



Palace: Duterte to push for federalism, rice tariffication in third SONA

by Virgil Lopez – July 19, 2018

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/661075/palace-duterte-to-push-for-federalism-rice-tariffication-in-third-sona/story/>

President Rodrigo Duterte is expected to call on Congress to approve the proposed federal charter and other measures such as rice tariffication in his third State of the Nation Address, Malacañang said on Thursday.

Duterte's spokesperson, Harry Roque, said the Palace will soon provide the media a list of legislative agenda to be submitted by the Executive Department to Congress.

Duterte has been pushing for a shift to a federal form of government as a means to address national economic and power imbalances as well as problems peculiar to his native Mindanao like underdevelopment and armed conflict.

Backed by Duterte, the draft prepared by the Consultative Committee headed by former Chief Justice Reynato Puno will go through scrutiny and possible revisions in Congress, acting as a constituent assembly, before it is presented for ratification through a plebiscite.

The government is also pushing for the amendment of Republic Act 8178 or the Agricultural Tariffication Act.

The National Economic and Development Authority said in May that replacing quantitative restrictions on rice imports with tariffs is expected to reduce local rice prices by as much as P4 per kilogram.

"This will bring down inflation and increase the purchasing power especially of the poor," the agency said.

Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Secretary Martin Andanar said Duterte will likely discuss the future plans of the administration and "staple" topics such as the war on drugs, criminality and poverty and peace talks with the communist rebels.

"But then again, iyan po ay depende sa ating Pangulo, kumbaga, adlib man siya o hindi. Kung ano po ang buod ng kaniyang talumpati ay hindi ko po masasabi sa inyo ngayon sapagkat mahirap po naman na ma-preempt po ang ating Pangulo," Andanar said in an interview on GMA News TV's "News To Go."

The Palace earlier said Duterte's speech on July 23 would not exceed 35 minutes.