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Headline: Aquino at UN Climate Summit: PH bears brunt of climate change impacts

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President Benigno Aquino. EDWIN BACASMAS

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NEW YORK CITY—President Benigno Aquino III on Tuesday said the Philippines remained vulnerable to the impact of climate change despite being a low emitter of greenhouse gases.

“It would not be an exaggeration to say that Filipinos bear a disproportionate amount of the burden when it comes to climate change,” Aquino said in a brief speech at the United Nations Climate Summit 2014.

Aquino delivered his speech before leaders of 41 other nations that included Mauritius, South Africa, Mexico, Norway, and Switzerland, at around 11:15 a.m. (11:15 p.m. Tuesday in Manila).

Aquino called on nations to end the “protracted debate” over the individual countries’ commitment to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and instead start working together to address climate change.

He said one nation should not wait for another’s action before determining its own, as it would only defeat the purpose of establishing a collective and effective response to mitigate the effects of global warming.

The Philippines experienced its worst typhoon in history last year, when supertyphoon “Yolanda” (international name: Haiyan) battered the Visayas region. With winds at 300 kph, it is said to be the strongest typhoon ever to make landfall in the world.

It claimed the lives of more than 6,000 people with 2,000 still missing nearly a year after the tragedy.

The UN Climate Summit 2014 was called by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to gather world leaders as a high-level push to finally have a global agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris next year, which the conference in Copenhagen five years ago failed to achieve.

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