

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
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**MALACAÑANG PRESS BRIEFING HOSTED BY PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICE ASSISTANT SECRETARY DALE DE VERA WITH EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
LUCAS BERSAMIN, NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
SECRETARY ARSENIO BALISACAN, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT
SECRETARY AMENAH PANGANDAMAN, AND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SECRETARY FRANCISCO TIU-LAUREL JR.
JANUARY 24, 2025 [12:15 A.M. – 1:03 P.M.]**

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Magandang umaga, Malacañang Press Corps, welcome sa ating press briefing ngayong araw, January 24.

Makakasama natin ngayon sina Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin para ibahagi ang mga direktiba ni Pangulong Marcos Jr. kaugnay sa 2025 national budget; si National Economic and Development Authority Director General Arsenio Balisacan para sa mga naging tagumpay sa ekonomiya nitong 2024; si Department of Budget and Management Secretary Amenah Pangandaman para sa budget execution matapos ang mga pakikipagpulong ni Pangulong Marcos Jr. sa cabinet secretaries; at, kasama rin natin si Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel.

Good morning, ES and secretaries. May we ask Executive Secretary Bersamin for an opening statement.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY BERSAMIN: Good morning to all of you, members of the Malacañang Press Corps. Mabuti naman at you came over to the PICC to join us in this occasion. And kami ay nagagalak na ginawa ni Secretary Mina and the DBM, the Department of Budget and Management, itong pagkakataon na nandidito kami sa PICC – pinulong kami, lahat ng bureaucracy ng Executive Branch upang mas higit na malaman namin iyong mga pangangailangan sa budget execution. Next Monday we will have another session like this ano.

So, I'd just like to relay to you that the President is really in earnest in seeing to the proper implementation of the budget, the surviving parts of the budget because as you know, there were several items that were subjected to veto or to conditional implementation. So, other than that, in order for you to have more time to ask your questions, I will defer to my colleagues in this panel.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Thank you, ES. May we ask Secretary Pangandaman to give an opening statement.

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Just to add lang po what our Executive Secretary said. So, this will be a two-day event/workshop for our cabinet secretaries. It's a very first... we have been doing this but mostly for the technical staff but this is the first that our cabinet secretaries are present.

What we did today is a budget execution workshop. We discussed the guiding principles on budget execution, we discussed the veto message of the President – one-by-one po iyan, and the guidelines for the budget execution, the e-marketplace and the New Government Procurement Act.

On day two po, this will be on Monday, we will discuss the budget call naman po for our 2026 national budget.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Thank you, Sec. Mina. Secretary Balisacan...

NEDA SEC. BALISACAN: Yeah, thank you. The exercise that we perform this morning and to continue on Monday is very critical. It comes on the back of a report that we made to the cabinet and to the President yesterday and the performance of the Philippine economy last year and we took stocks of the lessons learned from that experience and we are building that in the fiscal programming for this year.

So, the exercise that we are doing today in relation to the budget process is critical to ensuring that our economic momentum is continued, the socioeconomic transformation that we want to achieve will be achieved 'no and help us achieve all the indicators of socioeconomic transformation that the President has committed to deliver at the end of his administration and those are indicators present in the Philippine Development Plan.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Thank you, Secretary Balisacan. Secretary Tiu-Laurel...

DA SEC. TIU-LAUREL JR.: Well, this *[technical problem]* gobyerno. Maraming mga—nalinawan ko maigi paano mag-procure with the new system dahil nag-crossover ako from the old system to the new system in just less than six months 'no so while still trying to learn the old system. It's very welcome and I believe this event will make the DA perform faster and better for our farmers and fisherfolks. Thank you.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Thank you, Secretary Tiu-Laurel. We're now opening the floor for questions. Maricel Halili, News5.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Magandang umaga po. Secretary Amenah, pakilinaw lang po iyong naging pahayag ni Representative Ungab na mayroong mga blank items doon sa bicam report. Sino po iyong nag-fill in nitong mga blanks na ito bago siya na-submit bilang endorsed bill?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Iyong—kayo na rin po nagsabi, it's the bicam report po so may technical working group po iyan from the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines. So, siguro we can just go back a little lang on the budget process or the legislative process. Siguro I can share a little bit because I came from the Senate po, I was a young staffer from back then.

