NEWS ROUNDUP
13 OCTOBER 2026 | 08:00 am

- El Nino sets temperature record in key Pacific zone: EU monitor
- Marcos serious about nuclear energy to meet surging AI, data center power demands
- Wanted: Guardians for the backbone of Luzon
- Pre-COP31 turns up heat on global rooftop solar, carbon finance
- Baguio's El Niño mitigation measures part of long-term water security plan
- Innovation for survival in the era of climate change

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- PH advances adaptation action, stronger multilateral cooperation at Pre-COP 31
- PH takes on co-facilitator role in climate finance and investments discussions at Pre-COP31

ABS CBN

El Nino sets temperature record in key Pacific zone: EU monitor

An intensifying El Nino broke a temperature record in a key zone of the Pacific in September, the EU's climate monitor said Monday, in another sign the weather pattern is gaining exceptional strength.

Marcos serious about nuclear energy to meet surging AI, data center power demands
By: Harlene Delgado

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said his administration is "serious" about establishing nuclear energy in the Philippines as a new source of power, arguing that the rise of data centers will soon drive up demand for electricity.

DAILY TRIBUNE

Wanted: Guardians for the backbone of Luzon

Sack by sack, the Sierra Madre is being carted away. In quiet corners of digital feeds and clandestine local trades, native soil stripped right from the foothills of our greatest mountain range is allegedly sold in bags — a shocking, micro-level indignity happening right under our noses.

MANILA BULLETIN

Pre-COP31 turns up heat on global rooftop solar, carbon finance
By: Myrna M. Velasco

As a super El Niño threatens to push human survival and economies worldwide to the brink, the pre-COP31 agenda has spotlighted global rooftop solar as well as Fiji's launch of its carbon market, which is primarily geared toward renewable energy (RE), as part of the key actions on the climate fight's frontlines—betting that millions of solar-powered homes and new streams of climate finance can help keep the 1.5°C warming limit within reach as leaders head to Antalya, Türkiye, next month for the next round of climate change diplomacy.

THE CHRONICLE

Baguio's El Niño mitigation measures part of long-term water security plan
By: Nicos Immanuel Atienza

The Baguio Water District (BWD) said its El Niño mitigation measures are part of its long-term water security plan, which aims to address rising demand and dwindling water resources.

THE MANILA TIMES

Innovation for survival in the era of climate change

AN innovator is a person who introduces new methods, ideas or products. Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Nikola Tesla, and Steve Jobs were all innovators who turned ideas into functional inventions the world has benefited from.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

PH advances adaptation action, stronger multilateral cooperation at Pre-COP 31

The Philippines called for effective implementation of the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and greater coherence in the multilateral climate system during the Pacific Pre-COP31. The Philippine position emphasized the need to strengthen resilience and translate global commitments into concrete action.

PH takes on co-facilitator role in climate finance and investments discussions at Pre-COP31

At the Pacific Pre-COP31 in Nadi, Fiji, the Philippines was appointed co-facilitator for the Finance and Investment sessions, part of a broader, minister-led climate-finance process aimed at advancing practical discussion on how finance can support countries' climate priorities and implementation.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

El Nino sets temperature record in key Pacific zone: EU monitor

An intensifying El Nino broke a temperature record in a key zone of the Pacific in September, the EU's climate monitor said Monday, in another sign the weather pattern is gaining exceptional strength.

Global forecasters have been warning for months that this El Nino would likely become the strongest ever observed and the latest record has tumbled even before the episode's expected peak later this year.

The warming phase of a natural climate cycle, El Nino raises sea temperatures in the tropical Pacific, triggering changes in weather that can increase the risk of drought and flooding, and exacerbate man-made global warming.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service said sea surface temperatures in a tell-tale El Nino monitoring region of the Pacific, known as Nino3.4, had reached an "all-time high" of 29.70C last month.

This exceeded the peak temperatures of previously strong El Nino events of 1982/1983, 1997/1998 and 2015/2016, "underscoring the exceptional intensity of the current El Nino", the EU monitor said.

