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PRESS BRIEFING OF PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON SECRETARY HARRY ROQUE
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SEC. ROQUE: Magandang tanghali, Pilipinas.

Humarap po ang ating Presidente kagabi para sa kaniyang regular Talk to the People address. Muling iginiit ng Pangulo na wala nang nai-produce ang Senate Blue Ribbon Committee para patunayan ang akusasyon ng korapsiyon. Dagdag pa ni Presidente, ang nangyayaring inquiry ay at the expense of dragging government officials and compromising government's efforts against COVID-19 sa panahon na mataas ang mga kaso at maraming namamatay at nagkakasakit.

Panghuli, sinabi ng Pangulo na kung sa tingin ng Senate Blue Ribbon Committee ay may nakalap na itong sapat na ebidensiya ng korapsiyon, dalhin ang kanilang kaso sa Ombudsman o sa mga korte.

Usaping bakuna naman po tayo. Mahigit apatnapu't isang milyon or 41,793,930 total doses na po ang na-administer, ito po ay as of September 20 at ito po'y sang-ayon sa National COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard. Sa bilang na ito, nasa 18,823,718 ang fully vaccinated or 24.4%. Sa Metro Manila naman po, nasa 14,873,731 ang total vaccines administered. Sa bilang na ito, nasa 6,603,149 ang fully vaccinated or 67.54% na po as of September 19, 2021.

Tandaan po natin ha, walang bayad ang magpabakuna. Ulitin natin, lahat ng bakuna ay ligtas at epektibo anumang brand dahil lahat ay pumasa sa ating Food and Drug Administration.

Dumating po kagabi, September 20, ang 561,600 doses ng Pfizer na donasyon ng US government through the COVAX Facility – maraming salamat po!

Pumunta naman po tayo sa update sa COVID-19. Ito po ang ranking ng Pilipinas sa mundo ayon sa Johns Hopkins World Meter COVID-19 data at WHO COVID-19 Dashboard: Number 18 po ha ang Pilipinas pagdating sa total cases; Number 14 po tayo pagdating sa active cases; Number 136 po tayo sa mundo pagdating sa cases per 100,000 population; Number 93 po tayo pagdating sa case fatality rate. Nasa 18,937 po ang mga bagong kaso ayon sa September 20, 2021 datos ng DOH. Mataas pa rin po ang ating recovery rate na nasa 91.91%, mayroon na po tayo higit sa dalawang milyon or 2,171,832 na mga gumaling. Samantala, malungkot po naming binabalita na nasa 36,934 na po ang binawian ng buhay – nakikiramay po kami. One point fifty-five percent (1.55%) po ang ating case fatality rate.

Tingnan naman po natin ang confirmed cases by report date around the country 'no. Bagaman mataas ang mga kaso, unti-unti na po itong bumababa sa ibang mga lugar. Makikita ito sa Metro Manila na kulay asul na linya 'no. Tingnan po natin iyong kulay asul 'no. Ang mga Plus areas ay kulay berde. Ang Mindanao ay kulay orange. Nguni't ang rest of Luzon na kulay pula ay patuloy na tumataas. Sana po ay magpatuloy po ang downward trend.

Pagdating sa case trend, nananatili ang high risk classification sa buong bansa. Tingnan naman po natin ang infographics sa healthcare utilization rate: Sa national and healthcare utilization rate at ICU utilization rate ay nasa high risk. Walang rehiyon ang nasa high-risk ang healthcare utilization rate, samantalang labing-isang rehiyon ang high-risk ang kanilang ICU utilization rate.

Dito po nagtatapos ang ating presentation. Kasama po natin ngayon si Dr. Edsel Salvaña at Dr. Fr. Nic Austriaco. Puntahan po muna natin si Dr. Salvaña 'no.

Ulitin po natin, Dr. Salvaña, ang tanong: Are some vaccines better than the others? Talaga naman po ang Pilipino talagang mas gusto nila ang mga western brands pero hindi nga po dumarating 'no; hindi gaya po ng mga Chinese brands. So kayo po ay isang dalubhasa, isang doktor, are some brands of the vaccine better than the others, Dr. Salvaña?

DR. SALVAÑA: Magandang hapon po, Spox. Magandang hapon sa lahat ng nakikinig at nanunood.

Iyong ating mga approved vaccines po, iyong may EUA na vaccines, lahat po sila ay mabisa laban sa severe disease – more than 90% effective po. Pinakita rin sa Centers for Disease Control na it decreases your risk of dying and ending up in the hospital by more than ten times.

Now, ang pinag-uusapan po, ano po ba iyong effectiveness nito against iyong tinatawag na clinical disease, iyong magkakaubo, magkakasipon? Originally, iyong nakita po natin sa Sinovac sa Brazil, 50%. Pero iyon pala, iyong variant of concern, nandoon iyong Gamma, iyong medyo matinding variant of concern dati kaya medyo mababa iyong efficacy niya, pero noong pinag-aralan ito sa Turkey, more than 80% po iyong effectiveness niya against clinical disease.

Now ngayon, iyong nakikita naman po natin, iyong Pfizer na 90 to 95 percent effective bago pa dumating iyong mga variants of concern, ngayon sa Israel na puro Delta iyong nakikita nila, iyong clinical efficacy is down to 30 to 40%. So bumababa po talaga iyong clinical efficacy ng vaccines kapag Delta ang pinag-uusapan, nguni't nananatili na mataas ang effectiveness against severe disease.