So, kapag napasa na po iyong batas from the Senate and the House, magba-bicam sila. So, ang iri-report po sa floor at ang ira-ratify ng floor iyong mga napagkasunduan noong dalawang houses kasi minsan po magkaiba ang version nila. So, ang iri-report po noong chairman noong Appropriation at saka chairman noong Finance na ipapasa noong dalawa, iyong agreements nila doon sa mga provisions ng pinasa nilang bill. So, iyon po 'yung bicam.

Pagkatapos po iyon ma-ratify, babalik po sila sa kanilang mga technical staff and then they will write it again. Lilinisin po nila kasi kung makikita ninyo po, ang pinapasa lang po nila sa floor kapag nag-ratify sila even—not just the budget po ha, pati iyong mga ibang mga bills, manipis lang po iyan – iyon lang pong mga napagkasunduan nila and then, all the rest, wala pa po iyan. So, babalik po sila sa technical working group nila, sa mga staff nila; isusulat nila nang maayos and then magkakaroon po ng enrolled bill, enrolled version.

Iyong enrolled version po, iyon po ang pinapasa sa Office of the President na pirmado po ng Speaker of the House at saka iyong officer po niya, Senate at saka iyong Sec-Gens po nila. So, iyon po Ang makakarating sa Office of the President. So, iyong sinasabi po nila na blangko, sila din lang po ang makakapagpuno noong blangko.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: So, walang nakarating sa Office of the President na may blank items like—?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Hindi po kasi nakakarating sa Office of the President ang ratified—iyong nira-ratify nila sa floor kasi iba po ang format noong nira-ratify.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: And another clarification, Secretary, kasi sabi nga ni Presidente, optimal iyong description niya doon sa 2025 national budget. So, nagkaroon ng adjustments like doon sa press conference ni Secretary Remulla, he said na mayroong mga additional na intelligence fund sa DILG so kailangang i-transfer doon sa ibang mga programs. How does it work? Paano po iyong magiging sistema noon? Paano iyong magiging proseso ng pagta-transfer?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Mayroon po tayong tatlong mechanism on, kung paano po natin puwedeng ma-prioritize iyong mga programa po na hindi na naisama sa General Appropriations Act. You have to remember, we have the President's budget, ito po iyong ginawa po ng cabinet together with the President – ito po iyong pinasa natin sa kongreso, ito po iyong National Expenditure Program or the President's budget.

May mga nakalagay po doon, it's consistent with our Philippine Development Plan, consistent with our socioeconomic framework, consistent with the respective roadmaps of the different departments. So, nasa constitution po na ibibigay po iyan sa kongreso tapos sila po ang magbibigay sa atin ng go signal kung ano po iyong gusto nilang ilagay doon sa General Appropriations Act.

Ngayon, noong lumabas po siya, of course there are... nagkaroon po ng mga amendments iyong ating mga nasa lehislatura. Some of it are not yet, first, shoulder-already and not consistent or hindi po siya priority ng mga department heads and secretary and the administration. So, may tatlong mechanism lang po iyan na puwedeng gawin, hindi po natin puwedeng basta-bastang ibalik niyan dahil bawal po sa atin iyan:

First, kung ano po iyong existing na mga programa mo, may mga line-items ka diyan, kung hindi mo po siya magagamit or nagkaroon ka ng savings, may different reasons po for savings – pina-bid mo, mas mura iyong lumabas noong pina-bid mo; pangalawa, ayaw mo na iyong proyekto, ina-abandon mo na, I think, hindi mo na siya priority. Iyon po, puwede po tayong mag-augment – use of savings and augmentation. Ang process po niyan is that iri-request po iyan ng ahensiya and it goes to the Office of the President for approval.

Ang second po is use of unprogrammed appropriations. Of course, iyong UA po, there are triggers po na ginagamit diyan para po magamit natin iyong UA. Kailangan po mayroon tayong excess revenues certified by the Bureau of Treasury.

