

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**PRESS BRIEFING BY  
PRESS SECRETARY TRIxie CRUZ-ANGELES**

**[Press Briefing Room, Malacañan Palace in Manila | 04 July 2022]**

**PRESS SECRETARY TRIxie CRUZ-ANGELES:** Magandang araw sa inyong lahat, mga katrabaho.

Ikinagagalak ko po na maging — nandito ako kapiling ninyo at dito sa ating pangunahing press briefer.

So for today's press briefing, the primary topic is on House Bill 7575. As you know, it had been vetoed by the President. He still fully supports the aerocity, in fact, the building of the airport, the freeport, and the special economic zone.

But the law needs to be sharpened to admit of the following: to provide audit — the necessary audit provisions for COA; the procedures for expropriating lands that had been awarded to Agrarian Reform beneficiaries; to provide for a master plan with metes and bounds of the full scope of the economic zone. It needs to address why there is a rule-making power given to the economic zone to this particular economic zone for environmental issues, for environmental concerns. This has not been given to other economic zones.

It also seems to include some provisions that might be contrary to some technical operations in relation to transportation laws. And there needs to be a rationalization, first, or a justification that the zone is of — will be nationally significant. Meaning, it provides benefits to the whole nation and not just to the locality, and that it does not narrow our tax base.

So other than that, we will be taking your questions.

**REX REMITIO (CNN PHILIPPINES):** Madam, good morning.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Magandang umaga.

**MR. REMITIO:** Ayun. Maiba lang po 'no. Doon sa... I understand si President Duter — ah President Marcos patuloy siya sa process ng pag-complete ng Cabinet 'no.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Opo.

**MR. REMITIO:** So kailan po 'yung pinaka-deadline ng pagkumpleto ng Cabinet?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Walang...

**MR. REMITIO:** And — sige po, go ahead, go ahead.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Pasensiya na ha medyo... Wala po sa binibigay sa amin na sinasabi nilang deadline. Ang sinasabi is masuri talaga ang pag-evaluate nila dito sa mga kandidato para sa mga posisyon.

I understand that this is now going through the final evaluation stage. So I don't think it will take too long.

**MR. REMITIO:** My second and last. For departments of Health and Energy, I understand kung halimbawa wala pang secretary, mayroon na bang mga na-offer-an and ano po 'yung considerations nila?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Wala po kaming impormasyon tungkol diyan. Dumadaan po sila doon sa proseso ng pagsusuri.

**MARICEL HALILI (TV-5):** Hi Ma'am, magandang umaga po.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Magandang umaga.

**MS. HALILI:** Ma'am, may we have details about the visit of President Marcos sa Department of Agriculture this morning? Ano po 'yung kanyang instructions?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Hindi pa po tapos 'yung meeting. So we'll wait for the President to announce it.

**MS. HALILI:** Ma'am, when it comes doon sa executive orders ni President Marcos, mayroon na po ba siyang in-issue na first EO? And kung mayroon na po, ano po 'yung laman?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Wala pa po. Wala pa po tayong EO 1.

**MS. HALILI:** Wala pa ba, ma'am?

**SEC. ANGELES:** MC 1 po yata 'yung iniisip ninyo? MC 1.

**MS. HALILI:** Ah okay, but when it comes to EO, wala pa. [overlapping voices]

**SEC. ANGELES:** Memorandum Circulars 1 and 2, I think we reiterated also.

**MS. HALILI:** Ma'am, 'yun naman pong sa state visit, what's the plan of President Marcos when it comes to state visits? Mayroon na po ba siyang naka-schedule? Is it true that he will be visiting China this week?

**SEC. ANGELES:** We have... The President has not announced any state visits. As of now, he is busy building up the Cabinet. So we will have to wait for an announcement if there is indeed such a thing.

**MS. HALILI:** Ma'am, how about po the invitation of US President Biden?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Let's wait for Malacañang to formally acknowledge it and then we will probably make the announcement with regard to whether or not it's going to happen. But let's wait.

**MS. HALILI:** Ma'am, sorry last na lang po.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Sure.

**MS. HALILI:** Follow up lang po doon sa question ni Rex about appointee. Bakit po natatagalan 'yung pag-appoint especially po sa Department of Health na secretary considering that we are still in pandemic?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Only that they'll have to evaluate it very well and fully. The President is quite aware and in fact one of the priorities is managing the effects of this pandemic. So you must also understand that this is so important. They must look very closely and carefully at the candidates.

