PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
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PRESS BRIEFING OF PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON HARRY ROQUE
January 21, 2021 (12:10 P.M. – 1:17 P.M.)

SEC. ROQUE: Magandang tanghali, Pilipinas.

Siyempre po maraming napuyat sa atin dahil pinanood po natin ang inagurasyon ni President Biden ng Amerika at kaugnay nito:

"Our President, Rodrigo Roa Duterte, sends his warmest greetings and the best wishes to the 46th President of the United States, Joseph "Joe" Biden and to his Vice President Kamala Harris. America has once again shown us how deep its roots in democracy are, it has always been an exemplar to the world and today it has reassured the world that its people remain committed to peaceful electoral transitions and the noble principle of representative democracy. We, in the Philippines, look forward to continuing our long-standing partnership with the United States in working together for a freer and more peaceful world. We are confident that President Biden will wear his new mantle of leadership with pride and with due regard for the hopes and aspirations of the rest of the world."

Pasensiya na po, pero ingles para maintindihan po ng mga Amerikano.

Tulad ng una ninyong narinig sa akin press briefing, kahapon ang unang araw ng ocular inspection ng cold-storage facilities na gagamitin natin para sa mga bakuna. Kasamang pinuntahan po ng ating Vaccine Czar Secretary Carlito Galvez, ang Zuellig Pharma; makikita ninyo ang larawan ng Zuellig sa inyong screen, ito po ay sa Parañaque. May kakayahan ang cold rooms ng Zuellig Pharma na matatagpuan sa iba't ibang bahagi ng Pilipinas na makapag-hold ng 650 million vaccine doses 'no habang ang walk-in freezers ng Zuellig na may temperature mula -50 hanggang -25 degrees ay nakakapagtago ng 14 million doses. Mayroon din silang ultra-low freezers na mayroong kakayahan na mag-maintain ng temperature na negative -80 degrees; kaya nitong magtago ng 6.5 million doses. Ito po ay para sa Pfizer 'no na kinakailangan nga ng -70 to -80 degrees.

Nagpunta rin po ang grupo ni Secretary Galvez sa Unilab sa Biñan, Laguna. Kasama ito para masiguro ang kahandaan natin sa pagdating ng bakuna. Kaya ng Unilab na mag-accommodate ng hindi bababa sa five million doses at any time na may temperaturang two to eight degrees – ito po iyong para sa mga Chinese vaccines naman 'no. Tingnan natin ang mga larawan.

Tsinek din po ni Secretary Galvez ang cold-storage facility ng RITM na may kapasidad na magtago ng vaccines na nasa ultra-low at two to eight degrees na temperature requirements.

Ganito po ang proseso ng vaccine distribution ha – mula cold-storage facility hanggang sa recipient. Pagdating po sa Pilipinas, siyempre po naka-refrigerated iyan sa eroplano,

susunduin po iyan ng refrigerated ng mga trucks din. Dadalhin po muna iyan sa DOH rented private warehouse or sa RITM.

Ito po muna ha, unahin muna natin iyong sa cold-storage facility na nangangailangan po ng -2 to -8 and -20 'no. Pagdating po ay dadalhin sa DOH rented private warehouse, pagkatapos po ay ipapadala through refrigerated vans din sa regional warehouse at hub. From the regional warehouse at hub po, dadalhin iyan sa mga city health offices at saka sa mga provincial health offices na mayroon din pong mga refrigerator. Tapos dadalhin na po natin iyan sa rural health units, sa mga city health offices na naka-refrigerator din hanggang ibigay po sa ating mga kababayan.

Para naman po doon sa Pfizer na mayroong cold-storage facility na hanggang -70 percent, siyempre po kinakailangan ng refrigeration iyan sa eroplano pa lang; at pagsundo, refrigerated truck din. Iyan naman po ay dadalhin kaagad sa rented private warehouse. At pagkatapos po sa rented private warehouse - diretso na po sa private 'no kasi iyong mga -70 po talaga ay mga pribado po iyan 'no - ay dadalhin po natin sa regional health units at saka sa city health officers, sa mga ospital, sa implementing units at ibibigay po sa ating mga kababayan.

Paalala lang po: Ang scenarios na aking nabanggit ay maaaring magkaiba base sa mga serbisyo na maibibigay ng vaccine manufacturers such as but not limited to, direct distribution to the service delivery sites, presence of a distributor in the country.

So ito po iyong in default, kung wala pong pangako na delivery doon mismo sa lugar na kung saan ibibigay ang mga bakuna. May mga kumpaniya po kasing nangako ng ganiyang serbisyo.

Tulad ng aking sinabi, pag-usapan natin ngayong araw ang update tungkol sa telecommunication sector. Pasensiya na po kayo ano, at siyempre iyong usaping bakuna, ay naantala itong paghimay-himay natin ng report ng National Telecoms Commission. Pagkatapos po nating himayin ang report ay kasama po natin mamaya si Usec. Caintic ng DICT para naman makuha kung ano ang evaluation ng ating DICT ukol dito sa report na ito.

Now, sang-ayon po sa isinagawang speed test ng Ookla – ang global leader sa internet testing data and analysis – ang internet speed ng Pilipinas ay nag-improve ng 297.47%, ang tinutukoy dito ang internet average download speed for fixed broadband; at 202.4% ang improvement sa mobile broadband. Now, ang makikita ninyo pong 297.47 increase ay increase simula po ng administrasyon ni President Duterte, July 2016 hanggang Disyembre ng 2020. Pero kung titingnan natin iyong pag-increase naman mula noong nagbabala ang Presidente noong kaniyang SONA ng July 2020 hanggang Disyembre 2020 ay nagkaroon po ng 25.4% increase sa bilis ng fixed download speed.

Okay, pagdating naman po sa mobile download speed, sang-ayon po sa Ookla, nagkaroon po ng 202.41% mula noong July 2016 hanggang December 2020. Pero iyong increase po niya mula noong nagbabala ang Presidente sa kaniyang SONA noong July 2020 hanggang December

2020 ay 32.7% increase, ito ay para sa buwan ng Disyembre noong nakaraang taon kung ikukumpara noong July 2016 speed.

Okay, pagdating naman po sa average download speed for fixed broadband, ito ay nag-improve from 7.91 Mbps noong July 2016 at naging 31.44 Mbps noong December 2020. Kung ikukumpara po iyong increase mula July 2020 to December 2020, ito po ay 25.4% increase.

Ang average download speed ng mobile broadband ay nag-improve din po ng 7.44 Mbps noong July 2016, ito po ay naging 22.50 Mbps noong December 2020. Pero kung ikukumpara po iyong increase from July 2020 to December 2020, ito po ay 32.7% increase.

