

Climate Predictability Tool (CPT) Training Workshop

Prepared by Mrs Shontelle Stoute and Mr. Adrian Trotman

The training workshop took place at the Blue Horizon Hotel, Christ Church, Barbados February 27th – 29th 2012. After some background presentations, participants were trained on the use, and interpretation of outputs, of the Climate Predictability Tool (CPT), that allows the production of seasonal forecasts and validation. The final output was a consensus three-month outlook for the Caribbean region for the period March to May 2012.

Presentations

Participants were exposed to the climate monitoring and prediction process at the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) by Mr. Adrian Trotman of CIMH while Dr. Anthony Barnston of International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) and Dr. Wassila Thiaw of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) spoke on seasonal climate predictions and the NCEP (National Centres for Environmental Prediction) climate forecast system respectively. In his presentation on Operational Seasonal forecasts in Europe, Dr. Jean Pierre Ceron of Meteo-France stated that one needs to have information about ocean variables and seasonal forecasts (ENSO indices) to produce a climate forecast.

CPT Exercises

Several experiments were carried out to observe the relationship between (i) sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the Pacific and Atlantic, and (ii) predicted rainfall and actual rainfall of the Caribbean Region for March-April-May season. Based on the results of the experiments, participants agreed on the final regional outlook. The consensus map can be found at <http://www.cimh.edu.bb/?pageID=SRg34X&content=precipoutlook&sub=current>, and the related discussion at <http://www.cimh.edu.bb/?pageID=SRg34X&content=precipoutlook&sub=discussion>.

The Caribbean Regional Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF)

The CariCOF forum was convened at Savannah Hotel on March 1st and 2nd 2012. Present were personnel from Meteorological Services, Climate and Climate Change groups, disaster agencies, agricultural institutions, Water Resources Agencies, Health and Environmental Agencies; nationally, regionally and internationally.

Welcome

Mr. Hampton Lovell (Director of Meteorological Services, Barbados)

Mr. Lovell welcomed all guests and participants to the forum. He emphasized that the forum must focus on tailored services to the Caribbean region. He embraced the forum as it would create a process to provide a regional outlook forum.

Mr. Tyrone Sutherland (Director of Caribbean Meteorological Organization, CMO)

Mr. Sutherland mentioned that the climate outlook forum had its start in the late 90s. He also stated that CIMH has since come a long way and today have an ongoing access to global prediction centers, and carrying out many climate-related tasks. CIMH is now in line with being recognized as a World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Climate Centre (RCC).

Summary of Presentations

Climate Outlooks and Climate Services for the Caribbean (Dr. David Farrell, Principal CIMH)

Several presentations were made by participants. Dr. David Farrell (Principal, CIMH) in his address stated that weather and climate are uncertain and certain sectors carry an uncertainty with respect to risks. One of the expected outputs from the forum would be the ability to work together to come up with solutions to problems that challenge our society. He also stated that Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) will be one of the top 5 priorities in the WMO over the next 5 years and it should matter to us in the region because it allows us to have quality information on which to base decisions.

Ms. Elizabeth Riley (Deputy Director, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency) highlighted hazards of concern at the regional level including, hurricanes, wind storms, storm surges etc. She stated that the Caribbean Disaster Management is about empowering partners.

Dr. Rupa Kumar Kolli (WMO) spoke on a global view of the RCOF (Regional Climate Outlook Forum) process and the GFCS. The GFCS is divided into 5 components:

1. The user interface platform

2. Climate Services Information System
3. Observations and Monitoring
4. Research, Modeling and Prediction
5. Capacity Building

There were also several panel discussions under the following topics:

1. Regional Perspectives on Climate Impacts – Water and Agriculture
2. Regional Perspectives on Climate Impacts – Hazards and Ecosystems
3. Climate Forecasting – Tools, training and Outreach
4. Regional Adaptation – Ongoing Activities

Ms. Patricia Ramirez spoke on the Central American experience of creating a Climate Outlook Forum before participants engaged in an interactive session based on the presentation of the March to May 2012 forecast from the CPT training session. That presentation was made by Mr. Adrian Trotman.

In creating a Climate Outlook Forum for the Caribbean several impacts in the region need to be taken into consideration: impacts on agriculture, infrastructural/social impacts due to flash flooding, landslides etc. The transition season (from dry to wet) for the region has been identified as March-April-May.

A Climate Outlook forum can provide valuable information/ guidance for various industries (agriculture, building, tourism, disaster emergency). It was suggested that in addition to the three-month forecast, a monthly forecast be done as well. In spite of the interval of forecast, much of the discussion centred around the interpretation of the product

Throughout the CARICOF workshop meteorologists spoke on their experiences during the training workshop, as well as to indicate further needs of their Meteorological Services. Very important were the views of the user community for climate outlooks and other climate-related information.

Dr Roger Pulwarty (NOAA) challenged workshop participants to decide on a time of the year to have these annual CariCOF workshops. It was unanimous that it should occur to aid in preparation for the hurricane and rainy season. It was further suggested that the most appropriate time for all parties would be in the month of May.

***The CPT training and CariCOF were hosted by the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology and sponsored by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the USA, The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*