But in a statement to AFP, Copernicus said it "cannot yet say that the current El Nino is the strongest ever recorded".

As climate change raises ocean temperatures, it can make recent El Nino events appear stronger than past ones, complicating historical comparisons.

Copernicus said it had adopted a new index, which accounts for the warming of tropical oceans, that suggested the current event is not yet stronger than past ones.

But the values observed in September "point to an already exceptionally strong El Nino, especially given that the event has not yet reached its peak", Copernicus told AFP.

Not all forecasters use the same scale to interpret El Nino.

On Friday, Japan's weather agency said that El Nino conditions had reached their "strongest intensity on record", with temperatures in the phenomenon's monitoring area 4C above normal.

RECORD OCEAN TEMPERATURES

As El Nino gathers strength, global average sea surface temperatures hit a record 21.05C for September, topping the previous high of 20.92C for the same month in 2023, according to Copernicus.

Overall, the world experienced its second hottest September on record, with surface air temperatures averaging 16.27C, the EU service said.

September was 1.63C hotter than the pre-industrial average, a period defined as 1850-1900.

Nations agreed at the 2015 UN climate talks in Paris to keep global warming "well below" 2C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5C, in order to limit the effects of climate change.

106 areas under state of calamity due to El Niño: NDRRMC
But the United Nations declared in September that the long-term 1.5C target would be missed in a matter of years.

"We are in a new run of months above 1.5C, and with a strong El Nino still intensifying it is likely to last into 2027," Copernicus director Carlo Buontempo said in a statement.

"Crossing the Paris Agreement's long-term limit is only a matter of time. How far we overshoot, and for how long, is still up to us," he said.

Scientists say it is crucial to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels to limit the period of "overshoot" above 1.5C and bring temperatures back down as quickly as possible.

Experts have warned that this El Nino would likely push global temperatures to a new record in 2027.

El Nino warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, bringing worldwide changes in winds, pressure and rainfall patterns.

It typically takes place every two to seven years and lasts around nine to 12 months.

Marcos serious about nuclear energy to meet surging AI, data center power demands
By: Harlene Delgado

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said his administration is "serious" about establishing nuclear energy in the Philippines as a new source of power, arguing that the rise of data centers will soon drive up demand for electricity.

“We’re serious about nuclear power because even as we stand now, we're okay in terms of power generation for the Philippines,” Marcos said during a press briefing on the final day of his working visit to Singapore on Sunday, October 11.

“But everybody knows that what's coming down the road is our data centers, is AI. And I think everybody by now knows that the demand for power is going to increase at a very, very high rate,” he said.

The Chief Executive stressed that the Philippines must prepare to produce sufficient power to support initiatives in artificial intelligence.

“And if we are to be part and we want to be part of the value chain for AI, for the digital economy, we have to produce enough power to support it,” the President said.

Marcos also underscored the need for the country to veer away from fossil fuels — albeit difficult — and tap more renewable energy sources.

In fact, the Chief Executive said he met with a group, which he did not identify, that is "exploring" hydrogen energy.

“They're very optimistic na marami raw deposit dito sa Pilipinas,” he noted.

He maintained that the country needs to “secure as much of our power supply as we possibly can,” which was underscored as the Middle East crisis virtually choked global fuel sources.

He also reiterated that the non-commissioning of the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, a project of his father, the late former president Ferdinand Marcos Sr., was a “bad choice” at the time.

Marcos earlier visited the Singapore Nuclear Research and Safety Institute on Saturday during his working visit.

DAILY TRIBUNE

Wanted: Guardians for the backbone of Luzon

Sack by sack, the Sierra Madre is being carted away. In quiet corners of digital feeds and clandestine local trades, native soil stripped right from the foothills of our greatest mountain range is allegedly sold in bags — a shocking, micro-level indignity happening right under our noses.

