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By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

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By: Bless Aubrey Ogerio

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BUSINESS WORLD

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

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ECO BUSINESS

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GMA NEWS ONLINE

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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.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

Integrated Management and Development Plan crafted for the Apayao-Abulug River Basin
By: Carlito Dar

BAGUIO CITY (PIA) — A new master plan for the Apayao-Abulug River Basin (AARB) envisions a climate-resilient river basin managed through unified and participatory governance, where ecosystems are protected, risks are reduced, and communities thrive through sustainable and inclusive development.

SUNSTAR

Severe urbanization pressures threaten Metro Cebu survival
By: April Blanche Cabañog

Metro Cebu faces intense environmental pressures, rapid urbanization and severe disasters. Architect Joseph Michael "Yumi" Espina called for action regarding the future survival and livability of the region.

TIME MAGAZINE

Climate Change Is Accelerating Faster Than We Can Respond, Scientists Warn
By: Simmone Shah

The climate is warming up faster than we can respond. According to a new report published Oct. 14 in the journal BioScience, "Earth's climate system is moving deeper into uncharted territory."

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS MIRROR

PHL calls for ambition anchored on equity, accessible climate finance
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EMPHASIZING that "a target cannot protect nations and communities by [itself], the Philippines urged delegates at the Pacific Pre-COP31 in Fiji to carry a unified, equitable agenda to the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) in Antalya, Turkey.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

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.

PHL down 3 rungs in index for sustainable trade

By: Bless Aubrey Ogerio

THE Philippines fell three places to 16th out of 30 economies in the 2026 Hinrich-IMD Sustainable Trade Index, as weaker scores in economic and environmental performance offset a modest improvement in its societal standing.

The country scored 58 out of 100 in the index released Tuesday by the Hinrich Foundation and the IMD World Competitiveness Center, which assess economies based on their economic capacity, social conditions and environmental performance.

The country ranked 20th in the economic pillar, down three places from the previous year, with a score of 49.8.

Its societal ranking improved two places to 19th, with a score of 49, while its environmental standing dropped four places to ninth, despite remaining its strongest category at 86.4.

Across the three pillars, the country's performance reflected a mix of strengths and persistent gaps.

In the economic category, high-technology products accounted for 60.98 percent of manufactured exports in 2024, placing the Philippines third among the 30 economies.

Labor force growth ranked fifth at 1.75 percent in 2025, while consumer price inflation ranked 10th at 1.7 percent.

Fixed internet speed, however, stood at 88.84 megabits per second in 2025, placing the country 18th in the index's comparison.

In the societal pillar, the country ranked first in gender non-discrimination in hiring, based on a 2024 score of 100, and in the government's response to human trafficking in 2025.

These gains were tempered by weaker indicators in education and health: mean years of schooling reached 8.98 years in 2023, ranking 16th, while life expectancy was 69.83 years, ranking 26th.

The environmental pillar remained the country's strongest area. The Philippines ranked first in environmental standards in trade, reflecting participation in major international conventions covering issues such as hazardous waste, marine pollution, climate change and endangered species.

It also ranked seventh in energy intensity and ecological footprint, while renewable energy accounted for 28 percent of its energy mix in 2021, placing it 10th.

Across the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation's 21 economies, the average index score rose from 55.9 in 2022 to 62.7 in 2026, with the largest gains recorded in Southeast Asia, led by Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia.

The United Kingdom retained the top spot, followed by Singapore, which rose two places, and New Zealand. Hong Kong and Australia completed the top five.

The report noted that rankings shifted only modestly this year, with no economy moving more than four places, suggesting that sustainable trade performance increasingly reflects underlying economic and institutional capacity rather than short-term disruptions.

It also cautioned that participation in trade agreements alone does not guarantee stronger performance.

"Membership in a trade grouping opens a door. It does not walk a country through it," said Arturo Bris, director of the IMD World Competitiveness Center.

The index assesses 30 economies across economic, societal and environmental dimensions, providing a comparative measure of how well they balance trade competitiveness with broader sustainability goals.

BUSINESS WORLD

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

By: Myrna M. Velasco

NADI, Fiji — 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.

