

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY
News and Information Bureau

**DFA PRE-DEPARTURE PRESS BRIEFING ON PBBM's WORKING VISIT
TO NEW YORK, USA FOR THE 77th UNGA
SEPTEMBER 15, 2022**

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Magandang hapon po, ako po si Trixie Cruz-Angeles, Press Secretary. So ngayong araw na ito, ang ating mga panauhin ay ang Department of Foreign Affairs ukol sa pagdalo ng ating Pangulo sa UN General Assembly.

So, Usec. Gregg, could you please introduce our speakers.

USEC. EUGENIO: Magandang hapon po, Malacañang Press Corps, DFA Press Corps at ang kasama natin sa FOCAP. Nandito po tayo ngayon sa ating press briefing, kasama nga po si Atty. Trixie Cruz-Angeles, ang ating Press Secretary; kabilang ang mga Department of Foreign Affairs officials na sina Ambassador Maria Teresita Daza, ang ating spokesperson ng DFA, at Assistant Secretary Kira Danganan-Azucena, at Assistant Secretary Jose Victor Chan-Gonzaga. Secretary?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Maraming salamat, Usec. Gregg.

Bago po ang briefing ng ating mga guests for today, ia-announce ko lang po muna ang pag-appoint ng ilan sa ating mga opisyal ng Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). Deputy Director General Aniceto dela Rosa Bertiz III has been appointed. And there are two other deputies Director General who are coterminous with the appointing authority in particular: Josefino Isaac Torres, vice Lina Sarmiento; and Teresita Machiavelli Casugbo Mali; vice Gabriel Luis Quisumbing. Iyon lang po and I turn this over now for the briefing of the DFA.

AMBASSADOR DAZA: A pleasant good afternoon to everyone. We thank the Office of the Press Secretary for the opportunity to partner in the conduct of this joint press briefing. For the members of the Malacañang and DFA Press Corps, this second joint press briefing focuses on the forthcoming participation of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. in the High-level Week of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly and his working visit to New York.

We're happy to have two senior career diplomats – Assistant Secretary Kira Danganan-Azucena and Assistant Secretary Jose Victor Chan-Gonzaga who have served in various capacities both in the home office and Foreign Service post, join us this afternoon.

Assistant Secretary Kira Danganan-Azucena currently heads the office of the United Nations and International Organization (UNIO) which is in charge of Philippine engagement with UN system and other multilateral fora while concurrently serving as the chief of staff in the Office of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. She has also served as the Deputy Permanent Representative in our mission in New York, in the Philippine Embassy in Rome, and the consulate general in New York and Hong Kong.

Asec. Kira will deliver the statement on the President's participation in the 77th UNGA. Her statement will be followed by that of Assistant Secretary Jose Victor Chan-Gonzaga who heads the office of American affairs, and who will provide updates on the other engagements and activities of the President while in New York.

Asec. JV has served as the consul general and minister of economic affairs of the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C. He has also been assigned and served as the CDA of our permanent mission to the World Trade Organization in Geneva. At the home office, he was director for human rights and humanitarian affairs, director for trade, economic and finance matters, and legal officer of UNIO.

After our two assistant secretaries have spoken, both OPS and DFA will facilitate the question-and-answer session. We will alternately call members of the Malacañang Press Corps and the DFA Press Corps, starting with the Malacañang Press Corps. May I now invite Asec. Kira to deliver her statement, followed by Asec. JV.

Thank you.

ASEC. DANGANAN-AZUCENA: Thank you, Ambassador Daza, and good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen from the media. My name is Kira Christianne D. Azucena. I am the Assistant Secretary of the Office of the United Nations and International Organization (UNIO) of DFA. My office manages and coordinates the Philippines' engagement with the United Nations including the country's participation in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

The President will travel to New York next week to participate in the opening of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly. He will deliver the Philippine national statement at the high-level general debate of the opening, and his speaking slot is approximately 3:15 in the afternoon of Day 1 – that's Tuesday, September 20, 2022.

The theme of this year's general debate is, "A Watershed Moment: Transformative Solutions to Interlocking Challenges." We can expect the President's statement to identify these challenges and the solutions to address them, the role of the United Nations, and how the Philippines intends to contribute to these efforts.