It is a grim metaphor for how we treat our ultimate protector: a massive, 500-kilometer bulwark stretching down the eastern coast of Luzon that blunts the fury of super typhoons and saves Metro Manila from erasure, yet is slowly being bled dry.

While public outrage routinely flares over massive illegal logging or controversial development projects, the stealthy pillaging of the Sierra Madre happens in truckloads and dirt bags. It is stripped bare by clandestine quarrying, encroached upon by opportunistic settlements, and undermined by land conversion.

Thousands of hectares of forest cover vanish annually, swallowed by greed. Unlike other fragile ecosystems across the map, our natural fortress has no dedicated, deep-pocketed champion standing guard.

Think about how things are done elsewhere. Thousands of miles away, American tech billionaire Tim Sweeney — the man behind Epic Games — quietly channeled his fortune into something far more enduring than vanity projects.

He bought more than 50,000 acres of fragile North Carolina forests, locking them under permanent conservation easements. No bulldozers. No commercial flips. Just raw, breathing space given back to the earth. It is a striking picture of private wealth meeting ecological emergency: one man using capital to ensure that development simply never happens where nature needs to rest.

Here at home, the contrast is a painful irony. We are certainly not short of laws. Statutes like the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act and the Chainsaw Act look pristine on paper. But walk onto the ground, and you find a system choked by bureaucratic red tape, economic desperation and collusive corruption.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is perpetually underfunded and spread paper-thin, leaving marginalized Indigenous communities and overworked civil society groups to face off against entrenched commercial syndicates with very little protection of their own.

Of course, we cannot simply lean on the whims of ultra-rich benefactors. Land tenure and ancestral domain rights in the Philippines carry deep historical weight, completely distinct from the private timberlands of the American South.

Our Indigenous peoples have been the true, beating heart of the Sierra Madre for generations, and any real conservation framework must honor their sovereignty — never replicate a colonial land grab.

Still, Sweeney's philosophy holds a mirror up to our domestic elite and homegrown tycoons. Our country boasts staggering fortunes built on real estate, banking, and infrastructure — empires that ultimately depend on a stable, disaster-free climate. Yet, corporate social responsibility here too often stops at token tree-planting PR stunts, falling pitifully short of the landscape-scale preservation we desperately need.

If our wealthiest business leaders possess the capital to reshape our city skylines, they have the means to secure our ecological lifelines.

Protecting the Sierra Madre demands a radical shift in how private wealth views legacy, paired with genuine state accountability and ironclad law enforcement. A real philanthropic push — through private trusts, buffer zones around protected parks, or endowments for Indigenous forest rangers — could rewrite the mountain's future.

The Sierra Madre cannot speak for itself, nor can it indefinitely absorb the double blow of violent typhoons, illicit soil-stripping, and human avarice. It has shielded us for centuries, standing tall while the storms rage. It is high time we stop taking its endurance for granted, shake off our comforting apathy, and cultivate the modern guardians it needs to survive.

MANILA BULLETIN

Pre-COP31 turns up heat on global rooftop solar, carbon finance

By: Myrna M. Velasco

As a super El Niño threatens to push human survival and economies worldwide to the brink, the pre-COP31 agenda has spotlighted global rooftop solar as well as Fiji's launch of its carbon market, which is primarily geared toward renewable energy (RE), as part of the key actions on the climate fight's frontlines—betting that millions of solar-powered homes and new streams of climate finance can help keep the 1.5°C warming limit within reach as leaders head to Antalya, Türkiye, next month for the next round of climate change diplomacy.

But fundamentally, for COP31 to earn the title of "COP of Implementation," it must break the vicious cycle of grand pledges and meager delivery by turning climate promises into measurable results, unlocking climate finance at scale, slashing bureaucratic red tape, and getting affordable funding into the hands of those in the climate danger zone.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell primarily noted, "That is the spirit we need heading into COP31–it is to deliver on its full potential this year, that is to drive forward implementation. Because this is what COP31 can and must do: how to convert promises into more real-world results. And that depends on many factors including scaling up, speeding up and broadening access to affordable climate finance."

