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CABINET SECRETARY KARLO NOGRALES
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CABSEC NOGRALES: Magandang tanghali po sa ating mga kababayan at sa miyembro ng Malacañang Press Corps.

Ibinaba na po natin sa Alert Level 2 ang Metro Manila simula bukas, February 01, 2022. Ibig sabihin, may kaunting pagluluwag at tataas na rin ang kapasidad ng mga establisyimento ngunit hindi dapat ito maging dahilan upang maging kampante na tayo. Patuloy ang ating panawagan na pairalin po natin sa ating sarili ang disiplina at mga kinagawian – isuot nang tama ang face mask, maghugas ng kamay, umiwas pa rin sa masisikip at matataong lugar, at magpabakuna; and if it's your turn to have one, magpa-booster shot na po tayo.

Sa ating pagnanais na bumalik na sa normal ang ating buhay o sa ating kagustuhang mamuhay sa ilalim ng new normal, hiling po natin sa ating mga kababayan na isabuhay pa rin natin ang nakagawian nang mga protocols na aking nabanggit.

Bumaba man ang alert level sa Maynila at sa ibang lugar, hindi pa rin naman nawala ang coronavirus, kaya mas mainam na maging maingat. Let us all remain vigilant and let us consistently exercise the protocols that keep all of us safe.

Tulad ng ating nauna nang inanunsyo kahapon, nasa Alert Level 2 na po ang Metro Manila simula a-uno ng Pebrero 2022. Kasama sa Alert Level 2 ang pito pang mga probinsya. Ito po ay ang Batanes, Bulacan, Cavite at Rizal sa Luzon; Biliran at Southern Leyte sa Visayas; at Basilan sa Mindanao.

Samantala, nasa Alert Level 3 naman ang mga sumusunod na mga lungsod at mga probinsya:

- Sa Cordillera Administrative Region: Abra, Apayao, Baguio City, Benguet, Kalinga at Mountain Province;
- Sa Region I: Dagupan City, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union at Pangasinan;
- Sa Region II: City of Santiago, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya at Quirino;
- Sa Region III: Angeles City, Aurora, Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Olongapo City, Pampanga, Tarlac at Zambales;
- Sa Region IV-A: Batangas, Laguna, Lucena City at Quezon Province;
- Sa Region IV-B: Marinduque, Romblon, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro at Puerto Princesa City;
- Sa Region V: Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, Naga City at Sorsogon;

- Sa Region VI: Aklan, Antique, Bacolod City, Capiz, Iloilo City, Iloilo Province, Negros Occidental at Guimaras;
- Sa Region VII: Cebu City, Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City, Bohol, Cebu Province, Negros Oriental at Siquijor;
- Sa Region VIII: Ormoc City, Tacloban City, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar at Western Samar;
- Sa Region IX: City of Isabela, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga Del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte at Zamboanga Sibugay;
- Sa Region X: Bukidnon, Cagayan de Oro City, Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, Misamis Occidental at Misamis Oriental;
- Sa Region XI: Davao City, Davao Del Sur, Davao Del Norte, Davao Oriental at Davao de Oro;
- Sa Region XII: General Santos City, North Cotabato, Sarangani, South Cotabato at Sultan Kudarat;
- Sa Region XIII: Surigao del Norte, Surigao Del Sur, Agusan Del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Butuan City;
- Sa Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao: Maguindanao, Cotabato City at Lanao Del Sur.

Ang alert levels na ito ay epektibo simula bukas at magtatagal hanggang a-kinse ng Pebrero 2022.

Kung inyo pong matatandaan, nauna na pong inilagay sa Alert Level 3 ang mga lalawigan ng Palawan, Camiguin, Davao Occidental, Dinagat Islands, Tawi-Tawi at Sulu. Ito ay naging epektibo noong January 28, 2022 at magtatagal hanggang February 15, 2022.

Samantala, may bagong desisyon na po ang IATF sa probinsya ng Ifugao. Mula Alert Level 4 ay ibinababa na po natin ito sa Alert Level 3 – Alert Level 3 na po ang Ifugao Province simula bukas, February 1, 2022 hanggang February 15, 2022. Again, Ifugao Province mula Alert Level 4 ay binaba ito sa Alert Level 3 simula bukas, February 1, 2022 hanggang February 15, 2022.

