Presidential Communications Operations Office
NEWS AND INFORMATION BUREAU

PRESS BRIEFING WITH UNDERSECRETARY KRIS ABLAN
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USEC. IGNACIO: Good afternoon, kasama na natin si Acting Deputy Spokesperson, Undersecretary Kris Ablan.

USEC. ABLAN: Salamat po, USec. Rocky. Magandang tanghali po sa ating mga kababayan at sa Malacañang Press Corps.

Nagpulong ang Inter-Agency Task Force, o IATF, kahapon, March 10, 2022, at ito ang ilan sa mga naging desisyon at aksyon:

Tulad ng ipinahayag ni Acting Presidential Spokesperson and Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar kagabi, binaba sa Alert Level 1 ang Iloilo City effective immediately, at tatagal hanggang Martes, a-kinse ng Marso 2022.

Speaking of alert level, in-amend ng IATF ang IATF Resolution Number 163, Series of 2022, kung saan inisa-isa ang criteria para ma-de-escalate sa Alert Level 1. If you would recall, the criteria, includes:

1. Low to minimal risk case classification.
2. Total bed utilization rate of less than fifty percent.
3. Full vaccination of 70-percent of its target population.
4. Full vaccination of 70-percent of its priority group A-2 target population which are senior citizens.

Sa IATF Reso Number 163, nakasaad doon na kailangan 80-percent ng priority group A-2 ang full vaccination.

Samantala, dahil sa pagbaba sa Alert Level 1 ng National Capital Region at iba pang lugar, na nagpapahintulot sa full seating capacity sa pampublikong transportasyon, ini-rescind o kinansela ang IATF Resolution Number 101 Series of 2021, effective March 24, 2022. Para sa National Capital Region, lahat ng bus na biyaheng pa-probinsya ay hindi na kinakailangan gumamit ng Integrated Terminal Exchange as the central hub for transportation.

Meanwhile, upon the recommendation of its Technical Working Group, the IATF approved the acceptance, recognition of the national and state COVID-19 vaccination certificate of Croatia, Cyprus and Nepal, for purposes of arrival quarantine protocols as well as for interzonal and intrazonal movement.

These countries shall be in addition to such other countries, territories jurisdictions whose proof of vaccination the IATF has already approved for recognition in the Philippines, and without prejudice to such other proofs of vaccination approved by IATF for all inbound travelers.

The Bureau of Quarantine, the Department of Transportation One Stop Shop and the Bureau of Immigration are directed to recognize only the proof of vaccination thus approved by the IATF.

Naka-flash sa inyong screen ang mga bansa, teritoryo o jurisdiction with accepted, recognized vaccination certificates.

Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belguim, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, India, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Monaco, New Zealand, Oman, Qatar, Samoa, Singapore, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, the Netherlands, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, The United Kingdom, The United States of America, Vietnam, Brazil, Israel, Timor Leste, The Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Republic of Ireland, Argentina, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Azerbaijan, Macau Special Administrative Region, Syria, Egypt, Maldives, Palau, Albania, Estonia, Greece, Malta, Uruguay, Romania, The British Virgin Islands and as I mentioned earlier, Croatia, Cyprus and Nepal.

Pinapayagan na rin ang pagkakaroon ng limited face-to-face classes sa kolehiyo o Higher Educational Institutions o mas kilala bilang HEIs, sa mga lugar na nasa Alert Level 1, base sa ginawang rekomendasyon ng Commission on Higher Education o CHED. However, they must have the following key points:

First, on the requirement for HEIs before operations in areas under Alert Level 1, they shall take the self-assessment checklist as per CHED-DOH joint memorandum circular number 004-2021, and operate under self-re-opening. However, they can continue to get technical assistance from their respective local government units or LGUs, the local IATF, CHED regional offices, and the CHED experts group.

Second, on the determination of required programs to conduct limited face-to-face classes, it is in the discretion of the HEIs to choose which learning modalities should they operationalize, as long as there will be continuity of learning under any flexible learning modality subject to the condition that the HEIs may require.