Thus, one bright spot that has emerged from the Pacific pre-COP has been global rooftop solar gaining political traction, with Australia's Climate Change and Energy Minister Chris Bowen, who also serves as COP31 President of Negotiations, leading the endorsement of accelerating rooftop solar installations to reach 300 million homes by 2030.

In addition, Fiji is putting its carbon market to the test as a potential climate finance pacesetter, targeting international cooperation to turn carbon credits into investment capital that can propel RE projects off the drawing board and onto actual installations.

Beyond the Pacific pre-COP's initial gains in the clean energy space, stark climate vulnerability was actually witnessed firsthand by government leaders and decision-makers during a visit to Tuvalu, one of the world's most climate-threatened and least-visited countries. And that somehow sharpened the urgency for the establishment of the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF), which targets mobilizing $1.5 billion to help island nations withstand climate disasters, build resilience, and stay in the fight for the 1.5°C global warming limit.

COP31 President-designate Murat Kurum said climate finance for the highly vulnerable small island developing states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs) needs to be on the implementation frontline, emphasizing that the proposed $1.5-billion PRF must not just be another pledge; instead, it must be delivered swiftly, fairly, and without getting shackled by a maze of bureaucracy.

“Justice in climate finance is essential. Resources must reach those in need in a timely and accessible manner, not through a lot of red tape. And we cannot accept that the same countries should always bear the burden,” he stressed.

He added, “It was intentional to choose the Pacific as the venue for the pre-COP because this is the front line of the climate crisis. We traveled to Tuvalu, heard first hand to what people are experiencing. We witnessed it ourselves. Tuvalu has made no contribution in this crisis. But unfortunately, they are faced with the threats. They are faced with existential crisis and they’re paying the heaviest price.”

The Taku Pakasoa Declaration, which was forged at the Pacific pre-COP31, somehow sends an uncompromising message to the world: climate action cannot retreat, commitments cannot remain trapped on paper, and the international community must unite behind those on the climate battleground before rising temperatures turn today’s warnings into tomorrow’s irreversible losses.

Building on COP28’s commitments to triple RE capacity, double annual energy-efficiency improvements by 2030, and transition away from fossil fuels, COP31 is gathering momentum behind a more aggressive global electrification drive to reach 35 percent by 2035 (from currently at 20 percent); and such shall be backed by massive-scale investments in energy storage and modernized grids.

The Taku Pakasoa Declaration similarly puts oceans and forests firmly on the climate battle plan, underscoring their vital role in sustaining Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic Ocean nations as well as in defending the livelihoods, cultures, and rights of indigenous peoples (IPs) and local communities who have protected these ecosystems for generations.

In particular, the Pacific covenant sounds the alarm over accelerating ocean warming, acidification, rising sea levels driven partly by melting glaciers and ice sheets, as well as mounting marine biodiversity loss; hence, there is a call for collective action to effectively safeguard the resilience of oceans as the planet’s primary climate regulator, largest active carbon sink, and an engine of global food security and weather stability.

Fiji’s carbon market takes aim at climate finance gap

Fiji is positioning its carbon market as a climate finance engine to turn emissions reductions into investment for RE and other clean energy ventures, proving that carbon markets must do more than put a price on emissions. In essence, they might be able to channel real money into climate solutions, accelerate the energy transition, and help vulnerable Pacific nations finance their fight for survival.

According to Fiji Minister of Information, Environment and Climate Change Lynda Tabuya, the country’s launch of its carbon market answers a longstanding demand from RE developers for new financing pathways, positioning carbon trading as a tool to strengthen international

cooperation, unlock climate investments, and channel much-needed capital into clean-energy projects.

“Our resource-owners have been asking this of us for many years. Finally, it is happening, which will open new sources of international climate finance for RE and the protection of ecosystems,” she indicated.

There are two important dimensions to this market establishment: Fiji’s domestic framework for managing carbon projects and its approach to international carbon trading under the Paris Agreement.

