. [Garbled] Pfizer at Sputnik po ay talagang ang policy po ay [garbled] negotiate lang sa national government. Iyong Moderna at AstraZeneca ay hindi pa nakakakumpleto pa ng pag-supply. At iyong mga iba katulad po ng J&J ay hindi pa raw open sa tripartite agreement; ang Covavax po ay wala pang emergency [garbled]. So may ilan lang naman po na [garbled] na hindi na pipirmahan iyong tripartite agreement pero nakita na valid naman iyong rason ng NTF kaya po [garbled] pirmahan iyong tripartite agreement.

Kami naman pong mga [garbled]

SEC. ANDANAR: Okay. Mayroong problema ang ating communication line with Governor Velasco and we'll try to get him back later on.

Samantala, mga economic frontliners naman sa ilang bayan ng Siquijor ang sinadya ng outreach team ni Senador Bong Go; ang mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan namahagi rin na hiwalay na tulong pinansiyal, pangkabuhayan at scholarship para sa ating mga kababayan. Narito ang report:

[VTR]

SEC. ANDANAR: Muli po nating balikan si Governor Velasco ng Marinduque. May datos po ba kayo, Governor, kung nasa ilang doses sana ang planong bilhin ng mga lalawigan through the tripartite agreement?

MARINDUQUE GOV. VELASCO: Sa pagkakaalam ko po ay mayroon na pong nauna sa aming mga kasama sa liga na nag-negotiate na po at mayroon na pong tripartite agreement. Ang alam ko lang po na may alegasyon na hindi pa po naaayos iyong kaniya o napipirmahan iyong tripartite agreement ay ang ating kaibigan pong si Governor Ebdane ng Zambales. Pero iyong iba po ay nauna na po eh, so, napirmahan na po iyong tripartite agreement.

SEC. ANDANAR: Governor, kumusta po ang dating ng supply ng bakuna diyan sa Marinduque at ilan pong doses sana ng bakuna ang plano ninyong i-procure sa ilalim ng tripartite agreement, kung mayroon man?

MARINDUQUE GOV. VELASCO: Kami po ay nakaasa naman po sa supply ng bakuna mula sa national government ano po, hinihintay po namin iyan. Kasi po ako, bilang national president ng liga ay alam ko naman po iyong availability ng supply. At iyon na nga po, karamihan po sa mga supplier ng bakuna ay nakikipag-deal directly sa national government, sila po ang priority. Kaya po kami ay hinihintay po muna namin iyong ample supply o sufficient supply ng bakuna na darating sa Pilipinas bago po kami o-order. Depende po kasi sa kakayahan ng mga LGUs kaya kaniya-kaniya po ang desisyon diyan eh.

So, sa ngayon po, iyong Marinduque po ay naghihintay po ng talagang may impormasyon na po na maraming supply na darating at saka po kami bibili. Pero sa amin naman pong ibinibigay ng national government ay dumadami na rin po, halos mga 18% na po iyong aming nabakunahan at

marami-rami na rin pong vaccines ang naibigay sa amin although gusto po namin ay mas marami pang bakuna na ibigay dahil nga po tumataas iyong infection rate.

SEC. ANDANAR: Nag-request po ba kayo, Governor, sa IATF na sumailalim sa mahigpit o mas mahigpit na quarantine status ang lalawigan ng Marinduque at ilan po ba ang nananatiling active cases at kaso ng Delta variant diyan po sa inyo?

MARINDUQUE GOV. VELASCO: Nag-request po kami ng mas mataas na community quarantine system. Dati po ay MGCQ lang po kami, ngayon po ay GCQ na kami at nag-notify po kami sa regional IATF for concurrence.

Tumaas nga po ang dami ng aming mga total number of cases. Dati po ay 390 lang noong Mayo 2021, eh ngayon ho eh halos umabot na ho ng 1,300, so, mga 250% po ang increase ano po. Ang active cases po natin ay 250 cases na po sa ngayon as of the present time.

SEC. ANDANAR: Governor, natukoy ninyo po ba kung bakit pataas ang bilang ng mga nagpopositibo sa inyong probinsiya?

MARINDUQUE GOV. VELASCO: May report na po iyong Philippine Genome Center na mayroon na pong anim na Delta cases dito po isang bayan namin sa Sta. Cruz kaya po talagang tumataas itong aming infection rate at ang bilis po namin. Ang evaluation po namin ay baka itong Delta variant po ay mayroon na rin sa ibang bayan kaya lang po ay wala pa po iyong mga ibang report galing sa Philippine Genome Center.

SEC. ANDANAR: Okay. Ano pong nakalatag na plano ng lokal na pamahalaan para maiwasang tuluyang ma-overwhelm ang mga ospital sa lalawigan?

MARINDUQUE GOV. VELASCO: Nagko-convert na po kami ng mga classrooms sa bawat barangay bilang isolation facility at pinapa-overtime na po namin iyong under construction pa po na isang malaking TTMF namin. So, sa tingin po namin ay maku-cover naman po iyong mga tataas pang numero ng mga COVID cases dito.