Pangatlo, sino ba ang covered sa limited face to face classes? Susundin ang applicable guidelines for areas under Alert Level 2 in the guidelines for nationwide implementation of alert level system for COVID-19 response, as amended.

Ano ito? Tanging fully vaccinated teaching, non-teaching at students ang pinapayagan sa lugar, habang flexible learning modalities naman para sa unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students.

Pang-apat, nasa maximum of 100-percent capacity naman ang seating capacity ng mga classroom sa kolehiyo sa mga lugar na nasa Alert Level 1.

Pang-lima, sa operasyon naman ng student dorms, walang restriction sa operation, ngunit, kailangan makipag-coordinate ng kolehiyo sa LGU concerned bago sila magbukas.

Pang-anim, kailangan tiyakin ng Higher Education Institution na ang mga estudyante na sasali sa limited face-to-face classes ay kailangan naka-rehistro sa PhilHealth o may katumbas na medical insurance, which covers medical expenses related to COVID-19, as either direct or indirect contributor.

Inire-rekomenda na ang mga estudyante na above 21 years old ay maaaring mag-enroll sa PhilHealth bilang indigent members, dahil wala naman silang visible means of income. Sa mga students below 21 years, maaari silang maging dependents ng kanilang parents o legal guardians.

Meanwhile, the IATF amended its earlier resolutions 160-b and 160-d or Delta, when the IATF added foreigners entering the Philippines visa-free, holders of Hong Kong SAR or Macau SAR passports entitled to stay for a period not exceeding fourteen (14) days.

The IATF likewise added negative laboratory-based antigen test taken within 24 hours that foreigners entering the Philippines must present. Previously, they just have to show a negative RT-PCR test taken within 48 hours. Now, it is either of the two, RT-PCR or antigen.

The same goes with testing protocols for fully vaccinated, unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated Filipinos arriving from abroad. They can now present laboratory-based antigen test, taken within 24 hours. Dati-rati ay kailangan ng negatibong RT-PCR test result.

Sa usaping bakuna, dumating sa bansa kagabi, March 10, 2022, ang 1,184,700 doses ng Pfizer vaccine habang noong Miyerkules ng gabi naman, March 9, 2022, dumating ang 1,056,000 doses ng reformulated Pfizer vaccine na binili ng pamahalaan para sa 5 to 11 years old at 128,000 doses naman para sa adult recipients.

As of March 10, 2022, nasa mahigit 69.5-million na ang naka-first dose habang nasa mahigit 64.2-million na ang naka-complete dose, o fully vaccinated, ayon sa National COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard.

Habang nasa mahigit 10-point 8-million ang naka-booster shots. Over-all, nasa mahigit 138-million na ang total doses administered.

Aasahan natin na tataas pa ang bilang ng nabakunahan, lalo na nagsimula na kahapon ang Bayanihan, Bakunahan 4 or ang National COVID-19 Vaccination Days kahapon, kung saan ang ating target ay makapag-administer ng 1.8-million doses ng COVID-19 vaccine.

We commend our vaccinators for coming up with innovative strategies to increase our vaccination output. Kasama rito ang jabs in jobsite, kung saan ang vaccination teams ay pumupunta sa workplaces para ma-engganyo ang mga empleyado na magpabakuna o magpa-booster.

Magkakaroon din tayo ng Vax to school program para naman magpatuloy ang face-to-face classes.

On other issues, good news!: Foreign Direct Investments in 2021 hit an all-time high at 10.5-billion dollars, breaching the previous high of 10.3-billion dollars registered before the pandemic in 2017. This growth reflects foreign investors' confidence in our economy and certainly augurs well in our efforts for a strong economic rebound as we transition to the new normal.

Sa ibang mga bagay pa rin, masaya namin binabalita na na-i-re-release na ng Department of Budget and Management o DBM ang 2.5-billion pesos na first tranche ng fuel subsidy para sa ating public utility vehicle drivers. Ang second tranche naman ay ma-i-re-release sa susunod na buwan. Kasama rin sa na-i-release ang 500-million pesos para sa fuel discount program ng Department of Agriculture.