Ngunit siyempre po 'no, hindi tayo titigil dito. Kinakailangan po ay maipakita pa rin natin na kapareho naman tayo o kapantay natin sa bilis ng internet ang ating mga karatig-bansa dito po sa Asya. Ito po ang lumalabas 'no, as of November 2020, ang Pilipinas ay Number 29 sa limampung bansa sa Asya 'no pagdating sa download speed ranking sa fixed broadband. Ang mga kapitbahay natin, karatig-bansa sa ASEAN tulad ng Singapore ay nasa unang puwesto, ang Thailand ay number 2; ang Malaysia ay number 11; ang Vietnam ay number 14; ang Laos ay Number 27. Siguro naman po dapat ay kapantay tayo ng Vietnam man lang.

Sa mobile broadband ay nasa Number 34 po tayo out of 50 counties ang ating speed sa Asya. Pagdating sa fixed broadband ay Number 20 po ang Pilipinas sa apatnapu't anim sa bansa sa Asya Pasipiko; at Number 22 naman po tayo sa mobile broadband sa apatnapu't na bansa sa Asya Pasipiko.

Well, dapat po talaga na mag-improve pa ang serbisyo ng ating mga telecoms provider dahil ang nasabi ko na nga po noong nagkaroon tayo ng espesyal na edition ng presidential press briefing dito sa mga telcos, hindi naman katanggap-tanggap na nahuhuli tayo sa ating mga karatig-bansa at kinakailangan na tayo ay magnais na maging world class pagdating po sa telecommunication.

Okay, pag-usapan naman po natin ang permits, towers at fiber optic po 'no. Ang monthly average ng permits na inisyu ng 2019 ay animnapu't tatlo sa Globe at limampu sa Smart. Pero matapos magbigay ng direktiba ang Presidente na pabilisin ang pagbibigay ng mga permits ng mga lokal na pamahalaan, tumaas ang average monthly number of permits na na-isyu mula Hulyo hanggang Disyembre noong nakaraan na taon. Nasa 552.65% ang itinaas sa Globe dahil 348 permits ang naisyu at 194.33% or 97 permits naman po ang na-isyu sa Smart. Ang nais po nating makita sa lalong mabilis na panahon ay ano po iyong karagdagang improvement sa speed ng ating internet at doon sa ating cellular service ngayong ginawan na ng paraan ng ating Presidente mismo ang pagpapabilis ng pag-issue ng mga permits sa pagtatayo ng mga telecommunications towers. Dahil dumami nga po ang nag-issue ng permits, tumaas din ang bilang ng towers na naipatayo. Mayroong 2,939 additional towers ang naipatayo mula Hulyo hanggang Disyembre noong 2020.

Makikita naman sa susunod na infographic ang cumulative number of additional towers na naipatayo na po ng Smart, Globe at Dito. Ang total po na naitayo nila to date, in December, is 22,834 towers kaya nga po titingnan po natin kung gaanong porsiyento ng pag-improve naman po ng speed ng internet at siyempre iyong quality ng cellular service.

Pumunta naman po tayo sa fiber optic rollout. Mayroon nang 543,740 cable kilometers na laid out sa buong bansa as of 2020. Sa taong 2020 lamang, mayroon pong 144,551 cable kilometers ng fiber optic na na-rollout. Ang total change po niyan is 36.21%, ang percentage change.

COVID update naman po tayo. Ito po ang global update ayon sa Johns Hopkins – higit 96.7 million or 96, 787, 591 ang tinamaan ng COVID-19 sa buong mundo. Nasa 2, 071, 892 pong katao ang binawian ng buhay dahil sa coronavirus.

Nangunguna pa rin po ang Estados Unidos na mayroong mahigit 24.4 million na mga kaso at 405, 630 deaths. Pangalawa pa rin po ang India, pangatlo pa rin ang Brazil, pang-apat pa rin ang Russia at pang-lima po ang United Kingdom.

Dito po sa Pilipinas, 'naku, tumaas po ang ating mga aktibong kaso. Mayroon na po tayong 28,904 na mga aktibong kaso sang-ayon po sa January 20, 2021 data ng Department of Health. Ang mabuting balita na lang po, sa mga tumaas na active cases, 92.5% ay mild at asymptomatic, samantalang 4.5% po ay critical; nasa 2.6 naman po ang severe.

Nasa 466, 993 ang kabuuang bilang ng mga gumaling or 92.3% recovery rates. Samantalang malungkot naming ibinabalita na 10, 042 tao na po ang binawian dito po sa atin ng buhay dahil sa coronavirus. Nasa 1.98% po ang fatality rate, nakikiramay po kami sa lahat.

Makikita po natin sa infographic ang surge dito po sa huli ng ating kurbada. Sayang po, 'no pababa na po sana talaga pero sumipa na pataas. Ito po iyong talaga naman pong kumpirmadong surge dahil nga po sa Kapaskuhan. Ang hindi po natin nakikita kung gaano katindi ang magiging surge dahil po sa Traslacion.

Uulitin po natin, habang hindi pa po nababakunahan ang mga Filipino, kinakailangan pong limitahan ang mga magkakasakit sa atin. Magagawa po natin iyan sa pamamagitan ng mask, hugas, at iwas.

Tingnan naman po natin ang availability ng mga kama para gamutin ang mga magkakasakit ng critical at severe, 'no. Well, bahagyang bumaba po ang available na ICU beds. Iyong mga nakalipas na araw, 60% po iyan naging 59, ngayon 58%, at iyan naman po ay dahil nga po sa surge. Sana po hindi pa dumami nang ganoon kadami ang mga magkakasakit nang seryoso. Pero sa ngayon naman po, nothing to worry about dahil marami pa po tayong ICU beds.

Sa isolation beds, mayroon pa po tayong 63% available. Mukha naman pong hindi dumami ang naospital sa ating mga isolation beds. Sa ward beds, 73% po ay available. So, ang tumaas lang

po talaga ay iyong mga na-ICU at ito naman po ay dahil nga po sa surge na ating naoobserbahan. Sa ventilators, 79% pa po ang available.

Okay. Dito po nagtatapos ang ating presentasyon. Kagaya po ng aking sinabi kanina, kukuhanin po natin ang panig ng DICT dito sa report ng NTC. Lilinawin ko lang po, ang NTC po ay quasi-judicial pero it is an attached agency to the DICT. So, kasama po natin ngayon walang iba kung hindi si DICT Undersecretary Manny Caintic para sa kaniyang obserbasyon at evaluation dito sa naging ulat ng NTC sa Pangulo bilang tugon doon sa sinabi ng ating Pangulo na kinakailangan mag-improve ang ating telecoms.

Pero bago po natin tawagin si DICT Manny Caintic ay wini-welcome ko po ngayon sa ating briefing room, walang iba po kung hindi ang batang-bata, ang guwapong governor ng Samar, wala pong iba kung hindi Reynolds Michael Tan. Governor Tan, welcome to our briefing. At kasama rin po ni Governor Tan ang kaniyang Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator, si Mr. Nicasio Bermejo. Welcome po to our press briefing.

