

# What's next after Paris Accord ratification?

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President Rodrigo R. Duterte recently approved the historic Paris Accord on Climate Change, which the Senate is expected to ratify soon. Despite his previous misgivings, it appears the President changed his mind when most of his Cabinet were for the deal and when it became clear the Philippines could still revise or re-negotiate its pledge—or intended nationally determined contribution (INDC)—of reducing carbon emissions by 70 percent by 2030.

The next big step is to implement and rally the people behind helping achieve the goal of limiting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius or less from pre-industrial levels.

Ratifying the deal will enable the country to avail itself of the United Nations' Green Climate Fund (GCF), consisting of funds, technology transfer and capacity-building.

When the GCF was founded in 2010, several industrialized countries committed to put up a fund of \$100 billion a year by 2020. So far, \$10.3 billion has been pledged and as of February 28, 2017, \$1.5 billion has been raised for mitigation and adaptation projects in developing countries.

The GCF aims to finance projects that help reduce carbon emissions by promoting renewable-energy (RE) generation and energy efficiency in transport, buildings, cities, industries and home appliances. It also targets increasing climate resilience in health, food, water security, livelihood, infrastructure and ecosystems—especially in developing countries.

Our technical and environmental experts should identify our own areas of priority and begin to craft initial project plans for which foreign funding could be applied. We could learn from what has already been done around the world in terms of climate-change mitigation and adaptation. Or, more important, turn to our experiences with great natural disasters, like Super typhoon Yolanda. But are we ready to implement the Paris Accord?

For years the UN has lauded our climate-change laws to be among the most progressive and forward-looking in Asia, if not the entire world. For example, the Climate Change Act of 2009 (Republic Act [RA] 9729) mandates that each LGU should craft a local climate change action plan (LCCAP). However, in November 2016, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) reported that since 2013, only 167 cities and municipalities out of the 1,634 across the country—or only 10 percent—have completed such LCCAPs.

Close to a decade after the country enacted the Renewable Energy Law of 2008 (RA 9513), the uptake of RE technologies is still very sluggish, bogged down in part by the myth that RE is still more expensive than traditional energy sources. But, the fact is, the cost per megawatt of solar has already dropped by 80 percent and wind by almost 50 percent since 2010.

Many have said that since Yolanda, the Philippines has gained a measure of moral suasion to demand concerted global action against climate change. Now is the time for the Philippines to walk the talk.