Makakasama natin ngayon si Undersecretary Rolando Toledo, ang DBM Spokesperson, para bigyan detalye tungkol dito. Usec, Rolly, good afternoon po. Magandang hapon sa inyo.

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Good afternoon, magandang tanghali sa iyo Usec. Kris and congratulations for your new appointment as Deputy Spokesperson and magandang tanghali po sa lahat ng mga tagapanood at saka mga nakikinig.

USEC. ABLAN: Usec, designation lang po, PCOO Undersecretary pa rin po tayo for Administration and Finance, and Freedom of Information Director. So, three in one po tayo, sulit po ang taong bayan sa atin. Usec. Rolly, ilan po ang mga tsuper ang makikinabang sa fuel subsidy program?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Okay. So, as provided and verified ng ating LTFRB, mayroon po tayong 377,443 beneficiaries na makakatanggap ng fuel subsidy amounting to 6,500. Kabilang po dito ang Jeepney drivers at mga driver ng UV Express, mini-buses, buses, shuttle services, taxis, tricycles at iba pang mga fulltime ride hailing – example po nito iyong ating Transport Network Vehicles Service or iyong tinatawag nating TNVS, at kasama rin po dito iyong motorcycle taxis at delivery services sa buong bansa. So, iyon po ang mga makakatanggap, Usec. Kris.

USEC. ABLAN: All right. Confirm ko lang po, Usec. Rolly, na kasama po dito sa ayuda ang mga food delivery drivers natin?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Yes. Tama ka diyan, Usec. Kris.

USEC. ABLAN: Usec, next question po. Magkano po ang matatanggap ng bawat tsuper o driver?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Makakatanggap po sila ng 6,500 bawat isa. Na-compute na po iyan, so iyon po ang matatanggap ng bawat beneficiaries po. Okay.

USEC. ABLAN: Usec. Rolly, iyong makakatanggap po ba sa first tranche this month of March ay siya rin ang makakatanggap sa second tranche?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: All right. Sa usapang second tranche, ito po ay subject sa maraming bagay na kailangan nating tingnan. Una, kailangan po nating malaman kung may excess revenue po iyan na puwede nating pagkuhanan na ise-certify po ng BTr.

Pangalawa, kailangan nating ma-evaluate ang effectivity ng first tranche upang alamin natin kung natanggap ba ito ng mga nararapat na benepisyaryo. May kailangan bang baguhin sa guidelines o kailangan pang paigtingin ang partnership with all companies.

Sa ngayon ang detalye para sa second tranche ay nakadepende pa po sa mga bagay na ito at siyempre po, that is also to be identified again by our LTFRB. Sila po kasi iyong may listahan po ng ating mga beneficiaries.

USEC. ABLAN: Usec, ito po ang tanong ng taong bayan: Paano po ba ang mangyayaring distribution ng ayudang ito?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Okay. Hindi ba nabanggit ko mayroon tayong 6,500 na benepisyo na matatanggap ng ating mga Jeepney drivers and others. Sa pamamagitan po ito ng cash cards to be issued by the Land Bank of the Philippines. Ang cash card po naman ay maaaring gamitin ng ating mga qualified drivers sa mga participating oil retail stores.

Para masigurado ang smooth implementation po ng ating fuel subsidy program, magkakaroon din po ng koordinasyon sa pamamagitan po ng LTFRB at sa Land Bank of the Philippines para po dito sa listahan ng mga benepisyo at reports tungkol sa successful credit ng subsidy sa cash card.

At ang DOE naman po ay makikipag-coordinate naman sa ating mga participating oil companies at oil retail stores. Ganoon po ang ating pamamaraan para mai-distribute po iyong ating ayuda.

USEC. ABLAN: Usec. Rolly, mayroon na po ba tayong master list ng mga makakatanggap ng ayuda?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Yes. Kagaya ng nabanggit ko kanina as provided and verified po ng LTFRB, mayroon pong listahan ng mga beneficiaries, opo. In coordination na rin po ito ng LTFRB, DOTr, with the DILG at DICT.