Sa ngayon po ay marami na rin po ang occupancy ng aming mga isolation facilities kaya patuloy po iyong aming paggawa pa ng additional isolation facilities sa mga classrooms po sa bawat barangay.

SEC. ANDANAR: Kumusta po ang monitoring ninyo sa mga borders? Ano pong paalala ninyo sa mga kababayan nating papasok o lalabas ng Marinduque?

MARINDUQUE GOV. VELASCO: Well, very strict po kami sa border control, Secretary Martin, dahil nga po natatakot kami na may mga iba pang carriers na papasok na dala pa lalo iyong Delta variant. Kaya nga po mahigpit po kami sa pagpasok at nagri-require po kami ng RT-PCR or antigen test sa mga pumapasok. At iyon naman pong mga non-APORs kasama na po iyong mga LSIs ay talaga pong tinitingnan. Prohibited po actually ang pagpasok ng mga non-APORs pero mayroon pong mga ilang rason na justified na ina-allow namin.

So, talaga pong istrikto itong aming pagpapasok ng mga gustong bumisita sa aming lalawigan. At pagkatapos po noon pagdating naman po sa loob ng bayan ay sina-subject po iyan sa thorough medical examination. Kapag mayroong mga symptoms ay ina-isolate na ho kaagad iyan. At iyon nga, bibigyan ho ulit ng RT-PCR para po magkaroon ng talaga pong conclusive na finding na positive po iyan. So, talaga po kaming nag-i-isolate na ngayon at halos hangga't maaari po ay walang home quarantine.

SEC. ANDANAR: Pinapatanong ni Tuesday Niu ng DZBB kung ilan ang pasyenteng tinamaan ng Delta variant at kung mayroon man ay ano ang kalagayan nila ngayon?

MARINDUQUE GOV. VELASCO: Anim po iyong tinamaan ng Delta variant sa Sta. Cruz at sa anim po, iyong isa po ay minalas po tayo at pumanaw na po. Pero ang sabi po sa akin ay mayroon naman pong comorbidity iyon, may ailment. So, ganoon po ang nangyari, mayroon pong isang pumanaw doon sa anim na Delta variant case. Opo.

SEC. MARTIN ANDANAR: Maraming salamat po sa inyong panahon, Marinduque Governor Presbitero Velasco Jr., Mabuhay po kayo at mag-ingat po kayo sir.

MARINDUQUE GOV. VELASCO: Maraming salamat po. Keep safe also to all of you. Maraming salamat po!

SEC. MARTIN ANDANAR: Samantala, hanggang dito na lamang muna ako, Usec. Rocky, at mayroon pa tayong trabaho doon sa opisina pero magsama-sama uli tayo sa Lunes, mga kababayan. Usec. Rocky, please go ahead.

USEC. IGNACIO: Pero, Secretary Martin, ang suot ko ay may kulay pula ng konti kaya bago ka po magpaalam ako naman po ay babati sa iyong ... kasama ko rin dito iyong ating mga kasamahan sa Public Briefing at ang PTV na isa pong Maligayang Kaarawan. At sana, Secretary Martin, iyon pong lahat ng inyong naisin, nasa puso, nasa isip ninyo ay mabigyan po ng katuparan, at siyempre good health sa inyo at sa inyong buong pamilya. Happy Birthday po!

SEC. MARTIN ANDANAR: Thank you so much, Usec. Rocky. At binabati ko po ang lahat ng nagbi-birthday ngayong mga panahon na ito, si Congressman Bong Plaza, Happy Birthday din sa August 21. At siyempre panalangin ko para sa mga kababayan nating dumadaan sa anumang unos ng buhay, lakasan ninyo lang ang inyong loob at manalangin sa Poong Maykapal para malagpasan natin kung anuman ang hirap na pinagdaraan natin tulad nitong COVID-19 pandemic. Salamat team, PTV! Magpapadala ako ng litson diyan sa inyo – litson manok!

USEC. IGNACIO: Okey lang, Secretary, basta kahit ano. Salamat po and again, Happy Birthday po!

Samantala—nakalimutan kong itanong iyong edad ni Secretary Martin. Kung mayroon korapsiyon o katiwalian mapapatunayan sa sinumang nasa pamahalaan ay dapat itong managot dahil hindi papayagan nila Pangulong Duterte at maging ni Senator Bong Go ang anumang porma ng katiwalian. Narito po ang report:

[VTR]

USEC. IGNACIO: Mainit na usapin naman po ngayon ang ginawang paggastos ng Department of Health sa pandemic funds, isa na rito ang diumano'y overpriced face mask at face shield. Kinukuwestiyon ng mga mambabatas kung paano po napunta sa DBM ang obligasyong bumili ng mga PPE. Para sagutin po ang isyu, makakasama po natin ngayong umaga si DBM Undersecretary Lloyd Christopher Lao. Good morning po sir.

