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Environment Secretary Gina Lopez (INQUIRER FILE PHOTO / GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE)

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MANILA — The Philippines formally signing on to the Paris Agreement on climate change, as the Senate on Tuesday unanimously concurred with President Duterte's ratification of the pact, spells a "great victory" both for the country and the planet.

This is according to Environment Secretary Gina Lopez who has expressed her "elation" at the development in a statement.

"This joint executive and legislative effort shows our unwavering commitment to protect the environment on a global scale," said Lopez last Wednesday.

Lopez credited Duterte for "setting the stage" for the Senate's concurrence to the global agreement to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, saying his ratification last Feb. 28 only showed he "deeply cares for the country."

Lopez also tipped a hat to the chairperson of the Senate committee on environment, Sen. Loren Legarda, "for her decades-long crusade to popularize and elevate environmental issues."

In a separate statement, the Philippine branch of nonprofit organization Climate Reality Project likewise lauded Legarda's leadership in the Senate and the Philippine government for taking an "important step forward in the fight against climate change."

"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, and 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," said Rodne Galicha, branch manager for The Climate Reality Project's Philippines branch. SFM

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