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INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASE (IATF-EID) VIRTUAL PRESSER WITH SECRETARY KARLO NOGRALES, DILG SECRETARY EDUARDO AÑO, AND DOH USEC. MARIA ROSARIO VERGEIRE

March 25, 2020/1:40-3:15 PM

ASEC. ARCENA: Magandang hapon Malacañang Press Corps at sa ating mga kababayan, welcome sa ating Laging Handa - IATF Virtual Presser. Kasama natin mula dito sa Malacañang si Cabinet Secretary at IATF Spokesperson - Secretary Karlo Nograles, kasama rin po natin si Department of Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año, at via a skype naman ay makakasama din natin si Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire. Now I will turn it over to Secretary Nograles for his opening statement.

SEC. NOGRALES: Mga kababayan, sa mga kasamahan ko po sa gobyerno at sa ating mga magiging na mga frontliners - ang ating mga tunay mga bayani, sa mga kaibigan natin sa media, sa atin pong lahat, magandang hapon po.

With your indulgence please allow me to begin by sharing with you our latest resolution, the Resolution Number 15 ng Inter Agency Task Force.

Now therefore, be it resolve as it is hereby resolved that the IATF approves the following.

Una, the proposed national action plan for COVID-19 is approved in principle. The specific of which are as follows: To adopt measures for the containment and mitigation of the spread of the virus, to reduce the spread of the new cases, and to facilitate the detection, identification and isolation of COVID-19 carriers;

To continuously sustain the conduct of the operations against COVID-19 pandemic in terms of human resource, logistics and finance, to mitigate the consequences and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the social, economic and personal security of the Filipino people. And we are hereby adopting in principle the proposed NTFCOVID-19 organizational structure in the national action plan to lessen the burden on the IATF streamline and to decentralize the operations in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, namely:

A. The IATF will serve as the policy-making body of the operations, while the NTFCOVID-19 shall serve as the operational command to be headed by the Secretary of National Defense. The National incident command will take charge of the day-to-day concerns and operations in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

B. The NDRRMC shall determine and identify the agencies that will belong to the new units of the proposed NTFCOVID-19 organizational structure. Within the proposed organizational structure is:

1. The Task group on response operations which will be led by the Department of Health with support from other national government agencies to address enforcement and security, food security, disaster risk management and labor issues among others.

2. The Task group on resource management and logistics, which shall ensure that critical needs of all concerned agencies will be addressed and provided.
3. The Task group on strategic communications which will be in-charge of communications.

C. Agencies identified by NDRRMC shall immediately designate an official with the rank of Undersecretary or Assistant Secretary to their assigned clusters. The aforementioned clusters shall report directly to the IATF to ensure proper coordination.

The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office or PCSO is hereby directed by the IATF to transfer P420,585,000 to the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation. The said amount shall be utilized to cover COVID-19 related packages of the PHIC. This amount corresponds to 50% of the remainder of the standby fund under section 4 of EO#201 per section 1 of EO 108.

The IATF recommends the action proposed on the handling and disposal of the remains of COVID-19 cases and PUI. The proposed actions are as follows:

- A. In handling the remains of COVID-19 cases, general infection precautions must be strictly observed to avoid further spread of the disease.
- B. LGUs shall designate funeral service facilities to handle the remains of COVID-19 cases and to provide possible financial assistance to cover the logistics, fuel, salary and other expenses that will be incurred in the process.
- C. LGUs and the DILG shall monitor and penalize funeral homes that refuse to provide logistics and transport of COVID-19 remains. Including but not limited to refusal to pick up the remains, subject to the policies and guidelines of the aforementioned LGUs or DILG.
- D. The DSWD shall allocate amounts for a funeral support fund, allotted to the indigent confirmed COVID-19 cases and PUIs, regardless whether they are undergoing home quarantine or admitted to a public or private facility. DSWD shall allot P25,000 per deceased for this purpose.
- E. The LGU may release issuances or ordinances to put a price cap or impose a price freeze on funeral services located within their jurisdictions.
- F. To reiterate funeral services staff and personnel are granted exemptions from the imposed Enhanced Community Quarantine. The said individuals may freely move and travel to ensure that the remains of deceased individuals will be given proper funeral services.
- G. Funeral companies are directed to provide transportation and/or housing accommodations for funeral service staff.

Guidelines, Rules and Regulation of all LGUs declaring their respective community quarantine under paragraph A, Item 2 of IATF resolution no. 12 must be compliant and consistent with the resolutions issued by the IATF.

We have with us, Secretary Ed Año and he will be expounding on this later.

The IATF resolution no. 13 dated March 17, 2020 section B, Item 1 is hereby amended and to be read as follows:

“Overseas Filipino Workers, permanent residents of foreign jurisdictions and stranded foreign nationals leaving for abroad through any of the ports in Luzon shall be allowed to leave the Philippines without any impediment; provided, that this provision shall not be interpreted to allow outbound travel to jurisdictions where travel restrictions are in place; provided further, that departing passenger maybe only accompanied by not more than one person when traveling to any international port; provided finally, that the Overseas Workers’ Welfare Administration is hereby directed to provide transportation services to OFWs intending to leave for abroad.”

Lilinawin ko lang ‘no, itong provision na ito ay in-amend po natin para ma-lift po iyong 24-hour rule for outbound foreign nationals dahil po marami po sa ating mga ... iyong mga foreign nationals po ay nagrereklamo na dahil sa 24-hour rule noong nakaraang resolution ay nahirapan po silang umalis ng ating bansa.

So ang reminder lamang po natin para sa ating mga LGUs at sa lahat ng mga enforcers: hayaan na po natin, huwag na nating pahirapan ang mga foreign nationals na makaalis po ng bansang Pilipinas.

So ni-lift na po natin iyong 24-hour limitation para po mas maging madali para sa kanila na lumuwas at umalis na po ng bansang Pilipinas.

Next, stranded passengers whether Filipino or foreign nationals are also allowed to book hotels and seek temporary accommodations. For hotel and other forms of accommodations, single occupancy of rooms shall only be required for health workers and repatriated OFWs. Double occupancy of rooms shall be allowed for other individuals not falling within the aforementioned individuals subject to guidelines of the DOH.

Outbound and repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers and stranded foreign nationals shall be granted free and unimpeded access to and from national government facilities such as airports, ferries, bus terminals, etc., notwithstanding any LGU pronouncement to the contrary. The said free access shall extend to the vehicles carrying the aforementioned individuals in order for them to reach their final destination. No fee or any other requirement shall be imposed by LGUs in this regard.

Uulitin ko po para sa ating mga LGUs: kung mayroon po kayong mga foreign nationals na stranded po sa inyong lokalidad, hayaan na po ninyo silang makaalis ng bansang Pilipinas. Sila po ay nakikipag-ugnayan na po sa kanilang mga embahada. Huwag na po natin silang pahirapan, hayaan na po natin silang makaalis.

Next, the OCD is hereby designated as the main coordinating body for all domestic donations relative to the management of COVID-19. The OCD or Office of Civil Defense is authorized to receive all domestic financial donations which shall thereafter deposit the same to the Bureau of Treasury. The intended beneficiary agency shall then submit a request to the Department of Budget and Management to access such funds. Government agencies who likewise receive

donations in kind are hereby directed to report the same to the OCD. The Presidential Communications Operations Office will make the necessary communications to this effect.

International financial donations shall be evaluated and decided on by a technical working group comprised of the DFA, the OCD, DILG, DBM and Department of Finance.

Next, the IATF approves the following recommendations of the Department of Agriculture subject to implementation of strict skeletal workforce and strict social distancing measures:

1. Allow all farming and fishing activities to continue.
2. Exempt all healthy farmers and farm workers, fishers and agri business personnel.
3. Allow agricultural supply stores and outlets, and veterinary clinics to operate.
4. Reiterate unhampered movement of all supplies used for agriculture including food packaging and manufacturing materials.
5. Reactivation of the Local Price Coordination Council or LPCC to strengthen the price monitoring and enforcement.
6. Upscaling “Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita” in support for food availability, accessibility and price stability.
7. Support the DA program, “Ahon Lahat Pagkain Sapat” or ALPAS kontra COVID-19.

Next, the IATF endorses the recommendation of the DTI in allowing the full operation of those engaged in the manufacture of medicines, medical supplies, devices and equipment, including but not limited to suppliers of inputs, packaging and distribution to address the country’s clear and present need for medical supplies and equipment.

Next, the DTI shall enjoin concerned export enterprises that manufacture medicines, medical supplies and equipment to supply at least 80% of their daily production for local or domestic use.

And lastly, the IATF strongly encourages companies to process payrolls online. However, for those who cannot, one payroll manager for each company is allowed to travel on March 26 and 27 for the purpose of processing their company payrolls covering the period until April 15, 2020.

