

Headline: Aquino to attend climate change summit in Paris

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THE TERRORIST attacks in France notwithstanding, President Aquino said Monday he was all set to attend a crucial climate change summit in Paris at the end of the month.

Mr. Aquino mentioned his trip to Paris during a dialogue at the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference (Apec) CEO Summit, as he answered a question from CNN's Andrew Stevens if he still wanted to pursue his advocacies after his presidency.

"I have said I want to take vacations," the President said, drawing laughter from his audience of more than 1,000, comprised mainly of the Asia-Pacific's business leaders.

Then he enumerated his grueling schedule in the final months of his presidency, which will end on June 30 next year.

He said that after hosting the Apec summit, he would be heading to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit in Kuala Lumpur "and then COP21."

Mr. Aquino also said he would have two more state visits but did not mention the countries he would be visiting.

The Islamic State group attacked Paris on the night of

Nov. 13, killing over 130 people in at least six sites in the city. French President François Hollande vowed that France would be "ruthless" against the Islamic extremists.

More than a 100 world leaders are expected to attend the meeting of the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) where negotiations would take place to reach a binding agreement to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-Industrial Revolution levels.

The aim is to head off the worsening impact of climate change, ranging from fiercer storms and rising sea levels to extreme rainfall and drought.

Mr. Aquino earlier hedged at going to Paris, saying that he might need to stay in the Philippines because of the El Niño phenomenon, which is expected to bring extensive damage, especially to the agriculture industry because of the extreme heat and drought.

The Philippines has become the poster boy of the disastrous impact of climate change after Super typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan), the strongest typhoon on record to make landfall, destroyed large swaths of the Visayas on

Nov. 8, 2013. More than 6,000 were killed and over 1,000 remain missing.

In February in Malacañang, Mr. Aquino and Hollande launched the Manila Call to Action on Climate Change ahead of COP21.

In October, the Philippines beat the deadline for its initial Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) that identified climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

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In its INDC, the Philippines has committed to reduce its carbon emissions by 70 percent by 2030 while maintaining a “business as usual scenario” from 2000 to 2030.