**MS. HALILI:** Okay, pero ma'am so habang wala pa po, mayroong nakatalagang OIC, ganoon po ba 'yun?

**SEC. ANGELES:** In accordance with Memorandum Circular No. 1, yes.

**MS. HALILI:** All right. Thank you, ma'am.

**KARMELA LESMORAS (MODERATOR):** Sec. Trixie, for the next question mula po kay Sam Medenilla ng Business Mirror, babasahin ko na lang po: "What will be the marching orders of President Marcos sa DA? Will he assign a spokesperson for agri affairs or a new agri sec? If yes, who will it be?"

**SEC. ANGELES:** I'm sorry, we cannot speculate on that right now as the President is still meeting with the officials as of this time.

**MS. LESMORAS:** Okay, next question from Sam Medenilla, ma'am: "Is President Marcos now considering any government austerity measure or revenue-generating policy to help address the country's debts. If yes, what are these measures?"

**SEC. ANGELES:** It's the economic team who is making these — drawing up these plans and the policy proposals in accordance with the directive of the President. We'll wait for the economic team to make the announcement.

**MS. LESMORAS:** And, ma'am, last question po ni Sam Medenilla: "When will President Marcos hold his first Cabinet meeting? What are the expected issues to be discussed in the said meeting?"

**SEC. ANGELES:** Well, it will be in accordance... Well, we have no official announcement yet as to when the first Cabinet meeting is going to be held. But the secretaries are given the

opportunity — those who have already been appointed — to make the assessment. So this will all be taken into consideration.

**IVAN MAYRINA (GMA-7):** Good morning, Secretary.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Hi Ivan, good morning.

**MR. MAYRINA:** On House Bill 7575, Senator Marcos, Imee Marcos, expressed disappointment and concern over the possible “chilling effect” on mga domestic and foreign investors of said veto. What does the Palace have to say about this?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Well, the Palace merely says that the law has to be sharpened. We have to make anticipations of possible constitutional challenges on this one. It will cause further delays if the law is challenged and invalidated.

So this is the best way to address the problems, the innate problems of the House bill, and it gives an opportunity for the legislature to make those corrections.

So we understand their feelings of disappointment but this is the stand of the President. Let’s fix this now so we don’t wait for it to be challenged later on.

**MR. MAYRINA:** But should the deficiencies be addressed? Do we have the President’s commitment that he will sign it into law?

**SEC. ANGELES:** I don’t think it’s a fair question to ask the President to commit. He does say he is fully supportive of this. And so in fact this is — it is his commitment to sharpen the law so that when this is indeed passed, then he can fully support it.

**MR. MAYRINA:** Understood, salamat po doon. On the urgency and the gravity of the food crisis, ano ho ang mga urgent measures na ipapatupad ni Pangulong Marcos sa DA him being also the head of the agency, of the department?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Let’s wait for him to make that announcement. He’s still meeting with them right now. So it would be unfair to make plans if you don’t have a reality check yet on the ground. So let’s wait for that.

**MR. MAYRINA:** Thank you. Thank you very much.

**EDEN SANTOS (NET-25):** Good morning po, Atty.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Magandang umaga.

**MS. SANTOS:** Since nasagot niyo naman po ‘yung sa HB 7575, doon na po ako sa pangalawang tanong ko. Iyong preparations po para sa nalalapit na SONA at saka po ‘yung sa budget kasi alam natin na ilang linggo na lang po ‘yang — mabilis po ‘yung mga araw so ilang linggo na lang kasunod po ng SONA ‘yung pagpasa po ng budget sa Kongreso. Nasimulan na po

ba natin ‘yung pag-draft ng ating budget para sa — under PBBM and ‘yun pong mga measures na gagawin po natin for SONA?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Well, in general, doon sa mga departamento, ‘yung budget po ay drawn up already in accordance with the previous administration. So doon sa iba nasumite na po sa DBM ang kanilang mga respective budgets so wala po kaming input masyado doon. Hihintayin po natin ‘yung susunod po na budget doon po ‘yung may input talaga ang present administration.