Before wrapping up, gusto ko lang po i-revisit iyong sinabi ni Pangulong Duterte kagabi. Nagpapasalamat po kaming lahat sa lahat ng nag-contribute in our efforts to address the threat posed by this virus, especially iyong mga nasa frontlines po natin. Mga medical and health personnel led by our doctors na kung saan lima po sa kanila ang nagbigay ng ultimate sacrifice para sa ating bayan. Your nation owes all of you a debt that we hope we can repay in our lifetime.

Aside from our health workers, si Pangulo ay nagpapasalamat din po sa lahat ng in charge sa pag-secure ng ating safety – ang AFP, PNP. Those who continue to report for work to ensure that essential services remain open to the public tulad ng mga groceries, food establishments, delivery services, iyong mga nasa gobyerno, iyong mga nasa pribadong sektor, lahat nang nagsasakripisyo para sa bayan. Those who have extended aid and volunteered in their various capacities to help our people in this time of need.

Mga kababayan, giyera po ito. Digmaan na po ito. This is a war that will be fought in many fronts. And your cooperation and support are crucial in our efforts to beat COVID-19 and to save lives. Whatever our disagreements, whatever our misunderstanding, what is not debatable is this: The enemy is COVID-19. Iyan po ang kalaban natin. And we have a greater chance of defeating the enemy if we work together and lift each other up rather than pull each other down.

This is a time that calls for kindness, for compassion, for generosity and for unity. Tandaan po natin ang sabi ni Pangulong Duterte: 'Kung magkanya-kanya po tayo, hindi tayo magtatagumpay. Together we can beat COVID-19; together we heal as one.'

Kaya't ulit-ulitin ko po ang ating pakiusap sa lahat ng ating mga kababayan: Bahay muna, buhay muna. Maraming salamat po and god bless us all.

ASEC. ARCENA: Maricel Halili of TV5.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Hi sir, good afternoon, Secretary Nograles. Clarification lang po on the special power, because I understand 18 million people iyong target natin na mabigyan ng P5,000-8,000. So how do we plan to choose who will benefit from this financial assistance? Probably given na iyong mga kasama doon sa 4Ps, but outside of 4Ps, how do we choose the beneficiaries?

SEC. NOGRALES: Mayroon po tayong working draft, na-present nga po kahapon sa amin sa IATF. So we have this working draft. It's a joint memorandum circular, pero kailangan po ng final pass. So, that is why iyong technical working group will do a final pass today. Iyan po iyong kanilang assignment ngayon and then present it to us again tomorrow.

So, by tomorrow hopefully kung maaga kaming matapos, then we can make an announcement or whatever. Siguro kahit anong oras siguro kaming matapos, then I will probably make an announcement – bulletin, kahit wala ng questions, because we also understand the essence of doing this very quickly. So time is of the essence, this is an urgent need already, but ayoko kasi pangunahan, kasi there might be some slight changes. But just to let you know that there's a JMC already and we are just doing a one final - final pass, just to make sure that everything is...

So basically doon sa kanilang presentation sa amin – iyong technical working group, mayroon po tayong mga qualifications. So, the qualifications are set clearly defined kung sino po iyong mag-qualify under this social amelioration package.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: I understand it's not yet final, sir. But of course given na iyong target natin, iyong mga low income. But at least do we also have plans on how to assist iyong mga minimum wage earners, lalo na iyong medyo malaki iyong family nila.

SEC. NOGRALES: Like I said, ayoko pangunahan, because the social amelioration is not just DSWD. Mayroon ding DOLE, mayroon din iyong DA. So lahat po iyan kasama doon sa isang buong social amelioration package, pati DTI kasama rin po dito. So, its different agencies using their different programs – so, may different targets sila.

So obviously iyong DSWD, iyon iyong marginalized sector, but DOLE also has naman iyong mga workers. So kanya-kanyang sector, mayroon po tayong social ameliorations package.

MARICEL HALILI/TV 5: Secretary Año, on the side po of DILG. How do you assess if the LGUs, I mean adequate enough or inadequate in doing their jobs in implementing the community quarantine. Kasi it seems na ilang araw na po, pero marami pa ring reklamo doon sa ilang cities?

SEC. AÑO: First of all, we set the guidelines through the resolutions of the national—the national guidelines through the IATF-EID. Especially for Luzon that we are on enhanced Community Quarantine, nandoon na iyong lahat ng guidelines. But sometimes na may mga LGUs na nago-overdo, especially doon sa pagpasok ng mga cargoes. So, hina-harmonized naming lahat ito, including those in Mindanao and Visayas na mayroon silang general community quarantine.

So, dapat hindi sila lalampas doon sa ipinag-uutos ng national. Mabilis naman din ang kanilang adjustment. Mayroon kaming 24-hours emergency operations center sa DILG. Lahat ng mga complaints against LGUs ay dumarating doon. So, real time din ay na-aksiyunan natin. And I am glad to announce na iyong mga LGUs na na-call natin iyong attention, naga-adjust kaagad sila.

Alam mo kasi sa LGU, lalo na iyong malalayong lugar mayroon silang tendency to overdo, kasi iniisip nila iyong welfare ng kanilang constituents, but not knowing ay sumosobra na. Like for example iyong cargoes, ayaw nilang papasukin; iyong iba diyan pinapapasok ang cargoes, ayaw naman papasukin iyong crew, so papaano tatakbo iyong cargoes?

So, hina-harmonize namin lahat iyon and we are open sa lahat ng mga complaints. At iyon nga wala naming LGUs na hindi nag-adjust, lahat ay gusto ring makatulong at in accordance to the IATF guidelines.

MARICEL HALILI/TV 5: Sir, some reports lang po from the ground. Doon daw po sa may Daang Hari sa Taguig, iyong Barangay Captain mukhang naubos ang pasensiya, namalo daw ng patpat doon sa mga residente na ayaw sumunod – ano po iyong violation niyong Barangay Captain?

SEC. AÑO: Kapag mayroong complainant diyan, then iimbestigahan natin. Siguro napanood niya iyong video, sa YouTube doon India na pinapalo iyong mga tao. Dapat naman kasi iyong ating mga kababayan sumunod, hindi lang naman buhay ninyo ito, buhay din ng kapwa natin iyong maililigtas. So, para wala nang aberya, sumunod na lang tayo. This time, mag i-strict lalo iyong ating law enforces at LGUs sa pagpatupad ng home quarantine. Dadamihan namin iyong mobile patrols at sisiguraduhin nating bumalik sa bahay nila iyong mga wala naman talagang exemptions at walang importanteng gagawin. Kung mag-resist sila, then we will accost and arrest if necessary.

MARICEL HALILI/TV 5: Will you impose sir penalty like you said arrest, penalty doon sa mga residente na pasaway? Because some of the local officials are also asking if that is possible considering na nakaka-first, second warning, pero hindi pa rin daw sumusunod?

SEC. AÑO: Well, actually sa ating batas dito ngayon na pinirmahan ng Pangulo, mayroon na siyang penalty clause, hanggang two months puwedeng ikulong, puwedeng magmulta ng hanggang 1 million pesos, tapos iyong sa Revised Penal Code ng Article 151, kung mag-resist ka sa arrest, puwede ka ding ikulong. So, iyan ay gagamitin natin kung kinakailangan.

TINA MENDEZ/PHIL. STAR: Sir, paano iyong coordination sa national and local government don sa pag mo-monitor ng mga...those with the symptoms ng COVID? Kasi sa isang siyudad may mag-asawa, nag-positive ang asawa; ngayon, nang tinest iyong wife, nagkaroon na siya ng pneumonia pero pinauwi pa rin sa bahay. Kasi it defeats the purpose iyong stay at home natin, baka mas lalong maraming mahawaan, lalong mag-accelerate ang COVID.

SEC. AÑO: Well, unang-una ano mayroon tayong Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams, ang trabaho nito ay mag-monitor ng mga PUM at saka PUI. At iyong talagang mayroon nang symptoms dapat talaga iyan, lalo na iyong severe at saka acute, ay dapat madala natin ito sa hospital.

Now iyong mga asymptomatic at ito ay under PUI, dahil ito ay galing sa ganitong bansa o kaya ito ay nakahalubilo ng isang positive, mayroon din tayong inutos sa ating LGUs na mayroon dapat silang tinatawag nating isolation unit. It could be a house, it could be a building, it could be an apartelle na kung saan ay doon natin dapat ilalagay iyong mga PUI natin at PUM.

Ngayon, iyong ibang LGUs ay nakikita nila iyong mga schools na puwedeng gamitin na quarantine area. So, hindi iyan automatic, kailangan mayroon siyang pahintulot galing sa DepEd, mayroon siyang dapat MOA. Kasi kung ginamit mo iyan, tapos nasira naman, sino ang sasagot niyan? So, hindi siya automatic, kailangan ay may pahintulot. Ganoon din iyong CHED, mayroon tayong mga universities, colleges puwedeng magamit na quarantine area, pero hindi o puwedeng automatic iyan, kailangan may pahintulot ang CHED at saka DepEd.