Kaugnay sa bagay na ito, iaanunsiyo ng Department of Transportation na kanilang awtomatikong ili-lift o sinususpinde ang 'No Vaxx, No Ride' Policy sa National Capital Region. Automatic po ito dahil kung inyong matatandaan, ang polisiyang ito ay ipatutupad lamang habang ang Metro Manila ay nasa Alert Level 3 o mas mataas pa.

Samantala, isa pong paglilinaw: Pinapayagan pong makapasok sa Pilipinas ang pasaherong recently recovered from COVID-19 ngunit nagpupositibo pa rin sa kanilang pre-departure RT-PCR Test, alinsunod sa nakasaad sa IATF Resolution No. 158.

Kailangan lamang po nilang magpakita ng mga sumusunod: First, positive RT-PCR test taken within 48 hours prior to the date/time of departure from country/port of origin; pangalawa,

iyong medical certificate issued by a licensed physician stating that the traveler has completed the mandatory isolation period, and is no longer infectious, and has been allowed free movement/travel; pangatlo, a positive RT-PCR test taken not earlier than 10 days but not later than 30 days prior to date/time of departure from country/port of origin. Again, balikan lang po iyong IATF Resolution # 158.

Sa usaping bakuna, inilunsad last week ang Resbakuna sa Botika sa Baguio City. Ang Baguio City ang kauna-unahang LGU sa labas ng National Capital Region na nag-roll out ng Resbakuna sa Botika program. Inaasahan natin na ang programang ito ay ilulunsad na rin sa piling botika at clinic ngayong linggo sa Bacolod City, Cebu City at Iloilo City.

Inaasahan din ang pagdating ngayong linggo ng Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines na binili ng ating pamahalaan. Dahil ito ay reformulated, ito ay sadyang binili upang eksklusibong gamitin para sa pagbabakuna ng mga bata na nasa edad lima hanggang labing-isang taong gulang lamang.

Sa Biyernes, a-kuwatro ng Pebrero ang schedule ng vaccination rollout para sa age group na ito. Sabay-sabay itong isasagawa sa Philippine Heart Center, Philippine Children's Medical Center Hospital, Manila Zoo, SM North EDSA (Skydome), and Fil Oil Gym sa Lungsod ng San Juan.

Mahalaga po ito sa ating paghahanda sa muling pagbabalik ng face-to-face classes o pisikal na balik-eskwela.

Kung inyong matatandaan, nauna nang nagsimula ang bakunahan sa mga batang may edad dose hanggang disisiete. Sa age group na ito, nasa 7.5-M na ang fully vaccinated as of January 28, 2022.

Tinitiyak natin na ligtas at epektibo ang mga bakunang gagamitin sa mga bata. Walang dapat ipangamba ang mga magulang, the doses for minors have been reformulated so that these are appropriate for them. Ibig sabihin, mas mababa ang doses na ituturok sa kanila. Kaya kung available na ang mga ito sa inyong mga lugar, dalhin ninyo po ang inyong mga anak sa vaccination sites at sila'y pabakunahan.

Sa kabuuan, mayroon na po tayong 126,470,538 total doses administered. Nasa mahigit 60.3 million na ang naka-first dose habang nasa mahigit 58.7 million ang naka-complete dose or fully vaccinated as of January 30, 2022, ayon sa National COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard.

Pumunta naman tayo sa COVID-19 update.

Ayon sa January 30, 2022 COVID-19 Case Bulletin ng Department of Health, nasa 16,953 ang mga bagong kaso ng COVID sa bansa. Sa bilang na ito, nanatiling mataas ang mild at asymptomatic na nasa 97.5%.

Nasa 31.4% ang ating positivity rate, habang nasa 92.8% naman ang porsiyento ng mga gumaling; nasa mahigit 3.2 million na po ang naka-recover.

Malungkot naman naming ibinabalita sa inyo na kahapon ay mayroong dalawampung (20) katao ang pumanaw dahil sa coronavirus. Our fatality rate is currently at 1.52%, this is lower than the 2% global average.

Samantala, sa estado ng ating mga ospital: Nasa below 50% na ang ating hospital care utilization rate; nasa 39% ang utilized ICU beds sa Metro Manila, habang 46% sa buong bansa. 37% po ang utilized isolation beds sa Metro Manila, habang nasa 47% sa buong bansa; 42% ang utilized ward beds sa Metro Manila, habang 49% sa buong bansa; 23% ang utilized ventilators sa Metro Manila, 25% naman sa buong bansa.

