

Headline: Your move, Mr. President

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Regina Lopez and President Rodrigo Duterte. INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

Regina Lopez and President Rodrigo Duterte. INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

President Duterte will get a fresh report on the Paris climate agreement from Environment Secretary Gina Lopez after she returns from a climate change conference later this month, Malacañang said on Friday.

Mr. Duterte earlier expressed reluctance to honor the historic pact that intends to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, arguing that this might slow the country's development.

But his tone has since softened on the issue, saying he would listen to his advisers with regard to the international accord.

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said Lopez is expected to report back to the President after her attendance at the Marrakech Climate Change Conference.

Better informed

Lopez will brief Mr. Duterte "in order for him to have a better informed view regarding the (Paris) agreement," Andanar said.

The climate change conference, to be held from Nov. 7 to 18, is expected to delve into how to implement the goals set by the Paris agreement.

Under the Paris agreement, countries agree to work to keep global temperature from rising this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 C.

The Philippines has yet to ratify the agreement, which came into force on Friday.

Cautious

On All Saints' Day, Mr. Duterte said he was being cautious on the matter of the climate change agreement because it might contain "progressive clauses" that could tie the Philippines' hands when it comes to development.

"We're just starting. I invited a lot of investors, I will put up industrial estates. There will be a lot of smoke there and pollution. I will just look if I would have leeway and elbow room to move because the treaty now that is being signed or passed around for signing is binding," he said.

He noted that the other countries insisting on the agreement were already industrialized, unlike the Philippines.

But he also said he was just airing his misgivings, adding that he would follow what his advisers would tell him.

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"If Gina Lopez ... if the National Police would say it's good, and if the legal adviser says that I should sign, then I will sign," he said.