



The 2019 Wet/Hurricane Season Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF)

Philipsburg, St. Maarten

May 21st – 24th, 2019

Concept Note

Addressing climate change and increasing climate variability are regional and national priorities established 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.

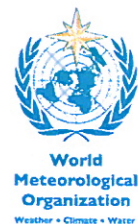
Regional Climate Outlook Forums (RCOFs), promoted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), are active in several parts of the world. These RCOFs are critical for the development and effectiveness of early warning systems as they provide real-time seasonal climate forecasts and interpretation across 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. CariCOF is a significant step towards providing those relevant and necessary climate services for over 25 Caribbean states and territories.

In June 2010, in the wake of one of the most intense droughts in Caribbean history, 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

Collaborators:





- The Outlook Forum that discussed the rainfall forecast with users, which determined the final product.

Since the 2012 CariCOF, the CIMH has been coordinating climate forecasting activities leading to a consistently growing body of climate forecasters who (i) contribute to the monthly production of consensus-based seasonal climate outlooks and (ii) engage with the user community, both nationally and regionally, to facilitate awareness-building within climate sensitive sectors. 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 season and the dry season 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 to 2018 wet/hurricane seasons, respectively;
- Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Guyana and Barbados for the Dry Season CariCOF - November to December 2014 to 2018, respectively.

These followed a similar agenda to that in 2012, but with the partnership workshop and forum merged into one General Assembly. The Caribbean 2019 wet/hurricane season, which will be the focus of this CariCOF, usually has implications for disaster risk management, with perennial threats from tropical cyclones (tropical depressions and storms, and hurricanes), floods and landslides. It is now customary to have a heavier participation from practitioners from national disaster management organizations. There will also be participation from partner regional organisations and agencies in St. Maarten representing other climate sensitive sectors such as health, energy, tourism and water. It is believed that these agencies, including those from national meteorological services across the Caribbean, stand to learn many lessons from the St. Maarten experiences of 2017 with Irma..

In collaboration with our partners the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), through the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) the 2019 Wet/hurricane Season CariCOF is scheduled for 23rd – 24th May. This will, as is customary, be preceded by training for meteorologists and climatologists from across the region in the art of climate forecasting. This particular training will focus on forecasting the potential of flash flood that can also lead to landslides, through quantifying the relationship between extreme wet spell and flash floods at the national level.

Collaborators:





The feature event at the forum on 23rd and 24th May, will be the delivery of the forecasts for the season. The upcoming season demands that emphasis also be placed on hurricane activity, and being hosted in St. Maarten, lessons to be learnt from their Hurricane Irma experience will be identified. Continuing to build capacity in the disaster management fraternity and regional organizations in understanding, interpreting and applying climate-related forecasts, including sub-seasonal (up to 2 weeks) and one month will be key for decision making during the upcoming season.

Very important to the climate services agenda in the region is the development of a regional Roadmap and Plan of Action (RPA), orchestrated by the Regional Sectoral Early Warning Information Systems across Climate Timescales (EWISACTs) Coordination Partners. The status of the RPA will be delivered to and discussed by participants, as the region prepares for its implementation during 2020-2030.

Other important discussions will focus on:

- Forecast based early action to be led by the Overseas Development Institute (UK) in collaboration with the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre
- National level sector specific climate information
- A proposed network for monitoring climate-related impacts.

Collaborators:



