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EPISODE 3 (PART 2)

SA LIKOD NG SONA

MR. IVAN MAYRINA: Mr. President, lately napansin namin, kaming nagko-cover sa inyo, you have been personally gracing and announcing government efforts that provide immediate relief to Filipinos.

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.: Yes.

MR. MAYRINA: Most recent of which itong hong inanunsyo ninyong zero-balance billing sa mga government hospitals, Benteng Bigas for larger population, free or discounted fares sa public transport.

Ito ho ay well-received as expected. And it appears to be working in your favor dahil pataas po ang inyong mga numbers – trust and approval numbers. Ito ho ba ay paraan to win back people’s trust and approval – ito hong ginagawa ninyo?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Hindi ganoon ang approach namin. We don’t work according to surveys, not really.

What we do is – is there… ‘Pag may nagrereklamo sinasabi, mahaba ang pila sa PhilHealth, ano ang puwede nating gawin para mas maginhawa?

‘Yung mga seniors na – eh kailangan tulungan natin. O sige, bigyan natin ng diskuwento doon sa mga tren. O tapos ‘yung commuters kasi araw-araw ‘yan eh.

So, anything that we can do to make things easier. Some – kahit na – kahit na hindi discount, ‘yung digitalization nga sa PhilHealth para hindi ora-oradang nakapila ang tao para makapag-claim lamang.

So, all of these things are being done because we have – we have many, many big plans. Malaking proyekto na ginagawa natin na it will take – matagal pa ‘yan, nasisimulan pa lang. Matatagalan pa ‘yan.

Ngunit, there are many things that we can do that affect people’s lives and help people’s lives, make it more easy. Cheaper, easier, more convenient, save time – all of those things that are valuable to all of us.

Eh pagka mayroon kaming nakitang ginagawa, ‘yun ang ginagawa namin. It’s not really to try and do anything.

The other thing is that hindi sapat 'yung aming pagbalita sa tao kung ano 'yung mga bagong serbisyo na nalaan na. Kaya't ngayon sinasabi namin and its importance na nandoon ako because when I go, when the President goes, it highlights whatever that is.

Like today, we started the estero – the Bayanihan Estero Program, which is cleaning up the esteros. Ngayon na nandoon ako, eh siyempre lalabas sa news 'yan, lalabas sa diyaryo, alam ng tao na may ganoon. So, they can volunteer. They can help in any way that they can. That kind of thing.

Or may pasyente who wants to go to the hospital, ngayon alam na nila. Dati hindi nila alam paano ba 'yung PhilHealth na 'yan? Ano ba 'yung mga ano? Ngayon, alam na nila kaya't hindi na sila mag-hesitate na pupunta.

MR. MAYRINA: How do you respond to observations that ito raw ay mga short-term, band-aid, o papogi para – ba't hindi raw ho ito – they do not really provide meaningful improvement in people's lives?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, ask the student who now pays 50 percent less for his pamasahe.

Ask the patient who now is willing to go under a kidney transplant because 'yung gamot na inaalala niya hindi niya mabibili pagka nagpa-transplant siya – maraming gamot 'yan eh, medyo mahal pa, eh libre na, o hindi na mag – hindi na siya mag-ano, magpupunta na siya, itutuloy na niya.

Those are the problems, and we are slowly solving them.

MR. MAYRINA: Halimbawa ho 'yung sa bigas, halimbawa. Instead of subsidizing, bakit hindi pababain ang farm inputs or make it easier for farmers to produce more para mapababa – you know things like that, 'yung mga ganoong observations?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: And that is why we have in the last planting seasons have recorded all bumper crops pataas nang pataas because inayos nga natin ang production.

Ang katotohanan, gamitin na lang natin 'yung bigas bilang halimbawa. 'Yung dalawampung piso, ngayon lang namin nagawa dahil ang dami munang kailangang ayusin.

Kailangan bawasan 'yung smuggling. Kailangan isara 'yung mga warehouse na nagho-hoarding. Kailangan mabigyan tayo ng makinarya para sa farmers.

Kailangan magbigay nga tayo ng tulong sa mga farmers. Kailangan natin maibigay 'yung CLOA para sa – doon sa Agrarian Reform.