At sa katunayan po kasama po rito iyong mga required documents na ipinasa ng DOTr upang ma-release ang pondo. I don’t know kung [unclear]. Provided sa amin kasi, pinrovide po tayo ng listahan pero mayroon tayong 377,443.

USEC. ABLAN: Okay. Usec. Rolly, dumako naman po tayo sa isa pang ayuda ano. Ano po ang pinagkaiba ng P2.5 billion na ni-release ng DBM sa P500 million na fuel subsidy naman ng Department of Agriculture?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Okay. Ang fuel discount program po naman ng Department of Agriculture ay may pagkakaiba sa fuel subsidy program ng DOTr. Sa isang banda ang fuel discount program ay naglalayong tulungan naman ang ating mga magsasaka at mangingisda sa pamamagitan ng pag-avail ng 30% discount sa mga oil companies contracted by the Department of Agriculture.

Ang maximum amount po ng discount na puwedeng makuha ng mga benepisyaryo ay P3,000. So, ang cash card po para dito ay magmumula sa Development Bank of the Philippines. Para sa detalye at proseso po ng distribusyon and identification of beneficiaries, okay, so we defer this to our Department of Agriculture to share the information po.

USEC. ABLAN: All right. Maraming-maraming salamat po, Usec. Rolly Toledo ng DBM. Please stay on the line for our Q and A later.

Meanwhile po, kinukumpirma po natin ang appointment ni Mr. Michael Gonzales Regino, as President and CEO of the Social Security System at si Mr. Dante Flores Vargas, as Deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas.

All right. The floor is now open to Q and A session with Usec. Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Usec. Kris. Good afternoon, Usec. Toledo.

Unang tanong mula kay Jinky Baticados ng IBC-13: Usec. Kris, may posibilidad ba ang Alert Level Zero sa bansa? Kailan muling iaanunsiyo ng IATF kung mayroon mang pagbabago sa lebel ng alerto sa Pilipinas? Sa panig ng Malacañang, katanggap-tanggap ba ito? Similar question with MJ Blancaflor.

USEC. ABLAN: Salamat po kay MJ at saka kay Jinky. Patuloy po na sinusubaybayan ng IATF ang COVID-19 situation sa bansa. Bago po mag-March 15 ay maglalabas po ng desisyon ang ating IATF.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Second question: Reaksiyon from the Palace. According to WHO, hindi pa tapos ang pandemya. Tama kaya na patuloy ang pagtahak natin ng landas tungo sa pagbaba ng antas ng alerto kung pagbabasehan ang unang inihayag ng DOH na maaari na ang Alert Level Zero, ano ang pahayag ng Pangulong Duterte hinggil dito?

USEC. ABLAN: Kaya naman po na masusi at dahan-dahan nating binubuksan ang ekonomiya kaalinsabay sa pagpapabilis ng pagpapabakuna sa ating mga kababayan. Nandiyan pa rin po ang ating IATF and they are constantly monitoring the situation.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Usec. Kris. Tanong mula kay MJ Blancaflor ng Daily Tribune: Usec. Kris, does the Palace support COMELEC en banc review of campaign guidelines amid the decreasing number of COVID cases? Do you agree that we should loosen up restrictions in campaigning?

USEC. ABLAN: Salamat po. Nirirespeto po ng Palasyo ang guidelines po ng COMELEC as long as it is aligned po with IATF resolutions and guidelines.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Usec. Kris. Susunod magtatanong via Zoom, Mela Lesmoras ng PTV.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Hi, Usec. Kris and Usec. Toledo. Sir, just a quick follow up about sa discussion sa Alert Level 1 at Alert Level Zero. May I ask, sir, sa naging IATF meeting kahapon, ano iyong tinitingnan ng IATF para nga, una, maideklara na iyong Alert Level 1 sa buong bansa at paano naman tayo din hahantong sa Alert Level Zero?

