NEWS ROUNDUP
26 FEBRUARY 2026 | 08:00 am

- PHL faces climate-related credit risk
- Earth's 'green center' is drifting, and climate change is pushing it
- Professionals tasked to be dedicated, innovative on preserving forests, addressing climate change
- 'Groundbreaking' model can calculate true impact of climate change and it's bad news for Europe
- Planned Climate Relocations in Philippines Threaten Human Rights
- Over a billion fear losing land and homes within five years

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- CCC: Behavior change, systemic reform vital in anti-plastic drive

BUSINESS WORLD

PHL faces climate-related credit risk
By: Katherine K. Chan

THE PHILIPPINES is among the countries most vulnerable to climate-related credit risks as extreme weather imperils the country's economic and fiscal stability, Fitch Ratings said.

"We expect physical climate risks to have an adverse (effect) on the Philippines economy and public finances through various channels," Edward Parker, Fitch Ratings managing director and global head of research, sovereigns and supranationals, told BusinessWorld in an e-mail.

EARTH.COM

Earth's 'green center' is drifting, and climate change is pushing it
By: Eric Ralls

Earth's peak greenness has shifted decisively toward the northeast over the past four decades, establishing a measurable relocation of the planet's living surface.

That steady drift redraws where seasonal plant growth concentrates, altering the geographic balance of carbon uptake and ecosystem timing worldwide.

From daily satellite views of global vegetation, a single shifting point marks where the planet's greenery concentrates most strongly at any moment.

ENVIRONEWS NIGERIA

Professionals tasked to be dedicated, innovative on preserving forests, addressing climate change

Director-General, Federal College of Forestry, Ibadan, Prof. Zachariah Yaduma, has said enormous challenges facing the world in preserving forests and addressing climate change require the dedication and innovation of forestry professionals.

Yaduma made the assertion at the matriculation ceremony held for 333 fresh students admitted into the college for the 2025/26 academic session.

Some 234 students were offered admission to pursue various National Diploma (ND) programmes while 99 others were admitted for Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes.

EURONEWS

'Groundbreaking' model can calculate true impact of climate change and it's bad news for Europe
By: Liam Gilliver

Researchers have created a new mathematical solution to analyse how emission-intensive actors are responsible for increasing climate damage.
A "groundbreaking" study has lifted the lid on just how much human-made climate change is impacting extreme weather across Europe.

Climate researcher Gottfried Kirchengast and his team at the University of Graz in Austria have developed a new method for computing the hazards from extreme events such as heat waves, floods and droughts.

FUNDS FOR NGOS

Planned Climate Relocations in Philippines Threaten Human Rights

Following Typhoon Odette in December 2021, which devastated Siargao in the Philippines, authorities began relocating entire communities to areas deemed safer. These efforts, however, have largely ignored international standards and the rights of affected residents, particularly people with disabilities. Many relocation initiatives lacked meaningful consultation, accessible information, and inclusive participation, leaving displaced communities at risk of future extreme weather events and undermining their ability to maintain livelihoods, access services, and preserve cultural and social ties.

UN NEWS

Over a billion fear losing land and homes within five years

The finding comes in a UN-backed report that underscores the need for stronger political commitment and inclusive policies around land rights amid growing focus on climate change, biodiversity protection, gender equality and rural transformation.

Over the past two decades, governments have adopted national and international frameworks on issues such as land policy in Africa and responsible regulation of land, fisheries and forests – resulting in more than 70 countries undertaking efforts towards land reform.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

CCC: Behavior change, systemic reform vital in anti-plastic drive
By: Marita Moaje

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is expanding its anti-plastic advocacy from periodic awareness campaigns to a sustained push for behavior change and systemic reform.

In a news release Wednesday, CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje said through its “Bawal Plastik Dito” (plastic is banned here) online campaign, the agency emphasized that reducing reliance on disposables is essential to strengthening climate resilience, particularly in the Philippines, which remains highly vulnerable to climate-related disasters.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS WORLD

PHL faces climate-related credit risk
By: Katherine K. Chan

THE PHILIPPINES is among the countries most vulnerable to climate-related credit risks as extreme weather imperils the country's economic and fiscal stability, Fitch Ratings said.