Good morning, sir. Can you hear me? Hindi po namin kayo naririnig, naka-mute po yata kayo, sir? Sir Lloyd? Okay, aayusin lang natin ang ating linya ng komunikasyon.

Samantala, maliban po sa 3 milyong doses ng COVID-19 vaccines mula sa Sinovac, panibagong supply din sa Astra Zeneca dumating sa bansa. Ito po ay higit 580,000 doses na binili ng pribadong sektor. Ang detalye mula kay Naomi Tiburcio:

[NEWS REPORT]

USEC. IGNACIO: Maraming salamat sa iyo, Naomi Tiburcio.

Samantala, balikan na po natin si [garbled] Lao. Sir, good morning po.

FORMER DBM USEC. LAO: Good morning, ma'am.

USEC. IGNACIO: Sir, lumutang po ang pangalan ninyo sa nangyayaring imbestigasyon ngayon patungkol po sa COA audit observation sa Department of Health, ano po. Ito po ay dahil sa paglipat ng Kagawaran sa DBM ng pondong 42 billion pesos na pambili ng mga face masks at face shields. Puwede ninyo po bang ipaliwanag bakit daw po napunta sa DBM, kung saang opisyal po kayo dati, ang pagbili pati ng supply na ito at sino po ang nag-initiate ng transfer?

FORMER DBM USEC. LAO: Hindi po nilipat sa DBM ang pera. The money was sourced out from DBM and transferred to DOH. However, DOH transferred it to PS-DBM, the Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management. It is transferred to PS-DBM when the items that you are buying is considered common supplies, common goods like coupon bonds, ballpens, laptops, iyong binibili natin na office supplies – toilet papers, alcohol – those are common supplies that most government agencies procure it through the PS-DBM.

During the time of pandemic, it is not only DOH that was in need of buying the face masks, the face shields, the alcohol, the things that we need for protection against COVID. So it was classified by the GPPB [Government Procurement Policy Board] as common supplies. So when it was considered as common use or common supplies, common goods item, PS-DBM already has the authority to buy these items, together with DOH, together with PITC, together with DSWD, together with the LGUs. So all agencies now may procure such item under common goods supply.

So noong classified siya to ease the burden and to allow more access and more avenues of procuring the said items, kasi ang dami, almost everybody is in need of buying such items and

there is such lack of supply and by reason of iyong existing laws on how we procure, medyo mabagal siya, we have to open up the avenues. So DOH needed help and they passed on some of the budgets to PS-DBM to procure the said items. So ganoon po. When it is classified as common use, it can be passed on to PS-DBM po because that's our forte.

Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Sir Lloyd, iyon daw pong paggamit ba ng Department of Health sa Procurement Service ng DBM ay may legal basis? Ito po ba ay nangyari na dati pa?

FORMER DBM USEC. LAO: Yes, yes. PS-DBM is a specialized agency of the government. Its main purpose is to procure. Specializes under the said concept because most agencies do not have a regular procurement process; they don't really procure items as part of their regular performance or their function. Like DOH, their main function is to provide health and services; like DSWD, they provide social services; DOTr, they provide transportation services. But in the course of providing these services, they need to provide supplies; and to procure these items needs specialization, needs manpower, needs time, needs effort. So in order to not dilute the manpower and resources and time of these agencies, a different agency is focused and performs function for them. So iyon iyong PS-DBM.

So iyong bibili ka ng coupon bond, let's say sampung coupon bond every month, so you don't have to bid every month for the coupon bond. Kasi under the Procurement Law, medyo may bidding process, medyo mahaba iyan and it will take this five persons to conduct the bidding process, the publication. Medyo mahaba talaga iyan. So imagine if all agencies, instead of focusing on their primary purpose, also be bothered with these things, medyo masasayang iyong oras 'di ba. So they pass it to an agency whose only job is to procure, and that is the Procurement Service.

Multiple times na po, that's for long-standing years na ginagamit na po ang PS-DBM for such function. And PS-DBM has two functions, either they buy under the common supplies or they do procurement under non-common use. Iyong non-common use kasi, hindi siya regular. Like kapag bibili ka ng train, so you have to pass through PS-DBM if you want to kasi medyo hindi niya forte, kailangan ninyo pang mag-training, kailangan ninyo pang mag-set up ng team. So the technicalities would be so much effort and you will only do it once because we buy trains maybe once every five years, 'di ba. They would rather pass it to an agency who's more efficient in doing that time and again.

So during pandemic, medyo na-overwhelm ang DOH kasi all their personnel, most of them are doctors, running around, running hospitals, going around community facilities, building quarantine facilities, managing iyong RT-PCR, building COVID testing laboratories; and if you task them more to buy more items, medyo confusing na iyan. So they would rather have it removed from their shoulder and pass it to other agencies, which in this instance, PS-DBM.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sir Lloyd, regarding po doon sa sinabi ninyong presyo ng face mask at face shields na sinasabing overpriced, ano po ang reaksiyon ninyo dito? At sino po daw iyong naghahanap ng supplies na ito at kanino po ito binili?

