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By: Lindal Rowlands

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BUSINESS MIRROR

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By: Raffy Ayeng

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

PH–Germany partnership powers systemic climate and ecological transformation through TRANSCEND project

By: Inquirer.net

The partnership between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Government of Germany continues to drive transformative climate and biodiversity action through the Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development (TRANSCEND) Project — a joint initiative that strengthens climate governance, empowers communities, and protects ecosystems.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

AL JAZEERA

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By: Lindal Rowlands

Typhoon Fung-wong has moved away from the northwestern Philippines after carving out a trail of devastation, leaving at least 10 people dead and 1.4 million displaced.

Known in the Philippines as Super Typhoon Uwan, the intense tropical storm was forecast to head northwest towards Taiwan.

Fung-wong lashed the northern Philippines while the country was still dealing with the devastation wrought last week by Typhoon Kalmaegi, which killed at least 232 people in central provinces on November 4 before pummelling Vietnam, where at least five people died.

At least 10 people died due to flash floods, landslides, exposed electrical wires, and a collapsed house in the provinces of Catanduanes, Eastern Samar, Nueva Vizcaya, Mountain Province and Ifugao, disaster-response and provincial officials said.

Among the dead were three children who were hit by two separate landslides in the mountainous province of Nueva Vizcaya, police told The Associated Press news agency, adding four others were injured. Another landslide in nearby Kalinga province killed two villagers, and two others were missing, provincial officials said late on Monday.

Fierce wind and rain flooded at least 132 northern villages, including one where some residents were trapped on their roofs as floodwaters rapidly rose.

More than 4,100 houses were damaged, Bernardo Rafaelito Alejandro IV of the Office of Civil Defense and other officials said.

“While the typhoon has passed, its rains still pose a danger in certain areas” in northern Luzon, including in metropolitan Manila, Alejandro said. “We’ll undertake today rescue, relief and disaster-response operations.”

Fung-wong slammed ashore in northeastern Aurora province on Sunday night as a super typhoon with sustained winds of up to 185km/h (115mph) and gusts of up to 230km/h (143mph).

The 1,800km (1,100-mile)-wide storm weakened as it raked through mountainous northern provinces and agricultural plains overnight before blowing away from the province of La Union into the South China Sea, according to state forecasters.

More than 1.4 million people moved into emergency shelters or the homes of relatives before the typhoon made landfall, and about 240,000 remained in evacuation centres on Tuesday.

BUSINESS MIRROR

Ban Ki-Moon urges urgent climate action as COP30 opens
By: Malou Talosig-Bartolome

“I JUST wanted to break his neck.”

FORMER United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon recalled that the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement nearly collapsed due to the last-minute objection of a single country.

“After years of negotiation, one small country almost broke the deal,” Ban said at the opening of the Asian Forum on Enterprise for Society (AFES) in Makati City.

The former South Korean foreign minister did not identify the country but hinted that it is a Catholic country.
“We had to call the Pope. He wasn’t answering. It was a true crisis,” he recalled.
Ban used the anecdote to underscore the fragility of global consensus—and the urgent need for solidarity, courage, and action across sectors.

His message comes as COP30 opens in Belém, Brazil, and as the Philippines reels from back-to-back typhoons and deadly earthquakes that expose the rising toll of climate inaction.

What is the Paris Climate Agreement?

Adopted in 2015 by 196 countries, the Paris Agreement is the world’s most ambitious climate treaty. It aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C—and ideally 1.5°C—above pre-industrial levels. Countries submit their own climate action plans, known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs), and are expected to scale up ambition every five years.

But the world is not on track. Global emissions continue to rise, and the planet is now projected to warm by up to 2.8°C by the end of the century.

“Climate change does not care where you live,” Ban said. “It attacks all countries, all people. We must walk together.”

Typhoons in the Philippines highlight urgency

Ban’s message hit home in the Philippines, where Typhoon Tino (Kalmaegi) and Super Typhoon Nando (Ragasa) recently displaced thousands and exposed gaps in disaster preparedness. He emphasized that climate justice must be applied globally, especially in vulnerable nations like the Philippines.

“These are not abstract goals—they are the blueprint for survival,” Ban said, citing six priority areas from the UN’s 2030 report: food systems, energy, digital transformation, education, jobs and social protection, and climate and biodiversity.
Business must lead: “Join all our hands together”

Ban called on business leaders to take a more strategic role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially through tri-sector partnerships involving government, enterprise, and civil society.

“No country can do it alone—not the United States, not Europe,” he said. “We must join all our hands together.”

He praised the UN Global Compact for aligning corporate practices with sustainability, labor rights, environmental protection, and anti-corruption. “This compact is not optional—it is essential.”

Legarda: Walk our talk—climate justice must be local

In an interview with BusinessMirror, Senator Loren Legarda echoed Ban’s call for urgent, ground-level action.

“All these good policies will be for naught if we don’t work with people on the ground,” she said. “We must reduce and eliminate the loss of lives and livelihoods.”

Legarda pointed to the recent typhoons as proof that climate impacts are worsening. “Areas that never flooded before are now underwater. It’s multifaceted—solid waste, forest loss, marine degradation. It’s all connected.”

She emphasized that governance must begin at the barangay level. “Let’s not wait for top-down solutions. Climate justice is not just about demanding accountability from polluters—it’s about saving our own lives and livelihoods.”

MANILA BULLETIN

ADB provides $3 million to protect Philippine wetlands, boost climate resilience

The Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) has provided $3 million, or roughly ₱177 million, to the Philippines Flyway Project, aimed at protecting critical wetland ecosystems that support migratory bird habitats and the livelihoods of local communities.

“The project, funded by a $3-million grant from the Global Environment Facility, was announced during the ongoing 12th Meeting of Partners of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) Partnership, hosted by the Philippines’ Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR),” the ADB said in a statement on Tuesday, Nov. 11.

“The Philippines Flyway Project is part of the ADB’s Regional Flyway Initiative (RFI), launched with partners in 2021 to mobilize $3 billion over the next decade across 11 developing countries in Asia and the Pacific to conserve priority wetlands along the EAAF,” it added.

The ADB emphasized that the project aims to safeguard and sustainably manage Philippine wetlands, which serve as key stopovers for migratory birds along EAAF.

It added that the initiative also seeks to enhance biodiversity, support sustainable livelihoods, and strengthen climate resilience for millions of Filipinos.

“Wetlands in our region face mounting threats from reclamation, degradation, and urban expansion, and the EAAF is considered the most threatened of the world’s major flyways,” noted Scott Morris, ADB vice-president for East and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.

“Through the Philippines Flyway Project, the ADB and the DENR are working together to protect, manage, and restore these critical ecosystems—helping communities and nature thrive,” Morris added.

The ADB underscored that the project will be implemented by the DENR and will focus on three priority wetlands: Candaba in Luzon, and Lake Mainit and Sibugay Wetlands in Mindanao.

The initiative aims to strengthen the protection, management, and restoration of degraded habitats while also building local capacity, improving site management plans, and promoting sustainable livelihoods that balance conservation with development goals.

The ADB noted that over 20 migratory waterbird species rely on Philippine wetlands as essential stopover and wintering sites. The country also hosts 10 Ramsar wetlands of international importance and seven Flyway Network Sites, including major seabird colonies such as those at Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park.

The multilateral lender said the RFI seeks to develop long-term financing models that enhance community resilience through nature-based solutions to extreme weather events, such as recent disasters in central Philippines.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Philippines ranks 7th in climate risk index
By: Bella Cariaso

The Philippines is ranked as the seventh country most affected by storms, floods and heat waves in 2024, based on Germanwatch's latest Climate Risk Index.

Over 832,000 people died worldwide due to more than 9,700 extreme weather events in the same period, resulting in $4.5 trillion in economic damages, it added.