DAILY TRIBUNE

Green economy offers path

Investing in ecosystem restoration could generate billions in economic activity across Southeast Asia while protecting communities from worsening climate risks, according to research presented at Bangkok Climate Action Week 2026.

Indonesian research organization Center of Economic and Law Studies estimated that adopting restorative economic practices could generate Rp 2,208 trillion, or approximately P8 trillion, in economic output for Indonesia over 25 years.

The study also projected a potential 15 percent reduction in income inequality.

The findings were presented as regional organizations pushed for a shift toward a restorative economy, where economic development supports the recovery of forests, watersheds and other natural resources rather than relying primarily on their extraction.

For the Philippines, which faces frequent typhoons, flooding and other climate-related disasters, the approach offers a potential framework for strengthening environmental protection while creating economic opportunities.

At the event, researchers and policymakers discussed financing mechanisms that could direct investments toward environmental restoration and communities vulnerable to climate change.

These included ecological fiscal transfers, environmental taxes and policies linking government funding to environmental performance.

“We must elevate the nature-based economy beyond basic conservation and position it at the center of national economic strategy,” said CELIOS executive director Bhima Yudhistira.

“Through equitable fiscal mechanisms and transparent benefit-sharing, we can attract capital while ensuring transition dividends directly enrich local communities on the frontline.”

Indonesia’s implementation of ecological fiscal transfers across 43 subnational governments was highlighted as an example of connecting environmental performance with public financing.

Meanwhile, Cendekia Iklim Indonesia emphasized the economic benefits of watershed restoration and agroforestry.

The organization cited agricultural initiatives involving coffee and macadamia production in Thailand’s Doi Tung region as examples of combining environmental rehabilitation with sustainable livelihoods.

Participants also examined how biodiversity-based enterprises, local producers and impact investors could contribute to a broader green economy.

Koalisi Ekonomi Membumi executive director Fito Rahdianto called for stronger collaboration among governments, businesses and communities.

“Climate action strategies cannot operate in isolation; they require active, cross-sector collaboration,” Rahdianto said.

ECO BUSINESS

Nepal is a warning: Climate adaptation must become a global priority

By: Ashif Shaikh

Mitigation is essential as it limits future dangers, but adaptation protects people from existing risks.

After Nepal's flash flood in the last week of August, I sought to get first-person accounts of the tragedy. I wanted to learn how People's Courage International, the non-profit I lead, can better support and design climate-resilience interventions grounded in affected communities' priorities. Tek Singh, my colleague in Nepal, facilitated a phone call with Sundari Tamang from Rasuwa, the district severely damaged by the floods.

"I lost my brother, sister and our home," she told me over the phone through a patchy connection. "We got a warning from the authorities only five minutes before the water struck."

Sundari had been displaced by a disaster before, having lost her last home, also in Rasuwa, in the 2015 Nepal earthquake. She was subsequently resettled not far away, in the village of Khalte, where she rebuilt her life.

Her account brings forth a fundamental question. Are we simply helping people rebuild stop-gap homes after every disaster, or are we helping them rebuild ones where they can remain safe for the next 20-30 years?

Uddhab Raj Awasthi, a programme manager working with the Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre in the area, told me Sundari's losses were part of a much wider challenge. He talked about how families are still searching for missing relatives and how communities have lost many of the young workers needed for disaster recovery. Beyond relief, major challenges include lack of permanent housing and the loss of livelihoods.

Nepal is not isolated in its predicament. In 2026 alone, extreme heat, floods, drought and wildfires have affected communities across Asia, Europe, Africa and North America. In India and Pakistan, temperatures exceeded 46C in multiple cities in April and May, exposing hundreds of millions to dangerous heat.

World Weather Attribution, an international collaboration of climate scientists, found that human-induced climate change made the April heatwave roughly three times more likely and about 1C hotter. In Assam, severe floods affected more than half a million people, claiming at least 99 lives and submerging more than 45,000 hectares of cropland.

Last year, the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) recorded 358 natural hazard-related disasters worldwide, affecting 110.2 million people, causing over 16,600 deaths and nearly US$170 billion in economic losses.

