

Headline: Philippine climate change envoy leads new protest fast

Byline: Agence France-Presse

Published Date: 01:36 PM January 31, 2014

Section: globalnation

Word Count: 2581

Content:

Naderev Sano. AP PHOTO

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MANILA— A Philippine diplomat who went without food for 14 days last year will lead another fast on Saturday in a bid to pressure world leaders over climate change.

Naderev “Yeb” Sano, the Philippines’ lead negotiator at United Nations climate talks, drank only tea and water throughout the last meeting in Poland in November, garnering world headlines and praise from developing nations.

Sano’s latest symbolic one-day hunger strike is an attempt to maintain pressure ahead of the next UN talks in Peru, with his tactics beginning to attract followers around the world via social media.

“The objective is to keep connecting with the people who believe in climate justice ... I’ve always believed in fasting as an important instrument in provoking change,” Sano told AFP.

Sano will carry out his February fast while visiting Tacloban, a city in the eastern Philippines that was devastated when Super Typhoon Yolanda (International name: Haiyan) tore across the region in November.

Yolanda, which was the strongest typhoon ever to make landfall and left 8,000 people dead or missing, triggered Sano’s original decision to fast at the UN climate talks in Warsaw.

Sano said he expected other people around the world connected via social media to follow his example, in what he believes will be a growing movement ahead of the Peru round of talks in December.

The Peru gathering is vital in trying to secure a global pact by 2015 that would limit global warming to 2.0 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-Industrial Revolution levels.

Sano’s fasts have been promoted by Nobel laureate Al Gore’s Climate Reality Project, which has 143,000 followers on its Twitter feed @ClimateReality.

About 300 people around the world have committed to fasting in solidarity with Sano, according to Ashwini Prabha-Leopold, a spokeswoman for the Climate Action Network, a global coalition of more than 850 non-government organisations that is working to keep climate change to sustainable levels.

“However this has not been promoted widely and we expect a growth in number as we move this initiative onto a bigger platform from February 1,” Prabha-Leopold told AFP.

The World Council of Churches has also called on its Twitter feed for people to join Sano in fasting on the first day of each month, promoting the hashtag #fastfortheclimate.

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“It is deeply moving to see so much support,” Sano said.