



NEWS ROUNDUP

11 MAY 2026 | 08:00 am

- The country where lethal hantavirus cases are on the rise. Experts blame climate change
- DAVID MARCUS: New York Times announces the end of the climate change hoax
- 28 areas under 'danger' heat index on May 11 — PAGASA
- JICA, Philippine agencies launch climate finance transparency project
- Climate change could erase most South American cloud forests, study warns
- 'Godzilla El Niño': Southeast Asia warned of possible fires, haze
- DSWD, DENR ink pact to enhance environmental protection projects
- Oil, plastics and climate: Why higher prices could speed a materials transition

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- [Opinion] Beyond frameworks: ASEAN, Europe and the governance challenge ahead
- ASEAN, EU boost green energy ties
- CCC, KWF advance climate messaging in Filipino, regional languages
- ASEAN, EU leaders seek stronger cooperation amid energy and sustainability challenges
- ASEAN, EU leaders warn climate goals risk stalling without funding
- CCC, KWF ink partnership to advance climate communication in Filipino and regional languages
- CCC, Embassy of the Netherlands explore ways to further strengthen climate cooperation through NBS
- Legarda, CCC underscore value of anticipatory climate action and protection of the vulnerable
- Philippines pushes for action-driven, results-oriented climate approach
- Yolanda's 'ground zero' faces hurdles as Philippines climate fund approvals lag (Part 1)
- Can Borongan be a blueprint for nature-based flood control projects in the Philippines? (Part 2)

CNN

[The country where lethal hantavirus cases are on the rise. Experts blame climate change](#)

By: Anabella Gonzalez, Gonzalo Zegarra, Caitlin Danaher and Charlotte Reck

Hantavirus cases in Argentina have almost doubled in the past year, with the country recording 32 deaths alongside its highest number of infections since 2018.

FOX NEWS

[DAVID MARCUS: New York Times announces the end of the climate change hoax](#)

For almost the entirety of the half century I have lived on Earth, I have had experts, teachers, politicians and activists hectoring me about how climate change is going to destroy the planet. But this week, in The New York Times, of all places, is evidence that climate alarmism is finally cooling down.

GMA NEWS

[28 areas under 'danger' heat index on May 11 — PAGASA](#)

By: Vince Angelo Ferreras

Twenty-eight areas across the country are forecast to experience “danger” level heat index values on Monday, May 11, 2026, according to the state weather bureau PAGASA.

MANILA BULLETIN

[JICA, Philippine agencies launch climate finance transparency project](#)

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Philippine government have launched a technical cooperation project aimed at strengthening sustainable finance and climate-related transparency frameworks in the country.

MONGABAY

[Climate change could erase most South American cloud forests, study warns](#)

By: Liz Kimbrough

Up in the misty mountains, teems a kaleidoscope of life: trees drip with epiphytes, hummingbirds sip from bright blossoms, and rare creatures occupy every nook in the cloud forests, which scientists have likened to terrestrial coral reefs. But a new study warns that climate change could strip away the conditions that make cloud forests possible, and in the worst case, erase nearly all of them within 50 years.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[‘Godzilla El Niño’: Southeast Asia warned of possible fires, haze](#)

The projected hotter and drier conditions later in 2026 could trigger more intense forest fires and haze in Southeast Asia, fueled by a potential “Godzilla El Niño cycle”, said Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu on May 7.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[DSWD, DENR ink pact to enhance environmental protection projects](#)

By: Zaldy De Layola

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has partnered with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to strengthen community-driven development efforts that improve the lives of Filipinos in the grassroots while safeguarding the environment amid climate change and other threats.

UNITED NATIONS

[Oil, plastics and climate: Why higher prices could speed a materials transition](#)

By: Daniel Dickinson

Most conventional plastics are made from oil and gas and production costs have increased recently as a result of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz in the Middle East.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[\[Opinion\] Beyond frameworks: ASEAN, Europe and the governance challenge ahead](#)

By: Secretary Robert EA Borje

The recent tensions in the Middle East once again reminded governments how quickly instability in one part of the world can ripple across entire regions. Within days, concerns over energy supply disruptions were already affecting markets, transport systems, production costs and household expenses far beyond the immediate conflict zone.

[ASEAN, EU boost green energy ties](#)

By: Mico Virata and Rico Osmeña

Southeast Asian and European leaders moved to deepen cooperation on sustainability and energy on Thursday as rising fuel costs, supply chain disruptions, and climate risks continue to strain regional economies.

[CCC, KWF advance climate messaging in Filipino, regional languages](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) and Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) have partnered to jointly develop communication materials, conduct of capacity-building activities, and co-create campaigns using the best available scientific data as well as national and regional languages.

MANILA BULLETIN

[ASEAN, EU leaders seek stronger cooperation amid energy and sustainability challenges](#)

By: Merlina Hernando-Malipot

Leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU) called for stronger regional cooperation and faster implementation of sustainability initiatives amid ongoing energy and economic pressures across Southeast Asia.

PALAWAN NEWS

[ASEAN, EU leaders warn climate goals risk stalling without funding](#)

By: Celeste Anna Formoso

ASEAN and European Union leaders meeting in Cebu City on Thursday openly acknowledged a widening gap between climate ambitions and the money needed to make those goals happen, warning that sustainability plans across the region could fall short without stronger financing and faster implementation.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC, KWF ink partnership to advance climate communication in Filipino and regional languages](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), reinforcing a partnership that strengthens the accessibility of climate information.

[CCC, Embassy of the Netherlands explore ways to further strengthen climate cooperation through NBS](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), led by Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, led by Ambassador Marielle Geraedts, are exploring ways to advance nature-based solutions (NBS) as a key strategy for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

[Legarda, CCC underscore value of anticipatory climate action and protection of the vulnerable](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) and Senator Loren Legarda both emphasized the importance of stronger anticipatory action legislation to strengthen resilience and preparedness against the impacts of climate change and protect vulnerable communities.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Philippines pushes for action-driven, results-oriented climate approach](#)

By: Catherine S. Valente

The Philippines pushed for an action-driven and results-orientated cooperation between the Associations of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and the European Union (EU) to strengthen implementation systems and address persistent delivery gaps in climate action.

VERAFILES

[Yolanda's 'ground zero' faces hurdles as Philippines climate fund approvals lag \(Part 1\)](#)

By: Mariejo Roxas

Since 2016, the coastal municipality of Guiuan, Eastern Samar—ground zero for Typhoon Yolanda—has been trying to access the People's Survival Fund.

[Can Borongan be a blueprint for nature-based flood control projects in the Philippines? \(Part 2\)](#)

By: Mariejo Roxas

Shortly after his reelection in 2019, Borongan City Mayor Jose Ivan Dayan Agda moved to tap the People's Survival Fund, a national climate finance mechanism, to support the city's climate adaptation efforts.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

CNN

[The country where lethal hantavirus cases are on the rise. Experts blame climate change](#)

By: Anabella Gonzalez, Gonzalo Zegarra, Caitlin Danaher and Charlotte Reck

Hantavirus cases in Argentina have almost doubled in the past year, with the country recording 32 deaths alongside its highest number of infections since 2018.

The rise comes as Argentine authorities race to trace the footsteps of a couple who traveled extensively in the country and later died amid an outbreak of the virus on the cruise ship MV Hondius. The vessel left port in Ushuaia, southern Argentina, on April 1 and is currently on its way to Spain's Canary Islands.

It is expected to reach Tenerife's industrial port of Granadilla early Sunday morning.

Experts blame climate change and habitat destruction for the rise in cases of the disease, which is usually caused by exposure to the urine or feces of infected rodents.

The current season, which started in June 2025, has already seen 101 confirmed hantavirus cases, Argentina's health ministry said – compared with just 57 during the same period last season.

Not only did the country record an unusually large number of cases this year, but it also recorded one of the highest lethality rates of recent years, with the number of deaths marking an increase of 10 percentage points compared to the previous year.

And those numbers exclude the outbreak on the cruise-ship MV Hondius, the origins of which remain unknown.

While no cases of the hantavirus have been recorded in Ushuaia in recent decades, according to the ministry, the virus is endemic in some other areas of Argentina.

Argentine authorities believe the couple visited various regions of the country as they crossed back and forth over the border with neighboring Chile on several occasions, and into Uruguay, before joining the cruise.

Four geographic regions of Argentina are historically high-risk areas for contagion: Northwest (in the provinces of Salta, Jujuy, and Tucumán), Northeast (Misiones, Formosa, and Chaco), Center (Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and Entre Ríos), and South (Neuquén, Río Negro, and Chubut).

The Dutch couple who died amid the outbreak on the ship are thought to have visited both Misiones and Neuquén on their travels.

For many years, hantavirus had been associated with Patagonia in Argentina's southern tip, after a deadly outbreak in 2018 killed 11 people and resulted in dozens of infections.

