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ABS CBN

Argentina briefly closes Iguazu Falls to tourists over El Niño

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Fear of overflowing rivers forced Argentine authorities to temporarily block tourist access to the breathtaking Iguazu Falls on Monday, attributing rising water levels to the El Niño weather pattern.

MMDA begins talks with LGUs for El Niño preparations
By: Izzy Lee

MANILA — The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said on Tuesday that it was meeting with local government units (LGUs) to prepare for the possible impacts of El Niño.

PH most disaster-prone country in the world: report

MANILA – The Philippines is the most disaster-prone country in the world, according to a study conducted by two German institutions.

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PHL demands practical climate action now
By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

AT the Pacific Pre-UN Climate Change Conference (COP31) breakout sessions in Fiji, the Philippines delivered a clear message: It's time to move from big promises to real-world results.

GMA NEWS

Climate change poses a challenge to earthquake, tsunami preparedness — OCD
By: Mariel Celine Serquina

Climate change has made it more challenging for agencies and stakeholders to prepare for earthquakes and tsunamis as it leaves them with less time to respond to potential disasters, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) said Tuesday.

Super El Niño could make 2026 record hottest year: climate monitor
By: Laurent Thomet

BRUSSELS, Belgium - An intensifying El Niño pattern set an all-time temperature high in a key Pacific zone in September and could help make this year the hottest globally on record, the director of the EU's climate monitor said Monday.

MANILA BULLETIN

Attaining standards for sustainable progress through partnerships

The observance of National Standards Week from Oct. 8 to 14, culminating in World Standards Day on Oct. 14, offers the Philippines an opportunity to reflect on an often-overlooked foundation of national development: standards that make products safer, industries more competitive, technologies more reliable, and economic progress more sustainable.

DENR taps early warning technology to monitor El Niño threats
By: Jel Santos

Amid threats posed by El Niño, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has deployed an early warning framework using weather stations, satellite data, and risk mapping to help address threats to forests, coral reefs, and water supplies.

MANILA STANDARD

El Niño sets temperature record in key Pacific zone—EU monitor

Paris, France—An intensifying El Niño 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.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

Smart economics: tackle climate change and air pollution together
By: Simon DietzandElliott Harris

While air pollution has often been treated as an inevitable price of rapid economic growth, polluted air itself imposes many enormous costs

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

PH calls for practical, implementation-focused climate action at Pre-COP31

NADI, Fiji – The Philippines called for practical, nationally determined climate action backed by science, adequate support, and stronger international cooperation during the Pacific Pre-COP31 parallel breakout sessions in Fiji.

Metro Cebu water district adds new sources as very strong El Niño nears
By: By Robinson Cabardo Jr.

The Metropolitan Cebu Water District (MCWD) is sourcing an additional 40.4 million liters per day (MLD), mostly from groundwater and desalinated water, to offset expected supply losses from El Niño.

PTV

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.

MANILA BULLETIN

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Argentina briefly closes Iguazu Falls to tourists over El Niño

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Fear of overflowing rivers forced Argentine authorities to temporarily block tourist access to the breathtaking Iguazu Falls on Monday, attributing rising water levels to the El Niño weather pattern.

National park officials took the precautionary measure when the Iguazu River's flow exceeded 12,000 cubic meters per second -- more than six times its average rate.

"A temporary restriction on the movement of people and access to public areas has been put in place," Iguazu National Park announced.

It later said the area would reopen to tourists on Tuesday, citing a "gradual decline" in the river's flow.

The northeastern park closed over flooding caused by a previous El Niño cycle in 2023 and 2024.

United Nations experts have predicted an exceptionally strong cycle of the climate phenomenon, which causes global changes in winds and rainfall as well as erratic weather conditions.

Last month, Argentina's coastal region experienced above-average rainfall "similar to that seen during strong El Niño events," the national meteorological service noted.

The Parana River's flow exceeded historical averages by 37 percent in September, and by 40 percent so far in October, a hydroelectric plant on the Paraguayan border said Monday.