Sa ibang bagay: Gumawa ng kasaysayan sa larangan ng palakasan ang ating Philippine Women's National Football Team. Congratulations for clinching the country's first FIFA World Cup berth! Qualified po tayo sa FIFA World Cup 2023. Iba talaga ang galing ng Pinay! Congratulations po.

Dito po nagtatapos ang ating opening statement. Bago tayo pumunta sa mga tanong ng mga kaibigan natin sa MPC, kausapin po muna natin si Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat para pag-usapan ang paghahandang ginagawa ng tourism sector sa nalalapit na pagbubukas ng Pilipinas sa international tourism.

Sec. Berna, ilan na po sa ating tourism workers ang bakunado at ilan pong trabaho ang madyi-generate natin sa panunumbalik ng international tourism?

DTI SEC. ROMULO-PUYAT: Yes. Thank you very much, CabSec, for inviting the Department of Tourism.

To answer your question, all the major tourist destinations are already 100% vaccinated. May mga ilan-ilan pa but when you talk about Boracay, Baguio, the tourist destinations, 100% and in fact we are already in our booster program as we speak.

Siyempre, this would not have been possible without Sec. Galvez and Sec. Vince, kasi earlier on, noong July pa lang last year ay nag-allot na sila ng vaccines for all the major tourist destinations, kaya mabilis napabakuna.

Ngayon sa NCR, we've already 100% vaccinated na and ang booster program nasa 50% na. Iyon.

CABSEC. NOGRALES: Thanks, Sec. Berna. I think you have a presentation para sa ating mga kababayan?

DOT SEC. ROMULO-PUYAT: Yes. Thank you for inviting us and we're pleased to announce, iyong recent announcement of the IATF, of CabSec, about the resumption of international travel beginning of February 10.

Of course, this is a welcome development because this is something the entire tourism industry has been looking forward to, because we've been closed for nearly two years. Nevertheless, we recognize that we are still in the midst of a pandemic.

So in partnership with other concerned national agencies, LGUs and other industry stakeholders, we are taking all necessary precautions to ensure that this much anticipated resumption of international leisure travel from visa-free countries will not cause another surge.

We will be closely monitoring developments in the sector and keeping a close watch on tourism establishments, iyon kasi iyong mandate namin to ensure their full compliance with health and safety protocols.

Gaya ng sinabi mo CabSec, ang tatanggapin ay fully vaccinated leisure travelers from visa-free countries; dapat iyong passport valid for at least six months at a time of arrival and may outbound ticket sila to their country of origin or the next country of destination.

Most important all visitors must carry a valid proof of vaccination against COVID-19. The IATF of course, we have already scrapped the classification system. At kailangan siyempre ng negative RT-PCR 48 hours before departure and gaya ng mga returning Filipinos no longer required to undergo quarantine.

Our confidence to ease travel restrictions comes from various initiatives undertaken over the last two years and of course we are very strict with the implementation of health and safety protocols. The reopening of our borders to international travelers in just a few days' time would be the strongest sign yet that the county's tourism industry is on its way to a full recovery.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank CabSec, Dr. Edsel Salvaña and all the other health experts. Kasi kami naman—di ba IATF naman, we always follow the advice of our health experts and if not for Dr. Edsel Salvaña this would not have been possible, iyong reopening of leisure traveler na no quarantine. So with that, thank you and mabuhay tayong lahat!

CABSEC NOGRALES: Thank you very much, Sec Berna, please stay on board for questions from our friends from the media. And since nabanggit na rin si Dr. Edsel. Can we also give a chance to Doc. Edsel? Kumustahin natin si Dr. Edsel Salvaña mula sa UP National Institute of Health. Doc Ed?

Doc. Edsel, may kumukuwestiyon sa ating desisyon na i-revise ang quarantine protocols for international travelers, hindi raw po ba ito magdadala ng panganib sa ating public health systems, Doc, Edsel?

DR. SALVAÑA: Yes, good afternoon, CabSec. Good afternoon, Berna. And good afternoon to everyone whose watching 'no.

Of course, ang Technical Advisory Group, of which I am part kasama si Dr. Marissa Alejandria and Dr. Anna Ong-Lim, we are all infectious disease doctors. We are always looking at what's going on iyong community transmission sa atin at kung ano pangyayari sa ibang bansa.