"We expect physical climate risks to have an adverse (effect) on the Philippines economy and public finances through various channels," Edward Parker, Fitch Ratings managing director and global head of research, sovereigns and supranationals, told BusinessWorld in an e-mail.

THE PHILIPPINES is among the countries most vulnerable to climate-related credit risks as extreme weather imperils the country's economic and fiscal stability, Fitch Ratings said.

"We expect physical climate risks to have an adverse (effect) on the Philippines economy and public finances through various channels," Edward Parker, Fitch Ratings managing director and global head of research, sovereigns and supranationals, told BusinessWorld in an e-mail.

"Unfortunately, more frequent and severe storms and flooding will cause loss of life, and damage to homes, infrastructure and business that will cause disruption to economic activity, associated loss of tax revenues and rebuilding costs," he added.

In a recent report, Fitch determined that the Philippines faces one of the highest physical risk pressures on credit by 2050.

"Fitch Ratings believes the Philippines is one of the sovereigns most exposed to physical climate risks, based on an array of data and climate projections that feed into our Climate Vulnerability Signals," Mr. Parker said. "It is particularly exposed to more frequent and severe storms and floods, and to a lesser extent to sea level rise."

"We do not view it as particularly exposed to transition risks," he added.

In the Climate Vulnerability Signals (Climate.VS) report, Fitch analyzed sovereign credit profiles' potential exposure to climate-related risks from 2030 to 2050 by scoring them on a scale of 0 to 100, based on both physical and transition risks.

Out of the 119 countries analyzed, 60 countries, including the Philippines, were at risk of a credit rating downgrade due to issues arising from climate concerns.

Physical risks include heatwaves and wildfires, droughts, storms, floods and landslides, and a rise in sea levels.

Meanwhile, transition risks pertain to fossil fuel dependence or the exposure of major fossil fuel producers to a projected decline in global demand for fossil fuels as well as green energy costs or the cost of de-carbonization.

Based on the debt watcher's Climate.VS, the Philippines scored 55 out of 100 in terms of overall physical risk (VSp).

A VSp of 50 means Fitch Ratings could bring the country's credit rating one notch lower.

Fitch Ratings last affirmed its "BBB" long-term foreign currency issuer default rating and "stable" outlook for the Philippines in April last year.

A "stable" outlook means the Philippines will likely maintain its rating in the next 18 to 24 months.

The Philippines usually encounters about 20 storms yearly due its proximity to the Pacific Ocean, according to the state weather bureau Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

In 2025, 23 typhoons hit the country, affecting millions of Filipinos and leaving billions of pesos worth of damage nationwide.

Fitch's Mr. Parker said such climate risks could disrupt the local agriculture sector, potentially causing food prices and overall inflation to spike.

"Public expenditure aimed at mitigating some of the effects could also add to budget deficits, other things equal," he added.

Considering this, the country should invest in flood control and disaster preparedness initiatives to ensure the economy has adequate buffers against climate-related risks, Mr. Parker noted.

"Investment in infrastructure such as sea and flood defenses in critical areas and in disaster preparedness capacity can help countries to mitigate some of the impact of physical climate risks," he said. "They can also help to adapt to physical risks through careful consideration of planning, development and land use."

Last year, extensive flooding revealed substandard or nonexistent flood control projects across the country. These practices were later linked to Public Works officials, lawmakers and contractors who allegedly received kickbacks from the government's infrastructure program.

Fitch Ratings earlier told this paper that the graft scandal also risks the Philippines' credit rating due to its impact on political stability, fiscal policy implementation, as well as business and consumer confidence.

PAGASA expects four to 11 tropical cyclones to hit the country until July this year, with zero to one storm monthly until April and one to two each in May and June.

EARTH.COM

Earth's 'green center' is drifting, and climate change is pushing it
By: Eric Ralls

Earth's peak greenness has shifted decisively toward the northeast over the past four decades, establishing a measurable relocation of the planet's living surface.

That steady drift redraws where seasonal plant growth concentrates, altering the geographic balance of carbon uptake and ecosystem timing worldwide.

