

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE INAUGURATION OF THE CANCER DIAGNOSTIC INSTITUTE
BUILDING AND CANCER TREATMENT FACILITY BUILDING OF THE
SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES MEDICAL CENTER (SPMC)**

**[Delivered at the Southern Philippines Medical Center (SPMC) Open Grounds in Davao
City | 25 March 2022]**

Kindly sit down. Salamat.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III; Senator Bong Go, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Health and Demography; Southern Philippines Medical Center officials and employees led by the Chief of Hospital Dr. Ricardo Audan; Former Southern Philippines Medical Center Chief of Hospital and Health Undersecretary Leopoldo Vega; fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; akong mga kaiguon (my brothers and sisters)

Alam mo, may ginagayon man gung speech na --- every occasion naa na pero duha ra ka pages. Pagkahuman, manguli na ta. [laughter] I can read this in about a minute and a half but it does not mirror my --- naa sa akong kasing-kasing. Dili pud nako sobra ang akong gibuhay kay trabaho man nako na. As a matter of fact, di naman ko magkinahangla'g pasalamat because I am paid to do my job.

(TRANSLATION: Alam mo, a speech is prepared for every occasion, but it's only two pages. And after that, we'll go home. I can read this in about a minute and a half but it does not mirror my --- what's inside my heart. I won't elaborate too much on what I have done so far because that's my job. As a matter of fact, you don't need to thank me because I am paid to do my job.)

Ang kaning akong vocation actually started many, many years ago. Kada Pasko, muadto ko sa tanang hospital muhatag og pagkaon ug gamayng mga dulaan sa bata ug kuwarta. Mao toy akong istilo. Pagkahuman, niagi ko ngari sa cancer patients sa mga bata.

(TRANSLATION: My vocation actually started many, many years ago. Every Christmas, I'll go to all the hospitals and give children food and a little money. That's my style. And then I'll visit the children with cancer.)

You know, sama talaga ng loob ko kung bakit ganoon ang buhay. Actually, nandiyan man si Mae. Pumunta ako doon sa mga bata tapos may isang bata nadaanan ko, pinigilan 'yung pantalon ko.

Sabi niya, "Mayor, kanang putlon naman akong tiil sa Lunes. Puwede ko nimo tagaan og tiil?" Wa ko katubag dayon, nisulod ko sa comfort room, hilak gyud ko, bahakhak ba. Kaluoy sa isig katawo nimo. Nganong ana ang kinabuhi?

(TRANSLATION: Sabi niya, “Mayor, my leg will be amputated this Monday. Can you give me a new leg?” I couldn’t answer right away, I hurried to the comfort room instead and cried so loud. I felt so sorry for him. Why is life like this?)

Sometimes you begin to question God. Muingon ko, “Og naay Ginoo, nganong ani man ang sitwasyon sa kalibutan?” Just like now, there’s a war going on in Europe, ginabombahan tanan, patay ang mga bata, tigulang. Di nako usahay masabtan. Mao na nga gamayng bikil lang sa kuan sa mga pari... Pero nakaeskuwela ko’g Ateneo, wa lang ko kakumpleto didto kay gipapahawa ako.

(TRANSLATION: Sometimes, you begin to question God. I’ll say, “If there is a God, why is the situation on earth like this?” Just like now, there’s a war going on in Europe, so many places are getting bombed, people are dying, even children. I sometimes don’t understand why these things happen. That’s why even with the slightest altercation with Catholic priests... But I’ve studied in Ateneo, but I didn’t get to graduate there because I got expelled.)

Taas naman ang istorya pero usahay makaingon ko’g nganong nagbuhat ka ma’g kalibutan? Og imo nalang untang gitabla tanan? If it is really worth the work for seven days or six days, on the seventh day you rested kay gikapoy ka, nganong wa naman lang nimo hunaa gitabla nalang unta nimo ang sitwasyon sa kalibutan? So magprangka ko, those were the things that were really bakokang sa ulo ba.

(TRANSLATION: I’ve shared a lot already, but sometimes I say to myself, why did God make a world like this? What if God made it fair and equal? If it is really worth the work for seven days or six days, on the seventh day you rested because you were tired, why didn’t you think of designing everything equally? So sometimes I ask questions like that frankly, those were the things that were really bothering me.)