So the bottom line is po, ngayon kaya bumababa, dumadami po iyong ating breakthrough infection ay dahil sa Delta, hindi po dahil nagwi-wane iyong immunity or hindi na gumagana iyong vaccines; dahil po ito sa Delta. Pero nananatili po na mataas na mataas iyong effectiveness ng lahat ng vaccines natin against severe disease, against hospitalization and against death.

So sa ngayon po, any vaccine is good because it will prevent you from dying.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Dr. Salvaña. Puntahan naman natin si Dr. Fr. Nic Austriaco. Dr. Fr., malapit na pong mag-seventy percent ang Metro Manila. What can we look forward to kapag umabot na po tayo sa 70% o 'di naman kaya ngayong 65% na po ang bakunado sa Metro Manila?

DR. FR. AUSTRIACO: Thank you for that question, Spox. First of all, I would like to echo Dr. Edsel's point because this weekend I was able to calculate the vaccine effectiveness in Davao. Because we wanted to see the vaccine effectiveness of the vaccines in the Philippines against Delta in a Filipino context and it's difficult to do that in the NCR because there is so much mobility between the NCR and Region III and Region IV but we were able to get the data from Davao. And clinical effectiveness for all the mix, we do not know which specific is currently at 86.5%, 97.5% against death. So it's very important to tell our kababayans that the current vaccines in the Philippines, this is from last month so this is the August data, is still incredibly powerful at protecting Filipinos against the Delta variant.

With regards to the 70%, you know, there is uncertainty because of the Delta variant but I'm sure Dr. Edsel and I will agree what we are looking for is decoupling. We are looking for a decoupling of infection and hospitalization and death.

What this means is that as if we see that the infections are going up, when the population immunity reaches a certain point, the hospitalizations will not go up and in fact will go down because the vaccines are protecting our kababayans.

And Dr. Edsel shared some data with me, there are some suggestions that this may be already starting. It's difficult in NCR because of the mobility between Region and Region IV-A so it's really focused on the NCR but we are hopeful that we will achieve 70% and hopefully 80% of total population we will see significant effects on the decoupling.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Dr. Fr. Nic Austriaco. Pumunta na tayo sa ating open forum. Go ahead, USec. Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary Roque. Good afternoon po sa inyo at sa ating mga bisita.

Ang unang tanong mula kay Greg Gregorio ng TV-5: An article in an online in-depth analysis website says Philippines is facing a 4th wave of COVID-19 infection and is currently the most severe as it is driven by Delta variant. May we get the reaction of Dr. Salvaña and Fr. Austriaco on this?

SEC. ROQUE: Go ahead, Dr. Salvaña.

DR. SALVAÑA: Yes, po. So we know po, kasi mahirap sabihin kung wave or spike or surge dahil po sabay-sabay 'yan eh. Ang wave kasi kung isa lang 'yung pumasok tapos makikita mong tataas 'yan tapos bababa, 'yun po 'yung wave. Ito kasi madaming infections going on at the same time lalo na iyong nai-introduce from outside and also what's in the community. The bottomline is, if we're talking about the number of case, ito na 'yung pinakamadaming cases in ano—because of the inherent transmissibility of Delta.

Pero kung titingnan natin iyong number of deaths versus the number of cases, alam natin na more than double na iyong number of cases na nakita natin sa Delta for this latest ano, August. Pero dumoble rin ba iyong deaths? Actually, hindi. It is just slightly above iyong deaths per day na nakita natin noong April.

And so alam natin more than double iyong cases pero almost kapantay iyong number of deaths compared noong April which means that we are starting to see na—at even though expected natin na mas deadly nga iyong Delta, hindi ho 'yun nangyari.

And the only thing that's contributing to that most likely at ito na nga iyong sinasabi rin ni Father Nic na nagsisimula na siguro iyong ating decoupling is iyong pagbabakuna natin nang maraming tao – na instead of naging mas deadly ang Delta, paradoxically naging less deadly siya if you compare it to the number of cases we have versus the number of actual deaths that we are seeing po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Father Austriaco...

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you, Dr. Salvaña. Si Father Austriaco, please.

FR./DR. AUSTRIACO: So, I, too, will agree with Doc Edsel's point. However, you know it is tragic that I know so many more people who have died in this most recent surge than in the previous waves, the previous surges that we encountered.

I think one of the reasons is though the numbers are high, it's also been extended. So it's been the longest surge so far. I think Doc Edsel will agree, we are seeing a downturn in the numbers. If you look at our world in data, it's clear that the surge in the Philippines has peaked. For the last three days we've had negative growth rate in the NCR suggesting that the NCR also has peaked.

But all of these are always reversible and we have to be very careful as we move into the granular lockdown mode, that we do not reverse the gains we have made in the last few weeks.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. I think, Secretary Roque, may presentation si Father Austriaco.

SEC. ROQUE: Yes, go ahead, Father.

