

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE**  
**News and Information Bureau**

**PRESS BRIEFING OF ACTING PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON**  
**CABINET SECRETARY KARLO NOGRALES**  
**JANUARY 5, 2022 (12:02 P.M. – 1:13 P.M.)**

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** Magandang tanghali po sa ating mga kababayan at sa Malacañang Press Corps. Ito po ang kauna-unahang press briefing natin para sa taong 2022.

So before proceeding, let me first greet our friends in the media and our viewers a Happy New Year. Hindi na po tayo magpaliguy-ligoy.

While we welcome the New Year with optimism, the reality on the ground is that the country is now at high-risk classification due to the rising number of COVID cases.

Nitong huling linggo ng Disyembre, patuloy na nakapagtala ng pagtaas ng bilang ng mga kaso ng COVID-19. Nasa bansa na ang Omicron na apat na beses na mas nakakahawa kumpara sa Delta variant. Dahil dito, uulitin po natin na dapat isapuso ang mask, hugas, iwas, ventilation at bakuna. Iwasan din natin ang super spreader events tulad ng Pista ng Itim na Nazareno, Pista ng Sto. Niño, Sinulog Festival, Dinagyang Festival at Chinese New Year – manatili na lamang sa pamamahay para iwas sakit at iwas hawaan.

Umpisahan natin ang briefing sa highlights ng isinagawang Talk to the People kagabi. Inatasan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte si Secretary Eduardo Año na mag-assign ng police personnel sa mga quarantine hotels.

Dagdag ng Pangulo, kailangan may complete authority to inquire ang nagbabantay na mga pulis para ma-monitor ang compliance sa quarantine rules. This is being done in order to prevent those who may attempt to violate the quarantine regulations that have been put in place to protect our population from COVID.

Umapela ang Pangulo sa mga Katoliko sa kanilang pang-unawa sa mga hakbang na gagawin ng pamahalaan para maprotektahan ang public health at public safety kaugnay sa pagdiriwang ng Feast of the Black Nazarene na maituturing na isang posibleng super spreader even dahil sa dami ng dumadalo dito. Kasama rito ang pagkansela ng mass gatherings tulad ng Traslacion o Black Nazarene procession, at pagmimisa sa loob ng simbahan.

Kaugnay nito, inaprubahan ng National Task Force Against COVID-19 ang pagsuspende ng Traslacion o ang procession ng imahe ng Itim na Nazareno; ang pagsasara ng Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene of the Quiapo Church mula Biyernes, January 7, hanggang Linggo, January 9, 2022.

Inaprubahan din ng NTF ang pagsasagawa ng online masses. Walang physical holy masses na magaganap. Kasama rin sa inaprubahan ang paglalagay ng checkpoints at deployment ng officers mula sa Manila Police District at Joint Task Force Coronavirus Shield para ma-discourage ang mga deboto sa pagtipun-tipon sa simbahan.

Samantala, inatasan ng Pangulo ang National Bureau of Investigation na imbestigahan ang mga kaso ng posibleng paglabag ng quarantine protocols na pinapatupad ng pamahalaan mula pagdating sa airport hanggang sa facility, hotel o bahay.

Inirekomenda naman kagabi ni Presidential Adviser on COVID-19 Response and Testing Czar Secretary Vivencio “Vince” Dizon sa Talk to the People address na i-adopt nationwide ang Metro Manila Council resolution na i-restrict ang movement ng unvaccinated kasama ang mga lugar na wala pang surge. Kaugnay nito, naglabas ng memorandum ang Regional Task Force COVID-19 ng CALABARZON na naglilimita sa paggalaw ng unvaccinated individuals. Hinihikayat ng RTF CALABARZON ang lahat ng local task forces sa region na i-adopt ang nasabing resolution.

Sa usaping bakuna naman: Nasa mahigit 110 million ang total doses administered as of January 4, 2022 ayon sa National COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard. Nasa 79.42% naman ng target population or 61,260,924 ang nakatanggap ng first dose, samantalang nasa 65.63% ng ating target population ang fully vaccinated.

Let me again reiterate to our unvaccinated kababayans: Tara na at magpabakuna! Huwag na itong ipagpaliban. Lahat ng bakuna ay ligtas, epektibo at libre po. Vaccines are free and have been proven to be safe and effective. The numbers clearly show how these can prevent serious cases of COVID. Eighty-five percent po ng COVID patients sa ating ICUs or intensive care units ay mga unvaccinated, kaya malaking tulong ang bakuna para maprotektahan kayo laban sa COVID-19 at ang mga variants nito. Malinaw po ang ebidensiya, ito ang ating pinakamabisang armas kontra COVID-19.

Sa mga fully vaccinated na, i-schedule ninyo na po ang booster shots ninyo para sa dagdag proteksyon. There are supplies available so much so that there are now even LGUs that offer booster shots to non-residents.

Pumunta naman po tayo sa COVID-19 update. Ayon sa January 4, 2022 COVID-19 Case Bulletin ng DOH or Department of Health, nasa 5,434 ang bagong kaso ng COVID sa bansa habang nasa 26.5% ang ating positivity rate.

At habang patuloy ang pagtaas ng mga kaso, dapat doble po ang gawing pag-iingat lalo sa mga pumapasok sa trabaho, ugaliin na mag-ingat-buhay para sa hanapbuhay. Iwasan nating magtipon sa mga 3Cs – iyong mga closed spaces, iyong mga crowded spaces at iyong mga

close-contact settings. Kung hindi ito maiiwasan kagaya ng pagsakay sa public transportation, tiyakin natin naka-full face mask po tayo. Iwasan din ang pagkukuwentuhan habang kumakain during lunch break or during merienda break. Mas safe po kumain nang hiwa-hiwalay, kaya kaniya-kaniya muna tayong kain, mga kababayan.

Now, for other data: Nasa 97.2% ang porsiyento ng gumaling, nasa mahigit 2.77 million na po ang naka-recover. Nguni't malungkot naman naming binabalita sa inyo na kahapon po ay mayroong labinwalo ang naidagdag sa bilang ng mga pumanaw dahil sa coronavirus. Nasa 1.8% ang ating fatality rate at ito ay nananatiling mas mababa sa two percent global average.

