



The Caribbean Regional Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) **Christ Church, Barbados** **May 22nd – 25th, 2018**

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 islands, will rely on such early warning information systems if the goals of supporting adaptation and disaster risk reduction are to be realized.

In June 2010, a workshop was convened 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 that developed a draft seasonal (three-month) rainfall outlook,

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- A Partnership Workshop that brought together key partners and users of climate information and
- The Stakeholder Outlook Forum that discussed the rainfall forecast with users, which determined the final product.

Since the 2012 CARICOF, the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) has been coordinating climate forecasting activities leading to a consistently growing body of climate forecasters contributing to the monthly production of consensus-based seasonal climate outlooks, with engagement of the user community that allows awareness-building within those sector communities. At the 2012 CariCOF, it was also agreed that the bi-annual hosting of such forums, rotating across the region, just prior to the beginning of the wet and dry seasons in the Caribbean, be pursued. Since 2012, CariCOF workshops were held in:

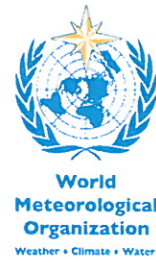
- Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines prior to the 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 wet/hurricane seasons, respectively;
- Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada and Guyana for the Dry Season CariCOF - November to December 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017.

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

The WMO Regional Climate Centre (RCC) for the Caribbean housed at the CIMH in collaboration with its partners will deliver the 2018 Wet Season CariCOF from May 22nd – 25th, 2018. This year's CariCOF is being financially supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and the Investment Plan for the Caribbean Regional Track of the Pilot Program for Climate Change (PPCR). Technical assistance is being provided by the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the USA.

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As has become the norm for the Wet/Hurricane Season Forum, much emphasis will be on disaster risk management. Training for meteorologists on short-term seasonal (for one month periods) and sub-seasonal forecasting will take place from May 22nd and 23rd.

The Stakeholder Forum which follows on May 24th and 25th will feature the signature activity of the delivery of the seasonal forecasts, including the 2018 hurricane season forecast. In the wake of the devastating 2017 hurricane season, the opportunity for multi-sectoral dialogue on the implications for and potential impacts of the 2018 hurricane season on the region's socio-economic sectors is particularly critical. CariCOF will again place some emphasis on providing weather and climate information of benefit to a range of sectors, including the energy, health and agriculture sectors. Finally, the Caribbean RCC along with its regional sector partners continues to advance a roadmap and plan of action for climate services in the Caribbean. Crystallising such documents in the near future will support the production, translation, transfer, and use of climate knowledge and information in climate-informed decision making and climate-smart policy making and planning.

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