

TALKING POINTS

Subject :

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Venue

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1. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests! Let me begin by extending my heartfelt gratitude to my friends Dindo and RP Manhit for giving me the honor of being allowed to speak.
2. When the Philippines was granted independence in 1946, the Filipinos were given a chance to build a country which they can call their own. It was a constant struggle. A lot of factors will come into play which greatly influence progress. One of which is the fact that there is a change of administration every 6 years and no guarantee of continuity of government priorities.
3. Fortunately, the country's economic growth has risen over the recent years and has created opportunities for the Philippines. We are given a good credit rating and the financial condition of the country was better. A manifestation of this is that the country can substantially invest in infrastructure which will create more opportunities for the country's development.
4. Over the past few years, government spending for transportation and public works has increased.

| | DOTr | Percentage | DPWH | Percentage | DOTr + DPWH | Percentage |
|------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 2010 | 16.577 B | 1.07% | 126.931 B | 8.2% | 143.508 B | 9.31% |
| 2013 | 34.185 B | 1.7% | 155.518 B | 7.75% | 189.703 | 9.46% |
| 2016 | 42.68 B | 1.42% | 384.287 B | 12.8% | 426.967 B | 14.22% |
| 2019 | 67.669 B | 1.80% | 549.390 B | 14.62% | 534.6 B | 16.42% |

5. Infrastructure is not limited to public roads and transportation. It also includes infrastructure for information and communication technology. Unfortunately, the country has one of the slowest internet speed years before. During the time of Pres. Duterte, there have been significant efforts, especially from the private sector, to improve on this.
6. The COVID-19 pandemic, unfortunately, is a setback that the whole world did not expect. It has created a global recession for economies that have not seen such downturn in years. For the Philippines, this means that lower government spending will be allotted for infrastructure.
7. How can we ensure that we can still continue to develop our country's need for infrastructure even if we are expecting less funding from the government? This is where we need help from the private sector.
8. I am of the opinion that for large scale projects which would develop infrastructure, the country should once again engage in Public-Private Partnerships or PPP. We can call it whatever brand the government may want to call it PPP, BBB, BOT as long as the model is the same since over the years, we have improved the implementing guidelines to bid out these projects with less or even no government cash out.

9. Some good examples of latest Public Private Partnerships are the Cavite Barge Terminal of ICTSI, LRT line 1 extension of Ayala and Metro Pacific, and CALAX of MPIC Tollways. In these projects, private companies worked hand in hand with the Transportation and Public Works department to give better infrastructure to the people.
10. The government needs to assess the “Build, Build, Build” program and encourage support from the private sector. We should consider investments that will score high in terms of performance, service to the public, and return on investment. Through this, we can still implement projects with a good economic impact though the country has limited funds.
11. I believe in the power of the private sector to boost our economy. After all, we have seen how the private sector assisted our government officials in building temporary facilities needed in fighting COVID-19. Moreover, I also believe that the private sector will continue to help as the country recovers from the effects of COVID-19.
12. Private sector investment can also support the *Balik Probinsya Program* of the government. PPP's can also be done for the Agriculture industry. Initiating a variety of projects will create more jobs in the regions which shall provide incentives for workers in Metro Manila to go back to the provinces.
13. This is not to say that we should abandon other ways to source funding. We can still welcome Official Development Assistance (ODA) from other countries but it should be need-based. To prevent the economy from collapsing, we should thoroughly evaluate if the country needs more loans.

14. On our part in the Legislative, particularly in the House Committee on Transportation, we have always taken a progressive stance. Our main general objective has always been plain: *to move this country forward*. I am very much willing to work closely with my partner in the Senate, Senator Grace Poe on legislation that can help the country improve its infrastructure.

15. I always believe in the importance of planning and creating a roadmap before initiating anything. Before implementation of projects are started, the government needs to identify the necessary infrastructure for each sector.

16. This is why we submitted in the 18th Congress House Bill No. 90 – An Act Providing for the Modernization of the Philippine Transportation Infrastructure, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and For Other Purposes which I hope Senator Grace can support.

17. The bill would require the DOTr to submit their transportation infrastructure plan which shall be reviewed by Congress. Congress shall also appropriate funding for the projects under the plan. Through this, we can ensure that even if there is a change in administration, the project would still continue.

18. We are also in the process of passing bills specifically for legislating all other infrastructure projects, such as those in tourism and other public works.

19. I am also in support of bills which strengthens PPPs. Currently, there are 5 bills pending in Congress that covers this filed by various authors.

- House Bill Nos. 77 (Salceda), 1244 (Villafuerte), 4873 (Rodriguez), 5452 (Roman), and 6575 (Garin) – An Act Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships and Appropriating Funds Therefor

20. I shall support policies which will make it easier for the private sector to implement the PPP projects, reduce unnecessary bureaucratic procedures, and prevent needless interruption during implementation of the projects.

21. On our part in the House of Representatives, particularly in the Committee on Transportation, we are one with our people in wanting nothing more than to move our country forward and onward. *Maraming salamat po.*

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