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REF: DIR. ROBERTZON F. RAMIREZ

MEDIA INTERVIEW BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. FOLLOWING THE CEREMONIAL TURNOVER OF EIGHT COMPLETED YOLANDA PERMANENT HOUSING PROJECTS IN LEYTE, SAMAR, AND BILIRAN

[Held at the BCC Multi-purpose Building in Poblacion District 9 in Burauen in Leyte | 17 January 2025]

Q: Hi, sir, good afternoon. Bukod po sa proyektong ito, ano pa po ‘yung mga nakalatag na programa ng pamahalaan para po…?

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.: Well, ito ang katapusan ng lahat ng permanent housing – 98 percent na ang nabuo ng project para sa permanent housing para sa Yolanda, specific ito sa mga Yolanda victims.

Kaya’t itong – pagka naibigay na – nagpirmahan sila kanina ng mga local government ng MOA para mai-turnover na ang mga bahay-bahay na ginawa ng NHA at saka ng DHSUD. Kaya’t for this project ay kaya naman pinilit kong makapunta rito dahil ang tagal nating hinantay na matapos itong mga proyektong ito.

Iyong unang ginawa na mga pabahay substandard. Kulang sa kuryente, kulang sa tubig, walang kalsada, napakalayo kaya’t hindi masyadong nagamit.

Ngunit ang ginawa natin ay ngayon nagbigay tayo ng kaunting pondo pa para ‘yung mga NHA na ginawa na una na technically substandard ay inayos na at pwedeng magamit. Inaayos ng mga local government lalong-lalong na ‘yung sa Tacloban. Kasi ‘yung Tacloban ang pinaka inuna na ginawan ng bahay eh nagkaproblema kaya’t ‘yun ang…

‘Yun ganoon lahat ng mga NHA project na ganoon na hindi magamit ay gagawin natin ng paraan upang maging mas maganda, maging technically na matibay-tibay para maharap naman ang ating mga bagyo na inaasahan nating darating dito sa Pilipinas pa.

Q: Sir, marami pang unoccupied units for Yolanda sa Tacloban and the rest of Region 8, ano ang order natin sa NHA and sa LGU sir para mabilis itong maokupahan?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Iyon na nga ‘yung sinabi ko eh inaayos namin.

Q: Iyong mga existing, sir, mga unoccupied pa, sir.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Kaya nga inaayos nga. That’s what I was saying na inaayos natin ‘yung unoccupied. Unoccupied ‘yun malamang maraming dahilan. Pero ang ginagawa natin para magamit nga ng tao ay binigyan natin ng pondo ang mga local government para maayos nila, para magamit na ng tao.

Q: Sir, on other matters, the DA is set to declare a food security emergency. What is your thought on this, sir?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, they are still waiting for the recommendation of the Price Coordinating Council. But siguro next week formally na matatanggap na ng DA ‘yung kanilang rekomendasyon and the recommendation, I believe, is going to be to declare an emergency.

The reason that we are doing this is ginawa na natin lahat upang ibaba ang presyo ng bigas ngunit the market is not being allowed to work properly. Hindi nasusundan ang demand and supply curve dahil hanggang ngayon kahit ibaba mo lahat ng inputs, ang pagbenta pa rin mataas pa rin.

And so, we have to force that price down and we have to make sure that the market works properly na walang friction cost na nangyayari dahil sa sari-sari – iba't ibang bagay. At iyong iba doon ilegal kaya't iyan ang iniimbestigahan ngayon ng Kongreso.

Q: Sir, regarding sa Comprehensive Sexuality…

PRESIDENT MARCOS: For?

Q: …Comprehensive Sexuality Education para sa students. Is this going to continue? The Comprehensive Sexuality Education po na nasa Congress ngayon?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Of course.

Q: What's your stand? This is going to continue po?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Basta education I'm in support of it, always, always. Education – okay ulitin ko what I used to say in the campaign – as far as I'm concerned education is the most important service that we provide to our people.

And in many cases, you can consider it to be a right of people to be properly educated. So, katungkulan talaga ng pamahalaan 'yan.

Q: Sir, ang question po niya sexuality education.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Oh, sexuality education! What…

Well, alam mo…What does sexuality education mean? Lalaki ka o babae ka, tapos na.

Q: For students to continue po, pabor kayo?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, as long as – 'yun na nga, because you know what, I think what you are talking about dumadami ang teenage pregnancy, dumadami ang single mothers, dumadami ang sakit na…

And even… Kasama na rin diyan, pagka teenager 'yung nanay, hindi marunong alagaan 'yung bata. Hindi nila alam – marunong alagaan ang sarili nila 'pag buntis sila. Kung anong kakainin; kung nanganak na, kung ano ang ipapakain doon sa bata.

These are all of the things that we need to address. And so, the teaching of this in our schools is very, very, very important.

And to make young people, especially, knowledgeable about what are the options that are truly available to us, and what the consequences are – what the consequences are of having a child too soon, too early. Children having children is a very difficult situation for both the child and the parent.

Q: Sir, is it safe to say that for this year, you are dealing with a less than optimal, less than ideal budget? And how are you going to deal with this lalo na po't this year you will cross the halfway point in your term?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, I – perhaps the budget as was passed, you could describe it as suboptimal. But we are remedying that situation and we are returning the most…

Well, let me put it simply, ang ginagawa natin ay 'yung mga masyadong nawala sa NEP, sa National Expenditure Program, na hindi na nabigyan ng pondo ay hinahanapan namin ng mga savings para maibalik ang mga pondong 'yan. Kagaya sa edukasyon, kagaya sa health, kagaya sa --- kagaya 'yan mga pabahay.

Q: Sa tourism, sir, budget ng opisina ninyo gagamitin niyo yata doon sa branding?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: I'm sorry?

Q: For tourism, you will use the office…

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Tourism? Yes, we already were able to… Natanggal 'yung branding budget nila, maibibi – maibabalik natin.

So, this is what we are doing. So, maybe the… As I said, the original budget can be described as suboptimal. We are working to make it optimal once again.

Q: Sir, your thoughts on JPE's thoughts on impeachment and the INC rally?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, you know, JPE is one of our best legal thinkers in the country. And he is right, there is a consequence to – there will be a precedent, and it will be very problematic.

But I still think that even if we – even if Congress is mandated to process these… Congress doesn't have… The House doesn't have a choice, and the Senate doesn't have a choice once these impeachment complaints are filed.

Well, I don't think that now is the time to go through that. So, ipaubaya na muna natin sa ating… Tutal as a practical matter, papasok na tayo sa campaign period. Wala ng congressman, wala ng senador dahil nangangampanya na sila. Hindi tayo makakapagbuo ng quorum. And so, as a practical matter, the timing is very poor.

Q: Thank you, sir.

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