PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
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MEDIA INTERVIEW BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
FOLLOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF RICE IN SIARGAO ISLAND
[Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte | 29 September 2023]

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good morning. We just finished the very important launching. Na-roll out natin 'yung bagong programa na Food Stamp Program. Ito po ay mga ating ginagawa para --- we are looking after, not only the amount of food that people are eating but also the nutritional value of what they are eating so we are able to monitor that so we can advise people on how to balance their diets.

So, ganun lang ka-simple. But we are only starting. We will soon have it nationwide. Pero we piloted it here in Siargao for today.

And now, we also distributed the rice that we had seized from the warehouses. This came from Zamboanga to give to the 4Ps beneficiaries who are also here.

Q: Hi, sir. Magandang hapon. Sir, I have two questions. Number 1, since na-launch itong Walang Gutom Food Stamp, ilang buwan after noon sir, so far kumusta ang assessment ninyo? And my next question would be, sakali man pong maubos na 'yung mga na-confiscate na bigas, paano po masu-sustain ng gobyerno 'yung pamamahagi po ng bigas sa ating mga kababayan? Thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: The first part, well, we just started with the Food Stamp Program and it's really… We're still in a pilot stage right now.

But so far, I have to say, mukhang maganda naman ang nagiging resulta. The key always is --- how to make it accessible to ordinary citizens.

So, like the technology must be sufficient, sufficiently good that it's easy for anyone to pick up the habit of how to use it.

So far, maganda naman kasi. Maganda 'yung programa na ginagawa ng World Food Programme. Tinulungan tayo ng UN dito sa World Food Programme. Tinulungan tayo ng France. Tinulungan tayo ng ADB.

Ito po ang mga naging partner po natin sa pagbuo ng Food Stamp Program.

And right now, I would have to say that it's proceeding smoothly and we will be upscaling it within the next month or so. We are aiming at the next phase of this rollout. We are already looking to 30,000 families to be beneficiaries.

On the second, well, we will just have to --- if we are able to stop all the smuggling and all the hoarding then there will be no need for us to give it away because prices will be stabilized and prices will stay stabilized --- following the season too much.

But we have also instituted many other things, like the price control of course was an emergency measure which we are now studying to see if the market forces are already sufficient to take over. Then of course, the buying price of the NFA.

So, all of these is really being done to normalize the situation of relatively cheap rice for Filipinos.

So, if we ran out… That will be a great situation if we ran out of seized, smuggled rice because ibig sabihin wala ng masyadong smuggling, wala ng masyadong hoarding, mako-kontrol ang presyo.

So, that is the best way to maintain it. That is the long-term aspiration for all of these that we are doing. Thank you.

Q: Good afternoon, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Hi. Good afternoon.

Q: Mr. President, in regards pa rin sa agri. Mayroon tayo nung suspension niyo po nung pass-through fee sa mga LGUs…?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Ng alin?

Q: Pass-through fee, 'yung sa mga vehicles na kukuhanan sila ng bayad. Sir, paano ito makatutulong doon sa pagpapababa rin ng presyo bukod sa stoppage of smuggling dito sa Pinas?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: The reason sinuspende natin 'yung pass-through fees is because unang-una, iba-iba ang bawat bayan na dadaanan mo, maglalagay ng roadblock tapos mag-i-inspeksyon. Iba ang bayad bawat ano.

Habang nag-aantay ka, iniinspeksyon niya. I'm sure, nakikita ninyo ito may nakapila na mga truck na kahit overnight nandoon pa rin.

Kaya, ease of doing business ang ating ginagawa. We are doing this to ease doing business and to lower the cost of transportation kasi kung dire-diretso 'yung truck na makapunta doon sa pupuntahan niya talaga, mas mabilis. Ibig sabihin mas mura ang magiging transportation. So, isa 'yun sa ano.

Tapos dahil hindi na tinitigil sa bawat boundary, mas mabilis ang pagdaan. So, it's really about the ease of doing business. And to simplify, again, the procedures that are required for a transporter to bring the produce, especially from the farm to the market.

Q: Good afternoon, Mr. President. Sir, sa matagumpay na pagtatanggal ng barrier ng Philippine Coast Guard sa Scarborough na inilagay ng China, tinitingnan po ba ninyo na harassment ito para ipagpilitan ang claims ng China over the West Philippine Sea?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Para mag? Harassment ito para?

Q: Harassment po sa Pilipinas para ipagpilitan po ang kanilang claim over the West Philippine Sea? At kabilang din po sa naging kautusan po ba ninyo sa National Defense na tanggalin lahat ng mga structures na itinayo ng China within the Philippine Economic -- Exclusive Zone, sir?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Yes, again, many of these are operational issues that I really cannot talk about. But in terms of taking down the barrier, I don't see what else we could do dahil talaga 'yung mga fishermen…

Noong pinutol 'yung tali, 'yung mga nakapasok na fishermen, noong araw na 'yun, nakahuli sila ng 164 tons na isda. So, sa isang araw pa lang 'yun.

'Yun ang nawawala sa ating mga fisherman. Kaya't hindi naman maaari na lalagyan ng barrier na ganun at maliwanag naman na nasa loob ng Pilipinas 'yan.

Basta't… Hindi tayo naghahanap ng gulo. Basta't gagawin natin, patuloy natin ipapagtanggol ang Pilipinas, ang maritime territory ng Pilipinas, ang karapatan ng mga fisherman natin na mangisda doon sa mga areas kung saan na sila nangingisda daan-daang taon na kaya't hindi ko maintindihan ba't nagbago na ganito.

Basta't kagaya ng sabi ko, hindi… Umiiwas nga tayo sa gulo. Umiiwas tayo sa mga maiinit na salita. Ngunit matibay ang ating pagdepensa sa teritoryo ng Pilipinas.

Thank you.

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