FORMER DBM USEC. LAO: Okay, first thing, of course if you consider that 27 pesos during that time, this time that's so expensive, even I would not buy that 'di ba. Face shield during this time is P120 that would really be very expensive. But during that time, when kasagsagan ng pandemya, everybody was scampering. We were all scampering. What we did when DOH sent the document to us, APR, the Agency Purchase Request, together with the fund transfer, we started our bidding process.

Now, DOH has a pool of list of their suppliers, and DTI has pool of list of business establishments, and we were sending all requests to everybody, "Sige, magpadala kayo 'no if you can supply." The problem in the Philippines, there is a very limited number of pools who are choosing these items. So mahirap. And iyong iba din, most of the suppliers are actually import distributors. So they import and they distribute in the Philippines. The problem is, they cannot also supply kasi nga during that time, no planes were flying and no vessels were going through the ocean.

So, how can we transport? So, very hard iyong mga supplier that's why we contacted even DFA, our consulates, our embassies abroad to find suppliers.

And during that time hahanap talaga tayo through our Bids and Award Committee, sila po ang naghahanap noon through market study, kahit sa Facebook ay naghahanap tayo ng mga suppliers and we make invites and very few people responded kasi nga the volume is too high and it's very hard to supply. And iyong mga requirements din ng government nahirapan din sila. You have to have registration in the government which is very hard to comply and given the scenario during that time very hard for people to travel, to submit documents, so iyon iyong complication.

And but there were several bidders who made some offer/price offers, the problem is it's very expensive. Actually, when you look at it, kapag sinabi mong mahal iyong twenty-seven, yes mahal iyan but during that time that was one of the cheapest because face mask during that time cost at around P30.00-40.00 Even DTI increased their suggested retail price which is at P28.00 during that time but people were selling it at P30.00, P32.00 to P40.00.

Ang face shield during that time it was the first time the people knew about face shield. It was my first time to know about face shield it was being sold at P250, 300, 400 – hindi ba ang mahal?

So, when you bid at it most of the bidders bid at it around 400 and 300 but there's one company who bid it at P120.00. So, that's actually the cheapest during that time. But now, when you go out your house, pumunta ka ng bangko, mag-deposit ka wala kang face shield hindi ka makakapasok pero iyong guard doon nagbebenta doon ng face shield at P25, at 30.00 di ba.

Kapag dumaan ka sa sari-sari store may benta diyan P30.00. When you go to 711, may face shield din diyan. Kahit sa ka pumunta may face shield and because of the increase of supply, the prices would drop.

But you can also see kapag tumataas naman iyong cases, the prices of these items would increase but not exponentially high. If you can ... for people to understand the scenario, last year isa ang

po ang bumagsak na presyo – that’s gasoline which is [unclear] because nobody was driving their vehicles, no industry was running. So, prices of crude oil dropped and so does gasoline and diesel but everything else that was on high demand increased their prices. So, we as buyers is limited in buying kung ano iyong offered and that was the lowest offered during that time [unclear] volume.

Iyon po. It’s all documented naman, may procurement process tayong sinusunod. Iyon po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Pero, sir Lloyd, kinukuwestiyon ng COA at ng mga mambabatas kung bakit wala man lang daw pong MOA ang nasabing paglipat ng pondo? Wala daw po kasing naging accountability sa pondong inilipat. Ano pong masasabi ninyo dito?

FORMER DBM USEC. LAO: No, there is pure accountability with or without MOA because its public funds. Ang public funds should always be audited. COA did not question it. COA inquired on it because that’s part of the exit conference. Kasi medyo iyong report – I apologize for this – but whatever information that’s going out is not complete. Hindi siya complete, ‘di ba? So, nagtatanong sila bakit walang memorandum of agreement.

There will be a requirement of memorandum of agreement if the item that a certain agency would requests PS-DBM to procure is considered a non-common use. If it is considered a common use then the agency requesting PS-DBM to procure does not give a memorandum of agreement. Iyong memorandum of agreement is like this:

Like DOTr, gusto naming bumili ng tren, that’s not called supplies because no other agency would buy a train in the regular course of their business. So, they need have a memorandum of agreement, may terms of agreement, may mode of payment because PS-DBM will always charge fees [unclear] income, is the one that is paying for employees. It is semi-independent, so, whatever we have that’s what we pay our employees.

So, alam ninyo non-common supply kailangan ng memorandum of agreement; but if it is a common supply, hindi po kailangan ng memorandum of agreement. Ang ginagawa nila, nagdi-deposit sila ng pera para anytime that they would want to withdraw items technically or buy items for us, we can outright deliver because the money is already available. Kasi may problema din tayo diyan kapag hindi po ganiyan ang set-up, nagkakaroon din kami ng audit observation memorandum from COA and sometimes NDA.

