

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

**PRESS BRIEFING OF MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ
WITH DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT
(DBM) SECRETARY AMENAH PANGANDAMAN;
DBM UNDERSECRETARY JANEL ABUEL;
DBM UNDERSECRETARY ROLANDO TOLEDO
DBM ASSISTANT SECRETARY MARY ANNE DELA VEGA
AND PRINCIPAL ECONOMIST JOSELITO BASILIO
AUGUST 1, 2024 [11:50 A.M. – 12:43 P.M.]**

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Magandang umaga, Malacañang Press Corps, and welcome sa ating press briefing ngayong araw, August the 1st.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. received the National Expenditure Program for fiscal year 2025, presented by Department of Budget and Management yesterday. President Marcos mentioned in his recent State of the Nation Address, that this proposed government budget was created with utmost care, diligence and meticulous attention. The 2025 NEP amounting to 6.352 trillion pesos is a 10.1% increase from this year's 5.758 trillion budget.

It aims to prioritize food security, social protection, housing, infrastructure, health care, disaster resilience, digital connectivity and energization. It also aligns with the key priorities of the Philippine Development Plan for 2023 to 2028 focusing on three pillars. These are: developing and protecting the capabilities of individuals and families; transforming production sectors to generate more quality jobs and competitive products; and lastly, creating an enabling environment.

The President also said in his SONA, *"We look to the cooperation of our colleagues in the legislature not only that our proposed national budget will be approved in your usual timely manner but it'll be adhered to as closely as possible."*

And to get an overview of the proposed budget, we ask you to please watch this video:

[VIDEO PRESENTATION]

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you. At para bigyan pa tayo ng detalye sa National Expenditure Program sa susunod na taon, kasama natin ngayon sina DBM Secretary Amenah Pangandaman, Undersecretaries Janel Abuel, Rolando Toledo, Principal Economist Joselito Basilio at Assistant Secretary Mary Anne dela Vega. Magandang umaga, Secretary Pangandaman.

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Good morning. Good morning, Ms. Daphne, and good morning to our media friends. Okay, let's start with the question and answer.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. We start with Jinky Baticados, IBC.

JINKY BATICADOS/IBC-13: Hi, ma'am. Good afternoon po. Ma'am, government agencies had wanted a little over 9 trillion po in funding for their programs next year but DBM only approved 69% of the request, among rationale natin dito, ma'am?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: First of all, we're following a fiscal consolidation, fiscal program 'no from now... when the administration started hanggang matapos po tayo. So, ang ibig sabihin po noon, generally we are trying to decrease our deficit and at the same time, maximize po whatever revenue that we have. So, with that po, based on the—DBCC po kasi ang nag-aayos ng mga levels and we came up with a 6.352 trillion level for next year.

So, paano po namin nagawa iyon na out of 9.2 trillion pesos naging 6.3 lang? First, we looked at the absorptive capacity of all the departments and agencies, kung kaya po nila ma-implement iyong mga proyekto; pangalawa, we also check the numbers, iyong utilization nila for the past two to three years; next, we checked also the preparedness of their programs and projects. We would like to ensure that kapag pumasok po iyong programa mo whether infrastructure or service iyong nature ng program mo, kaya po i-implement kaagad-agad – shovel-ready iyong mga projects.

Next, it should adhere to the Philippine Development Plan. Kung nakita ninyo po kanina, mayroong tatlong pillars tayo na sinusunod, iyong ni-launch natin na Philippine Development. And then, there are also existing program convergence na ginagawa po between Department of Budget and Management, NEDA and the other implementing agencies. For infrastructure, there is also a mechanism where we use together with NEDA, iyong tinatawag po na Public Investment Program and the Three-Year Infrastructure Program. Again, related din po iyon because we want to see whether an infrastructure project is readily implementable.