From daily satellite views of global vegetation, a single shifting point marks where the planet's greenery concentrates most strongly at any moment.

Working from that planetary record, Professor Miguel Mahecha at Leipzig University documented how this balance point has moved persistently northeast over recent decades.

Rather than swinging evenly between hemispheres, the annual loop now leans north in every season and stretches farther east than before.

By compressing global plant activity into one moving coordinate, the finding sets up a clearer test of what forces are pushing Earth's green center off its historical track.

A wave with seasons

Each year, the green center swung north and south in step with seasons, tracing a loop across land and ocean.

Sunlight drives the rhythm as plants add chlorophyll and leaf area in spring, then pull back when light fades.

By mid-July, the center reached the North Atlantic near Iceland, then dipped off Liberia in West Africa around March.

Because that loop repeats, small long-term changes show up as a steady lean rather than random year-to-year wobble.

The year-round northward pull

Over decades, the looping path crept north in every season, even during the southern summer when the team expected a southward tug.

Carbon dioxide explained about 70% of observed global greening, a long-term rise in leaf cover worldwide, in one large analysis.

Longer growing seasons and milder winters keep northern forests and farms greener later into fall, pushing that balance point north.

For now, the study linked the motion to broad climate and land changes, not to one simple culprit.

An eastward tug

Eastward motion showed up too, and the green center moved toward Asia as changes piled up in specific regions.

Greening hotspots in India, China, and parts of Russia added extra leaf area, pulling the global balance point east.

Farm expansion, tree planting, and forest recovery can all raise that signal, even if nearby places dry out.

Because longitude responds to where people manage land, the eastward drift points straight at human decisions.

Balancing the planet

Rather than tracking every forest and field separately, the team reduced Earth's living surface to one moving balance point.

"If you then carefully place this globe into calm water, the centre of mass will always point downward," said Mahecha.

By calculating that point through time, the team could talk about direction and speed without drowning in local details.

Miles per decade

At summer peaks, the balance point moved north by about 1.2 to 1.5 miles per year.

Since 2010, the strongest northward push came during Southern Hemisphere summer, climbing to about 8.7 miles per year.

With the southern leg moving north faster, the north-south swing shrank, meaning global greenness traveled a shorter distance each year.

Less movement between hemispheres could change when ecosystems absorb carbon and release water, especially during hot, dry summers.

Models test the future

To see what might come next, the researchers ran the same metric through six major climate models.

Those Earth system models, computer simulations that couple land, air, and oceans, kept the northward drift under every scenario tested.

Under higher warming, the models sent the balance point farther east, although they disagreed sharply on the pace.

That uncertainty flags a weak spot in how models handle vegetation, which affects carbon budgets and long-term climate planning.

Life follows green timing

Many animals time migration, breeding, and feeding so they arrive when new plant growth makes food easy to find.

Ecologists call that calendar phenology, the seasonal timing of growth, flowering, and dormancy across ecosystems.

When spring greening lingers longer in northern regions, some species can miss the best window for leaves or insects.

A simple global marker could help conservationists compare regions, then focus local tracking where timing problems are most likely.

Watching Earth's green center

Satellites cannot see everything clearly, and clouds, snow, or dense evergreen can blur what greenness means on the ground.

To make the work checkable, the team released scripts that rebuild every figure and its codebase.

Even with the code publicly available, the metric operates at a global scale, so it cannot pinpoint whether drought, wildfire, or farming caused a specific shift.

Paired with regional studies, however, the moving balance point can highlight where Earth's living surface is changing most rapidly.

By distilling the planet's plant growth into a single shifting balance point, the researchers made global change easier to track and explain.

The next step is to connect that movement to specific regions and drivers, and to see whether similar indicators could help monitor other Earth systems.

ENVIRONEWS NIGERIA

Professionals tasked to be dedicated, innovative on preserving forests, addressing climate change

Director-General, Federal College of Forestry, Ibadan, Prof. Zachariah Yaduma, has said enormous challenges facing the world in preserving forests and addressing climate change require the dedication and innovation of forestry professionals.

Yaduma made the assertion at the matriculation ceremony held for 333 fresh students admitted into the college for the 2025/26 academic session.

