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News and Information Bureau

PRESS BRIEFING WITH ACTING PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON
CABINET SECRETARY KARLO NOGRALES
December 15, 2021 [12:06 P.M. – 1:12 P.M.]

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Magandang Miyerkules ng tanghali po sa ating mga kababayan at sa mga miyembro ng Malacañang Press Corps. Ngayong araw ay mayroon po tayong isang special presidential press briefing dahil nagpulong kahapon ang Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) at kailangan ipaalam sa ating mga kababayan ang ilan sa mga mahahalagang resolusyon ng IATF.

Aside from these, we will also be tackling some other updates, so I beg your indulgence as covering all this ground may take a little longer than usual.

Una po rito ay inaprubahan ng IATF ang rekomendasyon na ipanatili sa Alert Level 2 ang lahat ng lugar sa Pilipinas mula bukas, disisais ng Disyembre hanggang sa katapusan, a-trenta y uno ng Disyembre.

The entire country will continue under Alert Level 2 beginning tomorrow, December 16 until December 31, 2021.

Kaugnay nito, ini-repeal ng IATF ang Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines, as amended, at ang pag-adopt ng IATF sa Guidelines on the Nationwide Implementation of the Alert Level System for COVID-19 Response, as amended.

Sa mga frontliners, kawani ng gobyerno, mga LGUs, volunteers, at sa ating mga kababayan: This would not have been possible without your cooperation, your help, and your sacrifices. Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat. Let's keep this up, 'wag tayong bumitaw.

In-aprubahan din ng IATF ang panibagong country risk classification effective December 16 hanggang December 31, 2021.

Umpisahan po natin sa Red List. Walo po ang mga lugar na nasa Red List. Ito ay ang mga sumusunod: ang Andorra, France, Monaco, Northern Mariana Islands, Reunion, San Marino, South Africa at Switzerland.

Ito naman po ang mga bansa o mga teritoryong na nasa Green List: Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, British Virgin Islands, Chad, People's Republic of China, Comoros, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Falkland Islands (Malvinas), The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Montserrat, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Rwanda, Saba –without

an “H” – this is the Special Municipality of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, Saint Barthélemy, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sint Eustatius, Sudan, Taiwan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, at United Arab Emirates. Apatnapu’t isa ang bilang ng mga lugar na nasa Green List.

Ang mga lugar na hindi ko binanggit ay nasa ilalim po ng Yellow List. Kaugnay nito, ni-lift ng IATF ang pansamantalang suspensyon ng testing at quarantine protocols sa mga lugar na nasa Green List. Ang susundin na testing at quarantine protocols ng mga international arriving passengers na galing sa Green List ay ang latest testing at quarantine protocols na inaprubahan ng IATF. Let us discuss these one by one.

Una po sa lahat, ang mga bansang nauna nang napasailalim sa Green List, base sa case at test metrics, kapag mayroong local transmission ng Omicron ay ma-re-reclassify bilang Yellow List. Ang Green List ay iyong mga low-risk countries/territories at jurisdictions, ito po ang mga protocol ng mga galing sa Green List na papasok sa Pilipinas:

Para sa mga fully vaccinated: Kailangan nilang magpakita ng negatibong RT-PCR test taken within 72 hours prior to departure from the country of origin. Kailangan din nilang mag-facility-based quarantine hanggang lumabas ang kanilang negatibong RT-PCR test taken on the 3rd day. After which, they shall be required to undergo home quarantine until their 10th day, with the date of arrival being the first day.

Para naman sa mga unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or individuals whose vaccination status cannot be independently validated na galing sa Green List: Kailangan nilang magpakita ng negatibong RT-PCR test taken within 72 hours prior to departure from the country of origin. Kailangan din nilang mag facility-based quarantine hanggang lumabas ang negatibong RT-PCR test taken on the 7th day. After which, they shall be required to undergo home quarantine until their 14th day, with the date of arrival being the first day.

Lahat ng mga pasahero, Pilipino man o dayuhan, na nag-transit mula sa non-Green List country/jurisdiction or territory, ay maituturing na hindi galing o nanggaling sa nasabing bansa o teritoryo kung sila ay namalagi lamang sa airport ng buong oras at hindi na-clear na pumasok ng immigration authorities ng mga nasabing lugar.

Titiyakin ng Department of Transportation na ang mga airline ay magsasakay lamang ng mga pasaherong susunod sa negative RT-PCR test before travel requirement. Exempted dito ang mga batang may edad tatlong taon gulang at pababa saan man bansa sila galing. Ang mga nasabing bata ay hindi kailangan magpakita ng negatibong RT-PCR test result bago mag-board, unless symptomatic.

Susundin ng mga minor na galing sa Green List ang the testing at quarantine protocols ng magulang o guardian kasama nila sa biyahe, regardless of the minor’s vaccination status and country of origin.

Pumunta naman tayo sa Yellow List o iyong nasa “Moderate Risk.” Ito naman ang protocols ng mga pasaherong nasa Yellow List na papasok sa Pilipinas: Para sa mga fully vaccinated, kailangan nilang makakuha ng negative RT-PCR test 72 hours bago sila umalis sa bansa kung saan sila galing. Pagdating ng Pilipinas, kailangan nilang mag-facility-based quarantine at mag-RT-PCR test sa ikalimang araw, with the date of arrival being the first day. Kahit mag-negatibo ang kanilang resulta sa RT-PCR test, kailangan nilang mag-home quarantine until their 14th day from the date of arrival.

Para naman sa mga unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, or individuals whose vaccination status cannot be independently validated na galing sa Yellow List: Kailangan nilang mag-RT-PCR test, taken within 72 hours prior to departure from the country of origin. Pagdating ng Pilipinas, kailangan din nilang mag facility-based quarantine at mag-RT-PCR test sa ikapitong araw, with the date of arrival being the first day. Kahit mag-negatibo ang kanilang resulta sa RT-PCR test, kailangan nilang mag-home quarantine until their 14th day from the date of arrival.

