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Headline: PH to call for 1.5 degrees Celsius target at Paris climate summit

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PARIS—For the Philippines and other climate vulnerable countries, the number should be 1.5 and not 2.

President Aquino himself will lead the call here in Paris for any climate change agreement to be forged at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP 21) to keep global warming to the minimum at below 1.5 degrees centigrade, instead of the 2 degrees centigrade target.

Mr. Aquino will be joined by other leaders of climate vulnerable countries, United Nations officials, and over a million Filipino youth who will make their voices heard through the #NowPH social media campaign.

President Aquino will keynote the high level meeting of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), which the Philippines currently chairs, where climate vulnerable countries would adopt what has been described as a “historic joint declaration” to call for Paris to agree to a 1.5 degrees Celsius long-term goal.

It would be followed by the #1o5C action.

The event takes place at 6:15 p.m. here (1 am in Manila), a few hours after Mr. Aquino gives his three-minute speech at the Leaders’ Event at COP 21.

With President Aquino at the CVF meeting are Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Climate Change; Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction; and Saleemul Huq, Chair of the CVF Expert Advisory Group and Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development.

The CVF is a bloc of 20 most climate vulnerable countries, with 23 incoming members from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Pacific.

The 20 participating countries are the Philippines, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Maldives, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Ghana, Nepal, Timor-Leste, Barbados, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Kiribati, Madagascar, Maldives, Nepal, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Vietnam.

Their representatives met in Manila last month where the call for the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal, supported by 106 countries, was articulated in the Manila Communique.

“We feel the 2 degrees centigrade global warming target in [the Paris agreement] draft is insufficient and inadequate,” Emmanuel de Guzman of the Philippine Climate Change Commission and head of the Philippine delegation of negotiators in Paris said in a recent interview.

De Guzman said that the world has witnessed how a less than one-degree rise in global temperature has already brought hazardous impact on communities.

De Guzman said that limiting global warming target to 1.5 degrees centigrade “is a matter of human survival.”

“The parties must set limit to global warming at 1.5 degrees centigrade to safeguard communities and the environment,” de Guzman said.

The #1o5C campaign emphasizes that keeping global warming at 1.5 degrees centigrade or below is the “only way” to guarantee the planet’s survival.

It said that warming beyond 1.5 degrees centigrade could cause low-lying nations like the Maldives, Kiribati, and Tuvalu and other coastal regions to disappear.

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Moreover, the #1o5C campaign highlights how “the impact of climate change also undermines a variety of fundamental human rights, including the right to life and rights relating to health, food, and water, among others.” (