Some 234 students were offered admission to pursue various National Diploma (ND) programmes while 99 others were admitted for Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes.

The Director-General urged the new students to embrace the values of hard work, integrity, and a deep sense of responsibility toward the environment.

He assured the students that the college has all it takes to prepare them, not just for employment, but for innovation and entrepreneurship in a rapidly changing world.

“The Federal College of Forestry was established not merely to award certificates, but to build character, competence, and capacity.

“We have a rich legacy of producing graduates who have gone on to make remarkable contributions to the field of forestry, environmental conservation, and sustainable development.

“As you embark on this academic journey, remember that you are not just students; you are the custodians of our forests, the guardians of our environment, and the future leaders who will shape the destiny of our nation’s natural resources,” he added.

Also speaking, the Guest Lecturer, Prof. Lateef Sanni, the Executive Director/CEO, Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute (NSPRI), charged both new and old students to unlock hidden treasures in forestry.

Sanni said that Nigeria’s annual 3.7 per cent deforestation rate ranks among the highest globally, noting that the country had about 30 per cent to 35 per cent of forest in the 1960s, but the current Nigerian forest cover was below 10 per cent.

He charged universities and colleges in Nigeria to intensify teaching on sustainability, environmental ethics, and also promote research and innovation.

“As a student matriculating into forestry education, you need to accept the responsibility to protect, manage, and advance Nigeria’s forest resources for generations to come,” Sanni said.

Earlier, the Provost of the College, Dr Ibraheem Lawal, in his remarks, said that the College had developed a strategic blueprint aimed at repositioning the institution to align with modern tertiary education standards through massive infrastructural development.

He added that the College had undergone a resource inspection as part of efforts to secure approval to commence the Science and Laboratory Technology (SLT) programme, an initiative aimed at significantly boosting student enrollment.

The provost warned that the College has zero tolerance for cultism, examination malpractice, indecent dressing, and other forms of misconduct.

“Our programmes are practical oriented, and failure in any practical component amounts to failure in the course.

“Also, our certificates are awarded only to students found worthy in character and learning.

“As you have worked hard to reach this stage, I encourage you not to relent. Maintain focus, discipline, and a high academic spirit, and ensure you finish strong,” he said.

The highlight of the occasion was the signing of oath of allegiance by the matriculating students and recognition of outstanding students from various departments in the college.

EURONEWS

'Groundbreaking' model can calculate true impact of climate change and it's bad news for Europe
By: Liam Gilliver

Researchers have created a new mathematical solution to analyse how emission-intensive actors are responsible for increasing climate damage.
A "groundbreaking" study has lifted the lid on just how much human-made climate change is impacting extreme weather across Europe.

Climate researcher Gottfried Kirchengast and his team at the University of Graz in Austria have developed a new method for computing the hazards from extreme events such as heat waves, floods and droughts.

Using a new mathematical solution, the model can be used to compute the frequency, duration, intensity, spatial extent and other variables of extreme events. This allows researchers to analyse the extent to which emission-intensive actors such as states or companies are responsible for increasing climate damages and risks.

"If suitable long-term climate data are available, the development of climate hazard metrics for extremes of interest can be tracked year by year and decade by decade – in European countries and any other region worldwide," says Kirchengast.

Researchers used the new method to investigate changes in extreme heat events in Austria and across Europe, using datasets of daily maximum temperatures from 1961 to 2024.

The threshold for "extreme" was taken as the temperature at each location that exceeded the daily values in the period from 1961 to 1990 by one per cent. For Austria, this was 30°C, in southern Spain it was over 35°C and in Finland it was around 25°C.

The study, published in the journal Weather and Climate Extremes, found that the total extremity of heat in Austria and most regions of Central and Southern Europe has increased about tenfold in the current climate period from 2010-2024 compared to 1961-1990

"This massive increase in the total extremity metric goes far beyond its natural variability and shows the influence of human-made climate change with a clarity that even I as a climate researcher have never seen before," says Kirchengast.

The cost of extreme weather
Thousands of deaths across Europe last summer were attributed to extreme heat, as temperatures soared to 40℃ across large parts of the continent and pushed several countries into drought.

