

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE**  
**News and Information Bureau**

**MALACAÑANG PRESS BRIEFING OF PALACE PRESS OFFICER AND  
UNDERSECRETARY CLAIRE CASTRO  
APRIL 3, 2025 [11:18 A.M – 11:58 A.M.]**

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Magandang umaga, Malacañang Press Corps. Welcome sa ating press briefing ngayong araw. Simulan natin sa mga magandang balita na dala ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. sa Bagong Pilipinas.

Nakamit ng Pilipinas ang Destination of the Year Award sa Routes Asia 2025 na ginanap sa Perth, Australia. Patunay ito na patuloy na lumalakas ang turismo sa ating bansa sa ilalim ng “Love the Philippines” campaign ng DOT. Nominado rin ang Mactan-Cebu International Airport at Clark International Airport sa airport categories ang Routes Asia para sa taong ito. Panoorin po natin ito:

[VTR]

Isa pang good news. Kanina ay pinirmahan ng Department of Budget and Management at ng Department of Education ang joint circular na naglalayong magbigay ng guidelines sa local government units para sa pagpapatayo ng child development centers sa kani-kanilang nasasakupan. Ito ay para matugunan ang kakulangan sa child development centers lalo na sa mga lugar na low-income LGUs. Ang proyekto ay pupondohan sa ilalim ng Local Government Support Fund Financial Assistance to LGUs (LGSFFA).

Malaki ang maitutulong ng proyektong ito sa pagpapatupad ng early childhood care at development programs. Pagkatapos mapirmahan ang joint circular ay epektibo na ito kaya puwede nang humingi ng pondo ang mga eligible na LGU para masimulan na ang pagpapatupad at pagpapatayo ng CDCs sa kanilang lugar.

At para mabigyan ng iba pang detalye tungkol dito at para sa programa ng DepEd patungkol sa massive feeding program para sa mga estudyante, makakasama natin ngayon si Education Secretary Sonny Angara. Good morning, Sec.

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Thank you, Usec. Magandang hapon po.

[VTR]

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Hello! Good morning. Galing lang kami sa Palasyo and the President was a witness dito sa agreement to joint circular of DepEd and DBM to create 300 new child development centers dahil ito ay nakabase doon sa finding ng UNICEF, may finding ang UNICEF na 78% of children below 5 ay wala sa daycare centers.

So, sabi nga ni Presidente, kahit may batas tayo requiring each municipality to build a daycare center because of... doon sa kulang sa pananalapi, hindi napondohan noong ibang low-income municipalities. So itong programa ni Presidente today, iyong utos niya which came just a few weeks ago by the way kasi nag-present iyong EdCom, prinesent nga iyong findings about iyong children na walang access sa daycare centers at saka iyong importance of early childcare and education.

So, inutos niya kaagad tapos ngayon, nandito na tayo. Kumilos din ang DBM – mayroon tayong one billion for 300-plus daycare centers and most of them will be in Visayas and Mindanao. I think close to 240—239 yata iyong nasa Visayas and Mindanao especially target ang BARMM which is experiencing the highest hunger, highest levels of hunger in the country.

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** At makakasama rin po natin ang DSWD Assistant Secretary, si Irene Dumlao. Asec.?

**DSWD ASEC. DUMLAO:** Magandang umaga po sa ating lahat.

Ang Department of Social Welfare and Development bilang lead in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Zero Hunger is fully committed in addressing the issue on hunger and malnutrition alinsunod po sa vision ng atin pong Pangulong Marcos Jr. na dapat wala pong Pilipino na magiging gutom. Kung kaya nga po tinitiyak ng DSWD na nagha-harmonize, nag-a-align iyong iba't ibang mga programa at serbisyo ng national government agencies and that we'll continue to partner with the private sectors so that we could collectively come up with sustainable solutions that would ultimately address the problem on hunger and malnutrition.

**PCO ASEC. DE VERA:** We're now opening the floor for questions for Secretary Angara and Asec. Dumlao. Jinky Baticados, IBC-13.

