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BUSINESS WORLD

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FOREIGN POLICY

[Can Middle Powers Gel?](#)

By: Sarang Shidore

Middle powers are having a moment. But that moment has been long arriving. The decline of unipolarity—with its roots in the 2008 global financial crisis and the disastrous U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003—led to a world of three great powers: not only the United States but also China and, to a lesser extent, Russia. The latter two are working increasingly in tandem. Moreover, a set of rising nations in the global south also contributed to the waning of Washington's hegemony.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Climate tech platform Zevero raises \\$7 million as global demand for carbon data accelerates](#)

LONDON, March 24, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Carbon management platform Zevero has secured \$7 million in new investment, bringing its total funding to \$14 million to date. The round includes participation from Spiral Capital, Gazelle Capital, and Deep 30, and it follows a period of rapid growth for the company, with annual recurring revenue increasing 400% year-on-year and its customer base doubling. Zevero also recently acquired sustainability advisory firm Inhabit, strengthening its capacity to help organisations move from measuring emissions to systematically reducing them.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Humid, hotter weather to prevail as dry season starts](#)

By: Josiah Antonio and Emmanuel Tupas

Humid weather is starting to be felt nationwide as the dry season begins, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said yesterday.

UNITED NATIONS

[UN weather agency warns of record 'climate imbalance' as planetary warming accelerates](#)

Hot on the heels of a scorching decade, the UN's weather agency has said that the planet's climate is "more out of balance than at any time in observed history".

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS WORLD

[PH to face more super typhoons in future amid climate change, expert warns](#)

By: Edg Adrian A. Eva

Amid the worsening effects of climate change, the Philippines may experience fewer tropical cyclones, but Super Typhoon–category storms are more likely to develop in the coming decades, an expert said on Monday.

Rafaela Jane P. Delfino, assistant professor at the Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology at the University of the Philippines Diliman, made the statement, citing the findings of various studies.

Among these are simulations from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) that compared historical storm data from 1971 to 2005 with future projections from 2036 to 2065.

Most of the models showed that the country is likely to experience a steady or even decreased number of tropical cyclones. However, the likelihood of stronger typhoons is higher.

“In terms of the number of typhoons, either stable or decreasing... Pero yung mga mas malakas na bagyo mas dumadami sila [But the stronger storms are increasing],” Ms. Delfino said during her presentation at the 161st National and 76th Meteorological Day press conference.

The Philippines currently averages 20 tropical cyclones per year.

Ms. Delfino said that this trend has already been occurring in recent years, citing findings from PAGASA.

But what is particularly concerning, she said, is the increase in the number of super typhoons that develop in or enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) in the same period.

The annual average of super typhoons entering the PAR increased from 1.5 per year between 1993 and 2002 to three per year between 2003 and 2020—a more than 100% increase.

Super typhoons are the highest tropical cyclone category in the Philippines, with maximum sustained wind speeds exceeding 185 kilometers per hour.

At this level, PAGASA hoists Storm Signal No. 5 in affected areas, as winds can pose an extreme threat to both life and property.

Tropical cyclones such as Haiyan (locally Yolanda), Goni (Rolly), and Rai (Odette) were classified as super typhoons, known for their devastating effects.

Ms. Delfino also said that rainfall associated with tropical cyclones has increased by 6–7% in recent studies compared to pre-industrial times and is projected to rise by up to 16% in the future.

What causes this? Ms. Delfino explained that human activities, such as increased emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, have contributed to global warming, accelerating climate change and its impacts, particularly over the past 200 years.

She added that warmer waters further induced by man-made activities make tropical cyclones stronger, increase their size, and contribute to rapid intensification, making storms more devastating.

“This leads to significant damage and loss of life and, more often than not, hinders sustainable development,” Ms. Delfino said.

Natural hazards, such as typhoons, cost the Philippines about 0.5% of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) per year, with losses reaching almost 4.5% of GDP in 2013 due to Super Typhoon Haiyan, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2026 report.

Extreme weather events also have lingering economic effects, cutting local economic activity by up to 2.2% immediately, with 1.7 percentage points of the impact still felt five years later, even after post-disaster adaptation, relief, and reconstruction efforts.

Without climate change mitigation, the Philippines could see GDP losses of around 5% by 2040 and up to 18% by 2070 compared with a scenario without climate change, the report also said.

Meanwhile, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on Monday warned that Earth’s climate system is more out of balance than ever in recorded history, as greenhouse gases continue to warm the atmosphere and oceans and accelerate the melting of ice.

