

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY
News and Information Bureau

PRESS BRIEFING OF PRESS SECRETARY TRIXIE CRUZ-ANGELES
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SINGAPORE

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: [Airing starts]... Unang-una iyong ating diplomatic milestone, ang golden jubilee was marked by the state visit noong dumalaw si President Yacob sa atin noong 2019. Milestone, kasi golden jubilee na ng ating diplomatic relations with Singapore.

Mayroon ding pag-uusapan tungkol sa sociocultural and people-to-people exchanges – pangunahin na dito ang two-way tourism in the post-pandemic era. Ang Singapore was the Philippines' top source of tourists from ASEAN in 2019.

Tapos may mutual recognition ng vaccine certificates; mahalaga para doon sa pag-travel natin between these two countries.

Singapore's technical and human resource development assistance to the Philippines – ngayon po pag-uusapan ang detalye niyan.

Kinikilala din ang dalawang daang libong mga Pilipino dito sa Singapore – pangalawa sa pinakamalaking source of overseas Filipino remittances in 2021.

And finally, iyong role ng mga Filipino nurses sa Singapore laban sa pandemic. Kinikilala nila po and in fact, kagabi in-announce ng ating Pangulo sa kaniyang pagpupulong kasama ang mga OFWs na nagsasabing ang Singapore that they are willing to take more. So kinikilala rin nila iyong likas na galing ng mga Filipino health workers na nandito.

Okay. Questions po...

Q: [Off mic] Good morning, ma'am. [Unclear] sa investment deals. Do we have a particular target or figure to how much we are hoping to get from the discussion team?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Wala pa po tayong numbers on that. Ay, mayroon ba? Sorry, hindi ko nakita iyong bottom notes ko. Ay, mahaba pa pala. Sorry...

So mayroon tayo pala sa political and security cooperation; Mayroon tayong bilateral mechanism on the informal consultation on the Philippines and Singapore action plan; May active military cooperation dialogues and intelligence exchanges, assignment of Armed Forces representative to the regional counter terrorism information facility.

For law enforcement, mayroon tayong cooperation and then may mga training assistance.

For economic cooperation and post-pandemic recovery: Singapore as the sixth largest trading partner of the Philippines and top investor in 2021; agriculture cooperation and COVID-19 assistance; may exchange of views on regional and global issues, Myanmar and ASEAN centrality, the Ukraine, the South China Sea.

May mga agreements na pipirmahan ngayon, iyong arrangement concerning the assignment of the team to the regional counter terrorism information facility as we have mentioned. Sa Philippines side, si Major General Romulo A. Manuel, Jr. ng Philippine Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Intel ang pipirma. Sa MOU naman on cooperation in personal data protection, sa Philippines side, si Commissioner John Henry D. Naga from the National Privacy Commission ang pipirma sa side natin.

Okay, that's it.

Q: Okay, ma'am, ulitin ko po. Do we have a target on how many investments are we eyeing or hoping to get from the [unclear]?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Wala tayong target number, yet mahirap pong magsabi kasi even kapag nakapag-usap na tayo at mayroon na tayong agreement, hindi rin natin-kukompyutin pa natin. Halimbawa sa Indonesia, ang laki pala ng amounts na makukuha natin – ang sabi originally ni Secretary Pascual, worth of 700 million. So noong finally nilabas namin yesterday, nakita ninyo naman iyong statement, so we're talking about billions and we're also looking at 7,000 new jobs for Filipinos.

So dito, wala pa po tayong numbers but as soon as ma-catch ni Sec. Pascual, we'll be releasing that later.

Q: [Off mic] How about iyong health care workers? How many health care workers [unclear]?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Hindi pa po sinasabi kasi ngayon nga iyong talks eh. Kinukuwento ko lang iyong topics ahead of the talks. Pero, well, since 200,000 na sila dito and they still want more, we're expecting a significant amount.

Q: [Off mic] Ma'am [unclear]... binabanggit ni Secretary Ople na pagharang ng mga health workers [unclear]?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Kailan? Well, ngayon ang usapan... we're hoping to have it implemented soon as possible. Kasi kinilala ng Singapore dito iyong tulong ng ating Filipino health care workers dito sa pandemya. So since hindi pa actually tapos iyong pandemic, we expect that they will be hired... well, in the earliest possible time.

Q: [Off mic] Pero [unclear] na po ba regarding naman doon sa [unclear] ng mga workers [unclear]...?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Aviation services, wala pa po dito sa aking notes. So hindi pa po sinasabi ng DFA sa atin. Wala pang release.

