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By: Chynna Grace Ong

THE Philippines needs up to $5 million in United Nations funding to reduce emissions of "super pollutants" that accelerate global warming, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said on Friday.

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DAILY TRIBUNE

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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Even as Filipino businesses become more operationally efficient, the country's carbon emissions continue to rise, according to the Climate Change Commission.

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Safeguarding mountain biodiversity
By Henrylito D. Tacio

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) says mountains support biodiversity and ecological systems, provide water and food, help reduce the impact of typhoons, and contribute to flood control and the prevention of soil erosion. They also have cultural value and contribute to local economies through tourism, agriculture, and various industries. These benefits underscore the importance of protecting mountain ecosystems, which provide habitats for diverse plant and animal species and resources and livelihoods for communities.

Malacañang: Prepare for El Niño, but don't hoard water
By: Renalyn Ramirez

Malacañang assured the public on Thursday, October 1, that the government has measures in place to prepare for a potentially stronger El Niño, while urging Filipinos not to hoard water.
PTV

Malacañang discourages hoarding, assuages fears over water scarcity amid looming super El Niño
By: Dean Aubrey Caratiquet

“Hindi po kinakailangang mag-panic, kailangan lang po ng tamang pag-prepara.”

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

El Nino: A deadly 'postcard from the future'

Peruvian fishermen gave El Nino its name — "the little boy" or Christ Child — after noticing unusually warm Pacific waters around Christmas that caused the fish they depended on to suddenly become scarce.

But what those fishermen observed locally can have consequences thousands of kilometers away. El Nino can shift temperature and rainfall patterns around the world, bringing extreme heat and drought to some regions and heavy rain and flooding to others.

Researchers now estimate that the unusually high temperatures linked to the current El Nino could cause around 451,000 excess deaths worldwide from June 2026 to February 2027.

The event is a "postcard from the future," Tamma Carleton, head of research at the University of Chicago's Climate Impact Lab, told DW. Land temperatures over the coming months are forecast to run about 1.2 degrees C (2.1 F) above normal.

"For the average person, that's roughly the warming climate change is projected to bring about 20 years from now, arriving all at once," Carleton said.

How does El Nino affect weather worldwide?

Normally, winds blowing west across the Pacific push warm surface water towards Asia and Australia, allowing colder water to rise near South America. During El Nino, which occurs erratically every two to seven years, those winds weaken. Less cold water then rises, and much more of the Pacific stays unusually warm.

The warmer water heats the air above it and fuels rainfall over the central and eastern Pacific. The rising air spreads high in the atmosphere, sending waves that disrupt weather worldwide.

"It is like throwing a stone into a lake," climate researcher Fred Kucharski told DW. "Initially the surface perturbation is local, but then the energy spreads all over the lake through wave propagation."

Kucharski said the effects can cross the tropics within one week and reach higher latitudes in about two. Where the waves travel determines whether a region becomes hotter, cooler, wetter or drier.

The current El Nino developed in June and has strengthened rapidly since. It is now on course to become an exceptionally strong — sometimes called "super" — El Nino.

The Climate Impact Lab says its estimate covers only the first nine months of El Nino, as far as the current seasonal forecasts allow. The event is expected to continue into Northern Hemisphere spring, and its effect on global temperatures could last longer.

"We expect the final number to be meaningfully higher than what we are currently reporting here," Carleton said.

Why can El Nino be so deadly?

The estimate of 451,000 excess deaths covers deaths linked to the direct health effects of unusually high temperatures associated with El Nino.

Extreme heat strains the heart and kidneys, makes it harder for the body to maintain a safe temperature and can worsen cardiovascular, respiratory and other illnesses. As a result, the underlying condition is often recorded as the cause of death rather than the heat that aggravated it.

"Most heat deaths never show up in official statistics as heat deaths," Carleton said.

El Nino can also alter rainfall, contributing to drought in some regions and heavy rain and flooding in others.