So, iyon po, augmentation, savings and UA, and iyong last po is iyong another fund po, iyong use of contingent fund ng ating Presidente. Ito po, mga new projects and urgent projects, puwede pong i-request ito ng mga department heads natin. Of course, we will ask for necessary documentation. Again, Office of the President lang din po ang mag-a-approve ng contingent fund. Iyong tatlo lang po na iyon ang puwede nating gamitin.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Salamat po. Kay ES lang po. Sir, may we have your reaction doon sa sinabi ni Representative Ungab na plano niyang dalhin sa Supreme Court itong usapin ng GAA?

EXEC. SEC. BERSAMIN: Hindi ko mapipigilan si Congressman Ungab at saka iyong mga similarly minded people who would want to make a ... put up a challenge. Ang problema natin diyan is, hindi kami ang mananagot diyan kung mayroon mang pagkukulang sa bagay na iyan dahil bicam report iyan eh. Wala kaming kinalaman sa bicam report. Ang may kinalaman lang kami iyong finished product na pinapirmahan sa Presidente, hindi iyong blank check.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Kay Secretary Pangandaman. Mayroon pong criticisms on the modifications na ginagawa ng OP on the budget. Could you please explain to us iyong legal basis po nitong mga adjustments na ito? Kasi, like for example, tinatanong po ng ibang mga congressmen, can the President actually declare savings at the start of the year?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Hindi naman po, kasi savings nga po so—nasaan ba iyong listahan ko kanina? Mayroon pong specific rules and regulations, may budgeting rules and guidelines po tayong sinusunod. Karamihan po doon ay nakalagay sa General Appropriations Act natin. Hindi ko lang memorize iyong mga sections, baka mayroon kayo diyan. Ha, ano iyong mga sections na kailangan?

So iyon, we follow that. Hindi po kami puwedeng magbalik, again, hindi po puwedeng magbalik kami ng mga projects and programs na nawala sa GAA; kailangan po nandudoon siya. And may rules po iyong tatlong sinabi kong mechanisms, may general provisions po tayo for the use of savings, augmentation, and the use of unprogrammed appropriations, and the use of contingent fund. I can provide po the details and the specific, general and specific provisions.

EXEC. SEC. BERSAMIN: Gusto ko lang dagdagan, mayroon kasing tanong, part of that question was, are there already savings as early as now? Yes, of course, because there are many vacant positions na nagkaroon na ng allocation sa budget 'no. Pero if they are unfilled January, they become savings for the month until na magkaroon ng occupant of that office. Iyong suweldo doon, savings iyon, technically speaking.

So, iyong characterization of those funds na hindi na-spend for specific purposes, beginning the year, this will be part of the savings. Only the President may, however, use the savings through his power of augmentation.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Secretary Balisacan, sir, with the President describing the budget as sub-optimal, where does that put us in terms of our ability to achieve our targets for the year considering that this is the year that we will cross the midpoint of the President's administration?

NEDA SEC. BALISACAN: Okay. Yeah, for this year, we're aiming to achieve six to eight percent GDP growth. And we do believe that the current configuration of the government budget will allow us to focus on critical services particularly for social protection, for food security and for our basic infrastructure, including our flagship projects.

Mayroon naman. Gaya ng sinabi kanina, the mechanism of augmentation can fill up those that were reduced especially those that are so critical 'no, like the right of way requirements for our major infrastructure projects.

But let's note that the government expenditure is just about 15 to 20 percent of the total economy. It's really the private sector that drives the bulk of our economy. But the spending of government is so critical to enabling the entire economy from working efficiently, functioning well so that we can achieve our targets.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Sorry, ES Bersamin, sir. Napag-usapan po ba dito sa forum ninyo kung ano ang magiging implication nitong looming legal constitutional challenges sa budget?

EXEC. SEC. BERSAMIN: Hindi pa namin alam kung ano iyong complexion ng mga challenges. We are just receiving these from the media that there will be challenges. But until we see the actual complexion of those whatever challenge may be mounted, it is speculative for us to say or comment on any of them.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Pero ano ho kaya ang magiging scenario should it come to that na magkaroon nga po ng legal challenge sa budget and then the Supreme Court steps in and declares it unconstitutional?