This season, however, most cases have been found in the country's central region, with the province of Buenos Aires topping the highest number of cases with 42.

The outbreak on the ship has been linked to the Andes strain of hantavirus, a rare but potentially severe form of the virus that in some cases can spread between humans through close contact.

Climate to blame?

Hantavirus in Argentina usually develops in rural and peri-urban areas, in the presence of crops, tall weeds, humidity, or a subtropical climate.

But experts believe environmental degradation caused by climate change and human activity is contributing to its spread by allowing the rodents that transmit the virus to thrive in new areas.

"Increasing human interaction with wild environments, habitat destruction, the establishment of small urbanizations in rural areas, and the effects of climate change contribute to the appearance of cases outside historically endemic areas," the ministry said.

Extreme weather phenomena, such as droughts and episodes of intense rainfall in recent years, are also fueling the trend, according to experts.

Temperature rises generate changes in the ecosystem that affect the presence of the long-tailed mouse, the main carrier of the virus in Argentina and Chile.

"These rodents are better able to adapt to climate changes, which could facilitate the higher number of cases we are seeing," explained Eduardo López, an infectious disease specialist and adviser to the Argentine government during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Forest fires have prompted both humans and wildlife to move to new places, increasing the risk, said Roberto Debbag, vice president of the Latin American Society of Vaccinology, while tourism trends have also had an effect.

"Anyone going to a risk area for tourism, if it is not cleared of undergrowth, represents a very high danger," Debbag said.

The Health Ministry said technical health teams will travel to Ushuaia in Argentina's Tierra del Fuego province to capture and analyze rodents in areas linked to the route of the Dutch couple believed to have been exposed to the virus.

However, Juan Petrina, director of epidemiology for Tierra del Fuego, said the timeline “doesn’t add up for them to have contracted the disease here,” citing airport and ship departure records claiming the couple were only in Tierra del Fuego from March 29 to April 1.

He also dismissed as a “rumor” a suggestion that the couple may have visited a landfill site in Ushuaia before boarding the ship. “The National Ministry of Health hasn’t been able to confirm that this was the case,” Petrina told a news conference in the southern Argentinian city on Friday.

Comparisons to the Covid-19 pandemic

Elsewhere, the outbreak of the virus on the cruise ship MV Hondius has sparked fears that another pandemic looms, as guests aboard the vessel hail from many different countries.

“I do understand why people jump to that conclusion,” Dr. Charlotte Hammer, assistant professor in Health Security and Infectious Diseases at the University of Cambridge, told CNN on Saturday. “We have a collective memory of Covid, but if you look at the virus and at the disease, we are looking at something quite different here.”

Hammer explained that individual strains of the hantavirus are associated with different rodent populations, and that the strain present on the cruise liner is the Andes strain, which she said is normally contracted only when a person has been in very close contact with an infected rodent. She added that human-to-human transmission is limited, as an infected individual must have prolonged contact with another person to transmit the virus.

“A cruise ship is, unfortunately, one of those settings where you tend to have close and prolonged contact in relatively ... small rooms,” the professor said.

“But that is not the settings we have, sort of, normally,” she said, explaining that the virus cannot be contracted simply by walking past an infected person. “So in terms of the transmission potential, it is incredibly different from Covid,” she added.

In an unusual turn, the World Health Organization’s director general posted a letter addressed directly to the people of Tenerife to his X account on Saturday morning. Citizens on Spain’s Canary Island have expressed concern ahead of MV Hondius’ arrival on Sunday.

“I know you are worried,” Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, “I know that when you hear the word ‘outbreak’ and watch a ship sail toward your shores, memories surface that none of us have fully put to rest. The pain of 2020 is still real, and I do not dismiss it for a single moment.

“But I need you to hear me clearly: this is not another COVID-19.”

The public health official reassured the people of Tenerife, whom he said he was compelled to speak to “human to human” despite the direct address being highly uncommon, that they will be safe.

He said that a step-by-step plan has been designed to guarantee the safety of passengers and island inhabitants and emphasized that the risk of transmission remains low as “no symptomatic passengers” are currently on board.

Ghebreyesus expressed his gratitude to Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez for his willingness to receive the ship, “I called it an act of solidarity and moral duty,” he said.

FOX NEWS

[DAVID MARCUS: New York Times announces the end of the climate change hoax](#)

For almost the entirety of the half century I have lived on Earth, I have had experts, teachers, politicians and activists hectoring me about how climate change is going to destroy the planet. But this week, in The New York Times, of all places, is evidence that climate alarmism is finally cooling down.

"Democrats Do Not Have To Campaign On Climate Change Anymore," blared the headline, this week, as author Matt Huber argues that voters are rather turned off by the subject. I would like to suggest that this is because it is the single most expensive lie in human history.

In elementary school, I endured warnings of a coming ice age, then by high school it was global warming that was minutes away from ending humanity. By the time I was an adult, the warming having failed, surprisingly, to occur, we settled on "climate change," as the vague name for the inevitable apocalypse.

In 2018, as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., was coming into prominence, she told us that we had a mere 12 years to fix the climate problem or we would all die. In that time, untold trillions of dollars have been spent by the government, along with basically every business in the country, to hold the weather at bay, even though every prediction the alarmists have made has fallen flat.

Miami, my friends, is not underwater.

It's not just the expense of climate alarmism, it's what it has kept us from doing, as well. How much would a gallon of gas cost today had we been drilling for oil instead of pretending the "emergency" meant we all had to switch to electric cars by next Tuesday?

With precious few exceptions, every single thing in our lives has been made much more expensive by the cult of climate and its constant lamentations about the end of days. Entire generations of our youth have been terrorized, just as their parents were by nuclear bomb drills, into thinking they may be the last human beings to ever live.

We have all seen the reports of young adults who say they don't want to have kids because they expect the world to end. It's ridiculous. Travel sports might be a plausible reason to avoid having children, but climate change is not.

Now, finally, after 50 years of hysteria, The New York Times, the very Grey Lady with her hair on fire over climate change this whole time, tells us it's not such a big deal after all?

Even Greta Thunberg, whose entire existence, it seemed, was predicated upon berating us for destroying the planet, has moved on to radical Islam, and traded in her Birkenstocks for a keffiyah.

Say what you will, but as an apocalyptic hoax, climate alarmism has had an absolutely historic run. Overpopulation nonsense had a few years in the 60s, but nothing compared to the decades of pure insanity that we have lived through thanks to Al Gore's unhinged predictions.

Everyone wants to be a good steward of Mother Nature. Littering is bad and all that, but performative nonsense like paper straws that melt in your cocktail or cars that shut themselves off every 10 seconds are meaningless gestures.

Expensive meaningless gestures.

The climate debate has always hinged to some degree on whether our greatest love should be for nature writ large, or for humanity, because we know that cheap energy is the doorway out of poverty, but also poison to the climate alarmists.

This battle became religious for the secular Left, with taxes instead of tithing and environmentalist slogans instead of prayers. It wasn't just a scientific issue, but a moral one. If you failed to join in the hysteria, then you were a bad person.

Nothing about American climate policy or attitudes towards it have ever made any sense. We tighten our belts and pay through the nose to keep our emissions low while the rest of the world basically fires huge carbon dioxide cannons up into the sky.

For once, I agree with The New York Times. It is time for this madness to end. We do not need to saddle our children with the emotional and economic damage of make-believe climate disasters.

Americans are smart enough to know that, whatever the looney Left might tell them, the end is not nigh.

GMA NEWS

28 areas under 'danger' heat index on May 11 — PAGASA

By: Vince Angelo Ferreras

Twenty-eight areas across the country are forecast to experience “danger” level heat index values on Monday, May 11, 2026, according to the state weather bureau PAGASA.

Based on PAGASA’s five-day heat index forecast, the following areas may record heat index levels ranging from 44°C to 42°C:

44°C

- Dagupan City, Pangasinan
- Aparri, Cagayan
- Casiguran, Aurora
- San Jose, Occidental Mindoro
- Cuyo, Palawan
- Dumangas, Iloilo

43°C

- Laoag City, Ilocos Norte
- MMSU, Batac, Ilocos Norte
- Bacnotan, La Union
- Tuguegarao City, Cagayan
- ISU Echague, Isabela
- Baler (Radar), Aurora
- Iba, Zambales
- Puerto Princesa City, Palawan
- Aborlan, Palawan
- Daet, Camarines Norte
- Masbate City, Masbate
- Roxas City, Capiz
- Borongan, Eastern Samar

42°C

- NAIA, Pasay City, Metro Manila
- Sinit, Ilocos Sur
- CLSU Muñoz, Nueva Ecija
- San Ildefonso, Bulacan
- Sangley Point, Cavite City

- Infanta, Quezon
- Mulanay, Quezon
- CBSUA-Pili, Camarines Sur
- Iloilo City, Iloilo

PAGASA classifies heat index values between 42°C and 51°C under the “danger” category, warning that heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely, while heat stroke is probable with continued exposure.

