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Headline: Senate seen to concur in ratification of the Paris climate pact

Byline: Tarra Quismundo

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MANILA, Philippines — The Senate is expected to soon concur in President Duterte's accession to the historic Paris climate agreement after it was approved on second reading Wednesday night, Sen. Loren Legarda said Thursday.

Legarda, chair of the Senate committee on climate change, said the chamber is expected to take up the agreement at the plenary next week as she expressed hopes for a speedy approval of the accession.

"I hope for the unanimous approval on third reading next week. As party to the agreement, we can influence the decisions on how the accord will be implemented and we maintain our leadership role in the international climate talks and advocacy," said Legarda, who chaired a subcommittee hearing on the accession Wednesday afternoon.

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Legarda was among key Philippine delegates to climate negotiations that led to the historic crafting to the Paris agreement, signed in April 2016.

The pact, signed after protracted negotiations among 197 United Nations member-states, aims to limit global warming below 2 degrees Celsius, as exceeding this would lead to an irreversible increase in Earth's temperature. It came into force in November following ratification of a sufficient number of countries.

Legarda said the agreement would give the Philippines access to the Green Climate Fund, a mechanism under the agreement where developed nations, for long the world's biggest carbon emitters, is obliged to pool together \$100 million annually to support vulnerable and low emitting nations in facing the impact of climate change.

"The Paris Agreement is a vehicle towards achieving climate justice as it compels developed nations that have contributed most to cause global warming to finance the Green Climate Fund and provide support to developing and vulnerable nations through capacity building and technology transfer," she said.

Climate Reality Project Philippines, a branch of former United States Vice President Al Gore's organization for climate action, welcomed the development.

"In joining the Paris Agreement, the government of the Philippines has assured that the voices of vulnerable peoples will always be heard, and the Climate Reality Philippines applauds this important step forward in the fight against climate change," said Rodne Galicha, head of the Philippine branch.

"The Paris Agreement is incredibly important for island nations like the Philippines, as deadly typhoons become more frequent and dangerous sea level rise continues to threaten Filipino

families and their abilities to live happy, healthy, comfortable lives. The government must do all it can to protect this most basic right, and joining the Paris Agreement ensures that we have the entire world in our corner,” he said. JE

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