So, Usec. Caintic, ano po ang ebalwasyon, anong tingin ng DICT sa naging ulat ng NTC at anong magiging rekomendasyon ninyo kay Presidente dahil ang sabi ng Presidente baka po kakanselahin niya ang mga prangkisa kung hindi po mag-improve ang serbisyo ng mga telecoms. The floor is yours, Usec. Caintic.

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: H! Good afternoon, Secretary Harry and thank you for inviting the DICT in this press briefing. I just have a couple of comments on the extensive report that our friend from the National Telecommunications Commission have done.

So, una sa lahat I want to highlight the fact that there has really been an increase in the tower rollout. I think this is in positive response to the joint memorandum circular that we have done as well as the President's directive in easing up the permit for the towers.

In that regard, you have seen dramatic increase in the tower rollout. And what does that imply? That will increase the extent of the coverage of the mobile operators in providing internet. Kapag dumami din po ang kanilang tore, gaganda din po ang signal na ating masasagap sa internet because we're only as limited also with the extent which the towers are prevalent.

Ang challenge natin would still be the fiber rollout, iyong land-based, which kami dito sa DICT starting last quarter, have already been looking at improving also and creating also an equivalent joint memorandum circular for easing up and regularizing the permit needed for the fibers naman.

Ang importante kasi dito, ang hinihingi sa atin ng mga partners – the telecom providers is: One, make it firm. Hindi pabagu-bago which is easy, hindi mahirap at saka mas mura. Meaning to say, hindi paiba-iba ang mga rates sa mga LGUs. We, in the DICT are firm believers of making easier, cheaper, and faster processing of such necessary permits for the fiber rollout. That the

fiber is also needed in distance communications kasi right now because of the pandemic nasa mga kabahayan tayo and we want it to be easy.

So, thank you so much Secretary Harry and we hope that with our increased and improved regulations in government, eh walang reason ang telecommunications sector na hind nila mapalaganap ang kanilang pag-rollout at mapaganda ang kanilang services even better.

Thank you po.

SEC. ROQUE: Usec. Caintic, but I need your recommendations dahil I intend to make this presentation to the President for our weekly meeting bago po mag-taping for the *Talk to the People*. Sabi po ng Presidente, shape up or ship out. Ano po ang rekomendasyon natin sa ating Presidente given this report from the NTC?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: Our recommendation is to continue that firm stand imposed for the telcos and on our end kasi sa government hindi naman tayo nagkulang sa pagbigay ng suporta sa ating mga telecommunication company.

So, we should not lessen our pressure on them, in fact we should even intensify the push but at the same time, we should do our best as government also to alleviate iyong problema doon sa mga permits. Ang challenge na nga ngayon is okay na iyong sa towers, ang ating sunod na kailangan ayusin, kami dito sa DICT are on the land-based fiber rollout.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay.

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: So, walang reason na mag-lessen ng pressure pero dual work po.

SEC. ROQUE: So, para maging malinaw lang, ang recommendation ninyo – huwag naman mag-ship out pero kinakailangan ipagpatuloy ang shape up, tama ho ba iyon, Usec.?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: Yes, Secretary Harry. Tuluy-tuloy ang push, tuluy-tuloy ang pressure ni President. Do not relent on the press. Full court press, kumbaga.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Maraming salamat, Usec. Caintic! Please join us for our open forum. Simulan na po natin ang ating open forum with our colleagues in the Malacañang Press Corps.

Usec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes. Good afternoon, Secretary Roque. Question from Evelyn Quiroz of Pilipino Mirror: You recently offered your office as a venue for discussion between Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and UP President Danilo Concepcion over the issue of the DND's abrogation of the 1989 agreement between the two. Have they accepted your offer?

SEC. ROQUE: Ah, linawin ko po 'no. What I offered was my good office. Ibig sabihin hindi lang iyong physical office ko, pupuwedeng sa labas po kung saan pakakainin ako ni Presidente Danilo Concepcion. Pero so far po ang tumanggap lang po ay si Secretary Delfin Lorenzana; hindi pa po ako nakakarinig ng kahit anong komento kay President Danilo Concepcion, natatakot po sigurong pakainin ako sa labas.

USEC. IGNACIO: For Usec. Manny Caintic po, question from Evelyn Quiroz ng Pilipino Mirror. Ito po ang tanong niya: The Commission on Audit has flagged the Department of Information and Communications Technology for using only 1.2 billion pesos out of its 6.2 billion funding for 2019 for a very low fund utilization rate. According to state auditors, a low allotment utilization rate would mean slow program/project implementation rate. Can you explain the DICT's inability to maximize the utilization of its budget?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: Thank you po. Una, bibigyan ko ng konteksto ang report—ay una sa lahat, nagpapasalamat kami sa COA for pointing out this deficiency.

We at the DICT recognize the importance of audit report because it actually helps us pinpoint the problem. But to provide context, the 2019 budget was delayed, na-delay ang pag-approve ng 2019 budget ergo everything else follow. But that is not an excuse.

But if you look at the COA report, it also identifies in its full report that they helped us pinpoint that there are inefficiencies in the procurement and budget implementation/executions. So this has been prevalent for that past three/four years. So what we have done with the Honasan leadership is to look at those inefficiencies and fix them. So we spent the time, fix them, so that the projects get implemented kasi hindi puwedeng bili ka nang bili, pa-bid ka nang pa-bid, hindi naman mai-implement.

Like for example the Wi-Fi – for the past 5 years, from 2016 to 2019—ah, 4 years, it has also been averaging an 800 per year deployment. But since we rectified the execution and then we started procuring again, we were able to rollout 4,300 Wi-Fi sites in just one year. So you see, we fixed the problem in the implementation and then we procured. Klaruhin ko lang din, the 2019 budget was extended till 2020 and the last report that we have right now, the poor utilization of the 2019 budget extended to 2020 is now 80%.
So my answer to this is that the DICT is rectifying its programs, always constantly checking the effectivity of the program. We need to be able to manage our vendors, our partners, our execution partners so that we attain the economic outcomes we desire. Hindi ibig sabihin that hindi natin niri-rectify ang ating mga nakagawiang mga mali. Thank you po.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Usec. Rocky, if I may add 'no. Secretary Wendel Avisado also sent us a note saying that despite the ongoing pandemic, government's actual infrastructure disbursements from January to November 2020 exceeded the infrastructure program level – in particular, infrastructures disbursements as of November 2020 totaled 727.9 billion which is 4% more than the program level of 699.2 billion.

So ini-expect din po natin na iyong spending for December 2020 will accelerate compared to the earlier months since line departments try to fast track the implementation of their programs and settle their outstanding payables before the end of the year.

In addition, iyong big spending departments such as DPWH and DOTr have also committed to implement their respective catchup plans for 2020. Ibig sabihin, wala naman pong overall underspending pagdating po sa infrastructure projects.

