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SECRETARY MARTIN ANDANAR
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SEC. ANDANAR: Magandang tanghali po sa ating mga kababayan at sa Malacañang Press Corps.

Simulan natin ang briefing ngayon araw sa isang pagbati. Happy International Women's Day at Happy International Women's Month sa lahat ng kababaihan! Kinikilala po natin ang napakahalagang papel ng ating mga kababaihan hindi lamang sa ating mga tahanan, kung hindi pati na rin ang kanilang kontribusyon sa ating lipunan. Kaya naman sa unang taon pa lamang ng Duterte administration, isa sa unang polisiyang kanyang itinaguyod ay ang karapatan ng kababaihan.

Let me read the President's message on the celebration of International Women's Day, and I quote: "I join the entire nation in celebrating the International Women's Day. I am truly proud of the Philippine's distinction as a shining beacon of gender equality and women empowerment in the world. Be it in politics, business, academe and local communities, most especially in our homes, women have occupied and continue to occupy positions of power and influence in our society.

This emphasizes not only our values as a people but also the importance we put on women as vital partners in nation building. While a growing consciousness on equality is already an impressive feat and women are breaking the glass ceiling, I believe that we can do more as we gain more access to education, information and innovation, more women will have the chance to meaningfully participate in many aspects of human development and change the mindsets that continue to put women and other gender expressions at a disadvantage.

So let us all come together in building a country where no one is left behind and everyone has the capacity to succeed. Mabuhay ang mga kababaihang Pilipino!"

Kaugnay nito, nilagdaan po ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte ang Executive Order Number 12 na nagbibigay ng full government support sa Reproductive Health Law. Ilan naman sa landmark pieces of legislation na pinirmahan ng Pangulo ay ang Republic Act Number 11148, o ang Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng mga Nanay Act, na nagpapalakas sa mga programang pangkalusugan at nutrisyon para sa mga buntis at lactating women, teenage mothers, adolescent girls, mga sanggol at mga bata in their first 1,000 days; ang Republic Act Number 11210, o ang Expanded Maternity Leave Act na nagbibigay sa working mothers ng 105 days o tatlong buwan na paid leave; at kahapon, bisperas ng Women's Day ay inilabas ng Palasyo ang pirmadong Republic Act Number 11648 na nagtataas ng age of sexual consent para sa statutory rape na mula dose anyos ito ay ginawang disisais anyos.

We are pleased to inform everyone that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has congratulated the Philippine government for this milestone as it fulfills the children's right to protection, which according to UNICEF, is enshrined in the convention on the rights of the child to which the Philippines is a signatory.

Groundbreaking ang mga ito kaya naman nagpapasalamat kami sa Kongreso. Patunay na may tapang at malasakit ang kasalukuyang liderato. Indeed, we have made change work for women.

Muling humarap kagabi si Pangulong Duterte para sa kanyang regular Monday Talk to the People Address. Ito ang ilan sa naging highlights:

Iniulat ni Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez na ang ekonomiya ng Pilipinas ay magiging collateral damage sa Russia-Ukraine conflict. Kasama sa economic impact ang pagtaas ng oil at food prices, pagtaas ng interest rates, fiscal stress sa investments at social protection program. Kumpiyansa ang Kalihim na mayroon tayong tools at kinakailangan preparasyon para tulungan ang mamamayan.

Kaugnay nito, iprinesenta ni NEDA Secretary Karl Chua ang labing-apat na rekomendasyon ng economic team bilang tugon sa epekto ng Russia-Ukraine crisis. Mamaya ay makakausap natin si Usec. Rosemarie Edillon para bigyan detalye ang mga rekomendasyon na ito.

Ini-report naman ni Health Secretary Francisco Duque III na ang Pilipinas ang may pinakamababang daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people sa Southeast Asia at 8.82. Makikita ninyo po ito sa inyong screen ang pagsunod sa minimum public health standards at mataas na vaccination rate ang dahilan dito, ayon kay Sec. Duque.

Speaking of minimum public health standards, sa report ni DILG Secretary Eduardo Año, bumaba ang violations sa mga hindi pagsusuot ng face mask at violations sa no physical distancing.

Samantala, malungkot na binalita ni Vaccine Czar Secretary Carlito Galvez, Jr. na bumaba ang ating vaccination sa buwan ng Pebrero. Dahil dito, magkakaroon tayo ng Bayanihan, Bakunahan. Ang ikaapat na National Vaccination Days na sisimulan sa Huwebes, March 10, 2022, at tatagal ng tatlong araw, hanggang Sabado, March 12, 2022. Prayoridad natin ang booster doses sa health at economic sector, iyong mga due na sa second dose o naka-miss ng doses, ang mga hindi pa nababakunahan sa Priority Group A2, at iyong mga hindi pa nabakunahan na 12 to 17 years old. Target natin mabakunahan ang 1.8 million na katao.

Kaya muli, nananawagan kami na magpabakuna na po tayo lalo na doon sa hindi pa nagpapa-booster. Importante po ang pagtutulungan ng mamamayan at gobyerno bilang susi sa ating pagbangon mula sa pandemya.

Sa usaping bakuna pa rin, nagpapasalamat po tayo sa Estados Unidos sa kanilang 3.9 million doses ng Pfizer vaccine donation sa pamamagitan ng COVAX Facility, ito po ay dumating kahapon ng tanghali, March 7, 2022. Maraming salamat po. Thank you.

Samantala, dumating din kagabi ang 1,167,660 doses ng Pfizer vaccine na binili ng pamahalaan. Suma total, mahigit limang milyon doses ng Pfizer vaccine ang dumating kahapon.

As of March 7, 2022, nasa mahigit 69.2 million na ang naka-first dose habang nasa mahigit 63.7 million ang naka-complete dose o fully vaccinated, ayon sa National COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard, habang nasa 10.6 million ang naka-booster shots na. Overall po, nasa mahigit 137 million na ang total doses administered.

