



Ties severed by election will take time to heal

THE aftermath of the Philippine national elections on May 9 prompted Adamson University in Manila to suspend classes from May 13 to May 16 in order to give students “the time to address post-election stress and take the time to reflect on their election experience,” according to a post signed by university President Marcelo V. Manimtim.

To manage election-related stress and to cope with frustration or guilt, psychiatrist Dr. Randy S. Dellosa recommended letting off steam with like-minded people.

“Avoid people with toxic behaviors that make you feel worse,” he said in a Viber message. “[You can also] create or join organizations with the same aspirations which your political candidate wanted to pursue.”

Elections are naturally stressful because of three factors, he added: the unpredictability of results, the agony of defeat, and the uncertainty of what happens after the electoral victors assume office.

“The stakes wagered is not money but expectations, hope, and emotions,” he said, noting that voters have a strong connection to their preferred political candidates because of their perception of these candidates being extensions of themselves.

“It may be because they come from the same region, or because the political candi-

date’s promises match the voter’s needs or hopes,” Dr. Dellosa told *BusinessWorld*. “On the other hand, many political candidates are expert manipulators who know how to create false rapport with the masses just to get themselves voted.”

Relationships have disintegrated in the heat of the political environment.

“People who have severed ties with friends and family due to differences in political opinions need time to heal from their emotional wounds,” said Dr. Dellosa.

Since healing takes time, he added, individuals can choose to either maintain minimal contact with the other person while keeping the interactions respectful, or avoid them — all the while having the openness of heart for reconciliation when one’s emotions have healed enough.

University Health Services at the University of California, Berkeley, also released a list of ideas for managing election-related stress ahead of the 2020 US national elections.

The suggestions include avoiding dwelling on things you can’t control, practicing gratitude for the people you feel grateful for, giving yourself permission to feel the way you do, staying active, and limiting your media consumption. — **Patricia B. Mirasol**

Decentralized healthcare to shorten waiting time

A DIGITAL-FIRST mindset is decentralizing the healthcare industry and delivering care to patients where they are, according to panelists at a conference hosted by Zoom about driving the future of virtual healthcare.

“The sources of consumers’ frustrations include long wait times, high healthcare costs. Against this backdrop, Asian consumers are fully embracing the digital era,” said Ricky Kapur, head of Zoom in the Asia-Pacific, at the May 11 forum.

He pointed out that home care and telemedicine packages that emerged in the Philippines because of the pandemic will remain.

Digitalization has already changed the way healthcare is delivered to the point of rendering traditional labor-intensive models insufficient in the face of Asia’s rising healthcare needs, he added.

Increased flexibility and better collaboration among staff are among the advantages of digital healthcare, said Singapore’s Integrated Health Information Systems Assistant Chief Executive Alan Goh. “The trend of using video consultations is here to stay.”

HOSPITAL-AT HOME

Zoom’s initiatives include video and meeting software development kits, which allow companies to build customizable applications using Zoom.



“It’s about making expertise traditionally found only by visiting a center of excellence more available to people,” said Ron Emerson, Zoom’s global healthcare lead. “There’s now a hospital-at-home — providing services at home that would otherwise be carried out in the hospital.”

In April, the Philippine Health department reported engaging with more than 100,000 patients a month over video conferencing platforms in the first quarter of 2021, spurred by extended lockdowns instituted because of the pandemic.

With restrictions either loosened or lifted around the globe, the focus now is to reach people where they are, said Mr. Emerson.

Mark Crowe, director of information technology innovations at US-based nonprofit healthcare

organization Sentara Healthcare, added: “Before COVID-19 [coronavirus disease 2019], the utilization of digital healthcare was pretty low, but now that we’re in the endemic stages, we’re actually seeing that the percentage utilization and adoption rate will never go back to pre-COVID-19.”

Clinics, hospitals, and health companies should consider their goals, services, and essential features when selecting a telehealth platform, he added.

“Every two weeks we’re upgrading, revising, debugging ... We’re at a point where we have such an enormous amount of utilization that we need to listen to the voice of the customer by recording feedback and redesigning based on friction points,” he said. — **Brontë H. Lacsamana**

OPINION

Pregnancy and COVID-19 vaccination

As the country observes Safe Motherhood Week, it is important to remind pregnant Filipino women and those who are planning to get pregnant about the importance of getting their complete coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine doses.