Titiyakin naman po ng Department of Transportation na ang mga airline ay magsasakay lamang ng mga pasaherong susunod sa negative RT-PCR test-before-travel requirement. Exempted dito muli ang mga batang may edad tatlong taon gulang at pababa, saan man bansa sila galing. Ang mga nasabing bata ay hindi kailangan magpakita ng negatibong RT-PCR test result bago mag-board, unless symptomatic.

Susundin naman ng mga minor na galing sa Yellow List ang testing at quarantine protocols ng magulang o guardian kasama nila sa biyahe regardless of the minor’s vaccination status and country of origin.

Pumunta naman tayo sa Red List o iyong mga tinutukoy na High Risk countries, territories and jurisdictions: Hindi po pinapayagan ang inbound international travel ng mga taong galing o nanggaling sa Red List within 14 days prior to arrival to the Philippines, anuman ang kanilang vaccination status. Tanging mga Pilipino lang pabalik ng bansa via government or non-government-initiated repatriation, at mga nasa Bayanihan Flight, ang pinapayagan makapasok, subject sa sumusunod na entry, testing at quarantine protocols.

Para sa mga passenger na fully vaccinated: Kailangan nilang magpakita ng negatibong RT-PCR test taken within 72 hours prior to departure from the country of origin. Kailangan din nilang mag-facility-based quarantine at mag-RT-PCR test taken on the 7th day. Maaari lamang silang payagan ma-discharge sa facility matapos lumabas ang kanilang negatibong resulta ng kanilang RT-PCR test. Ngunit kailangan pa rin nilang mag-home quarantine until their 14th day, with the date of arrival being the first day. Again, para iyon sa mga fully vaccinated.

Para naman sa mga unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or individuals whose vaccination status cannot be independently validated na galing sa Red List, kailangan nilang magpakita ng negatibong RT-PCR test, taken within 72 hours prior to departure from the country of origin.

Sasailalim din sila sa mandatory facility-based quarantine sa loob ng sampung araw with RT-PCR test taken on the 7th day at maaari lamang silang payagan ma-discharge sa facility matapos makumpleto ang kanilang ten-day facility-based quarantine. Kahit magnegatibo ang resulta ng kanilang RT-PCR test kailangan pa rin nilang mag-home quarantine until their 14th day with the date of arrival being the first day.

Susundin muli ng mga minors na galing sa Red List ang testing at quarantine protocols ng magulang o guardian kasama nila sa biyahe regardless of the minor's vaccination status and country of origin. Exempted po dito ang mga batang may edad tatlong taong gulang at pababa saan mang bansa sila galing. Ang mga nasabing bata ay hindi kailangan magpakita ng negatibong RT-PCR test result bago mag-board, unless symptomatic.

Hindi naman maituturing na galing o nanggaling sa Red List ang mga pasahero nag-transit lamang sa Red List na namalagi lamang sa airport ng buong oras at hindi na-clear na pumasok ng immigration authorities ng mga nasabing lugar. Pagdating ng Pilipinas, ang mga pasaherong nag-transit sa Red List ay susunod sa pinaairal na testing at quarantine protocols.

Dumako naman po tayo sa mga dokumentong kailangan ipakita para ma-validate ang vaccination status.

Una. Sa mga OFWs at kanilang mga asawa, mga anak at mga magulang na kasama nila sa biyahe na nabakunahan abroad, maaari nilang ipakita ang kanilang national digital or physical vaccination certificate ng foreign government kung saan sila nabakunahan nang hindi kinakailangan ng reciprocity agreement.

Para naman sa mga Pilipino na hindi OFW na nabakunahan sa Pilipinas o sa abroad at mga dayuhan na nabakunahan sa Pilipinas, maaari nilang ipresenta ang kanilang VaxCertPH digital vaccination certificate or Bureau of Quarantine/World Health Organization-issued International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis or ICV ang tawag dito or di kaya iyong national/state digital certificate mula sa foreign government kung saan sila nabakunahan, na tumanggap ng VaxCertPH sa ilalim ng reciprocity agreement, unless otherwise permitted ng IATF.

Sa mga dayuhang nabakunahan abroad, kailangan ipakita nila ang WHO-issued ICV or national/state digital certificate ng foreign government na tumanggap ng VaxCertPH sa ilalim ng reciprocity agreement, unless otherwise permitted by the IATF.

Samantala, pinapaalala namin: Pinagbabawal ang inbound travel ng mga batang walang kasama. Hindi pinapayagan makasakay ng eroplano ang lahat ng unaccompanied minor Filipino citizens galing sa "Red List," except if such minors are returning through the repatriation program of the national government or through a non-government-initiated repatriation, and Bayanihan Flights.

Pagdating sa Pilipinas, itu-turn over ang repatriated minors sa Overseas Workers Welfare Administration house parent who, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), shall ensure the minors' safety and their observance of quarantine protocols.

Hindi naman pabalik sa port of departure ang unaccompanied minor Filipino citizens na lumapag sa ating airport kahit na may pagbabawal. Sila ay itu-turn over lamang sa authorized DSWD officer who can ensure their safety and observance of quarantine protocols. But this is without prejudice to penalties na ipapataw sa mga airlines that allowed them to board, as provided in the applicable laws and rules including those issued by the Department of Transportation and its attached agencies.

Allow me to reiterate to all those who plan to come home during the holidays: We humbly request your patience as we in the IATF continue to make modifications to our protocols. These are all being done in response to evolving situations around the world. Ang puno't dulo po nito is we want to keep our people safe and we will do what is necessary to achieve that.