JINKY BATICADOS/IBC-13: Ma'am, one last po. In terms of the controversial Confidential and Intelligence Funds, Secretary, same agencies from the 2024 GAA po will get the confidential fund for next year? And, do we have exact data on how much confidential funds may be included in the next year budget?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Yes. So, our total Confidential and Intel Funds for next year, for 2025 ay bumaba po siya ng 16%, it is from 12.378 billion pesos noong 2024 sa GAA and then now, iyong proposal po namin, it's only ten billion, two hundred eighty-six million point ninety-one – iyon po. So, iyong mga agencies na naka-receive po are as follows—siguro babanggitin ko na lang po iyong mga malalaking ahensiya: Department of Interior and Local Government, naka-receive po ng 906.6 million pesos – it's between of the Office of the Secretary and the Philippine National Police; Department of Justice with 579.4 million pesos divided among the Office of the Secretary, Bureau of Immigration, National Bureau of Investigation, Office of the Solicitor General; we also have the Office of the President with 4.5 billion pesos; Department of [National] Defense, 1.8 billion pesos – of which, 147 million sa Office of the Secretary and then ang Armed Forces of the Philippines po is 1.7 billion pesos.

Mayroon din po ang DSWD but very little amount, 18 million pesos; Department of Transportation, 405 million pesos; other executive offices, 1.8 billion pesos kasama po diyan ang Anti-Money Laundering Council with 7.5 million pesos, Games and Amusement Board with 4 million, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency with 991.2 million pesos, National Security Council with 250 million pesos, OPAPRU po 60 million, and Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency with 500 million pesos.

Iyong mga ibang opisina po maliliit lang po, the likes of Commission on Audit, Office of the Ombudsman and the Commission of Human Rights.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Allan Francisco, PTV-4.

ALLAN FRANCISCO/PTV4: Hi, Sec. Hi, everyone. Good afternoon. Education's budget is the top priority. Ma'am, in his interview, DepEd Secretary Sonny Angara said he would study the proposal to increase the entry level salary of public school teachers. Kasama na po ba ito sa budget, ma'am?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Wala pa po. Hindi pa po ito nakakasama dahil noong nag-assume po sa posisyon si Secretary, well, Senator Sonny Angara, tapos na po iyong budget – nai-present na po namin kay Presidente po at sa Cabinet. But, we gave him the opportunity to at least rearrange the priority programs within the level that was approved during the Cabinet meeting.

Iyong increase po ng entry level, I think it needs a legislation po. However, iyong increase po ng salary, iyon po ang nakasama na po dito sa 2025 NEP. Naglagay po tayo ng 70 billion pesos for the increase of salaries of government employees po, of course kasama po sila, ang ating mga teachers. But the entry level, hindi pa po kasama. I think, pag-aaralan pa po nila and legislation po iyong kailangan natin doon.

ALLAN FRANCISCO/PTV4: Thank you, ma'am.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Racquel Bayan, Radyo Pilipinas.

RACQUEL BAYAN/RADYO PILIPINAS: Good afternoon. Secretary, last SONA po ni Pangulong Marcos, he mentioned iyong joint forces ng different agencies po to boost iyong potential and employability noong ating mga mag-aaral and youth. For under 2025 budget po, how much did we allot para po doon sa mga programs na may kinalaman sa employment noong ating mga kabataan po?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: For fiscal year 2025 National Expenditure Program, ang Youth Employability Programs under the Department of Labor and Employment ay nabigyan po ng 984.2 million pesos para po sa implementation ng following projects: first, Special Program for Employment of Students, iyong SPES po with 828.9 million pesos at iyong tinatawag po nating JobStart Program, JSP with 155.2 million pesos. Nagkaroon po ito ng substantial na increase of 84% from last year's budget; 449 po ang naging increase dito.

RACQUEL BAYAN/RADYO PILIPINAS: Ma'am, how about iyong unprogrammed appropriations po natin under 6.3 trillion 2025 NEP and kung mas mataas po ba siya this year 2024 budget?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Ang total unprogrammed po natin for NEP next year is 158.6 billion pesos – it posted a significant decrease of 572 billion or 78.31 percent from the 731 allocations for this year po. So, meaning iyong total na unprogrammed appropriation natin for next year is only 2.5 percent of the 6.352 trillion proposed budget.

