

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

**PRESS BRIEFING OF PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON HARRY ROQUE**  
**February 24, 2021 (12:04 P.M. – 1:04 P.M.)**

**SEC. ROQUE:** Magandang tanghali, Pilipinas.

Binisita po ng ating Presidente Rodrigo Roa Duterte kasama ang inyong abang lingkod at iba pang miyembro ng kaniyang Gabinete ang Surigao del Sur kahapon. Ito po ang dahilan kaya hindi po tayo nakapag-press briefing kahapon. Ito ay para personal na makita ang sitwasyon ng probinsiya at kalagayan ng ating mga kababayang naapektuhan ng Bagyong Auring.

Ito ang ilan sa mga tulong na naipaabot ng ating pamahalaan:

- Ayon kay DSWD Secretary Rolando Bautista, may nakahanda nang 8,000 family food packs sa Surigao del Sur at inaasahang mayroong karagdagang 7,000 food packs na darating ngayong araw. Mahigit 22 million pesos-worth ang halaga ng na-allocate bilang standby fund at stockpile.
- Ayon naman po kay DTI Secretary Ramon Lopez, magbibigay sila ng pautang or livelihood support funds para sa isang libong maliliit na negosyo na naapektuhan ng bagyo.
- Nagbigay din po ang Department of Agriculture, personal na binigay ni Secretary Dar ang 213 million na tulong sa mga naapektuhan na magsasaka.
- Samantala, ang ating DOLE Secretary Silvestre Bello III ay nagbigay sila ng 30 motorized fiber glass galvanized “bangka” [boats] para sa bawat munisipiyo ng Surigao del Sur. Nagbigay rin po ang DOLE sa bawat mayor ng 250 workers under the TUPAD program ‘no, ito po iyong emergency employment sa loob ng sampung araw. Iyan po ay 250 per municipality.
- Nag-commit naman po ang DOTr na mag-install ng runway lights sa Tandag Airport at mag-extend ang runway nito.
- Samantala, ang DPWH naman po ay nakipag-ugnayan sa lokal ng pamahalaan ng Surigao del Sur para sa kinakailangang gamit para sa konstruksyon ng mga barangay roads. Kasama po natin kahapon nga pala ‘no iyong napakasipag po na Asec. po ng DPWH.

Magandang balita po ‘no: Inaprubahan po kahapon ng Kongreso, ng Mababang Kapulungan at ng Senado ang panukalang batas tungkol sa indemnity fund na magpapabilis sa ating vaccine rollout. Tapos na tapos na po iyang proseso. Tumawag po sa akin kahapon si Majority Floor Leader Martin Romualdez para sabihin na naaprubahan na nga po ng Senado iyong bersiyon ng Senado at sumang-ayon na ang Mababang Kapulungan doon sa bersiyon ng Senado na hindi na po kinakailangan pang magkaroon ng bicameral committee report. So tapos na po iyan. Kapag iyan po ay makarating sa Malacañang, sigurado naman po, pipirmahan iyan ng ating Presidente.

Nagpapasalamat po tayo sa liderato ng Kongreso at ng Senado dahil sa kanilang mabilis na pagtugon sa hamon ng panahon. Record time po ata naipasa ito – maraming, maraming salamat sa inyong lahat. Inaasahan natin na ito nga po ay masusumite sa Office of the President para maisabatas na po sa lalong mabilis na panahon.

Usaping bakuna muna tayo: Binigyan ng Emergency Use Authorization or EUA nga po noong Lunes ang Sinovac ng ating Food and Drug Administration. Ito po ay binalita personal ng ating Director General Domingo sa ating Presidente noong kami po ay nagkaroon ng Cabinet meeting noong Lunes.

Inaasahan natin na bago matapos ang buwan na ito, sa Linggo ay narito na ang Sinovac dahil ang pangako po ng gobyerno ng Tsina, three to five days matapos mabigyan ng EUA ay makakarating na ang bakuna rito. At inaasahan po natin, kinabukasan ay tuloy na po ang pagbabakuna natin. Gaya ng ating pinangako, hindi po magtatagal, simula na po ang ating pagbabakuna.

May mga nagtatanong: Ligtas ba ho ang Sinovac? Eh bakit kasi hindi raw recommended sa frontline health care workers?

Well, ganito po iyon ‘no: Sa ginawang Phase 3 na clinical trial sa Brazil—bakit ba ho sa Brazil ginawa ang critical trial? Eh kasi nga po wala nang COVID sa China, konti na lang ang COVID so nagpunta sila doon sa maraming COVID na Brazil – nasa top five po kasi ang Brazil. Eh doon po sa Brazil, doon lang gumawa ng clinical trial ang Sinovac para sa mga health care workers na talagang gumagamot po noong mga mayroong sakit na COVID-19. So dito po sa hanay ng mga health care workers na exposed talaga sa mga pasyenteng may coronavirus, doon po lumabas na 51% ang efficacy rate ng Sinovac.

Pero Sinovac lang po, ang sa aking pagkakaalam ‘no, ang tanging bakuna na gumawa nang ganitong clinical trials exclusively sa mga health care workers. Sinovac is the first and currently the only vaccine where the participants in the clinical trials were health care workers.

Ito ang nagpapaliwanag kung bakit mas mababa ang efficacy results ng Sinovac kumpara sa ibang bakuna dahil kasama sa clinical trial ay ang mga health care workers ng Brazil na na-expose sa mga pasyenteng may COVID-19. Pero noong nag-clinical trial po naman sila doon sa mga ordinaryong mga mamamayan na hindi naman po exposed sa COVID patients gaya ng ginawa sa Turkey at saka sa Indonesia ay pumapalo naman po hanggang 91% ang efficacy ng bakuna; kaya wala po tayong dapat ipangamba ‘no.

Kumbaga sa isang labanan – ito naman po ay giyera – ang ating mga frontline soldiers ay mayroong 51% chance na magalusan pero hindi na sila kinakailangang pumunta sa doktor at sa ospital at hindi rin sila mamamatay. At sa mga non-combatants, lalong mas maliit ang tiyansa nila na masaktan at zero possibility na sila ay mamamatay.

Na-test na rin po ang Sinovac sa UK at sa South African variants, at lumalabas na epektibo po ito laban dito sa mga bagong variants.

