

Keyword: climate-change

Headline: PH Senate ratifies amendments to Kyoto pact on greenhouse gas cuts

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Published Date: 10:21 AM February 04, 2016

Section: globalnation

Word Count: 356

Content:

MANILA — The Senate on Monday concurred in the ratification of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which seeks to strengthen the country's commitment to the reduction of greenhouse gases as part of global efforts to address the effects of climate change.

A total of 144 countries need to ratify the amendment for it to be in force. As of December 21, 2015, 59 countries have ratified it.

The Kyoto Protocol is the only legally binding agreement for emission reductions for developed countries, according to Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the Senate Committee on Climate Change.

Under the protocol, 39 developed countries committed to reduce emissions of six greenhouse gases by an average of five percent below 1990 levels. The commitment period was from January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2012.

The Doha Amendment set a second commitment period for development countries to reduce their emissions of seven identified greenhouse gases by an average of 18 percent below 1990 levels. The new period would be from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2020.

"Acceptance of the Amendment ensures that the Philippines can continue to benefit from the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and the Adaptation Fund during the 2013-2020 commitment period, and consequently create new employment as it pursues sustainable development and implements adaptation projects," Legarda said in a statement.

The CDM allows emission-reduction projects in developing countries to earn emission reduction credits. The credits could be traded and sold and used by industrialized countries to meet a part of their emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol.

Legarda also said the Philippines has been in the best position to demand action from developed nations, as it has always been vulnerable to the effects of climate change but has not been a major cause of the phenomenon.

The developed nations, according to Legarda, have the historical responsibility for climate change and for cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, and should provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries affected by it. SFM

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