Nagkaroon din ng desisyon ang IATF kung saan pinapayagan ang operasyon ng sabungan at tradisyunal na sabong na nasa ilalim ng Alert Level 2, kung walang pagtutol dito ang mga LGUs or lokal na pamahalaan kung saan gaganapin ang sabong.

Ang pagpayag na ito ay subject sa mga sumusunod na protocols: Una, maximum of 50% venue capacity ng tanging mga fully vaccinated lamang; pangalawa, kailangan fully vaccinated ang lahat ng on-site workers/employees; pangatlo, cashless ang pagtaya o betting. Tanging technology-based platforms ang pinapayagan. Ibig sabihin nito, walang palitan ng pera sa sabungan at walang oral placing of bets. Hindi na puwedeng tumaya na nagsisigawan o nagsasalita; pang-apat at panghuli, dapat mahigpit po ang local government unit sa pagpapatupad ng minimum public health standards at technology-based betting at dapat mahigpit ang pag-monitor nito ng Department of the Interior and Local Government.

We enjoin LGUs that will allow the resumption of cockfighting operations to strictly enforce and implement these protocols and to shut down operators that fail to adhere to our minimum health standards.

Sa usaping bakuna: Naitala kahapon ang pinakamalaking vaccine arrival sa loob ng isang araw. Ayon sa National Task Force Against COVID-19, nasa walong milyon doses ng COVID-19 vaccines ang natanggap ng Pilipinas. Kasama rito ang 1,512,000 doses ng Moderna na donasyon ng France at Spain; two million doses ng Sinovac na donasyon ng China; 1,778,400 doses ng Janssen na donasyon ng Sweden at Austria; 945,600 doses ng Janssen na dumating ng hapon at 2,011,200 doses ng Janssen na dumating kagabi na parehong donasyon ng The Netherlands.

We extend our gratitude to the governments and people of France, Spain, People's Republic of China, Sweden, Austria, and The Netherlands. Maraming, maraming salamat po.

Uulitin ko po: Nandiyan na po ang bakuna. Sa mga hindi pa bakunado, para po ma enjoy talaga natin ang holiday season with our loved ones, protect yourselves and your families by getting vaccinated. Now na.

Pumunta naman tayo sa COVID-19 Update: Patuloy na gumaganda ang COVID-19 situation sa bansa. Una, nasa 235 ang mga bagong kaso ayon sa December 14, 2021 COVID-19 Case Bulletin ng DOH. Ito na ang pinakamababang naitalang bagong kaso sa 2021.

Pangalawa, below 1% po, nasa 0.9% ang positivity rate ng Pilipinas.

Pangatlo, 97.9% naman ang porsiyento ng gumaling. Nasa mahigit 2.7 million na po ang naka-recover.

Pang-apat, nasa 1.77% naman po ang ating fatality rate, at ito ay nanatiling mas mababa sa 2% global average. Sampu ang naidagdag sa bilang ng mga pumanaw dahil sa coronavirus.

At panlima, nasa below 25% naman ang ating hospital utilization rate. Sabi nga ng DOH, halos kalahati ng mga ospital sa buong Pilipinas ay walang in-admit na pasyenteng may COVID-19 mula December 5 to December 9.

Narinig ninyo sa amin kahapon ang ginagawa nating paghahanda ng national government kaugnay ng severe Tropical Storm Odette.

As of 11 AM today, December 15, Signal Number Two po ngayon ang Eastern portion ng Surigao del Norte at Surigao del Sur.

Naka-flash sa inyong screen ang mga lugar na under Typhoon Signal Number One.

Ang mga residente na naninirahan sa mga lugar na natukoy na highly susceptible sa mga hazards ay pinapayuhan na sundin ang evacuation at iba pang instructions mula sa kanilang local officials.

Para sa mga bumibiyaha, pinapaalala naming na nanatiling suspendido po ang land travel ng mga sasakyan papuntang Visayas at Mindanao, epektibo noong December 13, 2021, 6PM pa. Ito ay mananatiling suspendido hanggang ma-lift ang tropical cyclone warning signal.

Samantala, ang land travel ng mga sasakyan papuntang Catanduanes at Masbate ay suspendido rin, ito ay epektibo December 14, 2021, 9 AM; ito ay mananatiling suspendido hanggang ma-lift ang tropical cyclone warning signal.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) operations center is currently monitoring the typhoon movements and airport conditions. CAAP is also assessing possibility of suspending air traffic operations on areas expected to be affected by the typhoon.

Samantala, bukas pa ang ating mga pantalan pero ang mga biyahe sa mga Odette-affected areas ay suspendido base sa Philippine Coast Guard advisory.

On other matters, our economic managers through the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), have adjusted our growth target for 2021 to 5.5% from its previous forecast of 4-5%. This comes after our strong performance in the third quarter and the significant decline in the number of COVID-19 cases as a result of our accelerated vaccination drive.

They say, and I quote, *“As we continuously relaxed restrictions and increase mobility, economic performance is expected to accelerate further in the last quarter of the year.”*

Similarly, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) raised its economic outlook for the Philippines in 2021 and 2022. According to the Asian Development Bank Outlook 2021, the Philippines is expected to grow by 5.1% in 2021 and 6% in 2022.

The ADB says, and I quote, *“Growth momentum has clearly picked up on the back of the government’s vigorous drive to vaccinate Filipinos against the COVID-19 virus.”*

A number of economists from the private sector have likewise upgraded our economic growth outlook for 2021, you can see these on the screen; kasama po dito ang Goldman Sachs Economics Research, ang S&P Global Ratings, Pantheon Macroeconomics, Fitch Solutions, Capital Economics Asia at ang DBS Group Research.

Dito po nagtatapos ang aking presentation; makakasama natin ngayong hapon si Dr. Shirley “Gigi” Domingo, ang Vice President for Corporate Affairs at Spokesperson ng PhilHealth, who will discuss some recent developments in PhilHealth. Doc. Gigi, go ahead.