Ngayon, kung may concern or emergency kayo na related sa COVID-19, maaari ninyong tawagan ang mga sumusunod na hotline na naka-flash po sa inyong mga screen. Ayan po, paki take note po ng mga numbers at hotline numbers for COVID-19 sa inyong mga lugar at nandiyan din po ang ating One COVID Referral Center. Bukas ang mga linya 24/7 para i-assist kayo sa inyong mga medical needs.

As per other data, tumaas po ang ating hospital care utilization rate, nasa 35% na po ang utilized ICU beds natin sa Metro Manila, habang nasa 26% naman sa buong bansa; 32% ang utilized isolation beds natin sa Metro Manila, habang nasa 27% sa buong bansa; 36% po ang utilized ward beds sa Metro Manila habang 19% sa buong bansa; 20% naman ang utilized ventilators sa Metro Manila, habang 14% siya sa buong bansa.

On the economic front, Alpha Southeast Asia Investment Magazine recognized the Philippine Stock Exchange as 'Best Stock Exchange' in Southeast Asia for 2021. Congratulations po to all those who worked the past year to make this possible.

Congratulations too to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Benjamin Diokno for being awarded 'Central Banker of the Year 2022' by the prestigious, *The Banker*. To quote *The Banker*, "Governor Diokno has helped to see the Philippines through the COVID-19 pandemic, and push ahead with his modernization agenda for the country's banking system."

Good job, Governor Diokno, and congratulations!

The Bureau of Customs meanwhile collected P645.77 billion in 2021. This figure exceeded pre-pandemic collection of P630.21 billion in 2019. So, we commend the officials and personnel of the BOC for a job well done.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Samantala, bumaba naman po ang ating inflation mula 4.2% noong Nobyembre 2021 patungong 3.6% nitong Disyembre 2021 bunsod ng pagbaba ng presyo ng isda at gulay. Ito ang pinakamababang inflation na naitala sa taong 2021.

Dito po nagtatapos ang ating opening statement. Makakasama naman po natin ngayon ang isang kilalang health expert, si Dr. Edsel Salvaña para pag-usapan ang Omicron variant at iba pang usapin tungkol sa ating COVID-19.

Nandito rin po ang isa pa nating guest, si DILG Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya para naman bigyan tayo ng updates sa status ng financial assistance para po sa ating mga kababayan na naging biktima ng Bagyong Odette.

So, shall we start with Dr. Edsel Salvaña from UP-PGH? Doc Edsel, any updates on anong babantayan natin dito sa Omicron variant and iyong pagtaas po ng bilang ng COVID sa ating bansa?

**DR. EDEL SALVAÑA:** Good morning, Spox/CabSec. And good morning to everyone. Happy New Year po.

Nandito na naman tayo, medyo tumataas na naman ang ating cases. But the interesting things is and I've been talking po iyong mga colleagues po dito sa ospital, marami dito sa ating cases are mild and I think this is also because marami na po talaga tayong nabakunahan.

It's possible rin nga na nandito iyong Omicron and that is associated with milder symptoms bagamat mayroon pa rin talaga siyang magkakaroon ng severe, puwede pa ring mamamatay, lalung-lalo na doon sa mga hindi po nabakunahan.

So, we expect nga na mabilis talaga ang pagkalat nitong Omicron. Nakita natin sa United States, lalampas halos sa isang milyon na sila sa isang araw. Pero the good news is iyon nga, mukhang karamihan dito lalo na doon sa mga nabakunahan na are mild and the important thing po talaga is ipagpatuloy po natin iyong ating vaccination program and we continue to wear masks and ating minimum public health standards.

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Thank you, Doc Edsel. So, what we want to emphasize again is to get the unvaccinated vaccinated kasi kagaya ng sinabi mo, Doc Edsel, iyong mga mild na cases na nakikita natin are from vaccinated 'no. We cannot say the same thing about unvaccinated. So, kung unvaccinated ka, hindi po mangyayari iyong sinasabing iyong Omicron ay magiging mild, that only happens if you're fully vaccinated. Tama po ba, Doc Edsel?

**DR. EDEL SALVAÑA:** Tama po iyon, CabSec. Nakita naman natin ang people in the hospital is 85% unvaccinated and iyong mga namamatay is about 93% unvaccinated. Bagamat iyon nga, may mga Omicron na puwede pa ring maging severe, we see this more in those people who are unvaccinated by a lot talaga. And iyong mga namamatay 10-20 times iyong risk nila mamamatay whether it's Delta or Omicron compared to those who are fully vaccinated.

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Yes. And the second point also is even if you are fully vaccinated kailangang iwasan pa rin natin iyong Omicron because we do not want to overwhelm our healthcare capacities and when we talk about healthcare capacities, we're also talking about our health care workers 'di ba?

Because in fact, we also have healthcare workers who are now isolating themselves, quarantining themselves because they've been exposed or have gotten the disease, sila ay naging positive din.

So, ayaw rin po natin na mataas ang hawaan kasi ayaw rin po natin ma-overwhelm ang ating healthcare capacities and that most importantly involves not getting our health care workers overwhelmed with so much work and cases that they have to take care of. Tama po ba, Dr. Edsel?

**DR. EDEL SALVAÑA:** Yes, tama po iyon, CabSec. Actually, dito nga sa ospital namin, sa isang ospital na tinatrabahuhan ko – I go to two other hospitals – 27 po iyong nagkasakit na health care workers. All of them are vaccinated pero po lahat ay mild but the problem is they're out of circulation.

So, hirap po talaga iyong mga natitira and iyon nga, even if mild nga iyong lumalabas, may impact rin po ito sa ating workforce and mas mahihirapan po talaga tayong alagaan lalo na iyong mga kinakailangan ng medical attention, na may mga severe, and also iyong mga non-COVID na kailangan po talagang i-ospital.

So, please help us, mga health care workers po kami. Kahit po mahawa kami, most likely mild, pero malaki po talaga iyong impact sa capacity natin na alagaan ang ating mga kababayan na kinakailangang i-ospital.

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Thank you. And the third point also, Dr. Edsel, and this was discussed kagabi sa Talk to the People, let's take advantage of increasing the vaccination in the regional areas. While we're seeing a surge here in Metro Manila at iyong mga kalapit na mga probinsiya dito, we have to push for more vaccinations happening in the other regions outside of Metro Manila and CALABARZON.