The President's statement will also articulate his administration's priorities which include climate change, the rule of law and food security.

Around 152 other heads of state and government will participate in the high-level general debate. The President will take this opportunity to meet with some of them during his stay in New York. He will also meet with some key United Nations officials.

The President's participation in the opening of the UNGA 77 is important because it marks his first engagement with the United Nations which the Philippines recognizes as the world's most important multilateral organization.

In the UN's program of activities, the high-level general debate is the most important event politically because this is where world leaders articulate policy statements on world affairs and international relations. It is extensively covered by global media and monitored by policy analysts, governments, academics and CSOs.

This year's general debate is also significant because it is the first one to be held completely in person since the pandemic hit in 2020. The general debates in 2020 and 2021 were virtual, where statements were delivered via pre-recorded videos. Former President Duterte participated in the last two general debates through a pre-recorded video.

Thank you.

ASEC. CHAN-GONZAGA: Thank you, Ambassador Daza, and good afternoon, everyone. Good afternoon, Secretary Angeles. Thank you, Asec. Kira, for the briefing on the President's participation at the 77th UN General Assembly this year.

As we all know, the President is very focused on the economy. So coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and with much uncertainty and disruption around us, the President is not sparing any effort to address the economic challenges facing the country today.

The President has made it very clear from the initial discussions preparatory to this trip to New York that it will be more than his debut on the world stage. He gave unequivocal instructions that his meetings, whether with fellow world leaders or with US corporations, should focus on finding the necessary partnerships or synergies that will benefit the Philippine economy and the Filipino people.

As such, the other most important speech that the President will deliver in New York, aside from his UNGA address, will be at an economic briefing. This briefing is expected to attract institutional investors, senior corporate executives, business analysts, and even academic think tanks and entrepreneurs. This briefing will be an opportunity to outline the key economic priorities of his administration with a special focus on how we can hopefully expand and strengthen Philippine-US trade and investment relations during his term.

At this briefing, the economic managers will also speak to some of the macro-economic and sectoral issues that might be of interest to potential US investors and partners. We expect them to be joined by a couple of Philippine private sector leaders.

The President will then participate in CEO roundtables on targeted sectors. These roundtables are designed to project the Philippines as an important emerging economy and investment destination in Asia. Present will be companies that are operating in the Philippines and with expansion plans, as well as those who are planning to invest in the country in the near future.

On the other hand, we expect the one-on-one business meetings of the President to deal with priority areas that can engender a quick post-pandemic economic recovery and the long-term resilience of the Philippine economy.

The President intends to meet with US companies that would be able to contribute to our efforts to achieve food security, energy security and sustainable economic development among others.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, the President is expected to meet with the US Chamber of Commerce, the US-ASEAN Business Council, and the US-Philippine Society. At these engagements, he will be able to have wide-ranging and candid discussions with political, business and community leaders on raising the profile of the Philippines in the United States, contributing to the President's economic agenda and strengthening Philippine-US political, economic and cultural ties.

I'll stop here. Maraming salamat po.

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Thank you very much to Assistant Secretaries from the Department of Foreign Affairs. Usec. Gregg, may you please begin the question-and-answer portion.

USEC. EUGENIO: So, who would like to ask questions? Ivan Mayrina of GMA News.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Magandang hapon po sa lahat. Puwede pong malaman kung sino ang magiging bahagi ng official delegation ng Pangulo?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: I think this may be answered by the DFA...

DFA ASEC. DANGANAN-AZUCENA: Thank you for the question. If I may answer it, as part of the President's engagement with the United Nations, we had to submit a letter of credentials for the Philippine delegation. And in that list which was—which is quite long, we do have a number of Cabinet Secretaries included as well as the number of Undersecretaries and other support staff representing the different government agencies which include the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Finance, NEDA and other—the Department of Migrant Workers and other agencies.

I don't have the list with me but that's essentially the composition of the letter of credentials. I also know that there is quite a substantial—this delegation, I leave that to Asec. JV to address. Thank you.