DR. DOMINGO: Good afternoon po sa lahat. Good afternoon, Secretary Nograles. Una sa lahat ay thank you for inviting me today’s press briefing ‘mo. I was informed that the issue here to be discussed and clarified by PhilHealth is the issue of the hospitals in Iloilo that has signify their intention to disengage with PhilHealth. So, first of all, let me reassure our members or the populations, since lahat po ng Pilipino ay member na po ng PhilHealth under the Universal Health Care, that PhilHealth is on top of the situation by implementing strategies to fast track funds to our hospitals, kasi the issue here is delayed payments of PhilHealth reimbursement to these hospitals and it’s not all payment, all cases, but the COVID cases. So iyon lang po ang ating issue with our hospitals, it’s the COVID cases po.

So, let me reassure the public that PhilHealth is implementing reforms to fast track or expedite the release of much needed funds to our hospitals through mechanism called the Debit-Credit Payment Method. Itong method po na ito ay binibigay po natin iyong cash, equivalent to the amount of claims, claims that are with us minus of course the tax to the hospitals while we are processing the claims that are with us.

Secondly po, we are continuously reaching out to these hospitals through our regions and even through our national government, national official head office, which is headed by our President Atty. Dante Gierran. We are implementing several reforms and continuously reaching out to these hospitals to avert any situation that will not be good to our members.

Let me also dispel the notion that PhilHealth is not paying its claims when actually we have paid since January 2020. To date, we have paid around 165 billion in claims reimbursements. As I said, let's isolate the issue; it is the delay in COVID claims 'no.

Aside from that, we have released also 11.04 billion through the DCPM method. And specifically to these hospitals in Iloilo, we have released 1.6 billion in claims reimbursement from January 2020, today.

Okay now, another issue that was brought up is the return to hospital claims. These are claims that were returned to hospitals because of deficiencies. Let me assure you that we do this because we are, in keeping with our responsibility to safeguard the interest of our members and to protect the funds that are given to us – these are public funds kasi kaya dapat ay protektahan natin ito. Kaya lahat po ng claims na pumapasok sa amin ay binubusisi po natin iyon bago mag-release ng payment doon sa ating mga providers. Nagyon, kung may makita tayong deficiencies ay kailangan po ibalik natin sa kanila para makumpleto nila iyong deficiencies at ibalik po sa atin.

So iyon po. Let me reassure also that we have enough funds to pay for the liabilities or to pay for the claims of our members that are coming in to PhilHealth. As of June this year, we have 158 billion in reserve funds. Our cashflows are okay 'no, our cash is enough to pay our liabilities which are the claims and therefore, the issue of money is not a problem. So, I reassure our members that we have enough cash to be able to pay for the benefit avilment when you go to hospitals and other providers during your medical needs.

So lastly, may I say that we would like to call on our hospital providers that sana ay i-avail ninyo po itong DCPM na ito. You know, marami pong challenges talaga dala nitong pandemic nito, ang pag-process ng claims dito sa PhilHealth. And therefore, na-conceptualize po natin ang DCPM na ito para mabigyan kayo ng funds na kailangan ninyo po. Alam po natin na kailangan ng mga ospital ang mga funds na iyon, panlaban po dito sa pandemic na ito at iyon po ang naisip natin, iyong DCPM. Maraming ibang issues na na-bring up sa amin tungkol sa DCPM, ina-address po natin iyon. Katulad ng mga undertaking, ina-address na po natin iyon.

And lastly, I would like to tell our members that PhilHealth is committed in its mandate to make sure that when you avail of the services ay makaka-avail po kayo. Iyan po ang aming mandate – to provide you with your much needed benefits kapag mangailangan po kayo.

So iyon po, salamat po.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Maraming, maraming salamat, Doc Gigi. Please stay onboard for questions from our friends from the media. And with that, I would like to segue now to Usec. Rocky for the Q and A portion.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes, thank you, Secretary Nograles. Good afternoon din kay Dr. Gigi.

Ang una pong tanong mula kay Mikhail Flores ng AFP: When you say daw po the President plans to retire from government does that also means he is retiring from politics in general?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Well, the President is retiring from government after he ends his term sa June 30, 2022. As you know, he has withdrawn his candidacy for Senate and he plans to retire from government after more than four decades of public service.

What he will do after that? Siyempre as a retired government worker, siya po ay babalik na sa kaniyang private life and spend time with his family; become a, obviously, a private citizen of the Republic of the Philippines with all the rights, enjoying all rights as a private citizen of the Republic of the Philippines.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Ang susunod pong tanong mula kay Evelyn Quiroz ng Pilipino Mirror: Can you give us a hint of the real reason why the President withdrew his Senate candidacy?

CABSEC NOGRALES: It's really to spend time with his family after more than four decades ng serbisyo sa taumbayan. For more than four decades of public service – mula sa pagiging ano pa niya sa prosecution service as prosecutor all the way up to being mayor, vice mayor, a member of Congress, back to vice mayor then mayor, then now, as president of the Republic of the Philippines – now he wants to spend time, more time with his family.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. From Joel Pelenio of DWIZ: South African researchers confirmed that based on their new details, the vaccines provide less protection against the Omicron variant. But they still see indication na mas milder pa rin ang symptoms ng Omicron compared to the previous na mga variant. Kung less ang protection ng mga vaccines against Omicron, paano na lamang ang mga unvaccinated? Maaaring magiging severe ba ang effect ng variant sa kanila or still mild pa rin?

CABSEC NOGRALES: With regard to severity ng Omicron variant, we are still currently collating the data. The WHO is currently collating all information at magbibigay sila ng update

as regards iyong severity ng Omicron variant ‘no. So wala pa talagang conclusive findings in terms of severity.

