

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
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PRESS BRIEFING OF MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ
WITH DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY JAIME BAUTISTA,
DOTR UNDERSECRETARY FOR AVIATION AND AIRPORTS ATTY. ROBERTO LIM
AND CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
DIRECTOR GENERAL CAPT. MANUEL ANTONIO LARA TAMAYO
OCTOBER 28, 2024 [10:18 A.M. – 10:38 A.M.]

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Magandang umaga, Malacañang Press Corps, and welcome sa ating press briefing ngayong araw, October 28.

Earlier, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. witnessed the signing of the Laguindingan International Airport Public-Private Partnership Concession Agreement. Sa loob ng 30-year na concession period, inaasahan na tutugunan ng proyektong ito ang capacity storage ng Laguindingan Airport. This will also increase the number of million passengers per annum from 1.6 million to 3.9 million in Phase 1, and from 3.9 million to 6.3 million in Phase 2.

Para bigyan pa tayo ng detalye tungkol sa proyektong ito, kasama natin sina Department of Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista; Undersecretary Roberto Lim; and Capt. Manuel Tamayo, Director General of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines. Good morning, gentlemen.

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Good morning. Today is a significant milestone in our endeavor to improve air connectivity with the signing of the concession agreement for the Laguindingan International Airport Public-Private Partnership Project.

Since its opening in 2013, Laguindingan Airport has served as the main gateway for Northern Mindanao. We expect Laguindingan's transformation after Aboitiz InfraCapital takes over the airport operations and maintenance.

This privatization project coming closely after last month's successful turnover of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to a private concessionaire forms part of our program of airport upgrade and expansion while enhancing passenger experience.

Aboitiz InfraCapital will expand Laguindingan's capacity from 1.6 million passengers annually to 6.3 million passengers per annum.

Like other airport development projects, Laguindingan's transformation should promote regional growth, generate jobs and livelihood and create investment opportunities. This PPP project came to fruition with the International Financial Corporation or IFC of the World Bank Group providing us advisory services on how best to privatize this airport.

This endeavor highlights the immense potential of PPPs in driving innovation and infrastructure development. This partnership with Aboitiz InfraCapital not only taps private sector expertise but also ensures delivery of quality public service.

Let us draw inspiration from this second successful airport privatization project to advance our nation's infrastructure development.

Thank you and good morning.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Secretary Bautista. Shall we hear from Undersecretary Lim?

DOTR USEC. LIM: Good morning. The PPP program is a cornerstone policy of the government as a strategy to accelerate the infrastructure or development of airports and other sectors. So we are delighted that with this clear policy, the implementing agencies such as DOTr, in partnership with the PPP center and other relevant agencies, have been able to fast-track these projects that will bring connectivity, trade, commerce to our archipelagic nation.

So we expect to have more of this before the end of the year and additional projects for 2025. Thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Undersecretary. And now, let's hear from Director General Tamayo.

CAAP DG TAMAYO: Good morning, everyone. Indeed, this is a milestone for us, especially CAAP. As you all aware, we are supposed to be regulators of the so many airports that we have in the country. And with the PPP, slowly operations of airports will be moved out of CAAP itself so that we can concentrate on our primary mission of regulation and safety.

So private sector will develop this, it's quicker, and as what was mentioned by Secretary and Usec. Bobby, there will be other airports to follow. We definitely will partner with them, especially in expanding the routes to restore the regional or international flights to Laguindingan. It has a lot of potential. The runways are properly built and still can serve and we can, perhaps, expand these later on to include the wide-body aircraft. But this point in time, single-aisle aircrafts are sufficient and these are the types of equipment that are being used not only by our domestic airports but our partners within the region.

So with that, I'd like to say that we wish Aboitiz good luck and we hope we can improve the services for the good of the country.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you and let's open the floor to questions. Eden Santos, NET 25.