Q: [Off mic] Ma'am, just a clarification. You mentioned a while ago 7,000 new jobs for Filipinos. So, basically this will already include the health care workers and that of those industries or sectors which were mentioned by President Marcos last night which includes the aviation services, the engineering and professors. Does this basically include [unclear]?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Hiwalay po iyon. Iyong 7,000 new jobs sa Indonesia po natin iyon nakuha, iyong numbers na iyon. So wala pa po tayong numbers dito, for the Singapore side pero mas marami tayong workers dito and from what I understand, there are more opportunities also that are being given to us here.

Q: [Off mic] Okay. So, the agreements that you mentioned a while ago, there are a lot of agreements that will be signed. How will this impact the Filipinos here and in the Philippines?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Well, for example, iyong mutual agreement natin, iyong standardization ng health certificates natin, well, that eases travel restrictions between the two countries. So it bolsters tourism both to the Philippines and to Singapore. So, it's mutually beneficial, direct iyan, and immediate. One of the problems we have is for instance, in the President's economic recovery program, tourism is front and center of that for being one of our major generators of the economic activity that will help put us back on our feet and it's not just domestic tourism.

So, this is one of the biggest opportunities we have if we can do it with Singapore then perhaps we can standardize it with many more countries and we can encourage more travelers.

Q: Ma'am, one last on my end. When we were able to talk to some OFWs they were complaining about the difficulty in the process of obtaining Overseas Employment Certificates and the days off. Some employers are not granting them the...I don't know if it's mandatory but the days off and the food that they need to eat. These are just some of the issues that they raised.

How exactly will our Embassy expedite the process in granting their OEC and as mentioned by President last night he said that they will ease up the process and that they will make the process easier for Filipinos here as serviced by the Embassy. How exactly will this be done?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Ang sagot ng ating Pangulo diyan ay front and center iyong bagong Department of Migrant Workers na magtutulong sa pag-facilitate ng mga ito. Ang Embassy officials natin sila iyong frontliners natin pagdating sa ganiyan but the policy [unclear] consonant to the recommendations of our Embassy.

I understand na umabot na po kay Sec. Ople iyong ating mga daing, iyong daing ng ating mga OFWs and hinahanapan na po ito ng solusyon. She's one of our busiest Secretaries, hindi pa nabubuo iyong kaniyang department nagtatrabaho na po siya. So, siya iyong pinakabida namin ngayon.

Q: Good morning, ma'am. We would like to know lang po if mayroong personal statement or comment na si President Marcos regarding Mary Jane Veloso po kasi you announced yesterday na the DFA requested po iyong [unclear] baka lang po may personal pong sinabi si Pangulo.

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Like what we said, and we constantly say when it is a matter of international relations the President will make a pronouncement only when the policy is already said and place and after recommendations made by the DFA. We're always very careful about any statements because they have repercussions later on.

We also do not want to transgress the sovereignty of another state. So, definitely the President will make no statement until we have some kind of further development on Miss Veloso's case. But it doesn't mean na hindi siya inaasikaso ha. Tuluy-tuloy naman ang Embassy natin sa kaniya at sila nga po iyong kumuha ng abogado para sa kaniya.

Q: So, ma'am, all pronouncements regarding the development of the case will come from the DFA po?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Will be recommended by the DFA if the President feels that the policy is in place, and it is time to make a pronouncement then of course he would do so. Pero for the moment things are still moving. Since it was on September 4 only that our Foreign Affairs had brought the matter up to their local counterpart in Indonesia then kumbaga there's no decision yet that's made. In fact, the foreign minister said that isasangguni nila ito sa kanilang Ministry of Justice.

So, sa ngayon there's nothing final pero tinutuluy-tuloy pa rin natin iyong paghahanap ng solusyon.

Q: Secretary, magandang umaga po. Secretary, mamaya ay mayroong [unclear] meeting si Pangulong Marcos, anu-anong mga [unclear]?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Actually, wala pang sinasabi kahit po iyong mga meetings sa Indonesia hindi pa po pinapa-release iyong names ng companies, baka maudlot. These are serious investors already. I assume that they are the same case here in Singapore. Hindi namin po niri-release because they are private companies and they are not necessarily investing in public infrastructure, they are also investing in private business concerns which is still good for us.

So, dahil pribado nga hindi namin puwedeng iri-release iyong mga pangalan, let's leave it up to them to make their own announcements.

Q: Can you give us at least an idea kung saan sila [unclear]?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Titingnan natin kung puwede nating iano kasi iyong iba mabibisto na kaagad kapag sinabi ko kung ano iyong industry.

Q: Telecom?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Ano iyon? Wala akong narinig. Wala pa po. Promise, ia-announce ko as soon they give me a clearance to do so.

