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Headline: Philippines to speak up at UN climate change talks

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The Philippines will play a more active role in the United Nations climate-change talks in Durban, South Africa, in order to push for a global warming treaty that would benefit the developing world.

Presidential adviser on the environment Nereus Acosta, who will lead the Philippine delegation to the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN FCCC), on Monday said there was a "greater urgency" for the country to make its voice heard at the talks.

The UN FCCC aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2050 and stop the planet from heating up by 2 degrees Celsius, which causes extreme weather events.

Acosta said the Philippines was one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change but it was not able to exert pressure on other players in past conferences that were seen as failures.

Slow to adapt

He noted that while other countries in the region were keeping up with their commitments to cushion the effects of climate change, the Philippines was slow to adapt to the challenges.

Acosta said the signing of the country's National Climate Change Action Plan last week by President Aquino "gives us more reason to be there."

"This is a good opening. We are entering the global talks and there is a greater sense of urgency," he said.

This time around, Acosta said, the Philippines would be calling on other Southeast Asian countries to press commitments to lower emissions and increase funding to countries trying to fight climate change. "We have a stronger commonality with them," he said.

Acosta noted that the floods that ravaged Thailand and Vietnam as well as the typhoons that hit the Philippines showed that these nations were suffering economic losses from global warming.

The conference in Durban, which started yesterday and will end on Dec. 9, aims to have a treaty that will compel nations to lower carbon emissions and secure another round of commitments from the parties after the expiration of the Kyoto Protocol.

Also on the agenda are the terms of the transfer of clean technology to developing nations and the implementation of a funding mechanism that would allow vulnerable countries to adapt to climate change.

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