

PRESS RELEASE

Public and private sectors join forces to support logistics of COVID-19 vaccine program

17 DECEMBER 2020, MANILA— Over 700 individuals from key government and private sector partners registered for the COVID-19 Vaccine Logistics Summit on December 16 and expressed support for the Philippine government’s efforts to combat the pandemic through the national vaccine program.

To pool all government and private sector efforts together, Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases, National Task Force (NTF) on COVID-19, Department of Health, and a core group of companies composed of Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), AC Health, Unilab, and Zuellig Pharma hosted the country’s first-ever COVID-19 Vaccine Logistics Summit aimed at identifying critical gaps and challenges, learning from global experts, and building partnerships to strengthen strategies in preparation for the implementation of the vaccine program which is scheduled for the first quarter of 2021 according to NTF.

The morning session involved providing the latest vaccine developments at both international and local scenes from various experts including BCG Managing Directors and Partners Emily Serazin and Josh Kellar, McDonald’s Philippines Managing Director Margot Torres, Sprinklr APAC Head of Strategic Alliances Connor Hogan, Asian Development Bank Consultant Ankita Pandey, and International Air Transport Country Manager for the Philippines Samuel David.

Vaccines are now becoming available worldwide and while some of the developed countries like the UK and US have already begun their first roll-out of vaccination, the Philippines is now at the third of four stages of its COVID-19 National Vaccine Roadmap. In his presentation, Vaccine Czar Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr. stated that the country is nearing completion of its procurement process and financing and is now preparing the supply chain and distribution and deployment plan. Priority groups for the initial roll-out include health care workers, vulnerable persons, senior citizens, indigents, and poor communities.

Sec. Galvez also emphasized the coordination between the public and private sectors in responding to the pandemic. “In this summit, we see the coordination of all agencies and global organizations that really work together to fight COVID-19. This is very important for us to save lives and to recover the economy as well.”

Moreover, PDRF Chief Resilience Officer Guillermo Luz reiterated the need for a public-private partnership and for strong coordination. “This summit is all about recognizing our challenges, learning from experts, mobilizing our resources and assets, and coordinating across government, LGUs, and the private sector. This is a public-private partnership. We don’t think the government can do it alone. We don’t think the private sector can do it alone. This requires a very strong partnership as we have seen throughout the journey of T3 (Test, Trace, Treat) as we go from testing to distribution of supplies, PPEs, isolation, and treatment. Vaccination will be the same thing but even more complex,” he said.

The afternoon session was divided into three breakout sessions focused on different topics: Allocation and Administration, Distribution and Supplies, and Communications and Public

Uptake. Delegates exchanged ideas and discussed best practices and ways forward; representatives from the private sector also offered their services in the actual roll-out of the program.

The private sector can play a large role in the roll-out, particularly in administration, distribution, and communication. “But across each of the different pillars, there are still many things to consider such as the role of private hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and companies who can help recruit manpower. For distribution and supplies, we have various storage facilities and transportation; the role of security and IT providers. For communications and public uptake, there are many different roles for media agencies and publishers; we can tap social media platforms, telecom providers, and software solutions,” BCG Manila Principal Julian Cua said.

“Collaboration between the government and the private sector in the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines ensures the best use of trucks, airlines, hospitals, and other resources in one of the most complex logistics exercises ever,” PDRF President Butch Meily added.

NTF Deputy Chief Implementer Vince Dizon said that the challenges in this critical phase of COVID-19 response will be very daunting. “With our vaccine experts in the private and public sector, we can provide the most effective, safest vaccines on time. With our experts in logistics, we will be able to efficiently mobilize all their resources to get the vaccine down to the barangay level and in the most remote areas in the country. Finally, working with the private sector in our past communication efforts, we know we can change mindsets and beliefs and make our people embrace the safe, secure, and effective vaccines which are coming very soon,” he said.

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The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) is the country’s major private sector vehicle and coordinator for disaster resilience. As an alliance of businesses dedicated to building the disaster risk management capabilities of the private sector in the country, PDRF aims to contribute to the sustainable development and the general welfare of the Filipino people. For more information, visit www.pdrf.org.

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