



The Caribbean Regional Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) St. Georges, Grenada December 1st – 6th, 2016

CONCEPT NOTE

Addressing climate change and increasing climate variability have been made regional and national priorities by the heads of government of the Caribbean Community. Climate variability and change, as exemplified by extreme weather and climate events, such as droughts, floods and tropical cyclones, continue to pose significant risks for the Caribbean region. These make early warning information systems critical components of preparedness, risk reduction and adaptation.

Regional Climate Outlook Forums (RCOFs), promoted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) are active in several parts of the world. These RCOFs are critical for the development and effectiveness of early warning systems in that they provide real-time seasonal climate forecasts and interpretation across relevant time and spatial scales. Appropriate climate services, tailored to the Caribbean, will rely on such early warning information systems if the goals of supporting adaptation and disaster risk reduction are to be realized.

In response to the strongest El Niño on record (the 1997 to 1998 event), the first Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) was convened on May 21st – 22nd, 1998 in Jamaica. As is now typical of RCOFs across the globe, the Caribbean event formulated a consensus precipitation forecast for the Caribbean for the period of June to August 1998. Since then, CariCOFs were held in Barbados in April 1999 and in May 2000 in the Dominican Republic. Though three month rainfall forecasts were produced bi-monthly by the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), after that third CariCOF in 2000 none were held again until impacts from another strong climate event caught the attention of the region and it's the international community.

Co-host:



Collaborators:





After one of the region's worst droughts, a workshop was convened in June 2010 to re-establish the Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CARICOF) in order to develop a sustained collaborative process that provides credible and authoritative real-time regional climate products. In February/March 2012 a CARICOF was held that consisted of three separate but complementary activities:

- A Technical Training Workshop for meteorologists and climatologists that resulted in the development of a draft seasonal (three-month) rainfall outlook,
- A Partnership Workshop that brought together key partners and users of climate information and
- The Outlook Forum that discussed the rainfall forecast with users, which determined the final product.

Since the 2012 CARICOF, CIMH has been coordinating seasonal climate forecasting activities leading to a consistently growing body of Caribbean climate forecasters. The activities contribute to the monthly production of consensus-based seasonal climate outlooks, with engagement of the user community that allows awareness-building within sector communities that are sensitive to climate. During these sessions, users also get the opportunity to identify their climate information needs and how existing products can be interpreted to support decision-making. Equally important is the opportunity presented for meteorologists/climatologists and the user community to interface, and to build mutual understanding and trust.

At the 2012 CariCOF, it was also agreed such forums be hosted twice per year, roving across the region, just prior to the beginning of the wet and dry seasons in the Caribbean. Since 2012, CariCOF workshops were held in:

- Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Dominica prior to the 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 wet/hurricane seasons, respectively;

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- Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis for the Dry Season CariCOF - November to December 2014 and 2015

These followed a similar agenda to that in 2012, but with the partnership workshop and forum merged into one stakeholder General Assembly.

In collaboration with hosts The Grenada Meteorological Services and our other partners - the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Environment and Climate Change Canada, the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) of Columbia University, and the University of Arizona - our 2016 Dry Season CariCOF is scheduled for 1st to 6th December, in St. Georges Grenada.

This CariCOF will focus on agriculture and food security, water and health. From the 1st to 3rd December, the region's meteorologist and climatologists will be trained in climate forecasting, and prepare the forecasts for the 2016 to 2017 Dry Season. As has become customary a forum with the user community will follow from 5th to 6th of December, where the seasonal forecasts will be delivered and implications discussed. During the first afternoon, the Ministry of Health of Grenada will launch its Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Assessment. Participants would have the opportunity to discuss management and mitigative options in response to threats from a number of climate related hazards during a multi-hazard tournament. Participants will also be able assist CIMH and its partners in enhancing a number of sector-specific climate information bulletins to be launched in early 2017.

It promises to be a great sharing and learning event. See you then!

Co-host:



Collaborators:

