

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

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**PRESS BRIEFING OF MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ
WITH DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
(DSWD) SECRETARY REX GATCHALIAN;
OFFICE OF CIVIL DEFENSE DIRECTOR EDGAR POSADAS;
PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
(PPA) ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER ATTY. MARK JON PALOMAR;
AND NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION (NAPOCOR)
FLOOD OPERATIONS MANAGER MARIA TERESA SIERRA
OCTOBER 24, 2024 [10:18 A.M. – 11:05 A.M.]**

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Magandang umaga, Malacañang Press Corps, and welcome sa ating press briefing ngayong umaga, October 24.

Government efforts have been ongoing to address the onslaught of severe Tropical Storm Kristine that is currently traversing Northern Luzon; wind signals have been raised in provinces including the Visayas.

To tell us more about these efforts, updates on the status of our dams and ports, as well as the implementation of presidential directives, we are joined today by Secretary Rex Gatchalian of the Department of Social Welfare and Development; Director Edgar Posadas of the Office of Civil Defense; Atty. Mark Jon Palomar, Assistant General Manager of the Philippine Ports Authority; and, Maria Teresa Sierra, Flood Operations Manager from the National Power Corporation.

Good morning to our guests and let's start with Secretary Gatchalian.

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: Good morning, Daphne. Magandang umaga sa inyong lahat.

Being the lead agency in disaster response, kami ang in charge sa relief operations. Pero gusto ko lang i-emphasize na noong pag-upo ng ating Pangulo, ang kaniyang direktiba ay lagi tayong handa. So, we came up with the program called "Buong Bansa Handa" if you can recall, wherein we prepositioned

goods all-year round. Hindi na tayo nag-aantay... ang paradigm natin o ang mindset natin, hindi na tayo nag-aantay ng sakuna pa na dumating kung hindi nakakalat na sa mga regional/provincial warehouse ang municipal warehouses natin ang ating mga family food packs at iba pang mga gagamitin during relief operations.

Sa katunayan, bago natin naramdaman iyong epekto ng Bagyong Kristine, ang national stockpile natin – ito iyong mga family food packs na nakakalat sa lahat ng mga warehouses natin sa buong bansa – nasa kulang-kulang two million pieces. Ngayong umaga, I don't know if they can just flash the data, mayroon tayong 1.982600 million family food packs. Nabawasan mula kahapon hanggang ngayon kasi nagri-release na tayo.

So, we're ready. Sa katunayan, kausap ko kahapon si Mayor Legacion; the day before kausap ko si Congressman Lray Villafuerte; kausap ko rin kahapon ang ating Acting Governor ng Albay, si Vice Governor Glenda at ang assurance namin isa kanila, bagama't sila ang first line of defense, ang local government units, handang-handa ang pamahalaang nasyonal na i-augment o dagdagan ang kanilang mga supply.

In fact, in that table, kung maidi-direct ko lang kayo – sa Region V, the whole Bicol Region, bago tumama ang bagyo, we had around 150,000 or 170,000 na mga family food packs on the ground in Region V. As of this morning, we still have around 121,000 family food packs in the region at tuluy-tuloy ang withdrawal ng mga local government units.

Pero hindi tayo tumitigil diyan, habang nagwi-withdraw sila, nagpapadala na tayo ng karagdagang another 100,000 family food packs sa Bicol – en route na iyon ngayon. So, hindi pa man nauubos iyong family food packs doon sa region, dinadagdagan na ho natin siya.

So, again, ang paradigm o ang mindset ng pamahalaang nasyonal, ng DSWD, pagdating sa response, hindi tayo nag-aantay ng sakuna bago natin dalhin doon. Prepositioned na, iyan ang instruction ng ating Pangulo, iyan ang patuloy niyang minu-monitor sa akin day-in and day-out, 365 days a year. Kasi alam naman natin na hindi lahat ng sakuna ay napi-predict katulad ng bagyo – may earthquakes, may volcano... anything can happen. Kaya nga ang mindset natin: Buong bansa handa, lagi tayong handa, nandoon na ang mga goods natin.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Secretary Gatchalian. Let's hear from Director Posadas of the Office of Civil Defense.

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Thank you, Daphne. Good morning everyone.

Ang Office of Civil Defense po ay patuloy na nagbibigay ng kaniyang tulong 'no, ng kaniyang serbisyo as the secretariat of the NDRRMC which is chaired by no less than the SND, Secretary Teodoro and, of course, the Executive Director Undersecretary Ariel Nepomuceno and we are working closely with the Vice Chair for Response and Early Recovery on our efforts on Kristine.

And, so, your NDRRMC in Camp Aguinaldo is on Red Alert to make sure that everything is addressed properly, along with eight other regional emergency operations center namely: our emergency operations center in Ilocos Region, in Cagayan Valley, in Central Luzon, in the Cordillera Autonomous Region, MIMAROPA, CALABARZON and Region VIII in Eastern Visayas.