Pregnant women in general are immunocompromised and thus may be at higher risk of developing severe disease from COVID-19, such as pneumonia and respiratory failure, warned the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (POGS) and Philippine Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine (PSMFM).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), pregnant women with COVID-19 are more likely to require hospitalization, intensive care and invasive ventilation to help with breathing. In addition, compared with pregnant women without COVID-19, pregnant women with COVID-19 have an increased risk of preterm birth and of having babies that need neonatal intensive care.

They might also have an increased risk of stillbirth and maternal death. Pregnant women who are 35 years and above, are overweight, or have a health condition such as diabetes or hypertension may be at even higher risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19.

MEDICINE CABINET TEODORO B. PADILLA

As such the WHO and the Department of Health (DoH) strongly recommend that pregnant women and those planning to get pregnant receive the full dose of approved COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the country. This group of women should talk to their ob-gyn about receiving their recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses.

The WHO stressed that women who are trying to become pregnant should receive COVID-19 vaccines, as this is an important way to protect themselves and their babies from COVID-19 during pregnancy.

A growing body of evidence has not identified any adverse effects of COVID-19 vaccines on fertility or the ability to become pregnant. In clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccines, and in a large prospective study of couples trying to conceive, rates of becoming pregnant were the same for those receiving COVID-19 vaccines and those not receiving the vaccines.

The WHO does not recommend delaying pregnancy or terminating pregnancy because of COVID-19 vaccination, and no pregnancy testing is needed prior to vaccination.

According to the WHO, increasing evidence on the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy suggests that the benefits of vaccination during pregnancy outweigh potential risks whenever there is ongoing or anticipated community transmission of the virus. COVID-19 vaccination before or during pregnancy is especially important in settings with moderate to high community transmission or for women at higher individual risk of exposure or severe illness.

COVID-19 vaccines have been found to be highly effective in preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death from the virus. Studies have shown that pregnant women who get COVID-19 vaccines develop antibodies that are present in their babies’ umbilical cord blood. This suggests that babies may receive protective benefits from the vaccine, in addition to the benefits for pregnant women.

As of Jan. 30, the Philippine Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has received 126 suspected adverse reaction reports from pregnant women. The most commonly reported adverse reactions from pregnant women include headache, fever, vaccination site pain, difficulty in breathing, and cough.

Together with the WHO and DoH, the FDA also recommends COVID-19 vaccination to breastfeeding women. As of January, the agency has received 161 reports from the group of lactating mothers. The most commonly reported adverse reactions from pregnant women include fever, headache, malaise (a general feeling of discomfort or illness), vaccination site pain, and muscle pain.

“Overall, data suggests that the benefits of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine outweigh any known or potential risks of vaccination during pregnancy and lactation,” the FDA said.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said that it is especially important for people who are pregnant or were recently pregnant, along with household members to take appropriate steps to protect themselves and others from getting sick.

If going to the doctor for an appointment is a concern, people who are pregnant may ask their healthcare professionals what steps they are taking to protect patients from COVID-19. There are also other recommended vaccines during pregnancy, the CDC said.

TEODORO B. PADILLA is the executive director of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), which represents the biopharmaceutical medicines and vaccines industry in the country. Its members are at the forefront of research and development efforts for COVID-19 and other diseases that affect Filipinos.



Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF FORCE MAJEURE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROJECT (REPAIR AND/OR REPLACEMENT OF FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT DAMAGED BY TYPHOON ODETTE), WITH APPLICATION FOR AUTHORITY TO SECURE A LOAN FROM THE NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION (NEA)

ERC CASE NO. 2022-025 RC

NEGROS ORIENTAL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (NORECO I), Applicant.

Promulgated: May 02, 2022

NOTICE OF VIRTUAL HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on 06 April 2022, Negros Oriental I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (NORECO I) filed an Application seeking the Commission’s approval of its Force Majeure Capital Expenditure Project, namely: repair and/or replacement of facilities and equipment damaged by typhoon Odette, with application for authority to secure a loan from the National Electrification Administration (NEA).