TINA MENDEZ/PHIL. STAR: Pero, sir ang sitwasyon ngayon na sir, kailangan mo pang pumirma ng MOA, mag-paalam at mag-identify ng mga areas.

SEC. AÑO: Mabilis lang iyan – within the day, within the hours. Actually hindi naman direktso sa ano, may district supervisor, mayroong regional supervisor – sa level lang nila iyan, puwede na nila magawa doon.

TINA MENDEZ/PHIL. STAR: Sec., kanina si Secretary Nograles in-announce din iyong mga regulations on funeral and wake services ng mga fatalities ng COVID. Sec., ano bang worst case scenario na nakikita ninyo at gaano kabilis ang mga mamamatay?

SEC. AÑO: Ngayon ay nagpalabas din tayo ng memo circular sa ating mga Local Government Units na kailangan ang ating mga LGU ay mayroong nakahandang funeral na mayroong capability ng cremation. Kasi kapag COVID positive deceased person or cadaver dapat ay ma-cremate natin ito within 12 hours. Kung siya naman ay isang Muslim, dapat ito ay ilagay sa isang airtight sealed bag at within 12 hours, at the presence of one Imam who will do the Muslim rites, dapat mailibing din siyang kaagad to the nearest Muslim cemetery.

TINA MENDEZ/PHILIPPINE STAR: Sir, is there a plan to expand iyong enhanced community quarantine to Visayas and Mindanao at this point?

SEC. AÑO: Sa ngayon ay ang ating pinakamaraming cases talaga ay nasa Luzon, lalo na dito sa Metro Manila. But in Visayas and Mindanao na naka-general community quarantine, mayroon ding mga LGUs doon na nag-declare na ng enhanced community quarantine depende sa numbers ng positive cases sa kanilang lugar. Ang kailangan lang naman diyan, dapat ay mayroon siyang consultation with DILG and DOH; DOH because nasa kaniya iyong mga data at ito naman ay ating sinusupportahan.

Sa ngayon ay hindi pa naman kailangang buong Visayas at Mindanao para tuluy-tuloy pa rin naman iyong kanilang normal na buhay lalo na iyong sa trabaho at production. But if there is a necessity and depending on the development, ia-assess ng IATF iyan.

TINA MENDEZ/PHILIPPINE STAR: Sir, how about iyong going beyond one month, iyong lockdown in Luzon?

SEC. AÑO: We are now on, I think on the ninth day. So far ay okay naman iyong takbo ng ating lockdown or enhanced community quarantine. We assess the performance of our LGUs, nakita din naman natin na okay ang kanilang performance. Of course ang nakita nating problema, iyong kakulangan ng ating test kits na ina-address naman ng DOH at saka siyempre iyong ating social amelioration na ipa-finalize naman natin para masigurado natin, especially iyong tinatawag nating informal economy sector. Ito iyong tinatawag natin na mga no-work, no-pay; ito iyong mga informal workers, iyong mga nagtitinda noong sampaguita, nagtitinda ng balot - kailangan iyan ay mabibigyan natin ng ano.

Kaya nga doon sa batas na ito, 18 million families ay sakop sila doon, iyong tinatawag nating informal economy sector. Sisiguraduhin natin na mabigyan sila ng amelioration at ang gaganap dito ng papel na ito para siguradong makarating ay of course DSWD at saka LGUs. So ngayon ay kapag na-finalize natin ang Joint Memorandum Circular ay ibababa na natin itong mga tinatawag nating assistance sa ating mga kababayan.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV 4: Hi, for CabSec Nograles po. Sir kasama kagabi si Pangulong Duterte sa IATF meeting. Paano po iyong mga naging assessment niya so far sa enhanced community quarantine at may mga partikular po ba siyang naibilin din sa inyo na gusto pa niyang ma-implement under ECQ po?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Well, unang-una sa lahat, nagpapasalamat siya na naipasa na nga itong batas na ito at dahil nga po dito ay mas maging madali na lang po para sa amin iyong implementation at ang panlaban natin against COVID-19. So prinisenta din po namin sa kaniya iyong National Action Plan, sumasang-ayon naman siya at pumayag naman siya doon sa National Action Plan natin.

So ang makikita natin ngayon, gawa noong dahil may batas na po tayo, mama-manage na po natin iyong ating resources and logistics and response. So kung titingnan mo po iyong National Action Plan po natin, two major task groups po iyan – resource and response. So based dito sa batas na ito, ipa-farm out na namin sa task group on resource based sa batas na ito ano iyong mga angkop na provisions ng batas na ito under sa resource, tapos kung angkop doon sa para sa response.

And then siyempre ilalatag na ng bawat task group kung ano iyong mga resources available, tapos ilalatag din noong response group ano iyong responses or actions na gagawin based sa batas na ito. But because mayroon na po ito, mas madali na po tayong mag-source out. May resources na po tayo, lahat noong ating mga pangangailangan ay matutugunan na. Kaya iyon, lubos na nagpapasalamat si Pangulo doon at siyempre iyong sa frontliners nga, siyempre nalulungkot siya na may mga frontliners po tayo na nagiging casualties 'no.

At we wanna work on this effectively in a way na kung maaari mabawasan natin iyong mga casualties at dadami iyong mga recoveries. And kung anong mga resources ang kinakailangan natin para panlaban sa COVID-19 ay agad nating ma-deploy at ma-distribute.

MELA LESMORAS/PTV 4: Thank you, sir. Kay Sec. Año lang po, problems on ground naman sir. Kasi iyong iba nating mga kababayan, may mga nalulungkot pa rin kasi hindi sila nakakatanggap ng food packs from their LGUs. Sir, just to set the record straight, ano po ba ang bilin ng DILG: Lahat po ba ng residente kailangan makatanggap nito at kung mayroon po ba

kayong itinakdang deadline sa mga LGU na by this time kailangan nabigyan na lahat, ano po ba iyong mga bilin natin?

SEC. AÑO: Unang-una ano, sa mga food packs. Ang LGU, because of the public health emergency and the declaration of the state of calamity, may authority na sila na gamitin iyong kanilang calamity fund especially iyong quick reaction fund. So dito, pupuwede na nilang—makabili sila ng mga food packs para maibigay sa kanilang mga constituents. Siyempre, ang uunahin natin dito iyong mga indigent families; iyong mga well-to-do, huwag naman tayong mag-expect na tatanggap tayo sapagkat mas uunahin natin iyong mga nangangailangan. So ang munisipyo at ang probinsiya, mayroon silang mga respective calamity fund and QRF!

Ngayon, kung halimbawa kinapos na sila, puwede silang humingi ng tulong sa DSWD. Kailangan muna magamit muna nila iyong hawak nila bago sa national, kasi ang national siyempre ang uunahin niya iyong nangangailangan. So we are reminding actually all LGUs to utilize their funds now and distribute food packs to all who are needing this food. So kung mayroon mang hindi nakakatanggap ay ipagbigay-alam sa aming action centers and numbers, so we will call the attention of the LGUs.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, Mela. Okay, live din po nating kasama si Usec. Vergeire mula sa DOH. At ang susunod na tanong ay manggagaling kay Joseph Morong ng GMA-7 at live naman via Skype.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Good afternoon Secretary Nograles and Secretary Año. Sir my first question is, how much money do we stand to access under this law, sir?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Ang alam ko, I wasn't part of the debate 'no, but ang alam ko about 200... almost – in fact, 400 kung i-add mo lahat-lahat. Almost 400 billion kung hindi ako nagkakamali. Basta parang sinabi during the debates, hindi ko na nasundan eh iyong after na kasi we had that task force meeting also. But I know there's a 200 billion then there's another 100-something, so iyon.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, sabihin ko, 200 to 400 billion na pera 'no?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Yeah...

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, okay. Ano po iyong magiging immediate effect noong law because you will have this fund readily available to you – 200 billion to 400 billion – ano iyong puwede ninyo nang pagalawin in terms of procuring mga testing kits o mga—ano ba iyong mga puwede ninyo nang gawin, na puwede ninyo nang bilhin?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Well first of all, iyong sa social amelioration package na gaya ng sinabi ko, pina-finalize na lang natin iyong JMC. Kapag itong JMC ay na-approve na ng IATF at mapirmahan na ng iba't-ibang mga ahensiya na kasama dito sa Joint Memorandum Circular, then we'll launch it immediately. We will immediately implement this and this is nationwide basically, at ang target po dito is 18 million families 'no, Sec.?

SEC. AÑO: Yes, 18 million families.

CABSEC NOGRALES: 18 million families ang target nito. So, malaking chunk ng pera ang mapupunta dito and that's food assistance plus iyong cash assistance na ibibigay ng gobyerno

sa lahat ng mga marginalized at iyong mga kababayan natin na nangangailangan. So for social amelioration package, that's one.

