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Headline: PH to ratify Paris climate change pact

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The Philippines will ratify the landmark Paris Agreement, a legally-binding accord to combat climate change, during a signing ceremony in New York on Friday.

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje will represent President Aquino and deliver the Philippine statement at the UN headquarters on April 22, which coincides with the celebration of Earth Day.

Negotiated by 195 nations in France last December, the Paris Agreement calls for keeping the average global temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius while pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C above preindustrial levels.

2017 deadline

Climate ambassadors have until April 17, 2017 to sign the deal, and the agreement will come into force once signed by at least 55 countries.

The Philippines has pledged to reduce carbon emissions by 70 percent in 2030 through greater use of cleaner and renewable energy, improved mass transport services, more efficient waste management, reforestation and forest protection, and co-firing biomass, Paje said.

Senator Loren Legarda hailed the formal signing of the historic climate agreement whose main goal is to avoid the catastrophic effects of climate change by limiting temperature increase.

Climate justice

Legarda, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Global Champion for Resilience, made this statement when she addressed the Climate Vulnerable Forum in New York late Wednesday.

Legarda called for "climate justice for the victims of extreme weather events," apparently referencing the thousands of drought-hit farmers who protested in Kidapawan City over the lack of government subsidy and support. The four-day protest ended in a violent dispersal on April 1 that claimed the lives of three farmers.

"Is it not ironic and sheer paradoxical that the very people who till the land so that others may have their share of rice on their tables are now begging for food?" Legarda asked.

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