And also, very the important iyong level of vaccination na rin natin, kasi nakikita naman natin ngayon nag-record cases tayo pero iyong hospitals, while umakyat ng kaunti iyong admissions, very fast na it started to go down also. So, what that tells us is we can take a little bit of risk in terms of having these passengers come in especially from countries na who have the same or even lower community transmissions than us na iyong risk pa nga nila kapag nagka-quarantine sila, is actually lower na makahawa ng ibang tao over na naglalakad sila outside.

So, these decisions, very careful naman tayo and we also vet with the all-experts groups, very, very important, we have these open discussions. And hindi lang naman tayo iyong bansa na gumagawa nito. Actually, tiningnan na rin natin iyong UK, iyong Denmark nagbababa and we always watch what they are doing, so we are actually quite cautious and we are only doing this for vaccinated travelers, not for unvaccinated because we know that the unvaccinated travelers have higher viral loads and more likely to generate variants of concern.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Okay than you so much, Dr. Edsel. Again, gusto lang po naming i-emphasize na ang ating mga Technical Experts are composed of well-known doctors, epidemiologist, mga espesyalista at ito po iyong ginagawa nila araw-araw. Bago pa man dumating itong Coronavirus sa bansa ay ito na po iyong kanilang expertise.

So, thank you again, Dr. Edsel. And again, stay on board for questions also from the MPC. So we will now go to USec. Rocky para sa mga katanungan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Good afternoon, Secretary Karlo, kay Secretary Berna and kay Doc. Edsel.

Spox, unahin ko na iyong tanong ni Trish Terada since follow up ito. Trish Terada ng CNN Philippines: Bakit po ibinaba sa Alert Level 2 ang Metro Manila and nearby provinces when DOH said last week that it's premature to lower the Alert Level?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Opo. Iyong tinitingnan natin, iyong sa alert level decision metrics natin 'no. So, again tulad nang lagi naming sinasabi, ang tinitingnan natin diyan ay iyong ADAR, two-week growth rate, pati iyong total bed utilization. Ngayon, pagdating po sa Metro Manila, NCR, ang ating total bed utilization nasa below 49%. So, below 49% po iyong total bed utilization natin, ganundin sa Bulacan, sa Rizal, sa Cavite, sa Biliran, Southern Leyte at sa Basilan.

So, dahil nasa zero to 49, which is our lowest… kumbaga classification for total bed utilization nasa below 49% po siya, then nasa low risk na po siya sa total bed utilization. Ngayon, kung titingnan mo po iyong ADAR, pati iyong two-week growth rate ng nabanggit ko ng areas, NCR, Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite, Biliran, Southern Leyte at Basilan, nasa moderate risk po sila.

So, dahil doon puwede po siyang ma-deescalate to Alert Level 2 at iyon po iyong nakita ng IATF, iyon din po iyong prinesinta sa amin ng sub-technical working group at base na rin po sa mga advice at recommendations ng ating mga health experts, iyon po iyong naging desisyon na Alert Level 3 po itong NCR, Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite, Biliran, Southern Leyte at Basilan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Thank you, Sec. Karlo. From Rosalie Coz ng UNTV for Secretary Berna. Secretary Berna: Ano daw po ang mga paghahandang ginagawa ng pamahalaan sa pagpasok ng foreign tourists sa February 10?

DOT SEC. ROMULO-PUYAT: Iyong pinakaimportante is as early as last year po ng July, we already vaccinated our tourism workers. At noong January, we have been doing iyong booster shots because importante sa atin na hindi lang fully vaccinated, pero may booster iyong ating mga tourism workers. And hindi lang iyong mga nagtatrabaho sa hotel ang ating binakunahan. Let say pinag-uusapan ang island destination like Boracay, sinama po natin iyan. Nagpapasalamat nga kami kay Sec. Charlie at Sec. Vince, kasama rin doon iyong mga residents, kasi siyempre hindi naman puwedeng ibukod lang iyong nagtatrabaho sa hotel. So halos lahat doon sa Boracay ay binakunahan na and right now nasa booster na sila. And in fact, pati iyong mga ages 12 to 17 binakunahan na rin. So, iyon iyong first important sa atin.