Pero totoo po iyon ‘no, kapag unvaccinated kayo, mas mataas obviously ang magiging banta sa inyong kalusugan at maging sa buhay ng mga unvaccinated. Kaya patuloy pa rin po ang pagsusulong natin ng vaccination dito sa ating bansa to fully protect our citizens para fully protected po ang lahat ng Pilipino, lahat ng pamilya ng ating mga kababayan kaya napakaimportante po nito.

And then, apart from vaccination, importante pa rin po iyong minimum public health standards. So kahit bakunado po kayo, hindi naman ibig sabihin na fully protected ka na kung hindi mo susundin din ang minimum public health standards. So it’s always mask, hugas, iwas plus bakuna. Hindi pupuwedeng hiwa-hiwalayin iyan, hindi pupuwedeng i-individualize iyan; kailangan all of that taken together para mas mataas po ang proteksyon ninyo at ng inyong pamilya.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Can we go now to Mela Lesmoras ng PTV.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Hi! Good afternoon, Secretary Nograles, kay Dr. Domingo at kay Usec. Rocky.

Secretary Nograles, unahin ko lamang po iyong isyu hinggil sa alert level system. Can you please elaborate bakit po nagpasya ang IATF na panatilihin iyong Alert Level 2 given na sobrang baba na rin ng COVID-19 sa bansa? At mayroon pa po ba kayong napag-usapan na ibang patakaran ngayong Pasko na paiiralin o ilalabas ang IATF?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Iyong sa panahon ng Kapaskuhan ‘no, nandiyan pa rin naman iyong guidelines natin for alert level system. So ang nangyari sa IATF kahapon, sa aming meeting ay—kasi pilot pa rin iyong implementation dati ng alert level system ‘no. So very clearly now, pinu-forego na po natin iyong dating community quarantine system or classifications, now we are fully implementing now iyong alert level system sa buong Pilipinas. So titingnan natin ngayon ano iyong mga dos and don’ts at guidelines mula sa alert level system.

Alert Level System 2 ang buong bansa, so dapat maliwanag para sa lahat ng mga LGUs, lahat ng mga provinces, cities, highly urbanized cities and independent component cities hanggang sa barangay, maliwanag sa kanila ang mag dos and don’ts for Alert Level System 2.

Pagdating sa Kapaskuhan, siyempre, titingnan natin iyong Alert Level System 2 at para ma-remind ang ating mga kababayan, mayroon pong mga reminders ang Department of Health at ang PCOO na nakikita po natin dito sa PTV at maging sa ibang mga kasamahan natin, kaibigan natin sa KBP ay tumutulong din na ipalabas iyong mga reminders na iyan.

Now, ang tanong: Bakit Alert Level 2 pa at hindi pa tayo nag-Alert Level 1? Well, we are being very cautious because, ito nga, iyong banta ng Omicron na nakikita natin sa ibang mga lugar, mga bansa, territories and jurisdictions na may positive na Omicron lalo na ng local transmission ng Omicron, pataas nang pataas ang bilang ng COVID cases doon. At marami pa tayong hindi nalalaman tungkol sa Omicron, plus hindi pa namin talagang totally napa-finalize ang mga parameters for Alert Level 1. Kung titingnan po natin iyong guidelines for Alert Level 1 parang halos mao-open na ang lahat but everybody will continue practicing minimum public standards.

So hindi pa talaga tayo ganoon ka-confident to open up places for Alert Level 1 because we need to still ramp-up our vaccination kaya nga po mayroon tayong National Vaccination Days, number 1; number 2, tandaan po natin, marami rin po tayong mga kababayan ang uuwi dito sa ating bansa ngayong December. So we are being cautious, at tama rin naman na dapat cautious muna tayo right now. Anyway, as we see it, iyong economic numbers naman natin ay maganda, iyong employment numbers natin ay maganda rin, gumaganda na rin. Iyong hunger, poverty numbers natin, bumababa na po.

So with Alert Level 2, we're confident na nasi-secure natin ang health and safety ng ating mga kababayan but safely re-opening our economy at marami na rin po ang nakakabalik ng trabaho.

So because we want to keep that way, ang desisyon ng IATF is hanggang December 31, Alert Level 2 po tayong lahat. Pag-uusapan namin muli kung ano ang mangyayari for January 1 to 15.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Opo. At dito lamang, Secretary Nograles, naman sa naging pasya nga ng pag-withdraw ni Pangulong Duterte. May we know, ano po kaya ang nag-trigger sa kaniya para mag-decide na mag-withdraw na? At paano naman ito makakaapekto sa kaniyang quality of service sa kaniyang nalalabing panahon sa termino?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Well, gaya ng nai-release namin na statement 'no, unang-una, it's because the President wants to spend time with his family after more than four decades of public service. Number two, dahil po hindi na siya kandidato for any position this coming elections, he can focus now on our ... more, he can focus more on the COVID response; he can focus more on safely re-opening our economy; he can focus more on continuing, if not, even stepping up more of the public service, lahat ng mga pagbabago, lahat ng mga magagandang mga programa na nasimulan niya ay kaya niya nang mas lalo pa niyang masigurado na these are all put in place and implemented towards the end of his terms as President; and more importantly na maka-concentrate na rin po siya, unhampered, on ensuring na we will have peaceful, transparent and fair elections this coming May 2022.

MELA LESMORAS: Opo. At panghuli na lamang, Secretary Nograles: Kailan po kaya mag-aanunsiyo si Pangulong Duterte kung sino na iyong bago niyang iendorsong kandidato o baka mayroon na po ba kayang bagong iendorso na kandidato?

SEC. NOGRALES: Abangan na lang po natin. Sa tamang oras at panahon ay magsasalita si President Duterte tungkol po diyan.

MELA LESMORAS: Okay. Maraming salamat po, Secretary Nograles, Dr. Domingo at Usec. Rocky.