Key findings in the report have been presented at the 30th United Nations climate change conference (COP30) in Belém, Braz

Between 1995 and 2024, the Philippines experienced 371 extreme weather events, causing 27,500 fatalities and over $35 billion in economic losses, the report noted.

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Key findings in the report have been presented at the 30th United Nations climate change conference (COP30) in Belém, Brazil.

"Countries such as Haiti, the Philippines and India – all of which are among the 10 most affected countries – face particular challenges. They are hit by floods, heat waves or storms so regularly that entire regions can hardly recover from the impacts until the next event hits," said Vera Künzel, co-author of the study.

"When more funding to address loss and damage is negotiated here at COP, the focus is on countries like these. Without more long-term support, including for adapting to the climate crisis, they will face insurmountable challenges," she added.

Negotiators at COP30 face mounting pressure to set clear targets for climate adaptation, secure reliable financing for vulnerable nations and take decisive steps toward advancing climate action globally.

Consecutive typhoons in the Philippines preceded the Germanwatch report's release.

Aksyon Klima national coordinator John Leo Algo said Super Typhoon Uwan's wrath "places a lot of pressure on the Philippine government delegation at COP30 to deliver concrete outcomes."

The Philippines should ensure that developed countries deliver on their promise of mobilizing $300 billion in climate financing for developing nations, Algo emphasized.
Around 40 percent of people worldwide live in 11 countries most severely affected by heat waves, storms and floods over the past 30 years, the report said.

"Global emissions have to be reduced immediately… and adequate climate finance must be provided," Climate Risk Index co-author David Eckstein maintained.

THE MANILA TIMES

Philippines boosts resilience with new climate-smart strategies, Malacañang reports
By: Catherine S.Valente

THE government is implementing new “climate-smart” strategies to strengthen the country’s resilience to impacts of climate change, Malacañang said Tuesday.

Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said that President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered concerned agencies to implement resiliency measures, especially amid the spate of tropical cyclones battering the Philippines.

“As the president often says, climate change is not a challenge one country can solve alone; it requires a united global response,” Castro said during a press conference.

“So... the president has ordered that we have new strategies right here in our country to address the issue of climate change,” she added.

Castro cited the Department of Science and Technology’s Automated Furrow Irrigation System, which conserves water and improves crop yields through precise irrigation, and the Smart Farming Initiative that uses soil and moisture sensors to boost agricultural productivity.

She said that the government was also developing a National Adaptation Plan for a “climate-smart and climate-resilient Philippines.”

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration also continued to invest in early warning systems and disaster preparedness technologies, Castro said.

In May, Marcos urged developed nations and partners of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to bolster climate finance to make it accessible and sufficient for developing and poor nations that were most vulnerable to extreme weather conditions due to climate change.

The president pointed out that nearly half of Southeast Asia’s population faces significant climate-related risks as one of the most climate-vulnerable regions in the world.

“As the host of the Board of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, the Philippines will continue to advocate for scientific and evidence-based, investment-led, and transformative solutions to the climate crisis,” Marcos said during the 46th Asean meeting in Malaysia.

In July 2024, the Philippines was chosen as host of the Loss and Damage Fund Board, which is in charge of administering the multimillion-dollar climate.
In December 2023, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai, the world’s richest and developed nations initially pledged around $700 million for the Loss and Damage Fund.

In April this year, the board decided to spend $250 million until the end of 2026 on initial interventions to help developing countries deal with the aftermath of disasters stemming from climate change.

The startup phase will include grants of between $5 million and $20 million to small-island developing states and least developed countries with approved climate-change mitigation proposals.

CCC IN THE NEWS

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Sierra Madre: Luzon's storm shield

By: Raffy Ayeng

The Sierra Madre mountain range, stretching 540 kilometers from Cagayan in the north to Quezon in the south, continues to play a vital role in protecting Luzon from the wrath of tropical cyclones. Rising to 6,283 feet, this natural wonder spans 10 provinces, including Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna and Quezon.

