

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

News and Information Bureau

**PRESS BRIEFING OF MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ WITH DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS SPOKESPERSON UNDERSECRETARY MARIA TERESITA DAZA AND
ASSISTANT SECRETARY AILEEN MENDIOLA-RAU**

January 26, 2024 [11:04 A.M. – 11:12 A.M.]

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Magandang umaga, Malacañang Press Corps, and welcome to sa ating pre-departure briefing ngayong Biyernes, January 26.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is set to depart next week for a state visit to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Officials of the two countries are expected to have bilateral meetings and to sign agreements on maritime cooperation and agriculture, and to strengthen various areas of cooperation.

We are joined today by the Department of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Undersecretary Maria Teresita Daza, and Assistant Secretary Aileen Mendiola-Rau to tell us more about the upcoming state visit of President Marcos to Vietnam.

Good morning, Ambassador Daza and Asec. Rau. Go ahead, ma'am.

AMBASSADOR DAZA: Good morning. A pleasant Friday to the Malacañang Press Corps and, of course, to the DFA Press Corps as well.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos will be conducting the state visit to Vietnam on 29 to 31 January 2024 upon the invitation of His Excellency Võ Văn Thưởng, President of Vietnam. It will be the first visit of the President to Vietnam since he assumed office in 2022 and it will also be the first outbound state visit for the year.

The President and the First Lady will be joined by key Cabinet members including our Secretary of Foreign Affairs and members of his economic team. During the visit, the President will meet with leaders of Vietnam, namely President Thưởng; His Excellency Phạm Minh Chính, Prime Minister of Vietnam; and His Excellency Vương Đình Huệ, Chairman of the National Assembly of Vietnam where discussions on the multifaceted relationship and ways of exploring deepening of cooperation across different fronts will be expected.

The President is also expected to meet with business sectors to promote trade and investment relations between the Philippines and Vietnam. And as expected, the President will also meet with the Filipino community where he will highlight our friendly relations with Vietnam, as well as the contribution of our community in promoting a positive image of the Philippines in the country. There are about 7,000 Filipinos working and residing in Vietnam, and most of them are actually professionals.

Allow me then to actually turn the mic to Assistant Secretary Rau who will then discuss the significance of the visit. Thank you.

ASEC. RAU: Thank you very much, Ambassador Daza. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the Malacañang and the DFA Press Corps.

As Ambassador Daza, our spokesperson, has mentioned that the President and the First Lady will be conducting their state visit to Vietnam from 29—to actually the 30th of January, not the 31st. This will be the first outbound visit of the President for this year. And we have selected Vietnam as the country because our relations with Vietnam have spanned for almost 50 years, with the establishment of bilateral relations in 1976. As the Philippines sole strategic partner region, our ties have spanned across various cooperation including defense and security, maritime, agriculture and people-to-people relations.

Further to this, our two countries have actually set a goal of boosting our bilateral trade to up to US\$10 billion in the coming years. Apart from meeting key government officials that Ambassador Daza has already mentioned, who have expressed their commitment to enhance bilateral trade with the Philippines, the President will meet the business leaders to encourage closer trade and investment cooperation between our two countries,

The state visit is in line with the President's commitment to ensure food security in the country noting that Vietnam has been a long-time partner and is committed to supporting the Philippines' rice requirement among others. So as we expected, the visit of the President would involve an in-depth discussion on our agricultural cooperation.

The state visit is also essential as the Philippines continue to stress the importance of ASEAN centrality by forging closer and stronger relations with fellow ASEAN member states. The President is also expected to tackle important regional and international issues with Vietnam in order to share views and perspective particularly on matters involving the ASEAN region.

We consider that this visit of the President would be a significant milestone in our ever-evolving relations with Vietnam. Thank you.

MS. PAEZ: Thank you. Now, we open the floor to questions from the press corps. Go ahead, Chona Yu.

CHONA YU/RADYO INQUIRER: Could you tell us more about sa rice agreement ng Pilipinas at Vietnam?

ASEC. RAU: The Department of Agriculture and their counterpart in Vietnam is working on agreement that will ensure the continued supply of rice to the Philippines. They are setting some targets. But more details on that will come soon, once we finish the negotiations on the rice deal.

CHONA YU/RADYO INQUIRER: Could you give us kahit ballpark figure, ma'am, kung ilang toneladang bigas ang bibilhin?

ASEC. RAU: I think that will be up to the President to announce at the end of the visit.

Q: How about the maritime agreement that's expected to be signed during the visit, may we get some details, ma'am?

ASEC. RAU: The maritime agreement that was I think the subject of a news article recently is actually an agreement between the coast guards of both side, and this is about capacity building. And as part of the agreement, they will discuss possible activities that they will conduct under this agreement.

ANALY SOBERANO/BOMBO RADYO: Ma'am, good morning. Ma'am, doon sa maritime agreement, kasama po bang pag-uusapan iyong isyu sa West Philippine Sea dahil may mga isyu rin ang Pilipinas and Vietnam doon?

ASEC. RAU: If it's on the MOU between the coast guards, it's a simple agreement on how both coast guards will cooperate with each other. Now, on maritime issues, there's a general topic on

maritime discussion under...when the President meets with the three Vietnamese leaders. But we don't wish to preempt the discussions at this point. Thank you.

MS. PAEZ: Anymore? We're good. Anything else would like to add? Okay, very short and sweet.

Thank you very much, Malacañang Press Corps. And thank you to our officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs. Magandang umaga sa inyong lahat. Thank you.

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