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MALACAÑANG INSIDER HOSTED BY MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ
WITH CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONER CHAIRPERSON KARLO ALEXEI NOGRALES
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MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Current developments, presidential directives, accurate and reliable updates straight from the Palace. I'm Daphne Oseña-Paez, your Malacañang Insider.

The implementation of strategic policies, programs and initiatives aims to promote the morale and integrity and upskilling of government employees for efficient public service. These are some of the government's efforts under the Marcos administration.

To give us more information on these, we have with us Civil Service Commission Chairman Karlo Nograles. Good day, Chairman Nograles. Thank you for joining us here in Malacañang Insider.

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Good day. Thanks for having me, Daphne. Very nice press briefing room. *[laughter]*

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Nice setup that we have here also. Also happy to have you.

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Congratulations.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you. Well, inaprubahan ng NEDA ang 3.8 billion pesos Civil Service Modernization Project under the CSC and it's targeted to be implemented by 2025 to 2029. Ano ba ang purpose ng nasabing project?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Well, basically, it's really to modernize the HR management systems of the entire bureaucracy. Kasi naman nakikita po natin na different offices in government have their different HR management systems, some of them are kind of archaic *[laughs]*... you would wanna call it that way, some of them have become more advanced.

But, we in the Civil Service, one of the things that we do is we kind of test and assess the maturity level ng mga HRM systems or HR management systems ng different agencies of government – and our maturity levels across the board are not at par with global international standards.

And, so, this project is very, very important. It will be a game-changer in terms of modernizing the way we do HR in the government and not only will we be implementing a totally brand new HRIS (Human Resource Information System) system for the entire bureaucracy but it will also be integrated with the payroll system.

So, ang daming pagbabagong mangyayari. We would be able to digitalize, digitize and digitalize our HR systems and maraming mga functions dito will be automated; it will be tied up to the payroll system so there will be a lot of—lot more visibility in terms of vacancies – halimbawa, real time data on the vacancies, real time data on what kind of HR movements there will be in each and every agency of government and real time data and visibility also in terms of the payroll system.

So, it's gonna be a project between the CSC and the Department of Budget and Management and we're very, very excited to have this project really implemented by 2025 all the way up to 2029.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: That's interesting and I'm sure a lot of people will benefit, but who would benefit the most in this Civil Service Modernization Program?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Well, first and foremost, siyempre the government agencies, employees and officials in phase... in this five-year program, we will be hitting 1.1 million civil servants who will benefit from this. Ibig sabihin, the HR functions, the HR management functions in different agencies that will cut across about 226 agencies by the end of 2029, equivalent to 1.1 million civil servants.

Then, after 2029, uubusin din namin, tatapusin namin iyong ibang mga natirang agencies. So, that's a five-year plus five-year program. After ten years, the entire bureaucracy will be covered. So, but for up to 2029, it's 1.1 million civil servants. But, over and above that, the public will also benefit 'no directly and indirectly because number one, again as I said, it will help us really fill up the vacancies. It will help us look for the right people. It will help us in moving people and promoting people.

So, in other words, because our HR systems are more mature and more updated, then we can put the proper people in government and ultimately it's the public who will benefit from better public service by putting in more civil servants and filling up so many vacancies in government right now.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: What were the directives of President Marcos when you undertook this big program?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Actually, truth be told, before I came onboard as the CSC Chair, that was immediately his big ask. "*Karlo, you need to digitize and digitalize our HR systems.*" And so, this is in fulfillment of that promise in his big task. So, he's very happy that this is now moving along as planned. And, of course, he is concerned that it has to be implemented within the time frame – so it's 2025 to 2029. So, there is no room for delay. So, basically, that was his directive – make sure that there is no delay, make sure that we implement it correctly.

And after that Cabinet meeting when he gave the go signal, after that NEDA Board Meeting rather, marami nang mga agencies ang gustong sumama. So, from our initial plan of having 226 agencies, iyon, we're now finding it easier to fill up the slots for these 226 agencies who will be part of the first batch. And when I say first batch, it's this first five years because the next five years obviously will be up to the next administration and I, myself, I'm up to 2029 so it will be up to the next chairperson also. But 226 for this five years and then the rest with the agencies to follow after.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: So, in modernizing the HR, the human resources of the Civil Service—

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Of the bureaucracy.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Of the bureaucracy, what were the things that you initially found was inefficient or that needed to be improved and how will your agency address that?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Well, there are three different functions 'no, major pillars of HR – one is recruitment and placement. So, with this system, magiging mas madali ang makikita nating visibility. Right now, just to explain to everybody, the visibility ng CSC in terms of vacancies is we only are able to gather the data every six months, so it's not real time. We don't see the real time accuracy of the vacancies. We see the vacancies every six months.