And, so, clusters in response are activated and si Kristine ngayon ay nasa atin pang Philippine Area of Responsibility, so no let up and we continue to monitor and serve alongside with the different agencies of the council, some of them are seated in this table and we are continuously implementing the guidance of the President to provide timely, adequate and relevant response for our public who are victims of disasters.

So, thank you very much and good morning to all.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Director Posadas. And now, let's hear from Assistant GM Palomar of Philippine Ports Authority.

PPA ASST. GM PALOMAR: Good morning.

We are currently, well, we are currently monitoring the situation on the ground in our various ports. Currently, we have 7,313 stranded passengers, as well as 1,733 Ro-Ro vessels which are unable to travel. We have 14 ports which are currently experiencing the effect of the storm and there are no trips as of this day. We request that the passengers monitor the situation and not proceed to the terminals considering that there are no trips. And, that we are also providing food for the stranded passengers, we thank the DSWD for their assistance in providing food for our passengers.

Thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you. And, now, let's hear from the National Power Corporation, Ms. Sierra, please.

NAPOCOR FLOOD OPNS MGR. SIERRA: Hello, good morning.

So, aside from the mandate of the National Power Corporation to provide missionary electrification to the off grid areas all over the Philippines, so NAPOCOR also manages major dams in Luzon and Mindanao. So, for the five major dams that NAPOCOR manages in Luzon, these are the Ambuklao Dam and the Binga Dam in Benguet, the San Roque Dam in Pangasinan, the Angat Dam in Bulacan and the Caliraya Dam in Laguna.

So, our mandate is to ensure that the public or the downstream communities of the dams are safe from the risk of the dam. So, we ensure that should there be spilling operations conducted by these dams, so the LGUs primarily are partners with OCD and the provincial and the municipal disaster risk reduction management offices of these provinces are informed of the timely releases of these dams so that they can provide the necessary preparatory measures that the communities need to be advised that they should not be near the river to avoid any accidents or risk of floodings.

And, right now, so we are monitoring the spilling of the three dams in Luzon, so these are the Ambuklao and Binga Dams and the San Roque Dam. Currently, these dams are in minimal spilling operations so they are only open at .5 and one meter. So, this is to ensure that pagdating po noong Bagyong Kristine is mayroon po tayong sapat na reservoir allocation para po iyong ina-anticipate po natin na malaking buhos po ng pag-ulan is maagapan po siya at hindi po, kumbaga iipunin lang po ng ating mga dam. So, iyong mga releases po dito na ginagawa is very controlled po siya and will definitely not cause flooding sa downstream communities po natin.

And, these dams are, nag-start po kaming mag-release ng tubig dito sa mga dams prior to the arrival of Bagyong Kristine sa North Luzon to ensure po na kapag po dumating na po iyong bagyo is hindi na po natin sasabayan ng releases so hindi na po siya makakapagdagdag pa ng flooding downstream in case nga po na... iyon.

And, fortunately, the forecast from PAGASA and iyon pong na-receive po natin na ulan, thank God po na medyo naano po siya, iyong initial forecast po na malaki is nabawasan po siya kaya iyon pong forecast po na releases po ng ating mga dams as of today is hindi po tayo magdadagdag ng any gate opening. So, assured po iyong ating mga communities na kung ano po iyong mga na-experience po nila ngayon is iyan na po and then we anticipate na should the weather condition improve or iyon pong pag-pass po ng bagyo po natin at makalabas na po siya ng PAR, we can terminate the spilling operations at this time po.

Thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you. Any questions from the media? Left Narciso, DZRH.

LETH NARCISO/DZRH: Sir, sa OCD po. Bale, ilan na po iyong casualties natin as of this time?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Ini-expect ko pong itatanong ninyo iyon. Ang running total po namin ay sampu 'no, ito po iyong latest. Pero sa amin pong SitRep (Situational Reports), iyong for validation, meaning officially transmitted to us – pito po as of 8 A.M. kanina and mayroon din po tayong dalawang injuries at saka nine missing.

LETH NARCISO/DZRH: Saan pong mga lugar itong casualties?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Sandali lang po. Iyong sa sampu pong reported dead ay sa La Union, sa Quezon, sa Albay, sa Naga, sa Catanduanes at saka sa Masbate po. Iyon pong injuries ay sa Camarines Norte and sa Southern Leyte; and iyong atin pong missing ay sa La Union, Quezon, Camarines Sur, Masbate and Cebu po.

LETH NARCISO/DZRH: Doon na lang po sa mga lugar na apektado ng Bagyong Kristine, ano po iyong urgent need na hinihingi?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Kung sa Bicol po ang pag-uusapan natin, ito po ay iyong pag-rescue 'no. I was coordinating po with our regional director sa OCD 5 kanina before this press briefing, si RD Clyde Yucot, and he mentioned that ang challenge pa rin nila doon are the floodings 'no which are really mataas pa. So, mayroong challenges sila. There are enough resources pero iyon nga sa taas ng baha – these are in Naga and in several other municipalities in Camarines Sur such as Presentacion, Bula and the other towns nearby.

