

Headline: Int'l aid agency urges Duterte to honor Paris climate pact

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An international aid agency urged President Rodrigo Duterte to honor the historic Paris Agreement on climate change despite its perceived imperfections.

Economic Justice Programme Manager of Oxfam in the Philippines Dante Dalabajan said on Thursday that the agreement would provide for technical and financial aid to the Philippines so that it can transition toward a "low-carbon development pathway."

"It is important for the country, led by the President, to continue being the voice of the poorest, lowest-emitting and most vulnerable people on the world stage. Yes, the Paris Agreement is far from perfect, but it is what we have to work with to ensure countries like the Philippines are financially and technically supported as they shift towards a low-carbon development pathway. It is in this spirit that our country should uphold our commitment to the Paris Agreement," Dalabajan said in a statement.

Aside from urging the tough-talking President to honor the agreement, which the Philippines adopted along with 200 countries last December, Oxfam also asked Duterte to address the concerns of the poor as it has been found that economic inequality is inextricably linked to climate change.

"We, therefore, urge President Duterte and his administration to uphold its promise to deliver 'real change' for the poorest people, who are both the least responsible for and the most vulnerable to climate change, in the Philippines and beyond," Dalabajan said.

Some of the programs that can be implemented to help those who are vulnerable to the effects of climate change include supporting farmers to adopt climate-resilient crops and practices, utilizing the People's Survival Fund and putting primacy on the utilization of clean energy sources.

To address the perceived gaps in the international treaty, Oxfam said that the Duterte administration could engage in "multilateral processes."

"Internationally, the Philippine government must continue to engage multilateral processes to address the gaps in the Paris Agreement, to ensure binding commitments on the provision of support for vulnerable countries, mobilizing adequate finance to meet a clear climate change adaptation goal, and recognizing the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities," he added.

Duterte earlier said that he would not honor the agreement, dismissing it as "stupid" and "absurd" as it would only stall the country's economic growth.

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"We have not reached the age of industrialization. We're now going into it. But you are trying to stymie [our growth] with an agreement that says you can only go up to here. That's stupid. I will not honor that," the President said.

Last December, representatives of 195 nations agreed to keep the increase in global temperature at below 2 degrees Celsius, which is considered the point that an increase in the Earth's temperature separates humanity from the effects of global warming.

When it signed the agreement last April, the Philippines pledged to reduce carbon emissions by 70 percent in 2030.

However, after Duterte's pronouncement that he would not honor the covenant, outgoing Senate President Franklin Drilon said that the Senate would not ratify the agreement. CDG/rga

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