**MS. SANTOS:** Sa SONA po, Atty., ano po ‘yung magiging security measures po kasi doon sa inauguration ‘no medyo talagang napakaganda po nung setup pero ‘yung mga media po parang hindi nagkaroon ng — nabigyan ng pagkakataon to interview. Siyempre para malaman din ‘yung mga plans and ano pa po ng ating PBBM dahil sobrang parang “na-isolate” ba ang tawag doon? Ang layo nila doon sa pinaka event.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Well, thank you, your comments are duly noted. Makakaabot po. We can’t of course talk about any particulars with regard to security measures for obvious reasons. Pero interesting po ‘yung tanong niyo. We’ll get back to you on that one. It’s a good input.

**MS. SANTOS:** For my last question po, Atty., ‘yung pong sa appointments ‘no talagang until now maraming naghihintay sa DOE, DOH na sinasabing talagang napakahalaga pong mga agencies nito ‘no. Sa DOH po ba may mga information na lumulutang na nahihirapan si PBBM na pumili po dahil ‘yung mga nominado — Secretary Duque, si dating Congresswoman Janet Garin — parang kasama po sila sa pinagpipilian.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Well, ang sinasabi lang namin is dumadaan sa matinding pagsusuri. Wala tayong sinasabing nahihirapan or anything like that but because these are important — precisely because these are very important positions, kailangan dumaan talaga sa butas ng karayom.

**MS. SANTOS:** Wala naman pong political pressure or mga parties na involved?

**SEC. ANGELES:** We will rely on the President’s wisdom to choose the best people for the job.

**MS. SANTOS:** Thank you po.

**PIA GUTIERREZ (ABS-CBN):** Hi Ma’am, good afternoon. Ma’am, how is the President settling in with his new position? Could you tell us how the first few days of the presidency went?

**SEC. ANGELES:** How is he settling in? Medyo mahirap ‘yung tanong na ‘yun. So far he is upbeat, that’s the observation that we have made. He is very encouraging. He attended today’s flag ceremony, of course as required. And he has been — how do you call this? Well, what I can say is that he’s always well-received. So when he attended the flag, medyo nakaka-excite din for the people who are working with him. So far that’s what we can observe.

**MS. GUTIERREZ:** All right, ma’am. Ma’am, mayroon na po ba tayong balita on the living arrangements of the First Family?

**SEC. ANGELES:** For security reasons, we cannot really divulge that yet. We'll wait for the final announcement, we will wait for then.

**MS. GUTIERREZ:** Nabanggit din po ni Ambassador Romualdez that the President has received an invitation from US President Biden to visit the United States. Will the President accept this invitation?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Let's wait for Malacañang to make the formal acknowledgment of the invitation. That's how it goes.

**MS. GUTIERREZ:** All right. Last na lang, ma'am. Ma'am, I know that there has been a previous statement but could you give us details about the how inaugural dinner went kasi wala pa pong mga nabigay na mga details 'no? And also the celebration of former First Lady Imelda Marcos last Saturday.

**SEC. ANGELES:** We cannot comment on the second one, especially since I wasn't there. Well, I cannot comment on the second one.

On the first one, the inaugural dinner went very well. It was well attended. It was a happy occasion for everybody who was there and that's pretty much it. I think the other details have already reached the press. The dinner was solemn. Well, the whole inaugural was solemn, simple, and traditional.

So aside from the — how do you call this? — the usual... I'm trying to find the right adjective for this one, it was generally a joyful but simple and traditional occasion. So that's the best way I can describe it right now.

**MS. GUTIERREZ:** Ma'am, I remember si President Duterte before had a policy on social events in Malacañang like dapat daw 'yung sa kanya 'yung policy niya na one rice, one viand, one soup. He tried to siguro to follow that. Pero what will be the policy of Malacañang pagdating po dito sa mga social events? Kasi I'm asking this kasi over the weekend, may mga kumalat po na mga videos, mga pictures on the celebration of the former First Lady, and then understandably there have been concerns that there will be lavish parties again in Malacañang.

**SEC. ANGELES:** We acknowledge those concerns. There's no policy yet in place and that's all that we can really say about it. It was a family affair. And so I don't know if a policy will be borne out of this one. But certainly we will note that observation.

**MS. GUTIERREZ:** Thank you very much, Ma'am.

**KATRINA DOMINGO (ABS-CBN NEWS ONLINE):** Good morning, Secretary. Secretary, may we know how much was spent for the inauguration of the President?

**SEC. ANGELES:** I'll wait for the final figures. We don't really have it yet right now.

**MS. DOMINGO:** Ma'am, just one follow — just another follow-up question, the President earlier said that he will not be appointing a spokesperson because he'd rather face the media himself. May we know often we get to speak with the President and ask him questions directly?