USEC. ABLAN: All right. Mela, maghihintay po tayo bago mag-March 15 para i-release ng IATF iyong kanilang desisyon sa alert level knowing and being conscious that they are trying to use the latest data and metrics to make the right decision; so, abangan po natin iyan bago March 15.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Opo. And about lang po sa latest updates mula sa IATF kasi nabanggit po natin na iyon nga, about sa limited face-to-face classes sa HEIs. Sir, may mga nagtatanong lang din lalo na iyong mga college students na fully vaccinated with boosters na rin kung doon sa ating mga pasilidad, sa ating mga industriya ay pinapayagan na iyong full capacity sa mga industries, sa mga kolehiyo o sa iba pang mag-aaral, kailan naman po kaya papayagan iyong hindi na lamang limited face-to-face classes kung hindi parang katulad na rin noong dati na full capacity na rin sa mga paaralan?

USEC. ABLAN: All right. Mela, gaya ng sinabi ko kanina sa opening statement 'no na nag-release ng bagong guidelines ang CHEd dahil nga Alert Level 1 na sa NCR at sa ibang lugar at puwede na po ang ating limited face-to-face learning 'no – depende po iyon ultimately sa HEIs. As the economy slowly opens up, you can be assured po na magiging full na po iyong face-to-face but we're doing it one day at a time po.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Opo. At panghuli na lamang po, Usec. Ablan, kumpirmasyon o reaksiyon lang po mula sa Malacañang. Sa isang pahayag kasi kahapon, sinabi ni Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel Romualdez na pinag-iisipan pa nga ni Pangulong Duterte iyong kaniyang pagdalo sa US-ASEAN Summit. Pero kung sakaling makakarating na sa Asia ang gulo nga sa Ukraine ay handa ang—he offered that the Philippines would be ready to open its door especially to our ally the United States in using our facilities.

Ano pong masasabi rito ng Malacañang, una, may desisyon na po ba siya sa US-ASEAN Summit; at ito po ba iyong stand din ng Malacañang hinggil naman sa kung lalala iyong sitwasyon sa Ukraine?

USEC. ABLAN: All right. Mela, for both questions 'no, we will wait for the official statement of the Department of Foreign Affairs or DFA.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV: Okay. Maraming salamat po, Usec. Ablan at Usec. Toledo.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Susunod na tanong mula kay Alvin Baltazar ng Radyo Pilipinas. I think para po ito kay Usec. Toledo: Is there a possibility na mangutang muli ang Pilipinas in case the suspension of excise tax pushes through? Sabi kasi ng DBM sa excise tax kinukuha ng gobyerno iyong expenses para sa social services. So kung isu-suspend ang excise tax, saan huhugutin ang budget para dito? Option po ba ang pag-utang? Usec. Toledo, please.

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Okay. Thank you, Usec. Rocky and thank you for the question from Alvin Baltazar. Okay.

Now on the possibility po naman that the government will borrow or in case the excise taxes will be suspended, well we will defer to our Department of Finance for this question. But iyong ating Development Budget Coordination Committee or the group of economic managers strongly opposes the proposal to suspend the imposition of the fuel taxes because it will translate to significant foregone revenues and that will… this will be detrimental to our recovery and it is inequitable.

So to be more specific po, the measures that will have to be… significantly have a negative impact po dito sa ating revenue generation, we projected loss of around 117 billion in revenues or around .5% of GDP and eventually, if we will maintain our disbursement program, it will result to a bigger deficit. Hence, the DBCC po ay not recommending that provided the—iyong tinatawag nating targeted relief assistance instead through social protection program such as itong fuel subsidy at ito iyong fuel discount program po sa mga affected sectors that is to help cushion the impact of the rising oil prices.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Usec. Toledo.

Iyong second question ni Alvin Baltazar nasagot na ni Usec. Kris Ablan.