**DR. EDEL SALVAÑA:** Tama po iyon, CabSec, kasi kung titingnan po natin, even though ang taas noong pag-increase noong cases, iyong severe and critical is actually pretty flat and the reason why tumataas talaga nang todo-todo iyong ating healthcare utilization is because nag-a-admit pa rin kahit papaano ng mild and moderate eh when in fact we can do home isolation or we can do facility-based sa mga TTMFs natin hindi naman kailangan iyong level of care na ginagawa sa ospital. So, we have to triage properly.

And of course, doon sa regions na mababa pa iyong vaccination rate, we really have to catch-up. We have to use this time para kung tumama na sa kanila itong Omicron wave, magiging mild pa rin kagaya ng nangyayari dito so far sa Metro Manila

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Yes. So, we'd like to emphasize again 'no that in Metro Manila the reason why we're seeing what we're seeing, meaning to say, hospital care utilization is not increasing as steeply as the cases are rising is because karamihan ng mga kababayan natin sa NCR are fully vaccinated, in fact, doing boosters already.

We cannot say the same thing sa ibang mga regions. We're seeing sa Metro Manila, mga 90%/100% na vaccinated. Hindi iyan the same vaccination rate that we're seeing in other regions. So, we need to step-up iyong vaccination in other regions, so that if Omicron or whatever variant goes and spread doon sa mga regions, then we won't see an overwhelming number of cases happening in the hospitals.

**DR. EDEL SALVAÑA:** Yes po, tama po, CabSec. Very important we use whatever time we have left to protect as many people as possible and we continue to protect everyone. And also iyong healthcare workers po natin, suportahan po natin lagi.

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** Thanks, Dr. Edsel. Please stay on board for questions from the media. Let's now go to Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya of DILG to talk about iyong pamamahagi po natin, USec., ng tulong sa mga severely affected noong Typhoon Odette.

**DILG USEC. MALAYA:** Yes. Magandang hapon po, CabSec Karlo Nograles, at sa lahat po ng ating tagasubaybay and the members of Malacañang Press Corps.

Yes sir, magbibigay lang po tayo ng kaunting ulat, updates tungkol sa pamimigay ng ayuda sa ating mga kababayan na lubhang naapektuhan ng Typhoon Odette. Mayroon lang po tayong kaunting slides, dalawang slides na ipapakita. May I just request na mai-flash po ito sa ating mga screen.

So, makikita po natin sa ating screen ngayon iyong timeline ng ating pamimigay ng ayuda sa ating mga kababayan. So makikita po natin sa timeline na iyan na nagsimula tayo noong December 29 ay nag-issue ng Local Budget Circular and DBM para sa pag-release ng pondo, para sa mga nasalanta ng Typhoon Odette. And then immediately thereafter, the next day on December 30 ay nagkaroon din ng pagpipirma and release of the Joint Memorandum Circular ng DILG, ng DSWD at ng Department of National Defense.

At dito po sa Joint Memorandum Circular na ito, nailagay natin iyong lahat ng guidelines na kailangang sundin ng ating mga implementing agencies for the distribution of the ayuda. So kumpleto na po lahat ng guidelines on the part of the national government at ang inaantay na lang po natin is of course iyong distribution ng pondo nito sa ating mga kababayan.

So, as of Monday, we checked with the different LGUs at natanggap na po nila iyong pondong nanggagaling sa national government. So nasa kamay na po ng mga LGUs and pondong ito at nagsagawa po tayo ng orientation regarding the distribution para maipaliwanag sa mga local government units kung ano iyong mga pamantayang kanilang kailangang sundin sa pamimigay ng ayuda. At binigyan po natin ng 15 days mula sa pagsisimula ng kanilang pamimigay ang mga LGUs na tapusin at kumpletuhin iyong distribution nito sa kanilang mga kababayan.

So ito po iyong ilan sa mga guidelines natin. Again, it's P1,000 to every qualified individual, maximum P5,000 per family. At ang mga target beneficiaries po natin ay iyong mga low income and severely affected individuals sa iba't ibang local government units.

At iyong listahan po ng mga eligible beneficiaries na siyang gagawa nito ay ang local government unit ay kailangan po ay ma-post sa social media or kung walang kuryente pa rin hanggang ngayon sa lugar na iyon ay kahit i-post nila sa mga conspicuous cases na tinatawag sa barangay o sa munisipyo bago magsimula ang pamimigay.

At mayroon din po tayong creation o pagtatalaga ng isang grievance and appeals committee sa level ng local government unit para maaksyunan kung mayroon mang mga reklamo sa ating mga kababayan. At dahil na rin po sa kautusan ng ating Pangulo na tumulong ang Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines na magbigay ng additional manpower ay nagbigay na rin po ng kautusan si Secretary Año sa Philippine National Police sa lahat ng rehiyon na apektadong ng Bagyong Odette na magtatalaga ng karagdagang personnel kung kinakailangan para maghatid ng tulong sa mga malalayong lugar.

So, ito naman pong susunod na slide, ito naman po iyong budget na naibaba na natin sa iba't ibang munisipyo at lungsod na lubhang naapektuhan ng Bagyong Odette: So, sa MIMAROPA po, mayroon tayong tatlong probinsya and 21 municipalities na napadalhan ng pondong pinansiyal mula sa national government for a total of 198 million. Sa Western Visayas naman po ay mayroon tayong anim na probinsya for a total of 1.6 billion. Sa Central Visayas naman po, mayroon tayong apat na probinsya for a total of almost more than P1 billion. Sa Eastern Visayas, mayroon po tayong apat na probinsya for P964 million naman po. And Northern Mindanao, limang probinsya, P156 million ang ating ibinaba doon. At sa Caraga, limang probinsya, P864 million.

So, ang kabuuang pong pondong naibaba ng ating national government, ng DBM diretso sa mga local government units ay P4.8 billion. At nasimulan na rin pong ma-activate ang mga joint monitoring and inspection committees na pinangungunahan ng DILG, kasama po ng DSWD, ang Philippine National Police at ang Department of Justice, sa bawat LGU mayroon po kaming ganon at malapit na rin pong magsimula iyong monitoring and inspection na gagawin ng DILG at DSWD sa mga LGUs para masiguro po na makarating ang tulong pinansyal

na ito in cash sa ating mga kababayang nangangailangan ng tulong sa lalong madaling panahon.