**SEC. ANGELES:** That will be up to him. I think it will be in relation to whether there is a pressing issue that he would like to bring to the media directly. So it will be on those occasions. We cannot say yet if it's going to be a monthly thing or anything with that kind of regularity. It will really depend on the situation.

**MS. DOMINGO:** Thank you.

**SEC. ANGELES:** You're welcome.

**CRESILYN CATARONG (SMNI NEWS):** Yes, good morning po, Secretary. Cresilyn Catarong from SMNI News. Inirerekomenda po ng DOH na ituloy-tuloy po 'yung umiiral na COVID-19 Alert Level System. Ano po 'yung tugon ng Malakanyang dito?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Well, status quo tayo ngayon so 'yun lang po 'yung tugon natin. We just continue with the current operational setup and then we will see what the recommendation of the new DOH secretary will be.

**MS. CATARONG:** Iyong sa panawagan po Secretary 'yung na i-retain po 'yung IATF-EID, 'yung IATF po?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Yes po, ano po 'yun?

**MS. CATARONG:** Ano po 'yung plano ng Marcos administration po tungkol po sa — dito po sa IATF-EID may panawagan po na i-retain po ito?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Sa ngayon kasi what we're doing nga is everything is status quo. So we will also have to wait for the next secretary of Health to make a policy recommendation on that.

**MS. CATARONG:** Atty., ano po 'yung napag-usapan sa naging pulong po kamakailan nila Pangulong Marcos po at ng Chinese Vice President po?

**SEC. ANGELES:** We're waiting for the announcement from Malacañang. Mostly it was a congratulatory meeting. So that was the occasion of the inaugural. Beyond that, we will have to wait for additional information that the President will possibly convey.

**MS. CATARONG:** Thank you po.

**ROSE NOVENARIO (HATAW):** Good morning, Ma'am.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Good morning, Ms. Rose.

**MS. NOVENARIO:** Ma'am, may agam-agam po kasi 'yung mga empleyado ng gobyerno doon sa memorandum circular na in-issue po ni Executive Secretary Vic Rodriguez tungkol doon po sa pagbabakante ng mga pwesto ng mga pangunahing pinuno ng ahensiya 'no. Iyon po bang mga designated OIC or acting, mayroon po ba silang legal personality para pumirma sa mga transaksyon ng gobyerno particular po 'yung payroll po nung mga empleyado kasi alam naman natin kailangan nilang sumuweldo 'di ba? Baka raw po kasi maging cause sa delay ng kanilang sweldo kung wala pong legal personality 'yung designated niyong opisyal para pumirma po doon sa mga payroll nila.

**SEC. ANGELES:** The general rule kasi nga is that the OIC can sign on the day-to-day functions of an agency. So I don't think na magkakaroon ng problema dito sa ano — sa what we call the transition period. So...

**MS. NOVENARIO:** Kasama po ba 'yun sa ano sa assurance niyo na wala pong magiging problema sa Commission on Audit 'yung ganoong sistema po kasi siyempre ang pagkakaalam po nila ay walang legal personality nga po 'yung mga acting, 'yung OIC, kasi payroll po itong pinag-uusapan?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Well, in accordance with MC 1, this will be legal because there is a directive. If the agency is following the directive under the memorandum circular, then the COA observation will have to take that also into consideration.

**MS. NOVENARIO:** Particular po sa finances po?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Particu — well in the day-to-day functions because that is the point of having an OIC.

**MS. NOVENARIO:** Another topic, ma'am. Ma'am, ano po 'yung ano puwedeng paki-elaborate po 'yung sinabi niyo kahapon na 'yung i-issue niyo pong mga statement ay may kaugnayan lang po sa interes ng publiko or public welfare or — kasi po 'yung tanong namin kahapon tungkol doon sa birthday party ni dating First Lady?

**SEC. ANGELES:** I think the question was in relation to two things: the birthday party and the greetings that appeared on a billboard, I understand.

So the response of the office was that we don't comment on those things. We comment on official policy, on the issuances of the President, on the statements of the President, and so on.

So since first of all, the billboard doesn't appear to be public nor put up by any government agency, then there is no comment coming from us.

**MS. NOVENARIO:** Ma'am, may assurance po ba kayo na 'yung mga family affair na — o parties ng pamilya Marcos sa Malakanyang po ay hindi magmumula po sa pondo ng bayan 'yung gugugulin doon?



