Change of mind, change of heart: Philippine President signs Instrument of Accession of the Philippines to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte who previously rejected the climate deal calling it a "stupid" and "unfair agreement" that could limit the industrialization of developing countries like the Philippines signed the Instrument of Accession to the Paris agreement on 28 February 2017. He noted in November 2016 that the Agreement did not enumerate sanctions for parties that failed to comply with their obligations. "If there is no sanction and you are asking somebody to do something or not to do something and there is no sanction or punishment or whatever, then it's nothing."

The signature of President Duterte signifies impending ratification of the Agreement by the Senate (Upper House) of the Congress of the Philippines which will allow the country to push for stronger compliance to the provisions of the pact. It will enable the Philippines to sit in the conference of the parties in November 2017 that will tackle the status of implementation of the Paris Agreement. As the third most climate- vulnerable developing country in the world, it is important that the Philippines remain a strong voice and advocate of the principles of historical responsibility and common but differentiated responsibilities.

Philippine accession to the Agreement includes a declaration with a statement laying down the groundwork for a comprehensive review of the contributions that the country will provide to efforts that will address climate change. The review will include a wider consultation on the previously submitted conditional emission reduction pledge of 70% towards the development of the Nationally Determined Contributions and will take into consideration our capacity to implement such contribution, support received from developed countries for action and our development pathway.

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