EXEC. SEC. BERSAMIN: Wala.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Papaano ho ang mangyayari sa budget natin?

EXEC. SEC. BERSAMIN: Wala, wala. Alam mo, the Supreme Court will never stop the budget from being implemented, all right? I cannot understand if the Supreme Court will have that tendency to put a stop to it even if any of those challengers will ask for a TRO because the government function, must be ran. Now, sasabihin nila, fall back on the re-enacted budget, but the re-enacted budget can come only when there is a finding that it has been vetoed or the Supreme Court has nullified the present budget. But that is yet to be in the end of the year or maybe when this resolution of these challenges will have been delivered.

Okay, but right now, the government must continue to function. There is a dully approved budget subject to all those that were vetoed, the items. As we have been clearly telling, the effect of the veto is only to reduce the deficit because that is all that the veto has as a consequence. The realignments will happen only later on in the spending process.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Sorry, last for me. Secretary Tiu Laurel, sir, would you have an update for us on the declaration of food security emergency?

DA SEC. LAUREL JR.: Well, the NPCC has finalized the draft noong Tuesday pa lang, and the document is now umiikot for signature. So, na-delay nga. I was expecting it this week. So, malamang next week, makukuha ko na iyong signed document on the official recommendation for the declaration of rice emergency.

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Idagdag ko lang para po if you will get a chance, it's in our website the General Appropriations Act. Section 77, you will see the meaning of savings – magkaroon lang po ng savings kapag na-release. You also have to consider that under Section 6 in the President's veto message, there are some 757 million pesos na hindi pa po namin nalalabas, na kailangan pa po mag-issue ng SARO – these are the changes, ito po iyong mga nabago from NEP to GAA.

Okay. So, Section 77, definition of savings; Section 78, rules on augmentation – iyan po iyong mga kailangan nating tingnan, at mayroon din pong specific guidelines na ini-issue ang DBM on the release of those.

PCO ASEC. DALE DE VERA: Thank you, Sec. Jean Mangaluz, Phil. Star.

JEAN MANGALUZ/PHIL. STAR: Hello. Sec. Recto said that we're likely not to hit our 2024 GDP target, and we also did not hit our 2023 target. Are we still on track to reach the higher end of our target for the term of the President?

NEDA SEC. BALISACAN: We'll know that next week 'no, the Philippine Statistics Authority will release the growth performance for the fourth quarter and the full year 2024. But anticipating that given the developments in the fourth quarter especially the several typhoons that impacted heavily on our agriculture and also many industries because offices were cancelled/suspended many times 'no and so I can imagine the losses across industries.

So, I would expect the *[technical problem]* ... had expected. So, we may have difficulty achieving the six percent for the full year but we'll see.

JEAN MANGALUZ/PHIL. STAR: For the whole admin of President Marcos, do we expect na mari-revise ulit iyong target?

NEDA SEC. BALISACAN: Well, we do revise the targets as circumstances warrant 'no. We do understand that for example, for this year the level of uncertainty in the global environment and in the global economy is I think heightened. All these possibilities of a retaliation in the events that tariffs are raised in the US and so that would impact on us because we are part of the supply chain/the global supply chain, the exports [unclear].

So, but then again there are...as we have been pointing out repeatedly, the good thing about the Philippine economy these days is that almost three fourth of our growth is coming from within and it's a very consumption-driven economy and the service sector is also confident. Nonetheless, trade is an important part of the economy and we are monitoring that closely and we are using of course our budget to ensure that we can make the economy more resilient to shocks.

JEAN MANGALUZ/PHIL. STAR: Question to Secretary Amenah. So, some most of the most contentious items in the budget came not from the GAB because if you look at the GAB it's very similar to NEP, medyo malapit siya, but from the bicam. Do you think there needs to be more transparency in the bicam process? Will the executive branch wish for more transparency?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Hindi po kami part ng bicam, so I cannot answer that. But at least po for the, well, you know kapag may budget hearings naman and then committee hearings I think it's all in their respective websites. But on the bicam, I cannot answer, we're not part of it.