Ang tawag ng NDA is... I forgot. Kapag wala silang pera na dineposit tapos nag-o-order sila by urgency and sometimes hindi nakikita doon sa system, nakaka-deliver ang PS-DBM, the problem there is nag-deliver kami ng pera sa inyo hindi kayo nagbayad, mapapahamak ang ahensiya ng PS-DBM. So, that is the scenario there.

Now, why there is no memorandum agreement for these items, it is because those items that they bought are considered common use supply. It has been reclassified as common use supplies because it’s not only DOH that is in demand, is in need of those items but all agencies already. ‘Di ba kahit PTV4 kailangan ninyo ng alcohol, sa amin kayo bumibili; kailangan ninyo ng face

mask, sa amin din kayo bumibili; kailangan ninyo ng coupon bond, sa amin kayo bumibili; all agencies who need these items they procure these to us.

So, with that the DOH is not the only agency who were asking us to buy these face masks, face shields but a lot of agencies but the bulk of it is the Department of Health. So, since it's common supply it does not need any memorandum of agreement. It's a point of inquiry, formal inquiry by COA so we can answer in writing formally so it will be recorded as part of the audit process. Iyon po ang purpose noon sa exit conference.

Tinatanong nila bakit 27 iyong benta namin sa internet, medyo mahal, in our website and we explain, 'Yes, 27 ang benta namin because that's our old stock hindi ho 27.' Ang bili namin sa lahat, mayroong binili kami na P2.00, 1.75, 1.70 pesos sa face mask, mga ganoon na presyo as time goes by. But iyong mga old stock namin hindi namin nabebenta because as we bid, we get cheaper, we dispose the cheaper ones first kasi of course why would you buy the more expensive one?

But it doesn't mean na ang bili namin doon mahal and that we bought it now. No. we buy it according to the market's situation during the time and sometime you cannot dispose it to all. Kapag tsinek ninyo hindi naman binili namin lahat iyong [unclear] at P27.00. No, gradual iyan as time is needed [unclear] we buy kasi baka—we were expecting during that time [unclear] ang pandemya after three months, so, we have to buy this good for three months. Succeedingly, we continue to buy and we ship off some of these items to different regions.

PS-DBM has I think 13 [unclear] offices from Region I – XIII; we have LGU depots. [unclear] kami ng supply, so, different localities and regions outside of Manila can also get these items. However, eto iyong problem namin during the time, the suppliers would ship the items to let's say to Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental or [unclear] city or regions libre iyon kasi ang supplier will have to shoulder to freight.

Then we have stocks there, kapag gusto mong bumili doon area bibili ka, ang problema nagkaubusan sa Metro Manila, sa outskirts hindi nagkaubusan. That's where most of our—the slow-moving stocks na face shield and face mask na hindi nabebenta nakatago doon. So, if we have to send it to the central office just to sell it, it will be more expensive kasi we have to get shipping na naman, freight costs which logically, financially, that's irregular to act on.

So we decided na iwan na lang doon and make some changes to have it sold for discount. But in order to sell for discount, we have to get authorization from the Commission on Audit, kailangan din iyon to justify 'di ba, everything, how everything goes. The reason for this is the market fluctuation, unusual market fluctuation. Everybody, if you just are willing to recall, everybody is willing to recall, magkano po bili ninyo ng face mask during that time and ng face shield? Same po ang scenario sa amin. It's unfair to say na 120 bili ko ngayon. No, we bought it at the price, when you were buying it at 150 at also 20 pesos and 40 pesos. Sometimes, we get lucky, buy it cheap; sometimes we buy it fair. It depends on the situation, kasi paunahan talaga iyong bili. During that time, kasi kapag hindi ka nakabili, people will bash you, 'Bakit ba, ano ba ang ginagawa mo, bakit hindi na nagtatrabaho.' Tapos kapag nakabili ka, sasabihin naman, 'Oh ba't iyon ang binili mo?' You know, that is the situation, reality.

Thank you po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Sir Lloyd, basahin ko lang iyong ilang tanong ng mga kasama natin para sa iyo. Unahin ko iyong tanong ni Leila Salaverria: According to OIC Canda, she had aired the misgivings on the expensive facemask and face shield at that time. Were these concerns addressed before the purchase? At ang kay Tuesday Niu naman po, ibig ba daw sabihin, hindi lang DOH ang nagpabili sa inyo ng mga common goods but other agencies also, pero para bang nasi-single out ang DOH?

FORMER DBM USEC. LAO: First, I cannot recall that Undersecretary of OWWA, si Usec. Canda made a statement. I think it is best that we get the official record when the statement was made. If she made such statement, maybe on an executive committee level, it's all recorded. We can get it and we can check on when it was said, how it was said and what was the context when it was said so we can understand. Kasi it would be made clear, ano iyong circumstances surrounding with such statement were said and whether or not it was actually said. Kasi, as far as I can recall, I don't think there was any statement made. I have been attending exec committees din naman.

