



PGC's HEALTH PROGRAMS ON THE GO: The Provincial government of Cavite once again takes its health programs on the go with the conduct of another medical and dental mission in Barangay Malagasang I-F, Imus City on November 9, 2019. A total of 396 patients were served of which 356 underwent medical consultations and 40 had tooth extraction performed by volunteer doctors and dentists from General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital and trained staff from the Office of the Provincial Governor-Extension. Punong Barangay Randy S. Lara and the residents warmly welcomed the mission team and extended their message of thanks to the governor for always providing free health services to the community. -- (PICAD)

Robredo may skip Cabinet meeting sans drug-related agenda: Palace

MANILA -- President Rodrigo Duterte believes it was unnecessary for Vice President Maria Leonor "Leni" Robredo to attend future Cabinet meetings, if drug problem is not among the matters to be taken up, Malacañang said on Thursday.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said the President's pronouncement would be for Robredo's convenience, since attending a Cabinet meeting would be time-consuming.

"We have a Cabinet meeting. We are invited by the CabSec (Cabinet Secretary) and we are asked if we are going or not. It's optional for us to attend because if it is not your topic there, you will have to stay there for the rest of the meeting until the wee hours of the morning," Panelo said in a Palace press briefing.

"Kung hindi ka naman kasama doon sa agenda, mas masaya

siguro kung hindi ka na-a-attend (If you cannot relate to the agenda, it would be better if you do not attend). That's why I said you should be thankful. Pumunta ka lang kung ano mo, topic mo (Just attend if the Cabinet meeting covers your topic)," he added.

Duterte and Robredo have yet to meet since the President appointed the Vice President as co-chairperson of the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Drugs (ICAD) last October 31.

As ICAD chair serving until the end of her term in 2022, Robredo holds a Cabinet rank, the second time under Duterte's watch. She once was part of the Cabinet as housing czar but resigned in December 2016 because of policy differences with Duterte.

Robredo failed to attend the Cabinet meeting on November 6 but held her first meeting with member-agencies of ICAD on November 8.

Panelo said Robredo would need to wait for the President's invitation to the next Cabinet meeting.

"Sabi ni Presidente (The President said), 'I will invite her myself,'" the Palace official said.

Meantime, Panelo said Robredo can still share her views about other issues not related to drug menace, in case she is not invited to the Cabinet meeting.

Panelo assured Robredo that she would not be stripped of her right to freedom of expression.

"It doesn't mean naman na (that) when you are not in Cabinet meeting, you cannot comment because there is a transcript on that and that is given to all members of the Cabinet," he said.

"If you feel like commenting on other topics, you can do that... How? Mag-issue ka ng statement o gumawa ka ng memorandum (Just issue a statement or a memorandum), address whomsoever you want," Panelo added. (PNA)

'Oplan Tokhang' stays but needs retooling

MANILA -- Vice President and anti-drug czar Leni Robredo agreed that Oplan Tokhang will remain in place but stressed the campaign must undergo a "retooling", the country's top cop said Thursday.

"We were able to convince her, meron lang (there is just) probably repackaging or retooling on how it's going to be presented pero (but) she is convinced that indeed the Philippine Anti-Drug Strategy (PADS) is already a strategy that can be adapted outright," Philippine National Police (PNP) officer-in-charge, Lt. Gen. Archie Gamboa told reporters on the sidelines of a gun show in Mandaluyong City.

Gamboa met with Robredo and other members of the law enforcement cluster of the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs (ICAD) to discuss the country's existing anti-drug strategy.

"It had become a byword kasi parang madali syang maalala, parang kantong usapan (it is easy to remember because it is like street language). She's also convinced that (Oplan) Tokhang does not mean anything bad. Tokhang came from a Visayan word, kung titingnan mo yun (if you will look into it), there's no killing in tokhang. That's it, letting the people feel the existence of strategy," Gamboa added.

Gamboa said the meeting with Robredo went well.

"She is convinced after studying the Tokhang, Double Barrel, Double Barrel Alpha Reloaded and now the community-based. 'All are in order,' were her exact words," Gamboa said.

Robredo, co-chair of the ICAD, noted that measuring success in the drug war and coming up with unified figures, Gamboa re-

vealed.

"It's a community-based (approach). (All of these are) geared towards the declaration of drug-free barangays. We all have one track in mind there and we agreed on these initial steps to move forward," he stressed.

According to Gamboa, Robredo had pointed out three things that need to be focused on the government's anti-illegal drugs campaign.

"Yung going forward, second is measuring success and coming up with unified figures. All of these things are addressed already by ICAD even before. It's just a matter of letting her understand that these things have already existed," Gamboa said.

On Robredo's seeking of the help of the United States (US), Gamboa said the PNP has been coordinating with the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

Gamboa proposed strict enforcement along borders to stop the shipment of illegal drugs into the country.

He also believes that the country's seeking intelligence information on illegal drugs from foreign counterparts is "essential."

"We are convinced that a lot of our drugs are coming from the outside," Gamboa added.

Earlier, Gamboa vowed to fully support Robredo particularly in briefing her about the law enforcement aspect of the anti-drug drive.

He also said the PNP is ready for any possible changes in the drug war after Robredo sought its reassessment.

He, however, said there is no need for the country's second-highest ranking official to join anti-illegal drug operations. (PNA)

aside from helicopters including the PN's two newly-acquired AW-159s which were delivered on May 7 of this year and commissioned only on June 17.

The two "Wildcat" helicopters will be deployed aboard the two Jose Rizal-class missile frigates now being completed by South Korean shipbuilder Hyundai Heavy Industries and scheduled for delivery in 2020.

The AW-159s were acquired for PHP5.4 billion including its munition, mission essential equipment and integrated logistic support.

The AW-159 (previously called the Future Lynx and Lynx Wildcat) is an improved version of the Westland Super Lynx military helicopter. The helicopter has been ordered for the Royal Navy and British Army.

It is capable of speeds of 291 km/h (181 mph), range of 777 km (483 miles), ferry range of 963 km (598 miles) and an endurance of one and a-half hours (four hours and 30 minutes if fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks).

The AW-159s can also be armed with rockets, machine guns, missiles, torpedoes and depth charges and fitted with modern sonar systems for tracking down submarines. (PNA)

SoKor torpedoes to beef up PH Navy's anti-sub capability

MANILA -- The Philippine Navy (PN) will now be more capable of tracking and neutralizing hostile submarines if needed, as part of efforts to secure the country's waters.

This as the South Korean-made LIG Nex1 "Blue Shark" lightweight torpedoes, which will serve as the primary weapon of the two Leonardo AW-159 "Wildcat" anti-submarine helicopters acquired by the Navy, are now in the country.

"It was delivered in accordance with the timeline of the project in support of the anti-submarine capability of the AW-159 (anti-submarine helicopters)," Navy public affairs office chief, Lt. Commander Maria Christina Roxas said in an interview Wednesday.

The torpedoes were delivered to the Philippines on July 18, 2019, she said.

Roxas, however, declined to give the specific numbers of the torpedoes delivered for the PN but said there are "sufficient in quantity".

The "Blue Shark" lightweight torpedoes are also capable of shallow and deepwater operations are capable of speeds up to 45 knots. It also weighs 290 kilograms, a diameter of 324mm and a length of 2,700mm.

It can also be fitted to aircraft and warships