RACQUEL BAYAN/ RADYO PILIPINAS: Ma'am, may we know bakit po kaya nagkaroon ng pagbaba sa unprogrammed natin for next year?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: We tried to program all the—pinasok po natin sa program level natin lahat ng mga proyekto at programa ng ating mga departments and agencies. Generally po, well at least for me po, noong pumasok po ako sa DBM (sila po iyong mga mentor ko doon) ang alam ko po, ang pagkakaintindi ko po kasi noong unprogrammed appropriation which we follow year in and year out is that ang pinapasok po talaga namin dito...ang unprogrammed po kasi talagang standby fund eh at majority po ng nilalagay namin dito are foreign assisted projects po na hindi pa naa-approve ng ICC Board at saka NEDA Board.

Now, when we release the budget circular po, may deadline po kami doon na by March 31 kung ano lang iyong mga na-approve ng NEDA Board – iyon lang po iyong ipapasok namin sa programa and then all the rest ay ilalagay namin sa unprogrammed appropriations – ito po iyong mga foreign assisted na nakikita namin na maa-approve naman within the year, so kailangan din po natin lagyan ng standby fund for the GOP counterpart and the loan proceeds because we haven't received the loan proceeds yet.

RACQUEL BAYANI/ RADYO PILIPINAS: Thank you, ma'am. Lastly na lang po from my end, may we get an update po sa 2024 budget utilization natin, mayroon po ba tayong mga departments na nag-a-underspent?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Si Usec. Jojit na lang ang sasagot.

PRINCIPAL ECONOMIST BASILIO: According doon sa ating latest data, ang actual spending sa first semester ng 2024 ay higit sa itinakda ng DBCC – for example, mayroon kasing disbursement program eh, so that's...iyong releases have been around 24.6 billion higher than programmed – so, that means may mga na-accelerate tayong mga programa and projects na siyang nasimulan nang mas maaga ngayong taong ito. So overall, as of the second quarter or first semester or end June, initial data collected from agencies – around 14 percent higher na ang spending natin this year compared with last year.

So, ano iyong mga major reasons dito? So, for example, DPWH has its road network infrastructure program. Mas naging mabilis sila this first semester – ang isa sa mga reason ay nagko-conduct sila ng early procurement activities, meaning, bago pa magsimula iyong January 1 nakapag-bid out na sila ng kanilang mga road infrastructure projects even before the year began so that pag-release ng budget by January 1 nagsimula na kaagad iyong pagpapa-implement ng proyekto; DND (Department of National Defense) had a bigger spending for its modernization program; iyong sa 4Ps ng DSWD, mas maganda iyong naging proseso at ngayon mas may malinis na silang sistema at listahan ng benepisyaryo compared with last year kaya iyong releases nila for 4Ps have been faster for this year compared with last year; Comelec have also started its spending activities in preparation for the local and national elections for next year. Thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Racquel. Alexis Romero, Philippine Star.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL. STAR: Secretary, the President has been mentioning the need to continue engagements here and abroad in order to attain the economic goals of the Philippines and to sell it as an investment destination. So, may we now have details of the travel expenses/travel budget of the President and how do we compare it from last years?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Okay. All right. Mayroon pong for next year sa NEP one billion fifty-four – meaning, one billion five hundred forty thousand ang budget po ng Office of the President – 1.054 okay, 054 okay – billion ang proposed allocation for travel expenses under the Office of the President. It is a 94 million or eight percent decrease compared to 1.148 billion allocations in the 2024 General Appropriations Act; bumaba po siya ng eight percent.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL. STAR: To what do we attribute the lower budget for travels?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Siguro, kung makikita po natin dito sa proposal nila siguro may mga nabawasan po silang travel both local and foreign.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL. STAR: So, we expect a lower number of travels for the coming year from the part of the President?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: I guess because of the lower budget.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL. STAR: Kasi, medyo nako-confuse lang ako, Secretary, kasi iyong previous reports there was a mention of a 1.4 billion travel budget kung titingnan natin iyong mga previous reports last year na 2024 budget.