Thank you, Usec. Rocky. We go to Melo Acuña, please.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA DAILY PACIFIC: Magandang tanghali po, Secretary Harry. Ilang punto lang 'no. Ngayong may bago nang Pangulo sa Estados Unidos, magbabago po kaya ang foreign policy ng Pilipinas tungo sa Estados Unidos?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, sa akin naman po, ang ating relasyon na panlabas eh pareho naman pong consistent ang ating polisiya. Ang Presidente po ay sinusulong ang isang indipendiyenteng panlabas na relasyon na ang inuuna po ay interes ng ating bayan at mga sambayanang Pilipino. Ganoon din po ang mga Amerikano, isusulong nila ang pangnasyunal nilang interes at siyempre po ang pagkakaibigan naririyan pero kinakailangan po ang parehong bansa, ang isulong ang kani-kanilang mga interes.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA DAILY PACIFIC: Opo. Nabasa ko po sa Philippine Star iyong report tungkol sa 2.34 billion shelter project sa ARMM. Tila hindi po yata natapos iyong mga proyekto pero nagkabayaran. Ito po ba ay sisiyasatin ng Tanggapan ng Pangulo sapagkat mayroong kampanya ang administrasyon laban sa corruption, iyon pong mga programa na hindi naipatupad noong panahon pa ng ARMM. Ano po kaya ang sitwasyon?

SEC. ROQUE: Siyempre po titingnan natin iyan 'no. Nabasa ko naman po ang Star kanina so hindi po iyan lumabas kanina. Siguro iyong mga nakalipas na araw.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA DAILY PACIFIC: Kahapon po.

SEC. ROQUE: So kukunin po natin ang artikulo na iyan at I'm sure po ang Presidente dahil ang prayoridad niya ngayon sa natitira niyang termino ay itigil na itong problema ng korapsiyon, ay pag-aaralan po ito.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA DAILY PACIFIC: Maraming salamat po. Para po kay Undersecretary Manny Caintic. Magandang tanghali po.

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: Good afternoon, sir.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA DAILY PACIFIC: Opo. Ang tanong ko po ay may kinalaman sa monitoring ninyo ng telcos. Baka mayroon pong overloading sapagkat kahit po sabihin natin mayroon

silang mga fiber optics, 'pag nagsama-sama po iyong gagamit ng internet eh bumabagal, kung hindi napuputol. Baka po parang jeep ito na overloaded. Ano po kaya ang magagawa ng DICT?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: Thank you, Sir Melo. Tulad ng sinabi ko nga kanina, ang kailangan is magpalaganap pa ng marami pang fiber cable. Sa cable muna tayo, kulang pa. We are actually a very big nation, 400,000 square kilometers tayo 'no so malaki-laki pa, malawak pa and our fiber cable rollout is still minimal. So kailangan magdoble—double, triple, quadruple time pa ang mga telcos sa pagpalaganap.

Tayo sa government ang maitutulong natin is hindi magkaroon ng sagabal sa pag-roll out na iyon. Doon sa tore ramdam na nila, hindi na sila pinapahirapan. Pero kailangan pa po ng kable, sa ganoon 'pag dumami ang kable, hindi tayo nau-overload-an. Para lang po siyang [unclear] sa nakikita ko sa drawing, sa picture mo. 'Pag kulang ang host [garbled] lahat. Salamat po.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA DAILY PACIFIC: Thank you. Thank you, Secretary Harry.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Salamat, Melo. Salamat, Usec. Back to Usec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary, question from Virgil Lopez ng GMA News Online: Some senators daw po have pushed for the passage of the bill seeking to amend the UP-Charter Act of 2008 to require prior notification on the entry of police and military units in all UP campuses. Is the Palace for or against this bill?

SEC. ROQUE: We always respect the prerogative of our legislators to legislate national policies 'no. So sa akin po, that seems to be a reasonable proposal but that has to be enacted po into law.

USEC. IGNACIO: Question from Kris Jose, Remate/Remate Online: Reaksiyon po sa panawagan ng Duterte Youth Partylist sa DND na kanselahin na rin ang agreement nito sa PUP katulad ng ginawa sa UP. Sinabi ni Congressman Cardema na ang UP-DND Accord at PUP-DND Accord ay klarung-klaro na special treatment na inaabuso na sa tagal ng panahon. Sa tingin ninyo susuportahan din ng Pangulo na makansela ang PUP-DND Accord?

SEC. ROQUE: Sa reaksiyon po, eh karapatan naman po iyan ng Duterte Youth na magsalita, pero iyan po ay opinion ng Duterte Youth.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Maraming salamat. Triciah Terada, please.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Hi! Good afternoon, Spox. Spox, doon lang po sa usapin ng bakuna. Nagkausap na po si Senator Lacson and Secretary Galvez. And as how Senator Lacson described it, they had a good discussion or meeting. And he shared that after the meeting, he advised Secretary Galvez that some people – to be more careful, to be extra cautious – about

possibly some people taking advantage of his credibility. What can Malacañang say about this, sir? And has Malacañang considered this possibility? And ano, sir, iyong steps that you are taking to protect Secretary Galvez?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko po alam kung ano ang sinasabi in Senator Lacson 'no. But I guess, you know, in our earlier talks with General Galvez, I did warn him that although si General Galvez is a technocrat – he is not just a military leader, he has advanced management degrees from Australia and he is a true-blue technocrat – ang warning ko sa kaniya, do not think that the release of information is equivalent to communication. Iba po iyon 'no. Ang sinasabi ko nga, ang warning ko sa mula't mula ay talagang ipupolitika po iyan dahil wala na po talagang mabatong kahit anong isyu sa administrasyon ni Presidente Duterte ngayong patapos na po ang termino ng ating Presidente. So, I think he now knows what I mean, that the release of information does not necessarily mean it is strategic communication. So anyway, iyon lang po ang aking reaksiyon.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Sir, iyong usapin po ng UP Accord, I'm sure nakarating na po iyon kay Pangulo. What does he think of the appeals, the sentiments of the UP community? Will he be open to listening or at least to meeting with President Concepcion?

SEC. ROQUE: As I said po itong bagay na ito, hindi na po kinakailangang makarating sa level ng Presidente. Although we do have the principle of qualified political agency, sa level na po ito ni Secretary Lorenzana. And as I have said, I have offered my good offices. Secretary Delfin Lorenzana has accepted and I continue to await word from President Danilo Concepcion.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Sir, sa ibang topic naman. Numbers have gone up the past few days, iyong nabanggit nga po ninyo, iyong surge. How will this factor-in in the quarantine classification? Can we expect that there will be a re-classification?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, hindi ko po pupuwedeng pangunahan ang IATF 'no. Pero paulit-ulit ko pong sinasabi, data analytics will dictate kung ano po ang ating quarantine classification. At sa tingin ko po, nakita naman ninyo iyong availability of beds natin: Dalawa lang pong lugar ang critical—ang nasa moderate po pala, hindi pa critical, wala pa sa red – iyong CAR at saka iyong Region XI. So, iyong mga areas na iyon ay binabantayan po natin dahil kapag umabot sa critical iyan from moderate eh siyempre po mayroon tayong dahilan. Pero ang quarantine classification nga po will not really be on a national basis. It would be on a local basis. But as I said, idi-discuss pa po iyan dahil so far hindi pa po nagpri-present ang DOH ng latest analytics nila. Baka mamayang hapon po, today is the 21st, ah hindi pa, baka in the next meeting pa iyong data nila.

