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Sen. Loren Legarda . RICHARD A. REYES/INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

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The chief environment advocate in the Senate on Thursday called on the Duterte administration to ratify the historic climate pact signed in Paris in December as she vowed to work towards the chamber's concurrence once signed by the President.

This as the landmark deal, which aims to limit global warming below 2 degrees Celsius, takes effect on Nov. 4.

Senator Loren Legarda, United Nations Global Champion for Resilience, directed her call to the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) "to work together for the Philippines' ratification of the treaty."

"I call on all government agencies concerned to submit their respective certificates of concurrence (COC) in the Paris Agreement to the CCC and the DFA," Legarda said in her most categorical appeal yet for the Duterte administration to ratify the treaty.

"We understand that government is in transition, but we expect that the CCC and DFA have already met with the agencies and have explained the importance of this Agreement in our pursuit of sustainable development and climate and disaster resilience," she said.

President Duterte has expressed reluctance in ratifying the treaty, saying its provisions binding signatory nations to carbon emission caps might stymie the Philippines track towards industrialization.

On Wednesday, Mr. Duterte showed openness to the deal, saying he will sign if his advisers tell him it would be good for the country.

Legarda said she would work towards the Senate's concurrent ratification once the Executive has done its part.

She noted how the agreement could give disaster-prone Philippines access to the Green Climate Fund, a mechanism where developed nations, for long the world's biggest carbon emitters, would pull together funds to support "vulnerable, low emitting nations like the Philippines."

"The Paris Agreement is very important for the Philippines, being one of the most vulnerable nations to the impacts of climate change. We need to ratify the Agreement so that we can access the Green Climate Fund. The Paris Agreement addresses the issue of climate justice, which is the President's concern," Legarda said.

“There is no provision in the Paris Agreement that would prevent our industrialization. We have nothing to lose, but everything to gain with it,” she added. JE

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