FR./DR. AUSTRIACO: That's okay. I think I just explained the data so I think we'll be fine.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo, thank you. Question from Greg Gregorio ng TV-5 pa rin for Secretary Roque: How are we going to compare government's responses across these waves?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, nandiyan po iyong world ranking natin: Number 18 pa rin po tayo pagdating sa total cases; Number 14 sa active cases. Pero ang importante po Number 135 tayo sa case per 100,000; at ang pinakaimportante pagdating po sa mortality rate 'no, Number 95 po tayo 'no dahil 1.55 po tayo samantalang ang acceptable po ay—not acceptable 'no pero iyong tinatawag nilang more or less average is 2.1 worldwide.

So parang napakababa po kung ikukumpara natin sa worldwide trend iyong ating mga namamatay 'no. So it says po na bagama't maraming nagkakasakit, nababawasan naman po natin iyong mga numero ng mga namamatay. Sana nga po walang pumanaw na pero kung ikukumpara nga po natin sa buong daigdig eh mas kakaunti po ang namamatay. Ibig sabihin mas magaling pong mag-alaga ang ating mga frontliners.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Ang susunod na tanong mula kay Rosalie Coz ng UNTV: Kailan tuluyang ititigil ng Pangulo ang government transaction sa Philippine Red Cross? May balak bang totohanin ng Punong Ehekutibo ang kaniyang banta sa gitna ng pandemya? Hindi ba malaki ang naitutulong ng samahan sa pagresponde sa COVID-19 at 'pag may iba pang kalamidad sa Pilipinas? Similar question with Sam Medenilla ng Business Mirror.

SEC. ROQUE: Ang hinihingi po ng Presidente pananagutan/accountability kaya po pinapa-audit sa COA. Alam ninyo po ang ICRC at saka ang mga Red Cross societies, they are bigger than any personality, 'yan nga lang po ang epekto kapag ang namumuno ay nasa larangan din ng pulitika. Kaya nga po siguro talaga dapat pag-isipan na natin na ang dapat mamuno ng isang humanitarian organization dapat po ay wala sa larangan ng pulitika.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Thank you, Secretary Roque. Ang susunod na magtatanong via Zoom ay si Mela Lesmoras ng PTV.

SEC. ROQUE: Go ahead, Mela.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV4: Thank you po, Usec. Rocky. Hi, Secretary Roque at sa ating mga panauhin.

Secretary Roque, unahin ko lang po 'yung ating kasalukuyang granular lockdown dito sa Metro Manila. Kumusta po 'yung monitoring ng Malacañang; at may I ask, kasi may ilang residenteng nagsasabi na hindi pa sila nakakatanggap ng food aid, do we confirm this? At paano po kaya natin mai-ensure iyong timely distribution lalo na't ngayong pilot nga ay posible rin itong ipatupad nationwide?

SEC. ROQUE: Now unang-una po ibi-verify ko po kung hindi pa nakakatanggap ng food aid 'yung iba. Ang alam ko po kasi ito, shared responsibility 'no at ang aking nabalita sa ating mas mga naunang mga press briefing on the basis of petsa at ang unang mamimigay po ng food aid kung hindi po ako nagkakamali ah ay LGU. But I'm sure nasabi ko na po 'yan at naanunsiyo na rin po nila 'yan 'no. It will be a joint activity of the LGUs and the national government pero parang mauuna 'ata ang LGU. I could be mistaken; I have to check that 'no.

Pero beyond the—iyong report nga po na may mga ilang area na wala pang food aid na natatanggap, wala na po tayong ibang naririnig na adverse na mga reports tungkol sa granular lockdowns.

I will just emphasize po 'no, na ang alternatibo po na sa ating granular lockdowns ay malawakang lockdowns. Ang ginagawa po natin ngayon ay kung nasaan iyong mga kaso, iyon na lang po nila-lockdown natin, as small an area as possible. Kaya pati nga po mga barangay 'di natin nila-lockdown ang isang buong barangay 'no, kung pupuwede bahay lang o kalye lamang. Kasi ang nais po natin and dahil matagal ko na pong sinasabi ito, bigyan ng pagkakataon na makapaghanapbuhay ang lahat dahil hindi naman pupuwede na palagi na lang po tayong ayuda dahil ang ayuda po ay talaga ay hindi magiging sapat.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV4: Opo. And for our health experts lang po, kay Dr. Salvaña at kay Father Austriaco: Kumusta po 'yung monitoring ninyo dito sa bagong Alert Level System supplemented by strict granular lockdowns? Sa tingin ninyo po ba ito na 'yung magiging susi para magkaroon tayo nang better Christmas both sa health aspect at sa economic side?

DR. SALVAÑA: Yeah, I can start siguro. I mean it's only been a week. But what we have seen naman is iyong—ang reports that we're getting on the ground naman mukhang mas acceptable nga sa mga tao. Siyempre it's always hard 'pag we were locked in our places.

So I'm very hopeful actually na hopefully this is the way forward na we can open up but at the same time I echo rin iyong sinabi ni Father Nic na huwag po tayo maging complacent kasi these gains that we're seeing now are reversible – puwedeng umakyat na naman 'yan ulit kung hindi po talaga tayo mag-iingat.

But I think na the thrust towards granular lockdowns is really the way forward and we should try to make it work as much as possible.