Yes, Usec. Thank you very much, Trish. Tapos na ba si Trish o may question pa? Oh, may internet interruption lang, so may isa pang question yata si Trish. But meanwhile, let's go to Usec. Rocky please. Naku, nawala na rin sila pareho. Usec. Caintic, bakit ganito? Wala rin si Usec. Caintic. Usec. Caintic, you witnessed po kung ano ang nangyayari dito sa ating press briefing. Ano ba ho talaga ang dapat gawin natin para hindi naman kami maputol. Puro Metro Manila kami, napuputol kami. Can I ask Usec. Caintic first? Usec, oh you have witnessed iyong

ating problema, even in our discharge of our official functions, lahat kami nasa Metro Manila pero bakit ganito, napuputol. Ano ba ho, kailan ba ho matitigil itong ating hinagpis na napuputulan tayo ng internet, Usec. Caintic?

Any of the two. Trish Terada or Usec. Rocky or Usec. Caintic, please? Naku, patay na! Usec. Caintic, wala kang audio. Okay, let's try Trish again. Naku! Anyway, sa aking report po kay Presidente sa Lunes, sasabihin ko po ang nangyari on the day we rendered a report on the Telcos na nawalan po kami ng connection sa lahat.

USEC. IGNACIO: Ulitin ko iyong question ni Virgil Lopez, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Yes, go ahead.

USEC. IGNACIO: Ang tanong po ni Virgil Lopez: Some senators daw po have pushed for the passage of the bill seeking to amend the UP Charter Act of 2008 to require prior notification on the entry of police and military units in all UP campuses. Is the Palace for or against this bill?

SEC. ROQUE: We leave that to the wisdom of Congress because that is an issue of national policy. Although as I said, it sounds like a reasonable legislative proposal.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo, iyong second question po niya: Reaksiyon ninyo sa panawagan ng Duterte Youth Partylist, question naman po ni Kris Jose ng Remate/Remate online.

SEC. ROQUE: Nasagot na po iyan, already answered. So we go to Pia Rañada.

USEC. IGNACIO: Sir, I think hindi po natapos si Trish Terada, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: O, Trish are you here?

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Yes, sir. Hi, sir! My question po earlier po, bago po tayo naputol. Iyong numbers have gone up this past days, iyong binabanggit nga po ninyo surge. How will this affect or factor-in the quarantine classifications? Can we expect, sir, kagaya po ng nabanggit po ninyo last time, iyong about sa new normal, mayroon na po bang lugar na mapapalagay under the new normal or will this take a while since IATF still crafting itong do's and don'ts po?

SEC. ROQUE: Yes, two points, sinagot ko na iyong first point mo. What will determine the new classification, it's still the attack rate and the critical care capacity. So far dalawang rehiyon lang po ang nasa moderate or papalapit na ng moderate iyong isa 'no. Ang nasa moderate na po ngayon ay ang CAR. Tapos ang Region XI po ay papalapit na rin sa moderate. Kapag umabot po iyan sa critical, that will really be a factor in escalating community quarantine classifications in these two areas. Pero hindi naman po national 'no.

Pangalawa po, in principle, magkakaroon po talaga tayo ng new normal, pero hanggang ngayon po hinihimay-himay pa rin kung ano iyong mga do's and don'ts sa mga areas na ito. At siyempre po dahil may surge, parang titingnan pa rin natin kung mayroon tayong mga lugar na wala po talagang active cases for an extended period of time.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: sir, may mga panawagan po ngayon ang wage hike amid iyong rising prices of livestocks, iyong mga food needs natin. How will Malacañang reconcile it? And is it possible kaya po kaya ng industry, ng businesses natin to push for a wage hike?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, mayroon na po tayong batas tungkol diyan 'no. Ang mga Regional Wage Board po ang magdidesisyon diyan, puwede naman pong kahit sino ang mag-apply for increase in the regional minimum wage if they would want to. Pero kagaya ng sinabi mo na rin, kinakailangan balansehin natin iyan sa katotohanan na because nga of the pandemic eh napakadami ring mga negosyo ang nahihirapan kung hindi tuluyan ng nagsara.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Sir, very short lang on the Telcos. Does Malacañang have a target or final deadline this year kung kailan po dapat ma-achieve for example the specific ranking or specific speed?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, ang gagawin ko lang po sa Lunes ipiprisenta ko lang po, idi-discuss ko po itong rekomendasyon or findings ng NTC and the recommendation of the DICT, and I will seek guidance from the President.

TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS: Thank you, Spox, that's all.

SEC. ROQUE: Usec. Manny Caintic. Usec?

USEC. CAINTIC: Yes, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Ito po na-experience natin, first hand, ang problema natin sa internet connection, we are all in Metro Manila, eh ilang beses na po tayong naputol. Ano po ba talaga ang solusyon dito?

USEC. CAINTIC: More towers, more fiber cable and better customer service.

SEC. ROQUE: Ang question po: When, when, when?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: When, when, when? It takes time to build the—we help them build. We help them build by making our regulations easy [garbled] and faster, faster ang [garbled].

SEC. ROQUE: Even your audio, Usec. Caintic, ha coming from—

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: [Garbled]

SEC. ROQUE: Even your audio is problematic po ha. So anyway, just for your information.

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: Nasa labas po ako, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Oo. Okay, next question please. Usec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Secretary, question from Prince Golez ng Politiko Abante: Yesterday daw po, you offered to mediate talks between the Defense Secretary Lorenzana and UP President Concepcion concerning the 1989 Accord. Should this materialize, what do you wish to achieve from this conversation?

SEC. ROQUE: Ako naman po, a good office, you don't need to have a fixed goal. It's for the parties to talk. At ang sabi ko nga po, as a UP graduate, I have never experienced how it is to have military or soldiers on campus. Iyon lang po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Iyong second question po niya: As someone who has spent more than 15 years in UP as a student and another 15 as a professor, do you support the DND's decision to terminate its agreement with UP?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, sa tagal po kasing nasa UP 'no, since high school pa ako, itong Accord naman pong ito ay pinirmahan na noong 3rd year law student na po ako. Ibig sabihin, from high school until 3rd year law, wala naman po iyang Accord na iyan. At iyong mga panahon po na iyan ay kasagsagan ng aking pagiging aktibista, personally, hindi po ako nagpatinag. Noong panahon na nandiyan iyong mga posibleng mga kumbaga espiya ng militar, hindi po ako nagpatinag. In fact, iyon po iyong time na dinebate ko no less than Imee Marcos in high school, and one month later, Trajano disappeared 'no. May pulis po noon on campus. Wala naman po—naniniwala ako, dahil nga po doon sa tradisyon ng UP ng critical thought, ang mga estudyante diyan patuloy na maninindigan kahit ano pa po, kahit mayroon o walang mga pulis.