**JINKY BATICADOS/IBC13:** Good morning, secretaries. Sir, following the mandate of the President po about doon sa daycare centers 'no particularly in Mindanao and in Visayas, right. So, ano iyong target po ninyo to accomplish all of these 300?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Ah, siguro depende sa funding iyan. Hopefully we will have bigger funding in the coming year, 2026 'no. So, of course, dadaan pa tayo ng budgetary process but I think ang target is to close the gap as much as possible. Pero, I think dito pa lang, very crucial itong 300 dahil ito iyong ibang munisipyo o bayan na wala talagang child development center kasi they are all fourth and fifth class municipalities so wala silang kakayahan, so pumasok na ang national government.

At ang connection naman sa nutrition nito, kasi iyong feeding program ng DSWD is based in the daycare centers eh so kapag wala iyong bata sa daycare center, hindi napapakain iyong bata. So, iyon 'yung relation so that's why we want to get more kids, more children doon sa daycare centers para mas maraming mapakain or mas maraming benepisyaryo iyong feeding program ng ating gobyerno.

I want to add also, sorry Jinky. I want to add that dito sa ilalim ng administrasyon ni President Bongbong, pagpasok niya ay three billion lang ang budget for school feeding – it's increased to 11.7 billion. So that's like, I think nasa 350% increase in the budget, too.

**JINKY BATICADOS/IBC13:** Sir, open naman ito sa lahat 'no, for everybody?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** It is for—ang nasa batas kasi wasted and severely wasted, iyon talagang underweight iyong mga ganoon, marami tayong ganoon eh.

**JINKY BATICADOS/IBC13:** Sir, because of the availability of fund na one billion is being given to you by the DBM so mostly likely, sir, you will start this year?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Actually, just to clarify, the money is going to be given to the local governments, sila iyong mag-aano, sila iyong magku-construct – parang tinatawag na by administration so...

**IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7:** Kay Asec. Dumalo. Ma'am, how do you reconcile the fact that in a recent survey, tumaas pa po iyong bilang ng mga nagugutom – 27% ang nagsabi na nakaranas sila ng gutom sa nakalipas na tatlong buwan? How do you reconcile that with our efforts sa zero hunger project ng DSWD?

**DSWD ASEC. DUMLAO:** Well, Ivan, of course we recognize na marami pong mga factors na nakakaapekto sa issue ng hunger and malnutrition. Kaya nga po ang DSWD nakatutok tayo, we are intensifying our efforts and as I've mentioned earlier, we're working with other government agencies para mag-harmonize iyong iba't ibang mga programa and serbisyo natin and talagang ma-achieve iyong objective of addressing hunger.

On the part of the DSWD, niri-recognize naman natin iyong mga challenges. Halimbawa 'no in Visayas, protracted iyong issue on Kanlaon eruption and this could be one of the reasons kung bakit nga po tumaas din iyong incidents of hunger in that region. But then again, sabi ko nga po, DSWD is fully committed to ensuring na mai-provide natin iyong kaukulang kinakailangan lalo on... sa pagkain noong atin pong mga kababayang naapektuhan. And that is also one of the reasons why we are scaling up the implementation of not only Walang Gutom Program but also iyong mga ibang programa like Walang Gutom Kitchen.

**ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS:** Secretary Angara, good morning po. Secretary, since napag-uusapan natin iyong nutrition program, mayroon ba tayong study tungkol doon sa impact sa mga bata ng malnutrition/kakulangan sa pagkain?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Marami po, marami pong studies both local and foreign na kapag iyong bata hindi nakakakain, hindi nabubuo iyong kaniyang utak. And, ang sabi nga noong mga dalubhasa dito, 90% noong utak ay nabubuo before the age of 5, that's why nag-utos si Presidente na mag-focus tayo sa early childcare and development.

Kasi under DepEd, iyong kinder is five years old bago pumasok eh. Pero kumbaga, iyon universal iyon required na pumasok iyong mga bata. Pero iyong ECCD, kumbaga nakita niya na may mga LGUs na mahusay ang implementasyon, mayroong mga... sa ibang municipalities mayroong tatlo, limang daycare centers pero mayroon ding bayan na walang daycare center so sabi niya, dapat siguro pumasok na ang national government dito.