Pagdating naman sa pediatric vaccination, as of March 7, 2022, nasa 8.6 million na po ang fully vaccinated sa mga batang may edad dose hanggang disisiete anyos, habang nasa 947,979 naman sa mga batang nasa edad lima hanggang labing-isang taong gulang ang nakatanggap na ng first dose. Samantala, sa ating senior population, nasa mahigit 6.4 million ang fully vaccinated na mga lolo at mga lola.

Pumunta naman tayo sa mga numero sa COVID-19:

Nasa 6,297 new cases ang naidagdag mula March 1 to March 7, o 899 daily average cases, ayon sa March 7 National Covid-19 Case Bulletin.

Sa bilang na ito, nasa 1,055 ang nasa severe at critical admissions.

Pagdating sa hospital care utilization rate:

Nasa 25.7% ang ICU bed utilization

Habang nasa 18.4% ang non-ICU bed utilization.

Sa ibang mga bagay, kinukumpirma ng Malacañang na pinirmhan ni Pangulong Duterte ang appointment papers nina:

Mr. Saidamen Balt Pangarungan bilang ad interim chairman ng Commission on Elections (Comelec);

Mr. George Erwin Garcia bilang ad interim Comelec commissioner;

At Ms. Aimee Torrefranca-Neri bilang ad interim commissioner ng Comelec.

The directive of the president is to ensure an honest, peaceful, credible and free election.

Bago tayo pumunta sa mga tanong ng MPC, makakasama natin si NEDA Undersecretary Rosemarie Edillon.

Magandang hapon, Usec. You may now present or give your opening statement.

NEDA USEC. EDILLON: Yes. Magandang umaga, Sec. Martin and also to Usec. Rocky at sa mga kasamahan din natin sa media. Again, maraming salamat sa opportunity na makapag-present sa ating mga kababayan.

Number 1, tungkol doon sa gagawing mungkahi ng Economic Cluster tungkol sa mga pang-mitigate natin sa impact ng Russia at Ukraine crisis and then iyong tungkol po sa framework ng National Action Plan Phase 5 laban sa COVID-19. Itutuloy ko na po sa aking presentation if I may share my screen.

So itong first part ng presentation, actually mas nakita ninyo po iyong kumpleto o kabuuan nito kagabi doon sa Talk to the People noong prinesent po ito ni Secretary Karl Chua. Ito po iyong kabuuan ng napag-usapan na sa Economic Development Cluster.

So we began by looking at ano ba iyong magiging impact talaga nitong Russia-Ukraine crisis on the Philippines? So first is na naano namin, we agreed na hindi tayo nasa gitna nitong kaguluhan na ito subalit mayroong ricochet na impact sa atin. Ito po ay pinakita na rin po kanina ni Sec. Martin. But just to say na ito iyong naging summary ng nakikita naming economic impact ‘no on inflation dahil sa oil and food prices.

Ang Russia po is the largest exporter of natural gas and wheat. Ang Ukraine naman po ay medyo mataas din sila na exporter ng corn. So malaking magiging impact din nito sa atin. Although we do not really trade with them directly, pero ang mangyayari nito is sa kabuuan na supply for the world market magkakaroon nang medyo paghihigpit, so magkakaroon ng competition.

Sa interest rates naman, dalawang bagay dito ‘no. Una is before this Russia-Ukraine crisis nakikita na rin natin na papunta na rin sa pagtaas ng interest rates and ito iyong tinatawag natin na balancing act na ng mga monetary authorities. Pero nang dahil dito sa Russia-Ukraine crisis nandoon po iyong risk factor and that might actually be factored into sa interest rates.

Sa investments naman po, ganoon din ‘no, nang dahil dito po sa risk ng Russia and Ukrain, magkakaroon ng risk aversion iyong mga investors natin. Baka hintayin muna nilang humupa bago sila mag-decide na mag-expand ng kanilang investments. And then dahil sa mga kailangan na social protection spending nito magkakaroon din talaga ng impact sa ating fiscal situation.

Ano naman iyong interventions? So tulad nga po ng nasabi mayroon pong nabanggit na fourteen (14) ‘no, 14 kinds of interventions. I-categorize ko po ito into four ‘no.

Una sa lahat, kailangan nating palakasin ang ating domestic economy. Kaya nga po ang panawagan din ng Economic Cluster is sana nga iyong bansa ay mag-shift na sa Alert Level 1. Now we know this is not a matter of declaration na “Okay lahat na, shift na to Alert Level 1.” Pero sana na lang is iyong buo, lahat ng mga probinsiya, cities natin would meet the metrics so that they could be deescalated to Alert Level 1.

So alam naman na po natin na ito iyong cases, nakita naman natin bumababa naman iyong cases, hospitalization utilization mababa na rin po naman. Ang kailangan na lang po ay iyong sa vaccination rate. So iyon pong sa Bakuna Day magpabakuna po ang lahat. So kailangan po na ito

para bawat isa sa atin ay magkaroon talaga ng, you know, mapalakas natin ang ekonomiya and magiging mas kaya nating i-weather itong ano external risks na ito.

Iyong second group of preventions naman ay para sa energy sector ‘no. So ang gusto natin ay to try and first i-mitigate natin iyong impact nito on the price and then number two let’s ensure that we have enough supply. So tungkol po sa gas and diesel, sa LPG, sa coal and electricity.

So in particular po sa gas and diesel, dito na po lumalabas iyong suggestion ng economic cluster na dagdagan natin iyong subsidiya. So for March, mayroon na pong nakalaan talaga na P2.5-B. Pagdating po ng April, iyong second tranche ay iminumungkahi po namin na ibigay. At the same time po is dagdagan natin iyong ating buffer stock in which case dito po mangangailangan ng enabling law para madagdagan natin iyong buffer stock for gas, diesel and LPG.