Iyon lamang po at maraming salamat po muli, CabSec Karlo Nograles.

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** Maraming, maraming salamat, Undersecretary Malaya. So let's now proceed to USec. Rocky for questions from the media.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Yes. Thank you, Sec. Karlo. Good afternoon din po sa MPC at sa ating mga guests ngayong araw. Iyong una pong tanong ni MJ Blancaflor ng Tribune ay napresinta na po ninyo, Secretary, about doon sa pagiging high risk ng Pilipinas sa COVID-19.

Ang second question po niya: May we request the Palace to comment on the PDP-Laban petition asking the Comelec to reopen the COC filing? What are President Duterte's thoughts on the petition? Will he endorse a presidential aspirant who is a non-member of the party?

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** I cannot comment on that especially in this podium because as per reports from the media, that petition is being heard or will be heard by the Comelec today. So no comment po from the Palace.

And then with regard doon sa high-risk classification. Yes, based on our metrics and our parameters, any territory na mag-i-experience ng greater than 200% two-week growth rate ay ilalagay po natin sa high-risk classification. And unfortunately for the entire country, although most of it is makikita natin sa NCR plus areas, tumama na po tayo to more than 200%. In fact, by the account of Secretary Duque in the Talk to the People kagabi, sinabi po niya we are 404% po ang ating two-week growth rate.

So patuloy po ang panawagan natin doon sa mask, hugas, iwas, plus bakuna. And in work places and business establishments, public places – good, better, best ventilation, kung maaari the best type of ventilation that you can, let's also be mindful of that.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Ang third question mula po kay Sam Medenilla ng Business Mirror: Reaction daw po ng Palace sa pag-drop kay EJ Obiena from the National Pool of Athletes by PATAFA?

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** We continue to support all of our athletes, including our star pole vaulter EJ Obiena and we hope that whatever disagreements that he may have... between EJ and the Philippine Athletics Track and Field Association, hopefully they will all be threshed out for the allegations of fund misuse and other such allegations. Documents, we have been told, have already been sent to the Philippine Sports Commission and the Commission on Audit, so let us await further development in that regard or if they will issue a statement on that matter.



**USEC. IGNACIO:** Thank you, Sec. Karlo.

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Thank you. Let's go to Mela Lesmoras of PTV.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV:** Hi! Good afternoon, Secretary Nograles, at sa ating mga panauhin. Secretary Nograles, unahin ko lang po iyong alert level system. Since iyon nga, Alert Level 3 na ang NCR at ang iba pang mga karatig-probinsya, bilang proactive measure at habang hindi pa talaga kumakalat iyong Omicron variant sa Pilipinas are we eyeing o napag-uusapan na po ba sa IATF na isailalim na rin iyong buong bansa sa Alert Level 3 o mas mataas pa na alert level?

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** When we look at our decision metrics ng alert level system po natin, very clear po ang tinitingnan natin: We are looking at the two-week growth rate. Then we look at iyong ADAR or Average Daily Attack Rate, that is how many cases per hundred thousand population 'no. And then after that, we look at healthcare utilization rate.

So, doon po sa metrics na iyan, makikita po natin kung anong alert level ang dapat nating i-classify ang isang lugar, probinsya. So iyon iyong ating decision metrics na sinusundan, hindi iyong buong bansa agad. So, kami sa IATF, we will not hesitate na kapag ang isang probinsya, halimbawa, ay tumama doon sa parameters natin for Alert Level 3, then we will do it. That has been the... kumbaga protocol and procedure ng IATF. Gaya ng sinabi namin, we will give the General Alert Level System classification every 15-days. So, ngayon iyong January 1 to 15, But anytime we need to escalate the Alert Level 4 any province we will do it, which is what we did for NCR and then later on, dito sa Cavite, Rizal and Bulacan.

Mayroon pa tayong ibang mga probinsya na tinitingnan. Tinitingnan namin kung tatama siya doon sa parameters for Alert Level 3. Again, ayaw kong pangunahan ang IATF but binabantayan namin, based on the numbers and anytime that we feel that—well, anytime na tumama siya sa parameters for Alert Level 3 or higher, then we will immediately escalate.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV:** Opo. And since, mas nakakahawa itong COVID-19 ngayon, mas tumataas na naman iyong numero ng kaso. May mga ilang government workers lang, CabSec, na nagtatanong kung napapanahon na rin ba at may chance na bang maibalik din iyong hazard pay for government workers?

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Well, let's remember that when that was decided upon, we were under ECQ and I believe MECQ din na-cover din, that was when iyong malawakang lockdown were being done. We have thus since then shifted to alert level system, the highest of which is Alert Level System 5. So, wala pa naman tayong lugar na in Alert Level System 5.

And that being said, ayaw ko ring pangunahan, ano iyong magiging desisyon ng Pangulo o ng Office of the President with regard to that question. So let's continue to monitor whatever developments there are. But again, this is not something that we would wish to happen. And

when I say that, it's not just government, hindi lamang ang inyong national government, hindi lamang ang LGUs gaya ng sinasabi ko at sinasabi natin parati, it's a shared responsibility.

Now that we are in Alert Level 3, for Metro Manila, Cavite, Rizal and Bulacan, I think that is a signal to all of us to be extra, extra careful, extra, extra vigilant and ang target dapat natin is not to elevate it even higher. And as much as possible, avoid that others areas become elevated as well. Iyon ang target natin, iyon ang objective po nating lahat.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV:** Opo. At panghuli na lamang, CabSec, sa mga aktibidad lang ni Pangulong Duterte. May mga inaasahan pa po ba tayong aktibidad niya o pupuntahang lugar? At sa Talk to the People kasi sabi po niya dadalawin niya po ulit ngayong January iyong mga naapektuhan ng Typhoon Odette, bibisitahin niya ulit. Makakaapekto po ba iyong tumataas na COVID-19 cases sa movement ni Pangulong Duterte? Tuluy-tuloy pa rin po ba iyong mga aktibidad na ito?

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Well, obviously, first and foremost, we need to protect the President, iyong kanyang safety, ang kanyang health 'di ba. So nandoon naman iyong mga protocols and procedures na ginagawa. So as much as possible we have to ensure—while ensuring his safety and his health, we also do not want to limit his movement especially kung gusto niyang bumisita rin sa mga lugar kagaya ng sinabi niya kagabi, bumisita muli sa mga naapektuhan ng Typhoon Odette at iyong iba pang mga activities na gusto ring gawin in Pangulo.

