

Headline: PH to join push for consensus in Paris summit

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PRESIDENT Aquino said on Sunday he would share with world leaders in Paris the country's experiences from devastating calamities and join a push for consensus on mitigating the effects of climate change.

Mr. Aquino was scheduled to arrive in Paris at 5 p.m. Sunday (midnight, Manila time) to attend the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) and speak for countries most vulnerable to extreme weather conditions.

After joining the gathering of 120 nations in Paris, Mr. Aquino will visit Rome and the Vatican to meet with Italian President Sergio Mattarella, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and Pope Francis to "maximize the trip for the maximum benefit" of Filipinos.

In a statement before his departure at 10:15 a. m. Sunday from Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 2, the President said the country would contribute to the COP21 the experiences of Filipinos in facing and recovering from devastating calamities.

"In the Climate Vulnerable Forum, we will represent countries most vulnerable to calamities, growing in frequency and intensity, caused by climate change," he said in Filipino.

The gathering in Paris, he said, is a chance to push for the consensus not achieved in the 2009 conference in Copenhagen, the primary purpose of which was to instill in all participating countries their moral obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"The gathering in Paris is a good opportunity to again act and stress the importance of world unity for climate change," Mr. Aquino said.

He said that French President François Hollande was in the country to lend his support when the Manila Call to Action on Climate Change was launched in February.

"In our visit to France, we will express our sympathies with the French people for the recent atrocious attack in their country. We are one with them in condemning the violence wreaked by groups with selfish interests," Mr. Aquino said.

Likewise, the President intends to speak with big companies in France to encourage them to invest and expand their businesses in the Philippines to create more jobs for Filipinos.

In his trip to Italy, where he expects to sign deals in Rome with the Italian government aimed at opening up opportunities for Filipinos, he will also meet members of the Filipino community to see to their needs and deal with their concerns.

Mr. Aquino will proceed to the Vatican where the image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia will be blessed by the Pope. "We will ask Pope Francis to pray for our country and our countrymen who are close to his heart," he said.

"We will maximize this opportunity to maximize the benefit of this trip for all Filipinos," the President said, adding that through the trip, he would proclaim the country's transformation and willingness to help in achieving the world's collective objective.

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He called on Filipinos to be part of a society that resolves problems now instead of allowing future generations to inherit them.