DFA ASEC. CHAN-GONZAGA: Yes. Thank you, Asec. Kira. Well, we just confirmed that indeed there will be... about 20 to 30-member of business delegation composed of senior Philippine corporate executives who will be joining the President in New York for this particular trip. I'll leave that to; I think DTI or the Palace to issue the final list of business delegates who will be accompanying the President. Thank you.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Isa na lamang po. Naikasa po ba ang meeting in the sidelines with US President Joe Biden at sinu-sino pa pong mga world leaders kaya ang na-arrange na makakapulung ng Pangulo?

DFA ASEC. CHAN-GONZAGA: Thank you for the question. I just speak to the specific issue about President Biden. We're still in consultations with the White House and of course the National Security Council in Washington DC. Ambassador Romualdez is personally dealing with the matter, and I would understand that if there's gonna announcement, it will probably coming there from Secretary Manalo or from Ambassador Romualdez – and obviously that will have to be coordinated with the White House as well. Thank you.

TRISTAN NODALO/CNN PHILS: Hi, good afternoon po. Follow up ko lang po doon sa topics that will be covered by the President's speech sa UNGA. As you mentioned po kanina may mga ilang general topics na but in the last two UNGA of President Duterte, na-highlight po doon iyong position on the South China Sea and the arbitral ruling. Are we also expecting that there will be this assertion as well from President Marcos na ibi-bring niya po sa international community, itong issue po on the South China Sea? Thank you.

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: DFA...

DFA ASEC. DANGANAN-AZUCENA: Thank you, Sec. Trixie, and thank you for the question. In the draft statement that the DFA prepared for the President, there is a very strong question on the rule of law and the role of UNCLOS. But of course, there will be [unclear] there, the statement from speeches of the President, they're usually vetted by the Office of the President. So, beyond that, I cannot offer any further comments. Thank you.

TRISTAN NODALO/CNN PHILS: Thank you po.

CELERINA MONTE/NHK: Good afternoon po. I have a few questions, like follow up on Ivan Mayrina's question. Aside from President Biden, who could be the other president whom our head of state, that the President would be having a bilateral meeting? Would that include Japanese Prime Minister Kishida?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: DFA... We'll add to that, but I would like the DFA to answer first.

DFA ASEC. DANGANAN-AZUCENA: Thank you, Sec., and thank you for the question. What I can say at this point is that we do have a number of confirmed meetings at the leader's level involving the President. But we are not inclined to disclose at this point kung sino po iyong mga kausap niya. But definitely once the meetings have been conducted, there will be a statement/press release on these meetings – as soon as they're done. Thank you.

CELERINA MONTE/NHK: So, from up to when the President will be in New York, and will it be only in New York, not in any other states po in the US?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: There are no plans for any other—the primary purpose which there'll be the UN General Assembly and that is the main purpose of the trip. There are no amounts—no calendared activities other than that and those congruent are collateral to this address. Well of course, aside from the... what he usually does, meeting with the Filipino community when the opportunity arises.

Will the DFA like to add?

DFA ASEC. DANGANAN-AZUCENA: No, ma'am. Thank you.

CELERINA MONTE/NHK: Iyong dates po from when—he will be delivering the speech on the 20th but when will he leave and when will he come back to Philippines?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: I understand that he leaves the Philippines on the 18th and will return... if I'm not mistaken, DFA please confirm, on the 24th. DFA, I got my dates, right? All right, that's it. He leaves the Philippines on the 18th, returns on the 24th. He leaves New York on the 24.

CELERINA MONTE/NHK: Thank you.

HANNAH SANCHO/SMNI: Good afternoon, everyone. Ma'am, confirm ko lang po... hindi pa sure iyong Filipino community na meeting—na hindi pa possible iyong... or hindi pa sure na magkakaroon ng meeting si President Marcos sa Filipino community dito sa New York?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: We'll be making an announcement on the details at a later date.

HANNAH SANCHO/SMNI: All right. Thank you so much, ma'am.

JOB MANAHAN/ABS-CBN: Good afternoon po. I will just ask lang po if President Marcos would meet with China's Xi Jinping po? And follow up lang din po kung possible din po na makakapag-meet with Premier Kishida ng Japan po? Thank you.

