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## The Caribbean Regional Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) GeorgetownBridgetown, Barbados November 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> , 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,
- A Partnership Workshop that brought together key partners and users of climate information and

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- 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, roving 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, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados prior to the 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 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.

In collaboration with our partners the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Environment and Climate Change Canada, the US National Weather Services, the USAID Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID-OFDA), the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the USA, and the Barbados Meteorological Services, the WMO Regional Climate Centre (RCC) for the Caribbean housed at the CIMH will deliver the 2018 Dry Season CariCOF which will take place from 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2018 in Christ Church, Barbados.

As has become the norm for the dry season forum, much emphasis will be on the agriculture and water sectors. With an El Niño watch being issued for the upcoming northern hemisphere winter,

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which coincides with the Caribbean dry season, the potential for a severe dry season will heighten anticipation of the forecasts for the season. Further, because of the launch of the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) Initiative for the Caribbean on the morning of the first day (20<sup>th</sup> November, 2018) of the series of workshops, there will be some attention paid to disaster risk management, particularly after the devastating 2017 hurricane season.

Training for meteorologists will take place from 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> November, and will focus on (i) sub-seasonal forecasts, of up to one to two weeks and (ii) enhancing seasonal prediction of extreme events such as flash floods and heat waves. The training parallels another related meeting - the Fifth Meeting of the Consortium of Regional Sectoral Early Warning Information Systems across Climate Timescales (EWISACTs) Coordination Partners. The EWISACTs Consortium is developing a roadmap and plan of action for climate information services to reduce the risks of climate related hazards in climate sensitive socio-economic sectors in the region; including agriculture and food security, water, health, energy, tourism and disaster risk reduction.

The training and EWISACTs workshops will be followed by the Stakeholder Forum on 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2018. The signature activity of CariCOF, the delivery of the forecasts for the upcoming dry season and discussions on the implication for the region's climate sensitive socio-economic sectors, will follow a brief opening ceremony that would be addressed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Seibert Frederick. Sector stakeholders will particularly benefit from presentations and dialogue on initiatives to (i) introduce sub-seasonal forecasts for up to one to two weeks, (ii) work towards the seasonal prediction of flash floods and heat stress, (iii) support farming community climate risk management and (iv) enhance climate information services in the Commonwealth, led by the Meteorological Services of the United Kingdom. The Forum will further be introduced to new drought products from the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF CSP) and approaches to providing climate information for the health sector in the USA.

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