Underpinned by initial funding of approximately $2.6 million, Fiji’s 2026-2030 Carbon Market Plan sets a hard deadline to build the rules, systems, and safeguards needed to secure the country’s first international carbon trade by 2030.

The deeper significance this represents is that Fiji is betting on RE and other climate projects, including those on nature-based solutions, to work as engines of climate finance flow. It targets turning verified emissions cuts and carbon removals into tradable carbon credits, thus opening a new revenue channel for climate action while ensuring that financial gains would reach local communities and shall also be channeled to broader environmental protection initiatives.

Scaling rooftop solar installations worldwide

The Global Rooftop Solar Pledge is another international initiative launched at the Pacific pre-COP31 meeting; and the goal is to double the scale of rooftop solar installations from currently 150 million homes.

With Australia leading the way, the Global Solar Council, Smart Energy Council Australia, and Solar Citizens have also thrown their support behind the pledge, while also urging governments at national, regional, and local levels to join the push and turn rooftop solar into a global clean energy force.

At its core, this initiative demands that governments break down the financial, regulatory, and technical barriers choking rooftop solar growth by empowering households to generate their own electricity, expanding affordable financing, slashing red tape, upgrading power grids to handle distributed solar systems and batteries, as well as building the needed skilled workforce to install and maintain these systems.

The projection is for rooftop solar and battery storage to deliver 42 percent of solar growth and 34 percent of total RE growth by 2030; hence, households could then emerge as powerful players in the global energy transition, and this could in fact offer a faster route to energy security and protection from volatile electricity prices.

The Global Solar Council primarily cited that households in Australia have been saving up to 1,500 Australian dollars from their solar installations, while similarly noting the significant opportunities for plug-in solar and batteries as these products become more available around the world.

Bowen highlighted that the global rooftop solar pledge will help accelerate the electrification target, which is one of the defining priorities of COP31.

“These have been our objectives and those objectives have been very important to us and other things like progressing electrification, conversation which is being led through action agenda which Australia supports and will support. For the Global Rooftop Solar Pledge where Australia has 35 percent of our houses on rooftop solar; we’ll be working with other countries to spread rooftop solar more around the world,” he pointed out.

As COP31 rolls into Türkiye next month, world leaders will once again take the climate stage for the ultimate test of whether the largely promised “COP of Implementation” will deliver real action or simply add another blockbuster of undelivered promises to the diplomatic archives. Perhaps, we should be reminded that the planet may already be running out of patience for leaders who keep renewing their vows to the climate but never really show up for the marriage and in fulfilling responsibilities.

Baguio's El Niño mitigation measures part of long-term water security plan

By: Nicos Immanuel Atienza

The Baguio Water District (BWD) said its El Niño mitigation measures are part of its long-term water security plan, which aims to address rising demand and dwindling water resources.

"Tuloy-tuloy ang programa natin, hindi lang ngayon na may ine-expect tayo na El Niño, but because kailangan natin gawin dahil dumadami ang demand at lumiliit din ang resources natin (Our programs are continuing, not just because we are expecting El Niño, but because we need to respond to increasing demand and dwindling resources)," BWD General Manager Salvador Royeca said in an interview Monday.

Royeca said the utility has been expanding water production, improving its distribution system, developing rainwater harvesting facilities, monitoring sources, detecting and repairing leaks, protecting watersheds and promoting water conservation.

He said the district's long-term water security plan focuses on five pillars — source augmentation, water storage, system efficiency, source protection and demand management.

Since 2024, the BWD has been drilling two deep wells annually to augment supply as demand increases, according to Royeca.

The district currently produces 56,000 cubic meters of water daily against an average demand of 60,000 cubic meters, serving about 51,000 connections. Once commissioned, 10 deep wells are expected to contribute an additional 5,000 to 10,000 cubic meters daily.

The BWD has replaced old distribution pipelines with corrosion-resistant materials to reduce leaks and system losses.