Meanwhile, more than 40 areas are expected to experience “extreme caution” heat index levels ranging from 33°C to 41°C.

Baguio City in Benguet is the lone area forecast to experience a “caution” level heat index at 27°C.

The following areas are expected to record “not hazardous” heat index levels, or below 27°C:

- BSU, La Trinidad, Benguet – 26°C
- Benguet Radar, Tuba, Benguet – 22°C

The heat index refers to the temperature felt by the human body when relative humidity is combined with actual air temperature. High humidity slows the evaporation of sweat, making it more difficult for the body to cool down.

MANILA BULLETIN

[JICA, Philippine agencies launch climate finance transparency project](#)

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Philippine government have launched a technical cooperation project aimed at strengthening sustainable finance and climate-related transparency frameworks in the country.

In a statement on Saturday, May 9, JICA Philippines said that it signed the record of discussions for the Project on Strengthening Sustainability and Transparency Framework with the Department of Finance (DOF), which will serve as the lead implementing agency in partnership with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The agreement was signed by JICA Philippines chief representative Takashi Baba and DOF Secretary Frederick D. Go last May 6.

The project, which will run from 2026 to 2029, seeks to enhance sustainable finance and transparency through improved disclosure frameworks, strengthened greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory and reporting systems, and monitoring of climate-related initiatives.

JICA Philippines said the initiative aims to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of climate change measures by improving the capacities of relevant Philippine agencies and enhancing institutional arrangements supporting the country's commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Citing a 2025 discussion paper by state-run policy think tank Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), JICA Philippines noted that the DOF's Sustainable Finance Roadmap estimated annual climate finance flows at only \$2.5 billion to \$3 billion, significantly below the estimated \$12 billion to \$15 billion needed yearly, resulting in a financing gap of around \$9 billion to \$12 billion annually.

"As one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, the Philippines faces escalating risks from stronger typhoons, flooding, and rising temperatures," JICA Philippines noted.

"These impacts affect communities, critical infrastructure, and key sectors such as agriculture and energy. Addressing these challenges requires robust systems for planning, financing, and monitoring climate action, including strengthened approaches to managing and tracking climate-related investments," it added.

Under the project, JICA will dispatch Japanese experts specializing in climate change, sustainable finance, sustainability reporting, and transparency and GHG inventory systems.

The DOF will oversee policy integration and overall implementation, while the SEC will support sustainability reporting enhancements, and the DENR will strengthen the country's transparency framework.

JICA Philippines said the project would also support the implementation of article 6 of the Paris Agreement, including the joint crediting mechanism (JCM), through capacity-building and knowledge exchanges involving Philippine government agencies.

In a separate May 7 statement, JICA said Japan's expertise in corporate sustainability disclosure and GHG inventory development would be shared with the Philippines to help strengthen corporate sustainability reporting and climate-related monitoring systems.

"The advancement of corporate sustainability disclosure in the Philippines is expected to better inform Japanese investment decisions and further encourage activities of Japanese companies that consider climate change," JICA said.

The Japanese government's aid arm added that improved national GHG inventory systems would help establish the foundation for implementing market mechanisms under article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

JICA said the project forms part of its broader climate-related support for the Philippines, including the Climate Change Action Program-Subprogram 2 worth 35 billion yen in 2025, as well as technical cooperation initiatives on forest monitoring, hydropower inventory systems, disaster risk reduction, and climate-related training and scholarship programs.

JICA added that the initiative also reflects 70 years of bilateral cooperation between Japan and the Philippines in supporting low-carbon growth, climate resilience, and environmental sustainability.

MONGABAY

[Climate change could erase most South American cloud forests, study warns](#)

By: Liz Kimbrough

Up in the misty mountains, teems a kaleidoscope of life: trees drip with epiphytes, hummingbirds sip from bright blossoms, and rare creatures occupy every nook in the cloud forests, which scientists have likened to terrestrial coral reefs. But a new study warns that climate change could strip away the conditions that make cloud forests possible, and in the worst case, erase nearly all of them within 50 years.

The research, published in the *Journal for Nature Conservation*, used machine learning and modeling to project how cloud forest distribution in South America could shift under two different climate scenarios by 2070.

The study reports that under a high-emissions pathway, up to 91% of cloud forest area could be lost. Even under the most optimistic scenario, researchers calculate a 12% reduction, roughly 21,000 square kilometers (8,100 square miles), an area the size of El Salvador.

Cloud forests occupy a narrow band of land, typically between 1,000 and 3,000 meters (about 3,300-10,000 feet) above sea level, and are defined by persistent fog, cool temperatures and high humidity. That humidity shapes everything, from the mosses and orchids draped across surfaces, to the birds and amphibians found nowhere else on Earth.

The study notes these ecosystems harbor some 1,946 restricted-range species, representing roughly 8% of the world's mammals, birds, amphibians and tree ferns. Among the species endemic to South American cloud forests are the flamboyant Andean cock-of-the-rock (*Rupicola peruvianus*), whose brilliant orange-plumed males perform elaborate courtship dances on the forest floor; the critically endangered yellow-tailed woolly monkey (*Lagothrix flavicauda*), Peru's largest endemic primate; and countless glass frogs — delicate, translucent amphibians whose eggs can be seen developing through their own skin.

As temperatures rise, the base of clouds climbs higher up the mountain slopes, effectively shrinking the zone where cloud forests can exist. Species are pushed upward into increasingly fragmented habitat. For those species that live only near the summits, there is nowhere left to go.

But the stakes go beyond biodiversity. Because cloud forests capture fog on their leaves and branches and release it steadily into surrounding watersheds, communities downstream depend on them for reliable drinking water, particularly during dry seasons when other sources run low.

The researchers estimated that about 19.5 million people live within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of rivers whose flow is influenced by upstream cloud forests. Study lead author Patrícia Vieira Pompeu, a professor at the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil, warned that under

the high-emissions scenario, that supply would be compromised for an estimated 16 million people, or 83% of current beneficiaries.

“Cloud forests play an important role in regulating water in the headwaters of many Amazonian rivers, especially those originating in the Andes and other elevated regions of northern Amazonia,” Pompeu told Mongabay. “Their loss could reduce dry-season water availability and increase hydrological variability in Andean–Amazonian tributaries, potentially affecting downstream ecosystems and human populations.”

The study also found that only about one-third of South America’s cloud forests currently fall within protected areas. But that protection offers no guarantee of survival if the climate itself becomes unsuitable. Under the high-emissions scenario, the remaining protected patches would shrink dramatically in size, potentially becoming too small and isolated to support viable populations of many species.

“Cloud forests are already known to face many threats from human land-use change,” Walter Jetz, a biodiversity scientist at Yale University in the U.S., who wasn’t involved in the study, told Mongabay. “Montane cloud forests exist in a slim and globally rare climate space marked by cold and foggy conditions. There is no doubt that changing climate, combined with their narrow distribution and encroachment, makes montane cloud forests some of the most vulnerable highly biodiverse ecosystems on the planet.”

The study’s authors argue that two strategies are especially critical for the survival of cloud forests: stronger implementation of payments for ecosystem services, which provide financial incentives for landholders to conserve or restore forests upstream of populated watersheds; and better management of existing protected areas. Identifying which cloud forest patches are likely to remain climatically suitable even under future scenarios, they argue, should guide where those resources are focused.

But Pompeu said the most fundamental solution remains the same as for every climate-driven ecological crisis. “The key message is that we need to care about CO2 emissions,” she said. “We need to stop, or we will have problems with everything.”

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

['Godzilla El Niño': Southeast Asia warned of possible fires, haze](#)

The projected hotter and drier conditions later in 2026 could trigger more intense forest fires and haze in Southeast Asia, fueled by a potential “Godzilla El Niño cycle”, said Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu on May 7.

“Southeast Asia faces a perfect storm caused by a double whammy of geopolitical developments and climate change, which have severe implications for the region’s agri-commodity sector,” said Ms Fu at the annual Singapore Dialogue on Sustainable World Resources held at One Farrer Hotel.

She added: “A warmer-than-usual dry season is also expected in the coming months, with some meteorological agencies forecasting a super El Niño, or a ‘Godzilla El Niño’ cycle. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) predicts that this will amplify the impacts of climate change, including potential droughts in Southeast Asia.”

Ms. Fu urged Asean nations to be more vigilant in 2026 and pursue closer regional cooperation through the legally binding Asean Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, and a high-level ministerial committee that coordinates efforts to monitor and manage land and forest fires.

The minister’s cautionary message comes after Singapore faced several weeks of hazy conditions earlier in 2026 due to hot spots and vegetation fires in Johor. While the 24-hour Pollutant Standards Index (PSI) readings were within the moderate range, a burning odour reached many parts of the island during that period.

Bloomberg reported in the end of March that the 800-plus hot spots across Indonesia and Malaysia were the highest in seven years.

The WMO recently said the sizzling El Nino climate phenomenon could return between May and July. El Niño leads to the periodic warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific.

Early signs indicate that the climate event could be particularly strong, which could worsen the hotter and drier weather that it usually brings to Southeast Asia, raising the risk of wildfires.

According to the Asean Specialised Meteorological Centre, more hot spot activity can be expected as the traditional dry season sets in around June in the southern Asean region, where Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia sit.

The centre's website stated: "There is a risk of transboundary smoke haze occurrence over areas experiencing prolonged dry conditions during June and July as the prevailing winds blow from the south-east or south-west. The situation could intensify if El Niño develops."

The dialogue on May 7 focuses on agricultural commodities in Asean, which are being affected by higher energy costs, agricultural input prices, and shipping costs due to the Middle East conflict.

Organized by the think-tank Singapore Institute of International Affairs, it was also attended by Indonesia's Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Arif Havas Oegroseno.

As Southeast Asia braces itself for volatile times, the conflict underscores how sustainability enables long-term resilience and growth, said Ms Fu. She outlined how the region can harness sustainable practices to safeguard its commodities sector.

Amid an energy and fertilizer crisis sparked by the Iran war, the region can look into producing organic fertiliser and biogas from palm oil waste and wastewater to reduce its dependence on fossil fuel markets, Ms Fu suggested.

Noting that agricultural products made up nearly 10 per cent of Asean's total exports to the European Union in 2024, she added that compliant, sustainable practices can enhance the reputation and long-term market advantage of Asean products.

The EU, for example, will be imposing an anti-deforestation law at the end of 2026 that will require companies selling agricultural goods to the EU to prove their products did not destroy forests or degrade land.

"Sustainable production is not only about regulatory compliance, but also about access to markets and capital for investment and innovation," Ms. Fu said.

She said the geopolitical backdrop has created new risks that should be monitored and managed. One of them, she added, is green protectionism, where trade barriers that come with sustainability standards could "stifle trade, leaving growers, exporters and importers worse off."

And as Southeast Asia pursues alternative energy supplies like biofuels – derived from crops or agricultural waste – there is a need to manage the increased risk of deforestation, Ms Fu warned.

Nearly a fifth of Indonesia's deforestation in 2025 was due to the clearing of land for food and bioenergy crops under a government programme aimed at boosting food and energy self-sufficiency, according to think-tank Auriga Nusantara.

In 2024, Singapore commissioned a study on how climate change will affect Southeast Asia and its agricultural sector. The study will be completed later this year and shared with Asean, said Ms Fu.

She added: “Some of the challenges we face in the months ahead and foreseeable in the years to come will feed into Singapore’s Asean chairmanship next year.”

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[DSWD, DENR ink pact to enhance environmental protection projects](#)

By: Zaldy De Layola

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has partnered with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to strengthen community-driven development efforts that improve the lives of Filipinos in the grassroots while safeguarding the environment amid climate change and other threats.

In a ceremony held Tuesday at the DSWD Central Office Auditorium in Quezon City, the two agencies forged the venture through a memorandum of agreement (MOA) signed by the authorized representatives of the two departments.

Undersecretary Monina Josefina Romualdez of the DSWD's Operations Group spearheaded the MOA signing, on behalf of Secretary Rex Gatchalian.

"The DSWD and the DENR may come from different mandates, but we serve the same people, the same communities, and the same future. The agreement bridges social protection and environmental management, recognizing that poverty, vulnerability, and environmental degradation are deeply interconnected challenges that must be addressed together," Romualdez said in a news release on Thursday.

The partnership addresses the need to easily facilitate and streamline the processing of environmental permits and clearances for small-scale community infrastructure sub-projects located in critical areas.

"Under the KALAHY-CIDSS (Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan - Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services) Panahon ng Pagkilos: Philippine Community Resilience Project (PCRP), this partnership allows us to bring together community-driven development and environmental protection initiatives," Romualdez said.

She said the collaboration is expected to result in more responsive projects, stronger local governance, and more sustainable livelihoods.

More importantly, she added, it ensures that development does not come at the expense of the environment, but instead works in harmony with its protection and restoration.

During the MOA signing, DENR acting Secretary Juan Miguel Cuna said the agreement affirms the shared commitment of the two agencies to ensure that community driven development goes hand in hand with environmental protection and climate resilience.

"We recognize that many communities' sub-projects, especially those related to basic infrastructure, water systems, and livelihood, require various environmental permits and clearances," Cuna said.

Under the PCRP of the KALAHI-CIDSS, the DSWD expects the collaboration to result in the faster implementation of more responsive projects and sustainable livelihoods that work in absolute harmony with nature restoration.

UNITED NATIONS

[Oil, plastics and climate: Why higher prices could speed a materials transition](#)

By: Daniel Dickinson

Most conventional plastics are made from oil and gas and production costs have increased recently as a result of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz in the Middle East.

That means when the price of those raw materials rise, the cost of producing plastic often rises too, creating incentives to reduce wasteful use, expand reuse systems and invest in alternatives that are lower in carbon and do less harm to the environment.

Why it matters

The world's plastic economy is not just a waste issue. It is also a climate issue.

The increased use of plastics, which inevitably means more plastic pollution, is not only extremely harmful to the planet's biodiversity but also contributes to climate change.

Oil prices, plastics and climate change

Plastics are made overwhelmingly from petrochemicals derived from oil and natural gas.

According to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), plastics generate damaging greenhouse gas emissions across their entire lifecycle, from extraction and refining to production, transport and disposal.

UNEP says those harmful gases which are driving climate change are likely to increase if plastics production continues to rise unchecked.

Where plastics are used and where change is easiest

Plastics are used across the world because they are cheap, durable, lightweight and versatile.

- The largest share of plastics is found in packaging, including food wrappers, bottles, shopping bags and single-use containers. These are the easiest to replace.
- Construction, for example, pipes, insulation, flooring and window frames, is also a huge consumer of plastics (some replaceability)
- Consumer goods and textiles, polyester clothing, toys furniture and household goods also require a lot of plastics (mixed replaceability)
- As do transport (eg vehicle parts) and electronics (harder to replace quickly)
- Medical uses, like syringes, PPE and sterile packaging are difficult to replace with non-plastics (low replaceability)

According to UNEP, "we need to rethink how we produce, use and dispose of plastics."

So which plastics can realistically be replaced?

The key test is necessity versus convenience:

- Roughly one-third of the world's plastics are easily replaceable. Many countries have already passed laws banning plastic shopping bags and utensils, encouraging people to shop with reusable bags and use metal or wood-based cutlery.

These changes often become economically attractive when oil prices rise.

- Another third of plastics globally are partially replaceable, including textiles, construction materials and furniture, although in some cases the substitution can cause more environmental harm overall, especially in terms of climate emissions or deforestation.
- Some plastics with critical technical uses including medical plastics, electrical parts are almost impossible to replace.
-

As UNEP emphasises, "the answer is not to ban all plastics, but to end unnecessary, avoidable and problematic plastics."

It's worth remembering that not all plastic is equally harmful.

- Plastic insulation can reduce building emissions
- Lightweight vehicle components can lower fuel use

Higher oil prices can drive adaptation

As virgin plastic becomes more expensive:

- Excess packaging becomes less attractive, so businesses look for cheaper alternatives
- Single-use items like food containers lose their price advantage and can be replaced by, for example, reusable glass bottles
- Bans and levies gain support amongst the public as do the benefits of recycling
- According to UNEP, "reuse is one of the most powerful market shifts available."

The bottom line

The widespread need for plastics can keep fossil fuel demand alive, although higher oil prices can act as a hidden accelerator of change.

As fossil-based plastics become more expensive, countries across the world have a realistic pathway to:

- Cut unnecessary plastic first
- Expand reuse and refill systems
- Use alternatives where they make sense
- Decarbonize essential plastics that remain

That makes plastics not just a waste story, but part of the global energy transition.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[\[Opinion\] Beyond frameworks: ASEAN, Europe and the governance challenge ahead](#)

By: Secretary Robert EA Borje

The recent tensions in the Middle East once again reminded governments how quickly instability in one part of the world can ripple across entire regions. Within days, concerns over energy supply disruptions were already affecting markets, transport systems, production costs and household expenses far beyond the immediate conflict zone.

For Southeast Asia, the lesson extends beyond energy security.

What these recurring crises increasingly reveal is that many of the assumptions that once shaped governance and development planning no longer hold with the same certainty they once did. The risks that governments once managed separately now arrive together, move faster, and cut deeper across societies and economies.

This was one of the central undercurrents during discussions held in Cebu alongside the ASEAN Summit, including the ASEAN–EU Sustainability Summit where senior government officials, development partners, businesses and policy actors exchanged views on resilience, sustainability, and regional cooperation amid growing global uncertainty.

During our fireside discussion, Ambassador of the European Union to the Philippines Massimo Santoro and I repeatedly returned to one uncomfortable but necessary realization: governance systems designed around compartmentalized risks are now confronting a world shaped by interconnected systemic instability.

A unified regional framework cannot succeed with fragmented implementation. That may well be one of the defining governance realities facing ASEAN today.

ASEAN has already made significant progress in regional cooperation, economic integration, disaster coordination and sustainability frameworks across its three pillars. The harder question now, however, is whether our institutions can keep pace with the scale, speed and complexity of the disruptions emerging around us.

Implementation exists across ASEAN, but unevenly. National commitments do not always translate consistently at subnational levels where disruptions are ultimately experienced most directly. Yet governments are simultaneously being asked to accelerate just and green transitions, strengthen energy and food security, modernize infrastructure, sustain growth, and protect vulnerable communities in a far more volatile global environment.

This is the difficult reality confronting many developing countries today.

Our reality and realization: Climate change can no longer be treated as a stand-alone environmental concern because its impacts now cut across economic stability, mobility, public health, food systems, energy systems and long-term development itself. The challenge is no longer sectoral. It is systemic.

For years, resilience discussions focused heavily on recovery, how quickly economies rebound or how infrastructure is rebuilt after disruption. But the pressures confronting governments today demand systems capable of anticipating shocks, absorbing pressure, and adapting before disruptions spiral further.

Our region may need to reassess whether governance approaches built for a more stable and compartmentalized world remain sufficient for the risks ahead.

ASEAN's traditional strengths remain important. Dialogue, consensus-building, regional cooperation, and economic integration continue to provide stability in an increasingly uncertain world. But the region cannot rely solely on frameworks or on its identity as a single market and production base. Those foundations remain essential, yet they are no longer enough on their own.

As discussions initiated in Cebu continue feeding into succeeding ASEAN sectoral engagements, intersessional meetings, and the next ASEAN Summit in Manila under the Philippine Chairship, a broader realization is beginning to emerge: resilience cannot simply mean coordination after disruption. It must increasingly mean building institutions capable of functioning under continuous stress and uncertainty.

Under the leadership of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., the Philippine Chairship has already emphasized stronger regional cooperation on resilience, energy security, food systems, and sustainable development amid rising geopolitical and economic uncertainty. These discussions are becoming central to ASEAN's long-term stability and credibility as a region.

This is also where partnerships between ASEAN and the EU become increasingly valuable. During our discussions in Cebu, Ambassador Santoro and I underscored the importance of moving beyond ambition toward stronger implementation and coordination. That cooperation matters not only between regional institutions, but also through bilateral partnerships, triangular cooperation, technology-sharing, financing support, and capacity-building efforts that strengthen implementation across ASEAN and at subnational levels.

Under the Paris Agreement, cooperation was never meant to stop at declarations. Finance, technology transfer, institutional strengthening, and capacity-building remain essential if developing countries are to pursue transition pathways while preserving stability, development space and social protection for their people. But governments alone will not be enough.

As indicated in the Sustainability Forum in Cebu, increasingly, a more resilient and sustainable ASEAN will require governments, businesses, financial institutions, universities, science

communities, civil society organizations and local communities to move with far greater coherence than before.

Ultimately, we will not be defined by the scale of our ambitions or the elegance of our frameworks, but by how consequential our decisions become upon implementation.

The deeper question, therefore, is whether national, regional and global governance systems can evolve quickly enough to continue protecting people in a world where disruptions no longer arrive one at a time.

Resilience and sustainability, in the end, are not measured by how often we speak of stability, security and continuity. It is measured by whether economies and societies can thrive, remain humane, functional, and secure even when the assumptions that once sustained them no longer hold.

That will define whether economies across Southeast Asia and the developing world can truly prosper and grow, families in the region and beyond can live with dignity despite stronger storms, rising uncertainty, and growing instability beyond their control, and vulnerable peoples can still believe that progress is possible, even in a world becoming harder to predict.

[ASEAN, EU boost green energy ties](#)

By: Mico Virata and Rico Osmeña

Southeast Asian and European leaders moved to deepen cooperation on sustainability and energy on Thursday as rising fuel costs, supply chain disruptions, and climate risks continue to strain regional economies.

At the inaugural ASEAN–EU Sustainability Summit 2026, more than 200 policymakers, diplomats, and business leaders gathered to stress that sustainability is no longer a long-term goal but an immediate economic priority amid the global energy crisis and trade volatility.

Philippine Finance Secretary Frederick Go said the Philippines is looking to strengthen economic ties with Europe, especially as sustainability and investment priorities increasingly overlap.

“Europe and the Philippines have a stable and evolving partnership, built on trade, investment and development cooperation,” Go said. “Today, it is also focused on sustainability, climate and inclusive growth.”

He added that the proposed EU–Philippines Free Trade Agreement is the country’s “most important economic agreement this year,” with both sides targeting signing by the third quarter of 2026.

Business leaders echoed the urgency, saying economic resilience is now inseparable from sustainability.

“At a time of global uncertainty marked by energy volatility, supply chain disruptions, and rising costs, this Summit could not be more timely,” said Paulo Duarte of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines. “Sustainability is no longer optional.”

EU Ambassador Massimo Santoro, meanwhile, stressed the need to align climate ambition with financing.

“Strengthening the link between ambition and financing is essential to turning policy into real, on-the-ground impact,” he said, adding that energy challenges should push deeper cooperation on trade, renewables and disaster resilience.

Regional officials said ASEAN must balance growth with emissions reduction.

“The only viable path forward is cohesive planning that integrates sustainability into every aspect of development,” said Indonesia Deputy Minister Leonardo Teguh Sambodo.

In the Philippines, Climate Change Commission official Robert Borje said the energy transition could attract more investment.

“What can be seen right now as a challenge can be turned into an opportunity,” he said.

Business and government officials also discussed circular economy systems, supply chain security, and food resilience.

DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones said government efforts must be supported by the private sector.

“The government cannot do it alone,” he said.

Coca-Cola Philippines executive Antonio Del Rosario highlighted the role of Extended Producer Responsibility in strengthening recycling systems, while industry leaders warned that regulatory delays in vaccine approval could threaten food security during outbreaks.

Closing the summit, EU–ASEAN Business Council Executive Director Chris Humphrey urged faster action.

“We need governments, businesses and citizens to take sustainability more seriously in all its aspects,” he said, “so we can all live a longer life, a healthier life, and look after our planet at the same time.”

CCC, KWF advance climate messaging in Filipino, regional languages

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) and Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) have partnered to jointly develop communication materials, conduct of capacity-building activities, and co-create campaigns using the best available scientific data as well as national and regional languages.

CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje acknowledged the KWF as a critical ally in the fight against the climate crisis.

Making the effects of climate change clear requires that it should be communicated in a local, inclusive and understandable manner to each citizen from different levels of society, according to Borje.

KWF chairperson Atty. Marites A. Barrios-Taran stressed the critical role of language in nation-building and climate action.

“Our language should be serving the people,” she said.

MANILA BULLETIN

[ASEAN, EU leaders seek stronger cooperation amid energy and sustainability challenges](#)

By: Merlina Hernando-Malipot

Leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU) called for stronger regional cooperation and faster implementation of sustainability initiatives amid ongoing energy and economic pressures across Southeast Asia.

The call was made during the ASEAN-EU Sustainability Summit 2026 in Cebu on May 7, where more than 200 government officials, diplomats, policymakers, and business executives gathered to discuss renewable energy, climate resilience, food security, and sustainable economic growth.

Officials attending the summit included Philippine Finance Secretary Frederick Go, EU Ambassador to the Philippines Massimo Santoro, Indonesia Deputy Minister for National Development Planning Leonardo Teguh Sambodo, and Climate Change Commission Executive Director Robert Borje.

ASEAN-EU trade, financing seen key to green transition

During the discussions, leaders stressed that sustainability policies should now be treated as essential economic strategies rather than optional environmental programs.

Speaking at the summit, European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) President Paulo Duarte said countries in the region are facing growing challenges from volatile energy prices, supply chain disruptions, and rising operational costs, making closer ASEAN-EU cooperation increasingly important.

“At a time of global uncertainty marked by energy volatility, supply chain disruptions, and rising costs, this Summit could not be more timely,” Duarte said.

“It reflects a shared recognition across the region that sustainability is no longer optional,” Duarte, who is also a member of the EU-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC)’s executive board, said. “It is central to economic resilience, competitiveness, and long-term growth,” he added.

Meanwhile, Go said the Philippines is working to strengthen its economic partnership with Europe while supporting sustainability and inclusive growth goals.

“Europe and the Philippines have a stable and evolving partnership, built on trade, investment, and development cooperation,” he said. “Today, it is also focused on sustainability, climate, and inclusive growth, and we remain committed to deepening our collaboration with the EU and advancing our shared priorities together,” he added.

He also cited the ongoing negotiations for the EU-Philippines Free Trade Agreement, which both parties aim to finalize this year, describing it as a major opportunity to boost trade and investment.

“This is a much-awaited milestone that will strengthen trade, unlock new opportunities for exporters, and deepen our economic partnership with the EU,” Go said.

Meanwhile, Borje said the current energy situation could create opportunities for investment in cleaner, greener energy sources in the Philippines.

“What can be seen right now as a challenge can be turned into an opportunity — an opportunity not just for investments to come into the Philippines, but an opportunity that provides co-benefits as we work towards a greener future and greener sources of energy,” he said.

Santoro also emphasized the need to align climate ambitions with adequate financing to ensure sustainability projects can be fully implemented.

“While we are rightly ambitious in setting our targets for climate and environmental action, we do not always synchronize the financial resources needed to implement that ambition,” he said. “Strengthening the link between ambition and financing is essential to turning policy into real, on-the-ground impact,” he added.

Santoro noted that cooperation on trade, climate action, and disaster risk reduction should not be treated separately, as these challenges are closely interconnected. “The current energy situation must become an opportunity to accelerate this integrated approach, including on renewable energy and economic resilience,” he added.

Business, government leaders push faster sustainability action

Several sessions during the summit focused on circular economy initiatives, environmental governance, food supply stability, and supply chain protection.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Jonas Leones said stronger collaboration with investors and private companies is necessary to successfully implement environmental programs.

“The best lesson there is that the government cannot do it alone,” he said. “We need investors and the private sector to really implement and move forward,” he added.

Private sector representatives likewise underscored the importance of industry participation in sustainability efforts across the region.

Coca-Cola Philippines President Antonio Del Rosario said that Extended Producer Responsibility — an environmental policy approach that makes producers responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products — can be a huge driver for the circular economy in ASEAN.

“It can bring together not only government and industry, but also NGOs and the informal waste sector, which plays a significant role in Southeast Asia, including here in the Philippines,” he said.

Rodney van Dooren, Director of Illicit Trade Prevention at Philip Morris International, also highlighted the need to strengthen supply chain integrity across the region.

“Legitimate companies contribute most effectively by reinforcing and scaling government-led frameworks, not substituting for regulation or enforcement,” he said. “As a private sector, our role is to embed integrity into our day-to-day operations and to share relevant information, such as risk indicators and supply chain data, to support government enforcement efforts,” he added. Meanwhile, Cynderella Galimpin, Head of Animal Health for ASEAN, Korea, Australia & New Zealand at Boehringer Ingelheim, also underscored the impact of animal health on economic stability.

“We need to act fast when there is an outbreak,” she said. “Today, regulatory approval timelines for vaccines across Southeast Asia range from one to three years, but when the outbreak is already there, that is too late because it has already impacted food supply, trade, and the economy,” she added.

In his closing remarks, EU-ABC Executive Director Chris Humphrey urged participants to take responsibility for turning the day’s discussions into tangible results. “We need governments, businesses, and citizens to take sustainability more seriously in all its aspects, so we can all live longer, healthier lives while looking after our planet at the same time,” he said.

The ASEAN-EU Sustainability Summit 2026 was organized by the EU-ASEAN Business Council and the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines as part of the Philippines’ hosting of ASEAN-related meetings this year.

PALAWAN NEWS

[ASEAN, EU leaders warn climate goals risk stalling without funding](#)

By: Celeste Anna Formoso

ASEAN and European Union leaders meeting in Cebu City on Thursday openly acknowledged a widening gap between climate ambitions and the money needed to make those goals happen, warning that sustainability plans across the region could fall short without stronger financing and faster implementation.

At the inaugural ASEAN-EU Sustainability Summit 2026, officials from Southeast Asia and Europe repeatedly pointed to the same problem: governments have become more aggressive in setting climate and sustainability targets, but many projects remain stalled because funding and execution are lagging behind.

European Union Ambassador to the Philippines Massimo Santoro said governments and institutions often fail to align climate ambitions with actual financial support.

“While we are rightly ambitious in setting our targets for climate and environmental action, we do not always synchronise the financial resources needed to implement that ambition,” Santoro said.

“Strengthening the link between ambition and financing is essential to turning policy into real, on-the-ground impact,” he added.

The summit gathered more than 200 ministers, ambassadors, business executives, and policy officials on the sidelines of the ASEAN Leaders’ Summit as countries across the region deal with rising energy prices, supply chain disruptions, and pressure to transition to cleaner energy sources.

Rather than focusing purely on environmental messaging, several officials framed sustainability as an economic necessity tied directly to trade, energy security, and long-term competitiveness.

Paulo Duarte, president of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines and a member of the executive board of the EU-ASEAN Business Council, said sustainability is now closely tied to economic resilience.

“At a time of global uncertainty marked by energy volatility, supply chain disruptions, and rising costs, this Summit could not be more timely,” he said.

“It reflects a shared recognition across the region that sustainability is no longer optional. It is central to economic resilience, competitiveness, and long-term growth,” Duarte added.

Philippine officials also acknowledged that implementation remains a major hurdle in the country's transition toward greener energy.

Climate Change Commission Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert Borje said the region must start turning climate challenges into investment opportunities.

"What can be seen right now as a challenge can be turned into an opportunity — an opportunity not just for investments to come into the Philippines, but an opportunity that provides co-benefits as we work towards a greener future and greener sources of energy," Borje said.

Officials from ASEAN member states said countries in the region are under pressure to balance economic growth with emissions reduction goals.

Indonesia Deputy Minister for National Development Planning Leonardo Teguh Sambodo said Southeast Asian governments are trying to pursue both at the same time.

"The challenge for us is managing twin goals — achieving strong economic growth while reducing emissions," Sambodo pointed out.

"The only viable path forward is cohesive planning that integrates sustainability into every aspect of development," he stated.

The issue of financing also surfaced during discussions on the proposed EU-Philippines Free Trade Agreement, which Philippine officials said is becoming increasingly tied to sustainability and climate cooperation.

Special Assistant to the President for Investment and Economic Affairs and Finance Secretary Frederick Go described the agreement as the country's most important economic deal this year and said both sides are targeting its signing by the third quarter.

"Europe and the Philippines have a stable and evolving partnership, built on trade, investment and development cooperation," Go said.

"Today, it is also focused on sustainability, climate and inclusive growth, and we remain committed to deepening our collaboration with the EU and advancing our shared priorities together," he added.

The summit also highlighted the growing role of corporations in shaping sustainability efforts in the region.

The event was fully funded by private sector sponsors, including Coca-Cola ASEAN & South Pacific, Philip Morris International, Boehringer Ingelheim, and ACCA Global.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Jonas Leones said governments cannot carry out circular economy programs alone.

“The government cannot do it alone. We need investors, the private sector, to really implement and move forward,” Leones said.

Meanwhile, Cynderella Galimpin, head of animal health for ASEAN, Korea, Australia and New Zealand at Boehringer Ingelheim, warned that slow vaccine approval systems in Southeast Asia are already affecting food security and trade.

“We need to act fast when there is an outbreak,” Galimpin said.

“Today, regulatory approval timelines for vaccines across Southeast Asia range from one to three years, but when the outbreak is already there, that is too late, as it has already impacted food supply, trade and the economy,” she added.

Closing the summit, EU-ASEAN Business Council Executive Director Chris Humphrey urged governments and businesses to move beyond commitments and produce results.

“We need governments, businesses and citizens to take sustainability more seriously in all its aspects, so we can all live a longer life, a healthier life, and look after our planet at the same time,” Humphrey explained.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC, KWF ink partnership to advance climate communication in Filipino and regional languages](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), reinforcing a partnership that strengthens the accessibility of climate information.

Recognizing that the climate crisis is both a scientific and societal challenge, the partnership underscores the need to communicate climate information in ways that are clear, relatable, and grounded in the languages of Filipino communities.

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje highlighted the significance of the joint work between the Commission and KWF, citing that KWF is a critical ally in the fight against the climate crisis.

“Ang KWF ay mahalagang kaagapay ng CCC sa adbokasiya ng aksyong pang-klima at sa pagtugon sa krisis na kaakibat ng nagbabagong klima,” Borje said. “Bagama’t unibersal ang datos at siyensya ng pagbabago ng klima, ang pagpapabatid ng mga epekto nito ay dapat na lokal, inklusibo, at higit sa lahat ay naiintindihan ng bawat isang mamamayan mula sa iba’t ibang antas ng lipunan.”

Borje emphasized that the initiative supports the implementation of key national frameworks, including the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) built under the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., by strengthening climate literacy and enabling more effective local action.

“Ang ganitong teknikal na dokumento ay nangangailangan ng koordinasyon sa inyong institusyon upang masiguro na napapanatili nito ang linguistic inclusivity. Dito nagtatagpo ang dalawang tungkulin: ang CCC sa pagbibigay-linaw sa panganib at direksyon ng patakaran, at ang KWF sa pagtiyak na ito ay nauunawaan at nagiging bahagi ng buhay ng bawat Pilipino,” he added.

Affirming this, KWF Chairperson Atty. Marites A. Barrios-Taran highlighted the critical role of language in nation-building and climate action.

“Ang ating wika ay dapat na nagsisilbi sa tao. Ang Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino ay itinatag hindi lamang upang maging bantay ng balarila o tagasuri ng mga salita; ang ating serbisyo ay kailangang nakararating sa mga mamamayan,” Atty. Barrios-Taran expressed.

The partnership also sets the stage for sustained collaboration between the two agencies, including the joint development of communication materials, conduct of capacity-building activities, and co-creation of campaigns that utilize the best available scientific data using national and regional languages.

The partnership reflects a whole-of-government approach to climate action, integrating scientific knowledge with cultural and linguistic inclusivity to build a more climate-resilient Philippines.

The CCC remains steadfast in engaging with various sectors to advance climate action domestically and globally, reaffirming its commitment to building a climate-resilient and sustainable Philippines.

[CCC, Embassy of the Netherlands explore ways to further strengthen climate cooperation through NBS](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), led by Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, led by Ambassador Marielle Geraedts, are exploring ways to advance nature-based solutions (NBS) as a key strategy for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

At a meeting held at the CCC, both parties highlighted opportunities to strengthen bilateral cooperation on climate action, particularly in scaling up ecosystems-based approaches that reduce climate risks while supporting sustainable development.

“Nature-based solutions are among the most powerful and practical responses to the climate crisis. By working with ecosystems-based approaches such as protecting forests, restoring wetlands, and rehabilitating coastal areas, we not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also strengthen our natural defenses against climate impacts,” Borje said.

Both parties identified potential areas of collaboration, including participation in ASEAN–Netherlands cross-learning initiatives on climate adaptation and NBS, aimed at facilitating the exchange of technical expertise and best practices across the region.

The discussions are aligned with the Philippines’ National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2023–2050, which identifies the scaling up of nature-based solutions as a key cross-sectoral strategy, as well as the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which outlines the country’s commitment to greenhouse gas emissions reduction and climate resilience.

The Netherlands, recognized globally for its expertise in water management, climate adaptation, and integrated, nature-based approaches to flood risk reduction, expressed its support for a strengthened partnership with the Philippines through knowledge sharing, capacity-building, and innovative solutions.

The CCC underscored that strong partnerships with development partners such as the Netherlands are crucial in advancing climate action, particularly in mobilizing climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building support.

This engagement reflects the CCC’s continuing commitment to continued collaboration among governments, development partners, and local stakeholders to accelerate the implementation of nature-based solutions in support of the country’s climate resilience and sustainable development agenda.

[Legarda, CCC underscore value of anticipatory climate action and protection of the vulnerable](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) and Senator Loren Legarda both emphasized the importance of stronger anticipatory action legislation to strengthen resilience and preparedness against the impacts of climate change and protect vulnerable communities.

In her keynote speech at the Asian Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Resilience, Legarda underscored that policy reforms must shift climate governance from reactive disaster response toward systems that enable early and science-based action, particularly through institutionalized financing and preparedness mechanisms.

“We must tear down the firewall between ‘relief’ and ‘readiness.’ Our national budget has long treated climate finance as a post-mortem expense. We allocate billions for after, but pennies for just before. We need to activate resources for anticipatory use.”

Legarda stressed that legislative innovation must play a central role in advancing anticipatory response, ensuring that communities and other vulnerable groups are better equipped before disasters strike.

“I propose that we move toward a model of ‘Conditional Early Action.’ This means pre-positioning funds in the accounts of local governments—not for rebuilding schools, but for retrofitting them.”

“And we need to recognize that vulnerability is not uniform. Women, indigenous communities, the elderly, the PWDs, and those in geographically isolated areas face differentiated and compounded risks. Anticipatory finance must be redesigned to reach them first and not last,” Legarda said.

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje also emphasized that anticipatory climate action means that we should not think about how often we can rebuild, but how we rarely are destroyed.

“We must stop building and rebuilding the same risks over and over again. We must build right at first sight. Instead of repeatedly building after being destroyed, we need to invest right from the start. With best available science and data-driven planning, we can plan and implement well, ensuring that every peso spent reduces and does not reinforce risk,” Borje said.

A long-time climate champion, Legarda authored key pieces of legislation that form the backbone of the country’s climate and disaster risk governance, including the Climate Change Act of 2009, the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, and the People’s Survival Fund Act.

The conference convened representatives from government agencies, academic institutions, the private sector, and civil society. International development organizations – including the Embassy of France, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and regional DRM practitioners – were also present to exchange insights and advance collaboration on climate finance, policy coherence, and resilience-building efforts across Asia.

Carrying the theme “From Risk to Readiness: Investing in Climate Futures in Asia,” the event aimed to strengthen partnerships and mobilize investments that support climate-resilient development.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Philippines pushes for action-driven, results-oriented climate approach](#)

By: Catherine S. Valente

The Philippines pushed for an action-driven and results-orientated cooperation between the Associations of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and the European Union (EU) to strengthen implementation systems and address persistent delivery gaps in climate action.

Speaking at the Asean–EU Sustainability Summit 2026 in Cebu, Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chairman and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje stressed the urgency of translating climate commitments into measurable outcomes.

He said that Asean–EU cooperation must move beyond policy alignment and shift to achieving concrete results on the ground.

“Now is a time for us to take a few steps back and to look at what the gaps and challenges are. Because truthfully, the challenge for us is really delivering on the ground and implementation,” Borje said.

Borje said that while Asean member states continued to strengthen climate ambition through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and other regional frameworks, the challenge now lies in moving consistently from policymaking to implementation and assessment. He identified three major gaps that continued to constrain climate action delivery across Asean: institutional coordination across sectors, ministries, and levels of government; implementation capacity at scale, particularly at the subnational level where execution happens; and project preparation and execution readiness for resilience investments.

“Climate resilience cuts across sectors, ministries, and levels of government, and our delivery systems are still catching up to that reality,” Borje said, adding that implementation support at scale remained critical across Asean member states and local governments.

VERAFILES

[Yolanda's 'ground zero' faces hurdles as Philippines climate fund approvals lag \(Part 1\)](#)

By: Mariejo Roxas

Since 2016, the coastal municipality of Guiuan, Eastern Samar—ground zero for Typhoon Yolanda—has been trying to access the People's Survival Fund.

This government fund is meant to help vulnerable communities get ready for and cope with severe weather.

“Guiuan is very typhoon-prone. In fact, jokingly, we call ourselves the welcoming committee of typhoons,” said Rectito Melquiades, coordinator of the Guiuan Recovery and Sustainable Development Group for Resilience.

Despite being one of the first and hardest hit by climate disasters, Guiuan's push adaptation funding remains stalled by government delays. As a result, residents continue to face growing risks as extreme weather intensifies.

The PSF is a legislated national mechanism that supports long-term climate adaptation projects through direct funding—a pioneering model for locally led adaptation financing in Southeast Asia.

This P1-billion annual fund is a critical lifeline for climate-vulnerable communities, but many local government units see it as a needle's eye — difficult to pass through due to exhaustive requirements and unpredictable approval timelines.

In an interview, the Climate Change Commission said proposals for PSF funding are prioritized based on poverty incidence, vulnerability to climate hazards, and the presence of key biodiversity areas.

Guiuan, a second-class municipality bordering the Pacific Ocean and the Leyte Gulf, meets all these criteria. It also manages over 60,000 hectares of protected marine landscape and seascape and has complied with all the requirements, Melquiades said.

Their 35-page proposal for PSF seeks to address food insecurity and water resource issues, including the creation of a root crop research center focused on “palawan,” a resilient crop that sustained communities when rice supplies were cut off during Yolanda.

Local officials remain puzzled by the lack of approval by the PSF board. Ten years after its initial submission, Guiuan is still waiting for answers.

Rather than prioritizing hard infrastructure, the proposal focuses on sustainable food systems and marine protection—areas experts say are often overlooked in Philippine climate adaptation efforts.

Melquiades said they have yet to receive clear feedback or a formal rejection from the PSF board.

“We’re still hoping this will be considered by the PSF secretariat because we’re hoping to address our difficulties on food security and water resource management,” he said.

“For a very long time, LGUs were left clueless about where they were in the entire process. It’s as if they submitted a proposal in some black hole, and hopefully on the other side of that wormhole, there’s an approval or rejection,” said Kairos Dela Cruz, executive director of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities and a former PSF board member until 2024 as NGO representative.

“It’s hard to be in limbo,” he said.

The billion-peso paradox

The Philippines is consistently ranked as the world’s most vulnerable country to extreme weather and natural disasters, leaving over a thousand LGUs competing for a share of the PSF.

“It’s very hard to compete with each other because it’s becoming largely a victimhood approach... ‘What’s the edge of your vulnerability compared to mine, because mine is also real?’” Dela Cruz said.

In a document shared by the Climate Change Commission, the PSF board— headed by the Department of Finance— has approved 15 projects totaling over P1.4 billion since 2016. It has supported nine municipalities in developing their project proposals, with total grants of P18 million.

Unlike global climate finance mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund, the world’s largest dedicated fund helping low-income countries respond to climate change, the PSF is a unique, locally led adaptation fund sourced from the national budget.

The PSF was established in 2012 through Republic Act No. 10174, which amended the Climate Change Act of 2009.

Dela Cruz, who was part of the transition council when the PSF law was passed, said it was a long process before the initiative was kick-started.

“It was not even funded until 2015. So for a long time we have had a law, but we didn’t have any means of implementing it,” he said.

The PSF is meant to maintain a P1-billion floor, but it has only been replenished once since its initial allocation, said Dela Cruz.

Last year, the DOF announced a P1.42 billion financing commitment for the PSF.

The agency did not respond to repeated requests since February for an interview or comments.

Audit reports also show that the underutilization of the PSF has been a long-standing issue since its creation 14 years ago.

Unpacking the 'Yolanda' narrative

Gloomy skies and heavy rains can be seen from the office window of Eastern Samar Gov. Ralph Vincent Evardone in Borongan City in late February, well beyond the typical “habagat” (southwest monsoon) season in the Philippines.

“The weather has become erratic,” said Evardone. “We didn’t get to experience that a few years ago.”

From being the ground zero of two of the strongest typhoons in history—Yolanda in 2013 and Ruby in 2014—Eastern Samar is now facing increasingly unpredictable weather patterns brought by climate change, making it harder for local government units to prepare for the next disaster.

“How can you prepare for something that no one warns you about?” Evardone said.

While the governor said the province has enough funds for disaster response, it cannot afford large-scale projects that could prevent disasters brought by extreme weather events, such as flood resilience structures in river basins.

Eastern Samar has submitted three PSF applications—for Borongan, Guiuan, and Jipapad—but only Borongan’s proposal has been approved.

Dela Cruz said a key but often overlooked barrier is the limited capacity of LGUs to translate climate vulnerabilities into actionable development strategies.

“Climate change is here, it’s here to stay. But it would take some time for local governments to understand... how the Philippines’ development goals mean for them,” Dela Cruz said.

He added that this challenge is particularly evident along the country’s eastern seaboard—a vital, resource-rich but typhoon-prone region area —where the “Yolanda narrative” is often “co-opted” to secure climate finance.

At the 10th anniversary of Typhoon Yolanda in 2023, former Eastern Samar governor Ben Evardone said the PSF could help address climate change issues, but access remains difficult. He asked President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to relax the requirements so more LGUs can qualify.

Dela Cruz said this is “a really valid concern” for LGUs that experienced Yolanda firsthand and struggled to get their proposals approved.

“But I think it’s also symptomatic of the level of dire need on further assisting LGUs on how to come up with the proposal, and to visualize and co-create their development strategy moving forward,” he said.

[Can Borongan be a blueprint for nature-based flood control projects in the Philippines? \(Part 2\)](#)

By: Mariejo Roxas

Shortly after his reelection in 2019, Borongan City Mayor Jose Ivan Dayan Agda moved to tap the People's Survival Fund, a national climate finance mechanism, to support the city's climate adaptation efforts.

"The People's Survival Fund has been popular in the sense that it's difficult to hurdle... you need to thread the needle's eye," Agda said.

He formed a technical team to develop a proposal for a flood-control promenade along the Lo-om River, a major waterway cutting across several barangays. The project combined riverbank reforestation and bamboo planting with limited structural works—departing from the usual reliance on concrete barriers.

"But I told the team, this is 'suntok sa buwan' (a punch at the moon)," the mayor said.

Agda admitted he worried his support for Leni Robredo during the 2022 presidential elections might hurt the bid.

But to his surprise, the PSF board granted Borongan P118 million in 2023 to fund flood-control structures and reforestation along the Lo-om River—making it a model for other LGUs seeking access to the fund.

Agda attributed their success to a dedicated team that handled extensive documentation, including the Local Climate Change Action Plan ensuring these were "not doctored" but based on real data from their experiences.

The LCCAP, required of all LGUs, outlines local strategies for climate adaptation and mitigation. Around 90% of LGUs already have one, according to the Climate Change Commission.

It is essential to establish the "climate rationality" of PSF proposals, a common stumbling block for LGUs that must prove their projects are data-driven and directly tied to climate risks.

Even Borongan had to revise and resubmit its proposal several times to meet this requirement.

"Everything you submit has to be backed by data," Agda said.

Hard infrastructure vs nature-based solutions

Flood control—largely through hard infrastructure—dominates most proposals submitted to the PSF board, according to the Climate Change Commission unit that reviews them.

The PSF, however, encourages nature-based and community-centered solutions, including mangrove restoration, health programs, risk insurance, and early warning systems

Damage to infrastructure and agriculture from Typhoon Ruby, estimated at over P120 million in Borongan, nearly triple the impact of Typhoon Yolanda, pushed the city to rethink its approach.

Ronnie Tejero, chair of Barangay H in Borongan, said flooding continues to threaten residents, especially fisherfolk who depend on the river for livelihood. A previous concrete barrier built by the national government was destroyed and could no longer protect them, he said.

“The previous structure that we had was too low and not durable. But this time, we can see the new structure could not be easily washed away by floods,” he said.

In San Gabriel, the farthest town from the city center and situated by Lo-om River, a group of volunteer women was tasked to grow and replant thousands of bamboo trees to help stabilize riverbanks and reduce flooding and erosion.

“Typhoon Ruby really flooded our city, especially our public market, which was submerged by water and mud,” Agda recalled.

He added that combining structural measures with reforestation offers a more sustainable solution, but one the city cannot fund alone.

“I cannot dedicate all the resources of the city to solve a single problem,” he said.

While Borongan secured PSF support, many vulnerable LGUs were not as lucky.

Last year, the DOF launched a PSF caravan to guide LGUs on accessing funds for climate adaptation projects. Still, many lack the resources to meet technical requirements, including costly scientific studies often slowed by bureaucracy.

Technical barriers

The Eastern Samar provincial government also attempted to secure PSF funding for a flood control project in Jipapad, a fifth-class municipality located in a catch basin between the Oras and Catubig rivers and prone to frequent flooding.

Gov. Ralph Vincent Evardone said the proposal stalled due to requirements for a hydraulic analysis and a river basin master plan.

“PSF is tricky because the scale of the project should really benefit a lot of people, and it has to be backed by a feasibility study,” he said.

The governor added that the PSF board's criteria for being "prone to natural calamities" can be too broad and subjective, sometimes disadvantageous to applicants like Guiuan.

"They could ask: How often do we get hit by a Yolanda-type of a typhoon?" he said.

For Jipapad, the province proposed a flood control system with a public park designed to redirect floodwaters. But required studies had to come from national agencies, not the LGU.

Evardone said the PSF board requested a hydraulic analysis and a river basin master plan, which he expected from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), then working on a flood control project along the Oras River in Arteche.

"The problem is, we were not given a copy. Either they didn't want us to see the studies or because there weren't any plans," he said.

At the same time, the province did not have the expertise and resources to produce such studies independently.

"We didn't have an engineer with that kind of expertise," he said.

The case highlights a persistent barrier: Many LGUs lack technical capacity, while access to data from national agencies remains limited.

Borongan faced similar issues.

Although its city engineers designed the P118-million project, securing certification from the DPWH caused delays.

"Our plan turned out to be cheaper than DPWH. But that's when we experienced delays... the DPWH was hesitant to approve our project because of the price gap," Agda said.

But Borongan City's success with a nature-based flood control promenade points to a needed shift in local climate finance: from "business-as-usual" infrastructure toward more holistic, data-driven adaptation strategies.

At the same time, the struggles of other LGUs in Eastern Samar underscore the tension between urgent protection needs and the technical barriers that block access to critical funding.

"It's important to have access, but it doesn't stop at that, Evardone said. "It ends when the funding actually reaches LGUs."

=END=