In the case of the Department of Tourism as noong 2020 pa lang, mayroon tayong mga minimum health and safety protocols sa lahat ng mga hotels, resort, accommodation establishment, kasama dito iyong DOH at iyon talaga ay ini-implement natin.

Under the law and of course under IATF, hindi puwedeng magbukas ang any accommodation establishment kung hindi DOT accredited. So, iyon po ay we are making sure that ini-implement ng all the hotels and resorts and minimum health and safety protocols.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Second question niya, Sec. Berna: Kung ang mga mamamayan natin, hindi natin nababantayan lahat kung strict nakakasunod sa minimum public health protocols para maiwasang kumalat daw iyong infection, papaano pa ang mga dayuhan, gaano po tayo kakumpiyansang hindi daw po pagmumulan ng panibagong surge ang pagluluwag na ito sa international arrivals?

DOT SEC. ROMULO-PUYAT: Gaya nang sinabi ni Doc. Edsel, ang tatanggapin ay fully vaccinated. So, iyon napakaimportante iyon na fully vaccinated and the same way we treat… when we discuss with different LGUs iyong pag-implement ng minimum health and safety protocols, whether Filipinos or foreigners, the same iyon. That is why we are in close coordination also with the DILG para kausapin lahat ng LGU, iyong pag-implement ng health and safety protocols. Of course, sa ating mga hotels, iyon palagi ay we always remind, sometimes nabibigyan na ng warning, ng show cause order kapag hindi nila ito sinusunod.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Mula naman kay Jerome Aning ng PDI for Secretary Karlo: Secretary Karlo, how soon can the President appoint the replacement of the Comelec Chairman and two Commissioners who are retiring on February 2? Will the appointments be regular or ad interim considering that Congress is adjourned from February 5 to May 22? Similar question po iyan with Sam Medenilla ng Business Mirror.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Opo. ASAP po iyan and the President has a shortlist na po sa pagpipilian niya for the appointment. So siyempre alam ni Pangulo na kailangan na po nating i-appoint dahil sa mga vacancies and of course iyong depende rin po sa pagko-confirm doon sa Commission on Appointment, depende po iyan sa Kongreso on how fast they can confirm the appointment.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Ang follow up po ni Jerome Aning ng PDI: Will the President also be appointing soon the new chairpersons on the Commission on Audit and Civil Service Commission with the retirement on the incumbent chairpersons also on February 2?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Yes, and may shortlist na rin po si Pangulo doon.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Thank you, Sec. Karlo. Susunod pong magtatanong si Mela Lesmoras via Zoom ng PTV.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Okay.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Good afternoon, Secretary Nograles, Secretary Puyat, Dr. Salvaña and USec. Rocky.

Secretary Nograles, unahin ko lang po may inaasahan ba tayong Talk to the People mamayang gabi? At ngayong paluwag na rin iyong alert level sa Metro Manila, inaasahan ba natin na magkakaroon na muli si Pangulong Duterte ng mga public events dito sa NCR?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Iyong sa scheduled—kung mayroon bang Talk to the People mamaya, abangan na lang po natin. I will make the announcement if ever.

And then iyong sa schedules, yes, bini-build up na po iyong schedule ni Pangulo. Pero mas priority ni Pangulo bumisita doon sa mga areas na tinamaan po ng typhoon Odette, gaya ng sinabi niya sa last Talk to the People. Although there are some activities also na ini-schedule namin for mga turnovers niya. So abangan na lang po natin iyong mga updates sa schedule ni Pangulo.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Opo. And, Secretary Nograles, about naman po sa Alert Level 2 sa NCR simula bukas – maybe Secretary Puyat and Dr. Salvaña can also answer – paano naman po natin mai-ensure na hindi muling tataas iyong cases dito nga sa NCR lalo na at may parating na Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year? Ano po kaya iyong mga paalala pa at magiging measures ng pamahalaan even sa mga tourist spots dito sa NCR and sa mga public places? Ano rin kaya iyong mga puwedeng gawin ng ating mga kababayan para magkaroon nang mas [higit] na proteksiyon dito nga sa virus?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Okay, it will start and it will begin with sa sarili nating tahanan. So ang disiplina muna ay magsisimula sa atin, sa ating mga kababayan. So alam na po ng ating mga kababayan mga dos and don'ts, minimum public health standards and, of course, importanteng-importante iyong magpabakuna—ah, magpa-booster kung kinakailangan o kung nandiyan na kailangan nang magpa-booster, magpa-schedule na magpa-booster 'no. So iyan ang pinakauna, it begins with the people.