And dozens of people living on the banks of the Uruguay River evacuated their homes due to flooding along the major waterway, according to local press reports.

MMDA begins talks with LGUs for El Niño preparations
By: Izzy Lee

MANILA — The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said on Tuesday that it was meeting with local government units (LGUs) to prepare for the possible impacts of El Niño.

MMDA Chairman Atty. Don Artes said the agency convened a meeting with disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) officers from various local government units (LGUs) and concerned agencies to discuss potential risks and measures.

"Gumawa kami ng framework at nag-constuitute kami ng technical working group para pag-usapan 'yung various issues na may kinalaman sa El Niño," Artes said.

"Isa sa pinag-usapan 'yung health index in relation to health and suspension ng classes kasi may iba't ibang protocols ang bawat LGU. Ang plan namin ay gumawa ng isang single protocol," he added.

The MMDA is also planning to collect and conserve rainwater during the rainy season in preparation for potential water shortages.

The agency is looking into installing small rainwater catchment systems beneath skyways and along Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT).

"Normally, may downspouts sila eh na instead na 'yung tubig mapupunta sa drainage system, maka-ka-cause pa ng flash flood. 'Yan po ay sasahurin na rin para magamit sa secondary 'yung tubig ulan," he said.

PH most disaster-prone country in the world: report

MANILA – The Philippines is the most disaster-prone country in the world, according to a study conducted by two German institutions.

The World Risk Index, released by Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft and the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) at Ruhr University Bochum, said the Philippines is facing the greatest disaster risk of 193 countries in the world based on its exposure and vulnerability to natural disasters.

The Philippines has an index score 46.82, followed by India (42.31), Indonesia (41.46) and Colombia (38.37). Mexico, Myanmar, Mozambique, China, Bangladesh and Pakistan round up the list of top 10 countries most at risk of disasters.

Dr. Mahar Lagmay, University of the Philippines Resilience Institute Executive Director, said the country is at huge risk of disasters because it is in the typhoon belt of Asia.

“When there’s severe weather event like that, it carries along with it hazards. These hazards are namely the strong winds, the floods that are triggered, the landslides that are triggered by extreme rainfall events carried by the typhoon, as well as storm surges. These hazards are the ones that kill,” Lagmay explained.

Going forward, Lagmay said the Philippine government should focus more on preventing the ill effects of natural disasters.

“There are 4 pillars in disaster prevention and risk reduction, you call it. One is the long-term, preparations, this is called prevention and mitigation, the other is just before the hazard strikes, which is preparedness. And then during the time when the hazard strikes, that’s called response, and then afterwards, it’s called reconstruction and rehabilitation.”

“We should really shift from doing more work on response to the long-term preparations planning,” he said.

“I would recommend that our planning should incorporate climate change-adjusted hazards. These are the hazards that would happen because of the changing climate, because of global warming, that means that the typhoons will become stronger, carrying stronger winds, carrying bigger floods, triggering more frequent and more widespread landslides, and bigger storm surges.”

Lagmay noted that survivors of Philippine natural disasters tend to say that storms that have been hitting the country are worse than the last ones that affected them.

“We must anticipate the future events. And to do that, we need science. We need to reflect in our hazard maps which are mainstreamed into the planning process of the communities, the

comprehensive land use plans, the local climate change adaptation plans, the climate and disaster risk assessments," he said.

"If incorporated, the people in the community will be able to realize that there's such a type of hazard that is bigger than what they know or what they have experienced. And if we do that, they can anticipate."

The expert noted that disaster preparedness if important if the country wants to meet its development goals.

"We are all at risk from something, and that something might translate to fatalities, to deaths, it translates also to hampering our development, our economic progress. It translates to eating up our GDP."

"Like for example in the span of 10 years, the average of about 3 percent is taken out from our GDP because of disasters. The impacts of hazards. Now, that is a concern because if it hampers our development, then we will not achieve our Sustainable Development Goals," he said.

BUSINESS MIRROR

PHL demands practical climate action now

By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

AT the Pacific Pre-UN Climate Change Conference (COP31) breakout sessions in Fiji, the Philippines delivered a clear message: It's time to move from big promises to real-world results.