FR./DR. AUSTRIACO: For me, what I will say is we're doing an experiment and I'm an experimental biologist and you do not know what the experiment will yield. There's nothing really comparable elsewhere in the world so usually if there were—we would be able to look at elsewhere in the world to see what they did, but this is a unique approach to the Philippines in the NCR.

So we will know within the next two weeks whether or not we are able to sustain the gains we've had in the last few weeks.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV4: Okay. At panghuling katanungan na lang po, Secretary Roque: Ano po kayang schedule ni Pangulong Duterte or ng IATF? May mga dapat po ba tayong aktibidad ng Presidente?

SEC. ROQUE: [*Technical problem*] ... People itong linggong ito.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV 4: Sorry, Secretary, okay lang po bang pakiulit? Nag-hang lang po kayo kanina, iyong schedule lang po ni Pangulong Duterte?

SEC. ROQUE: Ang alam ko po ay magkakaroon ng pangalawang Talk to the People itong linggong ito at mayroon po siyang address sa United Nations itong linggong ito.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV 4: Okay. Thank you so much po, Secretary Roque at sa ating mga health experts, Usec. Rocky.

SEC. ROQUE: Salamat po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Secretary Roque, ang susunod pong tanong ay mula kay Rosalie Coz ng UNTV. Kaugnay po ng 2022 national elections: Ano ang masasabi ng Palasyo na pinangagambahan na ng iba na baka raw hindi makaboto ang naka-granular lockdown at magamit ito to declare failure of election?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, we will get there po, we will answer that situation kapag nandoon na po tayo kasi alam naman po ng Comelec kung ano ang ibig sabihin ng failure of election. Kung sila po ay naka-lockdown, iri-reset lang ng Comelec ang petsa ng botohan kung mayroon pang mga areas under lockdown pagdating po ng 2022. Pero kampante po ako, kagaya ng sinabi po ng ating mga dalubhasa, habang dumadami po ang ating mga nababakunahan, kapag nagkaroon na po tayo ng population protection or containment, tingin ko naman po makakapagbalik-buhay tayong lahat.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. From Joseph Morong ng GMA News: Would you have data on hospital admissions broken down into vaccinated and unvaccinated? What does this tell you?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, mayroon lang po tayong datos na pinakita na natin, eh doon po sa mga taga-PGH, iyong mga pasyente 'no. Lumalabas po talaga doon, iyong mga seryosong mga nagkakasakit ay hindi po bakunado. I think we released that figure already on the basis of iyong admission sa PGH. So, ang alam ko po, iyon pa lang ang available na datos pagdating doon sa mga vaccinated and unvaccinated. But, Father Austriaco, baka may datos ka, Father?

FATHER AUSTRIACO: Yeah. So we have some data now, as I've mentioned, from Davao City. I have also received data from several hospitals in the NCR regarding the vaccination status of their healthcare workers and we are calculating the vaccine effectiveness of the different vaccines in the NCR for the healthcare workers. So hopefully this data will be able to help us to understand how often they get sick and how strong the protection is.

One of the things I point out, you know, is that the data from Davao suggest that we don't need boosters for the general population yet. I know a lot of Filipinos are wondering whether or not if they start receiving boosters. If the efficacy, the effectiveness is 86% as the data seems to suggest in Davao in the general population, it suggest we don't need that [booster], which is why we need the data for healthcare workers to see whether or not they need boosters as other countries are beginning to deliver those as well.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Father Austriaco. Usec. Rocky?

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Ang susunod pong tanong mula pa rin kay Joseph Morong ng GMA News: Is there still vaccine hesitancy? Where do you attribute this?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, ang pinagbabatayan po natin ay ang mga survey, and we have to admit na malaking pa ring porsiyento ng nagkakaroon ng hesitancy at ang pangunahing dahilan pa rin ay iyong kanilang pagduda doon sa safety at efficacy. Eh paulit-ulit naman po nating sinasabi, hindi lang po Philippine FDA ang nagsasabi na ligtas at gumagana po ang mga bakuna, pati na po ang WHO. At kakagaling ko nga lang po sa New York, sa New York po nakakapagbukas na ang kanilang ekonomiya dahil ang niri-require po nila ay iyong mga vaccine cards. At ang New York po ay 80% na po silang vaccinated. Napakaganda na po ng lagay ng ekonomiya doon, at sana po umabot din tayo sa punto na 80% ang mababakunahan nang mabuksan na po natin ang mga hanapbuhay para sa ating mga kababayan.

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

SEC. ROQUE: Dr. Salvaña?

DR. SALVAÑA: Yes po, i-add ko lang, Spox. Iyong data that FDA has released as of August 29. Out of 13.87 million fully vaccinated individuals, ang number of breakthrough cases ay 242 only, the majority of these is Sinovac. And so that's .0017% breakthrough infection. Of course, overtime, makikita natin mas dadami iyong breakthrough, but that is a fantastic number. So that really tells us that our vaccines are working po.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you, Dr. Salvaña. Usec. Rocky?

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Secretary Roque, ang susunod na magtatanong by Zoom, Triciah Terada ng CNN Philippines.

SEC. ROQUE: Go ahead, Trish.