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Well, for meetings... we are not at liberty to make any announcements particularly since we were... we will be making final announcements when we get to New York as the occasion arises. So, I hope you understand.

JOB MANAHAN/ABS-CBN: Okay po. Tapos follow up question lang po. What are the topics that President Marcos will discuss during UNGA and ano po iyong possible na i-raise niya kung makikipag-meet siya sa iba pong leaders?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Well in general, we don't announce the details of the speech until actually it's been made 'no. But in this case, the President's primary objective and in fact this mean policy in his governance, in this administration is economic recovery. And so all activities, particularly, even those presidential activities that are related to this particular vision. So we are going to expect that his speech will be relating to how the Philippines will be recovering from this pandemic and where he intends to take this, and how he will do so in cooperation with other states. Are you okay?

Q: Yes po, thank you very much.

Q: Good afternoon, Ma'am/Sir. I just want to follow up on Celerina's question earlier about the itinerary. So, he is leaving on the 18th, may we know the time and what kind of coverage arrangements will there be at the airport? As well as clarification lang on the time of the speech is 3:15 PM, September 20th, that's East Coast time right? So that would be 3:15 AM Wednesday in the Philippines?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: DFA, with regard to the time of the speech, could you please clarify?

DFA ASEC. AZUCENA: Thank you, Ma'am, and thank you for the question. The President will speak, he is speaker number two on day one of the afternoon session of the general debate, and the afternoon session usually start at 3:00 o'clock. And world leaders will deliver their respective statements, are usually given courtesy time limit – courtesy, officers who would courtesy time limit of 20 minutes. But of course, if they go beyond 20 minutes, then moderator is in a position to stop them. So, that is why I said in my opening statement that the estimated time of delivery of the President's statement at the general debate is around 3:15 to 3:30 in the afternoon, New York time.

Q: Hi, magandang hapon po. Secretary Trixie, I gathered the Vice President is scheduled to have also a meeting, an Education Summit Meeting. But, is she pushing through, because I heard that the schedule is supposed to be September 17 to 19?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: I'm afraid, we are going to have to refer to the Department of Education for these details.

Q: All right. Of course, the President and the Vice President are not allowed to go out of the country at the same time, right?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Are you saying that is it a matter of policy that both the President and the Vice President don't leave the country at the same time? I think more than policy, it's simply a matter of prudence to have somebody in charge. It doesn't mean that they are absolutely not allowed to, but it is simply prudent to do so.

Q: So, is she not or is she coming to the Education Summit as well?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Like I said, we will have to refer to the Department of Education for the schedule of the Vice President.

Q: But you have to coordinate right on their schedule?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: In general, yes, they do.

Q: How about the DFA, I think you will be swamped with two heads there. Is the Vice President coming to the Education Summit?

DFA ASEC. AZUCENA: Thank you for the question. If I may, Sec. Trixie, we did receive confirmation from the Office of the Vice President that she will not be attending the Education Summit. So, on her stead, Secretary Manalo will attend the summit. Thank you.

Q: So, let me just clarify if it's in deference to the schedule of the President?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: The President has not mentioned the motives for the Vice President asking the Secretary of Foreign Affairs to go in her stead.

Q: Okay. All right, fair enough. Okay, another question if I may?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Yes.

Q: So, aside from that schedule of the Vice President, another global event is also happening on the other side of the globe, which is in the UK, which is the state funeral. Is that the reason you are not telling us the schedule of the President's meeting with other state leaders, because some other state leaders are also at the funeral of the queen?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Madam, I think that if we weren't telling you something, we won't be prudent telling you the reason for not telling you something. So, there is no indication of an unscheduled visit or meeting other than what has already been announced and agreed upon with the DFA.

Q: It doesn't say anything, Madam? Why the secrecy of not telling us who is the President meeting?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: There is no secrecy, Madam. We have no information on that. Nothing has been discussed with the DFA and so, when you ask if there is such a meeting, there is none, unless something else comes up later on. But, assuming that there is one and that it involved some level of secrecy, the diplomatic talks are exempt from disclosure, precisely because some things might happen and international relations and dialogues are sensitive in nature. However, what we can assure you is that, if something does come up, then we will make the announcement immediately.