Tapos kasabay po dito iyong mga conservation measures natin, importante po talaga iyon para sa lahat po sa gas, diesel, LPG and electricity pati na rin po iyong pag-develop ng mga alternative resources lalo na kapag sa electricity, iyon pong renewable energy. And then pati na po iyong paggamit ng tinatawag natin na active transport options, iyong paggamit po ng mga bisikleta.

Iyong pangatlo naman pong grupo ng interventions ay para naman magkaroon tayo or to ensure that we have enough supply of food. Una sa lahat is iyong support sa agriculture. Ito po iyong part two ng Plant, Plant, Plant Program ng Department of Agriculture. Kasama na rin dito iyong pagbibigay ng voucher para po sa fertilizers. Kasi nga po, isa din iyon sa nakikita namin na baka tumaas and so magbibigay po ng tulong para dito.

Tapos ganoon din, magkaroon tayo ng programa para una magkaroon ng immediate na ma-address natin iyong supply shortage natin sa pork, fish, chicken, rice, corn, sugar at saka iyong wheat. Alam niyo po wala po tayong tanim talaga na wheat.

So ang isa dito immediately is iyong sinasabi natin na palawigin iyong effectivity nang pagbaba natin taripa dito ‘no. Iyon po ang immediate solution pero mayroon din pong mga medium-term solution dito especially po sa pork, sa livestock mayroon na po, nakikipag tulungan po kami with the Senate para maipasa na po iyong Livestock and Dairy Bill. Ito po iyong nakikita naming mas robust solution dito.

So doon naman po sa wheat. Mayroon pong mga sina-suggest nga po galing sa Department of Science and Technology na non-wheat flour. So iyong mga made of banana, iyong mga from cassava, pati po sa pag-feed po sa ating mga livestock, sabi po nila cassava pwedeng substitute.

Tapos ang pang-apat po is iyong strategic investment priority plans. This one is really more of the medium to long term po ito. Ito ay sisiguraduhin po naming na included sa ating strategic investment priority plan ang renewable energy at saka ang pagdevelop ng agriculture. Ito po ay kaakibat po ito ng CREATE ano, para iyon pong mga bibigyan nating incentives ay doon po sa tingin nating priority na kaliangan ng ating bansa. So for now and it’s really about renewable energy at saka iyong sa agriculture.

Punta naman po tayo sa National Action Plan Phase 5. Ibibigay ko lang po iyong basic framework dito at kung nasaan na kami. In fact magri-report nga po kami sa IATF this Thursday.

So ito pong National Action Plan Phase 5, ang overall goal po natin is magkaroon tayo ng healthy and resilient Philippines. So ito po iyong mga prinsipyo na sinabi ng aming mga principals na we make sure will be integrated in the NAP 5. Una, should be clear and concise, localized and institutionalized, citizen and community responsibility.

At ang target outcomes po natin ay, one, iyong recovery rate po ng individuals infected with COVID-19 is increased. So kung puwede pa nating mapababa iyong case fatality rate natin, sa ngayon po mababa na rin talaga siya pero mas maganda kung mapababa pa natin.

Next is iyong health system has capacity to handle possible surge in cases. So kailangan nating palakasin pa rin ang ating health system and then, third, socioeconomic recovery is accelerated so nandoon po iyong balanse pa rin.

So ito po iyong sinabi na namin noon na characterization ng new normal, na ito po ay nakalagay doon sa aming—dito po sa We Recover as One na nag-output ng Technical Working Group on Anticipatory and Forward Planning. Sinabi namin ito iyong new normal – unang-una physical distancing will be observed, face covering required, strict hygiene and sanitation protocols, more outdoor than indoor activities, sporadic granular lockdowns possible and then nandiyan iyong takot ng bawat mamamayan na nandiyan pa rin kasi iyong COVID-19.

Now gusto [garbled] itong mapalitan into a healthy and resilient Philippines, na okay, mayroon pa rin talagang physical distancing pero ang mangyayari na po dito is iyong mga individuals observe proper public health standards to protect themselves and people around them.

Next po iyong imbes na rules ‘no on hygiene and sanitation protocols, ang individuals po by their own volition, observe a healthy lifestyle and active health-seeking behavior kasama na po iyong hygiene, kasama rin po iyong healthy lifestyle.

Iyong sporadic granular lockdowns, ang gusto po namin is iyong mga individuals are prepared to take on itong tinatawag natin na non-pharmaceutical interventions to counter [garbled] pandemic. Alam po natin na magkakaroon pa ng—siguro ng ganito, huwag naman sana ‘no, pero alam din natin na kapag bago pa lang siya na virus, we need to give the health system some time ‘no para matutunan nila kung paano ito kalabanin.

And then COVID-19 threat will be foremost, in the minds of individuals, mapalitan po ito ng – iyon pong lahat tayo will keep ourselves informed of possible health threats and how to protect ourselves.

Iyon naman pong more outdoor than indoor activities, magkakaroon po ng proper ventilation and environmental quality – nandoon po iyong consciousness ng lahat ng mga establishment owners pati na rin po mga residence owners.

Now, paano po mangyayari ito? That is actually the essence of the NAP 5:

So una sa lahat, kailangan nating makapagbigay ng timely information, useful information and then health guidelines.

Next, kailangan po nating mabigyan ang ating mga kababayan ng access to affordable medical tools – iyong diagnostics, iyong mga testing kits po, iyong prophylaxis, iyong treatment and the vaccine. Kaya nga po iyong FDA din nag-a-approve sila ng mga home-based na test kits 'no.

Tapos kailangan natin ng guidelines on safe settings and on environmental quality.

And then kailangan po natin kasi alam natin na dadating din talaga iyong ano na baka mag-non-pharmaceutical interventions na naman tayo, kailangan natin nang maayos na supply ng PPEs, affordable as well tapos kailangan po lahat tayo may financial savings – at para doon sa mga hindi talaga kakayanin na magkaroon ng savings, magkaroon tayo nang mainam na social protection mechanism.

