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Headline: Cabinet gives Duterte green light to OK Paris accord

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The Philippines has inched closer to ratifying the Paris Agreement on climate change after concerned government agencies submitted to Malacañang the certificates of concurrence (COC) to the landmark accord.

After threatening to reject the global accord for being “absurd” and “stupid,” President Duterte convened the Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Tuesday in the Palace, where the Cabinet concurred with its ratification.

Sen. Loren Legarda, the primary mover of the Paris accord in the Senate, on Wednesday expressed elation over Mr. Duterte’s decision to convene the CCC which, she said, was the body’s maiden meeting since it was created in 2009 with the passage of the Climate Change Act.

Legarda, the UN Champion for Resilience, said the meeting was “a good sign that our President sees the importance of addressing climate change impacts as they affect the overall development of the country.”

“It is a welcome development that all concerned agencies of government are now ready to ratify the Paris Agreement,” she said, adding:

“Once the executive [department] ratifies and transmits the instrument of ratification to the Senate, I would actively shepherd the Senate’s immediate concurrence.”

Legarda was invited to the meeting as the principal author of the Climate Change Act.

Mr. Duterte had earlier warned that he would not honor the Paris accord, saying it would only stymie the country’s economic growth and that it was just being “imposed” by industrialized countries on developing nations like the Philippines.

At the Paris climate conference in 2015, 195 nations adopted the legally binding global climate accord that aims to limit global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius, a warming threshold that scientists believe could significantly reduce the dangerous impacts of climate change.

CCC Commissioner Emmanuel de Guzman confirmed on Wednesday that Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. had signed the last of the documents needed for the ratification of the international treaty. —MARLON RAMOS

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