Floods can kill, contaminate drinking water and spread disease. Drought can damage harvests and cause water and food shortages.

Deaths from these other indirect effects are not included in the 451,000 projection.

Where will the toll be greatest?

The Climate Impact Lab expects some of the largest increases in deaths in the Sahel, South and Southeast Asia and parts of Latin America. The highest numbers of fatalities are predicted for Nigeria, Sudan, Niger, Chad, India, Indonesia and Brazil.

Many are projected to occur between December and February, meaning much of the expected toll still lies ahead.

"Heat headlines usually focus on Europe and North America," Carleton said. "This event's toll is overwhelmingly in lower-income, already-hot countries, where people have the fewest ways to adapt and where these deaths are least likely to be counted."

Are these lives being significantly shortened?
Some people who die during extreme heat are already frail. This raises an important question: Is the heat cutting their lives substantially short, or merely bringing forward deaths that would have occurred days or weeks later — an effect known as mortality displacement?

The underlying research uses annual rather than daily death rates, which largely filters out deaths brought forward by only days or weeks.

Ben Armstrong, an emeritus professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said he could not verify the 451,000 figure. But because the estimate is based on annual mortality data, it largely excludes deaths brought forward by only days or weeks. If the figure is correct, he said, most of those counted "would have lived at least six months longer."

Why predict deaths before they happen?
Scientists have long estimated the death toll from extreme temperatures retrospectively. Better seasonal forecasting is increasingly allowing researchers to look ahead instead.

To produce the estimate, researchers used earlier work showing how death rates change during hot weather in different parts of the world. They combined it with seasonal forecasts showing how hot each place is expected to become.

"Putting the two together lets us estimate the human cost of this event while there's still time to do something about it, rather than counting the deaths after the fact," Carleton said.

Heat warnings, cooling centers and hydration stations, home visits to vulnerable people, protections for outdoor workers and additional health care capacity could all reduce mortality.

The researchers believe targeted interventions could save tens of thousands of lives.

For Carleton, the forecast is a warning to prepare now for the heat that climate change could make commonplace.

"This El Nino gives us a look at future weather in the 2040s," Carleton said. "These temperatures will become normal in 20 years, giving us time and reason to begin investing in adaptive capacity now."

Extreme heat putting pregnant women, newborns at risk: UN climate chief

Extreme heat is putting pregnant mothers and their newborns at increasing risk, United Nations climate chief Simon Stiell will warn on Monday.

Speaking at the "pre-COP" summit in Nadi, Fiji, Stiell will cite a new survey showing more than two thirds of health professionals across five continents had seen complications caused by intense heat in the past five years.

"Rising temperatures mean rising danger in pregnancy," he is expected to say.

"Climate-driven extreme heat during pregnancy is increasingly linked to premature birth, stillbirth, low birth weight, and maternal complications."

"The picture is clear and very disturbing: as extreme heat worsens, pregnancy and birth are now a new faultline in the global climate crisis, and one which is potentially fatal," Stiell will say.

"This faultline must not become another deep chasm of climate-driven suffering, inequality and injustice."

Scientists warn that climate change is making extreme weather events more intense and resulting in heat records tumbling more often.

Around 33 countries, spanning from western Europe to the Sahel and central America, recorded their hottest July since records began this year, according to AFP analysis of data from the European Union's Copernicus climate observatory.

The survey of 1000 midwives and doctors in the United Kingdom, Australia, India, Brazil and Zimbabwe was commissioned by charitable foundation Wellcome.
Its chairwoman -- Australian former Prime Minister Julia Gillard -- said in a statement that mothers and babies are being put at increasing risk as a result of climate change.

"Extreme heat is an invisible killer, but pregnant women must not be invisible. Leaders have the evidence and solutions they need -- now they must act," Gillard said.

The survey found nearly all midwives and doctors had cared for mothers or babies suffering the effects of extreme heat.