PCO ASEC. DALE DE VERA: Sam Medenilla, BusinessMirror.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESSMIRROR: For Secretary Pangandaman po. After po nag-review iyong executive department ng mga budget noong past weeks, how many government agencies have gaps or shortages in their 2025 budgets? At saka, how much will the government need to address those shortage and where will the fund come from?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Hindi pa po kami tapos. We still have a few departments to go next week 'di po ba, ES? So, we'll have the final numbers once we finish the review. The source is still the same, iyong sinabi ko pong tatlong mechanisms that we will use if ever po na kailangan. Otherwise, we will ask the departments to prioritize those projects for our 2026 budget preparations. Anyway, we have...nag-budget call na po kami eh so the agencies now are starting to prepare their fiscal year 2026 budget proposals.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESSMIRROR: Sa ngayon, ma'am, ano po iyong completion noong review – mga 50 percent complete na ba iyong review?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Yeah. Mga 50 percent, there's another 50 percent pa.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESSMIRROR: May initial figures na kaya kung magkano iyong parang kailangan na i-fill up doon sa mga government agencies?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Thirty billion, so far.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESSMIRROR: Thank you po. Tapos for Sec. Balisacan, naman. Sir, na-discuss po kahapon doon during the NEDA Board meeting iyong Philippine Development Plan. So far, mayroon na po bang na-review iyong NEDA kung ano iyong mga parts ng PDP kung saan nagla-lag iyong implementation iyong government.

NEDA SEC. BALISACAN: We have provided report to the Cabinet and to the President as to the performance of the economy. Of course, the [unclear] we fall short of the target but that's understandable as I've said because of the external and domestic factors that are outside of our control but nonetheless, you know the performance of the economy was quite impressive compared to our neighbors in the entire Asia – we still are second, third among the major emerging economies in Asia as top performer.

Now, of course my colleague here, Sec. Kiko, knows very well how the agriculture was hit hard by the typhoons. We expect the agriculture to have contracted by two percent for at least I think in 2024 because of the heavy losses in the fourth quarter and also in the third quarter of last year, but expect to have that speedy recovery in 2025. So, that's one and you know agriculture is 10 percent of our GDP and almost a third of our employment – so, malaking impact iyon. Otherwise, the rest of the economy are doing well – of course, doing well, meaning in relation to those constraints that I mentioned but we could have done well if the environment is more favorable.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESSMIRROR: Aside, sir, from doon sa economic growth, may other aspects pa po ba ng PDP na kailangan pang i-accelerate ng government para ma-meet iyong targets for 2028?

NEDA SEC. BALISACAN: Yeah. I think that so far, what we have outlined in the PDP is rapid growth and a growth that is inclusive – we are succeeding in those two fronts. And the data show us – we can look at the recent reports for example by the World Bank showing that the growth of the economy in recent years have been quite inclusive compared to earlier periods in our recent history.

But we can do even better and accelerate poverty reduction or goals to achieve single digit poverty incidence by the end of this administration and that there will be far less hungry people and people are more secure with respect to exposure to shocks – natural or manmade shocks; that they have a good, high quality...

We are doing a good job. we are performing well in relation to improving the quality of jobs. Underemployment has fallen last year to 4.4% from 4.6% in 2023 for example. And with the inflation coming down to 3.2% and for 2025, we expect to see inflation settling to—within the government range of 2 to 4% and with a robust labor market subdued inflation. Those two would have powerful influence in the dynamics of poverty. So, we should see poverty continue to decline. Of course, there are certain commodities that remain challenging in terms of the prices and that's what we are focusing on. Sec. Kiko, he is here to take care of the rice, the pork and so on.

But I think with the progress that we have been making, we should be able to achieve those targets especially on the poverty front.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Thank you, sir. Tuesday Niu, DZBB.