Pero siyempre po, may dahilan din naman kaya nagkaroon ng ganiyang kasunduan kaya nais kong pag-usapan sana ng UP at ni Secretary Lorenzana.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Yes, Pia Rañada please.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Sir, three questions for you and then one question for Sir Caintic.

Sir, first, last August the President said that he would…he volunteered actually to get vaccinated in public with Russia's vaccine. And then, yesterday or a few days ago, you said that he wants a private vaccination. What led him to change his mind?

SEC. ROQUE: That's his personal decision, and I don't think he has to explain.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: So it's nothing to do with—because he volunteered for a public vaccination because he wanted to see that he is confident that these vaccines are safe and he wanted to encourage people to get vaccinated. Does this goal still not exist for the President?

SEC. ROQUE: It does, kaya nga po kita ninyo na ngayon ang mga public information dissemination natin 'no not only in our presidential press briefings, but also in Laging Handa and in the different programs of PCOO.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Sir, does the President plan to call President Biden in the coming days, perhaps to bring up the VFA or other issues?

SEC. ROQUE: I have no information as of yet. My next meeting with the President is this afternoon 'no, where there is an affair concerning the BARMM.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: And then, sir, lastly. You mentioned the meeting you're brokering with Secretary Lorenza. Sir, does this mean that Secretary Lorenzana is actually now open to walking back on his termination of the UP-DND Accord?

SEC. ROQUE: No, it doesn't mean anything. Alam mo kapag sinabi mong good offices, wala naman po iyang kahit anong prerequisite. It's just an opportunity to sit down. Pero wala po iyang objective, wala po iyang waiver of anything. It's done principally in interstate relations but has also been resorted to even in a domestic setting for purposes of either mediation or conciliation.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: So, sir, would you say that the likelihood of Secretary Lorenzana changing his mind after the meeting is zero?

SEC. ROQUE: No, I will not say that until they have actually been able to sit down and talk.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Okay. And then, next for Sir Caintic, Sir Manny. Sir, I've been asking this to DOH through their FOI portal and other officials as well, even StaySafe, sir, and I just want to know if you can say the details or the date even, just the date, na na-sign po iyong MOA dapat that StaySafe would transfer the user's data—sorry, Multisys' transfer StaySafe user's data to the government. When was this MOA signed? Is there a MOA?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: The deed of donation is still trying to be signed—pinapa-sign pa namin sa DOH, pero I think that's forthcoming. I cannot give you date yet on that. Wala pa rin namang tina-transfer pa na data on that.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Okay. Because I remember iyong resolution po ng IATF [garbled], it was contingent on that MOA being signed, and the deed of donation being signed. So how

can we push through with the rollout of StaySafe if indeed wala pa palang donation [garbled]? How do you assure citizens that their data is safe?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: That's the decision of the IATF, so I trust in the wisdom of the body as a whole.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: So, sir, we violated the IATF Resolution?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: I'm not saying that. It's just that the decision was to adopt it as well.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: So, sir, how do you assure citizens nga that their user's data is safe? Is it currently with Multisys, private organization, private firm?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: Right now, I think the National Privacy Commission has already been doing ongoing … continuous naman ang kanilang privacy assistance doon sa StaySafe. So maybe you can direct questions to them.

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Okay, thank you, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you very much, Pia. We go back to Usec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: Yes, Secretary, question from Tina Mendez ng Philippine Star: Graft charges were filed against BSP Governor Benjamin Diokno, six officials on the procurement of 116 million national ID contract. Any reaction from Malacañang? How will this affect the administration's move to implement the national ID program?

SEC. ROQUE: Wala naman po 'no. Kung maaalala ninyo, si Governor Diokno until fairly recently was in the Cabinet, enjoying the full trust and confidence of the President. In fact, he trusted him so much that he promoted him to become Central Bank Governor.

So naninindigan po tayo sa integridad ni Governor Diokno, at alam naman natin na karapatan ng kahit ang magsampa ng kaso. Pero kampante po kami at nagtitiwala na magbibigay linaw po si Governor Diokno sa isyu na ito.

USEC. IGNACIO: From Tina Panganiban Perez of GMA 7: What is the unemployment situation daw po in the country right now with the pandemic; and what industries/sectors are most affected? What assistance can the government is giving them?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko po memoryado 'no. Pero ang alam ko po, mula noong nag-ease up tayo at binuksan nating bahagya ang ating ekonomiya, parang nangalahati po iyong ating unemployment. Pero iyong kalahating iyon ay doble pa rin ng unemployment bago magkaroon ng pandemya. Pero hindi ko lang po maalala kung ano iyong figures na iyon.

Kaya nga po paulit-ulit tayong nagsasabi na puwede po tayo at dapat tayong mabuhay despite and in spite the virus. At kaya naman po natin iyan sa pamamagitan ng mask, hugas at iwas. Kinakailangan po pangalagaan natin ang ating kalusugan para sa ating mga hanapbuhay. Ingat-buhay para sa hanapbuhay.

USEC. IGNACIO: From Ace Romero/Phil. Star: Secretary Locsin tweeted, "Our entire passport revolving fund is gone; and we are in arrears to APO P388 million for printing passport booklets. Apparently, the fund was eaten up by travel allowances, insurance, miscellany. So bear with us until I fund money to replenish the fund." Ano daw po ang action ng Malacañang on this?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, we trust that Secretary Locsin can find the funds 'no. And I will bring this matter up also to Secretary Avisado.

USEC. IGNACIO: Thank you, Secretary.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you, Usec. Rocky. Joseph Morong, please.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Hi, sir! Good afternoon. Sir, my questions first are on the vaccination schedule of the government. Can you provide us now with the specific date of vaccination that the public can expect?

SEC. ROQUE: Ang sinasabi po ni Secretary Galvez, bagama't mayroong petsa po iyong pagdating ng Sinovac sa February, may posibilidad na mauuna pa ang ilang supplies ng Pfizer dumating kaysa sa Pebrero a-bente. At narinig ko rin po noong huling naging panauhin natin si Secretary Galvez na it will take around ten days bago mabakunahan ang taumbayan dahil mayroon silang kinakailangan na inventory at pagsisiguro na dapat gawin.