The pertinent provisions of the said Application are hereunder quoted as follows:

- Applicant NORECO I is an electric cooperative duly organized and existing under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines with office address at Tinaogan, Bindoy, Negros Oriental.
- NORECO I was granted a franchise to operate an electric light and power distribution service in the municipalities of Mabina, Manjuyod, Bindoy, Ayungon, Tayasan, Jimalalud, La Libertad, and Vallehermoso, and the cities of Guiluhangan, Bais, and Canlanon, all in the province of Negros Oriental.
- In compliance with the foregoing, the following documents are attached and made an integral part of this Application.
- Annex “A” is the Board Resolution issued by NORECO I, this establishes that the filing of this Application was duly authorized by it and the Verification herein was executed by the proper person.
- Annexes “B” and “B-1” is the Notice that was properly filed within three (3) months from the occurrence of the force majeure event, in compliance with Article 3.3 of the said Resolution No. 26, as well as the letter of acknowledgment from the Commission.
- In compliance with Rule 6 of the ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure, NORECO I furnished copies of the Application with all its annexes and accompanying documents. Copies of the proofs of service to the Office of the Municipal Mayor and the Sangguniang Bayan of Bindoy, Negros Oriental and the Office of the Provincial Governor and the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Negros Oriental are attached as Annexes “C” and its sub-markings.
- Annex “D” and its sub-markings are the proofs that the Application was duly authorized by its entirety in a newspaper of general circulation within the franchise area, in compliance with the same Rule 6 of the ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A “Project Application” was prepared, which is attached and made an integral part hereof as Annex “E”.
- The salient provisions are summarized in the following paragraphs.
- Force Majeure Event. Typhoon Odette (international name “Rai”) made landfall at around midnight of 17 December 2021 in La Libertad, Negros Oriental, within the franchise area of

NORECO I, carrying with it maximum sustained winds of 175 km/h near the center, gustiness of up to 240km/hr and a central pressure of 935 hPa. This resulted not only in a widespread blackout throughout the region; water supply and communication services were also adversely affected. The province of Negros Oriental immediately declared a state of calamity.

- Project Description. The project consists of the repair and/or replacement of damaged network assets, wireless communication assets, building structures and other equipment including the following:
 - A total of 5,488 poles were brought down by Typhoon Odette, of which 2,700 poles were heavily damaged and needed replacement. Several units of transformers, kWh meters and conductors also needed replacement.
 - Seven (7) wireless and radio communication towers were built to interlink the substation and linemen. These towers were brought down by Typhoon Odette, also damaging the installed equipment.
 - The Cooperative Administration Building was hit by a huge tree. The premises were also flooded because the building was constructed on a river bank. This resulted not only to damaged building structures, but also the destruction of necessary equipment such as the computers and printers required for billing and collection.
- Justification and/or Benefits of the Project. The repair and restoration of the facilities of NORECO I is necessary to enable it to service its franchise area. The project includes both first priority activities for immediate power restoration and second priority activities to restore non-network facilities necessary to adequately service its consumers and ensure the safety and security of employees.
- Estimated Project Cost. The estimated total cost of implementation is P172,428,866.93.
- Project Financing Plan. The proposed force majeure capital expenditure project will be partially financed by a loan of P700,000,000.00 from the National Electrification Administration (NEA) for a term of ten (10) years with 3.25% interest per annum exclusive of Documentary Stamp Tax and a one (1) year grace period. The balance will be sourced from collections through the Reinvestment Fund for Sustainable CAPEX (RFSC).
- Project Schedule. Immediately after lifting of storm warnings, restoration activities commenced together with the assessment and inventory of damages sustained. In view of the upcoming National Elections, NORECO I targets the restoration of power to all household connections by 30 April 2022, prioritizing schools and barangay halls; a delay in the full restoration of power to residential dwellings is anticipated for external reasons such as the need to relocate houses in locations now considered hazardous.
- Rate Impact. The indicative rate of the CAPEX - Force Majeure Event due to Typhoon Odette was based on the computed annual cash flow cost. An average shortfall of 0.4430 was computed for the 2021 to 2022 period indicating the need for additional inflows into the RFSC.

RFSC Item	2021	2022	TOTAL
Actual Energy Sales, kWh	83,408,512	82,203,895	165,612,406
Current RFSC Rate	0.3439	0.3438	0.3439
RFSC balance beginning per AFS, PHP	8,881,724	9,525,875	8,881,724
FUND INFLOWS			
RFSC Collections, Php	1,813,518	28,269,919	30,083,438
Loan proceeds from financial institutions, Php	100,000,000	100,000,000	200,000,000
Total Fund Inflows, PHP	1,813,518	128,269,919	130,083,438
Available cash for disbursement	10,695,242	137,795,794	138,965,161
FUND OUTFLOWS			
CAPEX - Force Majeure, PHP	-	172,428,867	172,428,867
CAPEX cost (2015-2020), PHP	729,145	28,269,919	28,999,064
Payment for amortization/s for previous loan (PHP)	440,222	9,169,054	9,609,276
Permit Fee, PHP	-	1,293,217	1,293,217
Total Fund Outflows, PHP	1,169,367	211,161,056	212,330,424
Fund balance ending, PHP, excess/(shortfall)	9,525,875	(73,365,262)	(73,365,262)
Excess/(shortfall) on RFSC, PHP/Wkh	0.1142	(0.8925)	(0.4430)