SEC. NOGRALES: Thank you, Mela. Let's go back to Usec. Rocky for other questions from the media.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes, thank you, Sec. Karlo. Ang susunod pong tanong ay mula kay Red Mendoza ng Manila Times, para po kay Doc. Gigi Domingo: Ano na ang mga paraan ng PhilHealth para hindi madagdagan ang mga hospital na may balak nang kumawala sa ahensiya dahil daw po sa mga hindi nabayaranang mga pagkakautang nito?

DR. DOMINGO: Una sa lahat, gusto ko pong sabihin sa inyo, wala po tayong natatanggap na official notice from hospitals that they will disengaged by next year. We heard that the same hospitals through their announcement will plan to disengage but wala pa tayong natatanggap na official notice po. Now, ano po ang ginagawa natin? As I said, iyong isyu po natin ay delayed in COVID claims 'no, kaya magri-release po tayo ng third wave of DCPM. The third wave of DCPM will be offered nationwide na po as long as the hospitals are managing a COVID cases, as long as they are managing COVID claims po, they are included in the qualified hospitals to avail of the DCPM 3. And dati po 60% binibigay natin, ngayon ay 80% of the amount computed na po ang ibibigay natin para ma-expedite lang ang funds na ito sa mga ospital po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Doc Gigi again and kay Secretary Karlo na rin po. Mula pa rin po kay Red Mendoza ng Manila Times: Kinuwestiyon po ng COA ang sinasabing IRM payments na may halagang P15 billion dahil daw diumano ay wala daw itong legal basis. Ayon po sa PD1445 o ang government auditing code, kung saan bawal daw ang advance na pagbabayad sa mga serbisyo o material na bagay na walang approval mula sa Pangulo. Ano po ang reaksiyon ng PhilHealth dito at may reaksiyon din po ba daw ang Palasyo dito?

SEC. NOGRALES: Unahin na muna natin si Doc Gigi.

DR. DOMINGO: Salamat po, salamat po also for the question po. PhilHealth maintains that we have legal basis to implement the IRM. May provision po tayo doon sa RA 7875 as amended, that PhilHealth can implement, provide mechanisms such as global budget and other payment mechanism that will benefit the members. Ang global budget po, ito ay isang kabuuan na payment, based on some criteria and it is a pre-payment katulad ng IRM. Secondly, sa

Universal Health Care Law ay mayroon pong nakasulat rin doon that we should shift to prospective payments, prospective iyong hindi po nagagawa iyong serbisyo, binabayaran na natin sila. Pero iyon nga katulad ng global budget nga. So, nandoon rin po iyon sa Universal Health Care Law. So para sa atin po ay iyon po iyong binibigay natin as legal basis to implement the IRM.

Can I just add 'no? But in relation to that, we also requested a post facto approval from the President, from Malacañang para dito sa IRM na ito. Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Thank you, Doc Gigi. Ang susunod pong tanong, Secretary Karlo, si Jo Montemayor ng Malaya, pero natanong na po ni Mela Lesmoras iyong kaniyang unang tanong. Iyong second question niya: With the recent developments, are there concerns that some PDP members might leave and transfer to other parties?

SEC. NOGRALES: Iyong PDP-Laban will support, continue to support President Rodrigo Duterte in his decision and in whatever decisions that he will have in terms of his governance, in terms of public service all the way up to the end of his term as President, PDP-Laban will continue to stand by the President. And PDP-Laban will also continue to be the dominant political party based on law and jurisprudence; it will continue to be the dominant political party for the 2022 national and local elections.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. May pahabol lang pong tanong si Sam Medenilla ng Business Mirror, Secretary Karlo: May projection po ba ang economic managers kung ano ang magiging impact sa economy, in case po ma-declare na ng Alert Level 1 ang some parts ng bansa?

SEC. NOGRALES: Wala pang niri-report sa amin sa IATF in terms of ano iyong projections niya. Iyong current projections ng DBCC is based obviously on what is happening on the ground presently, wherein alert level 2 tayong lahat. But, until siguro January, then perhaps doon pa siguro mapa-factor in, if ano ang maging effect noon or full effect noong Alert Level 1.

But, as we see it, under Alert Level 2, maganda naman ang lahat ng nakikita nating economic numbers, pati ang mga projections and not only in the Philippines, but even internationally as stated or as we already reported ay marami na pong mga top economic forecasters who have already given a plus projected forecast for the Philippines at the end of 2021. And I hope na tuluy-tuloy ito up to 2022 as forecasted by many economic experts.

USEC. IGNACIO: Last question lang po mula kay Jopel Pelenio ng DWIZ: Natanggap na po ba ng Palace iyong copy ng ratified bill from Congress regarding sa 2022 proposed national budget at kailan po kaya ito malalagdaan ng Pangulo para daw po maging ganap na isang batas?

SEC. NOGRALES: Na-monitor po namin na nagkapirmahan na po ang mga miyembro ng bicameral conference committee, nilagdaan na po nila. Pagkatapos po niyan ay it has to be back to their respective Houses for its ratification, in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, then pagkatapos po niyan ay ipapadala nila sa Malacañang. So as of the moment, hindi pa namin natatanggap but we will continue to monitor it.

Kung kailan lalagdaan ni Pangulong Duterte? Siyempre mayroon po iyang proseso, dadaan po iyan sa proseso, pero sa lalong madaling panahon, dahil napakaimportante pong ma-approve natin ang 2022 national budget.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary Karlo.

SEC. NOGRALES: Thank you, Usec. Rocky. Let's go to Maricel Halili ng TV 5.

MARICEL HALILI/TV 5: Hi, sir! Magandang hapon po. Doc and Usec., good afternoon. Sir, you mentioned earlier that the President [*wants to spend*] more time with his family and to focus on COVID response. If that's the case, why did he file COC in the first place? I mean, does it not confuse the public, considering that it's not only him but also other politicians or other aspirants changed their minds often?