So, we can expect na kung mas maaga ang darating sa Pfizer, then mayroon tayong mauunang bakuna within the month of January. Kung darating po ng January 20, baka naman po puwedeng mapabilisan iyong Sinovac para magkaroon tayo ng unang pagturok also within the month of January, which is still feasible kasi sabi niya around ten days and ten days after the 20th is still the 31st and we do have a 31st in this month of January. Mayroon nga po.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Within January, sir?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, ang aking computation lang po, ano—January tuloy, February pala! Wala palang 31 ang February. I'm sorry, I stand corrected. January ako ng January, February 20 po kasi iyon, 'no. So, ten days, eh baka Marso na kung darating po ng February pero sana po nga mapabilisan 'no, para at least within February may una nang maturukan from Sinovac. Pero kung darating po nang mas maaga iyong Pfizer eh baka naman po kung earlier baka iyong ten days requirement eh within February pa rin po. I stand corrected, sorry po. Kaya mali iyong count ko noong January, February pala walang 31. Sorry about that.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Okay. So, March probably iyong Sinovac and we are hoping that Pfizer will be earlier and within the month of February, 'no?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, libre naman pong umasa so we're hoping that both we can start in the month of February – hope lang naman po iyon.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Okay. So, iyong 30 to 40 million na vaccines from COVAX facility wala pa po tayong brand niyan, 'no? Sinong magdi-decide noon, WHO?

SEC. ROQUE: Well, ang naunang binitawang salita po ni Secretary Galvez is possibly Pfizer from COVAX and this is entitled tayo to 22% of our population pero sinabi rin ni Secretary Galvez, hindi po malakihan ang dating niya. So, parang tingi-tingi po ang dating niyan, mga 100,000 a month, thereabouts. So, because COVAX of course is intended to ensure that all middle-income and poor countries have access to the vaccines.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Okay. Sir—

SEC. ROQUE: At ang balita ko po, bukod doon sa tatlong western brands eh nag-apply na rin po ang tatlong bakuna ng China para mapasama po doon sa COVAX facility.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Understood. Sir, in terms of deployment, kanina diniscuss [discussed] ninyo and diniscuss din ni Secretary Galvez, of course si Usec. Vergeire, iyong storage facility. There are limitations 'no, in terms of storing what vaccines. Now, it will matter - I think, 'no and I don't know if you share the same opinion – it will mater in terms of what vaccines ang matatanggap ng mga provinces. So, my question sir is, given the limitations in the storage facilities, what vaccines will go to what provinces?

SEC. ROQUE: Ang masasabi ko lang po ang Pfizer, and hindi ako sigurado kung Moderna ba. Basta ang alam ko lang iyong Pfizer that requires negative 70, Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao lang po siya mapupunta dahil iyon lang ang mayroong cold storage capacity na up to 70 to 80 degrees negative, 'no. Pero iyong iba naman po, refrigeration lang, so, all the other vaccines can be delivered to the other provinces.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: So, iyon pong halimbawa, Sinovac, Sinopharm, Gamaleya, will go to the other provinces?

SEC. ROQUE: Opo, limited nga lang po iyong Pfizer. Can you check please kung ano po iyong isa na negative 80? Is it Moderna kasi pareho silang mRNA? Ang AstraZeneca ang alam ko hindi naman kinakailangan talaga iyan, 'no. I think it is only the mRNAs that require negative 70 to negative 80.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: So, Pfizer and Moderna?

SEC. ROQUE: Yes.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: So, sir, hindi ba iyan parang – well, coming from the public point of view – na parang discrimination?

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi po, kasi in-explain po ni Dra. Lulu Bravo na talagang mRNAs that requires negative 70 to negative 80 is really intended for developed countries with cold storage facilities. Talagang hindi po iyan for everyone in developing countries that don't have that capacity. In that sense, it's the science that dictated it, it was not intentional on the part of the manufacturers.

But iyon nga po ang ini-explain natin. Bagama't ilan ay binabasehan kung anong gusto nilang bakuna depende kung saan ginawa eh may mga ginagawa po talaga intended for those countries alone. Hindi naman nila inisip na ibibigay iyan sa mga country na walang infrastructure para tanggapin iyang mga bakunang iyan.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: So, iyong sa COVAX, free iyon, 'no? Just so for the record.

SEC. ROQUE: What about the COVAX fee?

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Iyong matatanggap natin na 30 to 40?

SEC. ROQUE: Iyong pauna po. Pero iyon nga po, may negosasyon tayo na bibili pa rin tayo, 'no. Wait a minute. Ano ba itong inaabot sa akin? Sa unemployment, 'no… Anyway, nasabi ko naman po kanina. Tama po ako, ang height po nito… masyadong mahaba. Basta ang alam ko po, at the height of the lockdown, is the peak. Noong nagbukas po tayo, nangalahati pero iyong kalahating iyon is still doubled compared to what we had before the pandemic.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Sir, just last two questions. Iyong sa disclosure po, si Secretary Galvez has already disclosed to the senators na iyong prices ng ating mga vaccines. Does it not break the CDA and what is the difference between disclosing it to the senators and to the public?

SEC. ROQUE: Unang-una, I was not privy to that meeting, so I cannot confirm for a fact po, 'no. I think earlier si Secretary Galvez was the guest in Laging Handa, I do not know if he confirms. But your question is: Will it not be a violation? Eh, ang tingin ko naman po hindi naman po siguro because it was not made public, as in, to the general public. But I do not know if he actually did, he may have just given also a range. I was not in the meeting as I said. Okay. Ang Moderna nga pala ho, hindi naman pala po negative 70 to 80, it's negative 25 to negative 15 Celsius ang Moderna.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: So, it's just Pfizer iyong for urban cities, for urban areas?

SEC. ROQUE: Pero limitado rin po ang ating negative 25 to negative 15. Limitado rin po iyan.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: Sir, last na lang. Now we have new US administration, update sir. Ano ba iyong mga makukuha natin na vaccines form the US and will the change in the administration affect that commitment or not?

SEC. ROQUE: I don't think it will affect any commitments already negotiated because these are in the nature anyway of 'G2G' agreements, no. So, summarizing what has been mentioned by Ambassador Romualdez, we can look forward to a supply from Pfizer, we can look forward to 20 million from Moderna; 10-10 to the private sector; and 10 to the government sector; and J&J will conduct clinical trials in the Philippines.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA 7: All right, sir. Thank you for your time, sir.

SEC. ROQUE: Thank you. Usec. Rocky, please.

USEC. IGNACIO: From Kylie Atienza ng Business World, Secretary: Data from the Department of Budget and Management showed infrastructure and other capital outlays declined by 50% to P40.3-billion in November from 80.9-billion a year ago. Infrastructure spending in November was also 29.4% smaller than the 57-billion spent in October marking the 5th straight month of year-on-year decline since June when it posted a 44.5% annual growth. Also, overall state spending reached P4.205-trillion at the end of 2020 up 11% year in year but fell short of its 4.23-trillion target by 0.66% according to preliminary data presented by the Finance Department on January 12. Ang question po niya, what's the administration's response to this?

SEC. ROQUE: Alam ninyo po ito iyong sinasabi ko na bagama't I am the one who broke the tradition of all spokespersons na hindi ko hinihingi ang questions in advance, pero kung ganito ka-detalyado po ang tanong ninyo, paano naman ako sasagot diyan? Pero kanina po, ang sinabi ko naman po, as far as spending on infrastructure is concerned, nag-exceed nga po iyong ating infrastructure spending doon sa ating actually programmed na spending.

