

Headline: Beyond Paris pact, hold biggest polluters accountable

Byline: Philippine Daily Inquirer

Published Date: 12:10 AM June 21, 2017

Section: opinion

Word Count: 3063

Content:

March for Science Philippines strongly condemns the United States, led by President Donald Trump, for pulling out of the Paris Climate Accord. America's withdrawal from the pact is a shameless act of betrayal and defiance of the scientific consensus on the reality of climate change. It shows how America is so unwilling to cooperate with the world to solve the climate crisis.

America's withdrawal also exposes Trump's appalling ignorance of or indifference to the negative impacts of climate change on communities around the globe and on the next generations, even as it plays blind, deaf and dumb to the worldwide clamor for evidence-based policy-making, which was raised in the recent March for Science global movement.

Trump says that withdrawing from the Paris Agreement is in the economic interest of the American people, and is in line with his administration's America First policy. Not true; the real reason for his decision is the interest of America's influential big businesses which stand to suffer once the agreement is in place.

The United States is in no position to argue that participation in the Paris Accord will give other countries an "unfair" advantage over America. The United States, as the largest historical emitter of greenhouse gases, has the biggest responsibility to ensure that the ill effects of climate change will be lessened, if not fully eradicated.

Contrary to Trump's claims, it is the United States that has imposed draconian social and environmental burdens on the peoples of the world, especially those who inhabit climate-change vulnerable countries. Decades of unconstrained carbon emissions from big corporations in industrialized countries, with the United States at the lead, have cost the environment a "fortune."

Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, which 195 countries has agreed upon, and which took effect in 2016, is a manifestation of the weakness of the agreement. Due to its nonbinding nature, which hinges on voluntary national pledges to reach the necessary carbon emission cuts, it has failed in addressing its prime objective of curbing the adverse effects of climate change. The numerous loopholes in the watered-down agreement has failed to hold the largest historical carbon emitter accountable; it has even allowed it to walk away from its responsibility to the environment and the people.

We in March for Science Philippines stand in solidarity with the whole world in efforts to lessen the ill effects of climate change. Beyond the Paris Climate Accord, the world must unite to condemn and to exact accountability from the United States. We call for a stronger agreement that will hold the biggest polluters accountable—an agreement that not only depends on voluntary national pledges but also has binding provisions that hold accountable big-polluter countries.

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