Kahit hindi niya pangunahing tungkulin ito eh magbayanihan effort na tayo along with the local governments kasi kung hindi, ang tagal na eh – ang tagal nang napasa noong batas, iyong republic act na requiring the municipalities to construct daycare centers. I think ilang dekada na iyon pero despite that, hindi pa rin nagagawa iyong daycare centers kaya kumilos na nang mabilis si Pangulong Marcos.

**ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS:** Secretary, follow up lang doon sa side ng nutrition. As far as school performance ng mga bata, anong progress iyong nakita natin noong nag-intensify tayo ng feeding program specifically doon sa mga... sa public schools?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** We have this exam called the CRLA (Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment) exam. It measures the literacy noong bata, iyong ability to read. Nag-improve siya especially at the early grades so parang pinapakita na the earlier we intervene, mas maganda

kaysa sa kapag umabot na ng—kasi iyong feeding program ng DepEd is Kinder to Grade VI. So, mas effective siya between Kinder and Grade II, iyon ang pinakamalaking gains, iyon ang pinapakita ng pag-aaral. So, iyon ang lesson namin, maaring kapag ganoon talaga ang trend, we may ask Congress to amend the law na more resources will go to the younger years.

**ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS:** If I remember it right, Secretary, during the time of then President Ferdinand Edralin Marcos, may Nutribun. Ngayon ba ibinalik natin ang Nutribun?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Yes, we have similar ano, kasi iyong DOST is part of the school feeding law, eh sila iyong kung ano iyong pinapakain namin, kailangan i-approve ni DOST na nutrient-rich siya. So, iyon iyong idea behind the Nutribun eh, so parang iyong modern-day Nutribun, iyong mga snacks ng mga bata, parang nakamodelo doon sa Nutribun ni President Marcos, Sr.

**ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS:** Thank you po, Secretary.

**LETH NARCISO/DZRH:** Good morning, Secretary. Sir, guidelines po iyong pinirmahan ninyo kanina ano, puwede pong malaman papaano masu-sustain iyong operations noon, halimbawa, naitayo na iyong mga daycare centers?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** The operations will be with the LGUs kasi iyon talaga ang nangyayari, iyon talaga ang nasa batas na LGUs will construct and will maintain the daycare centers. Pero sa ngayon, dahil sa kakulangan ng pondo, hindi nakakapagtayo iyong ibang LGU. So iyon na lang, kumbaga, kaya bayanihan approach, kasi here, in the 300-plus daycare centers, si national government ang pupondo pero dapat saluhin ng mga LGUs sa baba, mag-provide sila ng daycare workers at maaaring other ... maybe security or other workers to help dito.

**GILBERT PERDEZ/DWIZ:** Good morning po, Sec. Paano ho matitiyak ng pamahalaan na—nabanggit ninyo po kasi na iyong magpapatupad ay iyong LGU, iyong mga local officials. Paano po matitiyak natin na hindi ito mababahiran ng pulitika, iyong implementation ng programa?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Ay, hindi ho. Hindi naman nakabase sa kung kakampi o kalaban ito eh. Talagang nakabase siya sa objective criteria, kumbaga, kung fourth or fifth class municipality ka. So, walang pulitika dito, klaro!

**CHZIANELLE SALAZAR/RMN:** Good morning po, Sec. Sa side naman po ng mga teachers, paano po iti-train iyong mga daycare workers or mga teachers na idi-deploy doon sa mga CDC centers? May teacher to child ratio po ba?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Magandang tanong iyan. Actually, kapag younger iyong mga bata, mas maliit dapat iyong klase. So, kung sa regular class is 1:31, is to 35, pagdating sa kinder at daycare, pakonti iyan – 15 or 20 na lang sana, ideally.

Tapos doon sa training nila, nawala iyon eh, nawala iyong training sa mga higher education institutions, iyong mga colleges, parang nawala iyong specialization for early childcare. So, ngayon, I think ang recommendation ng EDCOM or Education Commission is ibalik iyong specialization in childcare para pag-graduate ng teacher, she has a specialization in early child care, iyon na talaga, alam niya anong gagawin. At saka, mayroon ding module ang TESDA actually. So, hindi mo kailangang maging college graduate; mayroon silang certification program na you can be trained in childcare, early childcare.