Next, gaya ng sinabi ko, iyong ating tasking now is the response task group and the task group on resource and logistics 'no, resource management. So ngayon ang resource management task group will now continue to identify iyong mga needs na kinakailangan ng different agencies including iyong response group. So whether that is more hospitals, more beds, more rooms, more ventilators, more PPEs, more masks, more testing kits... Lahat po iyan i-evaluate at ilalatag na nila lahat iyan 'no, ano ba needs natin based doon sa nakikita natin on the ground – PUMs, PUIs and all of these patients and COVID-19 positives 'no, and then lahat ng mga pangangailangan ng frontliners natin.

So ilalatag nila lahat iyan and then, because they're the ones in charge of the resource, then we'll work out as a mechanism kung saan mare-report agad sa amin sa IATF or mai-report agad kay Pangulo or sa kinauukulang kagawaran or ahensiya or departamento ng gobyerno para purchase agad, gamitin agad ang pondo tapos ibigay agad sa resource management tapos deploy agad 'no, for distribution not only in NCR but Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao. So dapat mabilis ang action ng lahat diyan!

We are in a state of calamity. We are in a state of emergency. So itong structure na in-approve po nga IATF, this is the structure that is used whenever the country gets hit by a national calamity or when we are in a state of national emergency. So mayroon po tayong protocols dito, nakalatag na po iyong parang procedures for this and so when we approved it, timing lang din iyong pag-approve nito, pagpirma ni Pangulo noong batas ng Bayanihan Act, so that all goes hand-in-hand.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir can I bring you to April 12 'no, na kunwari ili-lift na natin siya. What would we have achieved by April 12?

CABSEC NOGRALES: What we would have achieved by April 12 is we would have been able to contain the virus. We would have been able to probably identify what communities are negative 'no. So siguro we want to see more communities na negative, na walang COVID-19 cases and kung saan man ang mga communities na mayroon or kung mayroon mang mga COVID-19 ay na-isolate na po natin sila sa communities. And we're already focusing on treatment na and for their recovery.

So, basically, the victory that we want to happen is hindi na siya mag-spread. There are no, hopefully, no new cases happening and just like in China or Wuhan kung saan wala ng new cases and then naka-focus na sila sa treatment.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Okay. Sir, last three questions. The reason why I asked that is iyong law says, three months iyong effectivity ng powers ni Presidente and then another thing is you have 200 – 400 billion at your disposal. My question is: are we operating on the assumption na hindi natin kayang i-lift iyong quarantine by April 12?

SEC. AÑO: [OFF MIC] May I answer the question?

SEC. NOGRALES: Sasagutin daw ni Sec. Año.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Yes, please, sir.

SEC. AÑO: First of all, what do we expect to achieve after one month of quarantine? When we start—let me remind everyone that we are always one step ahead of others like Spain, Italy, even US. If we do not implement draconian measures like this, we would be ending like at least half of Italy's condition now because of the exponential growth of this spread of virus. So, pupuwedeng by the five digits na tayo, probably, baka aabot tayo sa—because remember the modeling na ginawa ng WHO kapag wala tayong ginawa na anumang measures in three to five months, we will have 75,000 positive cases with 3% mortality and about 5% severe o serious conditions ng positive patients. So, kung hindi natin ginawa ito baka ganoon iyong aabutin natin.

So, ang ating objective is really flatten the curve so that we can still – within our capacity – to treat positive cases and serious cases of positive patients. Because kapag dumating iyong point na wala na tayong capacity katulad ngayon sa Italy na nag-surrender na almost iyong government ay ganoon ang mangyayari sa atin na wala na tayong—kumbaga, pababayaan na lang nating mamatay iyong mga tao diyan because hindi na natin kaya even pati pagliling.

So... and because we are not a very rich country like other countries na kayang mag-massive testing ng kits nila, testing kits nila na like South Korea – they can conduct 15,000 test a day – the solution for us is to really to enforce the Enhanced Community Quarantine so that everybody will distance and will keep himself locked inside the home.

Social distancing, iyong ginawa ng Italy, it did not work. Why? Because people will always violate social distancing, even here in our country, naka-lockdown na tayo may sumisingit pa rin. So, draconian measures ang kailangan natin para mag-flatten ang curve and ma-contain natin if not eliminate the spread of the virus.

ASEC. ARCENA: Okay. Thank you, sir

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, I'll rephrase my question. Can we—I'll just rephrase my question, JV. Can we confidently say we can lift the quarantine by April 12?

SEC. AÑO: That we have to assess but I'm confident that we can, but of course it doesn't mean that's the end of the spread. We have to still continue the practice of strict social distancing – importante talaga iyon! For other islands, Luzon and Visayas, Mindanao, importante social distancing kung hindi sila naka-lockdown.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, just last two questions. Ano po iyong plano ng IATF sa Holy Week? Would you be giving regular updates still kahit Holy Week na?

SEC. NOGRALES: Hindi yata kami exempted sa trabaho kahit Holy Week—

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Parang damay kami doon, sir.

SEC. NOGRALES: Of course, buhay ng mga kababayan natin ang nakasalalay dito so, if we need to work, we will work. Walang Holy Week, Holy Week breaks po sa amin. Actually, walang breaks ang IATF.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir! Last question, sir. To the public ano, kasi ang iba nagtatanong paano kapag nagkasakit ako, [SIGNAL FADED] pagpapagamot sa COVID?

ASEC. ARCENA: Libre daw po ba ang paggamot ng COVID?

SEC. NOGRALES: Yeah, nandito sa batas. Nandito sa batas na sasagutin sila. So, kasama iyon sa batas na pinasa po ng Kongreso at pinirmahan ni Pangulo, na they will be covered.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, Joseph Morong of GMA 7. Our next question—kasama rin po ulit natin si USec. Vergeire ng DOH, at ang tanong na ito ay mula kay Rose Novenario ng Hataw ay para ho yata sa DOH. Hihingi ba ng tulong ang Pilipinas sa Cuba dahil matagumpay nilang nalabanan ang COVID-19 at nakahanda namang ibahagi ang kanilang paraan sa ibang bansa? Ano na ang nangyari sa plano ni Pangulong Duterte noong 2016 na sumailalim sa pagsasanay sa Cuba ang ilang opisyal ng DOH? Maraming salamat.

USEC. VERGEIRE: Good afternoon, Secretary Nograles and Secretary Año at sa ating mga partners sa media. Ito pong Cuba na pinag-aaralan natin since noong 2016 nga po dahil ang Cuba has a good health system at dito po pina-practice iyong iba't-ibang mga [unclear] system at iba't-iba pang mga interventions po para maging maayos ang isang health system. Hindi lang po Cuba ang nagkakaroon ng magandang response ngayon para rito sa COVID-19, marami pa po tayong ibang bansa na gumagawa rin nito.

And of course, the Philippines is very much open to partner with other countries so that we can learn from them. Actually, some of our interventions ngayon na ginagawa natin ay galing din po sa mga ekspertyensiya ng ibang bansa na ating ina-adopt para po mas maging evidence-based po ang ginagawa natin and hopefully it will be effective for our country.

ASEC. ARCENA: Isa pang question. Sir, ano raw po ang reaksiyon – mula ito kay Rose Novenario ng Hataw – ano raw po ang reaksiyon ng Palasyo sa pangamba ng NEDA na mararanasan ng bansa ang social at political crisis kapag tumagal pa ang lockdown?

SEC. NOGRALES: Kaya nga napaka-importanteng matapos na po natin itong digmaan na ito, itong giyera na ito kontra sa COVID-19. We have to end this quickly. We have to end this very soon. Kasi the longer it takes may repercussions po iyan para sa ating mga kababayan, para sa ating ekonomiya so, kailangang matapos natin ito. But again, hindi natin magagawa po ito kung wala pong kooperasyon ng bawat isa at kung mayroon pong nagba-violate ng mga guidelines, kung mayroon pong pinapahirapan ang gobyerno, hindi nagko-cooperate sa gobyerno, then it gives us more problems and it extends itong problema din ng COVID-19.

So, gaya ng lagi naming sinasabi at laging sinasabi ni Sec. Año, kailangang maintindihan, maunawaan natin itong kalaban natin. So, sabihin natin nasa giyera, nasa digmaan nga tayo, the first thing you have to do is learn your enemy, know your enemy, learn how it moves, how it operates. Gaya nga ng sinasabi lagi ni Sec. Año, itong virus na ito hindi mabubuhay ito kung walang host hindi ba? So, kung iisipin ninyo na ang kalaban nating itong virus na ito huwag nating bigyan ng paraan ang virus na makapaghanap po siya ng host.

