

# Senate vows to ratify Paris agreement this year

*Nation*

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**THE Senate will ratify the Paris agreement within the year, Senate President Aquilino L. Pimentel III assured French counterparts during a meeting yesterday.**

"The projected timetable is by middle of this year. (The Paris agreement) will be submitted to the Senate for concurrence," Mr. Pimentel III said during the press conference of the Philippine-France Parliamentary Friendship Association, after delegates from the Philippine and French Senates met at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila in Pasay City.

"Give us six months to get that ratified," he added.

Delegates from the French Senate, headed by Senator Gerard Miquel who is the President of the France-Southeast ASia Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group, visited the Philippines from Jan. 6 to 9 to advance the cooperation between the two countries, particularly in the field of environmental protection and climate change.

Among the topics discussed was the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, an international pact that aims to reduce global warming, which the Philippines is signatory to.

President Rodrigo R. Duterte, however, has been ambivalent about the matter, saying on different occasions last year that he has misgivings about the agreement, later expressing support, and again threatening to pull the country out of the pact.

For her part, Senator Loren B. Legarda, chair of the Senate committees on climate change and finance yesterday said: "The President has always been for climate justice and for decades I have been for climate justice, because the Philippines is a [carbon] non-emitter in the world. It doesn't mean that when you're for climate justice you're against the [Paris] agreement."

"The government is for agreement, and hopefully soon it will be transmitted to the Senate," she said.

Ms. Legarda added that all the senators who participated in the meeting with the French legislators -- Mr. Pimentel, Senate President Pro-Tempore Franklin M. Drilon, Cynthia A. Villar, Juan Miguel F. Zubiri and Joseph Victor G. Ejercito -- support the agreement

Speaking to reporters after the press conference, Mr. Pimentel said: "In the Senate we need 16 votes to concur, I think we have the 16."

## **GREEN ECONOMY**

Ms. Legarda further said that a more environmentally-aware policy thrust will not hamper Philippine economic growth.

"A low-carbon economy does not necessarily mean that we will not grow by leaps and bounds in terms of our GDP (gross domestic product)," Ms. Legarda said during the press conference. "In fact, sustainable development, having a green economy or what I would like

to call a low-carbon economy, is even going to be more beneficial to business and to industries.”

“When the green climate fund under the Paris agreement will be activated, if it’s not activated yet, France will be one of the major countries which would contribute towards the \$100 billion in the green climate fund for which the Philippines as a vulnerable nation can access both technical and financial assistance,” she explained.

The senator also cited a French government-funded marine environment monitoring system for the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, currently under review by the National Economic and Development Authority, as one of the cooperations between our countries for environmental protection.

For his part, Mr. Miquel, said in French: “It doesn’t make sense that we just import technologies to the Philippines, they have to be developed locally so that means more sustainable jobs to the future that is very much tied to the green economy.”

The delegation likewise extended an invitation to the Philippine Senate to visit France, to discuss, among other topics the French system of government.

“We accepted immediately the invitation from the French delegation to visit France so we can have a firsthand look at their system of government and then learn from them when they explain to us their system of government,” Mr. Pimentel said. “But it’s not for federalism, it’s for the executive-legislative setup because France is not a federal system of government.”

During their four day visit to the Philippines, the French delegation also met with Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto R. Yasay, Cebu Governor Hilario P. Davide III and Cebu City Mayor Tomas R. Osmeña.