WMO said that the years 2015 to 2025 were the hottest 11 years on record, with 2025 ranking among the second and third hottest years at approximately 1.43°C above the 1850–1900 average.

This imbalance increases the risk of extreme weather events, including stronger tropical cyclones, heavier rainfall, more intense heatwaves, and rising sea levels.

The report calls for urgent action, emphasizing the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate the transition to cleaner energy.

It also calls for strengthening early warning systems and climate-resilient planning to protect communities and economies.

DAILY GUARDIAN

[121 EXTRA HEAT DAYS: Climate change is brewing trouble for Iloilo coffee](#)

By: Francis Allan L. Angelo

Iloilo – the country’s fifth-largest coffee-producing province – is experiencing 121 extra days of coffee-harming heat per year because of climate change, making it among the hardest-hit growing areas in the Philippines, according to a new analysis from Climate Central.

The province recorded an average of 186 total days annually between 2021 and 2025 when temperatures exceeded 30°C (86°F), the threshold that scientists consider extremely harmful for arabica coffee plants and suboptimal for robusta.

That means Iloilo’s coffee-growing areas spent more than half the year enduring dangerous heat, with nearly two-thirds of those extreme days directly attributable to climate change.

Iloilo produced 5,736 metric tons of coffee in 2023, according to Philippine Statistics Authority data, placing it fifth nationally.

The convergence of high production volume and severe climate-driven heat raises urgent questions about the province’s capacity to sustain its coffee output in the years ahead.

The province’s 121 climate-change-added heat days far exceed the Philippine national average of 71 extra days per year.

It also surpasses the added heat days recorded for other major coffee-producing provinces such as Maguindanao at 109, Davao del Sur at 103, Cavite at 80, Sultan Kudarat at 77, and Batangas at 75.

NATIONAL PICTURE

Nationally, the Philippines ranked sixth among 25 major coffee-growing countries for the most climate-change-driven heat days added to its growing regions.

The country experienced an average of 123 observed days of coffee-harming heat annually and 71 extra days added by climate change between 2021 and 2025. That ranking puts the Philippines ahead of larger producers like Brazil, Vietnam, and Colombia in terms of extra heat days driven by carbon pollution.

The findings are especially troubling for a country that produces all four commercially viable coffee varieties – arabica, robusta, liberica (locally known as barako), and excelsa – and was once the fourth-largest coffee exporter in the world during the 1880s.

Coffee-growing regions span the archipelago from the Cordillera highlands of Luzon to the lowlands of Mindanao.

Climate Central's provincial-level data reveals stark variation across the country.

The provinces that saw the most extreme heat days added by carbon pollution were Misamis Occidental at 150 extra days per year, North Cotabato at 140, Southern Leyte at 137, and Leyte at 136.

These figures far exceed the national average, indicating that certain areas of the Visayas and Mindanao are bearing a vastly disproportionate share of climate-driven heat stress.

In terms of total observed days of harmful heat regardless of cause, Bohol was the hottest coffee-growing area in the country at 295 days annually — meaning coffee plants there endured temperatures above 30°C for more than 80% of the year. It was followed by Southern Leyte at 252 days, Pangasinan at 238, and Maguindanao at 234.

A few areas, however, were completely spared. Lanao del Sur, Mountain Province, and Sulu recorded zero days of coffee-harming temperatures during the five-year period, likely because of higher elevations or cooler microclimates that kept daily maximums below the 30°C threshold.

OVERLAP

When the Climate Central data is cross-referenced with the country's top 10 coffee-producing provinces, the overlap between high production and high heat exposure is striking.

Maguindanao, the seventh-largest coffee producer at 4,269 metric tons, recorded 234 observed days of coffee-harming heat annually, with 109 of those added by climate change.

Davao del Sur, the fourth-largest producer at 7,713 metric tons, experienced 124 observed days and 103 added.

Sultan Kudarat, the top coffee province by volume at 21,442 metric tons, saw 88 observed days and 77 added.

Cavite, the country's third-largest coffee-producing province at 8,190 metric tons and the historical home of liberica cultivation in the town of Amadeo, recorded 168 observed days of extreme heat with 80 added by climate change.

Batangas, the birthplace of Philippine coffee and the eighth-largest producer at 3,658 metric tons, experienced 176 observed days with 75 added.

The country's remaining top 10 coffee provinces — Bukidnon at 9,042 metric tons, Davao de Oro at 4,346, Sulu at 3,563, and Basilan at 3,222 — are all in Mindanao.

Seven of the 10 largest coffee-producing provinces are concentrated on the southern island.

Notably, while Sulu appeared on the top 10 list for production, Climate Central data recorded zero coffee-harming heat days for the province – suggesting its coffee-growing areas may be shielded by elevation or other local conditions.

The data suggests that several Philippine provinces with the highest coffee output are also among those most exposed to escalating heat stress, raising questions about the long-term viability of current growing areas – particularly for heat-sensitive arabica, which requires cooler conditions than robusta.

GLOBAL TREND

The Philippine picture mirrors a global pattern. Climate Central's analysis, published Feb. 18, found that all 25 major coffee-growing countries it studied experienced more coffee-harming heat between 2021 and 2025 because of climate change. These 25 countries account for about 97% of global coffee production.

The study defines coffee-harming heat as daily maximum temperatures exceeding 30°C — a threshold that is extremely harmful for growing arabica coffee plants and suboptimal for growing robusta varieties. Beans from these two species make up the vast majority of the global coffee supply, with arabica accounting for about 60% to 70%.

The top five coffee-producing countries – Brazil, Vietnam, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Indonesia – are responsible for roughly 75% of the world's coffee supply. These five nations now experience coffee-harming heat for more than 144 days of the year on average. Without the influence of climate change, there would be about 57 fewer days each year with such heat.

Among the top five producers, Indonesia experienced 73 extra days of coffee-harming heat annually because of climate change, while Brazil – the world's top coffee-growing nation, supplying 37% of global production – saw 70 extra days. Vietnam had 59 extra days, Colombia had 48, and Ethiopia had 34.

Brazil's top coffee-growing state, Minas Gerais, experienced an extra 67 days of extreme heat each year during the period.

Across all 25 countries analyzed, the average was about 47 extra days of coffee-harming heat added annually by climate change. The countries that saw the most additional harmful heat days were El Salvador with 99, Nicaragua with 77, and Thailand with 75.

HARDER TO GROW

Coffee – one of the most popular beverages in the world, with more than 2 billion cups consumed every day – is getting harder to produce and more expensive to buy, as climate change intensifies heat across the global “bean belt.”

Arabica coffee plants are significantly more sensitive to rising temperatures than robusta varieties. Research shows that even cooler temperatures in the 25°C to 30°C (77°F to 86°F) range are suboptimal for arabica growth, making the 30°C threshold a conservative estimate of the actual climate impact on this species. Arabica is also typically farmed at higher elevations, where temperatures may be cooler than the area-weighted regional averages used in the analysis.

Changes to rainfall patterns compound the heat stress. Adequate and consistent rain is crucial for coffee plant growth, with optimal annual totals falling between 59 and 79 inches. A 2023 drought in Brazil has been linked to recent spikes in global coffee prices, which reached record highs in December 2024 and again in February 2025.

Shifting temperatures and rainfall patterns also influence the spread of pests and diseases such as coffee leaf rust and the coffee berry borer, which can reduce both the quantity and the quality of bean harvests. The Philippines has its own painful history with coffee rust — the disease devastated Batangas plantations in the late 1880s and collapsed the country’s once-thriving export industry by 1891.

If farmers are unable to adapt, climate change threatens to reduce the amount of land suitable for coffee production by up to 50% by 2050. Current coffee-growing regions may become too warm over time, especially for heat-sensitive arabica, and the optimal zones for cultivation may need to migrate to higher, cooler elevations.

ADAPTATION, RISK

While relocating to previously unsuitable areas could create new economic opportunities, the primary environmental risk is deforestation as farmers clear existing forests for new coffee fields.

Farmers are already exploring adaptation strategies. Planting a taller tree canopy that shades coffee plants can protect them from harmful heat, while also enriching the soil and providing wildlife habitats, particularly for birds. The Smithsonian’s Bird Friendly® certification program recognizes organic coffee and cocoa farmers who use such sustainable agricultural practices.

The analysis used Climate Central’s Climate Shift Index, an attribution science tool that compares observed temperature data from the ERA5 reanalysis system with estimates of temperatures that would have occurred in a world without carbon pollution. The methodology counts the number of days each year that maximum temperatures crossed the 30°C threshold solely due to the influence of carbon emissions.

Climate Central also noted that climate change is severely affecting global cocoa production, heating up West Africa's cocoa belt with implications for chocolate supplies. Ghana experienced over 60 days of extreme heat annually between 2015 and 2024 — temperatures above 32°C (90°F), which exceed the upper limit for optimal cacao growth — while Nigeria experienced nearly 60 such days during the same period.

DW

[Earth's climate more unbalanced than ever, WMO warns](#)

By: Jennifer Collins

The world's oceans have broken heat records for nine straight years, glaciers are retreating and extreme weather is killing thousands. The only way to avoid the worst is to urgently ditch fossil fuels.

Every person alive today has grown up in a world of worsening weather extremes. Last year, a 50-year flood swamped Texas, glaciers in Iceland melted at record speed, a hurricane struck Jamaica with near-unprecedented force, and the world sweltered through record heat. The window to change course is narrowing fast, warn scientists.

A report published Monday by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) confirms the Earth's climate is more out of balance than at any point in observed history — and that the consequences will reverberate for centuries, and potentially millennia.

Key findings in the annual WMO State of the Global Climate 2025 report include:

- 2015 to 2025 was the hottest decade on record
- Oceans reached unprecedented heat for the ninth year running
- Glaciers and sea ice continue their retreat
- Extreme weather, cascading health risks and mounting human costs
- Earth's energy imbalance hits an all-time high, which means more of the sun's energy is entering the planet's systems than is leaving
- Global mean sea level is rising at a faster rate since 2012 than in the preceding two decades.

"Every key climate indicator is flashing red," said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. "Humanity has just endured the 11 hottest years on record. When history repeats itself 11 times, it is no longer a coincidence. It is a call to act."

Rising heat, extreme weather and global instability

Depending on the data set used, last year ranked second or third hottest on record at approximately 1.43 degrees Celsius (2.57 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels. That was slightly below the 2024 record of 1.55 C. The dip was due to global weather phenomenon La Nina's temporary cooling influence.

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, countries agreed to cap warming at 2 C and ideally 1.5 C to avoid the worst impacts of planetary heating.

The key driver of rising temperatures is surging greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, largely caused by burning oil, coal, and gas. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) reached its highest atmospheric level in at least 2 million years in 2024, and continued rising in 2025, according to the report.

The findings carry particular urgency for the year ahead. The warming weather pattern El Niño could return later this year, which scientists say could drive another sharp temperature increase, fueling more extreme weather.

In 2025, heatwaves, wildfires, flooding, drought and tropical cyclones caused thousands of deaths and billions in economic losses. The California wildfires in January 2025 alone caused more than \$60 billion (€52.4 billion) in damage and were the costliest such event ever recorded.

The report underlined climate change's growing health toll, including dengue fever — now the world's fastest-growing mosquito-borne disease. Meanwhile, 1.2 billion workers, over a third of the global workforce, are exposed to dangerous heat each year.

Climate change is also driving hunger, migration and water scarcity, increasing competition over dwindling resources. Over the past decade, weather-related disasters have forced 250 million people to leave their homes.

The UN has drawn a direct line between the climate crisis and global instability. At the same time, war and militaries themselves are a significant contributor to planet-warming emissions.

"Our addiction to fossil fuels is destabilizing both the climate and global security," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement.

Guterres added that countries have to act quickly to decarbonize to stop further warming, and accelerate a transition to renewable energy. "Renewables deliver climate security, energy security and national security," he said.

So Earth's energy is out of whack: What does that actually mean?

Appearing for the first time as an indicator in the WMO report, Earth's energy imbalance — the gap between solar energy entering the atmosphere and heat escaping back into space — reached a record high in 2025. In a stable climate, the sun's incoming and outgoing energy are the same.

In today's climate, much more energy is coming in than is leaving because greenhouse gases act like a blanket around the planet, trapping excess heat across its systems. Around 91% is absorbed by oceans, 5% by land, 3% by ice sheets and glaciers, and 1% heats the atmosphere.

"Human activities are increasingly disrupting the natural equilibrium, and we will live with these consequences for hundreds and thousands of years," said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo.

Accelerated warming: The consequences for the oceans

The oceans are the planet's main heat energy sink — and protect life on Earth from the worst impacts of climate change. But ocean heat broke records again in 2025 for the ninth consecutive year, with 90% of the ocean surface experiencing at least one marine heatwave, despite cooling La Nina.

The report's authors said there was no sign of that heat sink weakening, but they said warming was increasing across all ocean layers, including the deep sea. Changes to ocean temperature are now irreversible on timescales of centuries to millennia. Even significant emissions reductions today would not halt ocean warming this century due to the energy imbalance in the Earth system, said the report.

The human cost of ocean warming is vast. Some 3 billion people rely on seafood for protein, yet rising temperatures are bleaching coral, shrinking fish populations and weakening the ocean's ability to absorb CO₂. Warmer seas are also fueling more powerful storms and accelerating ice loss at both poles, driving sea-level rise, with cities and coastal areas on the frontline.

Arctic and Antarctic sea ice were among the lowest levels on record, while glacier mass loss ranked in the five worst years since records began in 1979. Glaciers are crucial for supplying water to two billion people.

The WMO report doesn't make any policy recommendations. But it says its findings should help governments and organizations prepare for and adapt to intensifying extreme weather linked to climate change. For example, weather and climate data could be plugged into health information systems to enable a more proactive response that could help save lives.

"When we observe today, we don't just predict the weather, we protect tomorrow. Tomorrow's people. Tomorrow's planet," said WMO's Celeste Saulo.

FOREIGN POLICY

[Can Middle Powers Gel?](#)

By: Sarang Shidore

Middle powers are having a moment. But that moment has been long arriving. The decline of unipolarity—with its roots in the 2008 global financial crisis and the disastrous U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003—led to a world of three great powers: not only the United States but also China and, to a lesser extent, Russia. The latter two are working increasingly in tandem. Moreover, a set of rising nations in the global south also contributed to the waning of Washington's hegemony.

Conditions are favorable for the emergence of a third force in international politics: middle powers. These major regional players—including Brazil, France, India, and South Korea—possess material capabilities in their region (GDP, defense spending, etc.) and enjoy appreciable global influence. They also now sense an opportunity. The past few years have provided still more fodder for their collaboration. First, Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, igniting the biggest conflict in Europe since World War II—and then, amid Kyiv's long, grinding war with Moscow, the Trump administration pulled back on its financial support, further unnerving Europe. Second, Washington's brazen territorial claims on Canada and Greenland shocked its NATO allies. Meanwhile in Asia, China stepped up harassment of Philippine craft in pursuing its illegal claims in the South China Sea and gradually enhanced its military shows of force around Taiwan in the context of a growing U.S. military footprint in the region.

All three great powers are now trying to expand their territories, putting major stress on the post-World War II norm of territorial integrity. Both Beijing and Washington are weaponizing supply chains and critical minerals, too, in ways that reduce options for third states.

Moreover, attempts toward an implicit collaboration among the great powers to order the world on their terms (even as they continue to compete) are gaining some traction. Washington is going out of its way to facilitate a successful U.S.-China summit, and President Donald Trump has spoken of a G-2 arrangement with Beijing. Trump's instinctive preference appears to be a spheres-of-influence arrangement with Russia and China.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's speech at the Munich Security Conference in February was conciliatory in tone, but it drove home the United States' current sharp divergence from Europe. Long used to the comfort of Washington's protection, European middle powers are now feeling rudderless and insecure. The sense of permanent vulnerability long felt in the global south has now enveloped core U.S. allies. The upshot is that a common security interest now binds Europe's middle powers together with dozens of countries elsewhere in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Beyond security, middle powers share an interest in defending multilateralism—increasingly endangered with the paralysis of the U.N. Security Council, the agonizingly slow progress in

climate negotiations, and Washington's abrupt withdrawal from numerous international organizations. Middle powers understand that multilateralism is an essential part of statecraft, indispensable to solving systemic problems such as climate change, the breakdown of open trade, pandemics, and much more. This understanding comes not from altruism but self-interest. Great powers, on the other hand, are driven by an inflated sense of their own strength, which means they tend not to put much faith in a process in which they perceive they'll have to make more compromises.

The trifecta of fragmenting alliances, increasingly transgressive great powers, and a more influential global south creates an opportunity for a middle power coalition to step in and stabilize the world order—perhaps along the lines laid out by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January.

Could middle powers fashion a countercoalition that enhances their autonomy, limits great-power excess, and rescues multilateralism? A closer reading reveals multiple barriers to such a coalition, which will take hard work to overcome.

Some signs point toward middle power equivocation rather than mutual commitment. In the wake of Trump's imposition of sweeping tariffs last year, practically all states acted individually rather than collectively, genuflecting to make trade deals that often put them at a disadvantage. Much of the world also reacted rather tamely to Washington's manifold travel bans and walkouts from institutions such as the World Health Organization and UNESCO. The global south has been diffident on condemning Russia's annexation of parts of Ukraine. And many members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have been muted on China's maritime intrusions.

Look more carefully however, and a quiet pushback is underway. Contours of a new global order are becoming dimly visible in the fog. These early efforts, led mostly by middle powers, are focused on trade diversification, autonomous regional security-building, and better leveraging domestic natural resources for national benefit. If these trends continue, the resulting reshaped order could be a complex set of interlocking dynamics—more bottom-up than top-down. Middle powers would be at the heart of such an assemblage.

But for these early efforts to mature, three major challenges will need to be overcome: the accidents of geography, the resurgent north-south divide, and the paucity of leadership.

Geography matters hugely in geopolitics. On the world map, great powers are dispersed across Asia, Europe, and North America rather than being clustered next to one another. Middle powers are additionally located in Africa.

This “tossed salad” geography has certain geopolitical effects. Former U.S. House Speaker Tip O'Neill's famous quip that “all politics is local” translates, at least in part, to international politics. Proximity is a major driver of security choices. It can prompt bandwagoning, for example, whether under severe pressure (for example, post-Maduro Venezuela's recent tilt toward the United States) or with strong inducements (Mexico joining NAFTA).

But more commonly, a great power's neighbors look to balance, or at least hedge, against it. Balancing strategies, when adopted, typically involve a preferential relationship with another great power rather than with distant middle powers (e.g., deepening U.S.-India ties to counter China). In sum, asymmetries of geography create differentiated threat perceptions among middle powers, acting as a barrier to deeper geopolitical alignments among themselves.

The north-south divide may be the biggest barrier to strong middle power coalitions. Global south states gained their hard-won independence after a traumatic period of resource extraction and other forms of exploitation by colonial powers. This tragic history was foundational to the north-south divide. In the first three or four decades after World War II, global south states rallied around the causes of economic equity and nonalignment. These were the heydays of the G-77 and the Non-Aligned Movement. Demands for redistributive justice peaked in the push for a "new international economic order" (NIEO) at the United Nations in 1974.

During the period of post-Cold War unipolarity, most global south states abandoned NIEO-type rhetoric and embraced globalization and, less overtly, U.S. global leadership. The north-south divide seemed to be losing traction, albeit on terms set by Washington.

But then the disastrous U.S.-led global war on terrorism and "Made in America" financial crisis marked the beginning of the end of unipolarity, in the backdrop of climate change and pandemics and, more recently, artificial intelligence emerging as critical global issues. As unipolarity began to wane, and a set of middle powers in the global south rose, north-south debates reemerged in force.

Middle powers of the south objected to the north's watering down of the common but differentiated responsibilities principle on climate change, felt betrayed by the hoarding of vaccines during the most dangerous phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, and resisted what they considered to be intrusive demands from the global north on adopting democracy.

However, the global north's middle powers have long argued for a universal set of values under the liberal international order framework. They attribute the continuing developmental lag in most global south states to poor domestic governance. "Good governance" and "anti-corruption" have been the north's watchwords in dealing with developing countries, further entrenching a divide between the two blocs.

Middle powers of the north and south also differ sharply on whether to consider climate change a security issue. As Washington abandons climate action, updated scientific assessments are only getting grimmer. And links between climate change and social instability and conflict, while complex, are becoming clearer. In response, most northern middle powers are in favor of securitizing climate change. But key middle powers such as Brazil and India critique the scientific findings and oppose de-emphasizing the developmental and equity dimensions of climate action. They also worry that climate security conversations could open the door for a new type of northern interventionism.

Additionally, many developing countries still rely on fossil fuels. Europe is implementing sharp cuts in climate finance, amid an overall pullback in foreign aid by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. And, as if rubbing salt into the wound, climate action is arguably being used as a cover for trade protectionism with the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism. The mechanism fuses two areas that have been historically disaggregated: carbon emissions and international trade. The EU's market size and regulatory strength have enabled it to try to bind global south states into adopting a set of unilateral rules governing this space. The mechanism also disregards the global north's disproportionate responsibility for global warming.

International migration is another dividing line between north and south. Even as the north benefits from immigrant workers, economic and cultural anxieties have fueled far-right parties, especially in Europe. These parties, which have no particular interest in engaging the global south, are now close to power in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Attitudes toward migration have also shifted more recently in Australia, Canada, and Japan. These trends impede closer collaboration with major labor-exporting states in the south.

Middle powers of the south would also have noted that Carney's speech came in the wake of a major ramp-up of U.S. threats to annex Greenland, a Danish territory. These threats invoked tough reactions in Canada and Europe. But shortly before, after Washington attacked Venezuela and seized its president, Nicolás Maduro, Canada, Germany, Japan, and the U.K. were far less critical of the United States and its flagrant violation of international law. This suggests that if the next U.S. president were to seek a new *modus vivendi* with core U.S. allies, the global north's current enthusiasm for a middle power coalition could easily lose steam.

Finally, whether today's middle power leadership is up to the grueling task of coalition-building—and coalition maintenance—remains an open question. This is also true for smaller, issue-based coalitions; these relate to the "variable geometry" Carney spoke of at Davos. We live in a world of hypernationalism, and global south states are no exception.

Politics is more inward-looking than it has been for a long time. Middle power leaders don't have much capacity to think beyond transactional wins, let alone build long-term coalitions that are truly order-making. A critical mass of forward-looking leaders spanning north and south will be needed for a durable new order that can gain domestic support and defeat any divide-and-rule strategies adopted by the great powers.

Can these rather daunting barriers to an effective middle power coalition be overcome? Recent and important wins such as the EU-India trade agreement set aside the most vexing issues in a rush to conclude the pact. But sooner or later, core differences among middle powers will need to be tackled and structural weaknesses mitigated.

Newer issues provide some hope for middle power coalition-building. For example, the fast-growing domains of AI and cross-border data flows are dominated by the United States and, increasingly, China, providing a sense of urgency for middle powers to cooperate. The EU

and many global south states agree on viewing data as a sovereign resource. However, global south states typically end up as rule-takers, even though they have a lot to offer, while the EU's regulatory strength allows it to carve out more autonomy for itself. Agenda-setting at the landmark Bletchley Park process for AI governance was initially dominated by the global north and China, but subsequent meetings gave space to India (which just hosted a global AI summit of its own) and others. Many global south states prefer the U.N.-led Global Dialogue on AI Governance, seeing it as truly multilateral.

There are also historical examples of successful north-south coalitions, such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Paris climate agreement, and the G-4 coalition (Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan) at the U.N. Building on recent successes, and looking to historical examples, a determined set of middle power leaders will need to make the necessary compromises to assemble the coalitions these times demand.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Climate tech platform Zevero raises \\$7 million as global demand for carbon data accelerates](#)

LONDON, March 24, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Carbon management platform Zevero has secured \$7 million in new investment, bringing its total funding to \$14 million to date. The round includes participation from Spiral Capital, Gazelle Capital, and Deep 30, and it follows a period of rapid growth for the company, with annual recurring revenue increasing 400% year-on-year and its customer base doubling. Zevero also recently acquired sustainability advisory firm Inhabit, strengthening its capacity to help organisations move from measuring emissions to systematically reducing them.

Zevero co-founders Shigeo Taniuchi, Ben Richardson, and George Wade

Zevero uses AI to automate emissions data collection and calculation across Scope 1, 2, and 3, building a reusable dataset that informs ESG disclosures, product design, and sourcing decisions. Embedded climate experts work within the platform to help identify hotspots, set targets, and develop tailored decarbonisation strategies, turning emissions data into something the whole business can act on, not just disclose.

The raise comes as sustainability reporting undergoes a structural shift. Frameworks like the UK Sustainability Reporting Standards (UK SRS) and Japan's SSBJ Standards are moving climate disclosure to the same level of rigour and governance long required of financial reporting.

Funding to accelerate international expansion and product development

The new investment will accelerate product development and Zevero's continued expansion across Asia-Pacific and continental Europe, where companies face growing pressure from CBAM exposure, supply chain mandates, and strict tender requirements. Working with organisations including Asahi Group, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and waterdrop, Zevero is rapidly expanding its customer base across manufacturing, FMCG, and consumer brands.

Shigeo Taniuchi, CEO of Zevero, said: "Businesses are increasingly being asked to manage sustainability the way they manage finance, yet many are still operating it like an annual project: rebuilding from scratch each year and producing a number rather than a system. Our focus is on changing that, by providing the platform and the expertise to make climate data continuous, defensible, and connected to the decisions that matter. This funding allows us to bring that to more organisations across more markets."

George Wade, CCO and Co-Founder of Zevero, added: "Carbon data is moving from a reporting exercise to a core input in operational and investment decisions. Organisations don't just need the software to collect the data; they need the guidance to help turn it into something the business can act on. That's what Zevero is built around."

Mr. Tomokazu Okuno, General Partner and CEO, Spiral Capital, which led Zevero's seed round and remains one of its largest investors, commented: "Zevero has built an impressive platform that helps businesses tackle one of the most pressing challenges facing organisations today: gaining clear visibility into their carbon emissions and acting on that insight. The company has demonstrated strong growth since its seed round, and we believe its combination of technology and expertise positions it well to scale globally. We are excited to continue supporting the team as they expand the platform internationally."

Following its previous funding round announced in September 2024, the investment marks an important step in Zevero's growth as it supports organisations navigating an increasingly data-driven transition to a low-carbon economy.

About Zevero

Zevero is a carbon management platform that combines automated carbon accounting with in-house sustainability expertise to help organisations measure, manage and act on their emissions data. By turning emissions into decision-ready insight, Zevero supports businesses in embedding sustainability into core operations.

Founded in 2021, Zevero operates across more than 20 countries, supporting organisations including Asahi Group, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and waterdrop.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Humid, hotter weather to prevail as dry season starts

By: Josiah Antonio and Emmanuel Tupas

Humid weather is starting to be felt nationwide as the dry season begins, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said yesterday.

PAGASA weather specialist Grace Castañeda said the temperature may continue to rise, bringing humid and hotter days ahead.

Based on the latest bulletin released by PAGASA, the provinces of Albay, Catanduanes, Northern Samar and Sorsogon will experience light rain today due to the easterlies.

Metro Manila and the rest of the country will have cloudy skies, state weather forecasters said.

PAGASA said the heat index in Catarman, Northern Samar is expected to reach 41 degrees Celsius or “extreme caution level.”

Meanwhile, temperatures in the cities of Zamboanga and Cotabato may reach 40 degrees Celsius.

Exposure to an “extreme caution level” heat index, which ranges from 33 to 41 degrees Celsius, may cause heat cramps and exhaustion.

Continuous activity under the “extreme caution level” heat index can lead to heat stroke.

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police has intensified measures to protect PNP personnel from the hazards of working in high temperatures.

PNP chief Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. ordered chiefs of police and unit commanders to ensure the welfare of their officers, especially those conducting patrol and checkpoint duties.

UNITED NATIONS

[UN weather agency warns of record 'climate imbalance' as planetary warming accelerates](#)

Hot on the heels of a scorching decade, the UN's weather agency has said that the planet's climate is "more out of balance than at any time in observed history".

"Between 2015 and 2025, we experienced the hottest 11 years on record," WMO's deputy executive secretary Ko Barrett said.

Last year was some 1.43°C above the 1850 to 1900 baseline in addition to breaking an ocean heat record, she explained.

Grim state of climate

Presenting a grim overview of the state of the climate in 2025, Ms. Barrett stressed that as glaciers continue to retreat and ice continues to melt, "the warming ocean and melting land-based ice are driving the long-term rise in global mean sea level rise."

She said that the findings are an inspiration "to work harder to get lifesaving forecasts and early warnings into the hands of those who can protect lives and livelihoods" so that they can mitigate the devastating impacts of the ongoing climate turmoil on the most vulnerable.

For its part, WMO has been issuing annual climate updates for more than 30 years, and the record figures in the last decade have been an increasing cause for concern.

Record greenhouse gas levels

The agency's scientific officer John Kennedy said that concentrations in the atmosphere of three key greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) reached record levels in 2024, the last year for which there are consolidated global numbers.

This marked the single-largest year-on-year increase.

"Data from individual sites around the world indicates that levels of these greenhouse gases continue to increase in 2025" and to modify "the energy balance of the planet", he added.

Worrying energy imbalance

Mr. Kennedy explained that under a balanced system, incoming energy from the sun is about the same as the amount of outgoing energy, but this is not the case at present.

"There's less outgoing energy due to the increased concentrations of greenhouse gases," he said. "More energy coming in than going out means that energy is accumulating in the Earth's system."

The Earth's energy imbalance is a new indicator WMO has started tracking, with results pointing to a notable acceleration in the rate at which warming has been progressing between 2001 and 2025.

"The largest fraction of that absorbed energy is going to the oceans, around 90 per cent of the excess energy in the climate system," Mr. Kennedy said. "This matters because over three billion people depend on these marine and coastal resources for their livelihoods. They're living off the ocean, and nearly 11 per cent of the global population live on low-lying coasts directly exposed to coastal hazards."

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