Representing the delegation, Philippine Ambassador to Fiji Noel M. Novicio called for practical, science-backed climate action tailored to developing nations' unique development needs.

Key highlights from the Philippine address include:

- A usable just transition mechanism: COP31 shouldn't just create frameworks; it must deliver a mechanism countries can actually use. Transition plans must address debt burdens, fiscal constraints, and technology gaps without imposing rigid rules.
- Implementation over new pledges: Novicio urged extending the Mitigation Work Program for four to five years. Success should not be measured by new pledges, but by unlocked investments, real emissions cuts, and better living standards.
- Inclusive science and honest stocktakes: GST-2 must combine global scientific research with traditional Indigenous knowledge to bridge the gap between information and action, delivering needed finance and technology without adding burdens.

Looking forward to COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye—where Australia will lead negotiations—the Philippines emphasized turning talks into practical partnerships across energy, water, oceans, and early warning systems.

"COP31's success should not be measured by the number of new commitments, but by whether conditions are created for existing ambition to become real action," Novicio said.

Aligned with the G77, the Philippines remains dedicated to making COP31 a true "implementation COP" that protects vulnerable communities and supports sustained growth.

GMA NEWS

Climate change poses a challenge to earthquake, tsunami preparedness — OCD

By Mariel Celine Serquina

Climate change has made it more challenging for agencies and stakeholders to prepare for earthquakes and tsunamis as it leaves them with less time to respond to potential disasters, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) said Tuesday.

During the World Tsunami Awarness Day press conference in Quezon City, OCD-NCR director George Keyser said the return period of major natural events has become shorter and more intense over time due to climate change.

These natural events include storms and earthquakes.

"Malaki talaga ang epekto ng climate change (sa disaster preparedness)," Keyser said. "Paikli ng paikli yung return period."

(Climate change has greatly affected disaster preparedness. the return period of natural events has become shorter.)

This led agencies like OCD to conduct several meetings with stakeholders in order revise intial preparedness and response plans.

Aside from climate change, Keyser said the lax perception of the public about disasters is also a challenge when it come to preparedness.

"Yung number one challenge talaga ito, yung perception na baka hindi man mangyari yan. Yung mabala na, yung ayaw mag-prepare," the OCD official said.

(The number one challenge is the perception of the public about disasters that it may not happen. Those who do not want to prepare.)

He added that Metro Manila must also have a locally appropriated evacuation plan to address situations when road and communication disruption take place after an earthquake.

"Kaya tayo nag-di-drill para makita yung lapses na itong sector. So yan, inaaral yan," Keyser said.

(We conduct drills to see the lapses of each sector and study it.)

Meanwhile, geologist Charmaine Villamil of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) explained changes in the climate do not trigger the occurrence of an earthquake but can aggravate its effects.

"Changes in the climate will not trigger the occurrence of earthquake, but the effects of climate change can aggravate the effects of tsunami," Villamil said.

"Kapag dumating yung tsunami, mas mataas pa po yung aasahan na alon," she added.

(Once a tsunami occurs, expect higher waves.)

The United Nation has designated every November 5 as World Tsunami Awareness Day to promote preparedness for natural disasters.

This include urging the public to participate in drills, runs, or walks along tsunami evacuation routes to help build resilience.

For its part, the PHIVOLCS will hold the “Tsunami! Run for Safety: Shake, Drop, or Roar? Move Away from the Shore!” on October 24 in Pasay City. — LA, GMA News

Super El Niño could make 2026 record hottest year: climate monitor

By: Laurent Thomet

BRUSSELS, Belgium - An intensifying El Niño pattern set an all-time temperature high in a key Pacific zone in September and could help make this year the hottest globally on record, the director of the EU's climate monitor said Monday.

Global forecasters have been warning for months that this El Niño 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 Niño temporarily 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 Niño 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 Niño events of 1982/1983, 1997/1998 and 2015/2016, the EU monitor said.