I am not a religious person, but I believe in God, klaro na. But sometimes, kaning mga ingon-aning sitwasyon maoy makapadala sa ako’g, “why?” “bakit?” Mao nang usahay nga magbikil ko’g istorya’g gamay lang kuan, mutubag na ko sa Katoliko. You cannot enlighten us about the inequality of this world, then do not pretend to be all knowing and forgiving. So mao na diha.

(TRANSLATION: I am not a religious person, but I believe in God, that’s very clear. But sometimes situations like this make me ask, “why?” “bakit?” That’s why sometimes I can’t keep myself from rebutting the Catholics. You cannot enlighten us about the inequality of this world, then do not pretend to be all knowing and forgiving. So that’s it.)

So from the Christmas, niingon to siyang bata nga putlon iyang tiil, ingnan nako (the boy said that his leg will be amputated, I told him) “Masiguro mo ‘yan anak, kung wala hindi kita mabigyan ng paa, itong paa ko ipaputol ko, my legs ibigay ko sa iyo.” So from that time, kami naman ni Mae, every week nandito na ako, sa lahat ng bata. Tapos makilala ako and then for a time they go.

Iyong bata na ‘yun, ‘yung naputol ‘yung paa ko, pina-prosthetics. Sabi ko, “Iyong maganda, ‘yung titanium hindi ‘yung cast, plastic na kahoy. Bilihan kita.” So binilhan ko. Ang bata nag...

Ang laki pala ng --- medyo may pagkatisoy, ang laki ng ano, lumaki 'yung katawan. Palagi 'yan na dito. Apat 'yan sila, ewan ko 'yung dalawa nag-graduate na ba? Pinaaral ko dito.

Alam mo minsan, paghiwalay ko sa asawa ko, naghanap lang ako ng bahay na maliit lang. So sabi ko kay Bong --- nilibot niya, diyan sa Margarita, may maliit na bahay, dalawang room --- maliliit 'yung bahay diyan. Sabi ko tama na ito para sa akin, ako lang man lang mag-isa. Children nandoon man sa asawa ko. Okay na.

About that time, I started to be frequent in this place. So wala silang matirahan. Iyong under treatment, wala silang mapuntahan. So binigay ko 'yung bahay. Sabi ko kay Mae, "I'm donating it to the hospital." [applause] Maghanap na lang ako ng isang bahay na isang kuwerto, tutal ako lang naman mag-isa. Pero kung may magtabi, okay lang [laughter] maski na isang kama. So 'yun.

Then marami akong makita sa labas 'yang magsama ng ano, mga paryente ba. Alam mo sa bukid, mga pobre, 'pag masakit ang tatay, anak, manaog na tanan, diha na na sila sa kanto-kanto sa gawas. Napakamiserable naman nitong p***** i***** buhay na 'to.

(TRANSLATION: Then marami akong makita sa labas 'yang magsama ng ano, mga relatives. Alam mo sa bukid, mga pobre, if a family member gets sick, the whole family will come down to go here and they'll stay out there on the streets. Napakamiserable naman nitong p***** i***** buhay na 'to.)

So may dinala ako na limang milyonaryo dito sa Davao. Sabi ko, "Magkain tayo, ako ang magbayad pero pagkatapos pakinggan ninyo ako." So kain kami, akala ng mga g*** mag-inuman. Sabi ko, "Hindi, may puntahan tayo." Across this compound, on the other side of the street it's a government property, city government. Tapos dinala ko sila sa loob, sabi ko, "Tingnan mo 'yung tao, hanggang dito, diyan, mga bata tulog sa kuwan..."

Ingon ko manaog ng usa para tambalan, mangasakit gyud ni tanan, ma-dengue... (I said if any one of them needs to get treatment here, then the entire family will come here as well and they will get sick with dengue...) Ingon nako nga (I said that), "I want a halfway house. Kailangan maglabas kayo ng pera." Nandiyan ngayon. [Okay pa ba 'yan, Mae? Is it...?] So sineparate (separate) ko, babae tapos lalaki. Tapos 'yung pag-ano because marami man rin tayong mga kapatid na Islam. Iba 'yung kitchen nila, iba 'yung sa Kristiyanos, para maganda ang samahan.

Tapos itong kay Mae mga mahal niya na mga anak, sabi ko, "Mae, 'pag nagka panahon..." Hindi ko sinabi kung --- hindi ko man akalain na maging Presidente ako. If given a chance, bilihin ko lahat para sa... Iyon, nasuwertehan.