And then, of course, it's hard for us to nudge agencies to fill up their vacancies if it's not real time. If it's real time, then it's easier for the CSC to nudge 'no. Also, in the same manner, agencies themselves – if they have real time data about the number of vacancies that they have, then it... theoretically, will be easier for them to see that there's a problem and for them to fill up these vacancies. So that's one, recruitment and placement.

Next one is learning and development. Obviously, in this era of digitalization, digitization, digital transformation, we really need to pick up learning and development. So, through this system, we will be able to see the gaps in learning and development, what sort of improvements in terms of skillsets that we need because we'll be able to profile each and every government worker and official on what sort of learning and development interventions we can give.

And since the CSC already has an LMS or Learning Management System, we can already input into the LMS depending on the learning and development gaps of the different agencies. We can tailor fit it already and tie it up to the HRIS system. In other words, for each and every agency, we will be able to assess what sort of learning and development interventions we can provide for them depending on their learning and development gaps, how we can improve them and we can tie it up with their LMS system.

And then, of course, third is performance management. So, performance management is really looking at the indicators in terms of their individual performance, in terms of organizational performance, in terms of agency performance and tie it up very well with our Philippine Development Plan. All of these can be done if we digitalize because as we all know, once we're able to digitalize data analytics, the data would be very important; we already have gone leaps and bounds in terms of artificial intelligence and using artificial intelligence to interpret the data.

And so, you know, there's a lot... you can imagine where we can bring HR management once we digitalize everything. So, masasabayan na natin because other countries are doing that. If we benchmark with Singapore, they're doing that already; if we benchmark with Australia, they're doing that already – ayaw rin nating mapag-iwanan.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. So, in keeping with this modernizing and improving the hiring process, you mentioned education and the skills. There was also mentioned by Education Secretary Sonny Angara, that there was a discussion about the qualifications in the Civil Service Commission and matching it with the senior high school graduate diploma. Would they be able to be candidates for CSC straight from senior high?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Yes. So, this is the discussion that they have in the EdCom, the Congressional Commission on Education and this is something that Secretary Sonny Angara took up with me immediately actually after he assumed office. And, I said that yes, there's already in fact a discussion and some recommendations and suggestions in the EdCom that we have to address the qualification standards in certain vacancies in government.

So right now, the discussion is—ang educational requirement kasi is college graduate. Ang sinasabi ni Sec. Sonny at ng ibang mga nasa EDCOM is mayroon namang K to 12, mayroon

namang senior high school. Hindi ba puwede na ang educational standards or qualification standards on education can some positions be lowered to senior high school graduate dahil K to 12 na nga. And I said, yes, that's possible but it must come from the recommendations of CHED and TESDA. So that's where we are at right now. And we're waiting for CHED and TESDA to come up with that resolution or that agreement endorsing to us, in the CSC, their approval to that recommendation that some positions in government has to be able to ... we can adjust them na imbes na college graduate, puwede nang senior high school graduate and maybe even perhaps senior high school graduate with techvoc abilities also.

So, hopefully, CHED and TESDA will endorse that immediately with the help also of Secretary Sonny so that we in the CSC can make the certain adjustments in the qualification standards for certain positions in government.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: President Marcos also directed that some qualified workers should be assisted in the application process especially in plantilla positions. What kind of assistance ang puwedeng mabigay sa mga qualified employees?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Actually, we did that already 'no. First of all, number one, apart—well, first of all, apart from this HRIS system that we'll have feasibility, it's easier for us to be able to fill up those vacancies already or at least nudge agencies to fill up those vacancies.

But number two, in the civil service, there's a game changer really when I started as chair. Before kasi, when you apply for government positions or vacancies in government, you had to go to the CSC to ask for certificate of eligibility. And since digitalization na nga tayo dito, we launched a CSEVS (Civil Service Eligibility Verification System) program. The CSEVS actually allows the candidate himself or herself and the HR officer to check online whether or not that candidate is in fact civil service eligible. So instead of going to the CSC, lining up in the CSC, waiting for your turn in the CSC and asking for a certificate, printed certificate of eligibility, puwede nang tingnan sa CSEVS. So online, makikita na na this person is eligible – no need for that, that thing, that certificate.

Next, of course, is we also—well, right now, we also do like, we're celebrating the Philippine Civil Service Anniversary, and we just recently concluded our job fair, government's job fair. So we had a lot of vacancies, more than 6,000 vacancies that we published through the different regional offices, we were able to conduct our government job fair.

