

# PATAS AT MAKATARUNGANG PAHAYAGAN

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**MANILA** -- Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said the Philippines will continue to fortify its bilateral relationship with Singapore, which is commemorating its independence.

Speaking at the Reception of the 54th National Day of the Republic of Singapore on Wednesday night, Locsin conveyed President Rodrigo R. Duterte's warmest greetings to the government and people of Singapore for the celebration of their 54th National Day on August 9.

"We are filled with renewed inspiration to continue our work of forging ever-stronger ties with the most efficient state in the world, one that started with almost nothing, except for a surfeit of leadership material far more than the rest of Asia combined," Locsin said.

The 54th National Day of Singapore also marks the 50th year of the establishment of Philippines-Singapore diplomatic relations that began in 1969.

"It is my honor to celebrate with you the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Philippine - Singapore diplomatic relations. Since 1969 our countries have never wavered in our deep friendship, and fruitful cooperation, through good and challenging times," Locsin said.

Locsin also praised Singapore's success in its sustainable development, saying that the country "represents the very vision and aspiration of many nations."

"Time-lapse of Singapore would be awe-inspiring, from its origin as coastal settlements, to its magnificent skyline, [and] the remarkable expanse of green urban spaces today...And so it became what it is today, the embodied Asian

vision of what a country should be," Locsin said.

"Singapore harnessed its strengths, which were weaknesses elsewhere," Locsin added.

The country's top diplomat also discussed the West Philippine Sea and said that while it would take time before the issue can be resolved, the Philippines would push for stability in the region.

"Nothing will stand in the way of limitless progress, prosperity, and, I dare say, peace for our region," he said.

"For the good health of His Excellency Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Her Excellency President Halimah Yacob, to the happiness of the peoples of the Philippines and Singapore, and to our enduring friendship," Locsin said. (PR)

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## Listen to health experts on Dengvaxia revival: solon

**MANILA** -- Senator Pia Cayetano on Friday agreed with President Rodrigo Duterte's position to wait for the advice of health experts and doctors before considering the reintroduction of the controversial Dengvaxia vaccine in the country.

Cayetano made the statement after the Department of Health (DOH) declared a national dengue epidemic due to the alarming rise of the mosquito-borne disease.

"This is a technical and scientific matter that should be left to the health experts. The President (already) said he's listening to them, so let's give this time," Cayetano said in a television interview.

"Sana po huwag muna tayong mag-comment... Kasi litong-lito na ang mga tao (I hope we could refrain from commenting... because people are getting confused)," the senator said.

Cayetano said politicians should rather focus on discussing policies to ensure better access to health care services while public health specialists decide whether or not Dengvaxia should be used again or not.

"Sana po ang mga politicians (Hopefully, the politicians) --we just discuss policies. Our policy is we want to ensure the safety of the Filipino people. We want to ensure that they have access to [appropriate healthcare services]. The poor should also have access to whatever is available to the rich," she said.

President Duterte on Thursday said he is open to the use of Dengvaxia again, but admitted that he remains in a quandary whether or not to lift the ban on the use of Dengvaxia.

"Yes, I am open to the use of Dengvaxia again. Maraming patay na (Many died already), it's an epidemic," Duterte said in a media interview after an event in Malacañan Palace.

"Ako (me), I'd rather go on the side of science. If nobody would believe me, still I would say that if there is anything there in the Western medicine and even itong herbal ng mga (even this herbal of the) Oriental if it would mean saving people's lives, I'll go for it," he told the Palace reporters.

DOH Secretary Francisco Duque III on Tuesday declared a National Dengue Epidemic in the wake of 146,062 cases recorded since January to July 20 this year.

In February this year, DOH's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) permanently revoked the certificates of product registration issued to Dengvaxia over the failure of vaccine-maker Sanofi Pasteur to submit post-approval papers.

In 2017, the government stopped its dengue immunization program using Dengvaxia after Sanofi came out with advisory which said patients who had no prior exposure to dengue virus could suffer severe symptoms if vaccinated with Dengvaxia. (PNA)

## 18K FAMILIES AFFECTED BY MONSOON RAINS: NDRRMC

**MANILA** -- The Typhoon "Hanna"-enhanced southwest monsoon has affected 18,045 families or 72,802 persons in several regions.

Latest update from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said the affected families are in Regions I, III, and Region IV-B (Mimaropa).

In these regions, 16 houses were damaged, and around 553 families or 2,377 persons are being aided inside and outside 24 evacuation centers.

NDRRMC added that some PHP1.6 million worth of assistance has been provided to the affected families.

Meanwhile, a total of 2,335 individuals, 317 rolling cargoes, 36 vessels, and 20 motorbancas were reported stranded in Region IV-A (Calabarzon), Region IV-B and

Regions V and VII.

"Hanna" is now outside the Philippine Area of Responsibility but heavy rains will continue Friday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said in its latest severe weather bulletin. (PNA)



**“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and He will flee from you.” – James 4:7**