And second, as to single out, na-single out ba ang DOH? Hindi naman siguro. Maybe because it's highlighted that DOH has the biggest procuring entity, agency who is buying face mask and face shield, because almost all of the employees of DOH are wearing face mask and face shield every day. In fact, they just don't wear things, they also wear N95. They also wear cover all, lab gown, gloves, head cover, shoe cover, marami po silang sinusuot na parating binibili. Minsan hindi po nakakaya ng PS-DBM, bumibili din po sila sa PITC; minsan hindi rin kaya ng PITC, they also buy it on their own. So, hindi lang din PS-DBM ang bumili, even DOH is buying, continuously buying for itself, and PITC is buying it for them as well and some other agencies. I don't know if how many things they have.

As per other agencies, yes that's true. DSWD is buying from us; other LGUs are buying from us. In fact, almost all agencies are buying from us with respect sa alcohol because bago pa nagpandemya, nakabili na po kami ng alcohol na kontrata, mura. So, noong nagpandemya, kami iyong pinakamurang alcohol, 'di ba kasi during that time, but it ran out around three to four months, then we have to bid it again which significantly change the price of alcohol. Other things din po, that's it and the answer to that question is yes. The direct answer to that question is yes. Yes, other agencies are buying from us. Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Sir Lloyd, nadidikit po inyong pangalan kay Senator Bong Go. Kayo po ba daw ay may kaugnayan sa kaniya ay may kinalaman din ba siya sa mga transaction na ito?

FORMER DBM USEC. LAO: [Sighs] Ever since, they have been always doing that, tie it to a politician to make my job politicized. Well, in reality, I applied for a job and I got lucky. I get a undersecretary position in the Presidential Management Staff, under Undersecretary Ferdinand Cui. After a year, I requested, I applied for a different position which was my first and my second government agency that I worked for when I was young, which is Housing Land Use and Regulatory Board. Because when I was a young lawyer, I worked with HLURB before in Mindanao, which was approved, I was appointed, so lumipat po ako doon. Lumipat ako doon,

also after a year, I resigned and applied for undersecretary na naman sa DBM. Then I was appointed sa PS-DBM.

Then after a year, I again applied [I apologized] for overall Deputy Ombudsman. People think it's something political – no, it's not! I have been doing it, it is part of my character. I worked in government when I was a law student, so I can go to school. I work as a teacher in Ateneo De Davao University, when I was a law student, college teacher. Then I became a lawyer. When I became a lawyer, I relieved myself from the local government unit sa council, kay Councilor Galicia, and I applied for HLURB.

But when I worked sa government, sa HLURB, sometimes I get bored, so I left the office at a rough, within period of six months and then I entered into private practice. But now, given the opportunity in 2016, I tried the government again. But siyempre, I am used to be a practicing lawyer with so many clients, I get really a bit, not that the term is maybe bored in a common parlance, but sometimes I reached the level of the plateau that I don't really find the work so enticing after a year. So I try to get a different field office that I can learn again.

And given the scenario that last year when I applied for Overall Deputy Ombudsman, people were, you know, making it political. So I withdrew my appointment and successively I tendered my resignation. That's it! And I am planning to go into private practice again, but will rest for a couple of months.

But to politicize it that I am connected to this and to that and there's this transaction. Politics maybe, but I am not a politician. I am just like any other Filipino who wants to try, apply, try his profession, his luck in the community, that's it. But to politicize it, is also very unfair. For the politicians who's tied up to me, that's unfair for them, more so for me because I am doing this for my own profession and my own uplift professionally, personally and personal growth. Kaya medyo nakakapagod because you want to do something good, prove something to yourself. But people make it a lot of things. So, it's best for me to just stay out of politics because you can never isolate yourself in politics, even if you are not a politician.

Thank you, Ma'am.

USEC. IGNACIO: Panghuli na lang po, Sir Lloyd. Tanong po ni Tuesday Niu ng DZBB at maging ni Leila Salaverria: Pinatawag po ba kayo sa susunod na pagdinig ng Blue Ribbon Committee at kung willing daw po ba kayong dumalo para magpaliwanag?

FORMER DBM USEC. LAO: Yes, several employees have contacted me through my personal number. Employees from PS-DBM informing me that I am being sought after to shed light or discuss my participation in the procurement process that is being questioned. Of course, it's my responsibility and I am willing to attend to shed light on the matter. I believe the objectivity of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee headed by Senator Gordon that it is fair and just and it is a proper and appropriate avenue for me to shed light on what actually transpired. So it is actually a good thing 'di ba, kasi people make assumptions without all the facts. It is best that all facts are laid and the best, one of the appropriate avenues is the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee and I would attend definitely as long as [unclear] allow it. Thank you po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Maraming salamat po sa inyong panahon at ang inyong paliwanag, Ginoong Lloyd Christopher Lao. Stay safe po at salamat sa inyong panahon.

LLOYD CHRISTOPHER LAO: Maraming salamat po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Samantala, inanunsiyo na nga ng IATF na ibaba sa MECQ ang klasipikasyon ng Metro Manila hanggang katapusan ng Agosto. Ang tanong pabor na kaya dito ang grupo ng mga negosyante? Makakausap po natin si Employers Confederation of the Philippines President Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr. Good morning po.