Q: Good morning, Secretary. You mentioned that in 2019 that the [unclear] is the top source of our investments in the Philippines. Do you think that with this...

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Not foreign investments, tourists.

Q: Tourists, yes. Do you think that this will still be maintained with this state visit and meaning Singapore as the top source? And also, with the employees [unclear] that you are going to sign maybe later on, any specific industry lang po not necessarily maybe [unclear].

PRESS SEC. ANGELES: We will announce as soon as we have the opportunity to do so. But we expect not to maintain the number of tourists in 2019, but to increase over several reasons.

Number one, we are getting a handle on the pandemic with people, our hospitals are not filling up anymore and we can now open up the economy. We are targeting tourists and so on, plus with the developments, with the further talks and with the standardization of the issuances of health certificates, with the ease of travel between countries then we expect more. I mean, of course, we won't expect it like tomorrow, but we expect to develop more tourists coming to the Philippines from Singapore.

Q: Ma'am, I am just curious, because the meeting between Secretary Manalo and his Indonesian counterpart that happened last Sunday. [Unclear] the administration has been asking what the administration's stand is. What it is doing to help Mary Jane Veloso. My question is, why was the release of the information that DFA already sought for executive clemency came only yesterday when it happened on Sunday? Is there any particular reason?

PRESS SEC. ANGELES: Other than the fact that the information first is vetted and then discussed, because as I mentioned, when the communication is between states and about two states that have diplomatic relations, we are always careful, particularly under the aegis of the President. So, if it is about the President trip and if we are talking about a sensitive matter between two states, then the DFA must study the matter before making the announcement.

Q: Good morning po, Sec. Ang Singapore po ay nagluwag na po sa pagsusuot ng face mask. Bukas din po ba ang Pilipinas na ipatupad din po ito sa atin, and ano po iyong factors na inyong tinitingnan?

PRESS SEC. ANGELES: Nagprisinta ang DOT na in certain states na nagluwag na, tungkol sa face mask ay tumataas ang tourism nila. Gawa nga ng front and center ang ating turismo sa pagbangon ng ekonomiya, this matter is being taken seriously. However, the DOH will still have a major say in it. So, kailangan magkatugma iyong ating DOH at ang ating DOT and other agencies bago tayo mag-revise ng ating mask policy.

Q: Secretary, itanong ko lang ha, kasi last week, pumutok iyong balita doon sa forging ng signature ni Pangulong Marcos tungkol sa isang appointment. Any update about that, Secretary?

PRESS SEC. ANGELES: Ang pagkaintindi ko, nagpatawag both ang NBI at ang CIDG ng ilang mga tao ukol dito. I think mag-uumpisa sila doon sa mga nag-publish noong impormasyon, not necessarily for purposes of making them respondents ha, pero to get information. So, after that, hindi po namin masyadong inuusisa to give the investigators a free hand in determining, not just the facts, but the possible accused in the matter. So, wala pa po ako, other than the fact na nagpapatawag sila. May second round sila ng mga ipinatawag. But I am not privy to who they are.

Q: Iyong very emphatic si Presidente kahapon before the Filipino community regarding iyong mga benefits na puwedeng gawin ng gobyerno [unclear] especially na nandiyan iyong tungkol sa pag-aalaga sa kalusugan at sa pag-aaral ng mga anak and even pabahay, may nabanggit ang Pangulo. Ano iyong mga specific action na puwedeng i-implement at puwedeng ma-avail noong ating mga kababayang OFWs?

PRESS SEC. ANGELES: Specific actions, wala pa po tayong specific programs, kasi direktiba nga ng gobyerno sa bawat ahensiya na pangalagaan ang mga pangangailangan ng ating mga OFWs, particularly when it comes to taking care of their families. So, there are certain policies that are being reviewed on health and housing primarily. Pinag-uusapan po, hindi pa kasi tapos eh. So we need to, for example, for health insurance, it requires some computation, so kapag natapos po iyon ay i-a-announce natin.

Napag-usapan po ito several times and the President has directed the formulation of policies for that specific purpose.

Q: It would be DMW who will spearhead or any other agency?

PRESS SEC. ANGELES: It depends, for example, ang healthcare, the policy can emanate both from DMW, the DOLE, PhilHealth, DOH or other related agencies. It depends kung ano po iyong mapagkakasunduan.

MODERATOR: Maraming salamat po, Press Secretary Atty. Trixie Cruz-Angeles at sa mga kasama nating media delegation dito sa Singapore.

PRESS SEC. ANGELES: Maraming salamat. Thank you.

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