Number three, is this – just recently, we also launched the Civil Service Eligibility Preference Rating. What does this mean? This means that beginning on March Civil Service exam and onwards, those who take the exam but can prove that they have been working in government as either a job order, contract of service, casual, contractual, coterminous, category 3, category 4, or with first level Civil Service eligibility, and can prove that they have worked in government for ten years or more, when they take the Civil Service exam, they're automatically granted a maximum number of plus ten points, bonus points in the exam. So instead of hitting—kasi 80 kasi iyong passing rate namin sa Civil Service exams, so instead of ... if you don't hit 80, if you get 70 or 71 Or 72 up to 79, and you can prove that you have worked in government for more than ten years as job order, casual, contractual, etc., then we can give you the plus points for you to hit 80.

Malaking bagay ito kasi marami sa ating mga job orders, casual, contractual ang paulit-ulit na nagti-take ng Civil Service exam at lagi nilang sinasabi, dahil sa hirap ng exam, kahit ilang take na sila, hindi sila makapasa; laging hindi sila maka-reach ng 80. So we did this in order for us to

increase the possibility na those who have worked in government also affirming that since they have this vast experience already in government, we give them those plus points. And malaking bagay din ito sa mga ahensiya because marami din sa kanila, nasasayangan kapag hindi nila mabigyan ng plantilla position itong mga matagal nang nagsiserbisyo tapos memorize na memorize na nila ang trabaho, memorize na memorize nila ang gobyerno kaya lamang, hanggang job order lang or contractual lang or casual lang dahil nga hindi puwedeng ipasok sa plantilla item because wala silang Civil Service eligibility. Hindi ka naman puwedeng mag-Civil Service eligibility until you pass the exam, eh paulit-ulit na nga ang pag-take ng exam.

So this is also another game changer that we did. And, in fact, the President, when we reported to him about this was very, very happy about this initiative.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Malaking tulong iyan for the employees and for the agencies as well, like you mentioned.

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Yeah.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: We will continue our discussion a little while. Up next, a discussion on the CSC modernization project at iba pang mga hakbang na ginagawa ng CSC para mas mapabilis ang pagpapaabot ng serbisyo sa publiko. We'll be right back.

[COMMERCIAL BREAK]

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: You're still watching Malacañang Insider with Civil Service Commission Chairperson Karlo Nograles.

Chairman Nograles, in the recent budget hearing on CSC, it was mentioned that over 200,000 vacant positions in different agencies are still unfilled.

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Yes.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: What led to that?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Two hundred three thousand.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Oh, wow!

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Various factors, as I have explained in Congress, the Civil Service can only do so much. We can only nudge agencies about filling up their vacancies which is why importante na their HRM or human resource management is mature. Because part of the assessment that we do in terms of the HR offices of the different agencies, in terms of assessing their maturity level is how fast they can fill up their vacancies. So the slower they fill up the vacancies, the less mature they are or the less point they get basically.

Various factors in terms of filling up the vacancies: One factor is that there's really no... siguro sabihin na natin na it's really a matter of agencies' publishing these vacancies, really looking to fill up these vacancies, really actively pursuing the filling up of these vacancies. Sometimes you would hear excuses like, "Yeah, we published it but there are no takers," so that can also be a factor, sometimes there are no takers which is why some agencies, because there are no takers, they come back to us and ask for adjustments in the qualification standards.

But more and more, I think, it's really the visibility. So as a head of agency, a head of agency must be, you know, must be active enough to really pursue the filling up of vacancies and then, really have a really no nonsense human resource recruitment, selection and placement plan. But in order for you to get to that level, your HR system really has to be mature. Your HR officer, really have to be very persistent and consistent. So iyon, marami talagang kailangan pagtuunan ng pansin when it comes to that.

Kami naman, what we are trying to do that, apart from what I reported to you – giving plus points, doing government job fairs, removing iyang requirement for certificate of eligibility – we are also looking for ways and means to make recruitment, selection and placement faster.

But, yes, it's really a challenge and I think with the HRIS system through our Civil Service Modernization Project, we can do a lot of things with the information that we will be gathering, the information will be real time and we promise in the CSC to be more active in nudging, and identifying the gaps also in terms of their recruitment, selection and placement plans. So, that's something that we're really looking forward to when we implement this program.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: I'll just ask you because you've been in government formally in the executive also, are young people, new grads attracted to working in government?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Oh yes. A lot of young graduates are attracted; there is a lot of demand. When we do the civil service exams you will see that there is so much demand for it that in fact when I came onboard as chair of the Civil Service [Commission], we increased our exam slots from previously pre-pandemic the highest that they've gone is sabihin natin mga 300 plus thousand exam slots per year. Right now, I challenge the CSC to double it and we've been able to – we're almost at 700 – 750,000 slots per year that we're offering. And even with those that big/huge number of slots, kulang pa.