Tulad ng ating unang nai-report, mga edad 18 to 25 na clinically healthy na economic frontliners ang kasama sa prayoridad kasama na rin po ang mga miyembro ng ating Hukbong Sandatahan na binigyan po ng 100,000 doses ng gobyerno ng Tsina.

Kaya nga kung papayagan tayo ng National Task Force at Department of Health ay kasama tayo sa mauunang magpabakuna 'no para magbigay kumpiyansa sa ating mga kababayan para mawala ang kanilang agam-agam.

Kung gusto po ni Vice President, she is welcome to join also. At kung inyong matatandaan, sa kaniyang mga naging pahayag sa media ay magbuboluntaryo naman po siya 'no bilang isang Vice President.

At tinanong po ang inyong lingkod ng mga miyembro ng MPC kung kasama sila sa unang mababakunahan sa age prioritization at pasok na pasok naman po si VP Leni. Hindi pa naman po siya senior.

Hindi lang Pilipinas ang unang gagamit po ng Sinovac ha, isang milyong doses ng Sinovac vaccine ang dumating na sa Hong Kong noong February 19. Ito ang first vaccines available sa Hong Kong, at nagpabakuna nga po ang lider ng Hong Kong na si Chief Executive Carrie Lam kasama ang iba pang senior officials ng Hong Kong.

Samantala, ang unang shipment ng Sinovac ay dumating na rin po sa Mexico noong February 20. At noong February 21 naman po ay dumating sa bansang Colombia ang Sinovac. Mismo ang President ng Colombia na si Iván Duque – wala po siyang relasyon kay Secretary Duque – ang tumanggap ng Sinovac vaccine. At alam na alam naman natin na nagpaturok na rin po ng Sinovac ang lider ng Indonesia na si President Joko Widodo; at noong nakaraang linggo, ang kanilang bise president, si Mr. Ma'ruf Amin ay nagpabakuna na rin ng Sinovac.

Ang mga halimbawang ito ay nagpapakita na halos magkakasunod lang ang dating ng bakuna, kaya sa mga kritiko na nagsasabing kulelat ay research pa more imbes na magpakalat ng fake news.

COVID update naman po tayo: Ito ang world rankings po ng by country ayon sa World Health Organization at Johns Hopkins as of February 24, 2021: Number 31 pa rin po ang Pilipinas with 564,865 cases. Sa active cases, Number 43 pa rin po tayo with 29,817. Sa COVID-19 per one million population - 514.19, Number 135 po tayo. At sa case fatality rate, 2.1%, Number 67 po ang Pilipinas – ito po ay bumaba from Number 60, Number 67 na tayo.

Sa mga aktibong kaso ay mayroon po tayong 29,817 na mga aktibong kaso sang-ayon po sa February 23, 2021 datos ng DOH. Sa mga aktibong kaso, 94.1% ay mild at asymptomatic, nasa 2.6% ang kritikal, at 2.5% ang severe. Higit kalahating milyon or 522,941 ang kabuuang bilang ng mga gumaling or 92.6% or recovery rate. Samantalang malungkot naming binabalita na tumataas po ang bilang ng mga binawian ng buhay dahil sa coronavirus, ito po ay 12,107 na. Nakikiramay po kami. Ito po ay 2.14% fatality rate.

Sa ibang mga bagay ha, kinukumpirma po natin na napirmahan na noong Lunes, February 22, ang appointment paper ni dating PNP Chief Camilo Cascolan – kababayan ko po iyan – bilang Undersecretary sa Office of the President. Welcome aboard, Usec. Cascolan.

Sa iba pang mga bagay, galing po ang inyong spox sa Mariveles, Bataan ngayong umaga lang po para sa turnover ng tatlong units ng DPWH standard health facilities container van na gagamitin pong TTMFs ‘no. Maraming salamat po and congratulations kay Mayor Joe Castañeda ng Mariveles, ang kaniyang Vice Mayor, si Lito Rubia, at siyempre ang aking tukayo, si Councilor Harry Golocan. So, maraming salamat po, at I will see again at March 8 para naman po sa official blessing nitong TTMF facility ng Mariveles, Bataan.

At panghuli, ipinagdadasal po natin ang mabilis na recovery ng ating dating kasamahan dito po sa MPC. Dati ko na pong kasama ito kahit noong mga panahon na aktibista pa ako, si ABS-CBN reporter na si Doris Bigornia. Doris, pagaling ka and we’re praying for your speedy recovery.

Dito po nagtatapos ang ating presentasyon. Makakasama po natin, the lady of the hour, walang iba kung hindi si Sinovac Biotech General Manager MS. Helen Yang, live from Hong Kong.

Ms. Yang, welcome to our Presidential press briefing!

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Thank you! Thank you for having me.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Let me ask the first few questions, Ms. Yang. When is Sinovac arriving? Because we need to schedule the arrival because the President has said that he wants to be there when the initial shipment of Sinovac is delivered to the Philippines. When is Sinovac arriving in the Philippines?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Actually, we are working very hard with our Philippines counterpart to prepare for the delivery. The product has already been prepared, so, we just need to finalize the procedures with the Custom and then we can fix the date of the flight.

**SEC. ROQUE:** I was told by the Chinese Embassy that it would take three to five days from the date of issuance. Does this still hold? The EUA was issued last Monday, so, the three to five days still holds?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** We will try our best to see whether we can deliver the products in this week or next week. It will be very soon.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, I tried to explain, Ms. Helen Yang, earlier what happened in Brazil that the 51% was the efficacy rate exclusively for clinical trials conducted amongst health workers directly working with patients suffering from COVID-19. But what is the efficacy rate of Sinovac when it was used in clinical trials involving ordinary healthy human beings? Perhaps you can explain both the clinical trials involving health workers and the other clinical trials. The floor is yours, Ms. Yang.

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Sure, thank you. As you've said, we were conducting trial with our local partners in Brazil and all the volunteers are health care workers working directly, dealing with COVID-19 patients and the trial gave different level of efficacy and the results shows that the vaccine can protect the fatal cases and hospitalized cases 100%; and for those with mild symptoms who needs/require the medical assistance, the efficacy rate is around 80%. And if we include all the mild symptoms even without any requirement for medical assistance, then the efficacy rate is above 50% which is the standard from WHO. Therefore, we concluded that the vaccine is effective even in this very challenging environment. All the trials conducted in hospitals and on the health care workers.