This year's El Niño, which emerged in June, is "very exceptional" but it is too early to say whether it is the strongest ever observed, Copernicus director Carlo Buontempo told AFP.

As climate change raises ocean temperatures, it can make recent El Niño 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.

"It's a very large event even in that metric," Buontempo said. "This very large event today is happening in a much warmer climate."

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

On Friday, Japan's weather agency said that El Niño conditions had reached their "strongest intensity on record".

Record ocean temperatures

As El Niño 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.

Experts have warned that this El Niño, combined with human-induced climate change, could make 2027 the hottest year on record as heat stored in the Pacific is released into the atmosphere.

The weather phenomenon, which typically occurs every two to seven years and lasts around nine to 12 months, can drive world temperatures higher the year after its peak.

But Buontempo said even 2026 could wind up a record breaker as this El Niño builds toward its peak.

"If we follow the pattern we have seen in the past, we may have a record-breaking 2026, followed by a record-breaking 2027," he told AFP.

After a record-breaking August, the world experienced its second hottest September ever observed, 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. It was the second consecutive month that temperature rises exceeded 1.5C.

Buontempo said temperatures would probably remain 1.5C above normal into early next year

The last El Niño event helped make 2024 the hottest year on record after a series of months of temperatures exceeding 1.5C, he said.

But while El Niño plays a role, "the ultimate cause of the rise and the exceedance of 1.5C are anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases," Buontempo said.

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.

But the United Nations declared in September that the long-term 1.5C target would be missed in a matter of years.

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. — Agence France-Presse

MANILA BULLETIN

Attaining standards for sustainable progress through partnerships

The observance of National Standards Week from Oct. 8 to 14, culminating in World Standards Day on Oct. 14, offers the Philippines an opportunity to reflect on an often-overlooked foundation of national development: standards that make products safer, industries more competitive, technologies more reliable, and economic progress more sustainable.

Declared through Proclamation No. 1327 in 1974, National Standards Week underscores the importance of standards-consciousness in accelerating economic growth and attaining national development goals. Its relevance has only grown as the Philippines pursues inclusive growth, digital transformation, energy security, and greater resilience to climate change.

This year's observances provide an opportunity to advance two complementary priorities in the Philippines' development agenda. The international focus of World Standards Day on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7, Affordable and Clean Energy, highlights the role of standards in making the energy transition safe, reliable, and accessible. At the same time, SDG 17, Partnerships for the Goals, underscores the cooperation among government, business, academe, and civil society needed to translate sustainability commitments into concrete national gains.

Standards provide a common language for government agencies, businesses, researchers, and consumers. They establish agreed requirements for quality, safety, performance, and compatibility. When properly developed and enforced, they build public confidence, reduce waste, facilitate trade, and help Philippine enterprises compete in international markets.

The emphasis on SDG 17 is particularly timely. No single institution can deliver sustainable development on its own. Government provides policy direction and regulatory oversight; the private sector supplies investment, innovation, and operational expertise; universities and research institutions generate knowledge; and civil society helps ensure that public interests are protected.

National standards can translate these partnerships into practical results. Common technical requirements enable businesses to work together, allow compatible products and systems from different suppliers to function, and help regulators assess performance against objective criteria. Alignment with internationally recognized standards can also help local manufacturers enter export markets and participate in regional and global supply chains.

But partnership must extend beyond signing agreements and staging conferences. It requires measurable commitments, shared accountability, and sustained investment in laboratories, testing facilities, certification systems, and technical expertise. Small and medium enterprises, in particular, must have access to affordable standards education and conformity-assessment

services. Otherwise, standards intended to promote competitiveness could become barriers to the very businesses that need support to grow.

The focus on clean and affordable energy is equally consequential. SDG 7 calls for reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. For an archipelagic country vulnerable to imported fuel-price shocks and climate-related disasters, accelerating renewable energy development and improving energy efficiency are both economic necessities and environmental imperatives.