But as we speak, mayroong padating na mga reinforcement from the Southern Luzon Command both personnel and equipment and at the same time magpapadala din ng tulong doon 'no kasi we practice at OCD iyong pagtulong po ng mga less affected na mga regions to assist nearby regions 'no – iyong Region VIII po is sending assistance in terms of teams and equipment po today.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Eden Santos, Net 25.

EDEN SANTOS/NET 25: Hello. Good morning po, sir. Sa OCD pa rin po. Medyo nagkakaroon ng difference sa figures iyong mga casualty ang OCD sa PNP po. Saan po ba nagkakaroon ng...nahihirapan po ba ang OCD sa pag-collate ng mga information about sa mga casualties? Mayroon po bang coordination ang PNP at OCD para maging tally po iyong ating mga datos nang hindi po nagkakaroon ng kalituhan sa ating publiko?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Okay po. Wala pong confusion doon in terms of doon sa mga datos namin. In fact, iyong pinagmumulan po ng datos ng OCD, kapag sinabi pong validated kasi iyon ay ibig sabihin kumpleto iyong documentation at attributable po doon sa existing disasters.

Medyo ingat po kami doon sa pagdi-declare ng casualties due to a particular disaster kasi this forms part of our statistics kasi ito po ay in the near future ito rin po ay ina-account natin. When I was Operation Service Chief sa OCD, mayroon pa pong mga documents na sina-subpoena – so, iniingatan po natin iyon dahil talagang dapat sigurado tayo na attributable talaga to a disaster. Complementing us po are the efforts of the Philippine National Police, kasi kailangan namin, ma'am, iyong report nila and then of course nagsisimula iyan sa local government units involved halimbawa, iyong Municipal Health Officer nila, iyong kanilang Municipal Social Worker...SWDO at saka iyong kanilang pulis at saka iyong DRRMO nila na doon nagsisimula iyong pag-process noon, ma'am; and then aakyat iyon with the documentations – with the death certificate, with the blotter, positive identification; and then aakyat lang iyon sa region and then iri-report sa MDM cluster which is facilitated by the DILG and the we report po as validated. Makikita ninyo doon sa tally ng SitRep, lumilipat po siya once validated siya.

EDEN SANTOS/NET: Opo. Yesterday po kasi, ang casualty natin ay isa pero sa PNP ay tatlo na – parang ganoon po. Ito pong sampu ngayon ay validated na po ito, well-documented compared po doon sa sinasabi ng PNP na 20 casualties?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Yes, ma'am. Running total pa lang po ito. Ito po ay still for validation. Hindi po kayo dapat malilito dahil eventually iyon pong niri-report nila will form part – iyon po iyong basis ng processing namin eh kasi iyong police blotter, police report, and then the HMO report very important po iyon plus the death certificate – iyon po ang pinagmumulan ng proseso ng management of the dead and the missing persons.

EDEN SANTOS/NET: So, 10 po, hindi 20? Sa PNP kasi 20.

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Ma'am, iyong ngayon po sa report namin eventually magta-tally din iyan eh. There was one time in Carina, milya-milya po, 40 plus na sila, kami mga ano pa pero eventually po kapag na-validate na iyan, ma'am, that would adapt po pareho rin siya.

EDEN SANTOS/NET: Nakapagpadala na po ba ng mga rubber boats sa Naga gaya po noong kahilingan ni dating VP Leni at sinagot naman din po yesterday sa situation briefing ni PBBM?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: As we speak po, kinokolekta na po iyong mga commitment din ni Secretary Teodoro through the J-3 po. In fact, nakita ko na po iyong listahan ng mga equipment, mayroon din po tayong 17 na air assets 'no na naka-preposition sa Villamor, naka-preposition sa Cebu which are readily deployable weather permitting kasi we have to be sure din po that our pilots, our assets are safe. And iyan po ay commitment and we are going to keep it. And as we speak po, dumadating na rin iyong tulong sa Bicol – una, sabi ko nga iyong galing sa SOLCOM which is the area command nearest...iyong jurisdiction niya po iyong Bicol; and Region VIII which is the nearby region from Tacloban.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Ivan Mayrina, GMA 7.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Sir, sa OCD pa rin po. Kumusta ho ang initial reports natin ng damage caused by the landfall in Isabela?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Kanina rin po I was anticipating that this question will be asked. I asked iyon pong regional director natin sa Region II at candidly po sabi niya noong kausap niya iyong Municipal DRRMO ng Divilacan where the landfall happened at past midnight kanina when severe Tropical Storm Kristine made landfall, ang comparison nga po is mas malakas pa daw kahapon po noong isang araw iyong ulan at hangin kaysa doon sa actual landfall. So, parang of course, Divilacan is used to these conditions but just to compare, malakas din po pero mas malakas pa daw kahapon nang hindi nagla-landfall kaysa during its actual landfall.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: So, hindi ho nag-materialize iyong pinangangambahan natin na bago kasi mag-landfall, mag-i-intensify pa so we expected extensive damage na hindi ho...mukhang hindi ho nangyari?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Yes, sir. And the I asked also wala pa pong reported casualties as of now, sir, as we speak because I talked to him just a few minutes before this presscon and hopefully it stays that way na wala talaga tayong casualties. We're hoping and praying.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Alexis Romero, Philippine Star.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: Kay Secretary Gatchalian po. So, nakapasok na po ba iyong national government relief efforts sa Bicol, sa devastated areas?