About a third of respondents said they had seen cases of low birth weight or restricted growth, feeding difficulties, and dehydration or heat-related illness, all resulting from what they believed was extreme heat.

Stiell will tell pre-COP delegates that "pregnancy should be a time of hope".

"But for millions, it is becoming a time of anxiety, as climate impacts fill everyday life with risk."

The pre-COP31 summit in Fiji and the remote coral atoll Tuvalu is seen by Pacific leaders as a chance to draw attention to life on the frontline of climate change.

They are a precursor to the larger UN-sponsored global climate summit -- known as COP31 -- to be held next month in Turkey.

FINANCIAL TIMES

Philippines' central bank braces for 'Godzilla' El Niño

Severe Pacific Ocean weather event could fuel inflationary pressures and hit agricultural production across region.

The Philippine central bank has warned that a potential "Godzilla" El Niño weather phenomenon threatens to fuel inflationary pressures in an economy already reeling from high oil prices.

The El Niño phenomenon, a natural occurrence that causes higher Pacific Ocean temperatures and exacerbates extreme weather events, is the strongest on record in some places. It could worsen droughts and hit agricultural production across the southern hemisphere.

"There's a potential that this could be a Godzilla El Niño that could affect the region, and the peak has yet to come," Zeno Ronald Abenoja, deputy governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, told the FT in a video interview.

"This is a type of a shock that is a slow burn . . . something that you can anticipate to progress slowly over the next four or five months," Abenoja said.

The El Niño pattern, which has been classed as "very strong" by official agencies — and pre-emptively nicknamed after the Japanese movie monster by some observers — comes as the global economy is struggling with inflationary pressures from higher oil and gas prices.

In the Philippines and other countries, cost of living pressures have prompted protests and calls for more generous government subsidies.

Inflation in the Philippines was 6.1 per cent in August, among the highest in south-east Asia and a level the central bank has forecast it will maintain for the full year. The country imports nearly all its oil and is highly reliant on food imports.

Abenoja said the BSP had been factoring El Niño into its policy decisions over the past few meetings. The central bank has raised rates by a total of 0.75 percentage points since April, bringing its benchmark rate to 5 per cent.

"It's a tough period for policymakers for sure," Abenoja said. "We think that headline inflation could remain elevated over the near term, just because of the continuing impact of some of the recent increases in oil prices and weather disturbances."

The El Niño phenomenon, which the World Meteorological Organization expects to peak in November or December and persist until at least February, is expected to have a widespread impact across the region.

In Asia, the shift in the trade winds that is behind the El Niño pattern has already brought high temperatures to many heavily populated capitals, delayed rainfall in some parts and worsened drought in others. In some places, it is also expected to worsen rainfall, raising the risk of floods.

India has warned that this year's monsoon could be the driest in 17 years. In Indonesia, fires caused by slash-and-burn farming practices have been exacerbated by the El Niño effect, spreading toxic haze across south-east Asia.

Several south and south-east Asian countries have also warned of lower production of key agricultural commodities such as rice and palm oil.

Abenoja said the Philippine government had been taking preparatory steps by adjusting crop cycles and sourcing food items and commodities from overseas.

He declined to comment on whether the central bank would continue to increase rates. The BSP has previously said it is prepared to act to ensure inflation returns to its tolerance range of 2-4 per cent.

In August, the BSP raised its inflation projection for 2027 to 5.4 per cent from its previous estimate of 4.5 per cent, reflecting the potential impact of El Niño on agricultural prices and the phased introduction of higher minimum wages in the Philippines.

The BSP, which economists say is one of the most inflation-sensitive central banks, was among the first in Asia to start raising rates after the US-Israeli strikes on Iran. However, it does not expect inflation to return to its target range until 2028.

Economic growth slowed after the government of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr cut state spending following a corruption scandal involving public infrastructure projects.

The Philippines' economy grew 2.3 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2026, its slowest quarterly pace in five years.