EDEN SANTOS/NET25: Good morning po, Secretary. Tatal nabanggit po iyong international flight, so mayroon po down the road na kasama sa plano na magkaroon ng direct flight sa Laguindingan from other countries para hindi lamang po iyong local economies iyong mag-flourish? Mayroon po bang plano for direct flight?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Actually, iyong privatization will lead to making this airport as an international airport. So with the implementation of this PPP project, magkakaroon ng mga international flights dito and we will request Philippine carriers to fly out of Laguindingan to other Asian countries, and we will also request the other airlines of other countries to fly to Laguindingan 'no. So ang objective talaga is to make this as a regional, international airport.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Maricel Halili, TV5.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Hi, sir. Magandang umaga po. Sir, paano makakaapekto itong proyekto na ito sa terminal fees? Will there be changes?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Sa ngayon, wala muna 'no. Pero dahil ang private sector will invest billions of pesos 'no, magkakaroon ng maliit na increase doon sa mga terminal fees para naman ma-recover nila iyong investments that they will put into the project.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Sir, what's our estimate and kailan kaya possible na maramdaman natin iyong adjustment on fees?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Iyong adjustment on fees, hindi naman kaagad i-implement iyan; kailangan magkaroon muna ng improvements doon sa service na gagawin ng operator. In fact, we're looking at, siguro at least a year after. Katulad dito sa Manila International Airport, iyong passenger service charge or terminal fee will increase after one year pa.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Sir, pahabol lang po. Kanina it was mentioned during the event na iyong next target is Bohol. Mayroon po ba tayong ina-eye na other airports?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Right now, we are working on the unsolicited proposals for Bohol-Panglao International Airport. Iyong Swiss challenge period will end November 11 for the Bohol-Panglao International Airport.

We are also looking at the privatization of the Iloilo International Airport. We're working closely with a possible concessionaire. In fact, natapos na iyong aming negotiation 'no, and we will just need to get NEDA approval for this project.

We're also working for a possible solicited PPP for the Davao International Airport. In fact, a few weeks ago, we signed a transaction advisory services agreement with International Finance Corporation for them to assist us in preparing the terms of reference for the privatization of the Davao International Airport.

We're also working with the PPP Center for the privatization and operation, maintenance and operation of Kalibo International Airport.

So we're also working with ADB for privatization of possible seven to fifteen more airports in the country.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Alvin Baltazar, Radyo Pilipinas.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary, magandang umaga po. Secretary, magkano po iyong magiging share ng government dito sa Laguindingan habang nasa loob pa siya ng 30-year agreement?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Si Usec. Bobby will respond to that.

DOTR USEC. LIM: So, we have fixed payments of about 47 million for the first year and in subsequent years, it will be growing. And then we have a revenue share of 3% of gross revenues. We expect to receive 3.766 billion over the concession period. That is the expected revenue for this project.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: I-follow-up ko na lang, Secretary, Usec., kanina nabanggit ni Pangulo iyong kinakailangan on track iyong iba pang mga transport projects natin, Secretary. To name a few, for this year, ilan pa iyong kinakailangang ma-complete doon sa sinasabi ng Pangulo na kinakailangan on track iyong projects natin?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: This year, aside from itong mga airport projects na tinitingnan natin, we are expecting the start of operations of LRT line-1 extension. Tinitingnan namin na magkaroon ng additional service dito sa Line-1 for additional five more stations. And we are looking at the middle of November for the start of operations noong Line-1 extension.

We are also looking at the possibility of awarding the Bohol-Panglao International Airport, nabanggit natin kanina na iyong end noong Swiss challenge niya will be November 11. So, malaman natin if there will be a challenger, medyo magtatagal iyong award natin. But if there will be no challenger, posible na we can award this, before the end of the year.

We are also looking at awarding or giving the project for the start of the Cebu International Container Terminal. This is a project funded by the Korean Exim. Tapos na iyong procurement namin dito and we will do the notice of award in a few weeks. And siguro iyong agreement, we can sign before the end of the year also.

We are also looking at the possibility of inaugurating or do the groundbreaking for the Taguig International Exchange Terminal, ito iyong parang iyong PITX dito sa Parañaque na magkakaroon tayo ng another terminal sa Taguig and we are hoping to do this also before the end of the year.