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: Well, first of all, tulad nang ipinaliwanag ko kanina, hindi namin kailangan pumasok kasi nandoon na tayo bago pa nangyari iyong bagyo. This is part of our program of repositioning ng mga goods natin, hindi na natin inaantay kasi nga we know the logistics will be very difficult, mahirap kapag sasabayan natin na nandiyan iyong typhoon at saka tayo papasok. So, iyong term na “kung nakapasok na” nandoon na iyong goods all year long they are always there.

Pangalawa, gusto ko lang linawin dahil ako naging mayor din ako for nine years, sa Local Government Code, ang first responders will be the local government units – they have their own quick response fund, they have their own disaster funds, they have their own support system pagdating sa disaster. Ang DSWD at ang national government, papasok to augment and support kung sakaling kulangin sila. So, right now, kung ang tanong natin is ready kami to augment and support – as I saw the figures kanina, yes, we are more than ready to augment and support.

Ngayon, maaaring ang tinutukoy ninyo doon na may mga nakukuha pa rin tayong reports na hindi pa nakakarating doon iyong mga goods, that would be the responsibility of the local government units natin na dalhin iyon, ang tawag namin doon iyong last mile distribution. kasi sila ang may tao. Remember ang social welfare is devolved, hindi sasapat ang tao ng DSWD na kami ang magdi-deliver to the doorstep ng mga victims – so, that would be the responsibility ng ating mga local government units at nagsimula na.

In fact, kahapon nag-start nang mag-withdraw iyong mga LGUs – when I say withdraw, withdraw from our provincial and regional warehouses ng support ng goods. Nagwi-withdraw na sila kaya kung nakita ninyo iyong numero na pinost ko kahapon noong during the command conference, the goods was at around two million, now it's down to 1.982 – so, bumababa na iyan at bibilis nang bibilis iyong pagbaba niyan lalo na makikita ninyo sa Region V, as the water subside and as they can withdraw the goods. Classic example sa Albay, noong the night before at until yesterday morning medyo masama pa iyong kondisyon pero from what I gathered from our regional director, nag-subside na sa Albay – so, nakakakuha na iyong mga trucks ng mga local government units ng kanilang mga support goods galing sa amin.

So, now we are focusing our efforts on Naga and Camarines Sur and we continuously talk to the local chief executives – iyong governor, iyong mayors nila na kapag bumaba na, humupa na iyong tubig kaya na nilang mag-withdraw sa aming mga warehouse puwede na nilang kunin iyon anytime, nag-aantay iyon.

Pangalawa, katugunan ng ating Pangulo kahapon, nag-deploy na rin ang MMDA agad-agad ng water purification machines nila kasama ng OCD, nandoon na rin iyon. So that is now for the disposal ng mga local government units doon kung saan kakailanganin.

Pangatlo, ang mina-manage ng DSWD together with the province and the LGUs, iyong mga evacuation centers. Alam natin limited iyong pumunta sa evacuation center, kasi napakalawak na nung sakuna and marami nga na-trap na sa kanilang mga tahanan. So, despite that, we are helping augment the food requirement sa loob ng mga evacuation centers.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: Kasi nabanggit ni Presidente iyong sa rubber boats. Kapag nakapasok na iyong national government, saka sila makapagbibigay nung rubber boats. So, iyon po iyong parang naging context.

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: I think that's the context is the rescue side. But in the response side, our context has always been, nandoon na dapat iyong goods bago pa mangyari ang sakuna. And we've done this so many times, not just for but mag-volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, fires, every day. Minsan lang, hindi napapaulat, everyday, we augment local government units with the requirements, kapag may sunog sa kanila, minsan maliit lang itong mga sakuna, kaya hindi nari-report.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: So, sa rescue side, Director Posadas, iyong pagpasok ng national government, napuntahan na po ba iyong sa devastated area sa Bicol?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Kanina, iyong na-mention ko, sir. Napasok na iyong Pulangui, tama iyong sabi ni Sec., 'no, Polangui at saka Libon. So, ang concentration natin ngayon, iyong mga baha pa dito sa Camarines Sur. Kasama iyong Naga. Sabi ni Director Yucot, medyo mayroon pa tayong challenge doon sa ibang mga malalayong mga barangays and lugar. But, we are getting there with the augmentation ng SOLCOM and the Region VIII contingent, I'm sure malaking tulong iyon and with the assets ng Armed Forces readily deployable, that would address. And hopefully, kapag gumanda ang panahon and then bumaba na ng kaunti iyong pagbaha, then mas matututukan natin talaga iyong mas puspusan na pagtulong.

