

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE**  
**News and Information Bureau**

**PRESS BRIEFING OF MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ**  
**WITH NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (NEDA) SECRETARY**  
**ARSENIO BALISACAN**

FEBRUARY 3, 2023 [11:07 A.M. – 11:28 A.M.]

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** [Magandang umaga, Malacañang Press Corps, happy Friday and welcome to our press briefing today.

Before we end this week, we have some very good news to share regarding our health infrastructure. The National Economic Development Authority Board chaired by our President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has approved the University of the Philippines – Philippine General hospital (UP-PGH) Cancer Center – a public-private partnership project aimed at modernizing the country's health infrastructure on oncology services and cancer care.

Napakagandang balita nito; at para ibahagi sa atin ang detalye ng proyektong iyan, makakasama natin ngayon ang Kalihim ng NEDA or National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan. Sir, go ahead...

**NEDA SEC. BALISACAN:** Thank you. Let me greet everyone especially Spokesperson Daphne Paez and members of the Malacañang Press Corps, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Apart from the UP-PGH project that Spokesperson Daphne has mentioned, I would like to share with you and I am pleased to announce that the NEDA Board, chaired by our President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., approved seven high-impact projects during the third meeting of the NEDA Board yesterday.

These projects are expected to significantly contribute to achieving our social and economic transformation goal in the medium-term. First on the list is what has been mentioned, the approval of the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital or UP-PGH Cancer Center for public-private partnership. The NEDA Board approved the solicited build-transfer-operate proposal for the cancer center which will offer comprehensive, high quality and affordable oncology care services while helping pay for itself *[technical problem]*... in 2023.

The NEDA Board also approved an increase in cost of the MRT 3 Rehabilitation Project by 7.6 billion pesos; from 21.9 billion to 29.6 billion pesos.

The NEDA Board likewise approved the utilization of the JICA loan balance – that is Japan International Cooperation Agency – of 2.12 billion pesos for the CNS/ATM (Communications, Navigation and Surveillance Systems for Air Traffic Management) or that is Communication, Navigation, Satellite Air Traffic Management maintenance and resiliency enhancement.

I now turn to the discussion of these projects. The NEDA Board confirmed the Investment Coordination Committee or ICC approval of the new Dumaguete Airport Development Project of the Department of Transportation. Under this project, a new airport facility in Bacong, Negros Oriental will be developed with domestic and international standards for operational safety and efficiency. This project will replace the existing Dumaguete-Sibulan Airport due to physical and operational constraints involving the latter.

The new Dumaguete Airport shall enhance the province tourism and trade potential economic activities and standard of living. The total project cost amounts to 17 billion pesos, of which 13 billion will be funded through ODA or Official Development Assistance from the Korean government through the Export-Import Bank of Korea Economic Development Cooperation Fund. The Philippine government through the DOTr will shoulder the remaining amount of about 3.9 billion pesos. The project will be implemented within seven years.

Also approved was the Department of Agriculture's Mindanao Inclusive Agriculture Development Project or MIDP which aims to increase agricultural productivity, resiliency and access to markets and services of organized farmers and fisherfolk groups in selected areas. This agriculture development project cover selected ancestral domains in Mindanao from Regions IX, X, XI, XII, XIII and the BARMM.

The project will be pivotal in reducing poverty, unemployment and food insecurity among indigenous peoples. It will improve the economic situation of the indigenous peoples in Mindanao and further strengthen the capacity of LGUs to implement support programs that address weak market linkages and poor infrastructure in geographically-isolated ancestral domains. The project's estimated total cost is 6.6 billion pesos of which 5.3 billion is to be financed through ODA loan from the World Bank, while the balance of 863 million and 461 million will be shouldered by the Philippine government through the Department of Agriculture and LGUs respectively.

The NEDA Board also confirmed the ICC approval of the first phase of the Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project of the Department of Public Works and Highways. The project aims to mitigate flood damage, reduce flood risk and improve climate resilience in three major river basins in the country.

The first phase of this flood resilience project will have the following outputs: The improvement of strategic flood risk management planning; the development of flood production infrastructure in three target major river basins namely Abra, Ranao and Tagum-Libuganon in Mindanao; and lastly, the strengthening of community-based flood risk management measures. The project with an estimated cost of 20 billion pesos is to be financed through an ODA loan from the Asian Development Bank.

Further, the NEDA Board also approved the request for changes on two ongoing projects of the DOTr and the DPWH. The NEDA Board confirmed the ICC approval of the DOTr's request for changes and scope, increase in cost and extension of the implementation period for the Davao Public Transport Modernization Project. The project involves delivering a modern, high-priority bus system for Davao City wherein interconnected bus services will be prioritized along 29 routes. The implementation period for this project is extended from 2023 to 2029.

The NEDA Board confirmed the DOTR's request for changes in scope, project cost increase, implementation period extension, additional loan, and second loan reallocation of the Metro Rail Transit Line 3 or MRT 3 Rehabilitation Project. This project involves upgrading MRT 3 to its original as-designed state with provision for capacity expansion in the future. All subsystems will be restored, renewed, or upgraded, including the tracks, signaling system, power supply system, overhead catenary system, and communication system as well as maintenance and station equipment.

The project will also involve integrating other MRT 3-related projects such as the common station, the Dalian trains, and the transition to a four-car train configuration. This rehabilitation project

aims to enhance the safety and level of service of the MRT 3 and to promote its use to help alleviate the worsening traffic congestion in Metro Manila.

Lastly, the NEDA Board approved the expansion of the scope of the 24, November 22, 2022, NEDA Board approval to include the utilization of that 2.12 billion JICA loan or loan balance for the communications, navigations, surveillance, air traffic management system maintenance, and resiliency enhancement with the following component, maintenance contracts, ultimate fall back system and the feasibility study for the independent back-up system.