So, kaya nga po tayo nagso-social distancing pero kung hindi tayo magso-social distancing at mananatili po tayong mga pasaway, ang mangyayari niyan makakahanap na naman ng host ang virus and so on and so forth. Kung hahayaan po natin na hindi makapaghanap ng host ang virus tapos lahat ng mga infected po natin ay pagagalangin natin, mamamatay din iyong virus eventually. That's how you defeat your enemy.

So, doon sa sinabi ng NEDA, ang mensahe po natin is, that is the reason why we must end this war quickly and as soon as possible.

ASEC. ARCENA: Ang susunod na tanong mula kay Catherine Valente of Manila Times: *For DOH, can we ask if there are plans to purchase more COVID-19 test kits, perhaps from South Korea? South Korea is among the world's worst affected countries but one reason why it might have a higher number of infections than other countries is its aggressive approach to testing. It has already tested 300,000 people there. May plan po ba ang government to provide free and easy access to testing for anyone, not only prominent and influential individuals and their families?*

USEC. VERGEIRE: Unang-una, may plano ba ang ating gobyerno para tayo ay bumili ng COVID testing kits? Mayroon po tayong plano 'no. We cannot rely on donations for the rest of the time that we are responding to this crisis. Tayo po ngayon ay tumitingin na kung ano po ang mga compatible na testing kits para sa ating mga makina, sa ating mga laboratoryo dito sa Pilipinas para tayo rin ay makapag-procure din considering that we will be given additional budget for us to procure items or supplies that we will need for this response.

So opo, tayo ay bibili ng ating testing kits, mayroon na pong walong commercially available approved by FDA na testing kits, at maaari po nating pagpilian doon kung ano ang kailangan natin sa ating mga makina dito sa ating laboratoryo.

Pangalawa po, iyong idea po ng mass testing. Marami na pong nagtatanong ukol dito. Ang sagot po natin diyan ay hindi pa po sa ngayon ang mass testing dito sa Pilipinas. Unang-una po, ang ating mga testing kits, bagaman mayroon na tayong 100,000, may parating pa po, hindi pa rin po iyan enough to serve para po mag-mass testing tayo lahat. And always tandaan natin, ang experience po ng ibang bansa katulad po ng mga karatig na bansa natin, ang mass testing po ay ginawa, pinili lahat ng mga may sintomas at iyon ang itinebest, tapos iyon po ang in-isolate. Kung saka-sakali tayong gagawa ng ganito, ito po ang gagawin natin maybe kapag sufficient na ang resources natin para mas efficient po ang ginagawa natin.

So for now, mass testing, wala pa po iyan sa ating kunsiderasyon dahil po sa kakulangan ng ating mga capacity and, of course, iyon pong ating laboratoryo. So tandaan po natin, kapag gumawa tayo ng testing, kung may kits man tayo kung wala naman pong laboratoryong gagawa. Kaya nga po kinukumpleto natin ngayon na magkaroon ng extension laboratories sa buong bansa para hindi lang po dito sa Maynila, hindi lang sa Luzon. Dapat doon po rin sa Visayas and Mindanao, we can extend our capacity. Kapag na-stabilize na po natin itong lahat sa laboratories natin, and then we can now decide if we can do mass testing or not.

ASEC. ARCENA: Okay. From Reuters, for CabSec and Usec. Vergeire: *What is the total bed capacity, available workforce of hospitals designated as COVID-19 facilities? Do they have adequate inventory of ventilators, respirators, PPEs, etc.? Do we plan to add more facilities given that some private hospitals have already exceeding capacity? Do you have an updated data on how many people have been tested for COVID? Thank you.*

USEC. VERGEIRE: Yes, is it for me?

ASEC. ARCENA: Yes, ma'am.

USEC. VERGEIRE: Mayroon po tayo ngayon maibigay as an initial inventory 'no. I'd just like to make this clear, kung nag-umpisa na po tayo ng mga ating referral hospitals para tumanggap po ng mga kaso ng may COVID and they are severe cases and those of the vulnerable population, ang kinu-commit po ngayon ng UP-PGH ay hindi pa ho buong ospital – kapag nag-umpisa po tayo. This is going to be progressive kasi po kailangan nating intindihin na ang mga ospital na ito ay mayroon din po silang existing patients na naka-admit sa kanila ngayon.

So maaari po na during the course of how many weeks saka po tayo magkakaroon ng complete capacity of the whole hospitals that we are saying na itinatalaga para po maging referral hospital.

So ngayon po, ang ating UP-PGH has already committed 130 beds – 100 for those not requiring critical services, and then they have 30 na ICU rooms. For Lung Center of the Philippines, dati pa ho nag-umpisa iyan and they have dedicated, at the initial, 40 beds specific for COVID-19. Ito naman pong Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital natin, pina-fast track po natin ang pagkukumpleto nila ng kanilang mga kailangan para po makapag-umpisa rin sila. Tinitingnan pa ho natin kung paano natin masisiguro na appropriate po iyong care na ibibigay natin galing dito po sa Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital.

We are also looking at other hospitals now para po madagdagan ang numero ng ating referral hospitals especially in other regions of the country.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, Usec. For CabSec and Secretary Año, from Francis of Daily Tribune: *Cordillera farmers are reportedly throwing away their products due to lack of buyers dahil sa ini-impose na checkpoints. One Facebook user was even quoted as saying na iba iyong utos sa taas, EO at SOP against sa actual na nangyayari on the ground. Puwede raw kumuha ng pass pero paano kapag hindi raw inonor [honor] kasi naka-trike daw? Paano raw kung nauna ang lockdown kaysa guidelines ng pass? Paano kung walang internet si farmer?*

SEC. AÑO: Kapag farmers, kasama iyan sa ating resolution, they're exempted. Kasi ngayon tag-ani ngayon ano, kailangan din natin ng food production, kailangan natin ng food kaya ini-exempt natin iyong farmers.

Now, tell us kung anong LGU iyong sumusuway niyan and we will do appropriate actions 'no. We also disseminated this to our PNP, sila naman iyong nagma-man ng checkpoints. So iyong mga farmers, iyong mga plantation tenders, exempted sila because we need the food.

ASEC. ARCENA: Okay. Sir, follow up po from Francis: *May report na may pulis sa MPD na nagtest daw positive sa coronavirus. May financial assistance ba or tulong na matatanggap ang mga pulis na nasa frontline din in case sila ay tamaan ng sakit?*

SEC. AÑO: Yes, oo. On top of the ... iyong nandito sa batas na sinasabi, mayroon din tayong tinatawag na comprehensive social benefits program na kung saan ang mga men in uniform ay binibigyan natin ng kaukulang tulong kapag in line of duty. So ito namang pagkakasakit nila ay in line of duty dahil sila iyong nagsasagawa ng mga checkpoint dito, ibibigay natin lahat ng assistance na pupuwedeng ibigay sa kanila.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, sir. We have another caller. Melo Acuña of Asia Pacific Daily. Sir Melo?

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA PACIFIC DAILY: Good afternoon. Good afternoon, I hope everyone's well. I have a question for Secretary Nograles. China sent doctors to Italy and Argentina. And a video conference was held yesterday between Filipino and Chinese doctors at Chinese General Hospital. Is there a possibility that we could accommodate Chinese doctors to help us in our fight against the virus? That's the first question.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Oo naman. Kung saan man tayo makakakuha ng tulong, we obviously welcome any help that we can get from other nations, especially those who were successful in battling COVID-19. So kung saan man tayo makakahingi ng tulong at saan man ang... it's most welcome 'no. That's why we stick to the foreign policy of the President 'no, and that's been very successful that 'we're friends to all, enemies to none'. Iyan po iyong stand natin and we hope that we can count on our friends, especially in this hour of need.

MELO ACUÑA: Thank you very much. For Secretary Año, Secretary good afternoon. I received word from the National Democratic Front that they will also declare their own ceasefire in compliance with the suggestion or the call of the United Nations Secretary General. How does the DILG look at this gesture from the National Democratic Front? Thank you.

SEC. AÑO: Well first of all, our government declared unilateral ceasefire because we want to focus to fight this COVID-19. But of course we assume a defensive, a strong defensive stance also to thwart any attack that would be coming from the CPP-NPA. And we do not really expect kung anong magiging action nila, because you know, the first ay nagparinig pa si Sison na it's not yet time, ganito, ganito... We don't really care kung ano iyong action nila because we are really focused on fighting this COVID-19 and aimed at saving lives of our Filipino people.

Ngayon na nag-declare sila, well that's a good development. But as I said, we don't really care kung anong action nila. Basta tayo ay naka-focus dito sa COVID-19 and we are committing our AFP and PNP to concentrate on this fight.

MELO ACUÑA: Yeah, thank you very much. For the Department of Health. I'm just as interested as anybody else how DOH monitors the conditions in the island provinces like Masbate and Catanduanes. How sure are we that there are no PUIs or PUMs who may need medical assistance, and should there be test kits in these areas? How would the RITM, you know, receive all these specimens considering the lockdown and there are no flights between these island provinces? Thank you.