Many of these risks can be anticipated. This means many of their human consequences can also be reduced.

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Making adaptation core infrastructure

Globally, climate hazards affect communities and populations unequally. Climate disasters become human disasters when they meet poverty, insecure livelihoods, weak infrastructure and inadequate social protection. The same hazard can be a temporary disruption for one family and a lifetime setback for another, depending on their ability to prepare, cope and recover.

This is why we need both mitigation and greater climate adaptation. Our financing and attention, however, have not reflected that balance.

Global climate finance reached about US$2 trillion in 2024, yet only around US$64 billion was tracked as being for adaptation, according to the Climate Policy Initiative. The United Nations Environment Programme estimates that developing countries will need US$310-365 billion annually for adaptation by 2035. But there was only US$26 billion in international public adaptation finance in 2023.

This is more than just a finance gap. It is a protection gap.

Governments must begin treating adaptation as essential public infrastructure instead of depending on such financing. For one, early warning systems should reach the last mile, and Sundari’s experience illustrates this. She should have received a clear warning early enough for her family to evacuate, with directions to a safe location and support to get there. Warnings must also reach remote and marginalised communities in accessible languages and formats.

Governments and organisations should also devise plans to protect people from extreme weather, and distribute anticipatory finance that releases support before and immediately after predictable shocks, rather than wait for a new appeal after disaster strikes.

Globally, we already see some examples of these. In Bangladesh, the United Nations' World Food Programme uses forecasts and predefined triggers to provide anticipatory cash before severe floods. These offer families time and resources to buy food, protect essential belongings and move to safer places.

In India, the heat action plans of cities like Ahmedabad combine heat warnings, public awareness and health system preparedness, and specify protections for outdoor workers. Japan's advanced early warning systems include weather radar, automated observation stations and forecasting models that help authorities issue local warnings, and aid communities in preparing for earthquakes, tsunamis and extreme weather.

In Mozambique, the government, supported by partners including the UN, World Bank and World Meteorological Organization, has strengthened forecasting, community warnings and evacuation systems to reduce deaths and losses from tropical cyclones. And in Vietnam, mangrove restoration is providing longer-term protection against storms and coastal flooding while supporting livelihoods.

Designing products around climate risk
Households and small businesses should be helped to absorb shocks from disasters without selling productive assets or falling deeper into debt. Emergency credit, savings, parametric insurance – which pays a pre-agreed amount when an event reaches a pre-defined threshold – and flexible repayment can aid them in this.

In India, People's Courage International (PCI), which advances social protection and climate resilience for migrant and informal workers, has developed multi-peril climate insurance, while in Bangladesh it has developed parametric cyclone insurance for exposed communities.

Philanthropy also has an important role to play. Such capital can take risks commercial capital often cannot, as well as back local organisations, test new approaches, and generate evidence for governments and development institutions to scale.

For instance, with PCI's climate insurance work, funding can help us test the design of our offering, its affordability, and delivery to informal workers, and establish whether payouts protect livelihoods. ClimateWorks Foundation reported that foundation funding for climate adaptation and resilience reached a record US$870 million in 2024, but this remains far below what is needed.

Meanwhile, development institutions must integrate climate risk into their agriculture, livelihoods, health, housing, poverty reduction and women's economic empowerment programmes. They must ensure programmes financed today are able to survive the climate of tomorrow.

But scaling adaptation is not only about how much finance is available. It is also about who controls the finance. Too much funding remains concentrated in large institutions, leaving local organisations with less influence over priorities. This also weakens adaptation by overlooking local knowledge and needs, as well as reducing community participation.

Governments, development institutions and philanthropic foundations should make more flexible, long-term finance directly accessible to local organisations and communities and give them a meaningful role in deciding how it is used.

Vulnerable does not mean powerless

Communities are already adapting to climate change by changing crops, working hours and livelihoods. In Bangladesh, some communities are also making use of informal social networks to share weather warnings and help neighbours take protective action.

Adaptation should strengthen such efforts and build on these communities' knowledge and choices. What they lack is adequate resources and protection.