Hindi pa nagawa – noong bago kaming upo, wala pa lahat 'yan. So, sa nakaraang tatlong taon, ginagawa na ngayon namin. Ngayon may kakayahan na tayo.

MR. MAYRINA: But we're still heavily subsidizing the Benteng Bigas?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: It should not be that heavily subsidized. In fact, the –

MR. MAYRINA: So, liliit po ang subsidy in the coming years?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: It should come… Habang ‘yung production natin gumaganda, bababa nang bababa ‘yan.

But we got to – naabot na natin ‘yung punto na masabi natin o kaya na natin ito. We can afford it. We can afford the subsidy.

And as subsidy – as the subsidy becomes less and less, mas magiging malaki ang coverage ng P20 rice.

MR. MAYRINA: Ito ho nabanggit natin ’yung zero-balance billing kanina, itong Benteng Bigas, marami din ho kayong mga binanggit sa SONA ninyo na pangako that you intend to do in the next three years of your term: new classrooms, Bulilit Centers, all other projects. Tanong po ng tao: Mr. President, may pera pa po ba ang Pilipinas para tustusan lahat ito?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Oo, mayroon. Basta’t ‘yung pera ng Pilipinas ay ginagamit sa tamang paraan. ‘Yung perang nakalaan para sa ganitong – para sa classroom ginamit talaga sa classroom.

Hindi nakalagay doon dalawang classroom, ginawa lang isang classroom. Binulsa na ‘yung natira. O ‘yung mga ganoong klase.

‘Pag talagang mahigpit tayo at tama ang gamit nung ating pondo, mayroon tayo.

MR. MAYRINA: Uutangin ba natin ang pantustos sa mga proyektong ito? Because right now, P17.2 trillion. To many Filipinos na karamihan – normal naman po may utang sa mga tao, but the number P17 trillion is staggering at nakakatakot.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Yeah, but even if you look at any – the sari-sari store, isang negosyo, isang maliit na negosyo, may utang din pero may kinikita.

Tapos ‘yung utang na ‘yun, ginagamit pang-investment para palakihin ang negosyo, para pagandahin ‘yung whatever – restaurant or sari-sari – whatever it is. Huwag natin tinitingnan ‘yun lang trillion.

MR. MAYRINA: As an absolute number –

PRESIDENT MARCOS: It’s not an absolute number. Like any corporation, may balance sheet ‘yan. The balance sheet has assets and liabilities.

‘Pag tinitingnan lamang ‘yung utang, tinitingnan lang ‘yung liabilities. Eh tingnan niyo ‘yung asset. Nadadagdagan ‘yung asset natin. Nadadagdagan ‘yung training natin na ibibigay sa… Ako, pinakamalaking asset natin ‘yung Pilipino, ‘yung manggagawang Pilipino.

So, ‘yung utang na ‘yun, gagamitin mo naman para pang-training doon sa taong ‘yun. Anong balik nun? Ang balik nun employment.

At saka employments na magandang trabaho, hindi ‘yung mga basta-basta na trabaho. Ito ‘yung talagang magandang trabaho.

MR. MAYRINA: Tama rin po ba na ang pag-manage natin sa national debt is contingent on how we are able to combat corruption?

Nabanggit niyo ho kanina kasi, umuutang tayo't ninanakaw lang nila.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Yeah.

MR. MAYRINA: Kung mapigilan po natin 'yun, mapapababa ba ang utang ng Pilipinas?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Dahan-dahan mapapababa natin 'yan. Slowly we will bring it down.

MR. MAYRINA: Kahapon ho nag-anunsyo ang SSS na magkakaroon ng dagdag sa pension. Ang sabi po ng SSS, it will not necessitate additional contributions.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Nope.

MR. MAYRINA: But it will shorten – slightly shorten the fund life of SSS. How will this work, sir?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, that's fine because the SSS is growing anyway. Our population is growing. Our working population is growing. So, 'yun ang bawi doon, it will continue to grow.

In fact, in our estimation, SSS in terms of its fund is growing at such a rate that it will be bigger than GSIS soon.

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