REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE

Sections 24 (D) (1), 105, 188 and 196 of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended; Sections 2.57.1 (A) (6) and 2.57.2 (F) of RR No. 02-98, as amended; RR No. 7-2003; RR No. 16-2005, as amended.
BIR Ruling No. OT- 304-2022
BIR Ruling No. OT-305-2022
OT- 029 - 2024

COMMUNITIES NAGA, INC.
Lower Ground Floor, Bldg. B, Evia Lifestyle Center,
Daang Hari Rd., Almanza Dos, Las Pinas City

MAY 29 2024

Attention : **ATTY. CECILIA A. RAMILO, CPA**
Vice President
Tax and Corporate Affairs

Gentlemen:

This refers to your letter dated November 21, 2022, requesting on behalf of **COMMUNITIES NAGA, INC. ("CNI")** for confirmation of your opinion that the assignment by **CNI** of its rights, interests, and obligations under a Contract to Sell covering various parcels of land to its designated assignee is not subject to capital gains tax ("**CGT**"), expanded withholding tax ("**EWT**"), value-added tax ("**VAT**") and documentary stamp tax ("**DST**").

It is represented that **CNI** is a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the Philippines and with principal office address at Lower Ground Floor, Bldg. B, Evia Lifestyle Center, Daang Hari Rd., Almanza Dos, Las Pinas City. On September 16, 2019, **CNI** and the Sellers entered into a Contract to Sell ("Contract") for the sale of four (4) parcels of land (collectively, the "**Properties**") situated in Brgy. Carolina, Naga City, as follows:

Date of Execution	**Original Sellers**	**Lot No.**	**Area (m2)**	**Transfer Certificate of Title ("TCT") No.**	**Purchase Price (in Php)**
September 16, 2019	Cynthia A. Besas married to Walter Besas Carolina Austria -Militescu Emelie A. Roaquin Heirs of Antonio L. Austria II: Maria Leticia M. Austria; Michael M. Austria; Jennifer Austria-Pesnel married to Jerome Daniel Pesnel; Tiffany Austria-Thomson married to Jolyon Nicholas Thomson	Lot 6-B-10	225,517		PhP
		Lot 6-B-11-B	92,850	(portion)	
		Lot 6-B-12	156,701		
		Lot 6-B-6	105,202		

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The purchase price of the Properties as agreed between the Sellers and the Buyer in the Contract to Sell is Three Hundred Forty Eight Million Pesos (PhP 348,000,000.00), payable in the following manner:

1. a. A down payment of
(PhP) upon signing of the Contract;

b. Portion of the downpayment indicated above shall be deducted with the following:

1. The amount of PhP shall be directly payable to Fil-Estate Properties, Inc. as settlement to the Compromise Agreement dated September 05, 2014; and,

2. The amount of PhP due on the transaction representing Capital Gains Tax to be paid directly to the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

2. The remaining balance of
(PhP) shall be payable in eight (8) equal quarterly payments of Pesos (PhP , with the first quarterly installment to commence three (3) months from the signing of the Contract.

It is further represented that on November 08, 2021, with due notice to the Sellers, **CNI** executed a Deed of Assignment of Rights and Assumption of Liability in favor of **Pime Asset Ventures, Inc. (PAVI),** the "**Assignee**", whereby **CNI** assigned all its rights, interests with assumption of obligation over the unpaid balance under the Contract to Sell in the amount of PhP , which was paid by the Assignee.

In reply, please be informed as follows:

CGT/EWT

Section 24 (D) (1) of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended ("**Tax Code**") provides that a final withholding tax of six percent (6%) is imposed on the gain presumed to have been realized on the sale, exchange or disposition of real property located in the Philippines, classified as capital assets, including *pacto de retro sales* and other forms of conditional sales, based on the gross selling price or fair market value as determined in accordance with Section 6 (E) of the same Tax Code, whichever is higher, to *wit*:

> *"SEC. 24. Rates of Income Tax on Domestic Corporations. —*
>
> XXX XXX XXX
>
> *(D) Capital Gains from Sale of Real Property. —*
>
> *(1) In General. — The provisions of Section 39 (B) notwithstanding, a final tax of six percent (6%) based on the gross selling price or current fair market value as determined in accordance with Section 6 (E) of this Code, whichever is higher, is hereby imposed upon capital gains presumed to have been realized from the sale, exchange or other disposition of real property located in the Philippines, classified as capital assets, including pacto de retro sales and other forms of conditional sales, by individuals, including estates and trusts..."* (Underscoring supplied)

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In the instant case, there were two (2) sets of transactions: (1) sale of the Properties by the Original Sellers to **CNI** ("First Transaction"); and (2) assignment of rights, interests and obligations over the Properties by **CNI** to **PAVI**, the Assignee pending full payment of the purchase price relating to the First Transaction ("Second Transaction").