Pero 'yung mayor pa ako, 'yung accelerator, 'yun naka-program na sa City Government of Davao, 'yung malalaking building pati 'yung mga mamahal na ano, nandiyan na, nabili na. So there's really no reason for you to go to Cebu or Manila because it's the same machine, same equipment, at saka 'yung mga doktor, pare-pareho lang naman. Pagka pumasa ka sa Board, kagaya ng abugado, pasa ka sa Bar, tabla na tayo. It's a matter of just learning the art of handling the equipment.

So I am on my sunset of my life. I walk with a limp dahil sa numerous disgrasya sa motor. Eh hindi talaga ako nadala eh. I'm coming home, God willing. Nakita ko Pilipinas, okay naman. And lahat ng sinabi ko sa tao gagawin ko, just a number of my fingers, hindi siguro mag-abot ng 10.

Una sabi ko law and order, droga kasi galit talaga ako at huwag kang pumasok diyan kasi papatayin talaga kita. You destroy my country, you destroy the youth of the land, I will destroy you. Galit talaga ako. Ewan ko ngayon kung hindi na ako Presidente, pero baka ganoon rin. Kaya kayong nakikinig diyan na nasa droga, drop it. Get out of the habit of the addiction para wala tayong...

Universal healthcare, education, libre na ngayon. Irrigation ng mga farmers, wala na. Wa nay bayad, libre na. (They don't have to pay, it's free.) Infrastructure, makit-an man ninyo (you can see it).

When I became President, nandiyan man si Dr. Duque --- Secretary Duque. Sa Cabinet meeting sila, sinabi ko talaga, "Do not look into the result of the elections," kasi 'yung mag --- "Uy, pildi ta ngari, daog ta ngari, og wa na ta..." (Hey, we lost here, we won here, let's not...) Ako, sabi ko in all departments, Public Works and Highways, lahat, Transportation, sinabi ko, "Tabla. Hatiin ninyo ang pera para sa lahat."

That is why maski saan ka magpunta, especially Luzon, grabe ang --- you can see the stretch of highways as far as your eyes can see. It would take them about --- usually magpunta sila sa Ilocos, mga eight hours. You can negotiate it in five; if there is no traffic, four. Ganoon na lang kalapit because ang mga highways, naggawa ako ng mga bago. Iyon ang report ko lang sa inyo.

But special talaga sa akin itong cancer patients kasi 'yung... [applause] Alam mo sa totoo lang --- nandiyan man si Mae --- noong hindi pa nag-deteriorate, 'yung apat 'yan sila puro may isang paa na wala. Sabi ko kay Bong, "Bong, sabihin mo sa mga tao mo ipasyal itong mga bata. Hindi pa nakakita ito ng mga bazaar na bago, mga SM."

Nagpunta sila, so pinasyal sila sa SM diyan sa Lanang tapos tumawag si Bong, sabi niya, "Gusto man nito sapatos." Ingon ko, "Isa lang man ang paa nila. Ano man...? Iba na lang para maano."

Ah hindi talaga, 'yung babae sabi niya sapatos talaga sa kanya. Sabi ko, "Sige, bilihan mo." So sapatos ang binili nila. Tapos 'yun namang --- malalaki na 'yun eh. Sabi ko na, "Nakalabas na ba kayo, naka...? Kayo, mga ilang taon?" "Sixteen, 17." Basta ganoong edad. Sabi ko, "Nakapag-happy happy na ba kayo?" Sabi nila [shakes head] "Hindi talaga kayo nakasubok?" "Bong, patilawa." (Bong, let them experience it.) Pagkaugma, nitawag kang Bong, "Sir Bong, puwede mubalik mi?" [laughter] (The next day, they called Bong and said, "Sir Bong, can we go back again?") Nagalit si Mae. Sabi ko, "Mae ano, mamamatay na 'yan. Makatikim lang naman bago pumunta sa --- malangit man talaga 'yan."

Iyong isa, medyo sad siya kasi may nililigawan siya. Tapos sabi ko, "Sino?" Sabi ko, "Saana?" Sabi niya, "Sa ICC." Sabi ko paano natin -- Immaculate Conception College --- paano hanapin

'yung crush niya? 'Di tanong-tanong. Eh mahusay itong si Bong. Iyon pala taga-M'lang rin. Taga-M'lang siya eh.

