

Philippines to ratify climate pact

November 7 2016



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte inspects Japan's coast guard drills in Yokohama on October 27, 2016

The Philippines will ratify a global pact aimed at taming climate change, President Rodrigo Duterte said Monday, reversing his opposition to the historic United Nations agreement he previously dubbed "crazy".

In announcing the decision to sign up to the Paris Agreement, Duterte said he still had misgivings but his cabinet members overwhelmingly disagreed with him.

"After so much debate, the [climate change](#) (agreement), I will sign it because it was a unanimous vote except for one or two (in cabinet)," Duterte told reporters.

The Philippines last year signed up with the rest of the world to the pact, which aims to cap [global warming](#) at well below two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), and 1.5 Celsius if possible, compared with pre-industrial levels.

However shortly after taking office on June 30, Duterte criticised the commitments made by the administration of his predecessor Benigno Aquino.

Those commitments were to cut emissions of the greenhouse gases blamed for global warming by 70 percent by 2030 from 2000 levels, on condition it got support from developed nations to convert to clean technologies.

When he railed in July against the Philippines' commitments, Duterte said the agreement would stop developing countries from industrialising by burning fossil fuels—as rich nations had done.



Children swim at the sea near houses constructed on the breakwater at Manila Bay in March 2016

"There is no treaty to honour. We have not signed the treaty," Duterte said then.

"If you will not allow us to reach parity, you are already there and we are still here, then I'm saying that's crazy. I will not agree to that."

However the Paris Agreement does indeed allow for developing nations to continue to burn fossil fuels.

Duterte's cabinet members, some other lawmakers and one of his most important political allies, ex-president Fidel Ramos, said following those comments that they would try to educate the president about the Philippines' climate future.

Committing to the pact is a two-step process. The first occurred with the initial pledges and agreement in Paris last year. The second is a formal ratification.

The pact went into force last week after 55 parties to the UN's climate convention (UNFCCC), responsible for at least 55 percent of global [greenhouse gas emissions](#), ratified it.

In little over four months in office, Duterte has created an international reputation for incendiary rhetoric that is not necessarily backed up by action.

He has repeatedly threatened to tear up the Philippines' long-standing alliance with the United States and eject American forces from his country, although this has not happened.

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