

Headline: Obama being hypocritical on climate issue—local environmental group

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A Philippine-based environmental group criticized US President Barack Obama on Thursday for his call for nations around the world to address climate change.

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"Obama's climate pep talk to big business magnates in the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) summit does not change the fact that the pledged GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions cuts of the top 20 polluter countries by 2030 will actually result in an increase in emissions," Kalikasan PNE national coordinator Clemente Bautista said in a statement.

Obama on Wednesday gave a keynote speech at the Apec CEO Summit in Manila. He called on businesses to invest in renewable energy and climate resilience.

"The possibility for us to start investing in clean energy and power generation, that is sustainable, leapfrogging old technologies and getting it to new technologies can provide enormous boost, and there are a lot of capital out there willing to invest," he said.

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Obama also called on the business leaders to support the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) or climate change negotiations in Paris to be held at the end of the year.

The COP21 is an attempt to come up with a legally binding agreement to address climate change and to limit the global temperature rise to two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Bautista said Apec will not have a big impact "if Obama's climate solution is merely a sales pitch for renewable energy on one hand, and the perpetuation of Apec's 'more business than usual' economic model on the other."

The group cited a study by US-based author and political activist Jonathan Neale who said the climate pledges of the top 20 countries producing greenhouse gas emissions were not enough.

Neale said of the 20 countries, China, India, Russia, Korea, Mexico, Indonesia, South Africa, Turkey, Thailand, Kazakhstan, United Arab Emirates and Vietnam will increase emissions by 2030.

Meanwhile, US, European Union, Japan, Canada, Brazil, Australia and Argentina will only reduce emissions by about one percent by 2030.

Bautista said the US is "the number one historical polluter while China is the current top polluter."

"Both have not committed to cut their annual carbon pollution to significant level. Their business as usual emissions are primarily contributing to dangerous climactic shifts," he explained. "This reckless emission pathway of these polluters is leading our world to more natural catastrophes and

intensifying people's vulnerability to climate change.”

Bautista claimed that Apec globalization policies only lead to an increase in coal power and other fossil fuel projects.

“In the Philippines, the energy privatization policy has led to a 348-percent increase in the power generating capacity of coal projects from 2001 to 2014. Corporate logic will simply reject Obama’s pitch and carry on with the consumption of dirt-cheap fossil fuels,” he said.

Bautista said Obama left out “other facets of the climate crisis that globalization has worsened.”

“Obama and the other APEC economic leaders are so narrowly focused on the question of energy and climate mitigation. What about the proliferation of large-scale mining, agri-industrial plantations, and other big projects that are plundering natural resources, exacerbating environmental destruction, and eroding the adaptive capacities of the poor and vulnerable?” he said.

Bautista said more than “empty rhetoric,” the world needs “deep, drastic and binding emissions cut pledges and unconditional climate reparations from the top polluter countries.”

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The US and the Philippines are among the countries that have submitted Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) ahead of the climate talks. The Philippines committed to reducing its carbon emissions by 70 percent by 2030 while maintaining a “business as usual scenario” from 2000 to 2030. However, the Philippine INDC is conditional and will rely on foreign aid and support.
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