The examples above, from Bangladesh to Japan and Mozambique, also show that adaptation requires short- and long-term solutions.

Early warnings, heat action plans, evacuation systems, anticipatory cash and emergency support can save lives in the immediate term. Climate-resilient housing and infrastructure, stronger disaster risk institutions, ecosystem restoration, social protection and financial protection, like insurance, can reduce vulnerability over time.

Short-term measures help people survive the next shock; long-term measures ensure they don't lose everything again.

Adaptation is fundamental to development. It shouldn't be a separate environmental agenda sitting in an individual environmental programme. Climate shocks can erase years of progress in areas like poverty reduction and women's economic empowerment. Protecting those gains must become part of how development is financed and delivered.

For Sundari, adaptation is the difference between whether or not a warning reaches her early enough to act, whether the next home she builds is somewhere she can remain safe, and after being displaced twice, whether she has the protection and resources to rebuild without having to start over after the next disaster.

We have spent decades asking how to stop climate change. We must now ask with equal urgency how we protect those living through it.

GMA NEWS ONLINE

Atlantic Ocean currents can recover from severe climate weakening, study finds

An Atlantic Ocean current system weakened by global warming could recover over time if the climate cools, a study by the Danish Meteorological Institute showed on Wednesday.

The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation brings warm water from the tropics northward toward the Arctic, and the flow of warm water helps keep Europe's winters mild.

Published in the journal Science Advances, the study found no sign there was an irreversible tipping point for AMOC, as suggested by some previous studies, although the effects of the changes could last for centuries.

However, it also said that the Greenland ice sheet that contributes to weakening the AMOC as it pours cold freshwater into the ocean could not be restored once it had melted — even if the warming trend was reversed.

A disrupted AMOC could still destabilize global rainfall patterns and accelerate coastal sea-level rise.

No tipping point leading to collapse seen in model

The study said the AMOC could slow to about 6 million cubic meters of water per second from around 17 million at around 7 degrees Celsius of global warming.

"In our model, we do not see a tipping point leading to a collapse. The AMOC gradually weakens, but we find that it also immediately regains its strength if global warming is reversed," lead author Chuncheng Guo said.

However, he warned that even though recovery starts as soon as temperatures fall, it could take several centuries to finish, all while the effects of a weakened current would persist.

The 7 C rise used in the modelling used for scientific interest is far beyond the current projections for the warming trend.

The UN's environmental body said in September global temperature rises are set to exceed the key threshold of 1.5 C "within a few years". Governments committed to keeping temperature rises within 1.5 C to limit the impacts of extreme weather under the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The cooling rate required to reverse the AMOC also exceeds what is considered realistic with current technology, Guo added, pointing to a limitation of the single-model study. Further testing against other models was also needed, the study said.

Willem Huiskamp at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, who was not involved in the study, said a more stable AMOC would be good news, but said he doubted the real-world current was as stable as some models suggested.

The researchers estimated a long-term sea-level rise of around 20 cm from the melting of the Greenland ice sheet following a 1.5 C rise, and urged faster action to rein in emissions.

"Instead of relying on the global cooling to happen, it's a much, much safer strategy to not have warming in the first place," Guo said.

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

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

Integrated Management and Development Plan crafted for the Apayao-Abulug River Basin

By: Carlito Dar

BAGUIO CITY (PIA) — A new master plan for the Apayao-Abulug River Basin (AARB) envisions a climate-resilient river basin managed through unified and participatory governance, where ecosystems are protected, risks are reduced, and communities thrive through sustainable and inclusive development.

The Integrated River Basin Management and Development Master Plan 2027–2042 was presented during the AARB Management Council meeting on October 7 that was attended by concerned government agencies headed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, local government units and other stakeholders from Cordillera and the Cagayan Valley Region.

It involves 50 projects and 12 programs in eight thematic areas, namely water resources management, watershed management, environmental management, flood control and mitigation, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, economic development, and institutional development.

Target outcomes are resilient ecosystems and healthy watersheds, secured water supply and quality, reduced disaster risk and climate resilience, healthy wetlands and biodiversity, sustainable livelihood and local prosperity, and stronger institutions and good governance.