SEC. NOGRALES: Siyempre marami sa ating mga kababayan, mga kapartido ni Pangulong Duterte at maging sa ibang partido ay nagkumbinsi sa kanya na dapat ay ipagpatuloy niya iyong kaniyang serbisyo. Siyempre maraming iniisip si Pangulo kung saan ba siya tatakbo, so maraming mga suggestions, mga recommendations, maraming tumutulak talaga sa kaniya na na huwag munang mag-retire, na tumakbo siya at magpatuloy sa kaniyang public service despite the fact na, again as I said, more than 4 decades na po siyang naninilbihan sa publiko. But as with filing, as with running for any position, it all boil down to personal decision talaga ng isang tao, ng isang kandidato. At the end of the day, after giving it much thought, the President decided na mag-retire na lang from government and concentrate to the family.

So, even after he filed, 'di ba marami ring mga kandidato mga political parties are already endorsing him for Senate. So, marami talaga, nandoon talaga iyong pressure na gusto nilang magpatuloy si Pangulong Duterte; but at the day it's always a personal choice for anyone who runs or files candidacy in whatever position. So, at the end personal decision din ng Pangulo na at the end of the day he wants to spend more time with his family.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: But, sir, yesterday, just hours before President Duterte filed his statement of withdrawal, his daughter Mayor Sara Duterte, who was also running for vice president, endorsed him for senator. Ano pong nangyari, hindi po ba na-inform si Mayor Sara that her father will be withdrawing from the presidential race? Nag-uusap po ba sila?

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: I think ang titingnan na lang natin diyan ay iyong huling statement ni Mayor Sara after the President withdrew his candidacy for Senator, at ang sabi po ni Mayor Sara is she will support the President's decision.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: But how is their relationship, sir? Are they in talking terms?

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: They're in talking terms. The relationship is father and daughter, as with fathers and daughter, they will always love each other. As a father loves his daughter and the daughter loves a father.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Sir, kanina mayroon pong inilabas na pahayag si former Senator Bongbong Marcos. He said that the withdrawal of Senator Bong Go from the Presidential race reinforces these current signals, the consolation of administration forces to be BBM-Sara Uni Team. Mayroon po bang ibinigay na dahilan ang administration for former Senator Marcos to think like this?

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Well, as far as PDP-Laban is concerned, nag-issue po ng statement ang PDP Laban they will stand behind the President in whatever decisions he has in terms of public service at hanggang sa dulo ng kanyang term the President has given his pieces for withdrawing. So, hanggang doon lang.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Sir, panghuli na lang po. How will the decision of the President and the decision of Senator Bong Go affect the candidacy of the members of PDP Laban especially those who are included in the Senate slate. Supposedly, ruling party ang PDP Laban?

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Well, PDP Laban will continue to a force to be reckoned with because PDP Laban will continue to be the dominant political party for the 2022 national and local elections provided by law. Siya pa rin po ang dominant political party.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: But, sir, does this show the weakness of on the side of PDP Laban considering na, well, two of the highest officials of PDP just withdrew?

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Well, titingnan na lang natin iyong composition ng PDP Laban even in the local level, province, city, municipality level, even district level. Marami, karamihan ng mga miyembro ng PDP at nag-file under PDP are incumbents, are second termer, third termers, comebackers even.

So, mabibigat na mga public officials ang tumatakbo under PDP Laban kaya PDP Laban will continue to play a big part as the dominant political party for 2022 national and local elections.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Okay. Marami pong salamat, Secretary.

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Thank you. let's go to Trish Terada of CNN Philippines.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Hi! Good afternoon, Sec. Karlo and to Dr. Shirley.

Sir, first question for you na lang from my colleague Jorge Cahilis: Iyong concern lang po kasi for OFWs, many of them are trying to reach the OWWA but were not getting a response as of the moment. So, I think the question is for IATF. Ano po ba iyong solution na tinitignan natin when it comes to the lack of quarantine facilities for OFWs because we've been seeing pictures, sir, that they're really in dire need of help? May mga cases na nawawalan ng tubig and iyong nga po sa iba, kulang daw po talaga iyong facilities for arriving OFWs.

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Yes, that the reason why binalik natin iyong green list 'no. So, the green list countries upon consultation with our health experts, mataas naman iyong kumpiyansa na ibalik natin doon sa dating green list protocols. So, for green list countries mas mababa na po iyong number of days for quarantine because iyong testing niya for fully vaccinated 'di ba na third day na.

So, ganoon dinivide noon—before it was only yellow list protocol; now, we've divided it to back to green, yellow and red. That will release some pressure in terms of the number of days of quarantine although importante pa rin iyong home quarantine. So, [garbled] namin sa LGU to make sure, ang LGUs will make sure na they really follow the home quarantine protocols but that will medyo loosen up a bit doon sa mga facility-based quarantines na kinakailangan, number one.

Number two, iyong constant coordination with the Department of Transportation pati iyong mga airlines to make sure na maganda, spacing din noong pagdatingan ng mga flights from abroad. Then number three, iyong coordination also with our Bayanihan flights, government and non-government repatriation flights. So, it's [garbled] that has to have on the ground and among different agencies pero malaking bagay na iyong binalik natin iyong green list protocols.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: So, sir, bale iyong pagbabalik ng green list protocols, iyon na po iyong response ng IATF sa proposal ng OWWA to shorten the quarantine period of arriving OFWs, tama po ba?