And of course, we are conducting the trial in other countries, for example in Turkey. We also conduct a similar size of trial mainly among the ordinary population. And in Turkey, there was another big trial with certain thousand volunteers and there are two phases. The first phase is a few hundred health care workers and then it moved quickly to the second phase which is a lot larger size on the ordinary population. The principal investigator in Turkey has already announced the entry results when the cases collected reached June 29, a few weeks ago, and the efficacy rate is 91.25%. And therefore, we are expecting to see when the Turkey trial is concluded, when they reach the final number of the cases then how the efficacy rate would be.

But overall, I think, no matter from health care workers or from the ordinary population, the

Inactivated Vaccine has already proved very safe because not only the trial, we also have provided the vaccine in China and outside of China. There has already been over ten million or even twenty million people have already used the vaccine and the safety profile has been showing very well. And also, we are expecting that the people working in health care facilities who can be protected and because those are the people we needed for the society to treat a patient in order to maintain a regular norm of our whole society.

**SEC. ROQUE:** So, let me just verify. The 51% was a clinical study involving health care workers dealing directly with COVID-19 patients. Iyong 51% ay isang clinical study lang po na pinag-aralan doon sa mga health care workers na gumagamot ng COVID-19 patients. Is this correct, Ms. Helen Yang? I translated for the benefit of all the Filipino people.

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Understood. Yes, that's correct.

**SEC. ROQUE:** But when there were clinical trials in Turkey involving ordinary healthy individuals, the efficacy rate was 91%. Noong nagkaroon naman po ng clinical trial sa Turkey na ang pinag-aralan naman po ay iyong mga healthy na mga adults eh 91% naman po ang efficacy rate. Is that correct, Ms. Yang?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Yes, correct.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Okay. I'm sure our colleagues from Malacañang Press Corps will have many questions for you. I hope you join us for our open forum. Let's proceed now to our open forum. Usec. Rocky, go ahead please.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Yes. Good afternoon, Secretary Roque, and to Ms. Yang.

From Llanesca Panti of GMA News Online: Dr. Abeyasinghe of WHO said that the vaccine makers requirement for indemnification agreement is common to all countries and not related to Dengvaxia. How do you reconcile this with your previous statement that vaccine makers are demanding indemnification agreement due to Dengvaxia experience when the WHO said otherwise?

**SEC. ROQUE:** We welcome the remarks of the WHO and of course we hold the WHO declaration as the most authoritative declaration on this matter and we leave it at that, so so be it.

Now having said that ‘no, I will confirm that Pfizer really required a particular form of indemnity agreement and in fact the law itself ‘no. So that was confirmed to me last night by Deputy Implementer Secretary Vince Dizon ‘no when we had a pre-press briefing conference.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Second question of Ms. Panti: Is patronizing smuggled products now a part of the government’s policy given that Special Envoy to China Mon Tulfo admitted he got a smuggled Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine alongside Cabinet officials and also said President Duterte is aware of it?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Hindi ko po alam kung ano iyong tinatanong ni Panti. Wala pong ganiyang polisiya dahil kung may ganiyan pong polisiya, siguro commercial quantity na ang kumalat noong mga bakuna na hindi naaprubahan. Pero inaantay po talaga natin ang aksiyon ng FDA sa mga bagay-bagay na ito.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Third question: Is the Palace daw po supporting the suggestion of Labor Secretary Bello and DFA Secretary Locsin that the Philippines send healthworkers to Europe in exchange of 600,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines. How do you reconcile this speech with your previous statement that we have ordered enough COVID-19 vaccine doses for our entire adult population?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Wala pong inconsistency sa mga nasabi ko na at sinabi ni Secretary Bello at Secretary Locsin ‘no. Nag-order po tayo, sapat, sobra-sobra pa nga po, mga 90 million nga po ang in-order natin, sinobrahan na natin. Pero siyempre kung mas marami pang supply ang makukuha natin, bakit hindi.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Ang fourth question po niya: When is the President going to sign the vaccine indemnity bill into law?

**SEC. ROQUE:** ‘Pag dumating na po sa Malacañang dahil tinawagan ako kahapon ni Majority Floor Leader Romualdez, siguro po mga... nagsimula na iyong aking coms meeting mga 9:45 po ‘no kagabi. So kakatapos lang daw po ng Senado so hayaan naman nating matulog muna iyong mga senador at hayaan nating ma-print at maipadala dito po sa Palasyo.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Thank you, Secretary.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Maraming salamat. Mela Lesmoras, please.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV4:** Hi! Good afternoon, Secretary Roque. Follow up muna po doon sa nabanggit ninyo kanina na gustong saksihan ni Pangulong Duterte nga iyong pagdating ng mga bakuna mula sa Sinovac sa bansa. Para lang po din alam ng ating mga kababayan, magkakaroon po ba ng ceremony dito?

At nasabi ninyo po noong nakaraan na magpapaalam kayo kay Pangulong Duterte kung puwede kayong mauna. Just give us a picture, Secretary Roque, ano po ba iyong mangyayari pagdating dito ng Sinovac vaccines and sinu-sino po kaya iyong mga miyembro ng Gabinete na kabilang sa mga nag-volunteer para mauna?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, unang-una po, talagang sinabi ni Presidente na nais niyang salubungin iyong pagdating ng Sinovac. Alam mo Pilipino tayo, tumatanaw tayo ng utang na loob. Sa ating panahon ng pangangailangan eh talaga naman iyong kaibigan nating Tsina ang nagpadala ng unang bakuna sa atin.

So hindi mo matatanggal sa Pilipino na tumanaw ng utang na loob ‘no. Barring any glitches, nais pong sumalubong nga ni Presidente ‘no at magkakaroon siguro... [SIGNAL CUT] ... namin na importante iyong palawakin pa iyong kumpiyansa ng ating taumbayan at talaga naman pong kinikilala namin na kung kaming mga leaders ay magpapauna na magpabakuna ng Sinovac ay tataas po ang kumpiyansa ng taumbayan.

So alam ko po ako, si Vaccine Czar Galvez, si Secretary Duque, si Secretary Lorenzana eh iyan po iyong mga nagpupulong kay Presidente tungkol sa mga COVID-related matters, eh lahat po kami ay handang magpaturok na.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV4:** Opo. My second question, Secretary Roque, kasi noong mga nakaraan expected po natin ay Pfizer vaccines ang darating, abala na sa paghahanda sa mga ospital. Sa ngayon po ba inaasahang—let’s say sa uniformed personnel po kasi ito mauuna, so sa Camp Aguinaldo po ba or sa Camp—saan po kaya unang ididiretso iyong mga bakuna mula sa Sinovac?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, didiretso pa rin po iyan sa storage facility ng gobyerno ‘no, ng DOH. Pupuwede po iyang RITM ‘no dahil 600,000 lang naman po iyong unang darating at saka ordinary refrigeration lang ang kinakailangan ‘no.