Standards can help make this transition safe, dependable, and cost-effective. They guide the design and operation of solar installations, wind-energy facilities, batteries, electric-vehicle charging systems, and modern electricity grids. They also help ensure equipment quality, improve interoperability, and protect consumers from unsafe or underperforming products.

These safeguards matter as the Philippines expands renewable energy capacity and explores new technologies. Poor-quality equipment, incompatible systems, and inadequate installation practices can undermine investments and erode public confidence. Consistent technical requirements, credible testing, and effective enforcement can reduce these risks while encouraging innovation.

Clean energy must also become more accessible. Rural and island communities, low-income households, and small businesses should not be left behind as the country modernizes its energy infrastructure. Standards policy must therefore complement investments in transmission, distribution, storage, and off-grid solutions, while promoting efficiency that helps bring down electricity costs.

National Standards Week and World Standards Day should inspire action beyond ceremonial observances. The Department of Trade and Industry's Bureau of Philippine Standards, other government agencies, industry associations, and academic institutions must work together to strengthen standards development, upgrade technical capabilities, and widen public awareness. Ultimately, standards are not merely technical rules. They are instruments of trust, cooperation, and progress. By making partnerships productive and clean energy dependable and accessible, the Philippines can turn its development aspirations into tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary Filipinos.

MANILA STANDARD

El Niño sets temperature record in key Pacific zone—EU monitor

Paris, France—An intensifying El Niño 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 Niño 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 Niño 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 Niño 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 Niño 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 Niño is the strongest ever recorded."

As climate change raises ocean temperatures, it can make recent El Niño 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 Niño, especially given that the event has not yet reached its peak," Copernicus told AFP.

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

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

Record ocean temperatures

As El Niño 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.

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 Niño still intensifying it is likely to last into 2027,” Copernicus director Carlo Buontempo said in a statement. CheckForecasts

“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 Niño would likely push global temperatures to a new record in 2027.

El Niño 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.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

Smart economics: tackle climate change and air pollution together

By: Simon DietzandElliott Harris

While air pollution has often been treated as an inevitable price of rapid economic growth, polluted air itself imposes many enormous costs

Indonesia continues to battle some of its worst wildfires in years, spreading toxic haze to Malaysia and Singapore. Floods have devastated communities in Thailand, India and Nepal. Kathmandu is also seeking climate justice after a catastrophic collapse of rock and glacier ice near its border with China.

Another environmental tragedy unfolds without such dramatic images. Across the world, millions of lives are lost each year to polluted air. Many more people live with debilitating illnesses that strain household finances, overwhelm health services and keep them from working.

Governments that plan and budget for climate change and air pollution separately miss opportunities to protect health and strengthen their economies through the same investment.

We recently co-chaired an assessment for the UN Environment Programme and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) that puts a value on those opportunities. We estimate that outdoor and household air pollution caused about 8.4 million premature deaths worldwide in 2025. Outdoor fine-particle pollution was also associated with 5.5 million new cases of childhood asthma, 2 million new cases of dementia and millions of cases of other serious illnesses.

Our assessment is the first to quantify the combined economic value of climate and clean-air action within a single, internally consistent framework. A key innovation is its fuller accounting of pollution-related illness, or morbidity, including healthcare costs and lost productivity that conventional analyses have often undervalued.

Air pollution has often been treated as an inevitable price of rapid economic growth, but polluted air itself imposes many enormous costs. Those losses should count whenever a government considers whether cleaner energy or transport is too expensive.

At the same time, there is reason for optimism. Wider adoption of electric vehicles and renewable power can help improve local air quality and reduce long-term global warming. Work on our report began last year in Beijing, whose improvements in air quality demonstrate what sustained policy action can achieve.

Our assessment evaluates 25 measures across energy systems, industry, transport, agriculture, residential heating and cooking, and waste management. Complementing long-term

decarbonisation, action on super pollutants – including methane, black carbon and hydrofluorocarbons – can help slow warming.

Measures targeting methane and black carbon also improve air quality. Methane contributes to ground-level ozone, which damages health and crop yields. Black carbon, a component of health-harming soot, warms the atmosphere and accelerates melting when deposited on snow and glaciers.