ECO PRESIDENT SERGIO ORTIZ-LUIS JR: Good morning, Usec., at sa ating mga tagapanood.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Salamat po sa inyong panahon ano po. Sir, diretso na po tayong pabor po ba ang ECOP sa naging desisyon na ibaba na sa MECQ ang Metro Manila hanggang sa katapusan ng Agosto?

ECO PRESIDENT SERGIO ORTIZ-LUIS JR: Definitely, kasi from the very start naman against kami talaga doon sa ECQ. So, hindi lahat ng ano namin—gusto namin makapasok hanggang maaari iyong lahat ng puwedeng pumasok. So, hindi ko nakikita iyong detalye nito, pero mukha namang okay better than ano na... natatakot kami na baka i-extend ay talagang hindi na kaya ng—well, of course, the government naghihirap na rin at ang mga empleyado natin, iyong mga workers kawawa naman.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Hindi man po na-extend itong ECQ, sir, pero may ilang pa rin pong restrictions ano po sa ilalim ng MECQ. May ini-expect din po ba kayong losses sa higit isang linggong MECQ na ito?

ECO PRESIDENT SERGIO ORTIZ-LUIS JR: Well, siyempre mayroon din pero hindi naman siguro kagaya noong... malayo roon sa estimate ng NEDA na 150 billion a week, which in two weeks ay mga 300 billion ano. So, siguro ito kung mayroon man losses ito naman ni-restrict na hindi makapasok at kami naman pabor din na higitan iyong pag-i-implement para doon sa mga non-APOR na kakalat-kalat at ayusin nila iyong iba pang protocols para makabawas tayo dito sa pandemic. Pero okay na rin iyon siguro, dahan-dahan na-reverse iyong ano natin dahil doon sa ECQ at sana makabalik na tayo on track dahan-dahan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sir, bukod din sa sinabi ninyong hindi naman APOR na pakala-kalat, kung kayo po ang tatanungin, ano pa po ang maisa-suggest ninyong hakbang o paraan na puwede pong gawin kung saan mababalanse talaga iyong pagtugon sa ekonomiya nang hindi naman malagay sa alanganin ang kalusugan ng ating mga kababayan?

ECO PRESIDENT SERGIO ORTIZ-LUIS JR: Siguro kailangan pag-isipang mabuti iyong mga pinatutupad natin... nag-ano tayo, napakalaking gastos noong ... napakalaking perhuwisyo noong dalawang linggong ECQ. Pero tingnan mo naman, paano magiging effective iyon, sabay-sabay iyan, hindi maayos na pagbibigay ng ayuda, nagiging source ng mga ano. In the end,

kasabay pa iyong registration ng Comelec, kasabay pa iyong vaccination na hindi masyadong maayos.

Hindi ko alam kung ano, tapos we expect na mababawasan ang tao sa kalye ay hindi siguro ganoon ang dapat na ginawa plus nakakagulo iyong inability of the public transport to provide real transports to those who should be travelling, you know, to those who are working medyo magulo rin. Although nabawasan ang traffic during the ECQ pero ngayon na hindi na ECQ ay mas nadagdagan iyong magtatrabaho ay sana naman ayusin nila iyong transportation, iyong mass transportation.

USEC. IGNACIO: So base po sa pag-aaral, sir, iyong virus po nakukuha mula sa trabaho at naiuwi sa mga tahanan. So, ano po ang reaksiyon ninyo dito? At papaano ninyo po matutugunan iyong ganitong ... or mapuputol iyong ganitong chain of transmission?

ECO PRESIDENT SERGIO ORTIZ-LUIS JR: Alam mo, hindi ko sigurado kung talagang may pag-aaral na sa trabaho nakukuha iyan eh, of course, there are ano dahil [unclear] pero hindi nga po sapat ito rason iyon para huwag pagtrabahuin ang tao dahil kung iyon ang rason ay hindi na tayo mawawala sa ECQ. So, dapat iyan talaga pag-aralan, iyong pagpunta sa trabaho at saka pag-alis sa trabaho malaking bagay iyon, iyong pagpila mo sa sasakyan at ayon kakaano, pagpila sa mga bakunahan iyan ay malaking ano yan.

[Unclear] kaysa roon sa trabaho na alam mo naman pinaigting na rin naman, ingat na ingat na rin ang mga kumpanya na binabantayan nila iyong mga protocol. Hindi naman sila papayag na mayroong papasok na mayroon symptoms doon sa ano hanggang maaari. So, iyong bibintangan natin iyong sa lugar ng trabaho, kumakalat iyan na hindi siguro totoo iyon. Baka sa malls, baka sa kalye pero hindi sa lugar ng trabaho. Maiingat ang mga kumpanya, takot sila so hindi iyon ang dapat mong bantayan.

