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Headline: Ban on air travel for climate change talks only for DFA officials — Locsin

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MANILA, Philippines — Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. clarified that his directive to ban “air travels to climate change forums” is “strictly limited” to officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

“My ban on air travel to climate change forums is strictly limited to DFA. Of course Congress & all other dep[artments] are free to go; We will accredit them,” Locsin said over Twitter on Monday.

MY BAN ON AIR TRAVEL TO CLIMATE CHANGE FORUMS IS STRICTLY LIMITED TO DFA. OF COURSE CONGRESS & ALL OTHER DEPTS & ARE FREE TO GO; WE WILL ACCREDIT THEM. BUT WE AT DFA CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THE PRESIDENT'S DISPLEASURE WITH MORE CLIMATE TALK INSTEAD OF CLIMATE ACTION FINALLY.

— Teddy Locsin Jr. (@teddyboylocsin) June 10, 2019

The country’s top diplomat added that the DFA will “follow” President Rodrigo Duterte’s “displeasure with more climate talk instead of climate action finally.”

In a separate tweet, Locsin said that if “foreign post can travel by land, go ahead, attend, talk.”

WHAT ABOUT LAND TRAVEL TO CLIMATE CHANGE FORUMS? GOT ME THERE. SO YES, IF FOREIGN POST CAN TRAVEL BY LAND, GO AHEAD, ATTEND, TALK. CARS ARE POLLUTANTS BUT ELECTRIC TRAINS NOT WE THINK. YOU CAN SWIM. HORSEBACK, NO. THEY FART METHANE. CONGRESS MEMBERS GET ALL DFA COURTESIES DUE.

— Teddy Locsin Jr. (@teddyboylocsin) June 10, 2019

Last week, the foreign affairs chief said that he will “reject” all official participation of the Philippines in climate change conferences if it would necessitate air travel.

“I am rejecting all official participation in climate change conferences requiring air travel,” he said last June 5.

“We’ll just vote Yes to radical proposals. No more talk,” he added.

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However, his pronouncement was met with criticisms by several environmental groups.

One coalition even described his new policy as “arrogant, self-righteous, myopic and misplaced.”

But reacting to criticisms, Locsin clarified that the country would not send officials to “chitchat.”

“We just vote without talking. A Nauru UN conference in New York said that using air travel to talk about climate change makes the climate worse. (We’ll just do it via the internet.) Clean communication,” he said. (Editor: Julie Espinosa)

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