USEC. VERGEIRE: Yes, sir. Currently, we have our regional offices sir, in the different regions of the country whereby we have direct coordination with our provincial health offices and our, of course, city health offices and municipal health offices. So if ever there would be patients under investigation or persons under monitoring within their respective jurisdictions, they are being monitored, they are being taken-cared of by our regions, our provinces, our cities and municipalities.

With regards to laboratories, we already have opened our subnational laboratory in Davao and in Vicente Sotto which is in Cebu. So if ever they would be collecting specimens from their constituents, they need to send it to a much nearer place now. Unlike before that we have to send it to RITM. So they send it to Vicente Sotto or to SPMC in Davao. We are set to open our Western

Visayas Medical Center, also our Bicol Public Health Laboratory as soon, maybe by early part of next week.

So we are starting to extend our laboratory capacity and hopefully for the other regions, we will have more and we will be able to extend more in the different laboratories like private laboratories, so that we can have more access to these testing.

MELO ACUÑA: Yeah. Secretary Nograles, one last point if you will. With the emergency powers granted the President, has the IATF considered nationalizing the Department of Health because it's been devolved to the local government units?

CABSEC NOGRALES: Hindi pa naman namin pinag-uusapan iyan. Siyempre from a management perspective, since devolve po iyan sa LGUs, mas mabilis din po iyong response ng mga LGUs kasi naka-devolve nga sa kanila. And in terms of accountability and responsibility, ultimately they're also responsible and accountable to their own constituents. So from a management perspective, I don't think—hindi pa naman kailangan iyan. Right now, the LGUs are quick naman to respond.

MELO ACUÑA: Okay, yeah. Salamat po doon sa inyong pagliliwanag tungkol sa mga magsasaka, katanungan po iyon mula sa Camarines Sur. Thank you very much.

CABSEC NOGRALES: Maraming salamat po.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, Melo Acuña. Ang susunod na tanong mula kay Bella Cariaso of Bandera, for Secretary Año: *"Since we are in crisis, pwede bang ma-force ang isang mayor to resign from her post even if she is elected, if she fails to do her job or at least appoint a competent official to do the job for her?"*

SEC. AÑO: Yes of course, that's within the power of our President. If a mayor or even a governor abused his authority or defy an order, we can immediately put him under preventive suspension for 60 days, that's the power of the President even before the investigation is conducted; or the President can also dismiss any local chief executive kung kinakailangan. So iyan ay nasa prerogative lahat ng ating Pangulo kaya alam natin na mayroong sapat na kapangyarihan ang Pangulo.

Pero sa ngayon nakikita naman natin, lahat ng LGU is sumusunod, mga local chief executives. Nasosobrahan pa nga ng initiative kaya binabawasan natin eh.

ASEC. ARCENA: All right sir, another phone-in question: *"May assistance din ba for middle income households? Iyong special powers good for three months at iyong low income households lang ang may 5K to 8 thousand pesos na matatanggap. Marami din naman daw na middle income families ang affected ng work stoppage at ECQ dahil sa COVID."*

CABSEC NOGRALES: We will be extending assistance but hindi siguro in terms of cash or foods assistance 'no. So there are other ways to provide assistance 'no tulad ng mga—iyong sa mga utang na puwedeng iyong palugit doon sa utang 'di ba, iyong grace period... these things are also important 'no. These things matter also. So anyway, constant naman iyong aming pag-assess ng situation. Kasama din sa pag-assess iyong anong maitutulong natin sa ating mga kababayan.

Pero siyempre, uunahin natin iyong mga marginalized, iyong mga nangangailangan, the impoverish communities... those who are in at most needs 'no. And then tingnan natin 'no, because it's really a matter of budget and it's really a matter of knowing also saan ba tayo makakatulong sa 'which sector' 'no.

So sa middle income sector, there are other ways also that government can help you. If it's not food assistance or cash assistance, it's in other ways that we can help solve your problems habang naka-quarantine po tayong lahat.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, from Gen Kabling of Manila Bulletin: *"Under the National Action Plan, will the government deploy more troops to assist with medical care, build temporary hospitals, deliver food and enforce quarantine? How much budget is allocated to implement this program? Will the government expand the strict quarantine rules if disease outbreak escalates outside Luzon?"*

CABSEC NOGRALES: Iyong pag-deploy ng Armed Forces of the Philippines to help, obviously we need all the manpower, all the warm bodies, all the extra hands that we can get 'no, lahat ng resources siyempre. So lahat po iyan titingnan natin, kaya nga it's really a matter of resource management. Titingnan natin anong resources ang kinakailangan, tapos kung may gaps diyan, then we will know – o sige sa gap na ito, sinong puwedeng mag-fill in.

So, puwede bang mag-fill in ang AFP dito, puwede bang mag-fill in ng reservist dito, puwede bang mag-fill in ang mga volunteers dito. So it's really a resource management, programming the resources and looking for anong resources ang kailangan, saan ang gaps and then filling up the gaps. So we have to work very fast and we have to think very fast and we have to decide very fast 'no. So speed talaga is key here sa laban na ito.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, from Sam Medenilla of Business Mirror. Ilan pong BPOs and export oriented firms ang nakapag-submit ng alternative work arrangement before March 22, deadline? I-allow na po ba iyong mga nakapag-submit to continue their operations for the duration of the Enhanced Community Quarantine. Pangalawa, may desisyon na po ba ang IATF on the proposal of PAGCOR to lift the suspension in the operations of POGOs, electronic junkets and VIP gambling?

SEC. NOGRLAES: Doon sa first question, that is something that better answered by Secretary Mon Lopez of DTI. But he has been on top of that, on top of the situation from day 1. So, mas maigi siguro si Sec. Mon ang sasagot diyan. On the second questions – no, we have not been discussing POGOs or anything about POGOs sa IATF. It's still prohibited.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, follow up from Sam, may estimate na po ba ang government sa impact of COVID-related quarantine sa revenue collection of the government for the first quarter?

SEC. NOGRLAES: Wala pa. Hindi pa, or at the very least, I know our economic managers are doing their estimates on that. But it hasn't been reported to the IATF yet. So, the economic team, the economic cluster is...they have been doing their part naman in this war against COVID-19. So, they are doing their jobs naman po as far as economic assessment on the impact of COVID-19, at ano iyong mitigation efforts. Tapos nire-report na lang po nila sa amin iyong mga programs and policies na puwede naming gawin to mitigate any adverse economic impact ng COVID-19 sa ekonomiya ng bansa.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, may follow up si Joyce Baancio on DZMM on POGOs. Na-discuss na ba iyong recommendation ng PAGCOR na puwedeng payagan na iyong gambling arrangements na puwedeng mag-run from home and if yes ano daw po iyong guidelines sa kanila?

SEC. NOGRILAES: Wala, hindi namin—as far as IATF is concerned, bawal pa o iyong POGO at any form has not yet been—bawal pa, prohibited pa and we have not discussed any other alternative whatever, it's not in the table.

ASEC. ARCENA: From Pia Gutierrez of ABS-CBN. Many establishments are still implementing no mask, no entry policy, paano iyong walang pambili ng mask? May mga establishment din daw are refusing entry to people without Barangay Quarantine Pass, eh hindi naman daw lahat ay nagi-isyu ng Barangay Quarantine Pass?

SEC. AÑO: I will answer the question. Number one, at this stage, talagang advisable talaga ay naka-mask ang ating mga tao at dapat 6 feet na iyong ating social distancing. But it should not be a requirement. Kung walang mask, as long as naka-social distancing, dapat i-accommodate iyan. Dito rin sa mga supermarket, palengke, I'm advising all the LGUs to lift the window hours for marketing or buying because kapag naglagay ka ng window hours kinukumpol-kumpol mo lang iyong mga tao lalo. So, it should be a 12 hours and observed strictly iyong social distancing – so dapat ganoon.

Iyong Barangay Quarantine Pass, there is no hard rule, mayroong LGU na nag-iisyu at mayroon ding hindi, as long as nako-control nila iyong movement ng kanilang constituents. This is a good control measure actually, pero kung ito naman ay magpo-force sa mga tao na pipila at pupunta doon sa Barangay, hindi rin ito advisable. May ibang LGUs na hinahatid iyong quarantine pass sa bawat bahay ay okay iyon. Sapagkat hindi na nagkakaroon ng reason for people to get out. But with or without quarantine pass ang tao ay dapat payagang bumili ng pagkain kapag siya ang representative ng pamilya para sa pagkuha ng pagkain.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, follow up from Pia Gutierrez, pakitanong din po, what they intend to do with stand-off between LGUs and OWWA who are transporting OFWs repatriated from various countries. OFWs need to observed 14-day self-quarantine, but since no domestic flight s they are unable to leave the Luzon, so, OWWA looking for facilities to house them temporarily. Some LGUs where these facilities are located don't want to accept, unless DILG gives a written order.

