

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF  
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE  
DURING THE ARRIVAL CEREMONY FOR COVID-19 VACCINES**

[Delivered at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City | 28 February 2021]

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea... [*Kindly sit down. I'm sorry.*] Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr.; the People's Republic of China Ambassador to the Philippines His Excellency Huang Xilian; National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana; Health Secretary Francisco Duque; Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles; Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade and the other members of the Cabinet; the National Task Force Chief Implementer and Vaccine Czar Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr.; National Task Force Deputy Chief Implementer Secretary Vivencio Dizon; Senate Committee on Health and Demography Chairman Senator Bong Go; AFP Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Cirilito Sobejana and the other members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; PNP Chief Police General Debold Sinas and the other members of Philippine National Police; Philippine Commanding General Lieutenant General Jose Faustino; Philippine Air Force General Lieutenant General Allen Paredes; Philippine Navy Flag Officer in Command Admiral Giovanni Carlo Bacordo; Philippine Marine Corps Commandant General Ariel Caculitan; PCG Commandant General George Ursabia Jr.; mga kasama ko sa gobyerno; mga kababayan.

My fellow Filipinos, we welcome this day with high hopes of finally ending the COVID-19 pandemic in our country.

Today, we make another step [forward] in our ongoing fight against COVID-19, as we receive 600,000 CoronaVac doses from the People's Republic of China.

I convey my sincere gratitude to the Chinese people and the government of China for this gesture of friendship and solidarity – the hallmark of Philippines-China partnership.

I also thank Secretary Galvez and team Pilipinas for working very, very hard. And I would like to personally thank Ambassador Huang Xilian for helping ensure the timely delivery of this donation.

I said it before and I will say it again: COVID-19 vaccines should be treated as a global public good and made available to all, rich and poor alike.

No nation – no people - should be left to suffer the ravages of this pandemic for whatever reason.

Comprehensive global recovery hinges on equal and easy access by everyone to life-saving vaccines. Because, at the end of the day, as repeatedly said, no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Countries must therefore continue working together and do everything humanly possible to ensure a good outcome for every person.

With this very important shipment, I am confident that more batches of vaccines will be available with great dispatch until every Filipino will be given the chance to be vaccinated at the earliest possible opportunity.

I wish to assure the public that your government remains committed to a timely [vaccine] roll out that will enable us to confidently reopen our society.

The delivery of this first batch, I hope, will serve as a guarantee to everyone that we are taking a big step in our efforts to overcome this health crisis.

As we prepare for the distribution of these vaccines, I am directing all concerned agencies to institutionalize the whole-of-government approach in its roll out.

I cannot stress [this] enough: we cannot afford to waste time or resources in the distribution of these vaccines because we are dealing with precious lives.

To our dear medical frontliners, allow me to take this opportunity to thank you for your valuable and selfless contribution in the fight against COVID-19.

We recognize the profound sacrifices you continue to make every single day, even at the cost of being away from your loved ones and risking your precious lives just to take care of the sick.

As I have mentioned before, I assure you that the government will always be by your side, ready to help in any way we can.

To my fellow Filipinos, please set your fears aside. These vaccines are backed by science and deliberated on by our experts. Filipino experts.

I encourage you to get vaccinated at the soonest possible time. And be our partner in preventing the further spread of the disease.

To those who will be vaccinated, I also urge you to continue practicing health and safety protocols as we await for the final approval of all and more vaccines.

Remember to wear masks, wash hands and observe social distancing. Your cooperation here is key and will undoubtedly save numerous lives along [the way].

With the entire nation's support, I am confident that we will claim victory over this pandemic.

Panahon ngayon para mag-bayanihan.

Let us all demonstrate unity in our shared task of nation building and healthier society for every Filipino.

Before I end, I would like to just add that China has donated several vaccines to several countries. But it is only the donation made to the Philippines that was carried by a Chinese government plane. Iyong iba kinukuha doon sa China. Dito, hinatid sa atin. Maraming salamat po. *[applause]*

Mr. Ambassador, I'd like to just say that towards the --- maybe at the end of the year, when everything has settled down --- I intend to make a short visit to China to just shake hands with President Xi Jinping and to personally thank him for this donation. Thank you.

Maraming salamat po. *[applause]*

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