Q: Secretary, good morning. What is the status of the airports in the country after the Typhoon Kristine po?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Right now, all airports are operational. Wala namang mga major damages na nangyari doon sa mga airports natin. And, so far, lahat ito ay operational. There were a few flights that were cancelled from October 21 until the other day. Although all affected passengers were assisted by the airport authorities and the airlines themselves. So, so far, hindi tayo nagkaroon ng major problem sa mga airport natin during the onslaught of typhoon Kristine.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Ivan Mayrina, GMA-7.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Related question, Secretary. Itanong ko rin po iyong status ng sea and land travel, particularly in the CALABARZON and Bicol Region?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Sa mga sea ports natin ngayon, so far, open na lahat ng sea ports natin. Nagkaroon ng mga minor damages doon sa a few airports natin. The report that I got from GM Jay Santiago, is that we are estimating around 100 to 110 million pesos damages doon sa mga sea ports natin. Sa Batangas, maliit, there are more that 100 sea ports that were affected by Typhoon Kristine, mga minor damages, but total, aabutin din ng mga almost a hundred million iyong mga damages, which is PPA is now working on to do the repair.

Ang maraming naapektuhan na mga pasahero natin ay iyong doon sa, dito sa Sorsogon, iyong ating sea port from Sorsogon to Allen. Hanggang ngayon medyo mahaba pa rin iyong pila ng mga sasakay doon sa RoRo from Matnog to Allen. But, we are working closely with all the authorities, so that mapadali iyong pagbiyahe nung mga sasakyan.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Do we have an estimate, Secretary, kung ilang araw bago magbalik normal iyong biyahe natin lalo iyan sa mga RoRo?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Sa ngayon, hindi pa natin masabi kung ilang araw, kasi nag LTO just issued a memorandum, informing mga buses, bus operators po sana na huwag munang magbiyahe doon sa Bicol, lalung-lalo na iyong pupunta doon sa Matnog, dahil napakahaba pa nung queue. In fact, kanina, I heard a radio report na almost 30 kilometers daw iyong pila nung mga sasakyan doon.

Kaya we are encouraging iyong mga bus operators na siguro i-monitor iyong situation doon before allowing their buses to ply to those destinations.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Ito pong week na ito, Undas, traditionally, peak po ito ng travel. Are we advising the public na siguro i-defer na muna nila pagbibiyahe nila?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Mayroon naman tayong alternative modes of transportation, iyong mga biyahe ng Cebu, iyong mga gustong magbiyahe ng by boat or by ship going to the Visayas, puwede sila via Batangas, kasi mayroong mga RoRo service from Batangas going to Caticlan or from Batangas to Mindoro, to Roxas and Bulalacao. And mayroon ding Roro from that place going to Caticlan. And from there, puwedeng magbiyahe iyong mga buses going to Iloilo and even to Bacolod and Cebu.

Ang Department of Transportation, together with the other attached agencies ang CAAP, ang PPA, MIAA, ang Cebu International Airport, we are getting ready for the Undas biyahe. Mayroon kaming, every year, we have this Oplan Biyaheng Ayos, para sa ating mga mananakay. So, ready tayo, katulong din natin diyan ang Philippine Coast Guard.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay, Chona Yu, People's Journal.

CHONA YU/PEOPLES JOURNAL: Sir, quick follow-up on that. Ilang pasahero ang inaasahan nating dadagsa sa mga bus terminal, airports, sea ports for Undas?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Actually, millions iyong tinitingnan natin 'no. Every year naman, millions iyong estimate natin 'no. siguro iyong mga bus passengers lang natin, aabutin iyan ng mga 1 to 1.5 million passengers. Airports and sea ports, siguro easily iyan mga 3 million ang magbibiyahe.

Q: Secretary, mayroon po ba tayong mga inaabot na tulong doon sa mga—kasi sabi ninyo, 30 kilometers po iyong haba ng pila ng mga sasakyan sa papuntang Matnog and Allen, mga stranded, mayroon po ba tayong estimate kung ilan pa until now?

DOTR SEC. BAUTISTA: Ang mga local governments, ang DSWD are working together para matulungan itong mga pasahero na ito. Unfortunately, ang Department of Transportation, wala talaga kaming budget na pambigay doon sa mga affected passengers. But iyong other government agencies are helping the passengers.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay, no further questions. Well, thank you so much, Secretary Bautista, Undersecretary Lim and Director General Tamayo. Thank you Malacañang Press Corps. This concludes our press briefing.

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