If the full package of measures is implemented, every US$1 invested could generate around US$4 in market benefits, including lower healthcare spending, higher productivity and avoided climate damage. Including the broader economic value of longer, healthier lives raises the benefits to US$15. Some health and economic gains can become apparent within a single term of government.

For governments seeking faster growth and balanced budgets, the US$4 market benefit figure deserves particular attention. Fewer illnesses mean fewer working days lost and less pressure on health services. Reduced heat exposure protects workers' health and productivity. These gains help strengthen economies and ease pressure on public finances, even though they do not all accrue directly to the government.

Finance ministries should assess investments against these combined benefits. Each year of delay in implementing the package forfeits more than US$1.5 trillion in benefits we cannot recover.

Full implementation of these measures could prevent an estimated 144 million premature deaths from air pollution cumulatively by 2050. Compared with the report's baseline scenario, it could also avoid around 0.34 degrees Celsius of warming by mid-century – a significant contribution to limiting the extent and consequences of an overshoot beyond the 1.5 degree warming threshold.

Governments need not finance every investment themselves. Clear legislation, predictable standards and credible enforcement can encourage private businesses to act. Rules on methane leakage, vehicle emissions and refrigerants can create demand for cleaner technologies. Better coordination between ministries can reduce delays and implementation costs.

Delivering these gains also requires attention to who can afford to change. Families need reliable access to cleaner cooking and affordable, energy-efficient cooling. Farmers need practical alternatives to burning crop residues. Targeted public support and access to affordable finance should be built into implementation from the start.

Pollution crosses borders, so neighbouring countries have much to gain from coordinating their efforts. International financial support also remains essential for countries unable to cover necessary upfront investments. These priorities belong at the centre of the CCAC Annual

Meeting in Bangkok this week and the COP31 UN climate change conference in Antalya, Turkey, this November.

Governments need not wait for a breakthrough in international negotiations. They can remove barriers and set investment in motion now.

From smoke-filled and flooded cities to retreating glaciers, Asia has much to gain from tackling air pollution and climate change together. Investments made today can improve health quickly and deliver economic benefits for generations. Every budget that postpones them leaves families and economies paying the price.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

PH calls for practical, implementation-focused climate action at Pre-COP31

NADI, Fiji – The Philippines called for practical, nationally determined climate action backed by science, adequate support, and stronger international cooperation during the Pacific Pre-COP31 parallel breakout sessions in Fiji.

Speaking at the sessions on Just Transition, mitigation, and science and the second Global Stocktake (GST-2), Philippine Ambassador to Fiji Noel M. Novicio emphasized that climate commitments must translate into concrete action that responds to the national circumstances and development priorities of developing countries.

On Just Transition, the Philippines underscored the need for an operational and accessible Just Transition Mechanism that builds on the momentum of the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) and advances implementation under Decision 2/CMA.7. The Mechanism should support nationally determined transition pathways, address the economic and social dimensions of climate action, and respond to structural barriers faced by developing countries, including fiscal constraints, debt burdens, and limited access to technology and capacity-building.

“For the Philippines, a successful outcome at COP31 is not simply the creation of a Mechanism, but agreement on a Mechanism that countries can actually use—one that is nationally determined, inclusive, facilitative, and responsive to the realities of developing countries,” Novicio said.

The Philippines also called for a stronger mitigation outcome that moves beyond commitments toward implementation. It supported extending the Mitigation Work Programme for another four to five years, subject to review, with a stronger mandate to connect dialogues with concrete solutions, investment opportunities, and means of implementation, while remaining non-prescriptive, non-punitive, and country-driven.

Novicio said, “COP31’s success should not be measured by the number of new commitments, but by whether conditions are created for existing ambition to become real action, real investments, real emissions reductions, and better development outcomes for our people.”

On science and GST-2, the Philippines stressed the importance of inclusive, science-based assessments that draw on global assessments, regional and national research, and traditional, indigenous, and local knowledge. It called for GST-2 to provide an honest assessment of progress and gaps across mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation, with outcomes that inform nationally determined action without creating new obligations for developing countries.