Joseph Morong ng GMA News: Usec. Toledo, when is the DBM expected to download the money for fuel subsidy to LTFRB and saan daw po ang source?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Okay. Under po dati sa fiscal year 2020 GAA or our national budget, mayroon pong budget po ang Department of Transportation na 2.5 billion for the fuel subsidy. So it was released as mentioned kanina ni Usec. Kris by the DBM kahapon po. So this will then be fully transferred to DOTr and then to the LTFRB and then the main implementing agency—because they are the main implementing agency for this program. So ang source po nito, as mentioned, nasa GAA na po siya, itong 2.5 billion.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Usec. Toledo, iyong second question ni Joseph Morong ng GMA News: When do we expect the other 2.5 billion pesos?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Okay. Sige. Thank you, Joseph, for this question.

As part po kasi ng recommendation, if you'll note na ang EDC o Economic Development Cluster, the fuel subsidy program will be implemented in two tranches – ito nga po iyong first

tranche, ito po iyong 2.5 billion was already released and was charged from the regular budget of the DOTr.

Now the second tranche which also amounts to 2.5 billion is expected to be distributed next month and this will be charged from our unprogrammed appropriations of course but the release of unprogrammed appropriation is subject to the availability of excess revenue which will be certified by our Bureau of the Treasury. So we expect that the Bureau of the Treasury will certify at the end of the month or first week of April so that we can release the second tranche of the 2.5 billion.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Usec. Toledo, iyong third question ni Joseph Morong, although may mga nabanggit ka na po na sagot dito, basahin ko na lang, baka may madagdag po kayo: Explain please the mechanism of the Tawid Pasada and how this is going to help drivers? Some drivers we have talked said they are never benefitted from this, it's the operators daw po who have the card and therefore they are the ones who withdraw the money.

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: All right, yes. Alam naman po natin na itong fuel subsidy program is just an immediate response of the government to assist our transport sector with the current increase in the fuel prices brought about by the Russia-Ukraine situation.

Now, alam po natin na itong Pantawid Pasada is parang expansion of the program of the DOTr from previous Pantawid Pasada Programs for subsidizing the fuel expenses. Ang gusto ko lang sabihin, unlike po itong Pantawid Pasada, the financial assistance or the fuel subsidy will be directly provided to affected drivers rather than the qualified PUV franchise holder or operators. Iyon po iyong kakaibahan po dito.

And also, the fuel subsidy program is expanded not only to affected jeepney drivers but also to qualified UV Express, mini-buses, buses, shuttle services, taxis, and even the tricycles. Ang sabi ko nga din kanina, pati iyong ating TNVS and motorcycle taxis. So, iyon po iyong kakaibahan din dito.

So, in terms of the distribution, the new cash cards will be released po ng Land Bank of the Philippines in which the cash cards can be used by the beneficiaries in the participating retail outlets. For the details of the implementation of the programs, we can also connect or defer to our DOTr or LTFRB.

Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Thank you, Usec. Toledo. Tanong mula kay Cresilyn Catarong ng SMNI News, I think para pa rin po kay Usec. Toledo ito, Usec. Kris. Basahin ko na po: Iginiit ng isang Kongresista na hindi pa rin sapat ang fuel subsidy para sa PUV drivers kahit daw po doblehin mula sa 2.5 billion tungo sa P5 billion kaya hirit nito, pinakamainam na solusyon pa rin po iyong pansamantalang suspension ng excise tax sa mga produktong langis. Ano daw po ang masasabi ninyo dito, Usec. Toledo?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Nabanggit ko na rin kanina but I want to reiterate that ang ating mga DBCC (Development Budget Coordination Committee) po strongly opposes any proposal to suspend the imposition of fuel excise taxes because it will translate to a significant foregone revenues as mentioned and it will be detrimental for our economic recovery.

From the cost-benefit standpoint, the proposal to have the impact on growth at the same time economic recovery at sabi ko nga, nabanggit ko kanina po iyong revenue, foregone revenue, if you will be suspending this one, around 117 billion.