The approval includes a 60-month loan with a validity extension from 2023 to 2028 to cover their preceding intended utilization. This approval shall enable the upgrade of our eight-transport facilities and improved passenger experience by enhancing the safety, reliability, and efficiency of our air traffic service in Philippine Air Space following international standards.

In line with the strategies identified under the Philippine Development Plan 2023 to 2028, the approval of these high-impact projects is a manifestation of the Marcos administration's strong commitment to improving the quality of life of the Filipino people. In the next six years, we can look forward to seeing more of our agencies and sectors working hand in hand toward creating a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient society.

Thank you and have a pleasant day to all.

**MISS PAEZ:** Thank you, Secretary Balisacan. Are there any questions from the floor? Okay, Eden Santos of NET25.

**EDEN SANTOS/NET25:** Good morning po, Secretary Balisacan. Kanina po nabanggit ninyo, nasabi ninyo na wala pong privatization sa pitong proyektong ito. Paano po natin ito matitiyak sa ating mga mamamayan at papaano po natin masisiguro na walang mangyayaring pass on itong mga loans na ito sa ating mga kababayan, kapag po in-avail na nila iyong mga serbisyo nitong mga proyekto na ito?

**NEDA SEC. BALISACAN:** This is a build transfer operate project at so doon mismo, the private sector or private partner will build the facility, they will design, will engineer, and construct the facility, then transfer it to the UP-PGH. And then, the private sector will operate the facility. The design of the project involves the delineation of the ward of the basic cancer facility and the private pay, for pay facilities. So, tig-150 beds yon 'no and the level of service will be the same for both cases. The only difference there is because the same doctors are attending to both types of patients.

The advantage doon, kasi instead na iyong mga doctors natin ay umaalis sa hospital, para lang makapag-private practice, para makapag-earn ng enough, dahil you know, government salary, you know it's rate. They don't have to leave the area so that they can practice and they can serve our people. So, the ward is really for the, that part of the facility is for the low-income groups.

**EDEN SANTOS/NET25:** Sir, FYI lang po, I am a cancer patient survivor at talaga pong napakamahal po ng magpagamot sa anumang klase ng cancer. Maganda pong proyekto ito ng ating Pangulo at sana nga ay mapakinabangan ng ating mga kababayan. Pero, paano po iyong assurance na baka sa unang taon lang o ilang taon okay pa, pero pagdating ng mga susunod na panahon, baka malaki na rin ang bayaran ng ating mga kababayan?

**NEDA SEC. BALISACAN:** Hindi mangyayari iyan kasi may kontrata, it's part of the contract na iyon masu-sustain as a ward iyong one half of the facility. So iyon mga earning, those who can afford to pay, mga mayayaman na nag-a-avail ng service ng PGH, marami iyon ha... they can afford naman to pay, so they pay and the part of that money can be used to subsidize those in the ward And so that the quality of the service can be the same.

**MISS PAEZ:** Just to reiterate, you mentioned of the 300 beds, 150 will be for charity and the other 150 is an option for the private health sector. Next, we have Harley Balbuena of DZME.

**HARLEY BALBUENA/DZME:** Good morning, Miss Daphne and Secretary Balisacan. My question, sir/Secretary, on the UP-PGH Cancer Center: Can we have a timeline on the date of the beginning of construction and the target date of its completion and opening to the public?

**NEDA SEC. BALISACAN:** Now that the project has been approved, it goes on now to the next process which is offering it to the public now for the bidding process. It has to be bidded, so the private potential private partners come in to present their proposals and then the selection of the private partner will come out of those proposals and then implementation na. So, we expect that to happen in the next five or so years, kasi matagal din iyong completion of a building, especially this type of facility.

**HARLEY BALBUENA/DZME:** Thank you po. On the other hand po, iyong approved increase in the cost of the MRT 3 rehab project. Do you think, sir, this might result in a fare hike to our MRT 3 passengers?

**NEDA SEC. BALISACAN:** The intention here is to improve the capacity because the—we'll increase the number of cars and reduce the interval time and make the whole system safe and provide passengers good experience. Now, the system is being prepared also for eventual O&M-PPP in the future. But then again, the public consideration, the public interest consideration is always high in the agenda of the government.

So, hindi mangyayari iyan, even if, eventually in the future, mai-PPP natin iyong operations and maintenance because nakita naman ninyo, with the public operations and maintenance, the experience is not good and we think that a private sector operating it might be—is likely to give a better experience for passengers as we see it in other countries where a private sector operates the... not the construction because that's not viable for the private sector, but the operation and maintenance.

And of course, again, the contract has to be designed in such a way that we protect the interest of the riding public na walang ganoong sharp increases in—or unjustifiable increases in fare.

**HARLEY BALBUENA/DZME:** Thank you sir.

**MISS PAEZ:** Any other questions? Raise your hand, Ivan Mayrina of GMA7.

**IVAN MAYRNA/GMA7:** Sec., just a quick follow-up on the hospital. Is there going to be a separate structure to be built and where?

**NEDA SEC. BALISACAN:** Yeah, there is going to be a building within the UP-PGH compound and it's a 15 to 20 story-building, but both the ward and the for-pay part of the system will be on the same building so that the doctors can easily move from one area to another. And as you know,

it's also in the compound of the UP College of Medicine right? So, it will also be a good training ground for students, you know, medical students.

**IVAN MAYRNA/GMA7:** Thank you.

**MISS PAEZ:** Okay, any further questions? If there are none, I think we can close this press briefing. Thank you very much, Malacañang Press Corps, and thank you so much Secretary Balisacan. Have a good weekend everyone.

**NEDA SEC. BALISACAN:** Thank you, everyone.

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