So, we have two exams: March and August – that's the pen and paper exams. Over and above that, we also do our computerized exams which we call the COMEX. But right now iyang COMEX namin we are currently in the process of procuring a new system because COMEX has its limitations. The COMEX, we can only give it like three times a week and it's sometimes an old system so it really needs replacement. So, we are now in the process of procuring a new system which we will call the CSC-DEX or digital exams and that will guarantee more slots for those who want to take the Civil Service exams computerized and internet connected.

So, we hope to be able to provide the CSC-DEX to all regional and field offices namin nationwide that has strong internet because it's internet-based, and then conduct it Mondays to Fridays to increase the number of slots we offer every year because from a target of 700 to 750,000 if we add that ang assumption natin is we'll be able to add another 100,000 – so, we might hit 800 to 850,000 civil service exams slots per year with that combination and hopefully that will really increase the number of eligible. By increasing the number of eligible, we can have better chances of filling up these vacancies in government.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Like in a nutshell, what do you think a career in government gives people?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Oh, it gives them security of tenure. I think the increase in the interest basically of getting into government and getting or landing a plantilla item was highlighted during the pandemic because napansin ng tao during the pandemic, private offices shutdown and many employees were not given pay because the private offices shut down. Private offices all over the country, all over the world in fact, were forced to shut down. But government

continued to operate and suweldo ng mga officials and employees of government continued to be given.

So, right now we're seeing more interest, higher interest in fact from the younger generation to enter into government. Ang anecdote ko diyan: Before, noong una ang ginagawa ng mga mag-asawa ay iyong isang asawa ay nasa private sector, iyong kaniyang asawa ay nasa government sector para balanse. Pero right now mukhang ang direksiyon na nga dahil nakita nila ang advantages of working in government, ang mag-asawa mas gusto nang parehong nasa gobyerno.

And then sa mga kabataan din, I'm also seeing a lot of not just because of security of tenure but I think also the interest in serving the people – really public service, the call to public service, the call to at least devote a portion of your lifetime here on Earth serving the public, serving the people.

So, there's really that keen interest and I'm very happy to see whenever I go to visit mga civil service exams – so, we do oculars 'di ba? So, nagsi-civil service exam and I go to the classroom, I visit the classrooms, I visit the exam testing centers and then I look at the papers ng proctors. One of the things that I really look for when I look at the picture seat plan is the date of birth to see talaga kung ano iyong profile ng mga examinees. And I think based on my experience, in a classroom full of civil service examinees, kalahati noon bata, kalahati noon fresh graduates, kalahati noong 20 plus years old, actually – 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25. Sabihin na nating between 18 to 25 ang kalahati ng classroom; the others are the older ones obviously. So, doon mo makikita anecdotally, at least for me, you'll see that there are lot from the new generation that are really, really, really keen on being a civil servant.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: That's very hopeful and it's good that they could see that there is so much effort to modernize, professionalize and make it competitive also.

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Yeah and I think it's the right time to come in also, ang daming changes, we're going digital and that's not to say that...of course, that once we go digital it's not only right for us to go digital because mga kabataan are coming in but we in the Civil Service are also focused also on upskilling those who are already in government to embrace the digital transformation that is happening in the bureaucracy.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Well, this coming September 19, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will be giving Parangal para sa Outstanding Government Workers. Could you tell us about this and how do they classify the different awardees and how are they chosen?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Yes. Actually, it's move to September 18. September 18 that's the latest word from Malacañang. It's just been recently moved to September 18 and yes, the President will be awarding the Presidential Lingkod Bayan Award – that's the highest award any civil servant can hope to get. It will be the President himself who will be giving out this award.

So, we in the CSC, we screen the candidates up to the national level and we give it...so that the shortlist, the pinaka-shortlist after our screening process, we give to the President for his selection – so, he gets the final selection.

And those who will receive the Presidential Lingkod Bayan Award are those who are exceptional in their work. So much so that their exceptional work or initiative cuts across different departments on a national scale – ganoon kabisigat iyon.

