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Headline: Duterte: PH in 'serious trouble' due to climate change

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THE Philippines is in "serious trouble" as worsening problems of climate change and global warming have contributed to the severe impact of the recent typhoons that have hit the country, President Rodrigo Duterte said on Wednesday.

Duterte made the statement as he admitted that the country was "not prepared" in the event of severe weather conditions caused by climate change.

"Noong una, yung climate change ano pa ako noon, parang ayaw ko maniwala but ngayon sobra talaga ang tubig galing sa langit because umiinit ang planeta (At first, I did not believe climate change but now the rains coming from the heavens are heavy due to the warming of the planet)," Duterte said in his weekly public address.

"Even by a certain degree higher, we are in serious trouble kasi yung dagat mabilis na rin yung singaw ng tubig. The biggest..mas marami pa sa land mass ang tubig kaya kung bumagsak 'yan talagang todong-todo. and we are not prepared for that (due to the fast evaporation of water in the ocean. Water is bigger than the land mass so when it falls, the impact is severe)," he added.

Duterte also said that climate change has disrupted the weather patterns, saying typhoons could now hit the country anytime of the year.

"Noon (In the past) we have the typhoons and the hot weather and cold weather, usually in December pero ngayon wala na panahon sa bagyo. The bagyo can come anytime. Nagwawala nga ang tubig sa dagat," he said.

Duterte himself addressed the issue of climate change in the 37th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit in November last year, noting that developed countries must consider leading drastic cuts in carbon emissions and demand climate justice from "those who are most responsible for this existential challenge we face today."

He also told the international body in online sessions that consecutive typhoons that hit the Philippines reflected a "setback" for the government's development agenda, especially in affected regions.

The Philippines is among nations most vulnerable to climate change. It constantly deals with heavy monsoon rains and is battered by an average of 20 typhoons per year.

Auring, the first tropical storm to enter the country this year, hit parts of Visayas and Mindanao a few days ago, triggering floods and forcing thousands of families to evacuate their houses.

During his visit to the storm-hit Surigao del Sur, the President asked government officials to assist victims, help the province's agriculture sector, and repair damaged infrastructure within one week.