"We are also trying to collect runoff rainwater in our watersheds to make use of it and prevent it from simply flowing away," Royeca said.

The rainwater harvesting facility on Mount Santo Tomas was filled by monsoon rains in August and September, while the facility at Busol Watershed was commissioned this year and filled to augment supply during the summer season.

Similar facilities are being built at Buyog and Camp 8 watersheds.

The Mount Santo Tomas facility can supply at least 12 percent of the city's water demand for up to six months.

Baguio currently relies on 78 deep wells, 90 pumping stations and four spring sources to supply consumers.

The district also continues to plant trees in watersheds and has called on organizations, groups and offices to adopt forest parks to encourage public participation in watershed conservation.

Royeca said underground and spring sources have recovered following continuous rainfall in August and September. However, the district is conserving these resources amid forecasts of prolonged El Niño conditions that could further deplete water sources.

Among its short-term measures, the BWD is regulating groundwater discharge to prevent sudden drops in water levels and maximizing spring sources to preserve underground reserves.

It is also implementing water balancing in service zones, monitoring pressure and reservoir levels for real-time adjustments, and providing water during scheduled supply windows in critical areas.

The district has intensified leak detection and pipeline inspections, along with the immediate repair of leaks, pipe bursts and defective fittings. It has also stepped up efforts to detect and prevent illegal water connections and urged residents to report leaks. (PNA)

The Baguio Water District says the city is preparing for the prolonged effects of El Niño, with rainwater harvesting facilities filled and underground sources replenished by heavy rains in August and September. The utility is urging residents to conserve water to prevent the depletion of supplies during the expected five to six months of limited rainfall.

THE MANILA TIMES

Innovation for survival in the era of climate change

AN innovator is a person who introduces new methods, ideas or products. Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Nikola Tesla, and Steve Jobs were all innovators who turned ideas into functional inventions the world has benefited from.

With the advent of climate change, innovations equate not only to convenience but survival.

The Manila Times interviewed two Filipino innovators at the forefront of science development and climate study: Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum and University of the Philippines Resilience Institute Executive Director Dr. Alfredo Mahar Lagmay.

Solidum, a graduate of the University of the Philippines, University of Illinois, and Scripps Institute of Oceanography, has been with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), specifically at the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), since 1984. He is a protege of Phivolcs' pioneer director, Dr. Raymundo Punongbayan.

He later became Phivolcs director from 2003 to 2017, then was appointed Undersecretary for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in 2017. He assumed the post of Undersecretary for Scientific and Technical Services in 2019.

Solidum considers himself an innovator, saying that he tries to improve on things and provide solutions for real-world problems.

"So innovation is not simply about creating something new. It is about making things better, more efficient, and more meaningful for the people that we actually serve," Solidum said.

He said that at DOST, the goal is to produce results with meaningful impact.

"In the Philippines, what we actually do at the Department of Science and Technology is that innovation should be felt," Solidum said.

He said innovation is not just for scientists and engineers but for everyone, noting that every Filipino can become an innovator.

"It starts with being curious. Try to understand what the problems are. Fall in love with it so that you can develop new ideas and find better ways to solve those problems or new ways of doing things. So innovation becomes meaningful when it improves everyday life and creates opportunities for others," Solidum said.

He believes that innovation should be grounded not on novelty but scientific methods.

Solidum turned the term “Astig,” a Filipino colloquial term for “tough,” into an acronym for “Applying Science, Technology and Innovation in Governance.”

“We need to make sure that the science, the technology, and more importantly, the innovation that must be introduced is ‘fit for purpose’ for the specific problem in our specific stakeholder. Once we do that, the success of really developing very appropriate real-world solutions to real-world problems would be quite high,” Solidum said.

Despite the tough task, Solidum said he finds comfort in knowing that it would serve a good purpose.

“There is a different kind of satisfaction when you see your program, technology, or decision make someone’s life better or someone’s enterprises better. So when I go out, especially to the field, to different enterprises, MSMEs, to the valleys, to the mountains that I visit, I find relaxation because I feel happy. You don’t feel the tiredness when you visit them, talk to them, talk to the stakeholders that we visit, and listen to their problems,” he said.