TRICIAH TRERADA/CNN PHILS: Good afternoon, Spox, and to our guests po. Sir, first of all, doon lang po sa allegation ng false positive test results by the Philippine Red Cross. Saan po nakuha ng Pangulo iyong figures that he mentioned like 44 hospital workers, iyong sa PSG and iyong sa DoF where he alleged false positive cases? And kailan pa po niya ito nalaman?

SEC. ROQUE: Actual figures po iyan 'no. As reported, kasi matapos mag-test ng positive, right away, nagkaroon ng confirmatory test, lahat po sila, iyong porsiyento nga po na sinabi ni Presidente iyong nag-negative. Iyong second instance naman po, iyong 200 plus, eh lahat po iyan PSG. So kumbaga within the family po iyong datos na iyon. So, nilabas lang ni Presidente iyon kasi dapat talaga maimbestigahan ng RITM paano nangyayari iyon.

TRICIAH TRERADA/CNN PHILS: Actual figures coming from where, specifically iyong PSG, sir, kasi parang we can say, okay he got it from the PSG. Pero iyong mga unnamed healthcare workers and iyong sa DoF, saan po nanggaling? Saan nag-i-stem po iyong mga data na iyon?

SEC. ROQUE: I think, isang grupo rin ng nagpa-test niyan at sabay-sabay silang nagpa-test at iyan nga po ang naging resulta.

TRICIAH TRERADA/CNN PHILS: And did the President independently verify it? And hindi po ba nangangamba iyong Pangulo or even the Palace na ito po baka mag-cause ng takot or doubts sa number ng cases natin and that his question is actually kumbaga raising doubts over the actual number of COVID cases, iyong data po ng DOH?

SEC. ROQUE: Kaya nga po kinakailangan maimbestigahan kaagad iyan ng RITM, nasa makina po iyan eh, so you have to test the accuracy of the machines. At iyan po ay ginagawa na as we speak.

TRICIAH TRERADA/CNN PHILS: And, sir, kung itong mga data na ito dati pa naging available, bakit po hindi pinatigil and in-investigate? Hindi po ba reflective ito ng, kumbaga, incompetence sa part ng DOH kasi parang hindi po nila namo-monitor iyong mga labs all this time? Then what gives us the assurance that all other labs are giving us credible results as well?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko lang alam kung kailan talaga ito nangyari. Pero I think it happened fairly recent, at kaya nga po ngayon nagkakaroon ng imbestigasyon.

TRICIAH TRERADA/CNN PHILS: Pero, sir, ano sa tingin ninyo iyong magiging impact nito sa testing natin? Kasi 'di ba, sir, ngayon ang problem po natin ay mayroon pa rin talaga kasing cases, for example, in the provinces may mga taong hindi pa rin talaga naniniwala or in denial. Halimbawa, nag-positive sila, hindi ba, sir, parang mas mapi-feed lang iyong doubt nila na kapag nag-positive sila iisipin nila ah baka negative naman pala ako. So kumbaga, sir, hindi ba magugulo iyong paniniwala ng tao o iyong magiging response nila kapag nag-positive talaga sila?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi, Trish, kaya nga pinapaimbestigahan natin para we will make sure that the tests are in fact accurate. Now we know they are not perfect, but we are taking steps to make them more accurate.

TRICIAH TRERADA/CNN PHILS: Sir, ito na lang po, iyong kay Davao City Mayor Inday Sara Duterte. They informed the IATF of the low acceptability ng Sinovac and Sinopharm from China and kumbaga they are also urging or at least they are asking the IATF to at least consider buying more western vaccine brands instead of these Chinese vaccine brands, kasi doon po mas kumpiyansa iyong mga tao.

SEC. ROQUE: Well, on behalf of IATF, sino bang ayaw ng western brands? Ang problema lang, talagang hindi natin nakukuha ang supply. We ordered 40 million, pero nakikita naman ninyo, they come in trickles. Ang dumarating pa, mga COVAX supplied, iyong mga donated. Pero iyong mga binibili natin, talagang they have been coming in trickles. Pero I guess, I will also ask Father Austriaco because may data nga siya from Davao. So, ang importante, Father, from the data you have seen, totoo ho ba na less effective ang Sinovac sa Davao? Just for the record.

FATHER AUSTRIACO: Well, we don't know the exact mixed of vaccine brands in Davao. So, cannot do the calculations for Sinovac versus one of the other brands. All we can say is that the

given mix, the current mix of the vaccines that have been deployed in Davao are effective and most of them are Sinovac. We just don't know exactly how much.

TRICIAH TRERADA/CNN PHILS: Thank you, Father. Sir, just one last, mabilis lang po. So ibig bang sabihin nito, sir, the President is questioning the integrity now of the – bale iyong sa Red Cross – questioning the integrity of our COVID-19 testing data reporting? And bukod sa Red Cross, sir, is the President also open to ordering the DOH to investigate or look into the processes of other laboratories?

SEC. ROQUE: I think that is a wrong conclusion. I think the President wants our testing to be more accurate.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILIPPINES: Pero, sir, ipapa-test ninyo rin po ba iyong—ipapasilip ninyo rin po ba iyong ibang laboratories?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, I think that is the offshoot of the President's order that RITM, dahil medyo tagal nang ginagamit ang mga makinang, iyan must really go out of its way and test the accuracy maski at a random basis iyong mga makinang ginagamit natin ngayon.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILIPPINES: All right. Thank you very much, Spox.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat. Trish. Balik tayo kay USec. Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes, Secretary. Mula lang kay Joseph Morong ng GMA News: How do you address an issue na maraming gustong magpabakuna pero wala namang available, iyong iba, ang tagal magkaroon ng sked? In Cavite, for example, supply seems to be a problem there.