Pangalawa, iyong sa enforcement naman po, kagaya ni Sec. Berna kanina [garbled] DILG 'no, sa ating mga kapulisan, sa ating mga LGUs (local government units). At dito, dahil nga po magbubukas na ang tourism, may bago tayong kasama ngayon na magbabantay which are the establishments under DOT. DOT will be monitoring these establishments as well, so magiging kabalikat din po natin sila sa pagbabantay ng mga minimum public health standards.

So with that, I'll turn it over to Sec. Berna.

DOT SEC. ROMULO-PUYAT: Kagaya nang sinabi ni CabSec, even naman na bago tayo bumukas for foreign tourists, talagang mahigpit tayo when it comes to the accommodation establishments. Una sa lahat nga, dapat nga, kagaya nang sinabi ni CabSec, lagi naman naming

sinasabi, let's say a tourist destination, tinatanggap lang nila fully vaccinated, this does not mean na puwede na nilang gawin lahat ng gusto nilang gawin. Or kung negative na sila sa RT-PCR, it does not mean this is freedom already to party like as if it was pre-pandemic. Kailangan sundin talaga ang minimum health and safety protocols.

But, of course, you wear a mask when it makes sense. Kasi may mga nagtatanong sa akin, Dr. Edsel even up to today, kunwari kung magsi-swimming ba daw sila, if they have to wear a mask – hindi naman siguro. You have to wear a mask when it makes sense. But, of course, when you are actively eating, you wear a mask. But always talaga, iyong minimum health and safety protocols should be followed. And kagaya rin nang sinabi ni CabSec, please get vaccinated and if you have a chance, iyong booster program.

Masaya kami kay Mayor Benjie, iyong mga vaccination sites niya sa mga drugstores – Watsons, Mercury Drug – binukas rin niya ito sa mga turista sa Baguio. So when you go Baguio, you don't have to be a Baguio resident; you can avail of this booster program. Thank you very much.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Thank you. Can we also give a chance to Dr. Edsel because he is the doctor in the panel?

DR. EDSEL SALVAÑA: So, CabSec, I completely agree with what you and Sec. Berna said – very important talaga iyong ating minimum health standards. But also very important to acknowledge na itong last na dumaan, sa Omicron, sobrang dami ngang cases and yet iyong hospitals natin, we were able to protect them because of our vaccination rates. Aside from that, even iyong mga nakikita namin na bakunado na mayroon pa ring severe or even at risk for severe, mayroon tayong gamot that could further decrease the risk of dying.

So in other words, compared to two years ago, ibang sitwasyon na ngayon. Iyong costs ng pag-lockdown, iyong pag-limit ng mobility, dati madya-justify mo kasi wala tayong bakuna, wala tayong gamot. Ngayon, iyong bakuna, kung hindi ka vulnerable population, ang risk mo na mamatay is .1% which is very close to the flu. Kung nandoon ka sa one percent na vulnerable na nabakunahan from ten percent iyong risk of death nila, naging one percent; at kung magkasakit sila, puwede pa natin silang bigyan ng gamot na lalong bababa to .1% na lang.

So in other words, mayroon na tayong tools na na-tame na talaga natin itong COVID kahit ano pa mang variant iyan, pero hindi ibig sabihin na hindi tayo mag-iingat. But we can start to open up because the costs of locking down is so much and we don't need to that anymore because we have the interventions at hand.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Opo, salamat po. At panghuli na lamang po, CabSec, kasi ito ay tanong naman po ng maraming magulang. Just to put it on record: Dahil po ba Alert Level 2 na bukas,

puwede na ba ulit lumabas iyong mga bata? No age limit na po ba tayo ulit pagdating sa mga mall at sa iba pang pampublikong lugar? At ano po iyong paalala ninyo kung sakali?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Again 'no, we've been through this before noong December 'no. Please make sure na iyong bata ay naka-mask. Huwag palabasin kung iyong mga bata ay nasa napaka-mababang edad, nasa infancy or infant or very young age na hindi naman appropriate na mag-mask. So dumaan na po tayo dito noong December, ang pakiusap ko lang, reminder na rin sa ating mga magulang 'no, iyong mask po is very, very important. So please make sure na if ever iyong bata, katulad noong ginawa natin noong December, ay nakakapagsuot ng mask nang tama, fully covered ang face. At kung hindi naman angkop ang mask para doon sa bata dahil masyadong very, very young age, huwag nating pilitin. Ibig pong sabihin iyan, huwag na lang ilabas ang bata, 'di ba.