Researchers at Imperial College London and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine looked at 854 European cities and found that climate change was responsible for 68 per cent of the 24,400 estimated heat deaths during this period, having raised temperatures by up to 3.6°C.

2025's extreme summer weather also sparked short-term economic losses of at least €43 billion, with total costs slated to hit a staggering €126 billion by 2029.

A study published back in September, led by Dr Sehrish Usman at the University of Mannheim in collaboration with European Central Bank (ECB) economists, found that heatwaves, droughts and floods affected a quarter of all EU regions during the 2025 summer.

The immediate losses amount to 0.26 per cent of the EU's economic output in 2024, but the study's authors stress that these estimates are likely conservative as they don't include compound impacts when extreme events occur simultaneously, such as heatwaves and droughts.

FUNDS FOR NGOS

Planned Climate Relocations in Philippines Threaten Human Rights

Following Typhoon Odette in December 2021, which devastated Siargao in the Philippines, authorities began relocating entire communities to areas deemed safer. These efforts, however, have largely ignored international standards and the rights of affected residents, particularly people with disabilities. Many relocation initiatives lacked meaningful consultation, accessible information, and inclusive participation, leaving displaced communities at risk of future extreme weather events and undermining their ability to maintain livelihoods, access services, and preserve cultural and social ties.

The Philippine government established No-Build Zones in high-risk coastal and riverbed areas, preventing residents from returning to their homes. While intended for safety, these measures were implemented without adequately consulting communities or offering alternative housing. As a result, many returned to hazardous areas, and others were moved to unsuitable sites that lacked essential services, were inaccessible, or exposed residents to further hazards. People with disabilities faced particular challenges, as relocation sites often failed to consider accessibility or safety, isolating them from resources and livelihoods.

International human rights law emphasizes that planned relocation should be a last resort, guided by the principles of dignity, participation, and informed consent. Residents have the right to receive clear, accessible information and to be actively involved in decisions affecting their lives. In Siargao, however, residents report receiving minimal information, often through rumors, and insufficient engagement in the planning process. This lack of transparency and consultation undermines their rights to adequate housing, livelihood, and safety, while also violating disability-specific protections under international law.

To ensure rights-respecting planned relocation, local and national authorities should prioritize in-place risk reduction measures, meaningful and accessible consultation, and transparent information sharing. Relocation sites must be designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, provide access to essential services and livelihoods, and guarantee secure tenure. International organizations and donors should support authorities with technical and financial resources to implement inclusive, safe, and sustainable relocation solutions, protecting both vulnerable populations and the broader community from escalating climate risks.

UN NEWS

Over a billion fear losing land and homes within five years

The finding comes in a UN-backed report that underscores the need for stronger political commitment and inclusive policies around land rights amid growing focus on climate change, biodiversity protection, gender equality and rural transformation.

Over the past two decades, governments have adopted national and international frameworks on issues such as land policy in Africa and responsible regulation of land, fisheries and forests – resulting in more than 70 countries undertaking efforts towards land reform.

'Land insecurity' and inequality

Yet, progress is lagging. Currently, the ownership, tenure or use rights of only 35 percent of the world's land is formally documented, according to the report produced by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Land Coalition (ILC) and the French agricultural research and cooperation organization, CIRAD.

Further evidence includes the more than 1.1 billion people who feel "land-insecure" because they consider it likely or very likely that they could lose their homes or property in the coming years.

"Land insecurity is one of the most damaging forms of inequality, paid for in lower productivity, weaker resilience, and poorer nutrition," said Maximo Torero Cullen, FAO Chief Economist.

"Secure land tenure enables sustainable investment and is the difference between short-term survival and long-term food security."

Who owns land?

The Status of Land Tenure and Governance is described as the first comprehensive global stocktake designed to track how land is owned, used and governed.

It reveals that States have legal ownership of more than 64 per cent of land worldwide, although this includes customary land with designated tenure rights but without documented ownership.

Just over a quarter of all land is known to be privately owned – whether by individuals, companies or collectives. Tenure status regarding the remaining 10 per cent or so is unknown.