TUESDAY NIU/DZBB: Good morning po, kay Secretary Tiu Laurel. Sir, concerns po ito ng different farmer organizations and groups, bakit daw po kaya natatagalan iyong declaration or iyong issuance ng food security emergency considering its urgency. Ano raw po ba iyong nagpapatagal para mapirmahan ito at maaprubahan dahil baka raw maabutan na noong pag-ani nila, hindi pa nadi-declare? May sapat na panahon pa raw po ba ang NFA para i-dispose iyong kanilang kasalukuyang buffer stock at mabili iyong kanilang aanihin?

DA SEC. TIU LAUREL: Well, pati ako medyo nagmamadali rin to be honest and I feel for the farmers, but of course there's a process that every government agency has to go through bago papirmahan sa mga head of agency, it has to go through iyong pag-barcode, iyong paganoon. But it's going around na. But may oras pa naman.

But despite the fact na wala pa iyong final recommendation sa akin, mayroon nang plano ang NFA which we will announce next week on the rollout of this NFA rice once we issued rice emergency. Letter of intents have been issued to a lot of LGUs and OGCCs, to the Armed Forces and to the PNP para malaman na namin kung ilan iyong gusto nila. So, it's a matter of rollout na lang. The stocks were there, the stocks are positioned, so it's just a matter of booking the rice and logistics concerns na lang, but we are ready. We are ready to release the rice and give it to the people that need it. Thank you.

JONEL MARIBOJOC: To Secretary Amenah, is this the first time po na naka-experience kayo na may mga blank items or blank figures doon sa bicam report?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Kapag iyong sa bicam, wala talaga kaming alam. But ngayon lang siya na-mention. But I haven't seen iyong ibang bicam or ratified budget ng house and senate.

JONEL MARIBOJOC: Nasa preparasyon na po kayo for 2026 budget, ano po ang gagawin ninyo para maiwasan naman po iyong mga nangyari pagpupuno doon sa mga tinapyas na budget sa mga projects and programs ng administrasyon? Magkakaroon po ba kayo ng mga dialogue for the house leaders?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: You know sa executive naman, we know what's our priorities, start pa lang ng administration, the Philippine Development Plan, may respective roadmaps na po lahat ng ahensiya, may legacy projects na po tayo na nakalista na po, na-enumerate na po natin iyan. We will just have to make sure that all of those are funded now, until 2028 para matapos itong mga proyekto na ito. And we will consistently remind po siguro iyong close coordination

between executive and legislative. That is why we are also doing this exercise today and on Monday, para iyong mga cabinet secretaries din po natin can make representation po, mas lumakas pa po iyong representation nila when we do the budget, when we go to the congress for our budget.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Alvin Baltazar, Radyo Pilipinas.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary Pangandaman, magandang tanghali po. Secretary, mayroon po tayong timeline or target kung kailan natin target na maibalik iyong nawalang pondo doon sa mga binaklas o tinapyas na fund doon sa bawat kagawaran?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Wala naman po, actually depende po doon sa mga ahensiya at saka depende po doon sa iyong sinasabi ko nga pong mechanism kasi mayroon po tayong proseso, hindi po siya kaagad-agad puwedeng maibalik, bawal po tayong mag-ikot-ikot ng mga nasa budget because there are specific line items in our General Appropriations Act. Ito po iyong ginawa natin today, in-explain po natin sa ating mga cabinet secretaries kung paano po iyong proseso, ano pong mga dokumento ang kailangan nilang i-submit at saka paano nila i-comply iyong mga documentation na kailangan.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Pero doon sa three mechanisms na binanggit ninyo kanina, Secretary, kayang punan iyong nawalang pondo sa bawat kagawaran?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Hindi po lahat, I will be very honest on that, baka po hindi lahat noong kinakailangan, that is why I also encourage the agencies, kasi anyway budget call na rin po ng 2026 and then, in our new Government Procurement Act, naka-specify na rin naman doon iyong early procurement. So, by June, kapag nasa NEP na po iyan, nasa President's budget, puwede na rin po silang mag-early procurement para by the time na mayroon na rin tayong GAA for 2026, they can already award those projects?

