

Headline: Palace: Duterte not joking on upholding Paris Agreement

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Published Date: 12:34 PM November 08, 2016

Section: globalnation

Word Count: 1685

Content:

Presidential Spokesperson Ernesto Abella. MARLON RAMOS/INQUIRER

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It's no joke. Believe him.

Malacañang on Tuesday dispelled doubts on President Rodrigo Duterte's sincerity in upholding the landmark Paris Agreement on climate change.

"Why should he be joking about that?" Presidential Spokesperson Ernesto Abella told a press briefing with a wry smile.

"Yes, of course," he replied when asked if Duterte was serious about honoring the international treaty.

During the Cabinet discussions on the Paris covenant, Abella said the President raised his concern over "climate justice," noting that climate-vulnerable nations could not easily access the funds collected from countries which failed to comply with the limit on carbon emissions.

"There were certain things he was concerned about like the sanctions to be taken... because the agreement was not supposed to be binding so he wanted clarification regarding that," he said.

On Monday, the President said he would support the ratification of the climate change pact after members of his Cabinet voted unanimously to support it.

"After so much debate, I will sign the climate change agreement," said Duterte.

The Philippines was among some 200 countries which adopted the covenant during the 21st Conference of Parties held in France in December 2015.

In August, Duterte said he would not honor the Paris agreement, calling it an "absurd" and "stupid" arrangement which would only stymie the country's economic development. RAM

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