

Philippines becomes party to climate deal today

[By Paolo Romero](#)

(The Philippine Star) | Updated April 22, 2017 - 12:00am



***EARTH DAY:** A woman walks across a field in the rain in this undated photo, from the World Meteorological Organization, posted on the United Nations website to celebrate International Mother Earth Day today. The theme of Earth Day 2017 is 'environmental and climate literacy,' which emphasizes the importance of education in confronting global warming.*

MANILA, Philippines - The Philippines will mark Earth Day today with its formal commitment to comply with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which seeks to reduce greenhouse gases globally by 2030.

The historic climate pact, signed by 175 nations, puts a cap on greenhouse gas emissions, pursues the global development of renewable energy, and aids climate vulnerable countries to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change.

Last March 14, the Senate concurred with the Philippines' accession to the climate pact.

The Philippine Mission to the United Nations deposited the country's Instrument of Accession to the UN Treaty Section on March 23. It will enter into force for the Philippines after 30 days, or today.

"Earth Day will once again be historic for the Philippines as it will mark the commencement of the Paris Agreement's legal force and effect in our country. It will also mark a great start to our journey toward a resilient and sustainable future," Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the Senate committee on climate change, said yesterday.

She said one of the immediate effects of the agreement's entry into force is that the Philippines will no longer be just an observer in the next meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement or the CMA.

“It is important that we actively participate in the CMA so that we continue to advance our country’s interests. We need to exercise governance, oversight, leadership and decision-making in the implementation of the agreement,” she added.

Legarda noted that since the Paris Agreement allows the country’s access to international climate finance mechanisms, it is important for the government to immediately identify programs that can be funded.

The Philippines can secure support from developed countries for adaptation, mitigation, technology development and transfer, and capacity building projects.

Such projects could help finance the development and roll out of the country’s early warning systems, comprehensive risk assessment and management tools, and other capacity-building projects and programs that would make Philippine communities more resilient to climate change, Legarda explained.

Yesterday, Climate Reality Project-Philippines handed out its leadership awards for 2017 to various groups and individuals, including Legarda, for their work in fighting climate change.

The Climate Reality Project is a non-profit organization founded by Nobel laureate and former US vice president Al Gore.

Catholics to gather in Rizal Park for Earth Day

Thousands of Catholics will also gather in Rizal Park today to promote environmental awareness and stewardship as part of the Earth Day commemoration.

The Archdiocese of Manila yesterday said they intend to turn the area around the Lapu-Lapu monument in Rizal Park into an “Earth Day Laudato Si Village.”

“Laudato Si (praise be to you) refers to the thought-provoking encyclical letter issued by Pope Francis in 2015 exhorting ‘every person living on this planet’ to ‘care for our common home,’” the Archdiocese said in a statement.

The gathering will also be an integral part of the #Mercy2Earth campaign initiated by the Global Catholic Climate Movement to encourage reflection and action on the papal message, “Show Mercy to Our Common Home.”

“Our celebration of the Earth Day and the Divine Mercy Sunday this weekend offers a well-timed opportunity for all of us to gather together and manifest our unity to protect God’s creation from acts of apathy, heartlessness and greed that contribute to climate change and harm human life and dignity,” Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle said.

“Incidentally, our gathering falls on the day when the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which aims to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, will enter into force for the Philippines. This makes our celebration even more historic and timely,” he added.

The gathering will commence with a walk from four different locations going to the Lapu-Lapu monument. An inter-faith and indigenous “Prayer for the Creation” will follow after the “Breakfast Agape.”

A short sharing on Pope Francis’ call to acts of mercy for our common home will be led by Fr. Ricardo Valencia Jr., minister of the Archdiocesan Ministry on Ecology/Environment and Disaster Response.

Secretary Frances Veronica Victorio of the Climate Change Commission will talk about the Paris Agreement and the country’s obligations under the treaty.

The mural on the Philippine Commitment to Climate Agreement will then be unveiled.

There will also be simultaneous workshops and exhibits showcasing various solutions to the climate crisis, including practical measures to prevent and reduce wastes and emissions that pollute the environment and warm the climate. – **With Evelyn Macairan**