“For the Philippines, a successful GST-2 bridges the gap between knowledge and action. It must deliver finance, technology, and capacity-building to translate scientific findings into action and strengthen resilience,” Ambassador Novicio said.

Ambassador Novicio is a member of the Philippine Delegation to the Pacific Pre-COP31, headed by Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje.

Looking ahead to COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye, the Philippines emphasized the importance of translating negotiations into concrete climate action. Türkiye will hold the COP31 Presidency, while Australia will serve as President of Negotiations.

The COP31 Presidency’s Action Agenda could help advance the goal of making COP31 an “implementation COP” by mobilizing practical partnerships across energy, water, oceans, and resilience, while connecting multi-hazard early warning systems with proactive early action.

The Philippines underscored that COP31’s success will ultimately depend on how negotiated outcomes translate into meaningful action, support for vulnerable communities, protection of lives, and sustained development.

The Philippines aligns with the G77 and remains committed to working constructively with all Parties toward a successful outcome at COP31.

The Pacific Pre-COP31 was a preparatory ministerial and global leaders’ meeting held from October 5 to 8, 2026, in Nadi, Fiji. Delivered through a partnership between Fiji, Tuvalu, and Australia, the event was designed to lay the political groundwork ahead of the main UN Climate Change Conference (COP31) taking place in Antalya, Türkiye, in November 2026. The summit aims to amplify Pacific voices, showcase existential threats like rising sea levels, and urgently advocate for concrete commitments in global climate finance and action.

Metro Cebu water district adds new sources as very strong El Niño nears
By: By Robinson Cabardo Jr.

The Metropolitan Cebu Water District (MCWD) is sourcing an additional 40.4 million liters per day (MLD), mostly from groundwater and desalinated water, to offset expected supply losses from El Niño.

MCWD General Manager John Dx Lapid said during a recent Kapihan sa PIA that the water district is securing more sources and upgrading its pumping facilities to cushion an estimated 43 MLD drop in surface-water production at the peak of El Niño.

Lapid said some areas, particularly in southern Metro Cebu, may have reduced supply, but standby sources will cover the loss.

“We have already contacted our bulk suppliers of desalinated water. We have targeted that by November there will be additional volume coming from desalinated water that will not be affected by El Niño,” he said.

MCWD is also reviving groundwater sources, including deep wells, which are expected to be minimally affected and to provide a more reliable supply during prolonged dry conditions.

“We have water booster pump stations installed now, and at the same time we are reviving our groundwater sources,” Lapid said.

The water district aims to operate eight new pumping stations by year-end, with a combined output of about 5.8 MLD to help meet consumer demand in Metro Cebu.

PAGASA forecast

The preparations come as the state weather bureau PAGASA forecasts that El Niño will become very strong before the end of 2026 and persist through the first half of 2027.

In its Sept. 23 climate advisory, PAGASA said El Niño generally brings warmer temperatures and below-normal rainfall to most of the country.

This raises the risk of dry spells and drought, affecting agriculture, water resources, energy, and public health.

PAGASA Visayas weather specialist Jhomer Eclarino said the forecast should be taken seriously given its potential impact on water resources and other climate-sensitive sectors.

Eclarino said PAGASA Visayas holds a monthly climate outlook forum to help local government units, government agencies, and other stakeholders prepare.

National government response

MCWD's preparations are part of the national government's effort to ease El Niño's effects on water supply, agriculture, food security, and public health.

On Oct. 1, Malacañang said the government has activated Task Force El Niño to coordinate action on climate information, agriculture and food, irrigation, water supply, and social protection.

Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said funds have been set aside for preparations.

"Ang pondo po ay talagang pinaglaanan para po mas magkaroon tayo ng tamang paghahanda dahil nga binabanggit ito na super El Niño (Funds have been allocated so we can prepare properly, since this is being described as a super El Niño)," Castro said.

She also assured the public that the country will not run out of drinking water.

Concerned agencies are coordinating with the Climate Change Commission, which President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. chairs.