Q: I have the impression, Madam, that you are going to announce it after the meeting, right? After the meeting has taken place, right?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: No, Madam. I cannot control your impressions, but I can only tell you what information is available right now.

Q: Okay, so among the 150 other leaders that will be joining the UNGA, can you tell us exactly, maybe a ballpark figure on how many is the President scheduled or at least at the very least, at the pipeline of meeting him?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: I think I will have to defer to the DFA for this one.

DFA ASEC. AZUCENA: Thank you, Madam Secretary. It's hard to even give a ballpark figure, because the way these things go, requests are coming in from many sides and given that we are dealing with heads of state here, sometimes the final schedules and even whether the meeting will take place in the first place, up and down, very close to the date already. So, more than anything is really just a question of prudence on whether we should make the announcement or not precisely because things tend to be very fluid in setting with these meetings. Thank you.

USEC. GREGGY EUGENIO: Thank you, Asec. I think there will be no more questions.

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: The DFA Press Corps will be asking questions.

AMBASSADOR DAZA: There are a number of questions that have already been answered but there are some that may be good to actually raise and I will do it as a group because some are actually similar. One question that has been raised is what would be the significance of President Marcos's speech and address in the UNGA, and related to that is the question from Vera Files. What is the President aiming to achieve when he goes to UNGA? What are the issues that he will bring to the UN in his speech?

The issue of the window of giving the statement has already been answered. And also related to that is how does President Marcos' physical participation in the UNGA and his visit to the United States takes significance considering that the former—and I'm reading this which is not totally accurate, considering former President Duterte never physically attended the summit and never visited the US during his trip. As mentioned earlier, President Duterte may not have gone but he did actually participate in the UNGA virtually. So, these three [unclear] of questions that are more or less related.

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: We have already mentioned that purpose of the visit and the President's primary policy that his intent with the administration is to—for economic recovery and therefore his activities are always pursuant to that. His speech will be in pursuit of that so in fact the delegation is composed primarily of his economic team plus. If there are any more details, will the DFA like to add to this?

Are there any further questions?

AMBASSADOR DAZA: Yes, Madam Secretary. The other question that came also from [unclear] Santos is as follows: The President has a standing contempt order in the United States although certain US officials have said that President Marcos could not be arrested for diplomatic immunity. Does the President aim to settle the contempt order once and for all when he goes to United States?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: DFA? No, yes? All right. It is not part of the agenda as far as we can see.

Thank you. Are there further questions?

AMBASSADOR DAZA: This was actually also raised but I think has been partially answered. Does he plan to visit Washington during his US trip? And also related to that: The meeting with President Biden if it go, when will this more or less be, and what will be the areas or topics to be discussed?

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: I'm afraid that for state visits and meetings with other heads of state, then this will be subject to ongoing talks between the two states. As mentioned by the DFA, things are pretty fluid so we will be making announcements as soon as we can [unclear] any [unclear] particular day. I hope you'll be patient, these things are subject to a lot of back-and-forth between the representatives of both states. It's kind of educational for all of us.

Other questions?

USEC. EUGENIO: Secretary, we have question from Joseph Pedrajas of Manila Bulletin.

JOSEPH PEDRAJAS/MANILA BULLETIN: Good afternoon po. For the DFA po that will also be part of the delegation. What is expected from the agency po and if I heard it right, Secretary Manalo will be attending on behalf of the VP in the Education Summit? So, who will represent the DFA in the UNGA po? Thank you.

PRESS SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: DFA, please...

AMBASSADOR DAZA: Thank you for the question and thank you, Madam Secretary. Well, the DFA will be represented at its highest levels, which is Secretary Manalo himself, but he will be assisted by a couple of undersecretaries and ourselves, Asec. JV and myself and some support staff. Definitely, in all of the activities of the President where Secretary Manalo's assistance and presence are required, SFA will be there as well.

JOSEPH PEDRAJAS/MANILA BULLETIN: Okay, ma'am, but any meeting with the counterpart po?

AMBASSADOR DAZA: Well, Secretary Manalo himself also has a number of meetings lined up with his counterpart foreign ministers of other countries. As I've mentioned before, even for him, we choose not to disclose at this point which countries these are. But we will definitely make an announcement as soon as these are confirmed.