With two years left in his term, Solidum said that the only thing that matters now is the totality of DOST’s impact on the country.

“In a sense, I hope that years from now, the programs that we have created are still creating opportunities, solving problems, improving the lives of people, creating more businesses, more jobs, and developing smarter, sustainable, and very livable cities and towns,” he said.

Lagmay: Innovation in resilience

Known as the brains behind Project NOAH (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards), Lagmay is a geology graduate from the University of the Philippines. He finished his doctoral studies at the University of Cambridge and was a visiting scientist at Stanford University and the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

He became NOAH’s executive director when it began in 2012 until 2017, when it was moved out of the DOST to become part of the UP Resilience Institute (UPRI).

Lagmay said that yearly, the Philippines loses as much as P50 to 100 billion from severe weather events. The figure, he said, is an “underestimation,” noting whatever gains the country posted were negated by the impact of natural calamities.

He said that rainfall averages have increased in the past 100 years and floods have worsened further.

“I noticed that when I studied this in 2011, there were also mas

sive floods in Central Luzon that lasted for a month. It happened again in 2015 because of Typhoons Lando and Nona, again in 2020 because of Typhoon Ulysses, and again in 2024. Now, we have the southwest monsoon while storms are passing through the north. I've noticed that these kinds of unusually severe floods have become more frequent," Lagmay said.

Lagmay said these worsening floods have increased the suffering of Filipinos and disrupted the growth of the economy.

Recently, the UPRI received an additional P1 billion in funding from the national government to further enhance and expand its capabilities in disaster resilience, but Lagmay said the funding is not enough.

"It needs to be sustained because it's important that hazard maps reflect climate change scenarios—scenarios that are bigger than what is in the historical record," Lagmay said.

He added that it is not enough to know where the hazards are located, but also the interventions that a community is supposed to make.

"Without the science, those plans will go wayward and will always be impacted by floods, landslides, bringing down the economy whatever growth it has been achieved. So you really have to have those detailed hazard maps as accurate, reliable, and understandable as possible. That is the role of NOAH. And I think because the area of the Philippines is 300,000 sq km, P1 billion is definitely not enough," Lagmay said.

The funding, he said, would be used not only for the updating of hazard maps, but also for collaborating with other agencies, local government units, and state universities and colleges to integrate watershed science, flood modeling, terrain, infrastructure, and local knowledge to identify appropriate structural and non-structural solutions.

Lagmay said that innovation should disrupt the status quo.

"It can be anything especially for technologies or ideas that disrupt the status quo—that's innovation. You don't need to be an engineer or scientist to innovate. A system—you change it, you innovate for the better," Lagmay said.

He added that there are no barriers to innovation, noting that even artists can innovate for disaster risk reduction.

"I consider myself as an innovator because whenever I see something that is inappropriate, especially that I work on disasters, I work on it because scientifically I try to understand what caused the disaster, what lessons we learned from that so that we don't repeat the same mistakes," Lagmay said.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

PH advances adaptation action, stronger multilateral cooperation at Pre-COP 31

The Philippines called for effective implementation of the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and greater coherence in the multilateral climate system during the Pacific Pre-COP31. The Philippine position emphasized the need to strengthen resilience and translate global commitments into concrete action.

Delivering the Philippines' interventions during sessions on adaptation and the multilateral system. Cagayan de Oro City's 2nd District Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez stressed that adaptation frameworks must empower communities to build resilience, and that international cooperation must make climate support more accessible and effective.

"The test of the GGA is not whether we can measure resilience, but whether we empower countries and communities to build it," Rodriguez said.

He also emphasized the importance of a multilateral system that gives every country a seat and a voice while ensuring that climate support reaches communities more effectively.

"A stronger multilateral system is one that turns agreement into delivery, makes support accessible, and ensures that no country is left behind," Rodriguez said.

