

President yet to sign Paris climate deal

By Alexis Romero

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MANILA, Philippines – Was President Duterte pressured to honor the Paris climate deal?

It has been more than a month since the Chief Executive announced he is signing the climate agreement but he still continues to have reservations over it.

Yesterday, Duterte revealed that non-government organizations (NGOs) “who are more intelligent than the President” were among those who persuaded him to support the deal.

“I don’t know... I just signed it because of the NGOs. You know, the NGOs in the Philippines are brighter than the President. So, fine, I just signed it,” the President said in Filipino during his visit to typhoon victims in Camarines Sur.

Climate change has been linked to carbon emissions caused by human activities. The phenomenon has been blamed for natural disasters and drastic weather changes.

Last April, more than 150 countries inked the historic Paris climate deal that seeks to limit global warming “well below” two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. World leaders have also vowed to work to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The Philippines, one of the countries prone to cyclones, has yet to ratify the agreement. During the term of president Benigno Aquino III, the government committed to cut carbon emissions by 70 percent by 2030 – even if the Philippines is not a major emitter.

Duterte initially said he would not honor the deal because it could stunt the country’s development.

He also criticized the developed nations for imposing emission caps on developing countries like the Philippines, adding that these nations were the ones that caused massive pollution during the Industrial Age.

“The reason why I did not agree to it was simply there was no sanctions,” the President said, referring to countries that cannot fulfill their commitments.

He also said that the agreement did not specify where the climate fund would come from.

“It was not because I really did not want to sign it but it was lopsided in favor of the powerful ones,” he said.

“So I’m inviting everybody, including Japan. Naturally, the development of foreigners is always through machines... So we would need a little bit of elbow room to move.”