Handang-handa na po ang Hukbong Sandatahan para gamitin iyong 100,000 na na-donate sa kanila at handang-handa na po iyong mga mayors ng Metro Manila na ibigay itong bakunang ito sa mga 19 to 59 ‘no na healthy individuals.

So pagdating po sa kahandaan wala pong issue diyan at itong nakalipas na araw lang po ay talagang inisa-isa natin ang mga mayor ng Metro Manila, handang-handa po sila at excited na silang ibigay ang bakuna sa kanilang mga constituents.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV4:** Opo. Sir, before I go to my last question kay Ms. Helen Yang, may I ask kung may public address po mamaya?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Mayroon pong public address mamaya po.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV4:** Okay. Can I go to Ms. Helen Yang, sir, for my last question?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Go ahead, please.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV4:** Okay. Hi, Ms. Helen Yang! I just want to ask, so far how many countries have been using Coronavac? Can you please name these nations? And based on your data, what are the common side effects being experienced by those people who got inoculated with your vaccines, ma'am?

**MS. HELEN YANG:** Sure. Thanks for your question. I think up to now, there has already been 11 countries... including Thailand today. There will be 12 countries and regions receiving our vaccines including Brazil, Turkey, Chile, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Mexico, Colombia and there are several Latin American countries and Asian countries as well. And this number will go up to 15 by the end of this week.

So the common side effects and similar for the vaccine being used in the country for rollout, the campaign as well as the trial that there are muscle pain that is due to the aluminum hydroxide which is adjuvant in the vaccine. So people just feel muscle pain after getting vaccination but it can go over after a day.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV4:** Okay. Thank you so much, Ms. Helen Yang. Just a short follow up question: No one died yet, right, from taking Sinovac vaccines?

**MS. HELEN YANG:** No, there hasn't been any fatal impact of relating to use of the vaccine.

**MELA LESMORAS/PTV4:** Okay. Thank you so much, Ms. Helen Yang and Secretary Roque.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Thank you, Mela. Thank you, Ms. Yang. Let's go again to Usec. Rocky, please.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Yes. Question from Kris Jose of Remate/Remate Online: Kinuwestiyon ng isang senador ang pahayag ng FDA na hindi rekomendado sa healthworkers ang maturukan ng Sinovac vaccine dahil sa efficacy rate nito. Itinuturing ang pahayag bilang problematic, halfhearted at half-baked endorsement, hindi raw mapapataas ng FDA ang kumpiyansa ng publiko sa Sinovac base sa binigay na rekomendasyon.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Siguro po dapat si Dr. Domingo ang sumagot diyan 'no. Pero uulitin ko po ah, iyong 51%, iyon lamang iyong mga healthworkers na talagang naggagamot ng COVID-19. Pero doon naman po sa 50% na iyon, 78%, iyong kalahating puwedeng magkasakit ay hindi na kinakailangang pumunta sa doktor noong sila po ay nagkasakit, mild and asymptomatic at wala pong namatay.

So sa aking paningin po bagama't ako po ay ordinaryong layman, pero ito po'y sinabi rin ni Dr. Salvaña, iyang ganiyang efficacy rate eh iyan po ay hindi lang po katanggap-tanggap kung hindi excellent 'no dahil ang iniwasan natin iyong seryosong pagkakasakit at saka iyong pagkakamatay dahil sa coronavirus.

Now lilinawin ko rin po, nagbigay na rin ng eksplanasyon dito si Dr. Domingo – not recommended does not mean bawal! Kung gusto po noong health worker, hahayaan po nila dahil mas mabuti nga po itong ganitong proteksiyon kaysa wala, kaysa nag-aantay pa nang hindi pa pong dumarating na mga bakuna. So iyon po ang paglilinaw nila, it's only not recommended, it is not prohibited.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Question from Red Mendoza of Manila Times para po kay Secretary Roque: Ano po ang reaksiyon ninyo sa mga sinabi ni Mon Tulfo na gusto raw ni Presidente na magpaturok ng Sinopharm, pero inaayawan ng vaccine cluster?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, gusto po talaga niya ang Sinopharm pero wala pa po kasing EUA. Iyon po ang dahilan kaya umaayaw iyong mga doktor na advisers ng ating Presidente. Hintayin na ma-approve ang EUA.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Question for Miss Helen Yang of Sinovac from Red Mendoza of Manila Times: How can you assure our health workers that Sinovac is safe and effective despite the 50.4% efficacy in the trial for health workers in Brazil?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Well, actually, I think the data speaks. We have conducted trials in different regions, different locations in large scales, smaller scales, as well as the vaccine rollout in so many different countries. I think the vaccine safety has been really ensured while we are supplying the vaccine and more and more people are using the products. And regarding to the efficacy, I think even in this challenging study in health care workers only in Brazil and the efficacy rate is still above the 50% which is the standard of WHO and this shows the vaccine is effective and safe. Thanks.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Thank you. We go to Joseph Morong, please.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** Hello! Good morning, Secretary Roque. Good morning, Miss Yang. How are you doing?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Thank you, very well.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** Sir, can I go first to Miss Yang?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Go ahead, please.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** First question, I am interested about the date of delivery because Filipinos have been waiting for the vaccine, and you mentioned that you are in coordination with our Customs Bureau. Would you like to walk us through about the process of bringing the vaccines to the Philippines? What steps are you taking?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Right. So firstly, we need to have an EUA which we recently obtained because without EUA, even the vaccines are delivered, people cannot use it. So, after we had the EUA, we are finalizing the release of half for the delivery of the vaccine in the cold boxes and those are ready right now. And then we need to find for the quarantine [unclear], those are the Chinese Customs side, it's not the Philippine Custom side. So there are some procedures we are working very closely with our Customs colleagues right now. So hopefully we can deliver the vaccine in days.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** How many days will it take on the Chinese side?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Normally a week actually, but we are trying to see whether we can make it shorter. But I cannot assure you because there are some procedures that need to be done online and there are some checkings for the goods, those are the policies for Customs.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** Would you know how many would you deliver for the first batch?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Sure, we aim to deliver the 0.6 million doses for the first delivery.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** That will be 600,000, yes?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Right.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** Okay. So, one week. So probably second week of March, do you have a target dates as to when this will reach the Philippines?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** You mean for the 600,000 doses?