Ang sabi ko po kanina, we actually exceeded the infrastructure program level. In particular, infrastructure disbursements total of 727.9-billion which is 4% more than program level of 699.2. Pero iyong mga ibang tanong mo, hindi ko po masasagot because I don't have the data. So, iyong mga ganitong questions po, I will appreciate if you send it to me ahead of time kasi iyong revenues mo, hindi ko po masasagot iyan kasi I have no data po kung magkano na ang actual revenue collection ng ating Department of finance.

So, iyong mga ganitong question lang po na detalyado at may mga datos na kinakailangan, please send ahead of time. Siguro po on Monday, our next press briefing, iyong question mo about revenues earned, iyan po ang sasagutin ko next time, 'no

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Secretary, mayroon siyang limang questions dito pero basahin ko na lang iyong iba, baka po kasi masagot ninyo rin. Iyong second question niya: How will the

Philippine government address underspending especially for infrastructure to realize the potential gains of its ever-increasing budget?

SEC. ROQUE: As I said, hindi po totoo na mayroong underspending on infrastructure. Iyong ating actual disbursement of funds po eh exceeded pa our program level; so siguro po ongoing pa rin 'no iyong mga proyekto noong Disyembre at hindi pa pumapasok ang datos ng Disyembre, so iyan po ang explanation. Bagama't aminado tayo talagang nagkaroon ng delay. Bakit? Eh kasi pandemya po.

Kailan lang naman nagkaroon ng IATF decision na pupuwede nang ituloy lalung-lalo na iyong mga Build, Build, Build projects 'no. Noong nasa ECQ po tayo, parang months pa ang inabot before we ordered that construction projects may resume.

So talaga pong nagkaroon ng delay pero kampante naman po tayo, it will not translate to underspending because we actually disbursed more than what we expected to disburse.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Iyong third question niya: Will the government boost its infra spending in the last few months of the administration?

SEC. ROQUE: Nakasaad na po iyan sa 2021 budget 'no and as usual Build, Build, Build still comprises one of our most important strategies in our desire to recover from the economic effects of the pandemic.

USEC. IGNACIO: Question from Jo Montemayor: Has President Duterte called up or sent a congratulatory message to President Biden? If he called, when and how long was the talk and what did they talk about?

SEC. ROQUE: No information po, but I will ask this afternoon.

USEC. IGNACIO: From Celerina Monte: During the past few months, there seem to be improvement on internet services. However, this January, some customers specifically the PLDT customers received messages from telco that the customers have to upgrade and pay higher amount otherwise they will return to slower internet services kasi tapos na raw ang trial. The customers were surprised to find out na trial lang pala iyong improvement na naramdaman noong mga nakaraang ilang buwan. May rason po ba para taasan ang singil ng mga telco?

SEC. ROQUE: Perhaps Usec. Caintic can answer that question.

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: Spox, I will ask the NTC to look into this from their customer complaint section so we can have this answered accordingly. This is the first time I've heard about it. As to the question kung dapat ba tumaas ang bayad dahil nagru-rollout tayo nang more, dapat hindi naman. But we will look into this question po, to this complaint.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Question from Pia Gutierrez: What does the Palace think of the DTI's recommendation to allow children as young as 10 years old to go out to boost consumer spending and help revive the economy?

SEC. ROQUE: This will be discussed in this afternoon's meeting of the IATF.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. From Sam Medenilla: Question for Usec. Caintic lang po. Magku-conduct pa po kaya nang another round of assessment ang NTC or DICT sa performance ng telcos later this year? Will the government still consider the nationalization of communication services after po mag-improve ang telco services?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: As to the survey, of course that will not be a yearly thing. As to nationalization, hindi po natin iyan hangarin. We are trying to build a national broadband but that's for the purpose of the national government agencies, LGUs and its government instrumentalities. Thank you po.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Ang second question po niya: Kailan po expected na ma-complete ang joint memorandum circular for fiber optic installation?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: That's ongoing already for first quarter. We are doing this with the Anti-Red Tape Authority, the DILG, the Board of Investments—nakalimutan ko panlima.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. So ang ikatlo po niyang tanong: Update daw po sa implementation ng National Broadband Project of the Department of Information and Communication. Mayroon na po kayang timeline for the said project?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: Ongoing po ang phase 1. It is expected to complete the phase 1 by July of this year. That will be lighting up government's own fiber infrastructure from Laoag to NCR. Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Tanong po sa inyo, Usec. Caintic, ni Jam Punzalan ng ABS-CBN: How much will government spend to help telcos improve their internet infrastructure? Aside from streamlining permit processes, how will regulators help firms further boost our internet speed?

DICT USEC. CAINTIC: Hindi po budget ng government ang pag—to invest in the public franchises 'no such as the private of entities. That's an investment on their part. Trabaho po ng government is to invest in its own infrastructure for its own proprietary use. By doing so, we are actually spurring the demand as well and it would actually them expand to areas wherein tinatawag natin our missionary site – places wherein it is not economically feasible for them to expand – that's our objective. Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Thank you, Usec. Caintic. For Secretary Roque, question from Sherrie Ann Torres of ABS-CBN: Reaksiyon daw po sa sinabi ni Secretary Carlito Galvez na hindi totoo na pinag-walkout siya sa Senate hearing as was claimed yesterday.

SEC. ROQUE: Hindi ko po alam kung sino nag-claim na nag-walkout siya, dahil ang sinabi ko po dito, it's a specific instruction from the President. But I never said anyone walked out and I never said anyone will walkout; so hindi po ako iyong tinutukoy.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Thank you, Secretary Roque.

SEC. ROQUE: Okay. Maraming salamat po. Dahil wala na po tayong mga katanungan, maraming salamat sa ating mga kasama sa Malacañang Press Corps. Maraming salamat Usec. Rocky and thank you Usec. Caintic. Sana po eh bago matapos ang termino ng ating Presidente, kung mayroon pang pandemya eh at least sa Metro Manila hindi na po mapuputol iyong aming mga internet connection 'pag kami po ay nagpi-press briefing. So ang problema po talaga ng telecoms, ramdam ng lahat pati po dito sa seat of power na Malacañang Palace.

So with this note, sa ngalan po ng ating Presidente Rodrigo Roa Duterte, ito po ang inyong Spox Harry Roque'ng nagsasabi: Ang pangako ng Presidente kinakailangan komportable ang taumbayan. At ang ating internet connection, ang telekomunikasyon, hindi na po iyan pribilehiyo, iyan po ay kinikilala na karapatang pantao. Asahan ninyo po hindi matatapos ang termino ng Presidente na hindi po mabibigyan nang mas epektibo, mas mabilis na serbisyo at mas mabuting serbisyo ng telecoms ang taumbayan.

Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

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