And then iyon pong ating mga businesses and services, mayroon po silang continuity plan at kaya nilang magpatuloy kahit na mayroon tayong MPIs na sinasabi.

Tapos ang alam din natin is, okay, magkaroon ng novel virus – magkakaroon tayo ng, okay, panandalian muna ulit na non-pharmaceutical interventions – pero alam natin na this will be temporary, short term kasi mayroon tayong very vibrant na science, technology and innovation at sila po iyong magiging masigasig sa paghanap nang mas longer term solution.

So nandoon din po sa ngayon, it's really about addressing as well, iyong long term adverse effects nitong COVID-19. And again it will be a whole-of-society approach, ito po iyong lalamanin ng National Action Plan Phase 5.

So mayroon po kaming in-identify na na lima na specific objectives;

Empower and protect individuals,

Ensure business and service continuity,

Address the scarring due to COVID-19,

Digital transformation na ang tingin namin ito ang susi rin para sa business and service continuity,

And then iyon pong pag-build ng resilience [garbled] pandemics.

Actually nabanggit na rin ito kagabi ni Pangulo na i-document natin lahat ng mga gagawin natin 'no, iyon po ang lalamanin ng ating pandemic response playbook. We will also be working with Congress – kung hindi po itong Congress na ito, baka iyong susunod – for a pandemic flexibility bill para makapag-respond po tayo effectively and in a timely manner, at iyon pong roadmap for health security.

So iyon po ang asahan ninyo pong magiging laman ng National Action Plan Phase 5. Maraming salamat po

SEC. ANDANAR: Maraming salamat po sa inyo, Undersecretary Edillon. At, Rocky, I turn over the floor to you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Thank you, Secretary Andanar. Good afternoon din po kay Usec. Edillon.

Iyong tanong ni Tuesday Niu ng DZBB at saka ni Vic Somintac ng Net 25, Secretary, nasagot ninyo na sa—iyong appointment dito sa COMELEC.

Ang follow up po ni Pia Gutierrez ng ABS-CBN: Does the Palace see any conflict of interest with Attorney George Garcia's appointment as COMELEC Commissioner as he had been the lawyer of presidential candidate—of Bongbong Marcos in his electoral protest?

SEC. ANDANAR: We will defer this question to the COMELEC body.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary. Ang susunod pong tanong mula pa rin kay Tuesday Niu ng DZBB: May official statement ba from Palace na nagdeklara na ng Alert Level 4 ang DFA para po sa mga OFWs sa Ukraine, mandatory repatriation na po?

SEC. ANDANAR: Thank you, Tuesday. May official statement po, ito po'y mandatory evacuation ng mga Filipinos sa Ukraine at sasagutin po ng inyong pamahalaan ang ano mang procedures at maaari pong makipag-ugnayan sa ating mga embahada. And I'd like just to read the advisory of the DFA:

"DFA raises Alert Level 4 for Ukraine due to the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Ukraine. The Department of Foreign Affairs has raised the alert level for all areas in Ukraine to Alert Level 4. Filipinos in Ukraine will be assisted by the Philippine Embassy in Poland and the Rapid Response Team which are currently assisting Filipino nationals for repatriation.

The Philippine Embassy's 24/7 contact details are as follows: Emergency Phone Number +48604357396; also receives Viber and Wattsapp calls; Assistance to Nationals phone number +48694491663 and also receives Viber and Wattsapp calls. The DFA continues to closely monitor the political and security developments in Ukraine."

USEC. IGNACIO: Sunod naman pong tanong mula kay Celerina Monte ng NHK: Will President Duterte go to the US to participate in the Special ASEAN Summit later this month? If not, who will represent him?

SEC. ANDANAR: We had a discussion last night but I would like to defer this to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary. Si Mela Lesmoras po ang susunod na magtatanong, ng PTV.

SEC. ANDANAR: Okay, si Mela pala eh. Mela, please come in.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV4: Hi. Good afternoon Secretary Andanar, Usec. Rocky at Usec. Edillon.

Secretary Andanar, unahin ko lang po iyong issue ng pagtaas ng oil prices sa bansa ngayon. May ilang mambabatas na nananawagan na para sa declaration ng state of economic emergency, ano po ang masasabi rito ng Malacañang?

SEC. ANDANAR: Mela, ito ay masusing pag-aaralan ng Palasyo sa pamamagitan ng Office of the Executive Secretary at nagpresenta nga kagabi ang economic team ni Pangulo ng proposed government interventions kaya tingnan natin kung ang mga ito ay sapat na.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV4: Opo. And just a quick follow up, Secretary Andanar. Gaano po ba kahalaga rin sa panahon ngayon iyong nabanggit ni Pangulong Duterte na ipagpatuloy iyong joint oil exploration sa West Philippine Sea? At bukod po ba sa nuclear energy program, may mga iba pang iniisip ang pamahalaan na gawing iba pang source ng cleaner renewable energy sa bansa?

SEC. ANDANAR: Lahat ng alternative sources of energy be that from solar, from gas, from under the sea ay makakatulong po sa ating mga Pilipino. You know, energy is a problem that is not exclusive to the Philippines. Ang buong mundo ay kailangan ng sapat na enerhiya. So further details of the Department of Energy plans to exhaust all resources that we have, we'll leave it up to them.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV4: Opo. Panghuli na lamang, Secretary Andanar. Kasi nabanggit ng NEDA na as soon as possible kailangan na nga ring mag-shift to Alert Level 1 hindi lamang ang Metro Manila at ilang lugar kung hindi iyong buong Pilipinas. Nakikita po ba ng Malacañang na iyan ay very soon na, as early as March 16 sa bagong declaration ng alert level sa bansa?

SEC. ANDANAR: Hintayin po natin, Mela, ang desisyon ng IATF sa bagay na iyan, sa Huwebes o Thursday ay magkakaroon po ng pagpupulong ang IATF.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV4: Okay. Thank you so much Secretary Andanar, Usec. Rocky and Usec. Edillon.