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** Yeah, to reach the Philippines, you have a target date of delivery for the Philippines?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** That was what I just described. I think it will be just a round a week.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** Okay. With regards to the Brazil test, it's only in Brazil that you conducted a clinical trial that involved health care workers, is that correct?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Yes, that's only health care workers for the trial in Brazil. I think, in the world, that's the only one we conducted.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** Okay. How would you explain the lower efficacy rate of 50.4% when it comes to health care workers? Why is it lower with health care workers?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Well, you can imagine, that actually in the hospital those people are having a more likelihood of contacting the live virus. And you know while we do the

trial, we need to identify the positive cases in order to make a calculation of this, either 50 or 80 member. So, when the investigator identified the cases, they need to require volunteer to report at least two symptoms. And also, they need to be tested, PCR positive. And you can imagine that in hospital, it is very easy for doctors and nurses to do the PCR test and if they claim just a headache or runny nose, this could be two symptoms.

So, it's hard to say in that challenging environment whether this PCR test really is related to having the symptoms, but being impacted by the COVID. The [unclear] cause and effect relationship is not clear at the moment, but I think for running the trial under that pandemic in the hospital is already been very difficult. So, we do appreciate our volunteers and people who are involved in the trial to make that happened. So we can imagine that if you calculate these 253 cases identified in our trial against the volunteer population, the incidence rates is 4 to 5 times of the incidence rates in Brazil, that actually bring down the efficacy rate number.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** Yesterday, when our Philippine FDA approved the EUA for Sinovac and they included and advised for the government that is it not advisable that we administer Sinovac to our health care workers because of that efficacy rate. Your comment please?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Sure, I think of course as a manufacturer, our role is to provide the product and data for each government to evaluate and make the decision. We believe that the government or FDA will evaluate while balancing the risks and benefits. But what I want to say is that Sinovac vaccine is the only one currently available in the world that conduct the trial in health care workers only. And the final result, even if we include all the cases, even include those with a very mild symptoms, without any requirement for medical assistance, those are the results for the 50 plus something percent. But if we think about why we use the vaccine, we want to use the vaccine to help the society go back to normal. We want to prevent the disease which required medical assistance. We want to lower down the people who use the beds in the hospital. And those are the results, we have clearly seen that our vaccine works very well.

So, I think those people working in the hospital and if I think the safety of the vaccine has been fully demonstrated that they can be used at the minimal, the vaccines are safe. And then as a matter of the efficacy level, I think no matter from the Turkey trial or from the Brazil trial, the vaccine shows it is effective. So, of course I think different country have different measures about how they want to decide who should use the vaccine. But I think for our trial, we can clearly see the results of how the vaccines will play in the health care population. So, it goes very well in the very severe cases, it's hundred percent preventive. And for the mild cases which require medical assistance is about 80% prevention rate. But I think for general population like if you got a flu, you feel not well, but you can still go on working, I think those people are still be capable of treating the patients.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** Thank you for your time, Miss Yang. Can I go to Secretary Roque for very short question, Sir?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Go ahead, please.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** Sir, I understand that Sec. Charlie has already talked to Pfizer Global maybe Tuesday, probably Sunday or Monday? Would you know that and any update on the delivery or doon sa negotiation natin sa Pfizer? Should we just forget Pfizer and AstraZeneca now?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Ang huling nakalap ko po ay mayroon na lang kaunti pang pinababago doon sa indemnity agreement. Pero sa akin nga po, as far as the President is concerned, tuloy na po ang pagbabakuna using Sinovac. Pero alam po ninyo, tapatan, nakita ninyo po, ginawa natin lahat ng pupuwedeng gawin para paparatingin muna iyong Pfizer at AstraZeneca. At tapatan, alam naman natin na maraming mas may gusto ng mga made in the west. Pero nakita po ninyo talaga, nag-aagawan po ang buong daigdig sa natitirang 20% nitong mga western vaccines kasi iyong 80% nabili na po ng mga mayayamang bansa. Pero ang ayaw ni Presidente na hindi matuloy ang bakuna dahil ang gusto natin ay western. Kaya nga po ganoon na lang ang tinatanaw niyang utang na loob sa mga Tsino dahil kahit papaano, sa panahon ng ating pangangailangan, nag-deliver po sila o magdi-deliver po sila ng bakuna when we needed. Okay?

Mayroon pa po akong idadagdag at matutuwa naman kayo dito dahil ito po ay karagdagang impormasyon. Si Presidente po mismo nagtataka bakit ganoon ang naging EUA ng FDA at pinatawag po talaga si Secretary Domingo noong huling Cabinet meeting. Pinapunta po si Secretary Domingo at naiparating ni Presidente iyong kaniyang pagtataka kung bakit may ganitong colatilla 'no. Nirirespeto po ng Presidente ang opinyon ng mga experts kaya let the colatilla remain. Pero ang mga tanong nga lang po, eh kung ang WHO mismo nagsabi 50% is the threshold at ang tanong niya, eh bakit kinakailangan mag-colatilla kung ang WHO mismo nagsabi, 50% efficacy is acceptable.

Ang pangalawa pa po is, tinanong kasi ni Presidente, iyong sa Indonesia ba at ibang mga bansa na gumagamit na ng Sinovac ay ginamitan ba nila ang kanilang mga health workers. Noong Lunes po, ang sabi ni Dr. Domingo, hindi po niya alam. Pero since then po, nalaman namin na ginagamit din po sa mga health care workers ang Sinovac sa Indonesia.

So anyway, just so that the Sinovac manufacturer knows about this fact and the government of China knows this fact, just to translate, the President also expressed his—well, let's just say, the fact that he is perplexed with the special requirements of the EUA noting that the WHO itself has laid down the minimum threshold to be 50%. And during the Cabinet meeting, the President inquired if countries that are already using Sinovac are using them on health care workers, on that particular occasion, the answer of Director General Domingo was he does not know. But I've personally gone out of my way and I found out that countries like Indonesia have also used Sinovac on their health care workers.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** So given that, are we using Sinovac for health care workers?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, nalinawan na po ito ni Director General Domingo: Hindi po pinagbabawal, hindi lang po recommended. But if the health care workers want, they can have it.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** As a policy?