**SEC. ANGELES:** We assure you that the President will adhere to law and so that is the presumption. We will... The President does — no directive in excess of anything that is written in the law.

**MS. NOVENARIO:** Okay, thank you, ma'am.

**SEC. ANGELES:** Thank you.

**MS. LESMORAS:** Ma'am, ang susunod naman pong katanungan ay mula kay Alexis Romero ng PhilStar. "For Secretary Angeles: What is Malacañang's take on the suspicious deaths of high-profile inmates in Bilibid? What are the President's directives on this?"

**SEC. ANGELES:** We'll wait for the Secretary of Justice to make the evaluation on that one and his recommendation.

**HAYDEE SAMPANG (FEBC-DZAS):** Magandang araw po, Secretary. Mayroon po ulit finile (file) na bill sa Kamara tungkol po sa absolute divorce bill. Ano po ang posisyon dito ng Pangulo or ng Palasyo?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Since ito ay simpleng pagfa-file pa lang and therefore first reading pa lang, wala pa po tayong komento doon.

**KRISTINA MARALIT (THE MANILA TIMES):** Hi Ma'am, good morning po. Ma'am, my first question is recently opposition leaders including Senator Risa Hontiveros and detained former Senator Leila De Lima called on President Marcos to restore the Philippines' membership to the International Criminal Court to show daw good faith that the Philippines is one in strengthening human rights. What's the take of the President on this? Gagawin po ba niya ito or at least consider it?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Those comments as in any comment that is in the exercise of the freedom of speech are also duly noted. But we'll wait for the formal policy to be articulated by the President.

**MS. MARALIT:** Okay, ma'am. Second question, ma'am, follow up, in relation to that po an alliance of lawyers and legal practitioners and students are also calling for a review of the war against illegal drugs initiated by the previous administration. What is the President's stand on this?

**SEC. ANGELES:** We will have to articulate that later on when we have a directive from the President.

**MS. MARALIT:** Thank you, ma'am.

**CELERINA MONTE (NHK):** Good morning, ma'am. I just want to follow up and like rephrase some of the questions raised earlier regarding the pres — supposed President's visit abroad. So far which country are — among the heads of state, sino na po 'yung nag-invite kay PBBM and if

ever where could the President would have his first state or official visit and when could it take place?

**SEC. ANGELES:** Most of that is speculation. We will have to wait first for the acknowledgment, the formal acknowledgment of these invitations because these are state matters, you know, state functions. We wait for the formal acknowledgment and then the President will indicate whether or not he is accepting the invitation. So the rest, everything is speculative.

**MS. MONTE:** Okay, since you can't answer fully on that particular questions, I just want to follow up on the bill that the President vetoed regarding the creation of this Bulacan Economic Zone, Airport Economic Zone. Since you have mentioned that the President is supporting that, will he certify it as an urgent bill?

**SEC. ANGELES:** There is no indication of such certification but the importance is evident in the explanation of the veto that he merely wants these things to be sharpened. An approval of this law might result in a delay of its implementation because it might be challenged.

So that's how important it is for him that a law is more finely crafted in relation to those matters that he has raised. So that is how he articulates the importance of this bill.

**MS. MONTE:** Another follow up on the budget, you also mentioned that the previous administration already prepared the budget for this year. So is there any plan by the current administration to seek for a supplemental budget from Congress to finance the priority projects and programs of the current administration?

**SEC. ANGELES:** That will depend on each of the departments. The priorities will depend on which departments are implementing them. So we will have to wait for that. They have to assess that.

**MS. MONTE:** Thank you.

**MS. LESMORAS:** Secretary, ang susunod naman pong katanungan ay mula kay Vanz Fernandez from DZRJ and Police Files Tonite: "The West Philippine Sea dispute is still as relevant as ever even to the new PBBM's administration. So in recent days, has the President given any thought or issued any orders on the Philippines' stance towards the dispute in the WPS or towards China as a whole in relation to the dispute? Can we expect any diplomatic developments as per the President's orders or any form of directives that may bring the Philippines in a diplomatic shift on how we approach the dispute with China?"

**SEC. ANGELES:** The President's stand has always been clear but we will have to wait for the policy to be recommended by the new secretary of Foreign Affairs and for the President to articulate later on.

It's always a pleasure to see you guys. Many of you, I already know. Some of you have covered me before in more tumultuous times. [laughs] And some of you I still have to get to know but you have made today very painless.

Thank you very much. [laughter]

— END —