**TUESDAY NIU/DZBB:** Good morning, Secretary Angara. Sabi nga natin kanina, LGUs po ang mag-i-implement nito, may mechanism po ba tayo para ma-monitor kung talagang nai-implement ng LGUs itong program to make sure na iyong fund naman na ibibigay sa kanila ay hindi masasayang?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Yes, opo. Iyong DILG po ang magiging agency kasi sila iyong nag-interface or nagta-touch base with our local government executives, at mayroon silang tinatawag na seal of good local governance. Isa sa mga criteria doon ay iyong education programs ng isang LGU, kumbaga incentivized iyong LGU dahil kapag kausap mo iyong mga mayors, gusto nilang manalo ng SGLG, iyon ang nangyari diyan, parang naging kumpetisyon iyon. So, iyon ang, I think, incentive.

And then, I think, there is a new bill na passed by the senate and the house noong in-amend iyong early years act, at dito, ang magtsi-chair nga ng Early Childcare and Development Council is the DILG – will be jointly chaired; main chair is DILG tapos co-chair si DepEd. Kasi iyon ang parang nawala in the previous law na parang walang role si DILG and yet, nasa LGUs iyong responsibilidad para dito sa early childcare and development.

**PCO ASEC. DE VERA:** I think we have more questions from our media friends. Cleizl Pardilla, PTV4.

**CLEIZL PARDILLA/PTV4:** Good morning, Secretary. Sir, may I know lang po if we have enough childcare provider or specialists po ba iyong tawag? Thank you.

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Hindi, that's why we need to train more; kulang tayo. We have—at saka ang nangyari is iyong, by practice, parang appointee lang ng mayor iyong mga daycare workers, and they only receive parang honorarium lang. So iyon ang gusto nating i-level up, iyong kanilang occupation at bigyan sila ng mga trainings. So, overtime, magkaroon na rin sila ng credentials. Hindi naman kailangan college graduate tulad ng nabanggit kanina; may TESDA courses na magiging available rin for them kung gusto nilang mag-upgrade ng credentials nila.

**CLEIZL PARDILLA/PTV4:** Sir, since 300 po iyong itatayo, gaano po karami iyong kailangan at childcare provider, at mapi-fill in po ba iyon by 2026?

**DEPED SEC. ANGARA:** Well, ideally, each one will have one 'no. Siguro ang mangyayari diyan is may mga regions or bayan na walang ... mahihirapang maghanap ng graduates, iyon kailangan with the help siguro of DSWD, magti-train tayo ng ... DOH also, mag-train tayo ng mga puwedeng mag-man ng daycare centers.

**PCO ASEC. DE VERA:** Usec. Claire?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Maraming salamat po, DepEd Secretary Sonny Angara and DSWD Asec. Irene Dumlao. Thank you so much.

At sa iba pa pong good news, makakasama naman po natin si Assistant Director General Jonathan Malaya, National Security Council.

**NSC ADG MALAYA:** Maraming salamat, Usec. Claire.

So, ano ang sasabihin ko ngayon? [Laughs] Okay, siguro po iyong mga nasa balita lang 'no. The announcement yesterday by the US Defense Cooperation Agency of the proposed sale of the F-

16 fighter jets in the Philippines, we understand is part of the commitment of the Trump administration, what has been reaffirmed by the visit of US Defense Secretary Hegseth as an ironclad commitment to the defense of the Philippines – an ironclad commitment to the defense treaty between the Philippines and the United States.

If you will remember, Secretary Hegseth said in a joint statement with Secretary Teodoro, that the United States will deploy additional advanced military capabilities to the Philippines for joint training, enhanced interoperability and defense industrial cooperation.

So, we see this announcement by the US Defense Cooperation Agency as the implementation, the initial implementation of that joint statement between the two defense secretaries. We should note that the F-16 is the most advanced fourth generation fighter in the world. And if this sale pushes through, it will be a significant upgrade to our current arsenal. We have at present 12 FA-50 fighter jets from South Korea.

However, I was told that the Department of National Defense has not yet received an official communication from the US government. So as to the details of the sale, as to how soon this will happen, the procurement process, we will have to defer to the Department of National Defense for details.