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: 2024 po is 1.1 billion ang actual.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL. STAR: 1.1? Kasi sa background check it's 1.4, so apparently napalitan?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Actually, it's 1.14.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL. STAR: Okay, so less travel. But we can assure the public that despite iyong less travels eh maa-attain pa rin iyong objective na magkaroon ng engagements, iyong selling of the Philippines as an investment destination?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Yes po, definitely. Parang na-explain ko naman po dati together also with DTI and kami rin po sa economic team – we still continue to go out and parang kumbaga we market the Philippines as an investment destination – tuluy-tuloy po iyan. Samantalang, iyong iba po may mga napirmahan na po na mga memorandum of understanding and agreement ang ating Presidente, kailangan pa rin po mayroon din pa pong follow-ups itong mga ito para to ensure na makarating nga itong mga investments na nakalap natin noong mga nakaraang taon.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL. STAR: Salamat po.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you. Tuesday Niu, DZBB.

TUESDAY NIU/DZBB: Good morning, ma'am. Ma'am, iyong nabanggit po ninyo kanina na 70 billion additional salary increase para sa government workers, ito na po ba iyong sinasabi ni Presidente na in four tranches gagawin and how will we do that, kailangang mag-submit pa tayo ng another Salary Standardization Law po ba, ganoon po ba iyon?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Iyong 70 billion po para sa adjustment na iyan ng first tranche at saka second tranche for next year kasi gusto po natin simulan na this year iyong first tranche noong ating salary increase. So, it's 2024 – usually po kasi four years iyan eh, 2024; 2025; 2026; and 2027, so iyan po. Of course, iyong 2026 level wala pa po doon sa budget natin noong 2025. So, iyon po four tranches hanggang 2027 and as of now po, we are perfecting the executive order po and we are hoping po for the issuance of the executive order soon po.

TUESDAY NIU/DZBB: Iyong nabanggit din po ni Presidente sa SONA niya iyong medical benefits or allowance ng government workers. This year po ba ay i-implement na po iyon and how much po?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Next year po natin siya i-implement. Nag-allocate po tayo ng 9.6 billion pesos for next year para po makakuha ang ating mga government employees ng kanilang medical allowance, P7,000 each employee po. Wala po kaming ano eh—sa executive po, noon

pong pumasok po ako matagal na – pero galing ako sa Senate – so iyong may mga fiscal autonomy, they provide. So pagdating ko po sa executive, napansin ko parang wala po kaming medical allowance or HMO, so hindi po kami nakakapagpa-checkup, at least iyong blood test and all. Tapos, sa ER wala rin kaming access sa ganoon. So, we pay for it or maybe PhilHealth po. But, I think, this is a nice add to the benefits and allowances na mayroon po ang mga empleyado.

Q: [Off mic] Is that annually, Ma'am?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Annually po iyan. It's a cash po, kasi medical allowance po iyong nature na ginawa natin, parang uniform allowance po, para easier po iyong pag-acquire noong departments po noong kanilang HMO.

BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary, magandang umaga po. Secretary, follow-up ko lang doon sa tanong ni Tuesday, tungkol doon sa salary increase – interesado kami. Secretary, kasi ang sabi ni Pangulo, effective this year iyong first tranche. So, does this means na magkakaroon ng retroactive [effect]?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Yes, po.

BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: From the month of January?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: January, yes po.

BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Thank you, Ma'am.

MS. OSEÑA PAEZ: Applause, wow.

BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Kanina, parang hindi nabanggit yata iyong Office of the Vice President. Nagkaroon po ba sila ng increase doon sa budget ng OVP and kung mayroong increase, Ma'am, magkano po, Secretary?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Sa CIF po, wala pong CIF ang Office of the Vice President. I think, hindi rin po siya nag-request ng CIF. Pero ang total budget po niya for next year sa NEP po is P2.037 billion, P188.5 million is allocated for personal services, P1.79 billion for maintenance and other operating expenses and P56 million for capital outlay.

BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary, mas tumaas ba ito o mas mababa?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Tumaas po siya ng 8%.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA 7: Good noon, Secretary, P6.352 trillion, how much of this is going to be funded by internal revenue and how much of it is going to be funded by borrowings?

PRINCIPAL ECONOMIST JOSELITO BASILIO: Sa atin pong fiscal program for 2025 as approved by DBCC, revenue would be around P4.6 trillion and that would include tax collection na P4.3 trillion and breakdown into P3.2 trillion from the BIR, BOC – first time even in history na lalapas na siya sa P1 trillion level – so P1.064 trillion ang program ng Customs collections for next year; other non-tax revenues P210.8 billion and then, hopefully privatization proceeds, P101 billion. So, i-minus po natin iyan doon sa P6.253, ang magiging deficit natin, would be P1.537 trillion. This is around 5.3% of the projected GDP for next year, 2025, right in line with the medium-term fiscal program as revised by our economic managers.

MAYRINA/GMA 7: And where does that put us, sir, in terms of our debt situation, kasi we are, as of the last report, more than 15 trillion in debt?

PRINCIPAL ECONOMIST JOSELITO BASILIO: So, in general, of course, that brings us to our track, para iyong deficit to GDP ratio natin ay umabot sa fiscal target na 3.7% by 2028, so that means mayroon tayong pagbabayad ng utang, principal at interest payment, a little bit accelerated. Tapos, given the interest rate conditions – ang expected natin, dahil bumababa na iyong inflation, mga central banks around the world and even for the Philippines over the medium-term – we'll be more steady and lower from their levels last year or at the beginning of the year. So, that means, magpi-peak pa ng kaunti ang ating debt level, iyong sinabi mo na 15 trillion, aakyat pa siya to around 17 trillion by the end of 2025.

But eventually, because of better revenue collections, because higher iyong GDP, higher iyong base, so higher iyong sales, mas tataas din ang tax collection ng gobyerno, ganoon din sa Customs. So, in the end, bababa na iyong tinatawag na debt-to-GDP at dahil mayroon tayong fiscal bababa iyong ating debt levels eventually to what we are targeting. So, magiging less than 60% na iyong ating level of debt, let's say 60% of GDP na siya by 2026 onwards. And it can happen even before that, depende sa performance ng economy and of course revenue collections.

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: If you look at nominally, it looks big, pero based on international standards, tinitingnan po natin na metric sa debt is iyong debt-to-GDP ratio and it has been going down and with our fiscal consolidation, we will ensure that it will go down. Noong panahon pong pandemic, tinaasan po ng IMF iyong ratio na iyan, sabi nila, kahit hanggang 70%, good metric iyan. So, hindi naman po tayo umabot sa ganoon, but alam natin na tumaas because kailangan po nating pondohan iyong mga nangyari noong pandemic, dahil wala tayong masyadong revenue.

So in the coming years, tumaas po siya, babayaran natin siya, but still iyong debt-to-GDP ratio natin, its going down, we are now at 60.2% and then next year 60.1% 'no. So, ang ideal niyan sa ating fiscal consolidation is bring it down to 59% of debt-to-GDP ratio.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA 7: Based on the latest projection of the BSP, ang inflation po for July ay nasa 4 to 4.8% depending on the actual number, it has the potential to be the highest in the last nine months. How is the budget going to be responsive to our efforts to curb inflation?