Task Force El Niño was reactivated under Executive Order 53, signed Jan. 19, 2024.

The order directs the task force to develop a disaster preparedness and rehabilitation plan for El Niño and La Niña.

In Metro Cebu, MCWD has convened its El Niño committee, which will meet weekly to monitor developments and align preparations, Lapid said.

PTV

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.

The Philippines brings parties' implementation priorities to plenary after consultations, taking on a co-facilitator role in discussions on climate finance and investments at Pre-COP31 in Nadi, Fiji. (Photo courtesy: CCC)
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$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 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.

MANILA BULLETIN

DENR taps early warning technology to monitor El Niño threats

By: Jel Santos

Amid threats posed by El Niño, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has deployed an early warning framework using weather stations, satellite data, and risk mapping to help address threats to forests, coral reefs, and water supplies.

The agency said the framework provides field alerts to help local government units (LGUs), water managers, and field personnel respond to environmental hazards linked to rising temperatures.

The DENR likewise directed its regional offices to support water conservation initiatives, encourage water-efficient practices, and prioritize areas experiencing or at risk of water shortages, dry spells, and drought.

“At the same time, we are strengthening water conservation and resource management efforts to help communities and institutions cope with the growing risks of drought and water scarcity,” DENR Secretary Juan Miguel Cuna said in a statement on Tuesday, Oct. 13.

“We are equipping our field teams and local chief executives with real-time environmental intelligence to safeguard our forests, coral reefs, water resources, and coastal communities before severe damage occurs.”

According to the DENR, the early warning framework combines Automated Weather Stations (AWS), satellite heat stress mapping, and Geographic Information System (GIS)-based risk modeling.

In Bicol, the agency said DENR offices in Catanduanes and Masbate monitored AWS stations daily and mapped dry forest patches, drying creeks, shallow reefs, and emerging water-stress conditions.

The environment department said these efforts support localized drought advisories and water conservation measures for agricultural and coastal barangays.

Meanwhile, the agency said personnel of the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary in Caraga used AWS data to monitor localized heat indices, rainfall deficits, and water level changes.

The DENR said the information allowed the sanctuary’s Protected Area Management Office to generate peatland fire risk maps and deploy targeted patrols to highly vulnerable areas.
In the Ilocos Region, the department said it established a Red Flag Alert System linked to PAGASA and local disaster risk reduction and management offices. It uses 10 ranger stations equipped with lookout towers to detect early signs of wildland fires.

“In an era of accelerating climate extremes, timely information saves ecosystems and lives,” said Cuna.
“By deploying satellite-based heat stress tracking for coral reefs in Aurora, processing Automated Weather Station data to map fire hazards in the Agusan Marsh, and running Red Flag alert systems in Region 1, the DENR is replacing reactive measures with precision early warning.”

As such, the DENR cited coral bleaching alert updates issued by its Central Luzon office in May, June, and July 2026, based on satellite-derived sea surface temperature heat stress analysis from PAGASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

With marine waters off Aurora elevated to Coral Bleaching Alert Level 1 during the period covered by the updates, the agency said Regional Executive Director Ralph C. Pablo directed provincial environment offices in Aurora, Bataan, and Zambales to monitor coral reefs and require immediate reporting of bleaching incidents through the Philippine Coral Reef Bleaching Report Portal.

The DENR Central Office reminded regional offices to ensure continuous data transmission from all AWS facilities and the submission of weekly reef assessment logs by marine monitoring teams to the national portal.

It also told them to ensure that environmental monitoring data support local drought preparedness, water-use efficiency initiatives, and climate adaptation measures.

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) had earlier urged LGUs to utilize climate forecasts and risk assessments in their development and disaster preparedness plans ahead of the possible intensification of El Niño into a “very strong” event.

Recently, the Marcos administration directed government agencies to strengthen preparations for possible drought and water shortages due to a “super El Niño.”

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) warned in September that the strong El Niño could intensify into a very strong event between September and December, with dry conditions potentially worsening in the coming months.

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