The Philippines supported the voluntary testing of adaptation indicators based on national circumstances, capacities, and priorities, without imposing additional reporting burdens. It also called for closer coordination among climate funds and institutions, simplified and harmonized procedures, and direct access to climate support.

Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje underscored the importance of international cooperation and practical approaches that translate climate commitments into meaningful results for vulnerable countries and communities.

"Whether through adaptation or multilateral cooperation, our efforts must go beyond global commitments and frameworks. We must ensure that climate action delivers tangible results, strengthens resilience, and reaches the communities most vulnerable to climate impacts," Borje said.

Representative Rodriguez is a member of the Philippine Delegation to the Pacific Pre-COP31, headed by CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Borje. He is also the Vice Chairperson of the House Committee on Energy, a member of the Committees on Ecology and Natural Resources, and a key congressional representative in the passage of Republic Act No. 9729, or the Climate Change Act of 2009.

The Philippines, through the CCC, remains steadfast in advancing effective adaptation and a more coherent multilateral climate system that translates global commitments into concrete action on the ground.

The Pre-COP31 dialogue served as a platform for countries to exchange views and advance key climate priorities. These efforts helped shape discussions ahead of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31), scheduled for November 9–20, 2026, in Antalya, Türkiye.

For more information on the CCC's climate mainstreaming programs and partnerships, visit www.climate.gov.ph and www.facebook.com/CCCPhl.

PH takes on co-facilitator role in climate finance and investments discussions at Pre-COP31

At the Pacific Pre-COP31 in Nadi, Fiji, the Philippines was appointed co-facilitator for the Finance and Investment sessions, part of a broader, minister-led climate-finance process aimed at advancing practical discussion on how finance can support countries' climate priorities and implementation.

Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje co-led discussions with United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Parties, helping guide the exchange toward a practical balance: delivering on existing finance commitments while addressing barriers to access and mobilize complementary investment.

Following several consultations and discussions with participants, Borje reported back to the Pacific Pre-COP31 plenary on the priorities raised, bringing implementation concerns into the wider discussion on how global commitments can translate into support for projects and communities.

The report-back reflected broad convergence among participants that the UNFCCC's 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) should focus on implementing existing commitments and agreed outcomes, including the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance, and translating pledges into results on the ground. Participants identified debt pressures, limited fiscal space, high costs of capital, slow approvals, complex accreditation, and limited direct access as barriers to implementation.

Participants also discussed practical responses, including simpler and more harmonized procedures, faster processing, grants and highly concessional finance for adaptation, and stronger engagement with multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions.

They also raised guarantees, risk-sharing, climate-resilient debt clauses, and debt-for-climate swaps as possible tools. The report-back emphasized that aligning financial flows under Article 2.1(c), including efforts to mobilize private finance, can complement but must not substitute for developed-country obligations under Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement.

Borje was paired with France's Minister for Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, and International Negotiations on Climate and Nature, Monique Barbut, in the minister-led finance process.

"I thank Australia's COP31 Presidency for its confidence in the Philippines. We worked to keep the discussion grounded in practical ways to make climate finance support implementation," Borje said.

In his plenary finance intervention, Borje cited UN Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that developing countries will need US$310–365 billion a year for adaptation by 2035, compared with US$26 billion in international public adaptation finance in 2023.

“A large share of an inadequate pool remains inadequate,” he said, calling for finance that is adequate, predictable, and accessible to national and local institutions.

Philippine Ambassador to Fiji Noel M. Novicio underscored the same implementation test for COP31 in his session intervention: “a COP of implementation, moving from pledges to predictable flows and from access barriers to actual access.”

The Philippines’ contribution is grounded in its climate policy agenda under President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., including the country’s first National Adaptation Plan for 2023–2050 and updated Nationally Determined Contribution, or NDC 3.0, submitted to the UNFCCC in September 2026. Borje also took part in the 2026 UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance Forum in Sydney, which focused on financing climate action for water systems and the ocean.

=END=