

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 135, May 15, 2021]

TEMPORARILY MODIFYING THE RATES OF IMPORT DUTY ON RICE UNDER SECTION 1611 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10863, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "CUSTOMS MODERNIZATION AND TARIFF ACT

WHEREAS, rice remains the staple food for most Filipinos, and accounts for a significant portion of the food expenses of families;

WHEREAS, despite an increase in the total stock of rice, the estimated local production may still fall short of the total demand, necessitating importation from other countries;

WHEREAS, there has been a continuous increase in the price of rice from other countries, especially those imported from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations region;

WHEREAS, the current global economic situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other factors affecting the country's traditional sources of imported rice, cause uncertainty in the steady supply of rice;

WHEREAS, considering the increase in global rice prices and the uncertainties relative to the supply of rice, there is an urgent need to temporarily reduce the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) tariff rates on rice, to diversify the country's market sources, augment rice supply, maintain affordable prices, and reduce inflationary pressures, all for the purpose of ensuring food security in the country and protecting consumers;

WHEREAS, under Section 7(a) of Republic Act (RA) No. 8178, as amended, the President may increase, reduce, revise or adjust existing rates of import duty up to the bound rate committed by the Philippines under the World Trade Organization Agreement on Agriculture;

WHEREAS, Section 1608 of RA No. 10863 empowers the President, in the interest of general welfare and national security, and upon recommendation of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), to increase, reduce or remove existing rates of import duty; and

WHEREAS, on 11 March 2021, the NEDA Board endorsed *ad referendum* the temporary modification of the MFN tariff rates on rice falling under AHTN 2017 Heading 10.06;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue vested in me by the Constitution and existing laws, do hereby order: