



NEWS ROUNDUP

15 MAY 2026 | 08:00 am

- After quinoa's boom, Bolivian farmers face degraded soils and climate stress
- Combined climate extremes may prompt carbon budget rethink
- LAWA, BINHI programs help communities cope with climate change
- Master plan vs Mindanao River flooding OKd
- Mindanao adopts unified river basin plan
- New Zealand to Block Climate Lawsuits Against Companies
- Protected area managers across Europe are adapting to climate change
- Sustainable durian program boosts Mindanao agriculture
- UN members prepare for pivotal vote on landmark ICJ climate justice ruling

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- ASEAN, EU push stronger sustainability cooperation
- CCC underscores strengthened climate reporting to improve transparency under the Paris Agreement

ASIAN RESEARCH NEWS

[Combined climate extremes may prompt carbon budget rethink](#)

Combined extreme climate events are likely to become more common in the future if carbon emissions continue to rise, a paper in Nature suggests.

ESG TODAY

[New Zealand to Block Climate Lawsuits Against Companies](#)

By: Mark Segal

The government of New Zealand announced plans to change its climate change laws to prevent civil lawsuits against companies for environmental harm caused by their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, in a move described by Justice Minister Paul Goldsmith designed to “provide legal clarity and certainty” for businesses.

EUREKALERT

[Protected area managers across Europe are adapting to climate change](#)

New research shows how climate change is reshaping protected area management, though more funding and scientific knowledge are needed to facilitate the process.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Master plan vs Mindanao River flooding OKd](#)

By: Keith Bacongco

DAVAO CITY – The Mindanao River Basin Management Council (MRBMC) has formally adopted a unified master plan to address the perennial flooding and strengthen watershed protection in the country's largest river system.

MONGABAY

[After quinoa's boom, Bolivian farmers face degraded soils and climate stress](#)

By: Benjamin Swift

AROMA MARKA, Bolivia — The rolling hills around the town of Aroma Marka are a cacophony of colors: golden-yellow, deep-red and purplish-black quinoa pods smatter the otherwise barren landscape here in Bolivia's southern Altiplano, the Andean Plateau.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[LAWA, BINHI programs help communities cope with climate change](#)

By: Jose Cielito Reganit

MANILA – An official of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) on Thursday highlighted the accomplishments and expanded targets of Project Local Adaptation to Water Access (LAWA) and Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished (BINHI) as it continues to provide food, water and livelihood interventions for communities affected by the dry spell, particularly in Cagayan and Isabela.

[Sustainable durian program boosts Mindanao agriculture](#)

By: Che Palicte

DAVAO CITY – The Department of Agriculture in Davao Region (DA-11) announced on Thursday the recent launch of the second phase of the durian development project in partnership with the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and CAMP Asia, Inc.

THE GUARDIAN

[UN members prepare for pivotal vote on landmark ICJ climate justice ruling](#)

The UN's willingness to tackle the climate crisis in a fair and legal way will be tested next week during a critical vote of the UN general assembly in New York.

SUNSTAR

[Mindanao adopts unified river basin plan](#)

By: David Ezra M. Francisquete

GOVERNMENT agencies and local stakeholders have adopted a unified master plan for the Mindanao River Basin, a move aimed at strengthening flood control, protecting agricultural production, and improving climate resilience across key economic areas in Mindanao.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC underscores strengthened climate reporting to improve transparency under the Paris Agreement](#)

MANILA — The Climate Change Commission (CCC) underscored the importance of strengthening transparent and accountable climate reporting systems under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement, as countries continue to address persistent challenges in climate data reporting and disclosure.

THE PHILBIZNEWS

[ASEAN, EU push stronger sustainability cooperation](#)

ASEAN and European Union (EU) leaders on Thursday called for stronger regional cooperation and urgent action on sustainability, energy transition, and economic resilience as Southeast Asia grapples with mounting pressure from the global energy crisis and ongoing supply chain disruptions.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ASIAN RESEARCH NEWS

[Combined climate extremes may prompt carbon budget rethink](#)

Combined extreme climate events are likely to become more common in the future if carbon emissions continue to rise, a paper in Nature suggests.

Combined extreme climate events are likely to become more common in the future if carbon emissions continue to rise, a paper in Nature suggests. The study finds that the frequency of compound events — such as concurrent hot–wet and drought–heat extremes — is linked to cumulative carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. In particular, the frequency of more severe events is predicted to escalate rapidly. These findings suggest that targets for CO₂ emissions to keep warming limited to 1.5 °C and 2 °C may need to be lower to address the wider consequences of climate change.

Climate response to anthropogenic carbon emissions is usually quantified by measuring temperature changes relative to cumulative CO₂ emissions, which provides a basis for estimating levels of allowable CO₂ emissions consistent with global warming targets. However, this measure does not capture the full impacts of climate change. Compound events, such as concurrent hot–wet or drought–heat extremes, are of great concern as they can pose high risks to societies and ecosystems, but the response of these compound events to cumulative CO₂ emissions is not well understood.

Yao Zhang, Zhaoli Wang and colleagues use climate models and simulations to estimate the future change in monthly hot-and-wet compound event frequency per unit of cumulative CO₂ emissions. They find that historically frequent compound events will increase linearly with cumulative CO₂ emissions, whereas rarer and more severe events will escalate more sharply. Their measure of the response of compound events to cumulative CO₂ emissions suggests that this effect is 37–75% higher than averages estimated from previous models, thereby indicating that compound extremes will occur more frequently than projected by existing Earth system models. Accounting for these changes in compound events means that CO₂ emissions need to be substantially lower than those proposed to limit warming to 1.5 °C and 2 °C, the authors note. The new metric may support more comprehensive climate policy and negotiations, the authors conclude.

ESG TODAY

[New Zealand to Block Climate Lawsuits Against Companies](#)

By: Mark Segal

The government of New Zealand announced plans to change its climate change laws to prevent civil lawsuits against companies for environmental harm caused by their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, in a move described by Justice Minister Paul Goldsmith designed to “provide legal clarity and certainty” for businesses.

The initiative comes as six of New Zealand’s largest corporate emitters, including dairy giant Fonterra, face lawsuits filed by Maori climate activist Mike Smith, which were given permission to proceed by the Supreme Court last year, and were set to go to trial in 2027.

Goldsmith, addressing Smith’s lawsuits, said that the change to the climate change law would apply to both current and future proceedings before the courts.

Goldsmith said:

“Ongoing litigation in the High Court, where an applicant has brought civil claims against six major businesses for their greenhouse gas emissions, is creating uncertainty in business confidence and investment that the Government must address.”

Under the new proposal, the government said that it aims to amend New Zealand’s Climate Change Response Act 2002, in order to prevent findings of liability for climate change damage or harm caused by greenhouse gas emissions through the courts.

Noting that New Zealand’s climate change law already provides a legal framework enabling the government to manage greenhouse gas emissions, Goldsmith said that “our response to climate change is best managed by the Government at a national level and not through piece-meal litigation in the courts.”

In a radio interview following the announcement, Smith sharply criticized the government’s move, calling it “an affront to democracy.”

Smith said:

“If Parliament can cancel a live court case, then no legal claim is secure at all, once it becomes politically inconvenient.”

EUREKALERT

[Protected area managers across Europe are adapting to climate change](#)

New research shows how climate change is reshaping protected area management, though more funding and scientific knowledge are needed to facilitate the process.

The Natura 2000 network, the world's largest network of protect areas, aims at protecting important species and habitats across the European Union. Its traditional approach to conservation has focused on maintaining ecosystems in their historical conditions, but in a world characterised by a changing climate this may not be possible anymore, requiring adapting the conservation strategies.

Researchers conducted a large-scale survey across Europe aimed at Natura 2000 protected area managers, to investigate how they perceive and address the effects of climate change on biodiversity. The survey was conducted as part of the Biodiversa+ Scenarios for Protecting European Avian Redistributions (SPEAR) project focused on bird conservation, which involved partners from several European countries.

Managers' perceptions vary between regions

The findings show that over half of the managers already perceive climate change as a threat to biodiversity, with the majority of them already accounting for the impacts of climate change when planning management practices. Managers are particularly concerned about warming and changes in precipitations.

"Climate change is not equally perceived as a threat throughout Europe, for example managers in the Mediterranean region are more concerned than managers in the Boreal region, where for example Finland is located," says the study's first author, Doctoral Researcher Giorgio Zavattoni from the University of Turku, Finland.

Managers who perceive that their protected areas are vulnerable to climate change are also more likely to implement adaptation strategies.

"It was encouraging to see that over half of the managers consider the effect of climate change in their conservation management strategies, not only by trying to resist its effect but also by dynamically adapting to climate change and acknowledging that it transforms ecosystems," says Professor Jon Brommer from the University of Turku.

European Commission's new guidance strengthens adaptation strategies

This study came out at the same time as the European Commission published a new guidance on Natura 2000 and climate change, which is dedicated to strengthening adaptation strategies. The Commission notice clarifies legal flexibilities in the Birds and Habitats Directives, needs for strategic planning, and identifies practical adaptation measures.

“This guidance is welcome, because our study points out that many protected area managers are eager to learn more about the implementation of adaptation strategies,” says Dr Elie Gaget from the research institute Tour du Valat, France.

“However, managers also flagged the lack of scientific knowledge and financial resources to implement cost-effective climate adaptation strategies,” adds Gaget.

This study highlights the urgent need for researchers to take an increasingly important role in aiding managers by producing actionable knowledge, while also funding and capacity building support are strongly needed.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Master plan vs Mindanao River flooding OKd](#)

By: Keith Bacongco

DAVAO CITY – The Mindanao River Basin Management Council (MRBMC) has formally adopted a unified master plan to address the perennial flooding and strengthen watershed protection in the country's largest river system.

The plan will consolidate efforts of national government agencies, local government units, and development partners under a single framework to address flooding, watershed degradation, water resource management, and climate change impacts, said Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) Secretary Leo Magno.

Magno issued the statement after the MRBMC adopted the plan during the MRBMC Executive Meeting in General Santos City on May 12.

The initiative was meant to address fragmented implementation and ensure efficient use of government resources, he added.

Magno acknowledged the efforts of different government agencies and pointed out that there is a need to unify the efforts to avoid redundancy and effectively manage government resources. “That is why we were given a directive from the Office of the Executive Secretary to review and update the existing Mindanao River Basin Master Plan,” he said.

The Mindanao River basin spreads across the provinces of Bukidnon, Davao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, and some parts of Agusan del Sur and chartered cities Cotabato City and Davao City.

It is the second largest river basin in the Philippines with a total area of 21,503-square kilometers next to Cagayan River in Luzon.

The system also has the second longest river in the country with an approximate length of 373 kilometers.

Its headwaters can be found in Impasug-ong in Bukidnon, where it is known as the Upper Pulangui River. It joins the Kabacan River downstream where it is called Mindanao River.

While the Mindanao River basin is a critical source of irrigation and livelihood balance for millions of residents, it is increasingly threatened by flooding, watershed degradation, illegal logging, and climate change impacts.

Based on the 2024 study “Mindanao River Basin – Landscape Risk Assessment,” which evaluated the basin’s vulnerability to climate change and natural hazards, it showed that a

significant rise in flooding was linked to environmental degradation, particularly in upper watershed areas such as Upper Pulangi and other headwaters.

The study pointed out how deforestation, slash-and-burn farming, and rapid urbanization have reduced natural water absorption, intensifying flood risks in downstream communities.

It also stated that deteriorating water quality in the Pulangi River system has resulted in increasing fish kills, declining aquatic biodiversity, and higher turbidity levels driven by agricultural runoff, industrial discharges, and soil erosion.

Magno said the MRBMC will ensure that the plan will translate into actual projects on the ground.

“We will make sure that resources are not wasted, that projects are implemented properly, and that the people of Mindanao see the results in improved flood control, watershed protection, and climate resilience.”

Present during the meeting were MRBMC Chairperson Cardinal Orlando B. Quevedo and key representatives from different provincial governments, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Office of Civil Defense.

MONGABAY

[After quinoa's boom, Bolivian farmers face degraded soils and climate stress](#)

By: Benjamin Swift

AROMA MARKA, Bolivia — The rolling hills around the town of Aroma Marka are a cacophony of colors: golden-yellow, deep-red and purplish-black quinoa pods smatter the otherwise barren landscape here in Bolivia's southern Altiplano, the Andean Plateau.

At 3,800 meters (about 12,500 feet) above sea level, the Altiplano stretches across much of western Bolivia and into Peru, Chile and Argentina. Quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa*) has been grown on the Altiplano since pre-Hispanic times, but it was only recently that the nutrient-dense pseudocereal was put on the global map, fueling a production boom in the Andes. Prices later tumbled as countries outside the region also began cultivating it.

Yet the striking scenery belies the lasting scars the 2010-2014 quinoa boom left in the region. At its height, sky-high prices triggered a production frenzy, drawing former residents back from cities to plant the "golden grain." But Walter Canaviri, a quinoa producer and local leader, remembers that the sudden spike came at a cost. "Everyone wanted to produce more," he told Mongabay. In the rush to capitalize on the moment, some growers encroached on neighbors' lands, leading to disputes. "It was a sad time for this area because everyone turned against everyone," he said.

While the quinoa boom brought a temporary boon for rural Andean Indigenous communities, it also came with the destruction of local ecosystems, soil degradation, and social conflict – all of which have been exacerbated by changes in regional weather patterns and global climate change. Though Bolivian producers like Canaviri are working to grow organic quinoa real — royal quinoa — in an effort to differentiate their crop from the smaller and less nutritious versions grown in other areas, most producers lack direct access to international markets, making it difficult to receive differentiated prices for their products.

The quinoa boom

Quinoa has been an Andean staple for millennia, but came under threat when Spanish colonizers prohibited the cultivation of native crops and pushed for their replacement by cereals like barley and wheat. Later, international aid organizations encouraged Bolivian farmers to plant wheat rather than native crops. Though it was still grown on a small scale, quinoa was long stigmatized as a food for rural Indigenous farmers.

Global interest in quinoa slowly grew in the 20th century, fueled by the crop's adaptability and nutritional profile. Early trials reached Africa in the 1930s, followed by a commercial program in the U.S. in 1985. Quinoa's profile reached new highs in 2013 when, at the suggestion of Bolivian President Evo Morales, the United Nations declared it the International Year of Quinoa, recognizing the seed's potential role in "eradicating hunger, malnutrition and poverty." Prices

skyrocketed: after decades of hovering around \$1 per kilogram (45 U.S. cents per pound), export prices peaked near \$7/kg (\$3.20/lb) in 2013.

Farmers across the Andes scrambled to meet the demand. “They reacted as anyone would, saying ‘this is our opportunity,’” Elizabeth Jiménez, an economist who studies quinoa production at the Higher University of San Andrés in La Paz, told Mongabay. As prices soared, many urban migrants returned to their rural birthplaces to plant quinoa, reshaping regional land use. Between 2013 and 2015, Bolivia’s quinoa production area doubled and Ecuador’s increased tenfold.

By 2015, prices had plummeted as quinoa was popularized and competition sprang up worldwide (as of 2018, the crop was grown in 123 countries, from the UAE to Russia). Many growers in Bolivia blame the International Year of Quinoa for globalizing the plant and driving down prices. “The fact that quinoa is grown around the globe makes it difficult for us,” farmer Cleto Mamani told Mongabay.

Quinoa’s brief surge brought benefits to some farmers, who used their earnings to buy machinery or access education. Then there are others, like grower and middleman Eduardo Calizaya Chiri, who told Mongabay he lost more than \$140,000 when prices crashed before he could sell his stock.

While quinoa still sells for more than other Altiplano staples, like potatoes, its price has now stabilized far below the historic peak. But the region is still grappling with the impacts of the land-use change spurred by the seed’s global rise.

Quinoa’s lasting impacts

Traditionally, farmers here herded llamas, alpacas and sheep, using the manure as fertilizer for the small plots of quinoa that they cultivated for their own subsistence. But the “perverse incentive” during the boom prompted many to get rid of their livestock and expand their quinoa fields, Jiménez said. They also tended to use excessive amounts of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. In some regions, soils became depleted as farmers continued planting year after year.

As more land was dedicated to quinoa, native vegetation was cleared, degrading natural windbreaks and causing soil erosion. “The weather isn’t like it used to be,” Maura Condo Mendoza, who grows quinoa around Aroma Marka and near the southern Uyuni salt flats, told Mongabay. “Now the wind just levels the fields.”

Jiménez said that although farmers recognized the problems of intensifying quinoa monocultures, they saw them as a necessary compromise. “People didn’t know how long high prices would last, and it was the first time this crop was being valued on a global scale,” she said.

Though the intensity of quinoa production eased after prices crashed, it remains the most practical crop for many farmers, thriving even when other crops suffer from frost or drought. “Quinoa doesn’t need a lot of labor,” Marco Antonio Patiño Fernández, an agronomist at the Higher University of San Andrés, told Mongabay. “A sheep might cost 1,000 bolivianos [\$145], and 100 pounds [45 kg] of quinoa costs the same,” he added. “Just think: how much more work does it take to raise that sheep?”

Challenges in a changing environment

On a rainy morning in late March, Cleto Mamani hurriedly cut stalks of quinoa and gathered them into golden piles that dotted the Altiplano for miles. “The rain is causing problems for us,” he said of the unseasonal precipitation. “When the quinoa gets wet it can start to go bad.”

Global climate change and shifts in regional weather patterns — driven in part by deforestation in the Amazon — are making conditions increasingly difficult for the 70,000 Bolivian families in the Altiplano who depend on the pseudocereal. Growers in the Aroma area told Mongabay that drought and high heat have become more common, stunting growth and decreasing yields. Rising soil salinity elsewhere also means that farmers must wash the soil yearly to reduce salt deposits, making agriculture more labor-intensive.

Though Bolivia’s rainy season typically runs from November to March, a recent study documented changes in Bolivian Altiplano wet season timing and intensity, and the region has seen a 15% reduction in precipitation between 2000 and 2025. Farmers in Aroma said they’re worried that this year’s late rains could cause quinoa seeds to sprout prematurely or rot. They also noted that more moisture could reduce the number of seeds that fall off dry quinoa stalks during harvest.

Drought also makes it difficult to properly maintain fallow fields. “There’s no fallow land — it hasn’t rained enough, so there’s nothing for next year,” said Condo Mendoza, adding that resting lands need moisture to be aerated. “Many people are saying they’re going to hold on to their current stock for next year,” when prices may rise, she added.

At the same time, unseasonal episodes of frost have grown more frequent. Between freezes and heavy winds, quinoa farmer Edgar Cruz Bonifacio said he expects to lose roughly 40% of this year’s harvest.

These shifts, along with intensified monocultures, biodiversity loss, growing pesticide resistance, and an absence of integrated pest management practices, have contributed to the emergence of at least 18 new pests afflicting quinoa, from parakeets to moths to quinoa mildew.

At 64, farmer Orispo Choque has seen these changes from up close. “Back when I was young, there weren’t so many pests, the rain was better, and the harvests were good,” he told Mongabay as he supervised day laborers harvesting his plot of land. “But over time, tractors showed up, and worms appeared too, and started infesting everything.”

In 2006, Choque sold his animals to begin planting quinoa across his entire 100-hectare (250-acre) farm, half of which he used to leave fallow every year. He now purchases manure from a neighbor.

As growers grapple with a changing Altiplano, some warn that Bolivia's efforts to boost lithium mining could exacerbate existing pressures. Though state-run operations are currently limited, Indigenous communities around the Uyuni salt flats, where lithium is mined, have blamed the installation of some 20 wells for drying up the high-altitude wetlands, rendering agriculture nearly impossible. Gonzalo Mondaca, a lithium specialist at environmental nonprofit CEDIB, told Mongabay that more intensive mining would lower the water table and sap soil moisture, which could harm agriculture. "The impact on quinoa crops would perhaps be the first consequence," he said.

Solutions and challenges for Bolivian quinoa

In 2006, Aroma community members founded the Association of Ecological Quinoa and Camelid Producers (APREQC) which aims to produce organic quinoa to access higher prices and avoid the risks of agrochemicals.

Many growers, including Choque, sell their quinoa through APREQC or personal contacts who offer a slight premium for the organic product. However, when demand via the association falters, many sell in the nearby Challapata Market, where buyers don't differentiate between conventional and organic seeds. Much of this quinoa is then smuggled to Peru and exported as locally grown.

Organic farming is also becoming increasingly challenging. While it's mandatory for cooperative members in Aroma, Condo Mendoza said that near Uyuni, the practice has become untenable. "If you don't [spray chemical pesticides], the worms attack and leave the quinoa in a terrible state," she said. While organic alternatives and regenerative methods exist, many growers say these are costly and not as effective as chemical pesticides.

Bolivian growers say they're eager to bypass middlemen and sell directly to global markets. Their Royal Quinoa, produced in the mineral-rich soils surrounding the salt flats, boasts a larger grain and higher nutritional content than the varieties it's blended with when exported through Peru. While Bolivia's yields lag behind Peru's, experts and growers say the quality of Royal Quinoa should set the Bolivian product apart. "What's missing are public policies promoting exports," said Patiño Fernández, the agronomist.

Despite the 2020 designation of two Royal Quinoa varieties with a protected designation of origin (PDO) label — similar to how Champagne can only come from a certain region of France — the economic benefits to farmers have not yet materialized. The designation was intended to safeguard the Altiplano's unique varieties from foreign competition and validate their superior quality, but local growers say there's been little change in demand.

“It’s nice to have a certification, but without the marketing and the enforcement, it’s not going to get you anything,” Tamara Stenn, a professor at Suffolk University in the U.S., who has studied fair-trade quinoa in Bolivia, told Mongabay. “The certification was supposed to build value for their quinoa, but that needs to be supported on a government level.”

Many elements of the quinoa plant remain untapped, according to Patiño Fernández, such as the leaves, which boast a higher protein content by weight than the seeds. The research station where he works has also developed quinoa bars and cookies, which they hope could gain footing in the domestic market. Even saponin, the bitter coating that must be washed off the seeds before eating, has industrial potential: before multinational corporations dominated the Bolivian market, this byproduct was transformed into soaps and a toothpaste known as Quino-Dent.

As a lifelong quinoa farmer, Orispo Choque said he worries that environmental challenges will impact crop quality and productivity. “The heat is stronger and the rain is scarce,” he said, which could stunt growth and reduce quinoa supply as climate change worsens. “It seems we are already reaching that point,” he added.

But despite the barriers, Patiño Fernández said he’s hopeful. “I think a second stage for quinoa is possible,” he said. “But it has to be done with a sustainable focus.”

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[LAWA, BINHI programs help communities cope with climate change](#)

By: Jose Cielito Reganit

MANILA – An official of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) on Thursday highlighted the accomplishments and expanded targets of Project Local Adaptation to Water Access (LAWA) and Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished (BINHI) as it continues to provide food, water and livelihood interventions for communities affected by the dry spell, particularly in Cagayan and Isabela.

In a media forum at the DSWD Central Office in Quezon City, Director Isabel Lanada of the DSWD's Disaster Response Management Bureau (DRMB) presented the program's accomplishments from 2023 to 2025, as well as its expanded implementation targets for 2026.

She said the LAWA at BINHI programs was conceptualized under the directive of Secretary Rex Gatchalian to ensure long-term food and water security for vulnerable communities, especially those affected by droughts and other climate-related hazards.

Lanada emphasized that the program goes beyond providing temporary aid, aiming to strengthen the resilience and capacity of vulnerable communities.

Under the LAWA component, communities are assisted in building small farm reservoirs, irrigation facilities and the rehabilitation of waterways.

From 2023 to 2025, the DSWD has successfully established 3,614 LAWA sites nationwide, including 1,650 in Luzon, 721 in Visayas, and 1,243 in Mindanao.

This resulted in the harvesting of 2,092,200 kilograms of aquatic resources and 831.30 kilograms of kangkong (water spinach) during the period.

For BINHI, a total of 6,440 sites, comprising communal vegetable gardens and root crop farms, were established, with 3,875 in Luzon, 1,159 in the Visayas and 1,406 in Mindanao.

A total of 1,909.77 hectares has been cultivated under the project, resulting in the harvest of 35,234,362 kilos of crops and produce.

"Kung ang mga kababayan natin ay may alternative source of water and food, hindi po yan aalis sa kanilang mga lugar at pagyayamanin nila, ay hindi po sila makakaranas ng gutom, hindi po sila mapipilay in terms of economic needs nila (If the people have an alternative source of water and food, they will not leave their places, and they will sustain it. They will not go hungry, they will not be crippled in terms of economic nerds)," Lanada said.

For 2026, the DSWD is targeting the implementation of the programs across 2,549 barangays in 450 municipalities, covering 71 provinces and all 17 regions nationwide.

This aims to assist 119,780 beneficiaries through a combined funding support of PHP1.9 billion in grants, PHP250 million in donations, and PHP261 million from the Department of Labor and Employment's Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers program.

Meanwhile, the DSWD-DRMB continues to provide Emergency Cash Transfer (ECT) assistance to families affected by the dry spell conditions in the Cagayan Valley Region.

As of the latest monitoring, 35,444 families in Isabela and 31,782 families in Cagayan have been affected by the extreme conditions.

In response, the DSWD has already released PHP358.87 million worth of ECT for affected families in Isabela and PHP321.79 million for those affected in Cagayan. (PNA)

Sustainable durian program boosts Mindanao agriculture

By: Che Palicte

DAVAO CITY – The Department of Agriculture in Davao Region (DA-11) announced on Thursday the recent launch of the second phase of the durian development project in partnership with the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and CAMP Asia, Inc.

The project, “Income Enhancement of Farmers through Strengthening a Sustainable Agricultural Environment in Mindanao, Philippines (2026–2028),” aims to improve farming systems, strengthen cooperatives, and expand market opportunities for producers of durian and other tropical crops in Mindanao.

In a statement, DA-11 Regional Director Macario Gonzaga reaffirmed the agency’s commitment to sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture, stressing the need to transform farming into a market-driven enterprise.

“Our goal is to shift the mindset from farming as mere production to farming as a business. By strengthening cooperatives and creating hubs of excellence, we ensure that the value-added remains in the hands of the farmers,” he said.

A key highlight of the May 12 launch was the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among MinDA, CAMP Asia, and DA-11, formalizing collaboration on project implementation, policy, support, market linkages, monitoring, and coordination under the Transformational Enterprise Support for the Agribusiness Value-Chains of Mindanao (Team) program.

MinDA Secretary Leo Tereso Magno emphasized the initiative’s role in strengthening farmers’ resilience and promoting long-term sustainability.

“This project is more than an agricultural intervention. It is an investment in the resilience of our farmers, the sustainability of our communities, and the long-term strength of Mindanao’s food systems,” he said.

Meanwhile, CAMP Asia Country Director Buyoung Cho noted that the next three years will focus on deepening project impact and creating more sustainable opportunities for farming communities, particularly through the Davao Mt. Apo Farmers Agriculture Cooperative. (PNA)

THE GUARDIAN

[UN members prepare for pivotal vote on landmark ICJ climate justice ruling](#)

The UN's willingness to tackle the climate crisis in a fair and legal way will be tested next week during a critical vote of the UN general assembly in New York.

Every member state is being asked to back a series of landmark findings on climate justice from the international court of justice (ICJ) as part of a new political resolution. If passed, it will mean governments recognise they have a legal responsibility to cut their greenhouse gas emissions, including tackling fossil fuels.

The ICJ's advisory opinion, published last year following a series of hearings in the Hague, had been requested by an unprecedented 132 states without opposition in 2023. It was hailed as a "historic win" for small island states.

The Pacific island nation of Vanuatu has since been leading a group of states to draft a resolution that welcomes the opinion and tries to help it make a difference on the ground. Ahead of the UN vote on 20 May, it is seeking support from as many other nations as possible.

At a UN briefing earlier this month, the Vanuatu climate minister, Ralph Regenvanu, described the UN's initial resolution as "a collective act of multilateral confidence that law can help steer us through the climate crisis" that the court answered unanimously. "That unanimity is a gift to the membership. It gives us legal clarity and it gives us something precious in the UN; a common reference point."

Regenvanu wants the resolution to get the "broadest possible support", at least matching the 132 co-sponsors of the previous one.

The text of the resolution has changed significantly since an initial draft circulated in February. Calls for a "rapid, just and quantified phase-out of fossil fuel production and use", for example, were replaced with an urge to transition away. An original aim to set up an international register of damage, loss or injury was dropped altogether.

Some major changes were the result of pressure from the US, which has lobbied to drop the resolution altogether. But Vanuatu's climate justice envoy, Lee-Ann Sackett, who led the negotiations, said many states raised concerns or had comments, so significant effort was made to keep the text both "meaningful and unifying".

"Where delegations asked for reassurance we made it explicit," she said. "Where delegations asked for restraint, we built in safeguards."

The final text, published at the start of the month, now clearly states that the UNFCCC and the Paris agreement are the primary international intergovernmental forums for negotiating a global

response to climate change. Regenvanu stressed that it does not adjudicate disputes or attribute responsibility to any particular state. Nor does it create new obligations or prejudice legal positions.

Despite the changes, Regenvanu said it was “not a resolution that simply files the opinion away. It calls on all states to comply with their existing obligations as established by the court.” It is also intended to help member states think through how to implement these obligations.

The court’s advisory opinion is already being used in climate litigation around the world and judges are starting to reference it in their climate-related rulings.

But it has proved more intractable as a diplomatic lever. It failed to make a mark at last year’s UNFCCC climate talks in Belem; Saudi Arabia called its inclusion in final texts a “red, red line”.

The opinion was more evident at the inaugural fossil fuel conference in Santa Marta, Colombia, where Regenvanu told state delegates that they were “frontrunners” in doing what is both legally and scientifically required. “That is why the ICJ’s landmark advisory opinion on climate change considers international cooperation indispensable.”

More broadly, the resolution is being seen as a key test for the credibility of the international legal system.

Sackett said there was close engagement from state delegations that do not usually intervene on climate texts “because they recognise that this is also about the authority of the court, the integrity of the UN system and how we translate legal clarification into multilateral cooperation”.

Tania Romualdo, the permanent representative of Cape Verde to the UN representing the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said the importance of the resolution extends beyond the text itself.

For small island developing states, she said, “this is about the affirmation and protection of our territories, sovereignty and fundamental rights of our populations. This process has not been easy. There have been many sacrifices along the way. These are not easy compromises but they reflect the reality of negotiation.”

SUNSTAR

[Mindanao adopts unified river basin plan](#)

By: David Ezra M. Francisquete

GOVERNMENT agencies and local stakeholders have adopted a unified master plan for the Mindanao River Basin, a move aimed at strengthening flood control, protecting agricultural production, and improving climate resilience across key economic areas in Mindanao.

The framework, approved during the May 12 executive meeting of the Mindanao River Basin Management Council in General Santos City, seeks to harmonize the implementation of flood mitigation, watershed rehabilitation, and water resource management projects across the island.

Leo Tereso Magno, chairperson of the Mindanao Development Authority, said the initiative aims to eliminate overlapping government programs and ensure more efficient use of public funds.

“May ginagawa ang iba’t ibang ahensiya, pero ang kailangan talaga ngayon i-unify natin yung efforts. Baka madoble yung trabaho, oras at financial resources ng gobyerno ay masayang lang (Different agencies are already implementing programs, but what we really need now is to unify our efforts. Otherwise, work may be duplicated and the government’s time and financial resources could go to waste),” Magno said.

He added that the Office of the Executive Secretary directed concerned agencies to revisit and update the existing master plan to improve coordination among national agencies and local government units.

“We will make sure that resources are not wasted, that projects are implemented properly, and that the people of Mindanao see the results in improved flood control, watershed protection, and climate resilience,” he added.

The Mindanao River Basin is the country’s second-largest river basin and one of the island’s most important ecological and economic resources. It covers parts of Central Mindanao and nearby regions and supports major agricultural areas producing rice, corn, bananas, and other high-value crops for domestic and export markets.

Its river systems also provide irrigation, support fisheries and aquaculture, and supply water for households and industries. Several communities and business centers across Mindanao rely on the basin for transportation, livelihood, and power generation.

Officials said the basin has become increasingly vulnerable to flooding, deforestation, illegal logging, siltation, and climate-related disruptions, including prolonged droughts and stronger weather disturbances. These environmental pressures have repeatedly affected agricultural output, damaged infrastructure, and displaced communities in low-lying areas.

Authorities said the unified master plan will integrate infrastructure projects, watershed conservation efforts, and climate-adaptive measures to reduce economic losses and strengthen long-term sustainability in Mindanao.

The initiative also supports the national government's food security agenda by protecting agricultural production areas and improving water reliability for farmers across the island. DEF

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC underscores strengthened climate reporting to improve transparency under the Paris Agreement](#)

MANILA — The Climate Change Commission (CCC) underscored the importance of strengthening transparent and accountable climate reporting systems under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement, as countries continue to address persistent challenges in climate data reporting and disclosure.

The ETF serves as the global framework for tracking climate action, requiring Parties to submit structured reports on greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation efforts, and progress on climate commitments through the Biennial Transparency Report (BTR), including support needed, provided, and received. It aims to ensure that climate actions are transparent, comparable, and verifiable.

Despite its importance, implementation of the ETF continues to face common challenges across countries, including non-centralized data collection systems, limited financial and technical resources, varying levels of familiarity with reporting requirements, and limited access to standardized reporting tools. These gaps affect the consistency and quality of climate transparency reporting.

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E. A. Borje emphasized the importance of strengthening transparency systems under the ETF.

“Strengthening transparency systems under the Enhanced Transparency Framework is essential to ensure that climate reporting is consistent, credible, and evidence-based as we move toward the next reporting cycle,” Borje said.

The CCC emphasized that strengthening institutional arrangements and improving national data systems are critical to ensuring credible and reliable climate reporting. Transparent systems are essential to support evidence-based decision-making and to translate climate commitments into measurable outcomes.

The CCC also highlighted the importance of aligning reporting processes with ETF modalities, procedures, and guidelines under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, to strengthen coherence, improve data integrity, and support continuous improvement of reporting systems.

As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen transparency systems, the CCC continues to prioritize capacity-building, data integration, and institutional coordination to enhance the country’s

climate reporting architecture and ensure sustained compliance with the Enhanced Transparency Framework.

THE PHILBIZNEWS

[ASEAN, EU push stronger sustainability cooperation](#)

ASEAN and European Union (EU) leaders on Thursday called for stronger regional cooperation and urgent action on sustainability, energy transition, and economic resilience as Southeast Asia grapples with mounting pressure from the global energy crisis and ongoing supply chain disruptions.

Speaking at the inaugural ASEAN-EU Sustainability Summit 2026 in Cebu, government officials, diplomats, and business leaders underscored that sustainability is now central to the region's long-term economic stability and competitiveness.

Held on the sidelines of the ASEAN Leaders' Summit, the event brought together more than 200 policymakers, ambassadors, and senior executives from ASEAN and Europe to discuss strategies for advancing climate action, trade cooperation, food security, and resilient supply chains.

Frederick Go highlighted the importance of deeper economic ties between the Philippines and the EU, describing the relationship as a growing partnership anchored on trade, investment, and development cooperation.

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

"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."

Go also described the proposed EU-Philippines Free Trade Agreement as the country's "most important economic agreement this year," noting that both sides are aiming to finalize the deal by the third quarter of 2026.

Paulo Duarte, president of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines and executive board member of the EU-ASEAN Business Council, said the summit came at a critical time for the region.

"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. It is central to economic resilience, competitiveness, and long-term growth."

Massimo Santoro emphasized the need to align climate ambitions with financing and implementation mechanisms.

“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,” Santoro said.

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

Santoro also called for a more integrated regional approach to sustainability and resilience, stressing that trade, climate policy, and disaster risk reduction should no longer be treated separately.

“The current energy situation must become an opportunity to accelerate this integrated approach, including on renewable energy and economic resilience,” he said.

Leonardo Teguh Sambodo said ASEAN economies must balance growth with emissions reduction to achieve sustainable development.

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

For Robert Borje, the region’s energy challenges could also create opportunities for green investments.

“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.

During sectoral discussions, business leaders stressed the importance of stronger public-private collaboration in advancing circular economy initiatives, protecting supply chains, and strengthening food security systems.

Jonas Leones of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said circular economy policies would require greater investor participation and private sector support.

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

Antonio Del Rosario said Extended Producer Responsibility policies could significantly strengthen ASEAN’s circular economy initiatives by bringing together governments, businesses, NGOs, and the informal waste sector.

On supply chain integrity, Rodney van Dooren said private firms should complement government enforcement systems through data sharing and operational transparency.

“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,” van Dooren said.

Meanwhile, Cynderella Galimpin warned that lengthy regulatory approval timelines for animal vaccines could threaten food security and economic stability during disease outbreaks.

“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,” Galimpin said.

Closing the summit, Chris Humphrey urged governments, businesses, and citizens to turn sustainability discussions into concrete action.

“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 said.

=END=