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Yes, it will relieve a lot of the concerns in the ground because retaining the yellow list protocols for all except red magkakaroon na ng higher capacities ang facility kasi mas mabilis na iyong magiging turnover ng incoming and outgoing sa mga facilities without sacrificing iyong health and safety ng lahat.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Pero, sir, paano po planong tugunan ng IATF iyong parang hindi po naa-address na concern or kumbaga may mga cases pa rin po na iyong facility na tinutuluyan ng mga OFWs are, I would say, in poor condition? Like halimbawa, may mga

facilities daw po na kinukulang ng tubig and sobrang liit lang po talaga for them for even move around.

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Well, these are operational issues that OWWA has given us pati iyong—the different agencies also have given the assurance that they will address these some issues. May mga pailan-ilan po iyan, these are operational issues that OWWA has assured the IATF, and with the help and assistance of concerned agencies ay ia-address po iyong mga ganyang mga particular issues. This is not common to all; these are just particular issues for particular facilities pero may assurance po na aayusin po ang lahat.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: All right. Thank you very much, Spox Karlo. Sir, can I just please go to Dr. Shirley, very quick lang po na question.

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Go ahead, Doc. Gigi. Go ahead with your question.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Hi, Doc! Good afternoon. For perspective lang po, bakit po natatagalan iyong COVID related claims? And how and why is it taking time for PhilHealth to ask po kahit po almost two years na po tayo into the pandemic, kumbaga thresh out or to figure out how we can please to speed up the process for claims po?

DR. SHIRLEY DOMINGO: Thank you for that question no. First of all, kaya nadi-delay iyong COVID claims because of some policy issues. Policy meaning, for example, there was an issue about paying confirmed and probable cases. Our policy was to pay for confirmed and probable which was the issue earlier in the pandemic 'di ba? Otherwise, some probable but if we have these certain conditions is it considered a case pa rin.

Nagka-issues ito, as we all know mayroon ibang nakasuhan from PhilHealth for paying na dapat hindi nabayaran because hindi naman COVID case 'no, because there was no positive RT-PCR. So, this are policy issues that we had to settle. And there were also some issues that's above PhilHealth katulad noong payment ng Remdesivir and other medicines which were not in the PMDF.

So the issues were, should we pay for this? Wala sa PMDF, that's against the law. Actually, for PhilHealth which is a government agency, we should not pay any claim or medicines that are not in the PMDF. So, there were several others policy issues and inisa-isa po natin iyon. Sabihin ko sa inyo, tinutukan po talaga iyan ni President Attorney Gierran po at inupuan ng execom at iniisa-isa po namin lahat ng policy issues na ito para mabilis iyong claims.

Talaga naman naapektuhan, just like any other organization, ang PhilHealth dito sa pandemic, iyong human resource natin. Our claims went up from around 30,000 maybe four years back a day, ngayon ay 39,000 a day ang tinatanggap nating claims. Sobrang tumaas without the equivalent increase in human resource plus maraming na-isolate, na-quarantine, nagkasakit.

We had, of course, some people who passed away because of a COVID din. Some people— we have to follow IATF guidelines of 30% only in the office or 50% in the office. Of course, we let them work at home pero iba po iyong condition – WiFi was slow and all that. Ganoon po iyon, there were so many challenges po ng pandemic. But as we said, we tried to implement lots of reforms.

Katulad the in-augment ng human resource doon sa ating mga trace processing unit. We streamlined processes, iyong claims processing ini-streamline po natin iyon from several steps, mga 20 steps, binawasan na po natin iyon – mga 10 steps na lang. Ganoon po iyon, marami po tayong ginagawa, may challenges, but we have tried to overcome these challenges.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Do we have a commitment to hospitals, like for example is there any specific deadline from the end of PhilHealth kung kayo, halimbawa po, kapag nag-claim sila, nag-file sila for reimbursement or claim, maibibigay po ba agad iyong kailangan nila for a certain time frame?

DR. SHIRLEY DOMINGO: Under the law, we are allowed 60 days to process claims po ano, kaya we are implementing itong DCPM nationwide. And iyong inclusion po nito, lahat po ng claims starting January 2020 up to all those 2021, for claims that are more than 60 days with us ay babayaran na po natin iyon through the DCPM. And na-mention ko earlier this DCPM 1 and 2, we paid all the 60% of the amount while we are processing para po kung may RTH denied ay matsa-charge doon sa 40%. But this time, 80% na po ang iri-release natin kaagad sa mga hospitals while we are processing claims.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: All right. Thank you very much, Doc Shirley. Thank you also to CabSec. Nograles and to USec. Rocky.

DR. SHIRLEY DOMINGO: Salamat din po.

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Thank you, Triciah. Let's go back to USec. Rocky, if you have other questions. Mayroon pa ba?

USEC. ROCKY IGNACIO: Secretary Nograles, wala na pong mga tanong sa mga kasamahan natin sa media.

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Thank you, USec. Rocky. Advanced Merry Christmas sa iyo at sa buong team.

USEC. ROCKY IGNACIO: Thank you. Thank you, Secretary.

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Maraming salamat din po kay Dr. Gigi Domingo of PhilHealth and Merry Christmas din po sa inyo.

DR. SHIRLEY DOMINGO: Thank you po at Merry Christmas din po sa inyo. God bless po.

CABSEC KARLO NOGRALES: Sa mga residente ng mga lugar na daanan ng bagyo, maging laging handa at maging ligtas. Huwag pong maniwala sa fake news o sa mga naririnig sa tabi-tabi. Please get weather advisory and bulletin updates from official government websites and official news channel.

Samantala, bukas December 16, ay simula na ang Simbang Gabi. Ituloy po natin i-observe ang minimum public health standards – mag-mask po, hugas, iwas pa rin po tayo lalo na nandiyan pa rin iyong banta ng Omicron variant. Sa mga hindi pa po bakunado, mas mainam po na mag-attend na lang po ng online or virtual Simbang Gabi; mas mainam po magpabakuna na po tayo.

Ingat po lahat. God bless at Merry Christmas in advance.

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