Kasi tayo, mga magulang tayo 'di ba, so dapat nauunawaan, naiintindihan natin iyan. Safety first pagdating sa bata 'di ba. So ganoon po, iyan po iyong aming gustong i-emphasize po.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Thank you so much po, CabSec Nograles, Secretary Puyat at kay Dr. Salvaña at Usec. Rocky.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Thank you, Mela. Back to you, Usec. Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes, thank you, Sec. Karlo. Tanong ni Red Mendoza ng Manila Times for Dr. Edsel: May malaking debate tungkol sa kung paano ba ang magiging exit plan ng pamahalaan sa pandemic with some people arguing against it unless the government recognizes COVID being airborne even in non-closed settings? May studies po ba proving that COVID remains airborne even in open and non-closed settings? And dapat ba tayong matakot dito?

DR. EDSEL SALVAÑA: I don't know what exit plan means. Iyong ibig sabihin nila na mayroon na iyong COVID tapos bukas wala na. Actually, hindi. Mabagal ito and this will be drawn-out process; hindi pa tayo sigurado kung magkakaroon ng iba pang variants. But you know, hindi naman sa wala tayong laban.

Now, itong issue ng airborne, actually, kagabi and even today, nakikipagdebate kami with a lot of these environmental scientists. Ang issue kasi talaga dito is iyong iba niri-recommend nila dahil may mga maliliit na particles baka kailangan mag-N95 tayo. Pero hindi naman din iyon practical lalo na doon sa mga hindi health care workers, very uncomfortable; it's very expensive; and the surgical masks can do the job naman especially in places na maganda naman ang ventilation. So ang isyu lang dito is finding the right balance in terms of wearing the masks kasi kasama lang ito sa layers natin na mayroon tayong bakuna, mayroong mask and then in some cases, we wear face shields kapag mataas talaga iyong transmission.

So, itong mga layers na ito, we are always evaluating. For instance, kung nasa labas ka naman, you know, mas mababa iyong risk doon kaysa sa closed area. So, kung mayroon kang access sa mga N95, KN94, puwede mong gamitin iyon, pero kung wala mas mabuti may surgical mask ka pa rin. Huwag kang hindi magma-mask kasi wala ka namang N95, that's not how we want people to think.

So, this is all about taking reasonable risks otherwise hindi na tayo lalabas ng bahay eh. So, ang exit plan dito is really, you know, exiting your house, getting vaccinated, using the tools that are there and then we will adjust these interventions depending on iyong ating community transmission at kung iyon nga, iyong ating vaccination rates are very high and also, other interventions as the case maybe.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Thank you, Doc Edsel. Sec. Karlo, tanong mula kay Ivan Mayrina ng GMA News: Isn't the President concerned about the goings on in the Comelec and how it might affect the credibility of the Commission and the elections itself? In one of his Talk to the People early last December, he promised us a smooth transition of power and a credible and free elections.

CABSEC. NOGRALES: Yes. The Comelec is made up of a chairman and six commissioners. They are an independent constitutional body and they have their own internal rules and regulations that govern them.

So, among the seven, between the seven highest officials ng Comelec, we are confident that they can address whatever internal issues or concerns if any, that they have and we are confident that they will be able to resolve it and resolve these issues and concerns, if any, if they have, based and using their own internal protocols, rules, and procedures.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Tanong mula kay MJ Blancaflor ng Daily Tribune: Sec. Karlo, may we get your comment daw po on Vice President Robredo's statement earlier this morning that she regrets that her relationship with President Duterte has gone sour but she was hoping that they would find a common ground when she was a member of the Cabinet? Similar question with Miguel Aguana ng GMA News.

CABSEC. NOGRALES: Well. Vice President Leni Robredo continues to be the Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines and President Rodrigo Roa Duterte continues to be the President of the Republic of the Philippines. [garbled] in those respective capacities until June 30 of 2022.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Sec. Karlo. Iyong tanong po ni Kris Jose ng Remate/Remate Online natanong na ni Mela Lesmoras.