SEC. ROQUE: Well, maraming salamat po sa inyong pasensiya, pero ngayong linggo pong ito ini-report nga ni Secretary Galvez na pinakamaraming dumating na supply natin itong nakalipas na linggo sa ating kasaysayan 'no, nung pagtatanggap ng mga bakuna. So, nariryan na po ang mas malaking bulito ng ating mga bakuna, so parating na po sa inyo. At salamat po sa inyong pasensiya.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Tanong ni Leila Salaverria ng Inquirer, natanong na po ni Trisha Terada about Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte iyong proposal sa buying more western vaccine brands. Similar question po iyan with Celerina Monte ng NHK; si Joyce Balancio ng ABS-CBN. Ang second question po ni Leila Salaverria: What will it do about the Mayor's concern that there is low acceptability of Chinese brands in Davao City?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, nandito po si Dr. Salvaña at saka si Dr. Austriaco to assure people na so far po ang datos ay nagpapakita, gumagana po ang lahat ng ginagamit nating mga bakuna.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Tanong naman mula kay Celerina Monte ng NHK: There is a likelihood that other LGUs may also request the same. If so, what will happen to Sinovac vaccines considering that the government has already ordered bulk of Philippine vaccines from Sinovac?

SEC. ROQUE: I will ask our experts to respond pero ulitin ko lang po iyong sinabi ko, lahat po tayo may preference pero gustuhin man natin ang mga western brands, hindi po talaga dumarating and the Philippines is not alone.

Kaya nga po doon sa kampanya ko sa International Law Commission, ang sinasabi ko dapat may tratado na kikilalanin ng mga bansa sa buong daigdig iyong vaccine equality na dapat lahat magkaroon ng bakuna, pero hindi pa po iyan nangyayari.

So, sa ngayon po, lahat po ng pag-aaral ay nagpapakita na pati po ang Sinovac, ang mga Chinese vaccines, ay epektibo po laban sa seryosong pagkakasakit at laban po sa kamatayan na dulot ng COVID-19. But siguro po to address these points, let the experts talk. Alam ko po nakapagsalita na sila pero mas importante pong marinig ng taumbayan galing sa mga dalubhasa ang kasagutan dito. Go ahead, Dr. Salvaña.

DR. SALVAÑA: Thank you po, Spox. Unang-una, ang Sinovac at Sinopharm po ay mayroong WHO emergency use listing. Ibig sabihin po noon, nakita na ng WHO na mabisa at effective at ligtas ang mga vaccines na ito.

Pangalawa po, we've given more than 18 million doses of Sinovac in the Philippines at nakita naman natin iyong data na ipinakita na sinabi ni Fr. Nic na 86% or more and so more than half of those will be Sinovac. And finally, iyong sa 242 breakthrough infections out of 13.7 million fully vaccinated individuals, those numbers, like I said, are fantastic.

I have no doubt that Sinovac, Sinopharm, Pfizer, Moderna, all these vaccines continue to protect against severe disease. And huwag po tayong mabahala, mas importante po na maprotektahan natin against severe disease ang ating mga kababayan kaysa iyong maghihintay tayo tapos tamaan na tayo ng COVID, puwede pa tayong mamatay.

So, it's very, very important that we take what vaccine is offered so that we get protection as soon as possible otherwise we put our lives at risk and we'll prolong this pandemic po.

SEC. ROQUE: And, Father Dr. Nicanor Austriaco, at the risk of paulit-ulit pero kinakailangan po paalalahanan muli ang ating mga kababayan.

FR. AUSTRIACO: Any vaccine is better than no vaccine and all the vaccines will protect you and protect us from severe disease and from death. And we do it out of love of our families, right? Because if you get sick, your family will be at risk, they will lose you, they will lose forever.

So, it's better to go and get vaccinated now because there is no promise you will get Pfizer, Moderna, especially since the United States is about to start a booster program for Pfizer and Moderna and we do not know how that will impact the worldwide supply of Pfizer, Moderna.

We hope it will not but we've seen before the US will start buying hundreds of millions again. This will put an immense pressure on the world supply so go and get vaccinated now!

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Dr. Salvaña and Dr. Austriaco. Balik tayo kay USec. Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Thank you, Secretary Roque. From Red Mendoza ng Manila Times: Ano po ang masasabi ninyo sa enforcement ng mga bakuna bubble? Sa tingin ninyo ba gagana ito kahit na hanggang sa ngayon tumataas pa rin ang mga kaso?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, hindi pa naman po natin ipinatutupad ang mga bakuna bubble; pinag-aaralan pa po iyan. At ngayon po sa ating mga dine-in, 10% lang po ang ina-allow para sa mga fully vaccinated.