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, premises considered, it is most respectfully prayed to this Honorable Commission that a DECISION be rendered APPROVING the instant Application and GRANTING AUTHORITY TO SECURE LOANS TO NORECO I to finance the repair and/or replacement of damaged network assets, wireless communication assets, building structures and other equipment arising from Typhoon Odette.

Other just and equitable reliefs are likewise prayed for.

The Commission hereby sets the instant Application for determination of compliance with the jurisdictional requirements, expository presentation, Pre-trial Conference and presentation of evidence on the following dates and online platform for the conduct thereof, pursuant to Resolution 09, Series of 2020 dated 24 September 2020,¹ and Resolution No. 01, Series of 2021 dated 17 December 2020 (ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure):²

Date	Platform	Activity
08 June 2022 (Wednesday) at nine o'clock in the morning (9:00 A.M.)	Microsoft Teams	Determination of compliance with the jurisdictional requirements and expository presentation
15 June 2022 (Wednesday) at nine o'clock in the morning (9:00 A.M.)	Microsoft Teams	Pre-trial Conference and presentation of evidence

Accordingly, NORECO I is hereby directed to host the virtual hearing at NORECO I’s principal office located at Tinaogan, Bindoy, Negros Oriental, as the designated venue for the conduct thereof, and ensure that the same is open to the public and the community quarantine guidelines are observed at all times. Moreover, NORECO I shall guarantee that, during the conduct of the expository presentation, the participation of the public shall not be impaired.

Any interested stakeholder may submit its comments and/or clarifications at least one (1) calendar day prior to the scheduled virtual hearing, via electronic mail (e-mail) at docket@erc.ph, copy furnish the Legal Service through legal@erc.ph. The Commission shall give priority to the stakeholders who have duly submitted their respective comments and/or clarifications, to discuss the same and propound questions during the course of the expository presentation.

Moreover, all persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the instant case may become a party by filing with the Commission via e-mail at docket@erc.ph, copy furnish the Legal Service through legal@erc.ph, a verified Petition to Intervene at least five (5) calendar days prior to the date of the initial virtual hearing and subject to the requirements under Rule 9 of the ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure, indicating therein the docket number and title of the case and stating the following:

- The petitioner’s name, mailing address, and e-mail address;
- The nature of petitioner’s interest in the subject matter of the proceeding and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and
- A statement of the relief desired.

Likewise, all other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the case may file through e-mail at docket@erc.ph, copy furnish the Legal Service through legal@erc.ph, their Opposition or Comment thereon at least five (5) calendar days prior to the initial virtual hearing and subject to the requirements under Rule 9 of the ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure. No particular form of Opposition or Comment is required, but the document, letter, or writing should contain the following:

- The name, mailing address, and e-mail address of such person;
- A concise statement of the Opposition or Comment; and
- The grounds relied upon.

Any of the persons mentioned in the preceding paragraphs may access the copy of the Application on the Commission’s official website at www.erc.gov.ph.

Finally, all interested persons may be allowed to join the scheduled initial virtual hearing by providing the Commission, thru legal.virtualhearings@erc.ph, with their respective e-mail addresses and indicating therein the case number of the instant Application. The Commission will send the access link/s to the aforementioned hearing platform within five (5) working days prior to the scheduled hearing.

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WITNESS, the Honorable Commissioners ALEXIS M. LUMBATAN, CATHERINE P. MACEDA, FLORESINDA G. BALDO-DIGAL and MARKO ROMEO L. FUENTES, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 19th day of April 2022 in Pasig City.

AGNES VST DEVANADERA
Chairperson and CEO

LS: NCC/LSP/MCC



¹ A Resolution Adopting the Guidelines Governing Electronic Applications, Filings and Virtual Hearings Before the Energy Regulatory Commission.
² A Resolution Adopting the Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Energy Regulatory Commission.