

# Senate to ratify Paris Agreement ‘by July’

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**By Hannah Torregoza**

The Senate will ratify the Paris Agreement this year now that President Rodrigo Duterte has expressed his willingness to sign the pact that would put a cap to global warming caused mainly by the burning of gas, coal and oil.

Senate president Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III said the projected timetable would be on the middle of this year or July.

“It would be submitted to the Senate for concurrence. So that is the information received by the delegation from the executive branch. So give us six months and then we’ll let that ratify,” Pimentel said during a press briefing on Monday, January 9 after holding close-door talks with French senators at the Sofitel Hotel in Pasay City.



*FILE – In this April 3, 2014 file photo giant machines dig for brown coal at the open-cast mining Garzweiler in front of a smoking power plant near the city of Grevenbroich in western Germany. The world is nowhere near on track to achieve the ambitious temperature goals adopted in the landmark Paris Agreement on climate change, the U.N. said Thursday Nov. 3, 2016, warning of a worldwide human tragedy unless governments step up efforts to fight global warming. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner, File) Manila Bulletin*

Together with Pimentel are Senate climate change chief Loren Legarda, Senate president pro tempore Franklin Drilon, senators Juan Miguel Zubiri, Joseph Victor “JV” Ejercito and Cynthia Villar.

Legarda said she has clarified President Duterte’s stand on the climate change deal with their French counterparts despite his hesitation to honor the agreement.

"I already clarified with them the process of ratification and I already mentioned the earlier reports. The president has always been for climate justice and for decades, I have been for climate justice because the Philippines is non-emitter in the world. It doesn't mean that if you are for climate justice that you are against an agreement," Legarda said.

"So let's clarify that so that the facts are accurate. The government is for the agreement."

Legarda said 32 out of 33 government agencies have already submitted their certificates of concurrence, which she hopes would soon be transmitted to the Senate.

"The Senate president, Senate pro tempore all of us sitting here are environmentalists and climate advocates. I am certain we will be able to shepherd the concerns and ratification within the year," she said.

The French Senate, led by Sen. Gerard Miquel is in the Philippines for a four-day parliamentary and diplomatic talks as part of the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Philippine-French diplomatic relations.

Miquel said even the Department of Foreign Affairs has made the commitment to ratify the climate change pact.

"We met this morning with the secretary of foreign affairs, who very much assured us of the willingness of the Philippine government to expedite the agreement by July," Miquel told reporters during the press briefing.

He said both sides have agreed that France and the Philippines have to work together on the priority of issues for the protection of the environment, primarily in the production of clean renewable energy which is very important.

"But there are also other issues that we, to which we can be potentially helpful such as the recycling of water for example. Too many children worldwide get sick and die every day because of polluted water that they have to consume," he said.

"So the lack of access to clean water is one very important issue on which France is involved on. The sources of clean water, clean natural water, mostly preserved is an important priority. And of course this requires the installation of equipment that will allow us to retreat solid water," the French senator said.

Originally, Duterte expressed misgivings about the climate deal but changed his mind after several Cabinet meetings and securing a near-unanimous decision in favor of it.

The president complained that the pact—the first universal and legally binding agreement on climate change—does not sanction countries that would violate carbon emission restrictions.

Duterte also expressed concerns the pact would slow down the government's industrialization program.

More than 190 countries, including the Philippines, agreed to adopt the Paris Agreement on Climate Change signed in December 2015.