Climate and Oceans Monitoring and Prediction (COMP)

Pacific Islands - Online Climate Outlook Forum No. 114 Summary Report

Date: Tuesday 21 March 2017

Time: Australian Eastern Daylight Time 12:00PM (01:00 UTC)

Chair: Bureau of Meteorology

Main purpose for the OCOF:

- To provide a regular forum for the 11 participating PIC NMSs to discuss the current ENSO status, recent one and three-month rainfall, drought (if present) and their seasonal climate outlooks with other countries and the COMP project team.

In addition, it serves as an online training forum for recent SCOPIC* development and gives the project team and the NMSs an opportunity to discuss other project related matters.

Agenda:

1. Brief introduction of PIC participants and the Bureau team.
2. Brief report on current ENSO status.
3. Each NMS report on their past one and three months' rainfall in relation to the current ENSO situation (include ranking and verification), and their three-month outlooks. Wherever appropriate NMS to report on their drought status.
4. Round-table discussion: addressing general concerns/queries on outlooks and SCOPIC.
5. Feedback on COSPPac products and services.
6. Country statements with regards to drought or drought-like conditions, drought module issues/concerns.
7. Next meeting (Thursday 20 April - TBC) to be chaired by Tuvalu.

Participants:

The Forum was attended by 15 climate officers (6 female) from 8 partner PIC NMSs.

Cook Islands: Bates Manea

Fiji: Bipen Prakash, Arieta Baleisolomone

Kiribati: (Kamaitia Rubetaake and Mauna Eria were ready to participate but the phone connection failed)

Niue: Rossy Mitiepo, Robert Togiamana, Floyd Viliamu

Papua New Guinea: Kisolel Posanau, Ruth Apuqahe, Gabriel Tuno

Republic of Marshall Islands: Not available due to faulty comms.

Samoa: Junior Lepale, Tile Tofaeono, Faapisa Aiono

Solomon Islands: Noel Sanau, Helen Sikaiyo (from Melbourne)

Tonga: Sione Tu'ungafasi

Australia: Grant Beard, Simon McGree, Grant Smith (Bureau of Meteorology), Noel Sanau, Helen Sikaiyo (visiting Melbourne from Solomon Islands)

OCOF tables were received from 8 participating countries before the meeting.

* Seasonal Climate Outlooks in the Pacific Island Countries: climate prediction software developed under the PI-CPP.

Observations and Verification of December 2016 to February 2017 outlooks:

Observed rainfall for the one and three-month periods ending February 2017 were discussed for each PIC. This month, several countries experienced extreme rainfall as shown in the following table:

Station	Period	Rainfall Amount (mm)	Rainfall Rank	Year of record
Butaritari, Kiribati	Dec-Feb	278	5	76
Hanan Airport, Niue	Feb	461	64	67
Hanan Airport, Niue	Dec-Feb	1037	61	67
Nadzab, PNG	Feb	46	2	43
Kavieng, PNG	Feb	467	80	87
Nafanua, Samoa	Feb	641	42	45
Kwajalein, Marshall Islands	Dec-Feb	634	65	71
Auki, Solomon Islands	Feb	530	49	56
Taro, Solomon Islands	Dec-Feb	1024	34	38
Niuafo'ou, Tonga	Feb	528	42	44
Niuatoputapo, Tonga	Feb	694	70	70
Niuatoputapo, Tonga	Dec-Feb	1217	62	65
Vava'u, Tonga	Feb	926	71	71
Vava'u, Tonga	Dec-Feb	1207	65	69
Ha'apai, Tonga	Feb	498	71	71
Ha'apai, Tonga	Dec-Feb	951	68	70

[Note: The above data may not have undergone quality control]

Validation of forecasts with observed rainfall for the December to February period showed 25 consistent, 15 near-consistent and only 2 inconsistent outlooks (42 stations across 9 countries).

A summary of results (C-consistent, NC-Near Consistent, I-Inconsistent, N/A-not available) for each country is as follows:

Cook Islands (2NC); Fiji (7C, 1NC, 1I); Kiribati (5C); Niue (1C); PNG (2C, 3NC, 1I); RMI (1C, 1NC); Samoa (4C); Solomon Islands (3C, 4NC); Tonga (2C, 4NC); Tuvalu (N/A) and Vanuatu (N/A).

Overall: 25C, 15NC, 2I.

April to June 2017 Outlooks:

SCOPIC outlooks: Reflecting the time of year when statistical outlooks have less skill, 78% of the 49 station outlooks had near-equal probabilities in three terciles, while 16% had near-equal probabilities in two terciles. Two stations had the highest probability in tercile 2 and one had the highest probability in tercile 3.

POAMA outlooks: Eight countries provided completed POAMA tables this month: Cook Islands, Kiribati, RMI, Niue, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga. 47% of the 30 stations outlooks had the highest probabilities in tercile 1, 13% in tercile 2 and 37% in tercile 3. Three percent had near-equal probabilities in three terciles or near-equal probabilities in two terciles.

Other matters:

Observed Rainfall and Validation

Country	February 2017	December 2016 to February 2017	Verification† for December 2016 to February 2017 outlooks
Cook Islands	Above normal	Normal	Near-consistent
Fiji	Above normal	Above normal	Mainly Consistent
Kiribati	Below normal to normal	Below normal	Consistent
RMI	Above normal	Above normal	Consistent and near-consistent
Niue	Above normal	Above normal	Consistent
Papua New Guinea	Mix of below normal, normal and above normal totals	Mostly normal to above normal	Mainly consistent and near-consistent
Samoa	Mainly above normal	Above normal	Consistent
Solomon Islands	Mainly above normal.	Normal to above normal.	Consistent or near-consistent.
Tonga	Above normal	Above normal (North, Central); normal (South)	Consistent to near-consistent
Tuvalu			
Vanuatu			

† Forecast is consistent when observed and predicted (tercile with the highest probability) categories coincide (are in the same tercile).
Forecast is near-consistent when observed and predicted (tercile with the highest probability) differ by only one category (i.e. terciles 1 and 2 or terciles 2 and 3).
Forecast is inconsistent when observed and predicted (tercile with the highest probability) differ by two categories (i.e. terciles 1 and 3).