PRINCIPAL ECONOMIST JOSELITO BASILIO: Part naman po ng budget call at saka sa preparations ng mga budget ng mga ahensiya iyong tinatawag na mga contingencies like allowance for inflation at makikita natin doon sa submission ng executives at sa legislative branch iyong tinatawag na macro assumptions table A.1 ng BESF (Budget of Expenditures and Source of Financing), so nakalagay doon na ang inflation natin will be around still despite na mayroong pagtaas siguro depende sa sitwasyon. But on average, we still look at 3 to 4% iyong 2024 inflation average, tapos sa 2025, between to 2 to 4% ang macro assumption. So, it should still go down to the targeted levels na ang budget natin is already parang tinatawag na inflation proof na. Of course, mayroon tayong mga sectors ng society na hindi inflation proof because they are vulnerable, so mayroon tayong mga programa para dito.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA 7: Sorry, I think my question wasn't very clear. Ang gusto ko po sanang itanong iyong mga programa para ma-manage iyong inflation at maramdaman ng mga tao, dahil

iyon po ang hinihingi nila, iyong nama-manage iyong presyo ng mga bilihin? What specific interventions and projects are in the budget that will help toward that end? Thank you.

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Ito po iyong tinatawag natin na mga cash assistance at saka ayuda po. So, tuluy-tuloy din po, magbibigay tayo sa National Expenditure Program 2025, may kabuuang budget po na P253.3 billion po ang nakalaan para sa ayuda.

Under the Department of social Welfare and Development ay mayroon pong P205.5 billion, bulk of which, P114.1 billion will go to 4Ps; ang next po is iyong social pension po na mayroong P49.8 billion, tumaas po ito, dahil nagkaroon tayo ng bagong batas, 80 years old pataas mayroon na sila—iyong Centenarians Act; mayroon din po dito iyong protective services na under the DSWD, P35.1 billion; mayroon din po iyong sustainable livelihood program, iyong mga naka-graduate sa 4Ps, we continue to provide them cash assistance para makapagsimula po sila ng kanilang mga negosyo, that's P4.4 billion; at iyong Philippine food stamp, Walang Gutom Program with P1.8 billion.

Sa Department of Health, mayroon din po tayong 26 billion para sa MAIP (Medical Assistance for Indigent and Financially Incapacitated Patient), iyong medical assistance; and mayroon din po tayong Cancer Assistance Fund na 1.250 billion pesos.

Under the Department of Labor and Employment, iyong tinatawag po nating Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa ating Disadvantaged Workers or TUPAD program, we allocated 14.1 billion pesos.

Sa Department of Transportation, itutuloy pa din po natin ang fuel subsidy to transport sector affected by rising of fuel prices, 2.5 billion pesos and under the Department of Agriculture, may fuel assistance din po na 50 million for farmers and another 50 million for fisherfolks – iyan po.

Iyong Pantawid Pamilya po natin, nadagdagan po ito dahil sinama po natin ang unang one thousand days, unang one thousand na araw or unang dalawang taon, iyon po kaya nag-increase siya.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Eden Santos, NET25.

EDEN SANTOS/NET25: Sec., good afternoon po. Under the proposed 2025 NEP, how much is the allocated budget for flood control program of the administration?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Ang total na flood control for next year is 305.1 billion pesos po and that's divided among the following implementing agencies...

EDEN SANTOS/NET25: Opo. Secretary, kasi nga po naging problema po iyong mga nakaraang malawakang pagbaha ano po at sa mga oras na ito ay nagsasagawa ng investigation ang Senado kaugnay noong mga naging epekto po ng Bagyong Carina. Anu-ano po iyong mga—

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Babasahin lang niya, hindi ko mabasa eh.

DBM USEC. TOLEDO: The breakdown will be at 302.987 billion for DPWH and the others coming from MMDA; ang DPWH kasi, broken down kasi iyan into a regional breakdown, so mayroon tayong 302 for all of that, iyong 302.

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Yeah, 305 po siya 'di po ba? Ngayon iyong 302 billion po ay mapupunta sa DPWH; and then mayroon din pong mapupunta na 2.173 billion sa Metro Manila Development Authority, iyon po; and then, mayroong maliit for OPAPRU but these are for 10 million lang, maliit lang; 2.173 billion.