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: So, approximately, Secretary, mga ilang percentage iyong pupuwedeng punan?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Once we have the numbers, maybe I can share it with you.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary, gusto ko sanang ihabol ito. At nagpapasalamat po iyong mga government workers dahil sa second tranche. May kasunod pong tanong iyon, Secretary. Kasi, Secretary, hindi mawaglit sa isipan ko na iyong binitawan ninyong statement sa isang briefing sa Malacañang tungkol doon sa medical benefits ng mga empleyado ng gobyerno. Kailan po kaya iyon, Secretary?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Na-release na rin po siya sa mga departments and agencies natin, may guidelines na rin po iyon. That's the P7,000 per employee po for their medical allowance.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: So, kailan po inaasahang mararamdaman ng mga empleyado?

DBM SEC. PANGANDAMAN: Ano po iyon eh, kasi parang uniform allowance po iyan. They can pool it, iyong P7,000 per department, puwede po nilang i-pool and then kukuha sila ng kanilang respective HMOs, ganoon po. I'm sure they are already starting their process.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Thank you. Eden Santos, NET 25.

EDEN SANTOS/NET 25: Good afternoon po. ES, ilang porsiyento po ba, and Sec. Amenah, iyong nabago po sa NEP o President's budget na isinabmit sa kongreso? Kasama po ba iyong mga lumitaw na blank items doon sa nabago sa NEP? Wala po ba talagang alam si PBBM, ang ating Pangulo doon po mga sinasabing blank items kaya tuloy ang trabaho ulit, bumalik po sa ating Pangulo na isa-isa niya tuloy kinakausap ang bawat agencies para lamang doon sa mga proyekto, programs po na naapektuhan noong mga tinapyas sa budget sa ating GAA? Thank you po.

EXEC. SEC. BERSAMIN: Alisin natin sa consciousness ninyo na kami ay may kinalaman sa mga blank pages na sinasabi ninyo. That is why we resented so much iyong impression that the President was given a blank check, wala kaming kinalaman—internal sa congress iyon. And that is why we also respect the boundaries by not commenting kung sino iyong to be blamed or not. But I'm sure that we did not benefit at all from the blank spaces that are being peddled around.

Kaya namin sinasabi na fake news iyan dahil binibintang kay Presidente iyong pag-fill up. Even if that is not what they said, that is the impression they want to give to the public, which is very wrong, very malicious. Kaya ako. I came out with a very strong statement diyan and the President was very blunt also in saying, that whatever the former President was saying about this is a lie. Gusto kong malaman ng taumbayan na wala talaga kaming kinalaman diyan, tanungin ninyo mga congressmen, mga senators. And that is all we can say at this point.

EDEN SANTOS/ NET25: ES, iyong isa po ba sa implication po noong mga pagbabago sa NEP ay iyong araw-araw pong kinakausap ng Pangulo, isa-isa iyong mga government agencies, kaya po tuloy parang bumalik iyong trabaho sa ating Pangulo?

ES BERSAMIN: Anong ibig sabihin?

EDEN SANTOS/ NET25: Dahil po doon sa mga binago sa NEP kaya po napilitan ang Pangulo na isa-isang kausapin iyong mga government agency po?

ES BERSAMIN: Yes, consultation ang tawag diyan ano, because—of course the President always wants to know kung ano ang pangangailangan ng mga opisina na nasa executive. So, kung mayroong lumabas na nabawas doon sa GAA, sa NEP na sinabmit (submit) namin sa congress, siyempre si Presidente gusto niyang malaman kung ano iyong magiging epekto sa mga agencies na nakaranas ng ganoon. Hindi naman—there are areas na iyong NEP dinagdagan, pero hindi masyadong pansinin iyon. Iyong mga binawasan sa NEP iyon ang mga pinansin namin.

EDEN SANTOS/ NET25: ES last na lang po, mayroon po bang from Cong. Ungab, na nagpunta po sa inyo para ipakita iyong claim nila na may mga blank items po talaga?

ES BERSAMIN: Hindi namin kailangan kausapin si Congressman Ungab, siya ang magpapatunay sa kaniyang sinasabi, kasi wala kaming kinalaman sa kanya, wala kaming kinalaman sa blanks, that's his invention. If there were really true omissions, let the congress, the lower house or the upper house explain, kung mayroon. Pero patunayan muna, kasi ang hirap sabihin niya na mayroon talaga, hindi namin alam eh, wala kami up to that point hindi kami involve.