But, I agree with Secretary, iyon kasing batas natin ngayon, iyong General Appropriations Act, allows prepositioning at saka may mga bagong konsepto like anticipatory needs, nilalagay na rin natin iyan sa ating menu of platforms para mas maging effective ang ating response. And of course we appreciate, Sec., mayroon kayo nung predictive analytics. I-advertise ko lang, kasi ginagamit din iyan ng OCD in planning for our, iyong mga non-food items. We work parallel, complementary with the DSWD. And I think that's very good Science-based computation, para alam namin kung enough ba o kulang pa at ilan pa ang dadalhin natin doon. So, iyong efforts natin are really complementary.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay, perhaps maybe this is also an opportune time to talk about, just last week, we had the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. And the Philippines' anticipatory preemptive approach has been very much—it was called a lighthouse, it was called a guiding light, something that other countries could emulate.

So, in keeping with that, Secretary, we are already watching out for a low-pressure area in the south.

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: Yes. Actually, we are talking about it with the OCD and our friends from NAPOCOR and PPA, there is a brewing low-pressure area in the east side of Mindanao. I think PAGASA said, it's too early to say kung papasok or hindi papasok; it will be a severe tropical depression. But either way, we have stockpiles also in Mindanao and Eastern Visayas.

Later on, we can share with you the graph that we pulled out a while ago those remained intact, and we continuously produced goods out of our Cebu Processing Center. Kung matatandaan natin, dalawa kasi ang repacking center ng bansa, nasa Pasay iyong tinatawag naming National Resource Center at nasa Visayas, nasa Cebu naman iyong para sa Visayas and Mindanao.

There are plans, part of the anticipatory actions, to build one starting next year, the third one na ilalagay naman natin sa Caraga, nasa Butuan. That will serve the Mindanao and the eastern seaboard ng Visayas and Mindanao that is very prone to typhoon. Plans are also underway to look into expanding more of our packing centers to the eastern seaboard, halimbawa sa Bicol region, Quezon and all the way to Region II.

Pero right now, what is in the pipeline is the construction of a third repacking center in Butuan, the site has been given to us by the city government of Butuan, right beside the airport. Ito kasi kaya ikinukuwento ko ito, these are the platforms of anticipatory action. Anticipatory action, ibig sabihin, you anticipate, huwag mo nang antaying mangyari. So, we want to make sure na bukod sa mga regional, provincial, municipal warehouses natin, iyong repacking center natin, nakakalat din dapat sa buong bansa. So, that is something that we are working on right now.

Mabanggit lang, bukod sa response, amin rin ang early recovery. Part iyan lagi ng menu ng Pangulo natin na una, pagkain, pangalawa will be the cash assistance. Once mapasok, I can use the term, once mapasok na ng mga residente iyong kanilang mga bahay, after the storm at ma-realize nila iyong extent ng damage, papasok ulit ang DSWD to extend financial assistance together with DHSUD naman, to repair, rehabilitate iyong kanilang mga tahanan at ari-arian na maaaring napinsala. But right now, our

mindset is still in the rescue and the relief operations, pero nasa menu namin iyang financial assistance for early recovery.

CHONA YU/PEOPLE'S JOURNAL: Atty. Palomar, sir. I just would like to get an update doon sa dalawang barko na sumadsad sa Batangas, iyong kapitan, nawawala?

PPA ASST. GM PALOMAR: There were two vessels in Batangas which hit our port, one was the Super Shuttle 2, it was at anchorage sometimes during the night, it broke anchor. It was reported and when they were looking for the captain, he was not on the vessel, which is a violation of our regulations. We are currently conducting an investigation on this and proper charges will be filed.

With regards to the other vessel, Cassandra, this vessel was seized by the Bureau of Customs last week as part of a joint task force with the Bureau of Customs, the Maritime Police, as well as the Coast Guard. It was tied to the dock; as a protocol when storms are coming, it was requested that they be moved. Meetings were held with PPA and the Bureau of Customs last October 22, the Bureau of Customs had taken this into consideration and ATI wrote a letter to them on October 23. Nonetheless, the vessel was not moved and it was completely unmanned. So, an investigation is also ongoing regarding the liabilities of individuals involved.

CHONA YU/PEOPLE'S. JOURNAL: Sir, makakasuhan iyong kapitan ng barko for abandonment?

PPA ASST. GM PALOMAR: If he truly abandoned the vessel. He could be charged for abandoning the vessel.

CHONA YU/PEOPLE'S JOURNAL: Sir, may mga reported na po bang mga ports na damage sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa?

PPA ASST. GM PALOMAR: Yes, there are several ports which reported damaged. Currently, we have reported damage in Bicol, the Port of Bulan, Sorsogon. The Port of Pio Duran in Albay and our base port in Legazpi. The extent of the damage and the Customs repairs is still being assessed as of this date.

CHONA YU/PEOPLE'S JOURNAL: So, sir, temporary close po iyong operation nitong mga ports na ito?

PPA ASST. GM PALOMAR: No, well they are close because of the storm. But I don't think the damage will result in the total closure of the port.