It is indubitable that the First Transaction involves a sale by the Original Sellers to **CNI** of real properties that are classified as capital assets. Thus, the said sale is subject to CGT pursuant to Section 24 (D) (1) of the Tax Code. As represented, the CGT pertaining to the full purchase price of the Properties was already paid and remitted to the Bureau on November 16, 2019.

With regard to the Second Transaction, Section 2.57.1 (A) (6) of Revenue Regulations ("RR") No. 02-98, as amended, [1] implementing Section 24 (D) (1) of the Tax Code provides that if the sale is on installment, the procedures stated under Section 2.57.2 (J) [now Section 2.57.2 (F)] of RR No. 02-98, as amended, shall apply with the exception that the withholding tax on the former shall be final whereas that on the latter shall be creditable, to *wit*:

> *"Sec. 2.57.1. Income Payment Subject to Final Withholding Tax. — The following forms of income shall be subject to final withholding tax at the rates herein specified:*
>
> xxx xxx xxx
>
> *(A) Income Payments to a Citizen or to a Resident Alien Individual:*
>
> xxx xxx xxx
>
> *(6) On capital gains presumed to have been realized from the sale, exchange or other disposition of real property located in the Philippines classified as capital assets, including pacto de retro sales and other forms of conditional sales based on the gross selling price or fair market value as determined in accordance with Sec. 6(E) of the Code (i.e., the authority of the Commissioner to prescribe the real property values), whichever is higher — Six percent 6%).*
>
> *In case of sale on installment of real property classified as capital asset, the procedures stated under Section 2.57.2(J) [now Section 2.57.2(F)] hereof on the sale of real property classified as ordinary asset shall apply with the exception that the withholding tax on the former shall be final whereas that on the latter shall be creditable."* (Underscoring supplied)

Corollarily, Section 2.57.2 (J) [now Section 2.57.2(F)] of RR No. 02-98, as amended, states that:

> *"Sec. 2.57.2. Income Payment Subject to Creditable Withholding Tax and Rates Prescribed Thereon — Except as herein otherwise provided, there shall be withheld a creditable income tax at the rates herein specified for each class of payee from the following items of income payments to persons residing in the Philippines:*

[1] Implementing Republic Act No. 8424, "An Act Amending the National Internal Revenue Code, as Amended" Relative to the Withholding on Income Subject to the Expanded Withholding Tax and Final Withholding Tax, Withholding of Income Tax on Compensation, Withholding of Creditable Value-Added Tax and Other Percentage Taxes, April 17, 1998.

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XXX XXX XXX

(F) Gross selling price or total amount of consideration or its equivalent paid to the seller/owner the sale, exchange or transfer of real property classified as ordinary asset.[2] *— A creditable withholding tax based on the gross selling price/total amount of consideration or the fair market value determined in accordance with Section 6 (E) of the Code, whichever is higher, paid to the seller/owner for the sale, transfer or exchange of real property, other than capital asset, shall be imposed upon the withholding agent/buyer, in accordance with the following schedule:*

XXX XXX XXX

However, if the buyer is engaged in trade or business, whether a corporation or otherwise, these rules shall apply:

XXX XXX XXX

(ii) If, on the other hand, the sale is on a 'cash basis' or is a 'deferred-payment sale not on the installment plan' (that is, payments in the year of sale exceed 25% of the selling price), the buyer shall withhold the tax based on the gross selling price or fair market value of the property, whichever is higher, on the first installment.