**SEC. ROQUE:** As a policy, of course. Because that is also the language of the EUA – not recommended; but if the health care workers want, they're welcome to it.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** So first vaccination natin, health care workers, Sinovac, sir?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Hindi ko po alam because we will find out if they are health care workers who want. Ako po narinig ko, iyong mga asosasyon ng mga nurses, they want Sinovac. Because the 50% protection is better than no protection. So iyong mga ganiyan po, if they indicate their interest, they can have it and they will still have their priority.

**JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7:** All right, sir. Thank you for your time. Ms. Yang, thank you for your time. Nice seeing you today.

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

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Yes, Secretary. Question from Julius Babao of ABS-CBN: Ano daw po ang proseso na dadaanan ng mga magpapabakuna, step-by-step na process, like step one, registration, etc.?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, na-illustrate na po namin iyan napakadaming beses 'no. Pero siguro po ay napaka-awkward naman na sagutin ngayon iyan 'no. Mayroon pong registration; mayroong pong briefing kasi kinakailangang i-explain sa kanila kung ano iyong EUA, ano iyong possible side effect; tapos po papabakunahan sila; tapos hindi po sila papauwiin kaagad, magkakaroon po ng observation time para malaman kung mayroong adverse reaction iyong gamot bago po sila pauwiin; at bibigyan po sila nung parang tinatawag na passport kung saan patunay po iyan na sila ay nabakunahan na.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Second question po ni Julius Babao ng ABS-CBN: Pa-emphasize lang daw po ulit, libre ba na ibibigay ang bakuna?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Libre po ito, walang bayad. Kung mayroon pong maniningil, paalam ninyo po sa amin, paarestuhin po natin iyan for estafa.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Question from Jam Punzalan of ABS-CBN Online: Former Vice President Binay said the Labor department's offer of deploying more Filipino nurses to the UK and Germany is in exchange for vaccine is insensitive and dehumanizing. Did President Duterte give his blessing for this offer? How would you like to respond to ex-VP Binay's comment?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Lahat naman po ng opinyon ng ating mga kababayan ay nirirespeto natin dahil mayroon po tayong Kalayaan ng malayang pananalita sa Pilipinas. Pero hindi po ito ideya ng Presidente; ideya po ito ni Secretary Bello at Secretary Locsin na wini-welcome din natin because more is better than less.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Thank you, Secretary.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Thank you. Triciah Terada, please.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** Hi! Good afternoon, Spox, and good afternoon to Ms. Helen Yang. Sir, before I go to you, may I please have my first few questions for Ms. Helen Yang.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Go ahead, that's why we invited Ms. Helen Yang. Go ahead, please.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** Hi! Good afternoon, Ms. Yang. Ma'am, in the 12 countries where Sinovac is being used, how would you assess its effect so far? Because for example in Israel, there are reports that the Pfizer's vaccine was seen to reduce transmission. You see something of this effect also in terms of with the use Sinovac in the 12 countries?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Thanks for the question. Actually, you can see those countries are ... at the beginning when we start to ship the vaccines, those countries having a very large population. If you want to see the results or consequence similar to Israel, you need to have the country to use a vaccination covering pretty much of their population which we are not able to get it done in this way because the countries are so large. But we will expect in the coming months that we can see the similar effects, and that's part of our observation as well.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** Ma'am, if I'm not mistaken, Sinovac has been used in China since July, right. But would you have any information right now about the length of its effectivity?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** For the vaccine use in China, in June, we [unclear] to provide the vaccine under emergency use. So there are only a few types of population can use the vaccine. And currently the data of using the vaccine were collected by the Chinese government so we do not have the direct information or source for the results. And if they find anything, they will come to us. If they don't come to us, that means the vaccine is good.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** All right. Thank you, ma'am. Spox, I have a few questions for you.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Go ahead, please.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** Sir, you mentioned na iyon nga po, gusto ni Pangulo na salubungin mismo iyong pagdating ng bakuna because he wants to show this value of "utang na loob". But, sir, we're interested to know, how far this utang na loob can go? Parang in what way can this be expressed? Hindi po kaya maapektuhan, sir, iyong posisyon natin with other issues with China?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Ikaw naman, Trish, ano bang—ang akin lang eh kailangan magpasalamat. Nakita ninyo naman, ginawa natin ang lahat para makuha iyong gusto ng nakakarami lalo na iyong gustong brand ng mga oposisyon. Pero talagang sa huli, kapag nagkaroon na ng kagipitan ay mga kaibigan lang talaga natin ang maaasahan na magbigay ng kinakailangan natin.

So hanggang doon lang po iyon. Wala naman pong epekto iyan sa ibang mga isyu na mayroon tayo sa ating bilateral relation sa Tsina. Magpapasalamat lang po ang Presidente dahil sa panahon ng pagsubok, Tsina na naman ang nag-deliver. Noong panahon po kasi noong Marawi, Tsina rin po ang nagbigay ng mga baril na kinakailangan niya noong mga pagkakataon na pinagkait siya ng mga Amerikano ng baril. So sa pangalawang pagkakataon na nangangailangan tayo ng bakuna, ang unang nagbigay po sa atin, Tsina. Hindi po masama na ipakita ang ating utang na loob. Ang Pilipino po, sabihin ninyo na ang gusto ninyong sabihin, hinding-hindi po tayo ingrato.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** Hindi po kaya, sir, malubog tayo sa utang na loob sa China?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Hindi po. Hindi naman ganoon po ang Pilipino. Pilipina ka rin, alam mo naman kung saan tayo pupunta. Ipaglalaban natin ang dapat ipaglaban pero hinding-hindi tayo magiging ingrato.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** Sir, on another topic. Nabanggit po ng DILG that they are mulling the scrapping of travel authority and health certificates for travelers. Is this something that's been discussed with the IATF? And is this happening, sir?

**SEC. ROQUE:** This is an operational detail; we leave it to them. We have laid down the policy po.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** Sir, last night ay nabanggit po ni Pangulo iyong pagki-kidnap or iyong involvement ng NPA sa human trafficking. Can we have more information about this? And is this ongoing still?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Ito po kasi iyong pagri-recruit ng mga NPA sa mga kabataan, iyong mga below 18. At alam ninyo po naman talaga, matagal na ako sa larangan ng IHL, notorious po talaga ang NPA dahil kinukuha nila ang mga bata para maging mandirigma. At sang-ayon po sa naging desisyon ng isang international tribunal, eh pati po iyong pagpipilit sa mga bata magbitbit ng mga supplies ay iyan po ay classified na rin as recruitment of children as combatants.