A: Roughly, 13% iyong buong change. 787 billion.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Anna Bajo, GMA News online.

ANNA BAJO GMA NEWS ONLINE: Good afternoon po kay ES. Other matter lang sir, are we changing our position po when it comes to ICC because Secretary Remulla mentioned that we are having softened stance when it comes to probe on the drug war?

ES BERSAMIN: Hindi, ganito iyong sa ICC ano, we have withdrawn from the ICC, membership from the ICC and that withdrawal is now already in effect. Pero we have been very clear in our statements regarding this, if the ICC makes a move, and courses the move through the Interpol and the Interpol makes the request to us for the arrest or delivery of the custody of a person subject to ICC jurisdiction, we will respond favorably or positively to the Interpol request, kasi nagbi-benefit din tayo sa Interpol in other cases.

Hindi naman puwedeng sabihin na komo ICC ang nag-request sa inyo to come to us, hindi na namin kayo papansinin. Kung tayo ang magri-request sa Interpol hindi na rin tayo papansinin niyan because that is comity ang tawag doon eh. Comity, pakikipagkaibigan, makikipagmabuting—you know what that's means, 'no.

ANNA BAJO GMA NEWS ONLINE: Sir, ano po iyong sinasabi ninyong mga areas of cooperation na puwedeng gawin ng Philippines and ICC, iyon po ba iyon?

ES BERSAMIN: Well, ganito iyan ano, wala namang definite o klaro na sinabi na magko-cooperate kaagad. I do not even know kung anong ibig sabihin ni Secretary Boying. But as far as experience has given to the government shows, iyong request ng Interpol should always be respected because the Interpol is also doing us service in other areas similar to this. So, that's the meaning of comity.

ANNA BAJO GMA NEWS ONLINE: So, sir, iyong position po ng government, ng Philippine government or ni PBBM sa ICC is still the same?

ES BERSAMIN: Iyong position is wala na tayo sa jurisdiction ng ICC, pero that does not necessarily mean because of what I just said, does that necessarily mean that the order of the ICC and course through the Interpol is to be ignored, I'm not saying na iyong ICC ang inaano natin, iyong Interpol ang pinagbibigyan natin.

ANNA BAJO GMA NEWS ONLINE: Thank you po.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Pia Gutierrez, ABS-CBN.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ ABS-CBN: ES, can we get the comment lang doon sa sinabi ng Makabayan bloc that the President is deliberately blocking the impeachment of Vice President Duterte in congress, she's referring to iyong nangyayari daw po na hesitation to initiate impeachment proceeding na may kinalaman daw po doon sa earlier admission ng Pangulo that he told lawmakers not to file impeachment complains against the VP?

ES BERSAMIN: Hindi, ganito, let's understand this in the proper context 'no. Ang tinanong kay Presidente is 'are you in favor of impeachment?', siyempre hindi niya sasabihin na in favor siya or he is not in favor because that is the prerogative of the congress. You know, that under the constitution, the impeachment must emanate from the lower house, okay? Now, if the President has made a statement at all about that process, it is only an opinion that he stated because he probably—the thinking of the President is that might be distracting us from our agenda or our move forward.

But we do not say to the lower house, because we cannot dictate on the lower house. It belongs to a co-equal branch of government. All we were saying, the President was saying to the lower house is 'this is my position' but he is not blocking, he is not blocking he cannot do that eh. Because it is the discretion of the collective of the lower house. If they decide to initiate, there is no way of preventing that.

You remember, many years ago, si Speaker Manny Villar 'no, when he endorsed the impeachment complaint against President Erap, no one could have prevented him, kasi diniretso niya iyong impeachment complaint sa senate and immediately the senate acted. That's all. We have autonomy, independence and so on, we cannot dictate on the other branches of government.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: At dito na po nagtatapos ang ating press briefing ngayong tanghali. Maraming salamat po, Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, Secretary Amenah Pangandaman, Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel. Magandang hapon po.

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