

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**MEDIA INTERVIEW BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. FOLLOWING THE
CEREMONIAL TURNOVER OF THE FERTILIZER DONATION FROM THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

[16 June 2023]

Q: Good morning, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good morning.

Q: Sir, una sa lahat saan pong mga lugar sa bansa mapupunta itong donasyon Urea ng China? And may kondisyon po ba o qualifications para maging benepisyaryo nitong Urea fertilizer?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Papasok ito doon sa ating sistema ng voucher na binibigay natin pangtulong sa ating mga magsasaka. Ito ay para hindi magtaas ang presyo, hindi maging mas mahal. Hindi naman in-isolate (isolate) natin, inuna na muna natin dito sa Luzon so idi-distribute ito sa Luzon through the voucher system that we already have.

So, isasama na lang natin itong supply ng fertilizer na ito para lahat. Pagka nabigyan ang bawat farmer, mabibigyan sila ng kanilang voucher, kasama na ito doon sa kanilang kukunin.

Q: May napipisil na po ba kayo na maging Kalihim ng Department of Agriculture? 'Yun na lang po 'yung natitirang bakante na wala tayong leader.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Tinatanong ko sa kanilang lahat. Inaantay ko mag-volunteer sila mag-Secretary. Ayaw akong paalisin. So, hangga't matapos.

You know, the truth of the matter is, we have really managed to make some very important structural changes in the Department of Agriculture.

So, iniisa-isa natin 'yan. The problem had been was during the beginning of this year ay naging crisis lahat ng food supply, food prices, lahat fertilizer prices et cetera. Kaya napakalaking bagay nitong donation na binigay sa atin ng China.

We were just trying to put up emergency measures para naman mabigyan natin ng konting tulong at suporta ang ating mga magsasaka.

Ngayon, more or less, the prices of the agricultural commodities are beginning to stabilize. Now, we are going to make the structural changes that are important to increase production, number 1; to ensure the food supply of the Philippines, not only rice, but also corn, also fisheries, also livestock.

So, 'yan ang ating mga ginagawa ngayon para naman hindi na tayo umabot sa krisis na sitwasyon kagaya ng nadatnan natin after the pandemic.

Kaya't ang aking hangarin para sa DA ay pag iniwanan ko ang DA by that time, we will have systems in place so that we can guarantee the food supply of the Philippines, number 1;

(number 2) we can guarantee that the prices are affordable; and number 3, that our farmers make a good living.

So, hangga't matapos natin 'yun. I suppose you will just have to put up with me as DA Secretary.

Q: Thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Thank you.

Q: Good morning, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good morning.

Q: Sir, may we get an update on the review of Rice Tariffication Law? Ang inaalala po kasi nung ating mga magsasaka kahit lumakas ang ating produksyon, kailangan pa rin nilang makipagkumpetensiya sa imported na bigas.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, that has always been the case ... Kaya kailangan natin mag-import ng bigas dahil ang production cost nga natin ay mataas.

Kaya't ang presyo ng bigas dito sa Pilipinas ay ginagawa natin pagka nagkukulang ay nag-i-import tayo. Kaya't we always have to compete. Hindi natin maiiwasan mag-compete.

We just approved and rolled out the export, the plan for the export industries in the Philippines yesterday and that is something that we really have to be able to take advantage of.

Kasi sinasabi natin may RCEP, sinasabi natin may ASEAN, mayroon tayong mga free trade agreements. Maganda 'yan nabuksan ang merkado, both for our markets, both for our products to markets but also as supply for our importation.

Bababa ang tariff ng iba't ibang produkto pag nag-i-import ngunit mababawi naman natin 'yan sa export.

We have to learn to compete. Kaya't bukas ang merkado na 'yan hindi lang ibig sabihin dahil nabuksan na 'yan lahat ng export natin kukunin. We have to continue to compete. Pero hindi natin maiiwasan 'yun. Ganyan ang mundo ngayon. We are a global economy and we have to compete in the global economy and that is why our agriculture has to be brought to a level where we can say it is world-class and can compete with all the agricultural producers around the world, especially in our region.

Q: Good morning, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good morning.

Q: I would like to know from you. So, what's your expectation about the agriculture cooperation between China and the Philippines?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: It's very, very promising. As I mentioned in my remarks during the program, it turns out that the priority that we put here in the Philippines on agriculture, the Chinese government, as it was explained to me by President Xi when I went to visit him last

January was the same, that their outlook, that their priorities are the same. That there is food supply, that there is affordable food supply, that farmers are attended to and make a good living and to solidify and strengthen our agriculture commodities.

So, we can learn from one another in many, many ways. And I think that has been an ongoing process for a long time now. Not just now because of the food crisis that we are feeling around the world but also because we have very similar priorities when it comes to agriculture. So, I'm very optimistic.

Q: I have a follow-up. The question I'm supposed to ask yesterday but when the earthquake happened, so it's cut off. So, I would like to know from you, how are you looking forward --- economy, trade, and investment prospects between China and the Philippines especially after the RCEP took effect?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: I think, again, since the RCEP has now taken effect, it's clear that the volumes should increase and ... I am very optimistic that the trade between our two countries, China and the Philippines, not only in agriculture but in other aspects as well, I cannot see it lessening. I can only see it growing.

Thank you. Maraming salamat. Magandang umaga sa inyo. Thank you.

--- END ---