XXX XXX XXX

If upon completion of the payment of the purchase price of real property classified as ordinary asset, but before the execution of the Deed of Sale, the buyer decides to assign his right over the property to another person for a consideration, the assignment shall be considered a separate sale of real property and, therefore, subject to the creditable expanded withholding tax (EWT) or final withholding of capital gains tax, as the case may be, which shall be withheld by the assignee of such property based on the consideration per Deed of Assignment or the fair market value of such property at the time of assignment, whichever is higher, and to the DST imposed under Sec. 196 of the same Code using the same basis.

It is to be clarified, however, that ***sale of interest in real property (real property purchased on installment covered by Contract to Sell which was sold by the original buyer before it was fully paid) shall be taxable on the part of the original buyer (now seller) based on the realized gain thereon which is measured by the difference between the agreed consideration and the amount actually paid by the said original buyer****."* (Emphasis and underscoring supplied)

Based on the above provisions, it is clear that if the buyer decides to assign its interest in the real property subject of the sale, the following rules shall apply:

(1) after full payment of the purchase price but before execution of the DOAS, the assignment shall be considered a separate sale of real

[2] As Amended by RR No. 08-98, RR No. 06-01 and RR No. 17-03.

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property which is subject to CGT, or CWT/EWT, as the case may be; or

(2) before it was fully paid, the difference between the: (a) agreed consideration between the buyer (in this context, the "**assignor**") and the assignee; and (b) amount actually paid by the assignor to the original seller shall be subject to CGT or CWT/EWT, as the case may be. [3]

Applying the above-quoted provision, considering that: (1) the Original Sellers are not yet fully paid by **CNI**; and (2) the amount actually paid by the Assignee is equivalent to the amount paid by **CNI** to the Original Sellers, this Office hereby rules that the assignment of the rights, interests and obligations under the Contract to Sell covering the Properties to the Assignee will not result in any realized gain. Hence, the same is not subject to CWT/EWT or CGT. [4]

VAT

Section 105 of the Tax Code as implemented by Section 4.105-1 of RR No. 16-2005, [5] as amended, provides that:

"Sec. 105. Persons Liable. — Any person who, in the course of trade or business, sells, barters, exchanges, leases goods or properties, renders services, and any person who imports goods shall be subject to value-added tax (VAT) imposed in Sections 106 to 108 of the said Code.

XXX XXX XXX

"The phrase "in the course of trade or business" means the regular conduct or pursuit of a commercial or an economic activity, including transactions incidental thereto, by any person regardless of whether or not the person engaged therein is a non-stock, non-profit private organization (irrespective of the disposition of its net income and whether or not it sells exclusively to members or their guests), or government entity."

It is clear from the above-cited provisions that insofar as goods or properties are concerned, VAT is imposed on the sale, barter or exchange thereof in the course of trade or business, including transactions incidental thereto. It must be emphasized that VAT is imposed once there is an actual sale transaction where ownership is passed to the buyer.

It bears stressing that in assignment of rights the assignee merely steps into the shoes of the assignor without acquiring a better right than what the assignor had in the property to which the rights assigned pertain.

In BIR Ruling No. OT-305-2022, [6] citing BIR Ruling No. OT-304-2022, [7] this Office has ruled that a deed of assignment of rights in real property does not equate to a sale and an assignment of rights in real property is not a sale of real property itself but the rights pertaining to such property, [8] to *wit*:

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[3] BIR Ruling [DA-(C-172) 449-09], August 10, 2009; BIR Ruling [DA-377-08], June 24, 2008.
[4] BIR Ruling [DA-229-02]; December 3, 2002; BIR Ruling [DA-149-01]; September 3, 2001.
[5] Consolidated Value-Added Tax Regulations of 2005, September 1, 2005.
[6] BIR Ruling OT-305-2022 dated June 23, 2022 signed by Commissioner Cesar R. Dulay.
[7] BIR Ruling OT-304-2022 dated June 23, 2022 signed by Commissioner Cesar R. Dulay.
[8] *Id.*