As he is known to be a very active, very active President and he wants to be always on the ground. He always wants to be with people. So, we are putting the necessary protocols to protect him, while as much as possible not limiting what he wants to do so that he can effectively govern as our Chief Executive.

So the schedules, tingnan po natin, narinig po natin kagabi na gusto niyang bumisita muli sa mga lugar na tinamaan ng Typhoon Odette and we are currently kumbaga planning his schedule.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV:** Okay. Maraming salamat po, CabSec Nograles at sa ating mga panauhin.

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Maraming salamat, Mela. Let's go back to USec. Rocky.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Okay, thank you, Sec. Karlo. Iyong tanong po ni Llanesca Panti ng GMA News Online, natanong na po ni Mela Lesmoras.

Ang second question niya: I would like to ask Palace comment on this, CHR will pursue a creation of Human Rights Institute via legislation. Reaction daw po ng Palace?

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Yes, by all means, if they want to pursue legislation, then let them do so. I'd just like to point out din kasi na there was a reaction about bakit hindi siya naisama doon sa budget 'no. May I state that the reason being is that as per DBM, inclusion of projects in the national budget assumes, first, iyong project readiness; secondly, that mayroong complete estimates on costing, complete details on manpower and manning requirements. And then, of course, tinitingnan din po ng DBM iyong budget utilization ng agency at tinitingnan din po kung it was requested in the first place. Mayroon tayong budget call na sinasagawa, dapat doon po sa budget call pa lamang ay niri-request na po ito. But if pinapasok or ini-insert sa budget, but if it is deemed a rider, then we do not want riders in the budget because the budget, as with any law, pinagbabawalan po iyong mga riders. So it's much better if they pursue legislation separately from a national budget.

That being said, I'd also like to point out that under the administration of President Duterte, the CHR's budget has been more than doubled. If we look at the records, from P439-million budget by the preceding administration in year 2016, the budget of the Commission on Human Rights has enjoyed annual increases since then and so much so that the CHR's budget for 2021 was at 907 million pesos. So it's been enjoying an increase in their budget annually since the start of the Duterte administration.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Secretary Karlo, itanong ko na lang po muna iyong tanong ni Jo Montemayor: Asking for confirmation na Laguna raw po is now under Alert Level 3? Any other areas po that are now under new alert level?

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** We will be making the announcements 'no. It goes through a process. IATF has to decide. IATF, by its very nature, is inter-agency, so dadaan po muna iyan sa IATF and then we will make the proper announcements. As of the moment, I have nothing yet to announce as per any development on any alert level system. So hintayin na lang po natin na I or the IATF makes the proper announcement.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Tanong po ni Rose Novenario ng Hataw: Pahihintulutan na ba ng pamahalaan iyong pagbabalik ng ruta ng ibang bus o dyip upang hindi mahirapan ang commuters at hindi magsiksikan daw po sa limitadong public transport para maiwasan ang pagkalat ng COVID-19? Hindi ba nakikita ng IATF na super spreader ang pinagdaraanang kalbaryo ng mga obrero araw-araw para lamang makapasok sa trabaho at makauwi sa kanilang pamilya?

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** As per DOTr 'no, their report sa atin, sa IATF din na sa jeepney routes in Metro Manila, operational na po ang more than 85% ng jeepney routes in Metro Manila. Ang railway lines po natin, 100% operational na po. Mas mabilis na rin po iyong intervals ng mga tren natin ng MRT 3 dahil mas bago po at mas napabilis na rin po ang takbo ng mga tren natin.

And remember, the DOTr announced also that we have increased public transportation capacity to 70%, seventy percent na po. That being said, ang LTO, LTFRB, MMDA and our Philippine National Police continue to do everything to ensure that lahat ng mga health protocols sa ating mga public transportations ay lahat nasusunod.

With regard to, ano naman, bus terminals which, I think, is one of the concerns ng ating riding public – that is something that is being actively debated upon and discussed in the IATF. Mayroon tayong sub-technical working group that is also concentrating on that concern kaya hintayin na lang po natin ano iyong magiging desisyon ng IATF on that matter.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Thank you, Secretary Karlo.

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** Thank you, Usec. Rocky. Let's now go to Trish Terada ng CNN.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** Hi! Good afternoon, Sec. Karlo, and to our guests, to Usec. Rocky as well. Sir, doon lang po muna ako, first question ko will be about testing. Because ngayon po ay dumadami iyong cases, so how does the government intend to ramp up or improve po iyong testing capacity po natin? Will the IATF push for iyong recommendation po ni Dr. Wong to expand the use of home use or he is encouraging the use of home use of antigen. And in a way, tinitingnan din po ba natin iyong lower COVID testing prices?

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** Yes. So under the discussion, the current discussion right now even in the IATF and with our health experts is a wider use of testing. And we'll also need FDA also to chime in on that as far as using home test kits, what home test kits ang papayagan ng FDA; kailangan may mag-apply din for home test kits, what sort of parameters ang puwedeng pumasa batay sa FDA 'no at sa pagsusuri ng ating mga health experts 'no, wider use of antigen. And of course, the gold standard will continue to be RT-PCR.

So now, with this Omicron variant and as many other countries have been looking din at home test kits, it's also something that we are also looking at. Maybe we can ask also Dr. Edsel Salvaña to chime in because he is our health expert here. Dr. Edsel?

**DR. EDSSEL SALVAÑA:** Thank you, CabSec. Yeah, I mean, the antigen tests are good lalo na iyong home-administered ones kasi then you don't have to go out and potentially infect other people when you have symptoms. But, you know, we'll do all this. But the most important thing talaga that you can do when you are symptomatic especially if you only have mild symptoms and you are fully vaccinated, mababa naman iyong risk na you're going to have severe symptoms, is really to stay put and not infect anybody else; home isolate. If you need testing, there are labs that do home testing and there are some LGUs that do home testing as well.