Next is the CSC Pagasa Award. So, the CSC Pagasa Award naman is given to civil servants who has done an outstanding performance or initiative that cuts across several offices within his or her department, or even can affect another department as well or another agency as well.

And then the third set of awards is Dangal ng Bayan Award. Ang Dangal ng Bayan Award naman is given to civil servants who exemplify the ethical standards of a true civil servant. So, there are ethical norms, this is based on law and then, those who exemplify these ethical norms and standards because of the work that they do and because they are able to prove that, that is what they get, they are given the Dangal ng Bayan Award.

So, these are three sets of awards the President will be giving in Malacañang on September 18 as part of the Philippine Civil Service Anniversary.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Wow, we look forward to that. But why is an award like that important? Bakit mahalaga iyan, para sa mga government employees natin?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Well, it's quite important, number one, I think first of all, it's really a recognition of the outstanding, exemplary, exceptional work that these sets of civil servants have done. It's recognizing what they have done and what they continue to do and recognizing that the work that they do is truly appreciated, not only by the President, but by the people around them because you don't get that award, just because you have a pass through a nomination process. So, ibig sabihin may nag-nominate sa iyo, ibig sabihin dumaan sa Civil Service [Commission] at tiningnan namin kung talagang totoo iyong nomination at nakalagay sa nominations and our vetting process is we ask the people around, if totoo ba ito at talagang nakatulong ba ito. So, meaning to say, it's really a recognition, a testimony to the hard work that he do and how it has affected really positively the people around you and the nation as a whole. So that is one, recognition, really.

Number two, it really sets an example. It's an example to all civil servants that you can reach this level and that, they are truly an inspiration to all of us, that some people that exemplify what it means to be really an outstanding civil servant at sana all, sana lahat, everybody really moves and is inspired by this and try to at least, equal, if not equal, at least try as much as possible to follow in their footsteps. And it's really a recognition also of the agencies and the work that those agencies do.

So, this is the reason why we give these awards, it's really to tell the public that there are good people in government and there are people who really work hard in government. And that, hopefully, it inspires everyone, not just to join the government but for those who are already in government to do their utmost, whether silently, even or just to know that your efforts matter to us, matter to the people and matter to the President.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Chairman Nograles, this is the 124th Anniversary of the Civil Service Commission and also it's Civil Service Month.

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Yes.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: What is your message to government employees and to those who wish to join government? Ano ang masasabi ninyo sa kanila?

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: First of all, Happy 124th Anniversary. Happy 124th birthday to all civil servants! It's not the anniversary of the Civil Service Commission. It is the anniversary of

all civil servants. So, it was established in 1900, so now we are 124 years old Civil Service and all civil servants. So, it's our anniversary. My message really is first of all, thank you, thank you for choosing to serve the government and choosing to serve the people. Because alam naman po natin hindi madali maging civil servant, ang daming challenges. But the fact that you took on that role, the fact that you took on the challenge to serve the people, to serve the government is something already in itself.

Number two, habang nandito naman po tayong lahat as civil servants, ibigay na natin ang lahat – let's give it our all, let's give it our best, because really the Filipino people deserve no less than our utmost efforts to make life better for each and every Filipino. We are put in a position where we can make a difference, no matter how small. I am not saying, it has to be earth shattering, hindi naman kailangan ganoon kalaki. But to do your job well and to do it exceptionally, we really—it matters. Those small things, those little things matter. Believe me, at the end of the day, at the end of your career, you will look back at what you have done, what you have accomplished and you will be proud.

And siguro, third, as a final message, just stick to our core values of patriotism, integrity, excellence and spirituality and you will not go wrong. And we will keep doing this, next year, 125, 126, hanggang sa dulo ng career ninyo, just keep doing and following those public service values that we have imbibed, that we continue to imbibe all civil servants and we will be fine and the country will be fine.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: I love those values – patriotism, excellence, spirituality and integrity. Thank you for giving us updates on the Civil Service Commission, the civil servants of course are the backbone of our government.

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Absolutely!

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: And we really appreciate all the things that you have done and continue to do.

CSC CHAIRPERSON NOGRALES: Thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: So, thank you for joining us here, Chairman Nograles.

Epektibong serbisyo at pantay na oportunidad para sa pampublikong sektor. Mabilis at maayos na paglilingkod na nararapat matanggap ng bawat Pilipino – ito ang hangarin ng pamahalaan upang tiyakin na ang ating bansa ay mas magiging progresibo sa ilalim ng Bagong Pilipinas.

We bring you in-depth views of the latest issues and regular Palace updates. This is Daphne Oseña-Paez, your Malacañang Insider. Have a good day.

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