So iyong pagkuha po nila, pag-recruit ng mga bata talaga below 18 para sumapi sa kanila is not only prohibited as a war crime, serious breach of additional protocol too of the Geneva Conventions but also tantamount to illegal detention and human trafficking.

**TRICIAH TERADA/CNN PHILS:** All right. Thank you very much, Spox.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Thank you very much, Trish. Usec. Rocky, please.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Yes, Secretary. Iyong unang tanong ni Tuesday Niu ng DZBB ay kapareho rin po ng tanong ni Maricel Halili ng TV 5: Is it true that President Duterte already talked to the representative of Sinopharm as claimed by Mon Tulfo? What was the discussion all about? Is Mon Tulfo still our Special Envoy to China?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, I have to check ‘no because the special envoy is appointed on a six-month basis. Hindi ko po alam kung na-renew si Mon Tulfo. Now, whether or not he has talked to a representative, hindi ko po alam. If I will admit, I was in this adjacent room when Mon Tulfo was there but I could not really hear what they were discussing ‘no.

Pero sa akin, I don’t understand the big deal about the Mon Tulfo write up. That’s an account of Mon Tulfo and if you want verification please contact Mon Tulfo because I cannot answer on his behalf.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Second question ni Maricel Halili: Did you find Mon Tulfo’s claim alarming considering that this is not the first time Sinopharm was used without EUA? Even PSG members were inoculated without EUA. Isn’t this dangerous?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Wala po akong reaksiyon diyan dahil sa panahon ng pandemya naiintindihan ko po na marami talagang gustong magkaroon ng proteksiyon pero ang sinasabi natin sa lahat, hintayin po natin na dumaan sa proseso for our own interest.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Thank you, Secretary.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Thank you. Punta tayo kay Pia Rañada, please.

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** Hi! Good afternoon. Sir, does Malacañang think there is conflict of interest in Mon Tulfo’s application to be a local distributor of Sinopharm considering that he is or used to be a special envoy to China?

**SEC. ROQUE:** We have no opinion whatsoever. We leave that to the Ombudsman.

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** Sir, doesn’t Malacañang have an opinion because he is appointed by Malacañang and he is, kumbaga, he may be acting in the name of Malacañang? So, is this not something that Malacañang should in fact comment on?

**SEC. ROQUE:** We still have no opinion because as I said I do not know if he has been reappointed as special envoy. These appointments are renewed every six months.

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** But sir, why is the President dealing directly with the Sinopharm? Is he aware that vaccines can’t just enter the Philippines without FDA approval?

**SEC. ROQUE:** He did not deal directly with Sinopharm. As in fact, we still cannot import Sinopharm on a commercial basis, not even commercial on a large-scale basis beyond the compassionate use license issued by the FDA?

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** Sir, are you belying the claims of Mon Tulfo because he himself said that the President spoke with a certain John Boja who is the local rep of Sinopharm? Are you saying this is not true?

**SEC. ROQUE:** I'm not belying anything that Mon Tulfo said, all I'm saying is that's his article, please ask him, not me.

**PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER:** Sir, how about, sir, just more details on the President's awareness of these protocols and approvals? Because it seems to me—does Malacañang think that what happened, PSG getting vaccinated with Sinopharm, etc., the President blocking the PSG from testifying about it or speaking about it, does this not undermine the entire government's vaccination program given that, you know, there are approval, regulatory process that seemingly not being followed by the highest office in the land?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Again, that's your conclusion, but I don't think it undermines anything. If at all, lahat tayo eksperto na ngayon sa proseso sa FDA and I think that's one good thing that came out of this pandemic. At least alam na natin kung anong tamang proseso na sinusunod ng FDA at alam natin kung bakit habang nagdedesisyon ang FDA pagdating sa safety at efficacy ng bakuna, respetuhin natin iyan dahil iyan ay opinyon ng tunay na mga dalubhasa sa larangan na iyan.

No audio. Next question please.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Secretary, question from Dreo Calonzo ng Bloomberg, regarding po doon sa DOLE sa plan to ask vaccines from the UK and Germany in exchange for sending more Filipino nurses there: Are there more plans to trade Filipino workers for vaccine donations?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, hindi ko po alam, that's up to both the DFA and DOLE. Please ask them. But as far as the President is concerned, we have ordered more than enough.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** From Jerome Morales of Reuters, regarding pa rin po diyan. Ang tanong niya ay: Was the President consulted on this offer by DOLE, with UK rejecting the offer? Will we offer the nurses for vaccine deal to other countries?

**SEC. ROQUE:** The President was not informed of this proposal as far as I know.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Thank you, Secretary.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Okay. Punta naman tayo ngayon kay Melo Acuña, please.

**MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY:** Good afternoon, Mr. Secretary. Good afternoon, I hope you're well. I just have one short question for you and two questions for Ms. Yang. My first question is what is the update on the Dutch national's status Otto de Vries whose resident's status has been cancelled and will be sent home to his country, The Netherlands?

**SEC. ROQUE:** If you are referring to Dutchman Otto Rudolf De Vries or V-r-i-e-s, however you pronounce it – he has been deported. And he was deported for joining rallies which according to our Immigration Law is prohibited and he was deported because by joining rally, he has proven himself to be an undesirable alien. But he can still rally in The Netherlands.

**MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY:** Okay. Thank you very much. Let me go to Ms. Yang this time. Good afternoon! I hope the weather is fine in Hong Kong. How many vaccines has your company produced so far and will you be able to meet the international demand, Ms. Yang?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Sure, thanks. Actually, we start the production around August and September last year and until now we have already produced over one hundred million doses. And that's supposedly for China's demand as well as the other country as I mentioned earlier.

**MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY:** Okay. Have you considered putting up plants, to produce the vaccine outside of China? Because Russia said they plan to be in the Philippines too. So would your company think of that approach as well?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** I think that actually relate to our long-term development strategy. We do expect to have the external plant to produce or even the [unclear]. Similar models we started which is not easy as more impacted is that we work with Brazil and Turkey and Indonesia that we ship them ready to fill box. They can do the local filling, packaging and testing of the vaccine and that will shorten the time for delivery. I think going for long term, we do expect to be a more internationalize company, to have a foreign site.

**MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY:** If this is not classified. How much of your company's resources has been devoted to research and development?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Over all in the past years, we normally spend around 10 – 15% of our total turnover into research and development.

**MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY:** I see. But is it classified to mention the gross amount where you take the 10 – 15% of your gross for research and development?

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Yeah, we are actually a trading company. I remember that in the 2019, our total turnover is \$230-million and around 10% of that that would be over \$20-million invested into the R&D.

**MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY:** I see. Thank you very much. Have a nice day! All the best.

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Thank you.

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

**SEC. ROQUE:** Thank you very much, Melo. Back to Usec. Rocky please.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Yes. Secretary, iyong susunod pong tanong ay mula kay Tuesday Niu pero iyong unang tanong po niya ay nasagot na ninyo. Ang follow-up lang po niya ay: Sabi daw po ni

Mon Tulfo wala siyang nakikitang liability sa kaniyang part kahit nagpabakuna na siya nang walang approval ng FDA dahil hindi naman daw po siya opisyal ng gobyerno.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, that's his opinion nga po 'no, so, hindi po ako tagapagsalita ng aking kaibigan na si Mon Tulfo. So, lahat po ng kwestiyon ninyo kay Mon Tulfo, paki-direct po kay Mon Tulfo. I can only speak for the President po.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Question from Kylie Atienza ng BusinessWorld: Will the national government come up with ways to further reopen the economy or more industries in areas under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) at kung ano daw pong industries if ever? Kasama po ba ito sa plano ng ating economic managers after the President thumbed down their request?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Ang hindi po inaprubahan ng Presidente iyong proposal na buong Pilipinas ay mag-MGCQ. So, balik po tayo doon sa dating proseso na titingnan natin on a regional level, on a province basis kung pupuwede na mag-MGCQ ang iba't-ibang lugar sa Pilipinas. Eh, bago pa man po magdesisyon ang Presidente na ayaw niya ang buong Pilipinas MGCQ, mabibilang mo naman sa isang kamay kung ilan iyong mga lugar na naka-GCQ pa eh. So, wala pong problema iyan, patuloy lang po tayo ng dating proseso na natin at bukas po magpupulong ang IATF para po maisapinal iyong classification para sa susunod na buwan. Sa Biyernes po yata ang pagpupulong ng IATF.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Second question niya: Our economic planners recommended the further reopening of the economy to curb hunger and joblessness. Will the President's latest decision, will the national government find ways to help local governments cope with the economic impacts of the prolonged lockdown? What are these?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, isa na po diyan iyong hinihinging karagdagang pondo ni DOLE para po doon sa mga emergency cash-for-work kasi habang hindi pa po tayo tuluyang magbubukas, marami pa rin ang kinakailangan maski man lang po ng temporary work 'no.

At siyempre, paigtingin pa natin iyong mga pag-uutang natin; patuloy rin po nating ipinatutupad ang ating Bayanihan 2 at patuloy po nating ipinatutupad ang ating national budget; mas paiigtingin pa natin ang absorptive capacity ng ating mga iba't-ibang ahensiya para po ma-realize iyong fiscal stimulus na provided natin sa Bayanihan 2 at saka sa national budget for 2021.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Okay. Question from Ace Romero for Secretary Roque: May we get a statement on the EDSA anniversary rites? Will the President participate – pareho lang po sila ng question ni Jo Montemayor of Malaya – will PRRD address the EDSA commemoration? Any statement on the EDSA anniversary?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Mayroon naman pong magiging statement ang ating Presidente sa EDSA dahil iyan naman po ay by law is made into a public holiday at hintayin na lang po natin iyong official statement po ng ating Presidente.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Question from Tina Mendez of Philippine Star: Can we please ask if there is an update on the executive order institutionalizing National Employment Recovery Strategy Task Force? When will the President sign this?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Wala pa po ‘no. I will release the necessary information in due course.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Question from—pa-clarify daw po or ano dagdagan. Sabi ni Dreo Calonzo, exact position of Ms. Helen Yang sa Sinovac? And how do you pronounce daw po, is it Sinovac [Si-no-vac], Sinovac [Say-no-vac]? Sabi po ni Reymund Tinaza.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Ma’am [laughs]... Yes. Once and for all, ma’am, Ms. Helen Yang, what is your official designation with Sinovac? And how do you pronounce it, is it Si-no-vac or Say-no-vac? Also for my purpose ‘no.

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** Sure. It’s Say-no-vac.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Say-no-vac, okay. And what is your official designation, Ms. Yang?

**MS. HELEN YANG:** I’m the General Manager of Sinovac Hong Kong.

**SEC. ROQUE:** And is it a Miss or Mrs.? Because my Director Ting is asking.

**SINOVAC BIOTECH GM YANG:** [Laughs] I can share it privately. [Laughs]

**SEC. ROQUE:** [Laughs] Okay. Director Ting, you have the permission to contact her privately. Okay ma’am, thank you very much.

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Opo. Secretary, wait lang po, mukhang may nagpapahabol po ng tanong. Question po mula kay Ace Romero: Clarification daw po beyond issuing a statement. Will there be other forms of participation on the part of the President for the EDSA anniversary?

**SEC. ROQUE:** I have not been informed of any participation as of yet so I do not know this information. But I can assure you there will be a statement ‘no.

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

**SEC. ROQUE:** Yes. Are there further questions?

**USEC. IGNACIO:** No more, Secretary. Thank you.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, okay. Since there are no more questions—yes, we just have one information coming in. Ito po ‘no... I think it’s important that the nation hear, oo. Okay, well anyway we’ll probably do it tomorrow ‘no.

But so since there are no more questions, Ma’am, thank you very much, Ms. Helen Yang of Sinovac Biotech—the General Manager Ms. Helen Yang and of course Director Ting will be

awaiting your information. And thank you very much, Usec. Rocky. Thank you very much to the ladies and gentlemen of the Malacañang Press Corps.

On behalf of the President, Ms. Helen Yang, I'd like to express the gratitude of the President not only to Sinovac but to the government of the People's Republic of China for once more coming to our assistance in our time of dire need. Thank you very much and the Filipino people are a people that will never forget assistance given when we needed it the most.

So sa ngalan po ng ating Presidente Rodrigo Roa Duterte: Pilipinas, hayan po, parating na talaga ang bakuna. Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

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