However, I'd also wish to address the statement coming from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China wherein they said that any defense cooperation with other nations by the Philippines should not target or harm the interest of a third party nor should it threaten regional peace and security. And we would like to assure the People's Republic of China that the planned procurement of F-16 fighter jets to the Philippine arsenal does not in any way harm the interest of any third party. It is not intended for any nation. It is merely part of the AFP Modernization Program.

Now, I'd also like to give an update and I'd like to give with the latest data on this, regarding the research and survey vessel Songhang. It is currently outside the archipelagic waters of the Philippines, if I understand it correctly. At 7:30 this morning, it was approximately 48.65 nautical miles northeast of Tambisan Island in Sabah, Malaysia.

The Coast Guard is continuing maritime patrol of this vessel to ensure that it keeps to its track and it does not conduct maritime survey inside our waters because although ships have right of innocent passage, no foreign vessel can conduct maritime survey in our waters. So, the Philippine Coast Guard is being vigilant, they are continuously doing maritime patrol to ensure that this does not happen. In fact, the BRP Malapascua MRRV-4403 is currently shadowing the research vessel that I mentioned.

Maraming salamat po.

**TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH PLUS:** Hi, sir. Good morning. Sir, iyong sa reaction din po ng Chinese Foreign Ministry this time naman on the statement of AFP Chief Romeo Brawner regarding Taiwan invasion, China said that "We urge certain Philippine individuals not to play with fire on the Taiwan question. Those who play with fire will get burned." So, China opposes any baseless, distort and inflammatory reports regarding Taiwan.

So, how do we view this statement? And maybe the timing of the Taiwan invasion's statement, how do we reconcile this with the remarks made by the Chinese Foreign Ministry?

**NSC ADG MALAYA:** Yes. I understand that the Executive Secretary will be conducting a separate press briefing today on this issue. So, I'd like to defer to him on how to respond clearly. But just to give an additional input that the Philippine government will always be ready to protect and assist our OFWs wherever we maybe. And the context of the Chief of Staff's statement was merely to relay to the public that the Northern Luzon Command as an integral part of the Armed Forces is ready to assist our OFWs.

We have had similar evacuations in the Middle East before and everybody knows that. Whenever there is an emergency of some kind, we immediately send our planes; we immediately send ships to the area to evacuate our citizens. So, it is in that context that the Chief of Staff made that statement. But for other things as to the reaction to the Chinese Foreign Ministry's statement I'd like to defer to Executive Secretary for his statement later on.

**AIRA PANGANIBAN/DZRJ:** I would just like to ask, I will go back to the defense posture. How much are we looking at if we are going to start purchasing all these defense equipment? How much will it cost the government?

**NSC ADG MALAYA:** Ganito kasi 'no, we are still in the negotiation phase because as I mentioned, this was an announcement coming from the US Defense Cooperation Agency and as of now there has been no official communication yet by the US government to the Department of National Defense who will undertake the procurement. So, I think, it's premature at present to discuss the details of how much, when and I'd like to defer to the Department of National Defense for further details. I think they will make an announcement at the proper time.

**PCO ASEC. DE VERA:** Usec. Claire.

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Thank you, Assistant Director General Jonathan Malaya. At ngayon po ay handa na po tayong tumugon sa inyong mga katanungan.

**LETH NARCISO/DZRH:** Good morning, Usec. Ma'am, may we know po ano ng mga hakbang ang ginagawa ng pamahalaan kaugnay ng immigration crackdown ng Trump administration? Sabi po kasi sa ulat, mayroon nang dalawampung undocumented Filipino migrants ang nakakulong sa US ngayon?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Muli ang mga detalyeng pong ito ay ipapaubaya po natin pansamantala sa DFA at kapag mayroon na po tayong detalye na katugunan po dito ay ibibigay po namin agad sa inyo.

**TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH PLUS:** Good morning po, Usec. Ma'am, nag-start na po iyong hearing ni Senator Imee Marcos regarding sa arrest ni former President Duterte and dumalo po si Senator Bato dela Rosa doon and sa sinabi niya po ay parang nagreklamo po siya sa hindi pagdalo ng ilang executive official at ito raw po ay tahasang pagbabalewala sa doktrina ng checks and balances ng ating gobyerno. He adds na we are on the verge of constitutional crisis kung tuluyan daw pong i-snob iyong imbestigasyon.