Sa akin naman po, at some point, kinakailangan magkaroon tayo ng tiwala sa mga bakuna pero sa ngayon po, hindi pa po natin napapa-implement po iyan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Second question niya: Nagkaroon po ng mainitang diskusyon ang FDA ng Amerika tungkol sa pagbibigay ng booster doses sa lahat ng kanilang mga citizen doon na nauwi sa rekomendasyon na dapat 65 up at mga vulnerable lang ang puwedeng bigyan ng booster. Ano po ang possible implication nito sa ating bansa?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, napakahirap naman na balewalain ang naging finding ng US FDA kasi ito po iyong kinikilalang FDA na napakataas ng kanilang standards at kung kanilang desisyon na hindi magbigay ng booster sa lahat kung hindi sa mga A1 popu—hindi, sa A2 population natin at saka A3 population, so be it.

So, I don't know if our experts would like to add. Dr. Salvaña? Dr. Austriaco?

DR. SALVAÑA: Add ko lang. Unang-una, wala pa naman tayo sa six-month dito sa Pilipinas. Actually, ako, number two akong nakakuha and Sinovac, so itong mga breakthroughs na nakita natin, this is not waning vaccines. Ang nangyayari dito is Delta, iyong Delta talaga iyong nagbi-breakthrough dahil Delta siya. Nakita rin naman natin kahit sa Israel 30-40% na lang ang efficacy ng breakthrough sa Delta although iyon nga, tuloy iyong protection against severe disease.

So, sa ngayon, hindi pa ako kumbinsido na a booster using the old vaccines will work kasi you make the same old antibodies, hindi sila masyadong gumana sa Delta bagamat may ginagawa na ngayon na clinical trials sa reformulated vaccine specific to the variant of concern kasama po iyong Delta and I think those might be more appropriate later on.

Pero as per booster ngayon, ang ginagawa kasi ng FDA, iyong third dose na iyon hindi po itinuturing iyon na booster. Actually, third dose po iyon kasi sa mga mas matatanda, sa mga immunocompromised, iyong first two doses might not [unclear] and so a third dose might help them get full vaccinated.

Pero doon sa general population mukhang for now two doses is enough at kung magkaka-booster man tayo later on, I would rather get a new and improved reformulated vaccine na kasama na iyong Delta sa titirahin niya dahil kung mag-boost tayo nitong old-type vaccine, I don't know how much more it will add sa clinical efficacy and mataas na rin iyong protection against severe disease eh, so hindi na iyon makaka-add din nang masyado. Mas importante gamitin natin iyong

old vaccines na ito to vaccinate people who have not yet been vaccinated dahil mas malaki po talaga iyong benefit doon.

SEC. ROQUE: Dr. Austriaco?

FR. AUSTRIACO: I agree. At this point, it's so important to build up population immunity in the Philippines and the population immunity will also directly benefit those who are immunocompromised and who might have weakened immune system because it prevents the virus from getting to them.

And so at this point—I mean, here in the United States, the FDA expert panel spoke up against the President of the United States because President Biden wanted to extend this to general population but the expert panel said that there is no secure evidence to support this beyond senior citizens and those who may have—who are at risk for severe disease. And the question now is whether or not this includes health care workers who are at risk simply because they are exposed to high viral loads of Delta.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you very much, Dr. Salvaña and Dr. Austriaco. Back to USec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Iyong third question po niya: Consistent ang less than 3% ng moderate, severe, and critical cases kahit pumapalo ang kaso natin ng 20,000. Do you think may epekto na ba ang mga bakuna?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, from a layman's point of view, mahigit 65% na po sa Metro Manila, baka naman mayroon but I will ask the experts to answer. Dr. Salvaña?

DR. SALVAÑA: Yes po, Spox. Actually, we've been looking at this. Siguro mga three/four weeks ago, ang proportion natin ng severe at critical was about 2.8%. Nowadays, it's anywhere from 1.5 to 2.1 percent. So alam naman natin na we were expecting Delta to have more severe. So imbes na tumaas or stay at 2.8%, bumaba pa. And there's really only one explanation for that, and that's really the vaccination.

The other thing is, kung titingnan natin iyong by region na mortality rate or iyong case fatality rate, ang NCR is now down to about 1.2%. And so, I think, of course, early pa rin eh kasi iyong umabot tayo sa 50%, it's just a few weeks so it's very difficult to make hard conclusions at this point.

But from what we expected versus what's actually happening, even iyong projected cases for Delta by September 30 was at conservative, 150,000 active cases in Metro Manila eh. Nasa September 21 na tayo, we're at about 50,000 cases na active, so that's more than a hundred thousand below expectations.

So I think dito na natin nasisimulang makita iyong epekto nitong enhanced vaccination program. And of course, iyong ating mayors din have really shorten the time to detection iyong sinabi, iyong ni-recommend nga ng cluster na we have to do our PDITR more aggressively, mukhang ginawa naman po talaga nila. So I think what we are doing is worthy right now. But of course, the hospitals are still full kasi ang dami talagang kaso kagaya ng sinabi ni Fr. Nic, as this goes down, we really

have to re-enforce our healthcare system and at the same time, continue our vaccination program po.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you, Dr. Salvaña. Dr. Austriaco?

DR. FR. AUSTRIACO: I'm still waiting for the data. There are two things I'm waiting for. First of all, the vaccinations take two weeks after the second dose, number one; and then the severe cases and death is always two to three to four weeks after infection. So there's still significant lag, so I'm still waiting for data to decide exactly what is happening.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you, Dr. Austriaco. Back to Usec. Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes, Secretary. From Sam Medenilla ng Business Mirror: May update na kaya sa response ng COA sa appeal ni President Duterte to audit Philippine Red Cross?