EDEN SANTOS/NET25: With this budget po, Secretary, are we expecting na iyon pong mga malawakang pagbaha na naranasan natin sa mga nakalipas pong mga linggo, hindi na ganoon iyong magiging epekto with this big ano, na malaking budget po ito?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: I think, mas maganda sagutin ni Secretary Manny Bonoan. But, at least ang importante po is we're investing on it. It's not a one-time project na kinabukasan po ay makikita natin iyong result. I think, medyo matagal po iyong pag-construct ng mga ganiyang klaseng proyekto po. And then, mayroon din po silang... tama, may prinisenta po sila during the Cabinet meeting this week, mayroon po silang master plan na pinakita sa atin. Hindi lang po kasi iyan sa pag-ulan 'di ba, nanggagaling iyan sa bundok. I think, they already had a briefing also two days ago explaining iyong mga priority projects na iyan.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: And the President wants a long term, large scale, comprehensive flood control project that involves also water management to harness the water when it's rainy season so that when dry season, we have enough water.

So, let's move on. Last question I believe, because we're running out of time. Sam Medenilla, Business Mirror.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Good afternoon, for Ma'am Pangandaman. Kanina po na-mention na target po na bumaba iyong debt by 2026. Will that depend kung mapapasa po iyong mga revenue tax measures ng Marcos administration such as the single-use plastic, iyong sa tax for digital transaction and iyong sa sugar tax, iyong pagbaba ba ay kailangan mapasa iyong mga legislation?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Oo, kasama po sa assumptions ng DOF po iyong mga legislations na iyan, iyong mga tax reform measures na iyan.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: So, kung mapu-postpone po iyong passage ng mga legislation na iyon, baka hindi natin ma-reach iyong target?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Nag-usap na po kami, kasama po siya sa common legislative agenda ng LEDAC and I think sa House of Representatives po, marami po dito pasado na. So it's in the Senate, nasa advanced stage na po ng legislative process iyong mga tax reforms natin. And, of course, Secretary Recto was then part of the Senate, I'm sure that he will push for these reforms.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Tapos, ma'am, iyong na-mention ni President iyong pag-ban sa POGOs. So far, iyong 2025 budget ba natin, proposed budget, may maaapektuhan ba ng pagkawala ng revenue from POGOs?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Siguro we'll ask DOF, hindi ko alam kung kasama doon sa assumptions. But from what I heard sa DOF, kung mayroon mang revenue loss, maliit lang daw po.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Tapos last question na lang po. Ma'am, iyong na-mention din, 'di ba iyong postponement po noong Mandanas ruling dahil mayroong... ini-study pa rin ng DBM iyong possible devolution, kumusta na po iyong update pagdating doon sa study na iyon at saka mai-implement na po ba iyon by next year?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Nag-present na po, NEDA po ang gumawa ng study together with... tama ba, Asian Development Bank 'no, tama? ADB and NEDA. Tapos na po iyong study, na-present na rin po sa ComDev and then we are now final—for submission to the Office of the President and then we are just finalizing iyong kung paano po iyong transition to full devolution.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Puwede po kaya iyon ma-implement next year or it will take some time pa?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: I think it will take some time 'no, may transition siya – 2028.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Thank you po. Salamat!

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Well, thank you so much. Any final message from Secretary before we close?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Ah, okay. So, I will just, first, I would like to thank the entire Cabinet for helping us prepare this fiscal year National Expenditure Program for next year and we are already to defend our budget in Congress – both in House of Representatives and the Senate in the coming weeks. And sinabi rin po ng Pangulo na ginawa po namin ito meticulously at walang tulog po namin itong ginawa para po matugunan at maging responsive ang ating budget sa pangangailangan po ng ating taumbayan.

So, with that po, I hope you'll... oh, we are also promoting transparency in the national government, so I hope you'll be with us when we go to the Senate and Congress, when we try to defend this budget. Thank you po.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. On that note, thank you so much, Secretary Pangandaman and Undersecretaries Abuel, Toledo, Basilio and Assistant Secretary Dela Vega. And thank you, Malacañang Press Corps. Thank you for your interest and for your dedication to this NEP. Have a good afternoon. Thank you.

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