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Sino po nagsabi po? Si Senator Bato?

**TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH PLUS:** Senator Bato dela Rosa.

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Hindi po ba niya natatandaan na nagkaroon na ng first hearing, siya po yata iyong wala. That was an opportunity para sa kaniya para magtanong. So, huwag niya pong

sisihin kung ngayon po ay hindi um-attend ang mga Cabinet officials natin sa pangalawang hearing po.

Anim na oras po ang naging hearing noong una, sana po dumating siya, nagpakita siya para po nakapagtanong siya nang maayos.

**TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH PLUS:** But do you believe or hindi po ba tayo naniniwala iyong sa sinabi niyang puwedeng magkaroon ng constitutional crisis daw po, ma'am, kung patuloy daw pong gagawin ito ng Malacañang?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Dapat malaman din po ni Senator Bato na ang patungkol po sa executive privilege ay matagal na rin pong inayunan ng Supreme Court, marami na pong kaso na nadesisyunan ng Supreme Court – nandiyan po ang Senate vs. Ermita; Neri vs. Senate Committee kung saan po ang executive privilege ay patunay lamang po, according to the Supreme Court decisions, na ito po ay maaaring i-invoke ng ating pangulo at ng kaniyang mga high-ranking officials specially kung ito ay mga patungkol sa deliberative process privilege, presidential communications privilege, or state secrets privilege.

So, sana po mabasa niya po ang mga kasong ito para po siya maliwanagan.

**MARICEL HALILI:** Hi, ma'am. Magandang umaga po. Just one quick follow up. Sinabi po rin kasi ni Senator Bato na gusto niyang ipa-subpoena itong mga government officials na hindi dumalo. Do you think this is a reasonable move coming from Senator Bato and posible ba iyon?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Nasa kaniya po iyan kung magpapa-subpoena siya siguraduhin lamang din po niya na siya po ay magpapakita.

**ANNE SOBERANO/BOMBO RADYO:** Usec., sinabi kasi kanina na on negotiation phase pa iyong pagbili natin ng F-16 sa US. Sakali, Usec., saan kukunin ng gobyerno ang pondo pambili po ng mga nasabing aircraft?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Naku po, sa ngayon po, ako po personal ay hindi ko po batid ang kasagutan patungkol diyan. Sana po natanong kanina kay Sir Jonathan Malaya. Anyway, sabi nga po natin, wala pa pong detalye katulad po ng sinabi ni Sir Jonathan Malaya at aalamin po natin kasi nasa negotiation pa lang po. At kapag nagkaroon na po ng mga detalye patungkol po sa budget, muli, ibibigay po agad namin sa inyo.

**SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESSMIRROR:** Good morning, ma'am. Magtatanong lang po kami regarding doon po sa Palace reaction sa 17 percent reciprocal tariff na in-impose ng US government sa Philippines. May assessment na po ba iyong Philippine government kung ano iyong mga industries na maaapektuhan ng nasabing 17 percent tariff?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Sa ngayon po ay wala pa po tayong detalye patungkol po kung anong mga industries ang maaaring maapektuhan pero siguro po itong 17 percent na ipapataw na tariff ay isa na rin pong magandang balita dahil mas marami po na bansa na mas napatawan nang mataas na mataas na tariff. At lumalabas nga po na parang tayo lamang po ay ang second lowest 'no susunod po tayo sa Singapore. At ayon din po sa DTI, iyong impact po nito ay medyo hindi ganoon kalaki, very minimal po. At tayo rin po ay naniniwala sa isang relasyong maganda ng US-Philippine alliance kaya po ang pagpapataw po ng 17 percent ay maaaring napag-aralan din po ng gobyerno po ng administrasyon ng US kaya ito po ay tatanggapin natin. Pero kung anuman

po ang maaaring impact of course tayo ay dapat tumugon nang nararapat pero as of the moment, sabi nga po ng DTI, very minimal po ang magiging impact sa atin nito.

**SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESSMIRROR:** Ma'am, bale what steps will the government take to ease the impact of the additional tariff?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Titingnan po natin kasi base naman po sa mga reports natin, hindi naman po din kasi ganoon kalaki iyong ating ini-export. Hindi po malaki ang ating ini-export sa US at aalamin po natin, base na rin po sa DTI at DOF, kung ano ang maaaring maging dating or impact ng 17% sa mga produkto ng Pilipinas.

**SAM MEDENILLA.BUSINESS MIRROR:** Will the government appeal the additional tariff sa US government po? May plano po bang mag-apela iyong Pilipinas na parang i-reduce or tanggalin iyong 17% tariff?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Sa ngayon, wala pa po tayong nadidinig kung may plano po, pero kapag po nagkaroon ng pag-uusap patungkol po dito ay muli ibibigay po namin ang update patungkol diyan.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** But, Usec., how is the Philippines taking that decision from the Trump admin given that the US is a traditional ally of the Philippines and supposedly we have a very close ties. So, how is Malacañang taking this additional tariff?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Desisyon po kasi ng gobyerno ng US iyan. Kung mayroon po silang dapat na pangalagaan patungkol sa kanilang mga economic growth nila or sa kanilang mga ekonomiya, hindi po ito mapipigilan, iyan po ang kanilang magiging polisiya. At sabi nga po natin, ang pagpataw po ng 17% na second lowest, sa ating palagay ay hindi na po ganoon kasama; mabuti pa rin po ito, sa ating palagay.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** Although undeniable, it could also lead to higher cost 'di po ba iyong tariff? So, may epekto po iyon kahit papaano sa ating economy.

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Yes.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** So, how are we taking this? Are we even taking this positively, given that it could lead to higher cost?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Puwede po kasing maging positibo ito, puwedeng maging negatibo ito lalo na kapag po tayo nag-i-export. Pero kapag po nanatili ang ganitong klaseng polisiya, maaari pa rin po tayong makakuha ng mga investors mula doon sa mga bansa na may pinapatawan ng malalaking tariff. So, maaari silang pumunta sa Pilipinas, dito sila magsagawa, mag-manufacture, dahil 17% lamang ang pinapataw sa atin. So, puwedeng negative, positive ito.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** So, you are saying, since mas mataas sa iba, they might reconsider and you know?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Investing here.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** Dito na lang. Okay, mayroon ba tayong ibibigay na offer sakali sa US or sa Trump admin, in case para somehow ma-mitigate or somehow ma-ease iyong tariff na iyan or will we renegotiate para magkaroon ng better terms given that we are close allies?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Siguro po ang tamang ahensiya po ang sasagot po niyan at sa kasalukuyan po ay wala po tayong update tungkol sa iyong tanong.

**ANNA BAJO/GMA NEWS ONLINE:** Good morning po, Ma'am. May we just get your reaction on the recent statement made by Vice President Sara Duterte that although it is ironic, but she has to thank President Bongbong Marcos na nagkaroon sila ng forgiveness ni former President Rodrigo Duterte?

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** Mas maganda po siguro kung magpasalamat muna si VP Sara sa kaniyang ama mismo, kay dating Pangulong Duterte, dahil kung siya man po ay nagkaroon ng pagkakataon at nagkaroon ng oras kasama ang kaniyang ama ay dahil po ito sa kasong EJK. Kung hindi po naganap at nagawa ang sinasabing mga aksyon patungkol sa war on drugs at walang nag-complain, hindi naman din sila magkakaroon ng pagkakataon na makapunta sa The Hague. So, mas magandang pasalamat niya muna po, dahil sa ginawa ng kaniyang ama, sa mga inirireklamo sa kaniya, iyon po ang naging cause kung bakit sila nasa The Hague.

Pero pinaabot po natin ito sa Pangulo at ang sabi po niya, "Glad, I could help".

**ANNA BAJO/GMA NEWS ONLINE:** Thank you, ma'am.

**PCO USEC. CASTRO:** At dito po nagtatapos ang ating briefing. Maraming salamat, Malacañang Press Corps, at magandang tanghali para sa Bagong Pilipinas.

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