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> *"From the foregoing, it is clear that only sales, exchanges or transfers of real properties are subject to the final withholding tax imposed under Section 24 (D) (1) of the Tax Code of 1997, as amended, and as implemented by RR No. 2-98. Hence, assignments of rights over realty although classified as real property under the Civil Code, are not included within the purview of the said regulations considering that in assignments of rights the assignee merely steps into the shoes of the assignor without acquiring a better right than what the assignor had in the property to which the rights assigned pertain.*
>
> *Thus, the assignment of rights over the Contract to Sell involving a residential condominium unit by Prestige Labels to La Vie under the Deed of Assignment with Assumption of Obligations does not equate to a sale. A deed of assignment of rights in real property is not a deed of sale of real property itself but the rights pertaining to such property (BIR Ruling No. DA-252-96 dated July 18, 1996).*
>
> *Since no sale is involved, there is no basis for the imposition of withholding tax under Revenue Regulations (RR) No. 2-98, as amended (BIR Ruling No. 031-01, dated March 15, 2001). In the same vein, there is no basis for the imposition of the CGT or the VAT.*
>
> *Further, the assignment of rights, not being a sale of real property, is not subject to DST under Section 196 of the 1997 Tax Code, as amended. Said section refers to the sale of real property, which is obviously not the case in this instance. In this regard, no DST can be imposed on said assignment (BIR Ruling No. DA-240-01, dated November 16, 2001)"* (Underscoring supplied)

Applying the same in this case, clearly, the assignment of rights over the Properties by **CNI** to the **PAVI** cannot be considered as a sale. Consequently, since there was no sale, barter, exchange or lease of the subject Properties, there is no basis for the imposition of the VAT. [9]

DST

Section 196 of the Tax Code states that DST shall be imposed on sale, conveyance or donation of real properties to another person, to wit:

> *"SEC. 196. Stamp Tax on Deeds of Sale, Conveyances and Donations of Real Property. — On all conveyances, donations, deeds, instruments, or writings, other than grants, patents or original certificates of adjudication issued by the Government, whereby any land, tenement or other realty sold shall be granted, assigned, transferred, donated or otherwise conveyed to the purchases or purchasers, or donee, there shall be collected a documentary stamp tax, at the rates herein below prescribed, based on the consideration contracted to be paid for such realty or on its fair market value determined in accordance with Section 6 (E) of this Code, whichever is higher: Provided, That when one of the contracting parties is the*

[9] BIR Ruling OT-305-2022 dated June 23, 2022 signed by Commissioner Cesar R. Dulay.

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Government, the tax herein imposed shall be based on the actual consideration . . . x x x" (Underscoring supplied)

As discussed in item II above on VAT, in BIR Ruling No. OT-305-2022, citing , BIR Ruling No. OT-304-2022, the assignment of rights and interest, not being a sale of real property but merely rights pertaining to such property, is not subject to DST under Section 196 of the Tax Code, *viz.*:

"Further, the assignment of rights, not being a sale of real property, is not subject to DST under Section 196 of the 1997 Tax Code, as amended. Said section refers to the sale of real property, which is obviously not the case in this instance. In this regard, no DST can be imposed on said assignment (BIR Ruling No. DA-240-01, dated November 16, 2001)" (Underscoring supplied)

Accordingly, the Deed of Assignment between **CNI** and **PAVI** is not subject to DST imposed under the Section 196 of the Tax Code. However, the notarial acknowledgment to the said Deed is subject to the DST of P30.00 pursuant to Section 188 of the Tax Code. [10]

It is however important to note that, considering that the First Transaction was a sale of real property paid under installment payment or deferred payment basis, the payment of the DST imposed under Section 196 of the Tax Code, accrues upon the execution of the Deed of Absolute Sale but the basis for the imposition thereof shall be the gross selling price or fair market value of the property, whichever is higher, at the time of the execution of the related Contract to Sell. [11] Thus, the DST over the same shall be paid by the Assignee (to whom the rights, interests and obligations under the Contract to Sell were transferred) upon execution of the respective Deed of Absolute Sale. (***BIR Ruling No. OT-305-2022 dated June 23, 2022***)

This ruling is issued on the basis of the foregoing facts as represented. However, if upon investigation it shall be disclosed that the facts are different, then this ruling shall be considered null and void.

Very truly yours,

ROMEO D. LUMAGUI, JR.
Commissioner of Internal Revenue

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[10] BIR Ruling OT-305-2022 dated June 23, 2022; BIR Ruling OT-304-2022 dated June 23, 2022.
[11] BIR Ruling No. 634-2019, October 17, 2019; RR No. 17-2003 dated March 31, 2003 amending RR No. 2-1998, as amended.