SEC. AÑO : Yes, we are working out, we are working with the OWWA sa mga arriving OFWs natin. Ang sinasabi natin sa OWWA na find a place, if you found place and then inform us and then we will help you negotiate with the LGU to allow the quarantine of our arriving OFWs. Okay naman, mayroong mga initially ay siyempre, alam mo naman, if you are a local chief executive of your town, your first tendency really is to protect your own people and there are a lot of people coming from outside, siyempre, hangga't maari ayaw mo. But kapag makausap natin and it is really a patriotic duty to help our fellow Filipinos, pumapayag naman sila. Now, kung mayroon pag ibang LGUs, then DILG will step in and we will resolve any issue.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, sir. From Tricia Terrada of CNN Philippines. Since pirmado na iyong Bayanihan Act automatic na o ba iyong declaration of state of national emergency o kailangan pa po ba ng formal declaration from Malacañang?

SEC. NOGRALES: Sa reading ko kasi, state of national emergency is hereby declared over the entire country. So, iyan ang binigay ng Kongreso, ito ang pinirmahan ni Pangulo. So it's already

a common policy between Congress and the executive that we are now under a state of a national emergency – the entire country.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, from Vanz Fernandez of Police Files. For Secretary Año . Alam n'yo po ba na may mga pili lang po ang binibigyan ng kapitan namin ng mga groceries, pare-pareho lang naman kami na apektado ng COVID-19 na iyan, lalo na iyong mga nanay naming senior, may sakit pa, dapat priority po nila iyon, dahil may sakit, tapos kami wala ding trabaho iyong mga kapitbahay nabigyan, kami hindi. Ang unfair naman po yata, dapat magiging fair sila, tao din naman po kami. Nagpa-picture sila after mabigyan, after mabigyan kaya lang po hindi lahat mayroon kahit bigas lang po.

SEC. AÑO: Hindi tama iyan, iyan iyong tinatawag nating epal na mga Barangay Captain, i-report ninyo sa amin ang pangalan, anong Barangay, aaksiyunan natin iyan. At saka hindi rin requirement iyong voters ID na para bigyan ka ng quarantine pass o bigyan ka ng food assistance. Malayo pa ang eleksiyon, kalimutan ninyo ang eleksiyon. But what you are doing now will be the basis of the people whether you will be elected or not in the next election. Tandaan ninyo iyan!

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir from Cris Crismundo of Philippine News Agency. Anong take ng government sa Avigan, are we considering to import Avigan and follow up na rin about the test kits developed by UP. How the government will support this home-developed test kits?

SEC. NOGRALES: Iyong sa UP if I am not mistaken, they are already doing field implementation. So, from field trial, nasa field implementation na po sila and If I am not mistaken, iyong field implementation is I think they are ready to do field implementation at 26,000. Iyan ang alam kong plano, I don't know if they have actually done it already. Kasi from field trials, they go to the next level which is field implementation. I think the best person to ask there would be the DOST.

ASEC. ARCENA: Follow up, sir some studies said that multiple lockdown in the next 18 months is possible to get the crisis under control. If this will continue, are we looking at extended lockdown or lifting the lockdown so that government will impose another rounds of lockdown in the coming months?

SEC. NOGRALES: I think we take it one day at the time, masyado pang maaga pa iyan. I think instead of looking at that. I think we should really have to concentrate on social distancing measure, kung ano iyong nasa guidelines na, mag-cooperate na tayo, so dito muna tayo focus muna tayo at the task on hand. Saka na natin isipin iyan. Anyway, we have been very transparent naman in terms of the infection rate, iyong mga na-infect, iyong mga positive cases. So mismo, kayo mismo nakikita ninyo iyong numero at in your own minds naa-asses ninyo iyong situation yourselves. So, kami rin we do the same thing with all of the experts – epidemiologist, department of Health and we are looking at all the aspects siyempre of governance.

Kaya one day at the time.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, from DWIZ. Joefel Peleño: More than two weeks na lamang po ay magtatapos na ang one month implementation ng Enhanced Community Quarantine. Kakayanin po ba sir, na ma-contain ang virus sa loob ng nalalabing mahigit dalawang lingo.

SEC. NOGRALES: Kaya nga po we are doing everything that we can, hopefully with this law passed and with the set up now, and then following the new action plan, then we can double up our efforts even more, we can get more people and more resources, we can mobilize more people and more resources. Tingnan po natin, we will take it one step at a time.

ASEC. ARCENA: For Usec. Vergeire from Aileen Taliping of Abante, may isang hospital po sa lungsod ng Maynila kinukulang na ng health workers dahil halos naka-quarantine na silang lahat. Ano po ang magagawa ng DOH, para maalalayan ang hospital, para maasikaso ang mga COVID patient na naka-confine doon.

USEC. VERGEIRE: Yes, Ma'am. Mayroon po tayong mga mina-mapa na ngayon kung ilan ang mga apektado nating healthcare workers sa bawat hospital na mayroon tayo, both public and private in the whole country. Mayroon na rin tayo ngayong inilunsad na voluntary program for the health workers na gustong tumulong sa ating gobyerno para mabigyan natin ng lunas o matugunan natin iyong kakulangan—

ASEC. ARCENA: May isa pang tanong from Tina Mendez from Philippine Star.

TINA MENDEZ/PHIL. STAR: Sir, sa section 4, letter H: On the power given to the President to direct the operation of any privately owned hospitals and medical facilities, etc. – at what point can the government take over the operation of these privately owned hospitals?

SEC. NOGRALES: Siguro, we will rely on the experts on the ground – DOH will make and our task group on response, task group on resource. And then they will report either directly to the President or they will seek guidance from the IATF and then magde-decide ang Pangulo. Because it's just really a matter of iyong resources and then iyong situation on the ground, obviously, you will need to—ano iyong word na ginamit? Hindi “takeover” eh, tinanggal na iyong—

TINA MENDEZ/PHILIPPINE STAR: Direct the operation.

SEC. NOGRALES: You will need to direct the operation. You will need to direct the operation when you need the resource so, it's a need basis.

SEC. AÑO: Gradually, ay ia-apply na natin iyan. Like for example, initially, kailangan nating i-house iyong mga frontline health workers natin malapit sa ospital. So, iyan naman ay kasama sa priority natin para hindi na nagko-commute iyong ating mga frontliners, diyan na sila malapit sa vicinity ng hospital.

Secondly, of course, we are accounting our PUIs na naghihintay ng test result. Dapat sa mga ito ay hindi talaga—I mean, dapat isolate muna ito so, probably we will start looking with the IATF's effort, facilities where we can put PUIs and probably even asymptomatic positive cases para maihiwalay na sila.

Not necessarily hotel ito, puwede itong arena, gymnasium, iyong mga ganoong klaseng facilities so, para hindi na sila makapanghawa. So, progressively ay—we will use that provision of the law of course, based on the assessment and recommendation of the IATF to the President.

TINA MENDEZ/PHILIPPINE STAR: Sir, iyong resources meaning iyong doctors puwedeng hiram, i-deploy sa ibang hospital o quarantine areas -- anong ibig sabihin noon sir?

SEC. AÑO: That's why gumawa na tayo ng National Action Plan. Iyong IATF which is actually in charge of policy making, iyong mag-iimplement niyan, ito na ang National Task Force COVID. So, diyan sa response, dalawa ang main job diyan: iyong health response at saka public order. So, doon na iyong kung kinakailangan natin nang mag-focus, concentrate ng resources at ng manpower sa ganito.

So, mayroon na tayo ngayong tinatawag na mga task group na magpapatupad ng mga policies na inilabas ng IATF, kasama na rin iyan kung based on our assessment kailangan na natin even our reservist tatawagin na natin, so para makapagdagdag ng maraming doktor.

TINA MENDEZ/PHILIPPINE STAR: Sir, right now there are at least three or four private hospitals who announced they cannot anymore accept COVID patients – full capacity.

SEC. AÑO: Full na sila.

TINA MENDEZ/PHILIPPINE STAR: Anong relevance nitong provision na ito kapag gagamitin ng Pangulo? Ipu-push ba silang mag—anong puwedeng gawin?

SEC. AÑO: Sabi nga—siguro ang makakasagot ay si Usec. Rosette. Pero in this times kasi kailangan na natin ng stricter implementation nitong mga response natin, like for example nga, iyong pag-designate ng COVID hospitals dadagdagan na natin siguro iyon kung kinakailangan kasi kung tumataas—so, diyan papasok iyong ating response—task group response.

Now for hospitals, ang makakasagot talaga niyan ay ang DOH kung papaano iyong strategy nila, tutulong lang kami kung papaano i-implement iyon.

ASEC. ARCENA: Siguro tanungin natin si Usec. Vergeire – Usec?