While foreign storm chaser Josh Morgerman of iCyclone recently downplayed the range's ability to protect the east coast of Luzon, he acknowledged its role in reducing the intensity of storms before they reach inland communities.

In a social media post on 10 November, Morgerman clarified: "The Sierra Madre weakens typhoons after they make landfall. It doesn't protect the east coast of Luzon, which regularly experiences some of the strongest tropical cyclones in the world. So, yes, the Sierra Madre helps slow storms and protect inland Luzon, but it doesn't shield coastal towns from the initial, most destructive impact."

Morgerman's observations align with a study published in the Philippine Journal of Science, which confirms that typhoons hit the eastern coast at full strength but lose power after crossing the mountain range.

Following recent typhoon "Uwan," the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported only two deaths in Luzon, compared to hundreds in Cebu from typhoon "Tino" — underscoring Sierra Madre's role as a natural protector.

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) describes Sierra Madre as Luzon's first line of defense against climate-induced disasters: "Perhaps Sierra Madre's most renowned role is its function as a natural barrier against tropical cyclones. When storms approach from the Pacific, the mountain range slows down and deflects strong winds, significantly reducing their intensity before they reach inland areas.

"This natural shield helps minimize the destructive force of typhoons, saving lives, protecting infrastructure, and reducing damage to ecosystems and livelihoods."

Beyond typhoon protection, Sierra Madre supports 40 percent of the Philippines' forest cover, harboring around 3,500 plant species — 58 percent of which are endemic. It also acts as a critical carbon sink across 1.4-million hectares, absorbing carbon dioxide, regulating temperature, stabilizing weather patterns, and maintaining ecological balance. These forests provide vital habitats for countless wildlife species while sustaining biodiversity and rural livelihoods.

Despite its importance, the Sierra Madre faces significant threats from illegal logging and deforestation.

Former Agriculture Secretary Manny Piñol reiterated his September 2016 observation of rampant illegal logging during a Biyaheng Bukid sortie, posting on Meta last 10 November:

“Corn and other crops were planted in parts of the forest which were cleared, a farming practice which is not sustainable simply because land with very steep grades cannot be productive for long due to soil erosion.”

“Along the way, I saw signs warning against illegal logging, but these were apparently ignored by the illegal loggers. Government must act now before it is too late.”

Urban planner Felino “Jun” Palafox Jr. has also emphasized the danger posed by logging, linking it to mudflows, erosion, and flooding, particularly in Infanta and Real, Quezon. He called for government action, including reviewing the Subdivision Law and other regulations, to safeguard the mountain range.

ResearchGate highlights that illegal logging remains rampant in the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, the largest protected area in the Philippines, with 20,000 to 35,000 cubic meters of wood extracted annually. Despite protections, enforcement is weak, putting biodiversity and rural livelihoods at risk.

The Sierra Madre is also home to indigenous communities, including the Dumagat tribe, and serves as the watershed for the mighty Cagayan River, supplying irrigation to rice farmers in Cagayan Valley and Nueva Ecija.

Piñol warned that continued deforestation could have catastrophic consequences on agriculture, water supply and flood control.

The recent typhoons “Tino” and “Uwan” have underscored the mountain range’s importance. While the eastern coast bears the brunt of storms, the Sierra Madre protects inland Luzon, mitigating damage, preserving livelihoods and safeguarding ecosystems.

The CCC stresses: “Preserving the mountain range is a crucial step to enhancing our climate resilience, as it acts as a natural defense against typhoons, floods, and landslides.”

The Sierra Madre is more than a mountain range — it is a lifeline. Its forests regulate the climate, its peaks deflect destructive winds, and its rivers sustain agriculture and communities.

