



Rice subsidy for low, middle income families pitched by lawmaker

By Mel Matthew Doctor – June 27, 2022

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Amid the soaring prices of fuel and other basic products, Deputy House Speaker and Bagong Henerasyon Partylist Rep. Bernadette Herrera said the government should consider providing rice subsidies for poor to middle-income households.

According to Sandra Aguinaldo's report on "24 Oras" on Monday, Herrera said that there should be rice subsidies for purchases of 10 kilos up to 25 kilos depending on households' sizes.

"Economic forecasts indicate we will have high inflation for many more months until the inflation pressures have subsided," Herrera said.

"Expect added upward pressure on electricity, water, telecoms rates because of added forex adjustment costs," she added.

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies said those belonging to the middle class have a household income of P43,828 to P76,699 per month.

For his part, Senator-elect Raffy Tulfo said proposed subsidies should target minimum wage earners and those who live below the poverty line.

"Below middle class, ibig sabihin mga mahihirap, yes na yes. Doon tayo sa minimum wage earners o below minimum wage kasi sa ngayon, I think there are data na nakita ko, na 8 million Filipinos are still receiving below minimum wage," Tulfo said.

(Below middle class, which means the poor, of course yes. We are looking at the minimum wage earners or below minimum wage because right now, I think there is data that I saw, around 8 million Filipinos are still receiving below minimum wage.)

"Yun dapat ang targetin ng ating pamahalaan na mabigyan ng ayuda, yung mga nasa poverty line, huwag yung middle class. Middle class can take care of themselves," he continued.

(That should be the target of our government to give aid, those in the poverty line, not the middle class. Middle class can take care of themselves.)

According to the study of GMA News Research on the data from the government, middle class families comprised 49 million or 44.44% of the Philippine population.

Meanwhile, economist professor Emmanuel Leyco believed that Filipinos need help from the government because the world economy might slow down due to the pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war.

But instead of a rice subsidy, Leyco noted that financial assistance would be a better option.

He also insisted that it would ease the burden of Filipinos if collection of excise tax on oil products be halted.

“Ang ating ekonomiya ay pinaandar ng household spending kapag bumagal ang o humina ang purchasing power ng ating mga consumer, magiging dahilan yan sa pagbagsak o pagdausdos muli ng ating ekonomiya,” he added.

(Our economy is driven by household spending. When the purchasing power of our consumers slows down or weakens, that will cause our economy to collapse or slide again.)

President-elect Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. has earlier said that he would study suspending the collection of excise tax on petroleum products to mitigate the impact of fuel price hikes.