So if you are having difficulty getting a test or ubod na ang haba ng pila, the other option, if you only have mild symptoms is to do telemedicine, try to get tested at home so that you don't expose anybody. And if you really can't get a test but you have symptoms, just isolate for ten days para wala na tayong ibang mahawaan. You know, we'll do our best to really test, but the numbers are really staggering right now eh. Even the US is having huge backlogs among their states because so many people have symptoms.

And, you know, whether you're tested or not naman, if you are fully vaccinated, chances are it's going to go away on its own and you'll just have to watch out for the warning signs. And, of course, there's a lot of telemed available and, of course, the DOH hotlines.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** Thank you, Dr. Salvaña. Sir, isabay ko na rin different question for you. Because we're seeing reports of several people getting sick and mayroon din pong reports na nagkakaubusan daw po at least ng mga branded na 'go to' treatments for flu or whatever sickness we have, common sickness that we have. Where do we attribute this seeming increasing number of people getting sick? And how do we know if we should get tested already? Paano po natin siya mairi-differentiate from a regular flu or kung possibly COVID candidate na tayo, sir?

**DR. EDESEL SALVAÑA:** Yeah, that's really the problem eh, there's really no good differentiation among the symptoms. And in fact, forty percent of Omicron is going to be asymptomatic. So that's why if you have exposure, better to quarantine; if you have symptoms, better to isolate.

It's important, you know, you can have symptomatic relief. The symptomatic relief is great for being able to sleep. But you know, they are not antiviral so they're not going to add much in terms of how fast you're going to get better or not. You know, there are generic equivalents. A lot of people like branded kasi but, you know, paracetamols has been around for tens and tens of years, so you know it's not like it's a new drug. So the other generic equivalents, as long as they are FDA cleared, are just fine.

But I think the important thing talaga is, again, iyong isolation because when we expose people, you know, just because you don't have a test doesn't mean you can't get other people sick. And it is flu season, and you know, we had a lot of people go around during the holidays. So whether it was COVID or kung flu lang or even sipon o ubo, dadami talaga bigla iyan kasi people are more mobile.

So, right now, the cases are high in the community and we know it's circulating. The best thing to do talaga if you have symptoms is to stay home. If you can get a test, great; if you can't get a test, as long as it's a mild symptom, just stay home para wala na po kayong ibang mahawa.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILIPPINES:** Thank you, Dr. Salvaña. Sir, I'll just go back to Sec. Karlo. Sir, paano po natin plan i-address iyong problem sa cost ng testing because it appears sa mga

reports din po that a lot of people are hesitant to get tested dahil namamahalan pa rin doon sa COVID testing and at the same time iyong iba takot naman magpa-test at takot na malaman na may COVID-19 sila. So, maybe those two things, the cost and the fear of the people. How does the government intend to address that?

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** I think we should listen to our doctors and our health experts 'no.

So, again, just to remind, if you feel symptoms/symptomatic, the best thing to do is isolate immediately. Isolate immediately, let's assume that it's COVID.

Then of course for testing, we can always ask the help of the LGUs. We're constantly also coordinating with the LGUs and the LGUs are the ones on the ground. At sinasabi naman po namin na kapag symptomatic at kailangan i-test, iko-cover naman ng PhilHealth iyan. And then the LGUs also they have their own ways of testing, so, all of these things, all of these options are available sa ating mga kababayan.

But again, let's listen to our health experts. If you're symptomatic, if you feel symptoms, isolate agad and then try to get a test then we'll work hard to get you tested immediately so that we can confirm whether or not it's Omicron. But you need to also avail of the services n ating telemedicine, you need to avail the services of the LGUs as well,

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILIPPINES:** Alright. Thank you very much, CabSec. Thank you, Dr. Salavaña.

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Thank you. I'd just like to – again, emphasize 'no: Vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate. Thank you. Let's go back to USec. Rocky.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Yes. Thank you, Sec. Karlo. Tanong po mula kay MJ Blancaflor ng Daily Tribune for USec. Malaya: If two policemen will be deployed to each quarantine hotels following President Duterte's directive, ilan in total ang PNP personnel who will guard the said facilities? Kakayanin po ba daw ng manpower ito ng PNP?

**DILG USEC. MALAYA:** With the permission of CabSec Nograles, sir?

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Yes. Go ahead, USec.

**DILG USEC. MALAYA:** Yes. Ang atin pong numero ng mga quarantine facilities ay 297. Iba-iba po ang classification niyan - may mandatory quarantine facility, may stringent quarantine facility, at mayroon din for seafarers.

So, 297 times two dahil sabi ng Pangulo ay dalawa, that means 594 police officers; so, kakayanin naman po natin ito. Mayroon po tayong tinatawag na Mobile Force Battalion na

nakatalaga sa NCRPO, sa mga police district offices and mga police stations. At iyong mga dati po nating kapulisan na naka-assign sa mga checkpoints ay puwede rin pong i-assign ng Philippine National Police sa mga iba't-ibang DOT and Bureau of Quarantine accredited quarantine facilities. So, hindi po mahirap on the part of the Philippine National Police to deploy these 594 police officers sa mga quarantine facilities.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Ang follow-up question po niya: Kailan daw po magsisimula iyong enforcement, USec.?

**DILG USEC. MALAYA:** Yes. Actually, nagsimula na po iyong unang naging direktiba ni Secretary Año, iyong random inspection, December 31 hanggang sa ngayong araw ay nag-random inspection po ang PNP Health Service at ang NCRPO because instructions were already given by Secretary Ed Año. So, [garbled] facilities, around 50 have already been randomly inspected by the Philippine National Police.

Pero po since bago lang po ito, bigyan po siguro natin ng isa o dalawang araw ang ating kapulisan para mag-assign ng tao. I would expect baka po bukas ay mayroon na tayong mga pulis na nakatalaga sa quarantine facilities.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Sec., tanong po mula kay Jason Rubrico ng SMNI News for USec. Malaya: Will there be a timeline kung kailan dapat maipapasa ng mga Metro Manila LGU iyon po daw kani-kanilang ordinance ukol sa paglimita sa mga galaw ng mga unvaccinated? Kailan ba ang target na ma-implement ito sa Metro Manila?

**DILG USEC. MALAYA:** Okay. Base po doon sa MMDA Resolution tungkol dito sa regulating the mobility of unvaccinated individuals na alinsunod din naman sa IATF Resolution ay they urge the different local government units to pass their respective ordinance pero wala naman pong nakalagay doon na petsa kung saan kailangan ay naipasa na iyong ordinansang ito.

Ang advice po sa amin ay mayroong tinatawag na uniformed ordinance na dina-draft ngayon ang MMDA at ang Technical Working Group para ibigay sa iba't-ibang mga konseho para ito ay maipasa bilang ordinansa. But I would think na given na nasa Alert Level 3 tayo at kailangang-kailangan na natin ito ay siguro naman bibilisan ng mga iba't-ibang konseho ang pagpasa nitong ordinansa.

So, baka sa susunod na linggo ay mayroon na tayong makitang ordinansa naipinasa kasi siyempre that is a legislative process, kailangan dumaan po iyan sa proper procedure na nakasaad sa Local Government Code.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Thank you, USec.—

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Thank you.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Thank you, USec. Malaya.

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Thank you.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Sec. Karlo?

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Thank you, USec. Rocky. Thank you, USec. Malaya. Let's now go to Pia Rañada from Rappler.

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** Hi! Good afternoon.

Very quickly before my main questions. For USec. Malaya, sir, iyong 297 quarantine facilities, is this nationwide or just in NCR?

**DILG USEC. MALAYA:** Let me check 'no kasi this is the list that was given to me by the Bureau of Quarantine. It looks like it's—Sandali ha, hindi ako nakapaghanda sa tanong mo.

Okay, I have the list now, this is sa Metro Manila. It's Metro Manila. So, we still have quarantine facilities outside of Metro Manila, so mas madami po ito. And the directive of the President is not limited to NCR, its entire country, so we will also deploy police personnel in the quarantine facilities outside of NCR.

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** And we have enough manpower for that?

**DILG USEC. MALAYA:** Yes we do. As I mentioned, there's Mobile Force Battalions and Mobile Force Units in every district, province, and region of the country and doon tayo kumukuha ng mga additional na tao sa mga ganitong public health emergencies and disasters.

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** Alright. And then for Cabinet Secretary Nograles. Sir, we already saw earlier that the DOT revoked the accreditation of Berjaya Makati Hotel but given the President's remarks yesterday, he sounded like he was absolving all hotels from any legal liability when it comes to violations of mandatory quarantine.

Sir, isn't this jumping the gun and does this mean that other hotels will not be investigated or even Berjaya Makati will not face any legal cases for the breach in quarantine by the woman?

**CABSEC. NOGRALES:** Well, first of all, cases have already been filed against personnel, the officers of Berjaya.

Secondly, let's put context 'no in the President's statements in the Talk to the People kagabi. First context was in the light of the physical, the limits of hotel personnel to physically stop or



enforce the law. And it was in that context na limited iyong maaaring gawin ng mga officers or officials or the workers, or employees and the manager of the hotel. Given that context na medyo limited iyong kayang physical enforcement kaya po kinakailangan ng pulis and that's the reason why the President ordered DILG Secretary Ed Año to ensure that may police personnel tayo to strictly enforce doon sa mga quarantine facilities and isolation facilities natin because of the limits of the employees noong hotel to physically enforce especially kapag naging aggressive na iyong – What do you call this? – the person being quarantined.

So, also in that context iyong sinasabi rin is that duty-bound pa rin iyong officials of that hotel or that quarantine facility to at the very least report any violations of those who are supposed to be under quarantine. And if there is negligence on the part or hindi ginawa, the omission of the hotel employees or its officers in not reporting – remember the keyword here is iyong pagri-report – because the law itself, the Notifiable Diseases Act, so nandoon iyong responsibilities and obligation to report those who violate particularly so para sa mga quarantine facilities na they are duty-bound to at the very least report. In this case, as filed by the CIDG and the complainants, wala talagang pagri-report na ginawa. So those are omissions, which unfortunately fall under the elements found in the provisions of the law na pinagbabawal na prohibited acts.

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** So, Secretary, the President stands corrected? These hotels can be held legally liable for non-reporting. How will the President's remarks last night affect the investigations into hotels who are involved in the absentee quarantine modus? Tuloy pa ba, sir, iyong investigation?

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** You have to go back to the conversation between the Secretary of Justice and the President in the Talk to the People and that was very transparent. And in that conversation, the President agreed and then in-emphasize niya lang iyong limitation noong physical enforcement lalo na kapag naging aggressive na iyong magba-violate ng quarantine. So that is why you need a law enforcer there in order to prevent such aggression or such violations because of the limitations nga of these employees of the hotel. It does not remove or absolve them of their negligence – the omissions of their act, the non-reporting – and in any case, the cases will be filed, the cases will be prosecuted and then it will be up to the judge to decide.

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** Okay, last question, Secretary. Just further on the recommendation of Dr. John Wong about antigen testing. Sir, will the IATF consider subsidizing antigen testing the way that some other government's do that make it more accessible and affordable to the public, lalo na iyong home testing?

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** This is something that is consistently being discussed especially in light of this Omicron and again, we are looking at different options for us, for the national government, for the LGUs and even for private individuals. Again, it has to pass through FDA,

FDA has to approve. We have to have our health experts to chime in. Just to make sure and for the reason for this is we have to make sure that the tests being used don't give false negatives or even false positives, 'di ba? So it has to pass through this rigorous process with the health experts, the FDA chiming in, the DOH and then obviously the IATF will have to make a decision about increasing the options for testing for our population.

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** Sir, why only now two years into the pandemic? Other countries have very formalized, institutionalized protocols on home testing antigen and subsidizing antigen test kits. How come we are only doing this now, studying this matter?

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** No, it's something that we always consistently study naman, it's always something that consistently on the table sa IATF. But we are always looking at the RT-PCR as a gold standard, remember. That's the gold standard, then we allowed antigen testing 'no, and then as the months go by, there will be more and more test kits available or options for testing in the market. And so, we also look at what other countries are doing and what sort of home testing kits that they are actually using. But again, to put it again into context, it's still the RT-PCR that's a gold standard, number one; it's still through RT-PCR that we are able to do genome sequencing, 'di ba?

All the other test kits won't be able for us to determine what type of variant 'no. So, under that context we have the gold standard and we have other testing kits coming out in the market that has to pass through FDA that has to be studied by our health experts. And again, we don't want to give any false negatives out there, because that's also dangerous. So, the point is, it's always consistently being studied by the IATF and our health experts. And you know developments are happening every month, as we speak, with regards to testing,

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** Okay. Thank you, Secretary.