HARLEY VALBUENA/DZME: Good morning. To Secretary Gatchalian and perhaps also to OCD. Sirs, kahapon sa situation briefing with the President, napag-usapan na humihiling na tayo ng assistance to other countries, particularly our ASEAN neighbors. So, may pumasok na po bang pledges or assistance from other countries and at the same time, na-activate na po ba natin iyong EDCA sites for humanitarian efforts in collaboration with USA?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Yes, that was actually one of the discussion points yesterday. But as we speak, actually, we are going to the—SND has already spoken to Ambassador of Singapore to the Philippines and he also mentioned Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei; these are our ASEAN neighbors, co-members of ASEAN. And, zeroed-in particularly on their air assets to be used. This is in consonance with the President's guidance to try and probably try the air route to bring in more goods to the affected areas due to the roads which are non-passable.

So, I think, as we speak, there are certain paper works and documentations which have to be undertaken and soon when that will be done, and I'm sure we will announce, if this will already be operationalize.

HARLEY VALBUENA/DZME: So, sir, iyon pong mga nabanggit ninyong bansa, lahat po sila magpapadala ng aircrafts?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Not necessarily, kasi mayroon din naman tayong sarili 'no, I mentioned 17 air assets available to us, of the Philippine Air Force, and they will be basically augment iyong mga efforts natin particularly on logistics run, iyong mga cargo planes/cargo aircrafts that could haul iyong mga mabibigat na cargo and bring them into the hard-hit areas, particularly in Bicol.

This would be on standby kung kulang iyong ating assets. But we are already anticipating, so we are already coordinating with them, as part of our ASEAN cooperation.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Maricel Halili. TV5.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Good morning, sir, Director Posadas, just one quick follow up lang. Do we have a rough estimate as to gaano kadami iyong mga trapped individuals na kailangang i-rescue particularly in the Bicol region?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: The only data I have right now, ma'am, are iyong mga in evacuation centers 'no, but I don't have the exact numbers of those trapped. Because, as we speak, they are still doing rescue and we can have those data when they would be back in their offices and do the reports. But as soon they are available, we will try to communicate them to you. Anyway, nag-uusap naman tayo in between this press conference, thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Pia Gutierrez, ABS-CBN.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Kay Secretary Gatchalian. I know, sir, it's still too early to talk about cash assistance, pero magkano po iyong budget na naka-allot natin for this?

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: Well, too early in a sense kasi our social workers will have to assess. Normally, we classify that as totally damaged and partially damaged. I cannot give you a figure kasi baka naman ma-under estimate namin dahil hindi pa namin nakikita nga iyong extent ng damage.

Pero kung ang tatanungin ninyo ay kung may available funds? Again, let me categorically say, that the DSWD has available funds, ready to mobilize financial assistance in the coming days. Hindi naman iyan nauubos, that's on top of our regular assistance funds and mayroon din kami, iyong sa disaster funds namin.

So, nakahanda ho tayo. Sa katunayan, I'd always say na I'm very thankful that we have a Department of Budget and Management secretary who's also very in tuned with what's happening. Just this morning, she and I were exchanging messages and she said na 'not to worry, kasi mayroon pa rin silang naka-standby na funds sa kanila'. So, iba iyong na sa amin, kung kakailanganin daw namin, sabihin namin sa kanila.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Sir, we still expect a number of typhoons to come in the Philippines, kumusta iyong budget natin, sir?

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: We're praying hard na hindi na dumami pa iyong typhoon, kasi kahit na budget tayo, sana huwag nating magamit sa ganitong paraan. The budget can always be used for

developmental issues, but we're ready—kasi early on, we already anticipated na La Niña, ito. So, the typhoon season will be protracted all the way to first quarter of next year.

So, naka-ready ho tayo. In fact, we are already keeping an eye out already on the second storm that's brewing sa eastern seaboard natin and we know na marami pang darating sa November. So, we're ready, we have the funds, we can mobilize.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Kasi the President was mentioning something about a budgeting problem, kasama po ba iyong DSWD sa affected dito?

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: Unfortunately, I cannot comment on something na hindi ko alam iyong konteksto; it might be wrong for me to do so. Hindi ko narinig kasi iyon yesterday.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Sam Medenilla, Business Mirror.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: For Sir Posadas, po. Follow up lang po ako doon sa tanong ni Harley kanina. So far, bukod po doon sa mga logistics, airlift assistance from the other countries, wala pa pong nagpi-pledge ng donations or assistance, in kind or in cash?

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: Let me jump in lang, just to be fair, the Manila Economic and Cultural Office, has been arranging a series, hindi lang for this storm, has been arranging a series of rice donations, that's started even last year. It wasn't earmarked for this storm, pero ang nakalagay doon sa donation na nalikom nila is for continuous efforts and activities of DSWD.

So, right now, as we speak, mayroon tayong isang shipment ng rice na nasa Pier, na due for release today. And definitely, dahil mas pressing ang matter natin ngayon sa Bicol, we'll put that in relief boxes that we keep on augmenting sa Bicol.