USEC. VERGEIRE: With regard to this [SIGNAL FADE] which have [SIGNAL FADE] announced that they have [SIGNAL FADE] capacity, specifically I think three or four hospitals already did that. Unang-una po, tayo po alam po natin ang sitwasyon ng ating mga private hospitals because when the surge noong mga pasyente po, noong tumaas ang mga kaso – nag-umpisa, talagang flinak (flocked) po ang ating mga private hospitals.

So, now we are announcing and we are encouraging all of those Filipinos na mayroon po--iyong mga kababayan po natin na may mga sintomas ngayon, severe, belonging to vulnerable group, puwede po kayong pumunta sa ating mga government hospitals. Equally capable po ang ating mga gobyernong ospital, mayroon pa ho tayong mga kuwarto doon.

Hintayin lang po natin na ma-stabilize po natin itong ating mga numero ng mga nagpupunta sa ospital at hintayin din po natin na maipapatupad natin ang pagbubukas ng referral hospitals natin. Hopefully, by the end of the week or over the weekend, para ma-funnel po natin ang mga pasyente, eventually ma-decongest ang mga ospital.

Ngayon po, dito po sa mga pag-uutos ng ating Presidente regarding this new Republic Act, diyan po natin pag-uusapan together with other national agencies kung paano natin to better direct our private hospitals kung ano po ang mga dapat na maitulong nila sa atin. Ngunit mayroon na po tayong pagpupulong sa kanila, constant coordination kung saan tinutulungan nila tayo. Ang kanilang commitment kapag na-funnel na lahat ng mga pasyente or most of the patients sa ating mga referral hospitals, sila naman po ang tatanggap ng mga non-COVID patients. Sila po ang tatanggap ng mga serbisyong hindi na naisagawa dito sa referral hospitals natin kasi po naging COVID-19 hospital na sila.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Hi, Usec., magandang hapon po. Follow-up lang po. Kasi kanina na-confirm na that Senator Pimentel is COVID-19 positive and may kumakalat din po sa social media na prior to that, mukhang he visited an OB doon sa isang hospital because understandably his

wife is about to give birth and considering that he's already a PUI – nagkaroon po ba ng violation doon si Senator?

USEC VERGEIRE: Wala kaming nare-received pa na information about the chronology or the history of his whereabouts, when he was declared a patient under investigation. I'm not really sure o or it is accurate to say that he was PUI or PUM? Did he exhibit symptoms during the time that he went to the hospital? Was it really that he was classified as a PUM when he interacted daw po, direct close contact, to this doctor when he went to that hospital? We need to find out all of these things for us to be able to give you an accurate answer. But for now, we will have this verified and we will be responding to you in the next days, kapag nakuha na po natin ang information.

Q: Usec. Do we have figures lang po as to how many PUIs and PUMs we have nationwide.

USEC. VERGEIRE: Sa ngayon po, we will receive the information by 4:00 pm, what we have right now is what we had yesterday We already have about 6,000 PUMs - Persons Under Monitoring, and about 2,800 patients under investigation. So in total, if we look at those two numbers, we are basically monitoring about almost 9,000 persons already.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, Usec. Vergere. Clarification, iyong tanong ni Vanz Fernandez ay galing daw po ito sa—pinapatanong ng netizen. Okay, last two questions from Cath Valente of Manila Times. Kailan daw po magte-take effect ang Bayanihan Law and when can the people get the amelioration benefits and how?

SEC. NOGRALES: I think, it says here immediately upon publication eh. So, since napirmahan na ito ni Pangulo I would think that it should be published today, if not tomorrow and then upon its publication it's immediately effective. Iyong sa social amelioration gaya ng sinabi ko, mayroon namang huling pasada, may last pass lang po today na ginagawa ng technical working group, then tomorrow magpipirmahan na daw tomorrow, sabi ni Sec. Año, then they will present to the IATF then we'll launch immediately.

ASEC. ARCENA: Kailan daw sir, maibibigay iyong cash aid sa mga tao?

SEC. NOGRALES: Iyong cash aid, that's – again ayaw kong pangunahan iyong pipirma ng JMC – but based doon sa presentation kasi sa amin sa IATF kahapon, I think ang uunahin nga muna is the food assistance first and then iyong cash aid to follow.

ASEC ARCENA: Sir, from Raquel Bayan of Radyo Pilipinas. Tama po ba na hindi bibigyan ng food assistance ang barangay na isang residente na nagrerenta lamang o kalilipat lamang sa community.

SEC. AÑO: Dito sa pagbibigay ng assistance, wala naman tayong pipiliin dito, kung kaya ng resources, bigyan natin iyong ating mga kababayan kahit iyan ay hindi tagariyan. Kasi hindi pupuwede naman na dahil hindi siya—kasi may mga instance 'no, itong tao ay nagwo-work sa ganitong lugar, pero nakatira sa ganitong barangay, pero inabutan na siya ng lockdown dito. So, hindi na siya umuwi sa barangay pakainin pa rin natin iyon. Mayroon tayong resources ibigay natin sa ating mga tao.

ASEC. ARCENA: Sir, follow-up from Tricia Terrada of CNN Philippines. Will all of these refusals of hospitals to accept patients trigger government take-over of private medical facilities under extra powers law?

SEC. NOGRALES: Nasa batas naman po iyan. Of course, we don't want to use those powers. Hindi naman iyan take over no, iyong direct lang, iyong direct the operations of, iyon lang ang nakalagay diyan. But obviously we need all the resources we can get. At lahat naman makukuha sa pakikipagusap eh, hindi naman ito immediately papasok ang gobyerno, hindi naman po ganyan ang gobyerno. Makikipag-ugnayan, makikipag-usap po tayo! Alam ko naman na ang mga Pilipino matulungin, lahat ng ating mga kababayan. We are all here to help, lahat gutong tumulong!

So, I don't think there will be a problem. Itong nakalagay sa batas, this is just in case, nilalagay lang natin diyan, just to emphasize the urgency. But kilala ko ang mga Pilipino, tayo lahat – everybody wants to help. Lahat tayo nagsasama-sama sa laban na ito, sa digmaan na ito. Kaya hindi naman siguro kailangang pumunta pa doon. Everybody wants to help. Lahat po gustong tumulong, so magtulungan na lang po tayong lahat.

ASEC. ARCENA: Okay, sir iyan po iyong huling katanungang. May panghuling mensahe po ba kayo, Secretary Nograles and Secretary Año ?

SEC. NOGRALES: Siguro I join Secretary Año and the rest of the team na again, emphasizing na tayong mga Pilipino, tayo ang magkakampi dito, lahat tayo magkakampi dito kontra at laban sa COVID-19. Sa digmaang ito ang gusto lang nating talunin iyong COVID-19, hindi ang isa't-isa, lahat po tayo magtulungan, lahat po tayo magsama-sama.

Iyong frontliners po natin nandyan po sila naka-set up na po sila, our frontliners are doing their best. Sa mga frontliners po natin, iyong mga Bayani po, mga tunay na bayani ng bansang Pilipinas. Huwag po kayong mag-alala nandito kami para suportahan, para tulungan kayo. Alam namin, we are constantly monitoring lahat ng ginagawa ninyo at gumagawa kami ng hakbang para matulungan kayo, in terms of resources, in terms of manpower, in terms of equipment.

Concentrate on saving lives, kami na lang po ang bahalang maghanap ng paraan na masuportahan po kayong lahat. At iyong hindi naman po frontliners, the contribution that you can give in this war against COVID-19 stay at home, huwag mag-spread ng fake news, suportahan natin ang lahat ng nagsasakripisyo para dito. Give your sacrifice also, stay at home. Bahay muna, buhay muna iyan po ang panawagan namin sa inyong lahat. Maraming salamat po and God bless us all.

SEC. AÑO: Well, first gusto ko lang magpasalamat sa ating mga Senators and Congressmen sa pagpasa ng Bayanihan Act. In just one day naipasa nila iyong batas, napatunayan nila na kaya pala talaga kapag nagkakaisa at para sa kabutihan ng bansa. So, talagang I really praised our Senators and Congressmen for really a job well done.

Tapos of course we salute our health workers, our frontliners. We will do everything to support you, so that you can do your job at sa ating mga police, sundalo na nagma-man sa mga checkpoints, sumasaludo rin ako sa inyo at sa ating mga Local Government officials, ang ating mga Governors, Mayors, Barangay Captain.

Maraming bina-bash pero gawin niyo lang iyong trabaho ninyo and we will save this country. And of course our national government na talagang since day one ay nandito na and for our countrymen and women just do your patriotic act – stay at home. No more no less, just stay at home. And God bless us all.

ASEC. ARCENA: Thank you, Secretary Año, thank you Secretary Nograles at kay Usec. Vergeire; Maraming salamat, Malacanang Press Corps.

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