SEC. ANDANAR: Usec. Rocky…

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Secretary, tanong po mula kay Maricel Halili ng TV-5: What does the President mean when he said last Friday, "Mamili na kayo kung sinong Ilokano na leader ang ilagay ninyo doon." Is this an endorsement of a presidential candidate?

SEC. ANDANAR: Alam mo on the previous—previously 'no at ilang beses na rin the President has repeatedly said that he does not support any presidential candidate unless there is a compelling reason. At kung maalala ninyo po doon sa interview na ginawa natin with the

President, he clearly said – he may or he may not. So ‘antayin na lang po natin ang magiging desisyon ng ating mahal na Pangulo.

Kung ano man iyong sinabi ni Presidente sa Ilocos, you know the President ‘no, he likes to play with words and he loves to horse around.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sunod pong tanong ni Maricel Halili: Representative Salceda suggests that President Duterte declare a state of economic emergency due to fuel crisis. Will President Duterte consider this? Is there a need for a state of emergency now? Similar question po iyan with Mela Lesmoras ng PTV at si Kyle Atienza ng Business World.

SEC. ANDANAR: Yeah. I think we already answered that question, Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sunod na tanong po from Kyle Atienza: Ano na po ang update on the President’s statement last night that he might call for a special Congress session to address the economic impact daw po ng Russia-Ukraine crisis? Will he certify as urgent a bill seeking to amend the Oil Deregulation Law and suspend the excise taxes on fuel products?

SEC. ANDANAR: You know, depending what transpires in that region, in Ukraine and Russia and the Eastern Europe – puwedeng magbago ang sitwasyon on a daily basis. You saw the presentation of Secretary Karl Chua and he has clearly stated that they have recommended ways to avert this problem and to solve this problem – and one of those is legislation.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sunod na tanong pa rin po ni Maricel Halili ng TV-5: May comment ang ilang netizen na midnight appointee raw po si Secretary Karlo Nograles, ano ang komento rito ng Malacañang? Ano ang sistema sa pagpili ni President Duterte ng itatalaga sa fixed term?

SEC. ANDANAR: Hindi po totoo iyan. Alam ninyo po ang appointment ni CabSec Nograles or former CabSec, former Spokesperson ay nakapaloob pa rin po, nasa loob pa rin po ng oras at ng panahon na pinapayagan po ng ating batas.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary Andanar. Sunod pong magtatanong via Zoom si Ivan Mayrina ng GMA News.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Secretary, good afternoon.

SEC. ANDANAR: It’s good to hear your voice again, Ivan.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: [Laughs] Thank you, thank you. You too, sir. The President mentioned something about developing Recto Bank at sinabi po niya we have to be very careful because there is potential trouble there. What exactly did he mean, Secretary?

SEC. ANDANAR: The Recto Bank… Well you know, as we all know, maraming mga [garbled] na beyond our control especially in the disputed areas of the Republic of the Philippines.

Now let me defer that question to the Department of Foreign Affairs dahil sila po talaga mismo, Ivan, ang mayroong responsibility pagdating po sa pagsagot sa mga tanong that has got to do with the national interest and of course, you know, iyong ating mga interes na nagda-diverge with the interests of the other nations.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: I'm paraphrasing the President's words, mayroon daw nag-udyok sa kaniya na magpadala ng sundalo roon and then, may nagpaalala sa kaniya na may usapan na tayo ng China sa joint development and we should honor it. Can you elaborate on this further?

SEC. ANDANAR: Wala namang napag-uusapan, Ivan, doon sa meeting namin kahapon at wala ring napag-usapan doon sa past mini-Cabinet meeting, or iyong Talk to the People. Maybe, if these topics were talked about, I wasn't there.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Okay. One last point on this. In the light of looming energy crisis we are facing, can we realistically tap into our resources in Recto Bank to help us cushion the impact of this crisis?

SEC. ANDANAR: You know, it's going to need the cooperation of our big private partners in this Republic. Alam mo naman na pagdating doon sa oil exploration, no one government can do this alone. We need the expertise of other big businesses, expertise of other countries, nations that are used to the exploring of energy from the Earth.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Secretary, if I may direct my next question to Usec. Edillon?

SEC. ANDANAR: Yes, go ahead.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Usec., more on the point of the proposal of Congressman Salceda to declare a state of economic emergency. Ano ho ang mga triggers nito? When can the government declare a state of economic emergency? And how does it work? And how will it cushion the worsening impact of the crisis?

NEDA USEC. EDILLON: Actually, sa totoo lang, hindi ko alam kung paano iyong economic emergency 'no. So I know about the declaration of a state of calamity. I don't exactly know, I'm sorry, kung ano iyong magiging triggers nito.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Secretary Andanar, you might have the answer?

SEC. ANDANAR: Can your repeat that question, Ivan, please?

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: What will trigger the declaration of a state of economic emergency, at least sa far as the Palace is concerned? Ano ho ang naging ending ninyo kagabi tungkol dito sa calls for possible special session of Congress?

SEC. ANDANAR: Can you repeat that, what will trigger the?

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: The declaration of a state of economic emergency.

SEC. ANDANAR: You know, obviously, if there is a full-blown war. That would trigger it. But again, we will have to ask our experts at the Department of Finance.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: You mean, a war in the country? In the Philippines? There is, in fact, an actual war going on in Ukraine.

SEC. ANDANAR: Yes, there is an actual war going on in Ukraine, and our economic managers are following what is happening in Ukraine. We have had few meetings already, talking about the possible impacts of what is happening today in Ukraine, the increase in oil prices. When I say full blown war, I mean, that's really a world war.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Okay. One last point na lang, Secretary. At what point do we say na kailangan na nating mag-declare? Mayroon ba tayong, say, kapag umabot na ng ganitong presyo ang kada litro ng diesel, kailangan na ba nating mag-state of economic emergency? That's what I'm talking about.