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Iyong sa amin naman, iyon pa rin 'no, ang masasagot ko lang, kagaya ni Sec., ang narinig ko lang kasi kahapon was on iyong logistics run 'no, iyong pag-transport ng mga goods natin and other assistance in kind papunta doon sa hard-hit areas. So, sabi ko nga kanina, ginagawa na iyong paper works and soonest I think it will be a go, kung wala naman magiging problema because we have existing ASEAN partnership agreements.

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: I think, ang—if I can read it right, if I read it right, ang context noong statement yata ni Secretary Gibo yesterday, was augmentation. With or without that, the government is ready to respond. In fact, as we speak right now, we're loading more goods sa mga iba't ibang Philippine Coast Guard vessels both going north, and are waiting to be loaded naman going to Bicol.

At the same time, were talking, kahapon nandoon si General Brawner, may naka—as soon as the weather permits, I think our C-130s are also ready for deployment. Kumbaga, in addition, so reding-ready ang pamahalaan, ang kanyang kapasidad, both in terms of providing relief and logistics.

Ang sinabi lang yata ni Secretary Gibo, siyempre hindi ninyo maalís sa amin na maghanap pa karagdagang tulong.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Tapos, another question, sir. May initial data na po ba ang OCD regarding doon sa damage to agriculture ng Tropical Storm Kristine?

OCD DIR. POSADAS: Sa ngayon, medyo wala pa eh, kasi ang ano natin talaga ngayon is rescue pa rin, rescue mode tayo. And kasi, kailangan at least makapag-deploy tayo ng mga teams natin, RDANA teams natin, kasama ang DSWD at saka iba pang mga agencies dito. Ito iyong assessment teams na ginagawa natin immediately after ano.

As soon as conditions are safe also for our teams, kasi safety first 'no, baka mamaya madagdag sila doon sa numero ng casualty. So, as soon as it safe to deploy them, then we will deploy them that's part of the menu of our services para ma-identify natin kung ano iyong mga immediate needs. And from there we will also identify if there would be a need for more formal thorough assessment that will require iyong—medyo mas matagal kasi iyong post-disaster needs assessment, these are usually for big-ticket projects on rehabilitation recovery.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Sa NAPOCOR po, for Ma'am Sierra, mayroon na po tayong record kung ilan iyong mga areas na nawalan ng kuryente at saka kung kailan po natin expected ma-restore iyong power supply doon sa mga affected areas?

NAPOCOR FLOOD OPNS MGR. SIERRA: Unfortunately, I do not have the record right now, pero we can get back to you after this ano, to provide the information, thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay, question from Tuesday Niu, DZBB.

TUESDAY NIU/ DZBB: Hi, good morning po. To Secretary Rex. Sir, may na-mention kayo before, na iyong family food boxes po ninyo ay lalagyan na rin ng mga ready-to-eat meals from DOST, mayroon na po bang kasama iyong boxes ninyo ngayon o in the coming o in the future na po?

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: Nakahiwalay iyon na box.

TUESDAY NIU/DZBB: Okay.

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: We developed together with the National Nutrition Council, Department of Science and Technology, we're about to unveil it this November nga. A ready-to-box, nakahiwalay siya, kasi ang purpose niyan, number one; halimbawa sa evacuation center, it takes time bago maka-set up ng soup kitchen.

So pangtawid ito halimbawa, iyong isang araw na kakainin ng pamilya. These are products na in-incubate or dinevelop (develop) ng DOST with Filipino manufacturers, na ngayon ay bibilhin ng DSWD at ilalagay doon sa ready-to-eat food boxes natin.

This November, ilo-launch namin iyon, ipapakita namin, then we will now start the procurement process. It's certified by DOST, it's certified by the National Nutrition Council and narinig ko nga kahapon, nag-usap kami ng Philippine Ports Authority, para na rin sa mga stranded passengers. So, they are high-protein bars, high protein cookies, mayroon nga doon na parang rice na may ulam na, na nasa loob ng mga sachet na hindi mo na kailangang lutuin, kakainin nalang. Parang katumbas siya ng family food box but ready-to-eat family food boxes for a day.

Kasi alam naman natin na kapag day two, mas naka-set up na iyong mga evacuation center ng soup kitchen, we go back to the original family food box.

TUESDAY NIU/DZBB: So, ano iyon, sir, sa each family halimbawa, may family food box galing DSWD and another from DOST, [overlapping]

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: No, the DOST—amin rin iyon. It's just that DOST was the one who developed the technology for those, na lagi ninyong nakikita iyong DOST mayroon silang research and development, kung saan tinutulungan nila iyong mga maliliit na mga negosyante, mga maliliit na

kooperatiba na madagdagan ng value ang kanilang mga produkto. Isa sa nagawa nila are ready-to-eat meals, purely by Filipino companies, by small and medium enterprises.

Ang nagiging problema minsan nitong mga bagong mga MSME na ito, wala silang markado, so kami ang magiging markado nila. So, matatanggap nila dalawang box let's say... depends on the situation. Let's say, may sunog at hindi ma-setup ang soup kitchen or walang kuryente, hindi makaluto – then we have to give our ready-to-eat food box. Or sa pier for instance, imposible naman na gumawa sila ng soup kitchen doon although we do our mobile kitchen there, but this will be given to, mga immediate need para lang may makain ang mga mamamayan natin.