At saka bukod doon sa ano, masyado nating tinututukan iyong pagtaas ng cases ay hindi natin binabalanse doon sa fact na 96% of those cases ay hindi naman kailangan i-hospitalize eh. Iyong 4%, iyong siguro ang kailangan, iyong mga nagiging severe at saka doon nanggagaling iyong mga namamatay ano. Eh, tapos pipigilan mo ang ekonomiya, ang mga tao ay lalong dumarami ang rason lalo na iyong mga namamatay sa ibang bagay, ano.

Alam naman natin iyon, ang unang-una talaga na dapat gawin ay sa halip na inaano ay iyong transystem natin na dapat talaga eh wag ma-overwhelm. Iyon ang dapat ano, all part of the losses ng economy tinututok natin doon sa health system, eh 'di hindi sana tayo natatakot iyong overwhelm ay marami naman diyan sa nandiyan ay hindi naman kailangang i-hospitalize. Sabi ko nga, 4% lang ang dapat nating tutukan, doon lang naman. Tumataas naman ay hindi naman ganoong alarming dahil kung hindi naman ay hindi na tayo makakaalis sa ano.

We have to remember, isang taon at kalahati na tayong nagla-lockdown eh masunurin naman ang mga tao. Pero at the end of the day, hindi na rin mapigilan dahil sa tagal na ganiyang parusa. You have to remember, sa buong mundo tayo lang iyong pinakamahaba at tayo rin talaga iyong gumagamit ng face shield, sumusunod lang ang tao over the ano. So, doon mo maintindihan

kung bakit ang mga tao kung minsan hindi na naniniwala roon sa mga ano, doon sa mga warnings natin.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sir, itong tungkol naman sa bakuna. Ano po iyong naging reaksiyon ng ilang private sector kaugnay sa pag-hold ng pamahalaan sa pagbili po ng bakuna ng private sectors sa ilalim po ng tripartite agreement?

ECO PRESIDENT SERGIO ORTIZ-LUIS JR: Well, alam naman natin na ang pangako ng gobyerno, lahat ng babakunahan ay sagot ng gobyerno. Tama naman iyon. Unfortunately, alam mo ang limitasyon ng gobyerno, noong nag-umpisa tayo ay hindi naman puwedeng mag-downpayment ang gobyerno, hindi naman puwedeng mag-advance payment at saka iyong presyo tinitignan nilang mabuti.

Noong una, talagang hirap na hirap tayo, pero ngayon nakikita ko naman with all the efforts ng ano ay talagang tuluy-tuloy naman iyong dating ng bakuna ano. Tapos mayroon pang mga private sector na tumutulong ... iyong empleyado nila na hindi kasama roon sa priorities ay masama eh hopefully ngayong sunod-sunod iyong dating ng bakuna ay ma-address na iyon pati iyong mga importation ng private sector at talagang alam naman natin na kung hindi natin itutuluy-tuloy itong bakuna ay talagang may problema tayo.

At kung itutuluy-tuloy natin ay maiiwasan natin talaga iyong mga lockdown-lockdown na iyan at ang mga tao naman ay sisigla nang konti iyong ekonomiya natin dito sa mga darating na buwan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sir, kami po ay nagpapasalamat sa inyong panahon, ECOP president Sergio-Luis Jr. Mabuhay po kayo, sir!

ECO PRESIDENT SERGIO ORTIZ-LUIS JR: Salamat din sa iyo, Usec., at sa ating mga tagasunod.

USEC. IGNACIO: Narito naman po ang pinakahuling datos ng COVID-19 cases sa bansa. Base po sa report ng Department of Health as of August 19, 2021, umabot na sa 1,791,003 ang total number of confirmed cases matapos itong madagdagan ng 14,895 ng mga bagong kaso kahapon; 258 ang mga nasawi kaya umabot na sa 30,881 ang total COVID-19 deaths. Ang mga kababayan naman nating gumaling sa sakit ay umakyat na sa 1,648,402 matapos itong madagdagan ng 8,248 new recoveries. Ang active cases naman natin sa kasalukuyan ay 111,720, 6.2% po iyan ng kabuuang bilang.

Samantala, isa sa dahilan kung bakit nangingibang bansa ang ilang Pilipino ay para po may maipantustos sa pamilya. Ngunit hindi lahat sa mga nakikipagsapalaran abroad ay pinapalad. Kaya naman po ang Department of Agriculture, sa pakikipagtulungan sa DOLE-OWWA, ay naglunsad ng programa na magnegosyo dito mismo sa bansa ang ilang OFW. Ang programang iyan ang tampok bukas sa Ani at Kita.

At iyan po ang mga balitang aming nakalap ngayong araw. Ang Public Briefing po ay hatid sa inyo ng iba't-ibang sangay ng PCOO sa pakikipagtulungan ng Department of Health at kaisa ng Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas o KBP.

Sa ngalan po ni Secretary Martin Andanar, ako po si Usec. Rocky Ignacio ng PCOO. Magkita-kita po uli tayo bukas dito lamang sa Public Briefing #LagingHandaPH.

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