Abenoja said a planned increase in government spending should begin to affect the economy in the second half of the year.

"We continue to be focused on inflation, and we think that's actually our best contribution to a more durable long-term growth," he said.

MANILA BULLETIN

Marcos admin eyes solar-powered irrigation expansion as lasting legacy, Recto says
By: Betheena Unite

President Marcos is pushing for the nationwide expansion of solar-powered irrigation, an effort to lower farming costs, strengthen food security, and modernize the country's irrigation system, Executive Secretary Ralph Recto said.

Recto said the Solar-Powered Pump Irrigation Program (SPIP), administered by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), is targeted for expansion to 10,000 sites nationwide by 2030.

"We want to move from traditional irrigation to smart, digital and climate-resilient water management," Recto said, stressing that the President's goal is to reduce the costs incurred by farmers, increase their harvests, and ensure that farms have sufficient water even amid climate change.

Recto said the expansion of solar-powered irrigation will form part of the Marcos administration's long-term contribution to Philippine agriculture.

"This will be an important part of President Marcos' legacy, a modern irrigation system that harnesses clean energy, embraces new technology, strengthens our food security and, most importantly, improves the lives and livelihoods of Filipino farmers," Recto said.

NIA currently operates 4,036 SPIP sites across 43 provinces in all 17 regions, including 2,147 sites in Luzon, 1,102 in the Visayas and 787 in Mindanao.

According to the Executive Secretary, Marcos' directive is to ensure that farmers have reliable irrigation without having to spend so much of their income on irrigation costs.

"Habang tumitindi ang epekto ng pagbabago ng panahon, magtatayo tayo ng mga sistemang maaasahan sa tagtuyot, matibay sa panahon ng sakuna, at tunay na nagpapalakas sa kabuhayan ng ating mga magsasaka (As the effects of climate change intensify, we will build systems that can withstand droughts, remain resilient during disasters, and truly strengthen the livelihoods of our farmers)," Recto said.

Under NIA's Vision 2030 roadmap, the government aims to expand the network to 10,000 sites, benefit two million farmers, irrigate an additional 100,000 hectares of agricultural land and move toward net-zero energy use in irrigation.

Solar-powered irrigation systems use renewable energy to operate water pumps, reducing farmers' dependence on diesel and insulating them from fluctuations in fuel prices. Compared with diesel-powered pumps, the systems also require significantly lower operating and maintenance expenses.

“This is a long-term investment in food security. Every peso farmers save on diesel can instead be used for seeds, fertilizer, equipment and other needs that directly improve their productivity and income,” Recto said.

NIA is also moving toward smarter irrigation through an artificial intelligence-based monitoring system that will use real-time data to track water availability, soil conditions and irrigation requirements.

The goal is to allow irrigation systems to deliver water more efficiently, minimize wastage and respond more quickly to changing farm and weather conditions.

NIA data shows that existing solar-powered irrigation systems have maintained high operational availability and can provide six to eight hours of irrigation daily.

THE MANILA TIMES

PH needs $5M UN grant to cut 'super pollutants'

By: Chynna Grace Ong

THE Philippines needs up to $5 million in United Nations funding to reduce emissions of "super pollutants" that accelerate global warming, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said on Friday.

Environment Secretary Juan Miguel Cuna said the country had applied for the Climate and Clean Air Coalition's Super Pollutant Country Action Accelerator. The Philippines also offered to host the coalition's board meeting in Manila in 2027.

Cuna discussed the application with coalition secretariat head Martina Otto at the UN headquarters in New York during the recent 81st UN General Assembly.

"Reducing super pollutants can quickly improve the climate and air quality while protecting communities and agriculture," Cuna said.

Super pollutants, also known as short-lived climate pollutants, include methane, black carbon and hydrofluorocarbons. They remain in the atmosphere for a shorter period than carbon dioxide, but trap substantially more heat. Some also harm human health, the environment and agricultural production.