They're high-protein meals and cookies and supplement na masarap din by the way kasi baka isipin ng mga tao kapag mga nutritious, hindi masarap. DOST has perfected the art of delicious and nutritious ready-to-eat meals. Sana pala nagdala ako ng sample para sa inyo ngayong araw. Nakalimutan ko, kinain ko eh *[laughs]*.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Alexis Romero, Philippine Star.

ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: Kay Manager Sierra na lang po. So, nabanggit ninyo po kanina iyong pag-release ng water from the dam, controlled. Kasi naging experience dati noong mga residents doon sa recent disaster sa Metro Manila, there was this release ng dam that flooded the downstream communities. So, for the record, we can assure the public that there will be no repeat of such incidents wherein people were complaining because there were floods in the area because of the dam releases.

NAPOCOR FLOOD OPNS MGR. SIERRA: Uhum. Actually this is... we recently amended the dam protocols po and this is also in line with the directive of our President. So, prior to our amendment, we usually have—we thought it was enough that we should have a sufficient time, lead time to warn the public so it was previously around four hours.

But right now, we are amended our protocol that we issue notice on the preparatory phase for the dam discharge warning operation o iyong spilling operation po na at least 24 hours, we inform the LGUs. Ang kagandahan po with our amended protocol is, the past protocol kasi, we usually release water kapag puno na po iyong dam kasi we have to understand that the dams serve its own purposes specifically... especially for example po si Angat Dam wherein multipurpose po siya. So, as much as possible, we would like to maintain the water elevation of Angat Dam so that it can provide the sufficient water supply for Metro Manila, also for the irrigation requirements of Bulacan and Pampanga.

But, to... actually to balance the purpose of the dam na dito nga po papasok si NAPOCOR na flood control, so with the recent amendments of our protocols, we are working on it right now, so parang naga-guarantee na po namin iyong assurance sa mga downstream communities na iyong mga past experiences po natin with the dams, marami po tayong mga lesson learned about it eh. And, right now, we are also—para isa sa mga primary problems din namin is iyong challenges of climate change.

So, very unpredictable na po iyong weather natin, iyong dynamics po niyan even with... iyong na-experience nga po natin ngayon with Bagyong Kristine na every time na maglalabas ng update si PAGASA is paiba-iba iyong track noong bagyo and the rainbands of the typhoon is paiba-iba rin. Kaya iyong adaptability ng operations ni NAPOCOR pagdating sa mga dams, so iyong ano po natin na assurance na we release water nang hindi pa puno iyong ating dam kaya pagdating po ng malaking ulan, hindi na po katulad dati na malaki rin po iyong mari-release natin para to avoid iyong pag-apaw ng ating dam. So, iyon po ang parang maganda pong naging ano po also with the directive of our President. So, iyon po, may mga amendments na po tayo with our dam protocols.

ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: So, puwede nating sabihin sa mga tao na unlike before, maiiwasan na iyong ganoong mga senaryo?

NAPOCOR FLOOD OPNS MGR. SIERRA: Yes, po. Hindi ko naman po sinasabi na mali iyong mga operations before kasi iyong mga operations before is we did it following also the protocol so laging sinusunod po iyong ating protocol. But, we have to understand that with the recent changes po sa ating environment, so marami na pong mga... even iyong characteristics po ng ating ilog, lumiliit na po iyong mga capacities, ganiyan, so iyon pong ating protocols, we need also to amend it, adjust to... parang to accommodate po iyong mga changes po nito.

So, right now, iyong assurance natin is talagang as much as possible, we would like to assure the communities na minimized na po iyong—unless, unless we will be experiencing iyong sabihin natin na malakas na talaga na pag-ulan that we have no other choice but to mag-release po nang malaki para to ensure naman po iyong safety ng ating dams. Pero, right now, ano na po tayo... si NAPOCOR, assured na po iyong ating mga communities.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Sierra. In closing, maybe we can ask Secretary Rex. Any final messages to our audience?

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: Well, una sa lahat, thank you for having us, Daphne. Sa ngalan ng Department of Social Welfare and Development, nais naming i-assure ang ating mga kababayan na naapektuhan ng Bagyong Kristine na nakahanda ang aming departamento na mag-supply ng mga family food packs nationwide sa ating mga local government units na siya namang magdi-distribute sa ating mga

residente. Makakaasa ho kayo na tuluy-tuloy po iyan, iyan ang ating instruction ng ating mahal na Pangulo na walang pamilya o walang biktima ng kalamidad na ito na magugutom.

Pangalawa, kapag bumaba na ho ang tubig-baha, sisiguraduhin naman natin na ang mga cash relief or cash assistance, magsisimula na sa mabilis na panahon. Maraming salamat.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Secretary Gatchalian. Thank you, Director Posadas, AGM Palomar and Ms. Sierra. And, maraming salamat, Malacañang Press Corps. This conclude our press briefing. Mag-ingat po tayong lahat. Thank you.

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