

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**MEDIA INTERVIEW BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
FOLLOWING THE 86th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT
SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM (GSIS)**

[Held at the GSIS Gymnasium, GSIS Head Office in Pasay City | 31 May 2023]

Q: ...among the amendments po na na-adopt is 'yung absolute prohibition ng use or investments ng state pension funds. May we get sir your reaction on this?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: The use...? Yeah of course. Ah no... I perfectly agree. We have no intention of using ng pera – kukuha tayo ng pera ng pension fund. That's not the it's a – okay. *[How do I explain this?]* We will not use it as a seed fund.

However, if a pension fund, which is what pension funds do is they invest. If the pension fund decides the Maharlika Fund is a good investment, it's up to them if they want to invest in it. So not only pension fund but corporations. Mga fund -- iyan lang ang ginagawa nila pinapalaki nila ang pera nila para mayroon silang maibigay.

GSIS, this is precisely what they have been doing. They are making sure they are very solid, that they are very stable so that all the payments that they need to give out. So we have to differentiate those two things.

But no, we will not use it as a seed fund. We will not use pension fund as a seed fund.

Q: Sir, magandang umaga ho. Ano hong napag-usapan ho kanina sa nangyaring convergence meeting niyo ho sa NIA po?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, nagkaroon kami ng convergence meeting tungkol sa rice sector ng agrikultura. At iyong convergence meeting kagaya ng pangalan "convergence" dahil matagal ko nang sinasabi na 'yung value chain ng agrikultura ay mayroon namang mga elements of the value chain that are there. Iyon lamang they are not working together.

So ito 'yung gusto naming gawin ipag-converge nga lahat ng ahensiya ng pamahalaan and then to engage the private sector to come in and to partner with government, to partner with cooperatives, to partner with the individual farmers. Para lahat ng kakayahan natin not only a government but even as I said private sector, as individual, is directed in the same way.

And that way, this is – ang aming ginawang target is 97.4 – just to call it 97.5 percent self-sufficiency by 2028. Ninety-seven percent is sufficient. You do not have to really go to 100 percent kasi 'yung three percent iba 'yung mga niche products, 'yung mga organic, 'yung mga special na grain, Japanese rice, 'yung mga ganoon. Iyon hindi na natin kailangan i-provide 'yun. Pero at 97 percent masasabi na natin mapapakain na natin lahat ng ating mga kababayan ng may sapat na bigas and supply.

So that's what we talked about. We talked about the consolidation of the farmers dahil ang unang hakbang na kailangan nating gawin para magkaroon ng increased production at saka ibaba ang presyo ng produksyon ay kailangan i-mechanize. Hindi ka makapag-mechanize kung ang inaararo mo is only .6 hectares. Eh ganoon kung minsan ganoon lang 'yung lupa. So siguro kuliglig lang ang puwede mong gamitin. Hindi mo puwedeng gamitin 'yung tractor na malalaki which is very efficient. They can harvest 40 hectares in a day.

So these are the kinds of things that we were talking about. Also, the digitalization so that we provide good data to our farmers, the farmer leaders sa mga cooperatives.

So we are trying to consolidate the farms so that we can take full advantage of the economies of scale of the new technologies. Napag-usapan din natin speaking of new technologies is bringing down the average age of the Filipino farmer. And to do that again, we engage them with new technologies because they will be the ones who will operate those systems, those new technological systems. And that will make it interesting for young people to come in into the sector.

So in the end ganoon, 'yun ang aming pinag-usapan essentially it was the consolidation, digitalization of the rice sector and also the...

It is essentially a roadmap to the eventual goal of reaching 97.4 percent self-sufficiency for rice.

Q: Mr. President, magandang umaga po.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good morning.

Q: Good morning po. Sir, on the Bangkok-based business conglomerate which is planning to invest 2.5 billion dollars in agricultural technology. Ano kaya 'yung maaasahan natin dito in terms of food supply? And do we expect na makakabawas na ito ng ating importation?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: I didn't hear the first part. I'm sorry.

Q: Doon sa Bangkok-based...

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Doon sa Bangkok-based? 'Yung CP?

Q: Opo, 'yung mag-i-invest sila ng 2.5 billion dollars.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: This is precisely what I was talking about is the value chain. And sila, nabuo na nila sa Thailand privately ha -- they are a private company -- nabuo na nila 'yun sa Thailand 'yung value chain and more hanggang sa marketing all the way from R&D. Iyon lagi kong sinasabi, R&D hanggang marketing sila ang gumagawa o naibubuo nila.

So that's what I was saying and I kept saying, that's also what I was explaining to everyone earlier today was that I'm excited that... I know that we can do this because all the elements that are necessary are here. We have a good workforce. We have land. We have good scientists. We have good agriculturists, good agronomists, highly experienced. We have researchers.

We have all the elements but these elements do not seem to be in place right now. So that's what we are trying to do is to put all those elements together and they can help us dahil nagawa na nila.

At again, when it comes to -- they are very aggressive when it comes to the new technologies. Ang sabi nga nila, pinagmamalaki nila, sabi the last plant or the last farm that we organized is going -- is very different from the plant that we organized before that.

So I cannot tell you if it's a farm or a plant anymore. Agroindustry na talaga 'yung kanilang ginagawa.

So the reason being that pagka five years, three years later, they are going to build another plant. They use all the new technologies so naiwanan na 'yung nakaraan. That's where we want to be. That's how quickly we want to be moving and how agile we would like to be.

That's what we are hoping they can help us with and they have committed to do so.

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