Protecting this natural fortress is not just an environmental imperative, but a critical measure to ensure the safety, resilience, and survival of millions of Filipinos.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

PH–Germany partnership powers systemic climate and ecological transformation through TRANSCEND project

The partnership between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Government of Germany continues to drive transformative climate and biodiversity action through the Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development (TRANSCEND) Project — a joint initiative that strengthens climate governance, empowers communities, and protects ecosystems.

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), led by Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje, joined partners from Germany, the United Nations, government agencies, and non-government organizations at the 2nd Project Steering Committee Meeting of the TRANSCEND Project to review progress and align strategies for nature-positive resilience.

During the 2nd Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) underscored the need to turn climate projects into lasting systems and institutional reforms that sustain impact beyond project cycles and empower communities to take climate action that endures.

“The Philippines’ climate response must move beyond isolated pilot projects toward coherent systems that sustain impact beyond budget cycles,” said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje, speaking before partners from the Government of Germany, the United Nations, other government agencies, and non-government organizations.

“Our partnership must move beyond pilots. It must translate innovation into institutional practice, and good practice into national policy,” he added.

Jointly implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the CCC, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the TRANSCEND Project embodies the Philippines–Germany partnership’s shared commitment to climate and ecological transformation. It aims to strengthen the country’s capacity to integrate climate and biodiversity priorities into planning, investment, and policy — ensuring that climate action and ecosystem protection advance hand in hand.

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Borje highlighted the CCC’s initiatives to integrate climate resilience into regular government operations by strengthening policies and financing mechanisms that link plans, budgets, and outcomes. These include scaling up Local Climate Change Expenditure Tagging (LCCET) to improve transparency in public spending, accelerating the People’s Survival Fund (PSF) for community- and nature-based adaptation projects, and integrating climate criteria in procurement to make green and resilient practices standard across agencies.

He noted that sustainable resilience depends on “systems that align, financing that rewards outcomes, and institutions that endure,” adding that these principles guide President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.’s administration in pursuing systemic, evidence-based, and inclusive climate governance.

Running from 2025 to 2029, TRANSCEND aligns with national frameworks such as the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan (NDCIP), and the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP). The project seeks to institutionalize transformative, evidence-based actions that promote inclusive, nature-positive, and sustainable growth.

DENR Undersecretary Analiza Rebuelta-Teh welcomed the project’s role in strengthening convergence between climate and biodiversity efforts.

“This meeting allows us to assess milestones, address gaps, and ensure our actions advance both climate resilience and ecosystem protection,” she said.

German Ambassador to the Philippines Dr. Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke reaffirmed Germany’s support, emphasizing that climate change is a shared responsibility requiring collective resolve.

“Our two countries will continue to work as strong and constructive partners in addressing one of the most pressing challenges of humankind,” he said.

The ambassador added that the warming of the planet should not be viewed merely as a threat but as a challenge that calls for stronger commitment. He stressed that this should motivate nations to push harder toward ensuring a sustainable and livable planet for future generations.

The 2nd PSC meeting reviewed project progress and ensured strategic alignment for the coming years, including monitoring and evaluation systems to measure tangible outcomes such as reduced risks, restored ecosystems, and improved access to sustainable services.

Among those present were CCC Commissioner Rachel Anne S. Herrera, who facilitated discussions on some agenda items; Undersecretary Henry Yap Sr. of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD); GIZ Country Director Dr. Immanuel Gebhardt; and representatives from the DENR, DHSUD, Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and other partner agencies and organizations.

Borje concluded that the long-term success of TRANSCEND depends on building coherence across policies, financing, and institutions, ensuring that the project contributes not only to immediate climate and biodiversity goals but also to lasting reforms in public governance.

“If we do our work right — with discipline, courage, and constancy — TRANSCEND will not just transform cities; it will transform governance itself,” he said.

Through the TRANSCEND partnership, the Philippines and Germany reaffirm their shared goal of strengthening resilience, accelerating adaptation, and promoting low-carbon and biodiversity-friendly development across the country.

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