And of course, iyong 117 billion ay malaking bagay po ito para sa ating implementation of our programs and activities and projects that is nakalagay po sa ating GAA. At paano natin masusuportahan ito kung ito po ay i-suspend natin iyong excise taxes? So, ang desisyon nga po ng DBCC is not to rally supporting the suspension of excise tax because it has kumbaga difficulty or impact in the economy po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. USec. Toledo mayroon lang pong follow-up question si Tuesday Niu ng DZBB: Ibig bang sabihin malabo nang magpatawag ng special session ang Pangulo para matalakay pa ang mga panukalang suspendihin ang excise tax kasi daw po may strong opposition dito ang economic managers at naturally sila daw po ang pakikinggan ng Pangulo, Usec. Toledo?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: We defer that to the Office of the Executive Secretary for the calling for the special session of the Congress because that would be the Office of the President who would decide on the call for the special session of the Congress, Usec. Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Usec. Toledo, may pahabol lang po si Joseph Morong ng GMA News: Tama po bang sabihin na hahanapan pa ng pera iyong P2.5 billion?

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: Okay. From the earlier meeting po ng EDC, iyong Economic Development Cluster, and it was really raised into that issue and the BTr (Bureau of the Treasury) is already looking at sources of these excess revenues.

So, I just don’t know exactly the details of that excess revenue, but we already identified the source of the excess revenues. We are awaiting for probably at the end of the month because this is the first quarter then they can look at the possible excess revenue already. So, mayroon na pong na-identify initially by the Bureau of Treasury.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Thank you, Usec. Toledo.

Usec. Kris, tanong mula kay Ivan Mayrina ng GMA News: Senator Bong Go said in a press release that the President had already issued specific instructions to consult agencies to address rising oil prices. May we get details on this instructions?

USEC. ABLAN: All right. Thank you, Ivan.

Stemming from the President’s Talk to the People last Monday, the President gave instructions to the Secretaries of the National Economic Development Authority or NEDA, the Secretary of

the Department of National Defense, Department of Finance and Department of Trade and Industry to implement what was discussed and reported back during the Monday's Talk to the People. Let us wait po for the guidelines to be drafted and issued by the Office of the Executive Secretary.

The main point of the President is that everyone is on top of the situation. Government is on top of the situation and that all hands are on deck to mitigate the impact of the current situation and to provide solutions.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Tanong mula kay Maricel Halili ng TV5, hindi ko lang po alam kung ito ay nasagot ninyo. Kasama sa presentation ninyo pero bashain ko na: Ukraine appeals to Filipino businessmen to stop doing business with Russia. They said, every dollar earned by the Russian business will go to finance the criminal war in Ukraine. What will be the government's advice to the business sector?

USEC. ABLAN: All right. Thanks, Maricel 'no.

Again this is a diplomatic concern, and we will wait for the official statement from the Department of Foreign Affairs.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Tanong pa rin mula kay Maricel Halili: Will the government still continue our purchase of chopper in Russia? Aren't we in danger of facing sanctions under Countering America's adversaries Through Sanctions Act or CAATSA?

USEC. ABLAN: Thanks, Maricel.

I think the procurement of these equipment falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of National Defense. They will be reviewing this matters vis-à-vis what's happening right now in Europe. So, we'll get back to you on that.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Last question from Margot Gonzales ng SMNI. May nasagot ka na dito, Usec. Kris, basahin ko na lang baka may idagdag ka pa: Any update sa possibility na pagtawag ng special session ng Malacañang? Senators say they will comply to the President and will convene kapag iniutos na ng Pangulo.

USEC. ABLAN: All rght. Maraming salamat, Margot.

I think this issue was already raised before the President by the Secretaries last Monday's Talk to the People. It is being reviewed and it is a possibility of course.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Usec. Kris.

USEC. ABLAN: All right.

Muli, maraming salamat kay Undersecretary Rocky Ignacio at sa Malacañang Press Corps. Salamat din po sa ating panauhin, si DBM Undersecretary at spokesperson Rolando 'Rolly' Toledo. Mabuhay po kayo! Stay safe and God bless.

Dito po nagtatapos ang ating press briefing. See you again on our next briefing. Stay safe and healthy everyone. Tandaan, basta't laging handa at sama-sama, kaya natin ang anumang pagsubok! Happy weekend!

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Usec. Kris. Salamat din po kay Usec. Toledo at sa Malacañang Press Corps.

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