Si Ivan Mayrina po ulit ng GMA News: What does the IATF think of the COVID exit plan as proposed by Secretary Joey Concepcion which eventually dispensed of the alert level system in favor of standard health and safety protocols across sectors and industries?

CABSEC. NOGRALES: Iyong alert level system will continue to be used and to be implemented by the IATF. So, patuloy po ang alert level system classifications at protocol po natin.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Tanong mula kay Sam Medenilla ng Business Mirror for Secretary Berna: Secretary Berna, how will you be able to not discourage foreign tourists who may want to go to leisure destinations outside Metro Manila which have a 101 separate entry requirements and other different alert level status or will you just have to convince them that this is just part and parcel of traveling in the new normal?

DOT SEC. ROMULO-PUYAT: Yes. As we speak, we're already talking to the different tourist destination kasama ang DILG.

Noong December, actually, maluwag na sila, they already accepted fully vaccinated in lieu of a negative RT-PCR which by the way is what the IATF suggests. But noong nag-Alert Level 3 ang Metro Manila, doon sila naghigpit.

So, we are talking to them and sila rin naman ang mga different tourist destinations, iyong mga LGUs, matagal na rin nilang hinihingi na makapasok ang ating mga dayuhan. So, we are hoping, kasi kami naman sa DOT we always want less travel restrictions, of course, huwag pababayaan iyong minimum health and safety protocols.

So, we are talking to them and gaya nga ng sinabi, of course, they have autonomy, they can add, but based on our initial talks with them, kasi sila mismo nga talaga iyong nagtatanong na nang matagal kung kailan papasok iyong mga dayuhan, so, we expect lalo na nag-Alert Level 4 ang Metro Manila, na hindi na nila hihigpitan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Sec. Berna. Sec. Karlo, from Ivan Mayrina ng GMA News: Palace reaction daw po. The House Committee on Good Government and Accountability found that there was no overpricing in the Pharmally deal but recommended the filing of charges against two DBM officials for falsification of public documents and syndicated estafa against Pharmally officials.

CABSEC. NOGRALES: Well, the Congress, the House of Representatives, obviously is a member of the Legislative Branch, a coequal branch ng Executive, and hintayin na lang siguro natin si Pangulong Duterte na mismo ang magsalita tungkol diyan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Thank you, Sec. Karlo, Secretary Berna and Doc Edsel. Thank you, MPC.

CABSEC. NOGRALES: Maraming, maraming salamat sa iyo, USec. Rocky and thank you Sec. Berna.

DOT SEC. ROMULO-PUYAT: Thank you, CabSec.

CABSEC. NOGRALES: And the entire family ng Department of Tourism. I know it's exciting times but you also have your work cut out for you but all of these para makabangon muli ang industriya ng turismo. Maraming salamat, Sec. Berna. And thank you also, always for guiding us, Dr. Edsel Salvaña.

DR. SALVAÑA: Thank you very much, CabSec.

CABSEC. NOGRALES: Mga kababayan, mula pa noong magsimula ang pandemya, paulit-ulit ang apela ng inyong pamahalaan sa publiko na magsuot ng mask, maghugas ng kamay, umiwas sa mata-taong lugar, at magpabakuna. Dahil likas sa ating mga Pilipino ang pakikipag-bayanihan, hindi po ninyo kami binigo. Higit na marami sa inyo ang tumugon sa ating panawagan. At ito ang siya nating pinakamabisang tugon sa ilang ulit na ring pagraragasa nitong pandemya sa ating bansa. Tanggapin po ninyo ang pasasalamat ng pamahalaan sa kulektibo ninyong sakripisyo.

Ngayong ibinababa natin ang alert level sa NCR at sa ilang piling mga lugar dahil sa pagbaba ng bilang ng mga bagong kaso, sampu ng malaking porsyento ng asymptomatic at mild cases sa mga tinatamaan, ituloy lamang po natin ang pakikipagtulungan. Sa tulong ng Poong Maykapal, hindi maglalaon ay malalampasan din po natin ang hamong ito.

Sa mga kababayan nating Filipino-Chinese, Happy Chinese New Year! Kung Hei Fat Choi! Ipagdiwang po natin ang okasyong ito ng may ibayong pag-iingat.

Maraming salamat po. Daghang salamat kaninyong tanan. Ug Amping kanunay.

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