JOSEPH PEDRAJAS/MANILA BULLETIN: Okay. Last na lang, ma'am. Any topic po na madi-discuss kaya?

AMBASSADOR DAZA: Sorry, what?

JOSEPH PEDRAJAS/MANILA BULLETIN: Any topic po na madi-discuss?

AMBASSADOR DAZA: At the level of foreign minister, they usually talk about bilateral relations in general. And if there are specific topics in his bilateral relations that need special discussions, those will be discussed.

JOSEPH PEDRAJAS/MANILA BULLETIN: Thank you, ma'am.

USEC. EUGENIO: Okay, thank you, and for our last question, Karen Lema of Reuters.

KAREN LEMA/REUTERS: Hi, sir. Hi, Secretary. Just a quick question, ma'am: Before the President assumed the presidency, when was the last time he visited the United States?

AMBASSADOR DAZA: I'm sorry. You're asking when the last time the President visited the United States before he became president?

KAREN LEMA/REUTERS: Yes.

AMBASSADOR DAZA: Actually, I'm not sure. I don't have that information right now. Probably, I have to get back to you on that one.

KAREN LEMA/REUTERS: Thank you, ma'am. Appreciate it.

USEC. EUGENIO: Okay [garbled]. Thank you. Thank you so much for our DFA officials – Ambassador Daza, spokesperson; Assistant Secretary Kira Danganan-Azucena and Assistant Secretary Jose Victor Chan-Gonzaga. Maraming salamat po.

Secretary, would you like to—

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Yeah, hold on. Sure. Are there any other questions not relating to the foreign visit, to the UN General Assembly? Malacañang Press Corps? Wala?

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA: Nagtatanong po ang Commission on Human Rights, kailan daw po magkakaroon ng appointees kasi nagretiro po ang lahat ng mga commissioners nitong Mayo at hanggang ngayon po ay walang mga nakaupo opisyal sa Commission on Human Rights?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Okay. I can't really say when the appointment is going to be made. I understand that it is already under consideration. So maybe any day now, I'm not sure. But like I said, it has been under consideration already.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA: Maraming salamat po.

Q: Yes, hello. I hope you can hear me, babasahin ko lang iyong question na pinadala ko po sa chat. Is there any comment from Malacañang or the DFA on the hundreds of Filipinos reported to be stranded in US Military Base, on Diego Garcia Island in the Indian Ocean? This is relation daw po to an American contractor and there is a wage dispute that's ongoing, while the Department of Migrant workers has asked the employer to raise the wages. At ina-alleged po ng Department of Migrant Workers na kinansel daw po iyong chartered flights for these Filipinos. So, I am wondering if the Palace and the DFA could comment, and will this be brought up during the US trip?

PRESS. SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Whether or not, it's going to be brought up, we will have to see about that one. But for the moment, we are relying upon and monitoring through the Department of Migrant Workers. So, it's still in the hands of Sec. Toots, we will wait for her report, Malacañang will rely heavily on the people who are directly involved in this one. So, we will comment upon receiving her report.

Q: Thank you and if the DFA will also like to comment?

USEC. GREGGY EUGENIO: I think DFA is not already anymore already in Zoom. So, we will ask the question, Madame.

Q: Ma'am, good afternoon po. Can we get a Palace statement po regarding sa statement po na sinabi ni World Health Organization Director General Tedros Ghebreyesus na pandemic daw po is... we are in a better position to end the pandemic. We are not there yet, but the end is inside. Puwede pong makahingi ng Palace statement regarding that po?

PRESS. SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: We are not reacting to that statement, but we are continuing with our economic recovery program and pursuant to that, our very recent relax mask mandate is also pursuant to that one. So, if the World Health Organization is optimistic, then so are we in our outlook to recovering from this pandemic.

Q: Thank you po, Ma'am.

USEC. GREGGY EUGENIO: Okay, thank you. Maraming salamat po, Press Secretary Atty. Trixie Cruz-Angeles. Sa atin pong DFA Press Corps, FOCAP at ang Malacañang Press Corps. Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

PRESS. SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Thank you.

##

--

News and Information Bureau - Transcription Section