SEC. ANDANAR: It will require the full Cabinet and it will require the security cluster, the economic cluster to convene on this. And of course, the President will be the one who would chair this meeting. That would be—

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: And that's not happened yet?

SEC. ANDANAR: Well, it's not yet happening, yeah.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Thank you, Secretary. Usec. Edillon, thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Thank you, Ivan. Secretary Andanar, iyong kay Pia Gutierrez po about dito sa kung may conflict of interest daw po si Attorney George Garcia, iyong appointment po niya as Comelec Commissioner who had been the lawyer of presidential candidate, of Bongbong Marcos in his electoral protest?

SEC. ANDANAR: Oh yeah, I'm sorry I didn't get that question correctly. Pero alam mo, Pia, dumaan iyan sa vetting process at dapat respetuhin natin ang prerogative ng Pangulo na pumili nang itatalaga diyan. Again, hindi naman ito basta lang, basta-basta lang na pinipili. Napakahahabang proseso at mayroong mga vetting process. You know, it's not easy to choose an appointee na tatagal sa isang quasi-judicial independent body like the Comelec.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Pero, Secretary, may follow up lang po si Pia Gutierrez: As President Duterte was the one who appointed Attorney George Garcia to the Commission on Elections, how can the Palace address concerns about the appointment of a former election lawyer of a current presidential candidate to the poll body ahead of the national polls, as there are still unresolved cases on the candidacy of Bongbong Marcos pending at the Comelec?

SEC. ANDANAR: You know, again, its presidential prerogative. Every President has his or her appointees, at dumaan sa proseso. And the President now has a list of people that he can choose to appoint, and in this case, napasama po ang pangalan ni Commissioner.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Tanong naman mula kay Jopel Pelenio ng DWIZ: Given that because of war between Russia and Ukraine, talagang sobrang tumaas/nagmahal ang presyo ng oil. Pero ano po kaya raw iyong maibibigay na tulong ng gobyerno sa general public dahil hindi lang naman daw po iyong mga nasa pampublikong transportasyon at mga nasa agricultural saector ang labis na naapektuhan nang hindi mapigilang pagtaas ng presyo ng langis? Similar question with Pia Gutierrez of ABS-CBN.

SEC. ANDANAR: Magandang tanong iyan, at I believe na kasama iyan sa ini-report ni Secretary Karl Chua kagabi. And I would like to ask Usec. Edillon to answer the question.

NEDA USEC. EDILLON: Yes, thanks, Sec. Martin. Tulad nga ng nabanggit kanina 'no, mayroong four sets of interventions dito. So immediately, tama iyong sinasabi niya na pupuwedeng iba pang sector ang maapektuhan nito 'no. And that is the reason why ang gusto natin is, una sa lahat, make sure na palakasin ang ating domestic economy; pangalawa, make sure na mayroon tayong enough buffer with respect to our energy needs. Kasama na rin po pala rito iyong suggestion na i-stagger iyong pag-increase ng generation charge ng electricity. Kasama na rin po dito iyong suggestion na ibaba iyong tariff ng coal na malaking input po sa ating electricity at ito po ay maipapasa sa atin as, again, lower electricity prices.

Tapos iyong pangatlong set of intervention po ay para sa agriculture sector not just to help the farmers 'no and fisherfolks – kasama iyon and that's very important. And it's really more to make sure na we will have enough food supply. So iyon po iyong pangatlo.

And pang-apat, kasama rin po sa pagpapalakas ng ekonomiya iyong we make sure po na we are able to attract the right investments lalung-lalo na po doon sa renewable energy at sa agricultural development. Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Usec. Rose, may tanong pa rin po si Jopel Pelenio para sa inyo: Sa tingin ninyo, paano kaya pagkakasyahin ng mga ordinaryong manggagawa na may kakarampot na kita o suweldo ang pagmahal ng halaga ng mga bilihin na resulta ng napakataas ng presyo ng produktong petrolyo?

NEDA USEC. EDILLON: Yes, thank you for the question. Masusi po nating minu-monitor itong mga pagtaas ng presyo 'no. Ang isa nga po naming mairi-report is noong February, naging very tame po ang ating inflation despite the inflation in fuel.

So ito po iyong gusto naming mangyari na kumbaga ma-decouple natin 'no. At saka ang importante dito is ma-ensure natin na mayroon tayong, may enough tayo na supply ng food.

So nakita na po kasi namin in the consumer basket natin, ang pinakamalaki po na portion doon is really on food tapos susunod po iyong mga ginagamit natin for fuel, iyong LPG po, iyong kuryente and then iyong transport. Kaya dito nga po nakaabang iyong subsidiya ng gobyerno to make sure na mai-maintain natin na mababa ang presyo nitong mga ito.

So kung iyong doon po sa transport, kaya nga po nakaabang din iyong fuel subsidy para hindi rin po masyadong magiging, you now, kailangan na itaas natin nang mataas na mataas iyong ating fares.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. USec. Rose, tanong pa rin po ni Jopel Pelenio: Panahon na ba para isulong ang pagbasura sa Oil Deregulation Law na siyang dahilan kung bakit tila nagiging inutil ang gobyerno upang mapigilan ang patuloy ng pagsirit ng presyo ng langis na nagpapahirap sa mga [signal cut]?

NEDA USEC. EDILLON: Well, number one, isa nga po ito sa kailangan natin talagang pag-aralan muna bago tayo magsabi na ito iyong reason 'no. So, iyon po ang kailangan natin doon.

At ang tingin po namin is talagang kailangan lang is magkaroon tayo ng iba pa na sources of energy. So, in terms of sa electricity po natin, actually, mababa na po ang ating dependence on oil, nasa 4% na lang po. Ang malaki po na depende natin sa oil ay sa transport fuel kaya nga po very masigasig din dito ang Department of Transportation natin.