To set the master plan into motion, the AARB Management Council, in the said meeting, approved Resolution No. 1 Series of 2026, titled “Endorsing the Integrated River Basin Management and Development Master Plan for the AARB to the Regional Development Council of Cordillera Administrative Region and Region II for consideration and adoption.”

Upon approval and adoption of the RDCs of CAR and Region II, IRBMDMP shall serve as the regional planning framework for coordinated basin management and as a reference for investment programming, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and periodic updating of identified interventions, subject to existing government policies, programs, budgeting processes, and institutional mandates. (JDP/CCD-PIA CAR)

SUNSTAR

Severe urbanization pressures threaten Metro Cebu survival

By: April Blanche Cabañog

Metro Cebu faces intense environmental pressures, rapid urbanization and severe disasters. Architect Joseph Michael “Yumi” Espina called for action regarding the future survival and livability of the region.

Speaking to community organizers from Move Cebu and Rappler, non-government sector representatives, educators, professionals and young students on Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2026, Espina said that a functional urban center requires a shift in how local leaders perceive regional integration and climate resilience.

Livable metropolis

“A livable city is a city that is resilient, sustainable, inclusive and intelligent enough to anticipate the challenges of the future. And on the screen, you can see the five factors of livability... stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education and infrastructure,” he said

Espina said that Cebu cannot operate as an isolated entity, noting, “Cebu is no longer simply a city in a more complex world.”

Interconnected governance

Metro Cebu contains 13 local government units (LGUs) stretching from Danao in the north to Carcar in the south. Espina said that it is interconnected in many physical aspects yet wanting in governance.

Cebu City is the largest LGU in the metropolitan system, and Espina said, “Whatever we do here in Cebu City affects everyone else in the metro area.”

Typhoon Tino last November heavily underscored the urgency of this message. Espina said, “Our urban problems do not stop at the administrative boundary of Cebu City. Floodwaters and traffic do not recognize political boundaries. Economic opportunities, housing pressures, waste, water, food systems and disaster risks are all interconnected.”

Climate impact

Coastal rainfall measurements reached 183 millimeters during typhoon Tino, but mountain terrain conditions changed significantly.

“The rainfall data from Pagasa was 183 millimeters when it entered the island of Cebu, the coastal area. But when it reached the mountains, this area here, it became 428 millimeters per day. You know, the annual average monthly rainfall in Cebu is only 200 millimeters — that’s monthly. But it fell 428 millimeters in just one day,” Espina said.

Geographical challenges

Orographic lifting drove this extreme downpour as moisture-laden clouds dropped rain upon hitting higher elevations. Major regional watersheds including the Mananga and Butuanon River systems, alongside smaller networks like Lahug, Guadalupe, Kinalumsan and Buhisan, encircle the metropolis and funnel water downward from the uplands into urban sectors.

“You see that the bigger watersheds of the City of Cebu is encircling the whole city... and it fell in this area because of this orographic principle where the clouds came in here, when it reaches the mountain, the rainfall drops in this area,” Espina said.

Addressing these crises requires looking past short-term solutions and recognizing that the root causes connect to urbanization and climate change. Espina said that citizens and leaders must ensure a secure future because “we must begin thinking not only as a city, but as part of Metro Cebu.”

TIME MAGAZINE

Climate Change Is Accelerating Faster Than We Can Respond, Scientists Warn
By: Simmone Shah

The climate is warming up faster than we can respond. According to a new report published Oct. 14 in the journal BioScience, “Earth’s climate system is moving deeper into uncharted territory.”

The State of the Climate, an annual report that tracks the Earth’s “vital signs,” monitors several climate related indicators—ranging from greenhouse gas concentrations and temperature changes to tree cover loss due to wildfire. The researchers found that, of the 16 planetary vital signs, seven are currently at record extremes. This includes sea levels and greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Meanwhile several others, such as areas burned during wildfires and ocean heat levels, show evidence of acceleration or abrupt shifts.

The researchers warn that the rate of global warming appears to have accelerated, from about 0.05°C per decade between 1880 and 1970 to roughly 0.36°C per decade between 2010 and 2024—and the 2°C threshold meant to limit planetary damage could be reached before 2050 they warn. These accelerating and intensifying changes could raise the risk of reinforcing feedback loops and crossing tipping points—critical thresholds that, when crossed, can lead to accelerating and often irreversible environmental changes. In 2025, the Earth passed its first climate tipping point, as rising ocean temperatures, acidification, overfishing, and pollution are combining to cause coral bleaching and mortality.

"Earth’s life-support systems are being pushed beyond stable limits," the report states, "with changes unfolding faster than our ability to respond."

This year, a number of extreme weather events made the impacts of an acceleratingly warming planet impossible to ignore. July 2026 was the hottest month on record for the contiguous United States, with ocean temperatures also reaching a record high that month. Back-to-back heat waves in Europe lead to an estimated 35,000 excess deaths, preliminary reports show. A number of regions—including Utah in the U.S., Ontario, Canada, along with France, Spain, Britain, and Belgium have either experienced their worst wildfire years in history or are on track to do so. While we don’t yet know enough to link these individual weather events to climate change, research shows that it is supercharging extreme weather events.

Concentrations of greenhouse gases—including carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide—all reached record levels in 2026, the researchers say. In May 2026, atmospheric carbon dioxide exceeded 428 parts per million, roughly 50% above pre-industrial levels and generally higher than any time in the last 2 million years.

The authors of today’s report also tracked indicators of the human activities driving these planetary changes, like energy use, food production, and economic growth. Fossil fuel

consumption remains the dominant driver of these changes. Fossil fuel consumption rose by 0.9% in 2025, the report found, with oil, coal, and gas all reaching record highs, and annual energy-related carbon dioxide emissions surpassed 41 gigatons for the first time—the equivalent of emissions released by over 10,800 coal-fired power plants in one year.

There have, however, been some signs of progress, the report notes. Low-carbon sources provided roughly 43% of global electricity generation in 2025, and solar and wind energy consumption grew by approximately 18%. That was before the war in Iran laid bare the world's reliance on fossil fuels, and triggered a global green energy boom.

But cutting carbon emissions will no longer be enough on its own, the report states. Adaptation measures—ranging from shifts towards plant-based diets, to restoring mangroves to better protect against storm surges—will be key to adjusting to a changing climate.

The report underscores an unavoidable truth. "We are witnessing the rapid destabilization of the Earth's climate system," it states. "This is no longer a warning for the future; it is a diagnosis of the present."

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS MIRROR

PHL calls for ambition anchored on equity, accessible climate finance
By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

EMPHASIZING that “a target cannot protect nations and communities by [itself], the Philippines urged delegates at the Pacific Pre-COP31 in Fiji to carry a unified, equitable agenda to the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) in Antalya, Turkey.

The Philippine delegation to a pre-COP31 meeting stressed that keeping the 1.5°C goal alive requires dismantling complex financial barriers – such as high borrowing costs and slow approvals—ensuring that pledged climate finance translates into actual protection for vulnerable communities before risk becomes loss.

Climate Change Commission Vice Chairman and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje, Head of Delegation for Pre-COP31, said every country has a stake in limiting climate risk. He reaffirmed that the Convention and the Paris Agreement provide the principles for cooperation: equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and national circumstances.

On the 1.5°C goal, Borje said it must remain the purpose of collective action, with science and the Global Stocktake guiding faster implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans. Mitigation and adaptation must advance together, he added, because risks to water, food, energy, oceans and livelihoods are connected. Keeping 1.5°C within reach, the Philippine delegation stressed, requires finance, technology and capacity support that countries can actually access and use.

“Implementation requires finance, technology and capacity. The new collective quantified goal must now be made operational: its scale matters, and so do transparency, predictability and access,” Borje said.

The Climate Finance Work Program, he noted, can help define clear areas of work and support implementation under Articles 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3. The Philippines also called for implementation of the adaptation finance outcome agreed at COP30, with support that reaches countries in time and on terms they can use.

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