Climate and Oceans Monitoring and Prediction (COMP)

Pacific Islands - Online Climate Outlook Forum No. 115 Summary Report

Date: Thursday 20 April 2017

Time: Australian Eastern Daylight Time 11:00AM (01:00 UTC)

Chair: Tuvalu

Main purpose for the OCOF:

- To provide a regular forum for the 10 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 (Tuesday 16 May - TBC) to be chaired by Vanuatu.

Participants:

The Forum was attended by 20 climate officers (11 female) from 10 partner PIC NMSs.

Cook Islands:

Fiji: Bipen Prakash, Swatika Prasad

Kiribati: Kamaitia Rubetaake and Mauna Eria

Niue: Rossy Mitiepo

Papua New Guinea: Kisolel Posanau, Nanao Bouauka

Republic of Marshall Islands: Nover Juria

Samoa: Tile Tofaeono, Junior Lepale, Faapisa Aiono, Vaueli Su'a, Nuutofi Palemia, Mattaniah Salesa

Solomon Islands: Noel Sanau, Lucy Waiaraha, Helen Sikyo

Tonga: Mele Lakai

Tuvalu: Niko Iona and Eli Ene

Australia: Grant Beard, Simon McGree, Grant Smith

SPREP: Salesa Nihmei, Alexander Montoro, Epeli Tagi, Sunny Seuseu, Philip Malsale

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 January to March 2017 outlooks:

Observed rainfall for the one and three-month periods ending March 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
Nabouwalu, Fiji	Mar	591	95	100
Nadi, Fiji	Jan-Mar	1611	70	74
Majuro, Marshall Islands	Jan-Mar	1020	61	63
Nafanua, Samoa	Mar	135	3	45
Apia, Samoa	Mar	92	3	128
Auki, Solomon Islands	Mar	209	4	56
Vava'u, Tonga	Jan-Mar	1368	66	70
Sola, Vanuatu	Mar	186	2	41
Aneityum, Vanuatu	Mar	110	3	65
Lamap, Vanuatu	Jan-Mar	403	3	57

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

Validation of forecasts with observed rainfall for the January to March period showed 24 consistent, 20 near-consistent and 7 inconsistent outlooks (51 stations across 10 countries).

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

Cook Islands (N/A); Fiji (6C, 4NC,); Kiribati (4C, 1NC); Niue (1C); PNG (1C, 3NC, 1I); RMI (2C); Samoa (1C, 2NC, 1I); Solomon Islands (3C, 3NC, 1I); Tonga (4C, 2NC); Tuvalu (2C, 2NC) and Vanuatu (3NC, 4I).

Overall: 24C, 20NC, 7I.

May to July 2017 Outlooks:

SCOPIC outlooks: Reflecting the time of year when statistical outlooks have less skill, 81% of the 58 station outlooks had near-equal probabilities in three terciles, while 9% had near-equal probabilities in two terciles. Six stations had the highest probability in tercile 2 and no stations have the highest probability in tercile 1 or tercile 3.

POAMA outlooks: Nine countries provided completed POAMA tables this month: Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. 54% of the 39 stations outlooks had the highest probabilities in tercile 1, 10% in tercile 2 and 18% in tercile 3. Eighteen percent had near-equal probabilities in three terciles or near-equal probabilities in two terciles.

Other matters:

Observed Rainfall and Validation

Country	March 2017	January to March 2017	Verification† for January to March 2017 outlooks
Cook Islands			
Fiji	Mainly normal to above normal	Normal to above normal	Consistent to near-consistent
Kiribati	Normal to below normal	Mainly below normal	Mostly consistent
RMI	Above normal & below normal	Above normal	Consistent
Niue	Below normal	Above normal	Consistent
Papua New Guinea	Mostly normal to above normal	Normal to above normal	Mainly near-consistent
Samoa	Normal to below normal	Mostly normal	Mixed
Solomon Islands	A mix of below normal, normal, and above normal.	Mainly normal to above normal.	Mainly near-consistent to consistent
Tonga	Mostly normal	Mostly above normal	Consistent to near-consistent
Tuvalu	A mix of below normal, normal, and above normal.	Normal to below normal	Consistent or near-consistent
Vanuatu	Normal to below normal	Below normal	Inconsistent to near-consistent

† 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).