The accelerator program provides grants of $2 to $5 million over three years. The funding would help establish a government team of experts and provide technical assistance in sectors such as waste management, agriculture and transportation.

The Philippines' application is anchored on its National Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Action Plan, which identifies 13 priority measures to reduce emissions by 2035.

These include the Rice Sub-Sector Strategy being implemented with Clean Air Asia and the International Rice Research Institute, as well as the Asean-Korea Cooperation for Methane Mitigation.

Cuna said the accelerator would help implement the country's policies and fulfill its commitments under the Global Methane Pledge and updated Nationally Determined Contribution.

Environment Undersecretary Analiza Rebuelta-Teh said the program could bring together technical expertise, government priorities and sectoral initiatives to produce measurable emission reductions.

Aside from seeking funding, Cuna offered to host the coalition's board meeting in March or April 2027. He said holding the meeting in the region would complement broader Southeast Asian efforts to cut methane emissions, improve air quality and address climate change.

He also urged the coalition to help Southeast Asian countries harmonize their methods for measuring, reporting and verifying emissions.

The Philippines has been a member of the UN Environment Program-hosted coalition since 2015. It previously served as co-chairman and currently holds a seat on its board.

Funding decisions will be announced in November at the 31st UN Climate Change Conference, or COP31.

The coalition, a voluntary partnership of more than 200 governments and organizations, aims to reduce global methane emissions by at least 40 percent and black carbon emissions by 70 percent by 2030.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS MIRROR

Water, oceans in focus at international climate finance forum
By: Jonathan Mayuga

FINANCING for water systems and the ocean took center stage during the international climate-finance discussions at the 2026 Forum of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Standing Committee on Finance (UNFCCC SCF).

Hosted by Australia in partnership with Pacific Island countries and the Philippines, the forum gathered governments, climate funds, financial and development institutions, civil society, and communities around a challenge that reaches across borders, economies and ecosystems.

Climate Change Commission Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje framed the central task as aligning climate finance with interconnected climate risks and needs, so that investments across water, food, energy, ecosystems, infrastructure and livelihoods reinforce one another.

“Water is where climate risk becomes immediately human. It connects food, health, energy, ecosystems, infrastructure and livelihoods. The ocean regulates the climate, sustains economies and joins communities across borders. Yet the financial architecture still approaches these connected systems in fragments,” Borje said.

The Climate Change Commission is the lead policy-making body of the Philippine Government tasked to coordinate, monitor and evaluate programs and actions on climate change pursuant to Republic Act No. 9729, as amended.

Australia Deputy Chief Negotiator for the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) Chao Feng similarly emphasized that ocean and water systems are inseparably linked to mitigation, adaptation and resilience, food and water security, economic prosperity, and sustainable development.

More than 90 percent of coastal and island nations now include ocean-based climate action in their national climate plans.

Feng highlighted opportunities in coastal ecosystem protection and restoration, resilient communities, sustainable fisheries, offshore renewable energy and improved water-resource management. He said realizing these opportunities requires stronger governance, greater coordination, increased investment, technical expertise, capacity-building and partnerships.

Speaking on behalf of Fiji and the Pacific membership, Permanent Secretary for Environment and Climate Change Dr. Sivendra Michael said the ocean defines Pacific geography, sustains economies and food systems, shapes cultures, and underpins national security.

Pacific countries and territories collectively steward approximately 28 million square kilometers of ocean. Michael stressed that Pacific small island developing States should not be defined only by their vulnerability, but recognized for their experience, leadership and proven solutions.

“The challenge before us is no longer what needs to be done. It is how we finance implementation at scale and at pace,” Michael said.

He called for finance at the scale, speed and terms required, and for financing models that recognize watersheds, communities, coastlines, reefs and oceans as one unified system.

Drawing from Philippine and broader developing-country experience, Borje said the financing challenge is not limited to raising additional resources. It also concerns where finance flows, whether its terms match public needs, and whether national and local institutions can access and use it.

“Better accounting must help us identify neglected risks, correct imbalances and direct finance where it can prevent the greatest losses,” he said.

Borje noted that across many developing countries, institutions closest to climate risks must navigate accreditation, project-preparation and approval requirements that can exceed their technical and financial capacities.

He said the real test is whether financial commitments and instruments translate into protection for people and ecosystems.

“A commitment that cannot be accessed does not protect a watershed. A facility that cannot reach a coastal community does not restore a mangrove. And a financial instrument poorly matched to public need may create a project, but it may also create another vulnerability,” Borje said.

Across the three statements, a shared agenda emerged: water and ocean finance must become more accessible, reach the necessary scale, offer appropriate terms, and support solutions across connected natural and human systems.

Australia emphasized the enabling institutions and partnerships required for investment. The Pacific highlighted urgency, stewardship and ridge-to-reef solutions. The Philippines situated these priorities within the wider experience of developing countries and the need for a climate-finance architecture that responds to risk, need and public purpose.

Borje returned the discussion to the mandate and purpose of the Forum.

“Financing is the SCF’s mandate. Climate action for water systems and the ocean is the purpose,” he said.

DAILY TRIBUNE

UN forum pushes accessible ocean, water climate funding

Representatives from Australia, the Philippines and Pacific Island nations called for sweeping reforms to global climate finance during the 2026 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Standing Committee on Finance Forum, urging international climate funds to prioritize interconnected water and ocean systems.

The forum, hosted by Australia in partnership with the Philippines and Pacific Island states, brought together international financial institutions, government leaders, and civil society delegates to address fragmented funding structures that impede climate adaptation efforts.

Robert E.A. Borje, vice chairperson and executive director of the Climate Change Commission, stressed that existing financial architectures fail to treat water, food security, and coastal ecosystems as unified risks.

Borje noted that rigid accreditation processes and complex approval requirements often prevent local institutions in developing nations from accessing vital climate capital.

Echoing these concerns, Dr. Sivendra Michael, Fiji's Permanent Secretary for Environment and Climate Change, highlighted that Pacific small island developing states steward roughly 28 million square kilometers of ocean yet struggle to secure funding at the necessary pace and scale.

Chao Feng, Australia's Deputy Chief Negotiator for COP31, added that over 90 percent of coastal and island nations now incorporate ocean-based action into national climate targets, underscoring the urgent need for expanded investment in coastal restoration, offshore renewable energy, and sustainable fisheries.

Delegates concluded the forum by advocating for streamlined funding mechanisms that deliver direct financial support to vulnerable coastal communities and watersheds before catastrophic climate impacts occur.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Philippines carbon emissions keep rising – CCC

By: Brix Lelis

Even as Filipino businesses become more operationally efficient, the country's carbon emissions continue to rise, according to the Climate Change Commission.

CCC vice chairman and executive director Robert Borje said individual actions alone cannot bend the country's emissions curve; instead, decisions made jointly by the government and the private sector will shape it.

"At the national level, the absolute emissions trajectory still moves, however, in the opposite direction," Borje told corporate executives during the Philippine Net Zero Conference.

He said the country's fossil carbon dioxide emissions have increased by 25 percent since 2021, noting that national emissions intensity "did not fall at all."

"It grew. And over the last decade, our grid appears to show carbon intensity rising," Borje said.

Emissions intensity measures how much greenhouse gas (GHG) is produced for each unit of economic output, energy use or activity.

Under its nationally determined contribution, the Philippines has committed to cutting its GHG emissions by 75 percent through 2035.

Of that target, seven percent is unconditional, while 68 percent is conditional.

The unconditional component covers measures the country can undertake using its own resources, without relying on external funding.

The conditional component, meanwhile, depends on international climate finance, technology transfer, capacity building and public-private investment.

"The private sector is indispensable to achieving these goals, but it cannot be expected to carry the financial burden alone," Borje said.

He stressed that the CCC is ready to work closely with the private sector, including the Net Zero Carbon Alliance, to help create supportive policy frameworks.

“I am inviting this alliance to work with the government on green concrete work streams, again, critical carbon market architecture, comparable emissions information and spectral pathways grounded in real assets and real investment decisions,” Borje said.

MANILA BULLETIN

Safeguarding mountain biodiversity

By Henrylito D. Tacio

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) says mountains support biodiversity and ecological systems, provide water and food, help reduce the impact of typhoons, and contribute to flood control and the prevention of soil erosion. They also have cultural value and contribute to local economies through tourism, agriculture, and various industries. These benefits underscore the importance of protecting mountain ecosystems, which provide habitats for diverse plant and animal species and resources and livelihoods for communities.

The Laguna-based ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) notes that mountains also provide opportunities for tourism and recreation, including climbing, bird-watching and trekking through nature and community trails that allow visitors to discover unique biodiversity and local traditions.

The Philippines is home to more than 2,700 mountains, according to the CCC. Among the best-known are Mount Apo, the country's highest mountain at 2,954 meters; Mount Pulag, the highest peak in Luzon at 2,926 meters; Mount Mayon in Albay, known for its symmetrical cone; Mount Banahaw in Laguna and Quezon, which is regarded as sacred; and Mount Ulap in Benguet, a popular hiking destination.

The country is also home to major mountain ranges. In Luzon, these include the Cordillera Central, Sierra Madre and Caraballo Mountains. The Visayas has the Central Panay, Negros and Cebu mountain ranges, while Mindanao is home to the Apo-Talomo, Kitanglad and Kalatungan ranges.

Mountains, however, are not spared from destruction.

"Mountain ecosystems are constantly threatened by pressures from people and development, leading to illegal logging and deforestation, poaching of wildlife, erosion, pollution, and a host of other environmental problems that deplete biodiversity and are exacerbated by impacts of climate change," the ACB said.

The CCC also warned that rising temperatures, increased heavy rainfall and extreme weather events threaten mountain regions and the communities that depend on them for their livelihoods.

With all the benefits derived from the mountains, they need to be protected from destruction. Conservation is not simply about preserving scenic landscapes. It is also about protecting water resources, forests, biodiversity, livelihoods and communities that depend on these areas.

The United Nations has stressed the need for the proper management of mountain resources, including water, biodiversity, forests, grasslands and soils. It has also called for greater awareness and more efficient management of natural resources in mountain areas in response to climate change and the increasing threat of natural hazards.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Malacañang: Prepare for El Niño, but don't hoard water

By: Renalyn Ramirez

Malacañang assured the public on Thursday, October 1, that the government has measures in place to prepare for a potentially stronger El Niño, while urging Filipinos not to hoard water.

Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the Marcos administration is coordinating with concerned government agencies to prepare for the impacts of the weather phenomenon and has allocated funds for response measures.

"Kumbaga ang El Niño ay hindi na po bago sa Pilipinas. Kung mas matindi lamang po ang magiging epekto ngayon ng El Niño ay dahil dala ng climate change, pero handa po ang gobyerno," Castro said.

("El Niño is not new to the Philippines. If the effects of El Niño are more severe this time because of climate change, the government is prepared.")

PAGASA said a "strong" El Niño is currently affecting the tropical Pacific and is expected to intensify into a "very strong" El Niño between September and December 2026 and persist through the first half of 2027. The weather bureau warned that the phenomenon increases the likelihood of below-normal rainfall, dry spells, drought and water supply stress in parts of the country.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has reduced the allocation for the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System from the usual 50 to 53 cubic meters per second to 44 cubic meters per second starting October as part of measures to conserve water stored in Angat Dam. Irrigation allocation will likewise be cut from 30 to 35 cms to 20 cms.