Iyong pag-uwi niya noong mag-ano na siya, hinatid ko pa siya ng helicopter. Sabi ko, "Isakay kita ng helicopter." Ang helicopter, ni-landing ko doon sa harap ng bahay niya. So medyo maganda ang buhay. Nakatikim talaga siya ng lahat.

Nakilala namin 'yung babae, we arranged for a ano, nagsama sila one night one day diyan sa Samal. Happy na 'yung bata, fulfilled niya --- sabi niya niligawan niya pero hindi pa raw siya sinagot.

Kasi one day, pagbalik noong for the prosthetics, in-x-ray-han dito, sinabi ni Mae may nakita sila na small ano. Sabi ko, "Ano 'yan, Mae?" Sabi niya, "Leukemia." P***** i**.

Noong on his dying, tinawag ako ni Mae. Naggaganoon na eh. Pero he was livid, conscious talaga. So usap kaming dalawa sinabi ko na, "Alam mo, itong buhay na ito, hindi mo alam baka mauna pa ako sa iyo." Pero he was dying that night. Pagkatapos noon, sa sama ko ng loob, matagal ako bumalik dito kasi maganda na sana, nag-recover na, tapos na...

Pero ngayon na pabalik na ako, matanda na man ako, 77 years old, ewan ko kung anong magdating sa akin. Pero ako sa totoo lang, gusto ko 'pag wala na akong gagawin sa mundo... Tapos naman trabaho ko, nakapag --- may anak ko kandidato pagka vice president, 'yung isa congressman, 'yung isa mayor. Fulfilled na ako.

Itong anak ko sa pangalawang asawa, okay naman ang nanay niya kasi nurse, nag-OFW 'yan sa Amerika tapos umuwi. So 'yan ang --- siya 'yung ano ko ngayon. Fulfilled na ako sa lahat ng bagay. Wala na akong mahingi. Kung maghingi pa ako sa Diyos ng marami, sabihin ng Diyos, "P***** i** ka, ka-hangol (greedy) mo naman. Umabot ka na diyan..."

Well, but it was all work. Sabihin ko sa inyo, ang taong mag-ambisyong mag- Presidente, g***. [laughter] Ah g***. Kagaya ko, minsan mamayat ako, minsan tataba ako.

When you get to study all documents of the Republic of the Philippines from all places, provinces and cities, mawalaan ka ng stamina. Sometimes you finish reading --- I do not sign. Iyong iba kasi 'pag may initial na, na reviewed na, ako hindi, binabasa ko uli tapos I sign. Matatapos ako niyan mga alas siyete, alas otso bago ako makatulog.

That's why early on I said my day starts at one, two. Kung hindi ka na --- kung mangurakot ka, ay walang problema, wala talagang problema. Mag --- hindi ka na kailangan umuwi ng probinsiya, may mansyon ka na doon. Pero kanya-kanyang istilo 'yan sa buhay. It's always --- it depends on how you look at life.

So nahiya man ako sa gumawa nito, nandiyan sa likod siguro 'yan. Basahin ko na lang 'yung speech nila para tabla. [laughter]

It gives me immense pleasure to join you for the inauguration of the Cancer Diagnostic Institute Building and Cancer Treatment Center here at the Southern Philippines Medical Center.

This feat makes me glad, for it is indeed a huge leap that will help address the health needs of our people.

I thus laud the SPMC, the Department of Health, and all private partners for investing in the improvement of healthcare services in the region.

No longer will our cancer patients need to travel far just to receive the necessary treatments and care.

This accessibility to modern healthcare facilities, particularly those that cater to cancer patients, will surely help ease the burden carried by patients and their families.

I am confident, together with the devotion of the medical frontliners, this project will make a long-lasting and life-changing impact in the healthcare sector and in the lives of generations of Mindanawons.

As we welcome the launching of these centers, I urge our medical practitioners all over the Philippines to give the necessary attention to non-COVID-19 cases whose treatments may have been delayed or affected due to the restrictions we have to impose.

It is also my hope that public and private hospitals across the country will be inspired to further improve their services for our fellow Filipinos.

Indeed, this project will have a long-lasting positive effect in addressing public healthcare concerns in the region and in the lives of many of our kababayans.

As we have seen with the present COVID-19 pandemic, the wellness of the people is the strength of our nation.

Let us therefore continue to care for and be heroes for one another as we lengthen our strides towards a better, stronger and healthier Philippines in the years ahead.

Again, congratulations at mabuhay kayong lahat! [applause]

— END —