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President Duterte's stamp of approval on the Paris Agreement, which paved the way for the Senate ratification of the climate change accord, shows his statesmanship and openness to participatory decision-making: He listened to the appeal of climate change advocates and to his Cabinet recommendation to alter his initial reservations about the pact.

This humanitarian gesture of the President benefits our country which is most vulnerable to the onslaught of extreme climate catastrophes.

Climate change threatens to bring death and irreparable destruction to our life support systems. Climate change poses to our nation and government as great a challenge as the drug menace.

The Paris Agreement will allow for a systematic transition from the use of disastrous carbon fuel to the use of a mix of alternative clean energy—solar, wind, hydro, waste and geothermal. The transition can be accomplished without impeding President Duterte's modernization plan. Likewise, it will provide for a safe and resilient community that harnesses consensus and wide social involvement.

We can now start "changing" our present fuel consumption in our power plants, transport system, buildings and homes, as well as the way we manage our industrial and municipal waste, including the way we protect our forest and oceans as the carbon sinks.

This carbon reduction program under a Duterte stewardship, without hampering industrialization, promotes our nation's interest and global survival from an overheated earth that is causing cataclysmic typhoons and super-droughts that impact considerably on poverty, health and famine.

Future generations, looking back, can only applaud this progressive decision of the President.

HEHERSON T. ALVAREZ, former senator and environment secretary

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