SEC. ROQUE: No response yet, as far as I know.

USEC. IGNACIO: From Lei Alviz ng GMA News: Following Pfizer's announcement that their vaccine also works for children, 5 to 11 years old. Do you think the Philippine should also start vaccinating children? For Dr. Salvaña and Fr. Austriaco.

DR. SALVAÑA: Yeah, I think at this point, it's important to stick to our prioritization program kasi alam naman natin na ang A1, A2, A3 are at the highest risk for dying, followed by iyong population na 20 to 59 years old na alam naman natin ang baseline risk of dying from COVID can be as high as one percent; at kung i-vaccinate natin, it goes down to .1%. Iyong children 20 years old and below kasi, iyong baseline risk nila of dying is about .1%. So bagama't we want to get down to .01 percent, mas importante po na i-target natin iyong mga at higher risk for dying. Once our supply is okay, then we should vaccinate everyone po.

SEC. ROQUE: Father Austriaco?

DR. FR. AUSTRIACO: I, too, would like to wait. And also it's interesting in my view and this is, I'm not a medical doctor but in my view given the technology, if we were to vaccinate especially our very young, I think it will be important to err on the side of Sinovac rather than a Pfizer or Moderna because the technology for Sinovac is so much more understood. And our young children, especially those who are still pre-pubescent, we're not quite sure what will happen, right.

So I think, just like Dr. Edsel, I think there's no immediate need. But personally, if you ask me as a molecular biologist, if given the risk is already so low for a young child, if we had the option of if an mRNA vaccine or an attenuated vaccine, I would err on the attenuated vaccine to lower that point one to even lower and minimize any risk long-term for the development of our children.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Dr. Austriaco. Usec. Rocky?

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Secretary Roque, from Kris Jose ng Remate/Remate Online: Reaksiyon po sa sinabi ni Vice President Leni na iwasan daw po ang mga personal na insulto sa isinasagawang Senate inquiry ukol sa overprice na pagbili ng medical supplies at sa halip ay manatili lang sa katotohanan lalo na raw po ngayon at nahaharap pa rin sa pandemya ang bansa.

SEC. ROQUE: Agree po tayo. Pero lumalabas po na parang iyong ilang mga senador, hindi papayag hanggang hindi lumabas na diumano ay may korapsiyon. Eh malinaw naman po, walang

overprice sa PPE, walang overprice pagdating sa facemask; sumunod po sa proseso kasi ang Bayanihan I ay sinabi, hindi na kinakailangan sumunod doon sa 9184. So hindi ko po alam kung ano pang gustong makuha ng mga senador diyan sa pagdinig na iyan 'no.

Pero kung ikukumpara po natin doon sa pagdinig sa Kamara de Representantes na hinahayaang sumagot ang mga testigo at mga resource persons, lumalabas po talaga na wala pong irregular doon sa mga biniling mga PPEs, face shields. At saka siyempre po, nandiyan iyong testimonya mismo ng Chairman ng COA. So sa tingin ko po, kung sinabi na ng COA na walang overpricing eh hindi ko po alam kung bakit pa nagpapatuloy, kung hindi pulitika na lang talaga ang dahilan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Second question po niya: Hindi man po niya pinangalanan, ng Pangulo, pero batid naman po ng lahat na madalas na pong pinapatutsadahan ni Pangulong Duterte si Senator Gordon kagaya ng pagiging mataba nito. Pinuna rin ng Pangulo ang hairdo po ng Senador.

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko po alam kung ano ang tanong. Wala pong tanong.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Mula po kay Kyle Atienza ng Business World: The Makati Business Club is urging the government to improve its virus containment efforts as the economy re-opens. Ano po ang mga paghahanda ng gobyerno to prevent a potential virus contagion? Are we prepared enough for the re-opening of the economy?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, unang-una po, nagpa-pilot nga po tayo ng combination ng granular lockdown na napaka-istrikto, na ang pupuwedeng lumabas lang effectively ay ang mga health workers at mga OFWs, at saka combined with iyong alert systems.

So ito po ay ginagawa natin dahil naintindihan po natin 'no na kinakailangan magkaroon na ng hanapbuhay ang nakakarami sa atin. So hinihingi ko po ang kooperasyon ng lahat dahil kung ito po ay magiging tagumpay ay napakalaki po ng porsiyentong pupuwede nang makapaghanapbuhay. At importante po iyan na makapagbalik-buhay tayo.

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

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat, Usec. Rocky. Maraming salamat, Dr. Salvaña and Fr. Dr. Austriaco. Maraming salamat sa lahat ng ating mga naging kasama dito ngayon sa Malacañang Press Corps.

Sa ngalan po ng inyong Presidente, ito po ang inyong Spox Harry Roque na nagsasabi: Pilipinas, may katapusan po ang lahat. Kung tayo po ay umabot na sa sienta y singko porsiyento na nabakunahan sa Metro Manila, malapit na po ang ating inaasam na containment at pagbalik-buhay para sa lahat.

Magandang hapon po, Pilipinas!

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