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Headline: Duterte to uphold Paris Agreement

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President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday said he will uphold the Paris Agreement, which seeks to cap the rise of global temperature resulting from climate change.

During a speech in Malacañang, Duterte said it took him and his Cabinet several hours to discuss the agreement, which was agreed upon by the previous administration.

“Yung climate change (agreement) pipirmahan ko (I will sign the climate change agreement),” he said, explaining that it was a unanimous vote for his Cabinet but after he and another member raised concerns.

In July, despite his promise to uphold all international treaties, Duterte said he will not honor the Paris Agreement because it will limit the Philippines’ economic and industrial growth. This was followed by then Senate President Franklin Drilon’s statement that the upper chamber will not ratify the agreement.

“Since it is a Cabinet decision I would go along with it and sign it,” Duterte said.

However, Duterte warned that although the agreement is a binding treaty, it does not have sanctions to hold countries accountable.

He said bigger and industrialized nations could violate it and at the same time not be forced to pay for damages.

“Whatever it is the industrial countries are known not to honor contractual obligations, especially America. It has not paid its dues to the United Nations,” Duterte claimed.

He pointed out that the climate fund will not be used to pay for damaged incurred by climate-vulnerable countries. Instead, it will be allotted for other projects.

Duterte explained that he was only expressing his opinion when he first talked about the agreement.

“I do not lose the freedom of expression just because I am the President. I am not barred from giving my own opinion just because I am the President,” he said. RAM

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