Kung inyong mare-recall is iyong ating jeepney modernization 'no para sa mga [garbled] natin at saka iyong mga fuel inefficient kailangan nga po wala na iyan sa kalsada. So, ito po iyong mga nakikita namin na kailangan nating gawin, na ito po iyong mas long term para ma-decouple nga po iyong ating—mabawasan po iyong ating [garbled] fuel.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Thank you, USec. Rose.

From Raquel Bayan of Radyo Pilipinas for Secretary Andanar: Will President Duterte issue an Executive Order for the expansion of lower tariff rates for pork, rice, and corn until December 2022 in line with NEDA's recommendation? If yes, how soon can we expect this?

SEC. ANDANAR: Thank you, Raquel. Siyempre ayaw kong pangunahan ang ating mahal na Pangulo but that recommendation, the issue was raised, was a part of the presentation of Secretary Karl Chua.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Iyong susunod pong tanong ni Raquel Bayan, Secretary Andanar, nasagot ninyo na about doon sa Congress na impact ng Ukraine-Russia.

From Argyll Cyrus Geducos ng Manila Bulletin: Does a foreign national travelling with their Filipino spouse [garbled] insurance with COVID coverage of $35,000 when entering the Philippines or are they not required to have that?

SEC. ANDANAR: You know, let me defer that to the authorities. You know, as far as we are concerned, you know, the Department of Foreign Affairs, sila po ang dapat sumagot sa mga ganoong tanong.

USEC. IGNACIO: From Llanesca Panti ng GMA News for USec. Rose: Is there a budget available for NEDA's proposal to increase a fuel subsidy for PUVs from P2.5 billion to five

billion and for agri workers from five hundred million to 1.1 billion? Where will the additional budget be sourced?

NEDA USEC. EDILLON: Opo. Iyon pong unang tranche, mayroon na po iyon 'no, nakalagay po kasi sa GAA natin iyan, iyong initial na 2.5 billion at saka iyon pong five hundred million.

Iyon pong additional, ang tingin namin is hintayin muna natin ang magiging tax collection nitong March kasi alam ninyo po naman na kapag magkakaroon ng excess revenues from the program, ito po ay magagamit natin sa pag-fund ng tinatawag nating mga unprogrammed na appropriations. So, ang tingin naman po natin is malamang po magkakaroon din ng excess collection, dito po natin kukuhanin.

Salamat po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Follow-up mula po kay Evelyn Quiroz ng Pilipino Mirror for USec. Rose: Can you give us the basis daw po for increasing the fuel subsidy budget? What measures are in place para po makatiyak na makakarating ang ayuda sa mga kinauukulan?

NEDA USEC. EDILLON: Iyong sa mga—Doon muna po sa pangalawang tanong, Iyon pong DOTr, this is not the first time that they will be doing this 'no, iyon pong Pantawid Pasada Program natin medyo matagal-tagal na rin po ito. So, mayroon na pong mga cash cards ang ating mga franchise holders sa mga pampublikong sasakyan.

So, ganoon din po ang gagawin nila, doon nila ita-transfer tapos ang pagkakaalam ko po, doon sa card nandoon po iyong pangalan—iyong plate number mismo noong sasakyan. Hindi po pupuwedeng gamitin iyan for you know, for your personal vehicle. So, ganoon po iyong mekanismo.

Now, tungkol naman po doon sa paano ito na ano, paano ito na [garbled] mayroon po kaming mga assumptions po tungkol sa magkano iyong expected na increase and then ano po iyong kailangan para hindi masyadong sisipa iyong ating inflation. So, iyon po. Pero of course, kailangan po itong i-update 'no depende sa galaw din ng presyuhan sa merkado.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Clarification lang po ano, iyong tanong po about NEDA's proposal to increase fuel subsidy for PUVs ay mula po kay LLanesca Panti ng GMA News.

Ang susunod pa ring tanong ni Evelyn Quiroz ng Pilipino Mirror for Secretary Martin: Why is there no action yet on calls to suspend excise tax on oil and why is it the President calling for a special session so Congress can discuss amendments to the law?

SEC. ANDANAR: That is being discussed. Again, Undersecretary Edillon could answer that question. USec.?

NEDA USEC. EDILLON: Yes, thanks, Sec. Martin.

Tingin po namin parang may sequence naman ito ano. Una sa lahat is iyong kaninang nabanggit namin about iyong pag-extend ng effectivity ng ating mga [garbled] rates. So, ito po, again, may mga – kumbaga, mayroong mga action na requiring only executive action, executive approval. Ito po iyong mas madaling gawin talaga.

So, iyon po muna ang uunahin natin bago po iyong mga mangangailangan ng legislation kasi alam naman po natin na medyo matatagalan po iyon. So, unahin natin kung ano na iyong more or less within our control.

Salamat po.

USEC. IGNACIO: From Evelyn Quiroz pa rin po ng Pilipino Mirror: Which companies/company the President to who wants to takeover gas exploration project in Recto Bank? Can you tell us the details of this existing agreement with China on joint exploration in Recto Bank? Is this legal, USec. Rose?

NEDA USEC. EDILLON: Sorry, hindi ko po alam iyong tungkol po sa usapin na iyan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary Andanar?

SEC. ANDANAR: Yeah, I think we need to defer that to the Department of Energy. And USec. Rocky, I would just like to go back to the question of Argyll Barrios of the Manila Bulletin.

Does a foreign national traveling with their Filipino spouse who is a Filipino citizen must have travel insurance with COVID coverage of $35,000 when entering the Philippines or are they not required of that?

Yes, you must have travel insurance. Foreign spouse of a Filipino citizen traveling to the Philippines must obtain prior to arrival a travel insurance of COVID-19 treatment costs from reputed insurers with a minimum coverage of $35,000 for the duration of their stay in the Philippines.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Sec. Martin. Iyong susunod pong tanong ni Evelyn, nasagot ninyo na rin po na mayroon ng appointment ng CSC and Comelec Comelec commissioner.