Specifically, around 18 percent of the world's land, or 2.4 billion hectares, is owned by private individuals and corporations.

When agricultural land is considered – around 37 per cent of the global land area – the top 10 per cent of the largest landholders operate nearly 90 per cent of all land under cultivation.

Diverse ownership systems
The report also highlights how land tenure systems differ across regions.

For example:

In sub-Saharan Africa, 73 per cent of land is held under customary tenure though only one per cent is formally recognised as such, while most is undocumented and under State ownership

In North America, 32 per cent of land is privately owned

In Latin America, 39 per cent

In Europe, it's 55 per cent, excluding Russia where State land dominates.

Indigenous Peoples and women

Moreover, although Indigenous Peoples and other holders of customary tenure rights occupy 5.5 billion hectares – 42 per cent of the world's land – only a billion hectares are documented with clear ownership rights.

Data also shows that in almost all countries, women are less likely than men to own or have secure rights to land whether for housing or agriculture, underlining the importance of formal and legal documents for securing their land rights.

"Too many people still live with the fear of losing their land and homes, with women and young people remaining among the most excluded - a reality that undermines food security, climate action and biodiversity protection, and shows why secure land rights are foundational to achieving all three," said Marcy Vigoda, the ILC Director.

According to custom

The report also provides a detailed examination of customary land systems, which are largely stewarded by Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists and tribal groups.

Customary lands include forests, grasslands, wetlands and fisheries, and their governance – once regarded as archaic or a relic of the past – is increasingly viewed as vital for both people and the planet, given their contribution to biodiversity and climate action.

Roughly 4.2 billion hectares of customary land have been mapped worldwide, representing over 32 per cent of the Earth's total land mass excluding Antarctica.

Carbon release alert

These territories "hold an estimated 45 gigatons of irrecoverable carbon – which cannot be put back in time to avoid climate damage, found mostly in forest biomes – or 37 percent of the global total," FAO said.

In other words – any carbon released can't be reabsorbed quickly enough to prevent increased global warming.

The UN agency noted that customary lands are increasingly under threat from human activity such as urban expansion, large-scale industrial agriculture, oil and gas extraction and mining.

“Paradoxically, some climate solutions geared to renewable energy, biofuels, conservation and carbon offsets are increasing such pressures, especially on lands which lack formal recognition or protections,” FAO added.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

CCC: Behavior change, systemic reform vital in anti-plastic drive
By: Marita Moaje

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is expanding its anti-plastic advocacy from periodic awareness campaigns to a sustained push for behavior change and systemic reform.

In a news release Wednesday, CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje said through its "Bawal Plastik Dito" (plastic is banned here) online campaign, the agency emphasized that reducing reliance on disposables is essential to strengthening climate resilience, particularly in the Philippines, which remains highly vulnerable to climate-related disasters.

He said the campaign underscores the need to treat plastic pollution as part of the broader climate agenda.

"Single-use plastics are not just a waste issue, they are a climate issue. From production to disposal, plastics contribute to emissions, degrade ecosystems, and place additional burdens on communities already exposed to climate impacts," Borje said.

Riding on the momentum of January's Zero Waste Month, and on its earlier "Bawal Plastik Dito" sticker-pack initiative, the CCC has transformed the campaign into a year-long digital information drive designed to move public engagement beyond clean-up activities and toward concrete, everyday actions that reduce dependence on single-use plastics (SUPs).

The agency, through a series of informational and interactive materials on its online platforms, aims to reinforce message recall, encourage responsible consumption, and promote sustainable alternatives to disposable plastics.

"Reducing our dependence on disposability is a necessary step toward building climate resilience," Borje said.

The expanded campaign also supports the implementation of existing plastic waste policies by translating national commitments into practical and actionable guidance for individuals, communities, and institutions.

The CCC stressed that addressing the worsening plastic pollution ultimately requires rethinking consumption patterns and redesigning systems that currently depend on disposability, aligning development pathways with long-term environmental sustainability.

These solutions, Borje said, are within reach but require collective action.

"By encouraging practical choices and supporting systemic change, we can reduce plastic pollution while advancing climate adaptation and ecological protection," he said. (PNA).

=END=