

Headline: Gore coming here to train PH climate warriors—Loren

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IT WAS a 30-minute call that hopes to build a new generation of climate warriors in one of the world's most vulnerable nations.

Taking a half hour off from crucial climate negotiations in Paris on Thursday, former US Vice President Al Gore called Sen. Loren Legarda to firm up his planned trip to the Philippines.

"He's coming to train the youth on climate [action]," said Legarda of Gore, founder of The Climate Reality Project, a nonprofit organization that initiated a campaign for greater climate awareness in 2005.

"He has this project that he has been doing in different parts of the world including Turkey. He had one in Miami, and he will have one in the Philippines in March. He selected Manila," said Legarda, recently appointed global champion for resilience for the United Nations climate talks in France.

The senator broke the news to the Inquirer in a chance interview at a food market at Bonifacio Global City in Taguig City on Friday night, blending in with the crowd in a white tunic, jeans and espadrilles. She had no security men around, just her driver and assistant.

Legarda said she received Gore's call at 4:30 p.m., a conversation meant to make up for a missed meeting in Paris. She said she was tied up with deliberations on the proposed 2016 budget, as the chamber's finance committee chair.

"It really was about the trip and how I, as global champion of the UN, can work together with him for the world," Legarda said animatedly.

Gore's Philippine volunteers had reached out to her six months ago, seeking help to organize the former US official's Manila visit, where he intends to give youth training on climate change.

The lawmaker is chair of the Senate committees on climate change and environment and natural resources. She authored the law that created the Philippines' Climate Change Commission.

She said Gore's associate, Australia-based conservationist Don Henry, flew to Manila a month ago to discuss the visit.

Gore's Climate Reality Leadership Corps training aims to bring together select individuals who are "committed to addressing the impacts of climate change and implementing solutions that will define us to future generations," according to the project's website (www.climaterealitytraining.org).

On his Manila stop, "he wants to engage the youth," Legarda said.

Tentatively, those interested in participating would be asked to register online, and then later screened. Details on the application process as well as the final dates for the Gore training will be announced later.

For Legarda, it would be the first time to formally meet Gore.

The senator, who has been earlier teased about the former US vice president, was seated beside Gore during his June 8, 2010, lecture on climate change in Manila.

But the lawmaker doubts he would remember her, joking while feigning a sad face: "I was a losing vice presidential candidate then, I had just cut my hair and I was depressed."

"I'm not just looking at the trip in March. I don't want to sound presumptuous but I'm looking toward a long-term engagement," she said, catching herself and clarifying that she meant the professional kind.

"[It's a] long-term engagement on how I, as an Asian, in the most vulnerable region, in the third most vulnerable nation in the world, and he, as a former [US] vice president and Nobel laureate who has been to Antarctica and all that, how we can work together," she said.

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A beaming Legarda recalled Gore's call Thursday and how he commended her efforts. "How heartwarming! He said, 'I've heard so much about all the good work you've been doing for the country and the world.' It got me teary-eyed," Legarda said.