From Evelyn Quiroz ng Pilipino Mirror: USec. Rose, there is a looming sugar shortage in the country. Has NEDA formulated concrete measures to address the matter?

NEDA USEC. EDILLON: Actually po ang Sugar Regulatory Administration po ang gumawa, Mayroon na po silang proposal na binanggit na prinesent sa economic cluster. Sinuportahan po iyan ng economic cluster. ang isang proposal nga po ay i-allow iyong mga industrial users na makapag-import ng sugar base on a ratio of one is to one. So, parang 50% ng kanilang requirement is i-source nila domestically, 50% ang importation. Subalit mayroon pong naIlabas na temporary suspension nitong order na ito. So, kailangan po muna na ma-resolve po ng court ang mga issues sa order na ito.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. From Margot Gonzales ng SMNI News: Ano po ang masasabi ng Malacañang sa pagbibigay ng Comelec ng parusa sa mga kandidato na hindi makakalahok ng Comelec debate. Isa po sa hindi pupunta ay si Presidential daughter Inday Sara?

SEC. ANDANAR: Alam mo itong Comelec, again, they are quasi-independent judicial body and they decide for their own commission. Kung anuman ang kanilang desisyon, it is really up to them at hindi naman para makialam ang Palasyo or any other agency or department of this government.

USEC. IGNACIO: Tanong naman po mula kay MJ Blancaflor ng Daily Tribune. Mayroon na po bang bagong Cabinet secretary at IATF co-spokesperson. Same po question po iyan ni Daniza Fernandez ng Inquirer at tanong din po iyan ni Jo Montemayor.

SEC. ANDANAR: Wala pa pong naibibigay sa aking listahan or mga pangalan kung mayroon bang bagong Cabinet secretary o kung may bagong co-chair ng IATF.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Pero clarification po ni Jo Montemayor, si Secretary Andanar na rin ba ang new IATF Spokesman at Acting Presidential Spokesman po or permanent Spokesman? Magkakaroon din po ba ulit? Sino po daw ang Head ng Task Force Hunger?

SEC. ANDANAR: I am the Acting Presidential Spokesperson, my Deputy Spokesperson is Atty. Kris Ablan, my Undersecretary sa PCOO. Both of us will be helping each other, tag team. Kung sino po o kung sino ang tutuloy noong Task Force on Hunger ay hindi ko pa po alam. We will see in the next few days kung ano po ang magiging desisyon ni Pangulong Duterte at kung ano po ang magiging atas ni Executive Secretary Medialdea.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sunod pong tanong pa rin ni MJ Blancaflor: May timetable po ba kung kailan magsi-shift nationwide as Alert Level 1 as recommended by NEDA, Secretary Martin?

SEC. ANDANAR: Abangan po natin iyan sa Thursday, MJ. Ito naman ay pinag-uusapan every week ng IATF. Hintayin natin kung ano ang magiging pasya ng grupo, ng body ng IATF.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. From Tuesday Niu ng DZBB: Secretary Martin, please confirm, naurong daw ang ASEAN Summit sa April. Dadalo po ba si Pangulong Duterte dito?

SEC. ANDANAR: As I said earlier, it’s been discussed in a huddle last night. I will defer to the Department of Foreign Affairs kung ano po ang magiging pahayag na opisyal ng ating pamahalaan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Pahabol na tanong ni Tuseday Niu: May bagong appointment si Pangulong Duterte kay BuCor director General Gerald Bantag. Bakit need iri-appoint? Hanggang kailan ba dapat ang unang appointment ni Bantag sa BuCor?

SEC. ANDANAR: Let me get back to you on that. I will send you a private message. I will figure out, I will find out kung ano iyong istroya sa likod ng tanong ni Tuesday.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Mayroon lang pong follow up si Kylie Atienza: Is the President also willing to declare a state of economic emergency to allow daw po LGUs to tap their calamity funds to address the impact of rising fuel prices?

SEC. ANDANAR: Ayaw kong pangunahan ang ating mahal na Pangulo. Ang tamang ahensiya o departamento na dapat ay magbigay ng rekomendasyon ay ang Department of Energy. So hintayin po natin kung ano ang magiging takbo ng panahon dulot ng gulo diyan sa Ukraine at Russia.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Pahabol na tanong ni Ace Romero ng Philippine Star: Secretary Martin, will you serve as Presidential Spokesman until the end of the President's term or you will be acting Spokesman?

SEC. ANDANAR: Right now, I am acting and I serve at the pleasure of the President. Kung ano man ang atas sa atin ni Pangulong Duterte ay gawin natin, because we signed up for this job. Kung ano ang utos ay sundin lang natin. But, it's an honor to serve the President in his remaining days in office.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary Martin. Thank you, Usec. Rose. Thank you MPC.

SEC. ANDANAR: Thank you so much, Usec. Rocky Ignacio. Salamat kay Undersecretary Rosemarie Edillon ng NEDA, kay Mela Lesmoras, kina Ivan Mayrina, kina MJ Blancaflor, the entire Malacañang Press Corps. Salamat, it's good to see you again. At dito po natatapos ang ating kauna-unahang press briefing bilang acting Spokesperson ng Palasyo.

Nagpapasalamat po tayo sa aking immediate predecessor na si former Presidential Spokesperson and now Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, Karlo Nograles sa kaniyang naging epektibong papel na tagapagsalita ng Pangulo at IATF. He became the voice of calm and reason during this challenging time as we vow to continue the good work of Chairman Nograles. Congratulations, Sec. Karlo.

At nais ko rin pong ipakilala muli ang aking Deputy Spokesperson, si PCOO Undersecretary Kris Ablan. Kris, would you like to join me here? Another Ilokano.

Huwag po ninyong kalimutan, i-follow ang PCOO social media pages at PCOO affiliated pages. See you again in our next briefing. Stay safe and healthy everyone.

Tandaan po: Basta't laging handa at sama-sama, kaya natin ito. Kaya natin ang anumang pagsubok. God Bless the Philippines.

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