The Climate Change Commission has also warned that the heat index in cities and towns with limited tree cover could reach 45 to 50 degrees Celsius during the intensified El Niño.

Hoarding 'not advisable'

Castro discouraged the public from hoarding water supplies, particularly bottled drinking water, saying excessive stockpiling could unnecessarily tighten supply and push prices higher.

"Alam niyo naman ang tubig kapag ito ay bottled water, meron din po itong panahon na dapat ito ay i-consume. So hindi po advisable na kayo ay magtago, mag-hoard ng mga tubig ngayon," Castro said.

("As you know, bottled water should also be consumed within a certain period. So it is not advisable to stockpile or hoard water at this time.")

Castro said the government has not received reports of a shortage of bottled drinking water and urged the public to prepare without panic-buying.

She said preparing for possible water shortages is reasonable, but should be done properly, including through water conservation.

"Kaagapay po ninyo ang gobyerno, ang pamahalaan at lahat ng mga concerned agencies. So hindi po kinakailangang mag-panic. Kailangan lang po ng tamang pagprepara," Castro said.

("The government and all concerned agencies are working with you. There is no need to panic. What is needed is proper preparation.")

Task Force El Niño

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. earlier ordered agencies involved in the government's El Niño response to step up preparations, particularly for the agriculture and water sectors.

Marcos reactivated and reconstituted Task Force El Niño through Executive Order 53 in January 2024. The task force was mandated to coordinate government measures on water supply, food security, energy, public health and safety, among other areas.

Castro said Marcos has convened agencies involved in the current preparations, including PAGASA, the Department of Agriculture, National Irrigation Administration, NWRB and Department of Social Welfare and Development.

"Lahat po ito ngayon ay pinapakilos na po," Castro said.

("All these agencies are now being mobilized.")

PTV

Malacañang discourages hoarding, assuages fears over water scarcity amid looming super El Niño
By: Dean Aubrey Caratiquet

“Hindi po kinakailangang mag-panic, kailangan lang po ng tamang pag-prepara.”

This sentence encapsulates the messaging that the government wants to extend to its citizens, after receiving reports of some Filipinos beginning to hoard bottled water in reaction to the super El Niño phenomenon that they heard about in the news. Water& Marine Sciences

In a briefing on Thursday, Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary and Palace Press Officer Claire Castro warned that hoarding potable water may lead to artificial supply shortages and drive up prices of the essential liquid commodity.

Instead of panic-buying, Usec. Castro advised Filipinos to do their part in water conservation efforts by sharing tips such as fixing leaking faucets or water pipes in their respective households, thus ensuring that no drop goes to waste.

“Ang kailangan po ng mga kababayan natin ay magprepara, maging ready po. Kung ano man po ang mangyayari kailangan pa rin natin paghandaan.”

Meanwhile, she pivoted the focus to the government’s El Niño Task Force, which continues to be hard at work in ensuring that various sectors are protected from the effects of this severe weather phenomenon.

Concerned agencies such as the Department of Agriculture (D.A.), National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) are already in active coordination with the Climate Change Commission to ensure a coordinated response to super El Niño.

Usec. Castro went on to share that P6.2 billion is set to be released to the D.A. for farmer and fisherfolk subsidies, along with P39.82 billion in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund under the 2026 General Appropriations Act.

With the phenomenon set to last until the first quarter of 2027, the proposed budgets for certain items in next year’s budget are as follows:

- P45.67 billion for the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund
- P46.35 billion for NIA (P30.47 billion allocated for irrigation restoration and development)
- P11.18 billion for NFA rice buffer stocking
- P9.88 billion Quick Response Fund for frontline agencies

- P4.5 billion for crop insurance

The Malacañang official addressed Filipinos, “Kung nakaraan ay nakalagpas tayo, nalampasan natin at hindi naman tayo natakot na hindi tayo makakainom ng tubig sa araw-araw, ganun din po ang dapat nila isipin.”

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