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** Thanks, Pia. Let's go back to USec. Rocky.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Yes, thank you, Sec. Karlo. Tanong po mula kay Llanesca Panti ng GMA News Online: Will religious gatherings, including masses be prohibited under alert level 3 areas amid the arising of COVID-19 cases?

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** Well, based on our current guidelines, we still allow religious gatherings, 30% for alert level 3, 30% for fully vaccinated 'no. But again, the new development right now is itong mga ordinansa na ipapalabas halimbawa ng iba't ibang mga Metro Manila cities and perhaps even in CALABARZON and perhaps in other cities or provinces as well, baka magpapalabas na rin sila ng mga ordinansa nila, with regard to limitation sa movement naman ng mga unvaccinated.

But as it stands, the general rule, kapag alert level 3 ang lugar, then kapag religious gatherings is 30% indoors for the fully vaccinated. So iyon pa rin po ang sinusundan natin. Special na lang po iyong sa Pista ng Black Nazarene, which ayaw nga natin ng super-spreader events, so kami ay nakikipag-ugnayan din sa Catholic Church na iyong mga misa ay gagawin na lang pong online.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Tanong po ni Llanesca Panti pa rin: Will the President issue an executive order regulating prices of self-test antigen kits, as well as Molnupiravir and Paxlovid, to make them cheaper and more accessible?

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** Well, that's something that we will be looking at. Again, as far as FDA is concerned, it has to pass through their regulation pagdating dito sa mga antigen kits or self-test kits. As far as Molnupiravir and Paxlovid is concerned, I think iyong sa Pfizer na Paxlovid, we're still awaiting word from FDA kung mayroon na po ba, if they went to FDA to apply for an EUA for Paxlovid. Sa Molnupiravir, I know may mga LGUs din po na who have already purchased or have already secured.

Iyong sa EO that something that I will have to refer to the DOH and the health experts to chime in. Before the President even signs an EO, kailangan dumaan po iyan sa proseso and possibly, the DOH will have to send its comments with regard to that. I don't know if Dr. Edsel Salvaña would like to add anything from what I just said. Dr. Edsel?

**DR. EDEL SALVAÑA:** Yes, CabSec. Actually, a lot of these meds, iyong like Molnupiravir for Merck and PAXLOVID™ for Pfizer, the companies have already said that at least while nagpandemic, they will minimize lang iyong profits from it. And they've actually licensed it to several generic manufacturers. Now, it's really up to the generic manufacturers, unfortunately, kung magpapatong pa sila on top of that.

So we'll see how it goes. But I think, ano naman, like with the testing sa RT-PCR and other things, I think government naman can make those decisions whether they need to regulate those prices po.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Sec. Karlo, ang susunod pong tanong mula kay Jopel Pelenio ng DWIZ, same question po sila ni MJ Blancaflor ng Daily Tribune: Secretary Dizon and three other Cabinet secretaries recommend that "no bakuna, no labas" policy of Metro Manila mayors must be implemented in the entire country. May desisyon na po ba ukol dito ang IATF at kailan ito maipatutupad?

Ang follow up naman ni Ivan Mayrina diyan ay: Should there be ordinances or will the President issue an executive order?

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** May meeting po ang IATF tomorrow, and that's one of the possible topics that we will be discussing. As it stands right now, as I mentioned in my opening statement, so far, iyong Metro Manila Council ay nagkaroon ng isang resolution. Sila po ay nag—they've come into an agreement. Napagkasunduan po nila na maglalabas sila ng kanilang mga ordinansa.

Then, the CALABARZON also, regional task force, is also supporting that and perhaps even the local government units and the provinces under CALABARZON might also ... will also come out with their own respective ordinances. Obviously, for other LGUs as well, it's up to them to decide. But as far as IATF is concerned, we'll probably talk about it tomorrow sa aming IATF full meeting.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Tanong pa rin po mula kay Ivan Mayrina ng GMA News: Pa-clarify daw po the President's order to barangay captains to arrest unvaccinated individuals who will go out of their residence. Attorney Cayosa, former president of the IBP said, and I quote, "Walang batayan iyong walang batas o ordinansa na nagbabawal na lumabas. Ang covered ng ordinansa ay ang pagpasok sa mga establishments. Police power dapat may basehan sa batas or ordinansa absent any crime walang basehan para mag-aresto."

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** Opo. Kapag lumabas iyong ordinance, then—when the President was speaking about persons in authority, iyong barangay kapitan po is considered a person in authority. So sa konteksto po na iyon, kapag oras na lumabas na ng ordinance ang isang LGU, halimbawa, dito sa Metro Manila, iyong mga cities natin dito, dahil napagkasunduan na nga po ng Metro Manila Council na maglalabas ng ordinansa ang mga LGUs dito sa Metro Manila – then mai-enforce na po iyan ng ating law enforcement agencies and persons in authority including the barangay kapitan.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Iyong tanong po ni Miguel Aguana ng GMA News ay nasagot ninyo na rin Sec. Karlo about doon sa pila sa swab testing. Salamat po.

**CABSEC NOGRALES:** Thank you, Usec. Rocky. At maraming, maraming salamat din po sa ating mga guests – Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya ng DILG and, of course, si Dr. Edsel Salvaña.

Mga kababayan, our experience with COVID-19 has shown us that we can contain this disease with prompt, decisive and measured action on the part of the national government, our local government units, our communities, our families and ourselves as individuals. This allowed us to overcome the threat posed by the Delta variant and this will allow us to overcome the challenges posed by the Omicron variant.

Malinaw po na lahat tayo ay kailangang kumilos nang may buong pag-iingat – mask, hugas, iwas, plus ventilation, plus bakuna. Kung may nararamdaman po kayo, immediately, immediately isolate; mag-home care kung kayo ay may mild disease lalo na po kung kayo ay

fully vaccinated. And mga simpleng aksyon na mga ito ay may impact sa kalusugan ng ating mga kamag-anak, kapitbahay at komunidad. These choices, these steps and these precautions matter. Piliin natin ang ating kaligtasan; piliin natin ang ating kalusugan.

Now, just as before, we need to be mindful of the welfare of others. Kailangan nating magtulungan at maraming salamat po.

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