

17 November 2011 -Regional La Niña Update-Pacific

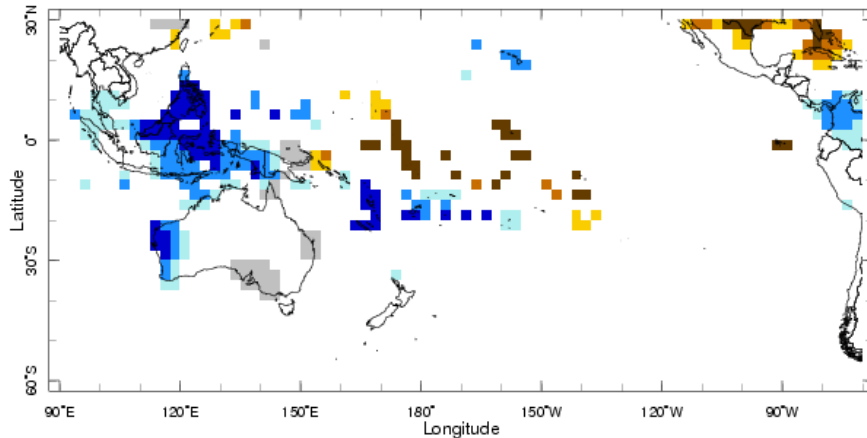
Produced by the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society

La Niña redeveloped in August and is now of weak to moderate strength, and so is likely to affect rainfall patterns in some areas. The La Niña is likely to remain until about February 2012. In some regions, unusual rainfall patterns related to this weak-moderate La Niña event are forecast (see map and forecast interpretation below). No two La Niña events are exactly the same, and so one should not automatically expect impacts this year to be similar to last year. We recommend monitoring seasonal forecasts on a monthly basis for updates on areas where there are enhanced chances of receiving too much or too little rainfall. IRI's next forecast update is scheduled for 21 December 2011 and can be found at: <http://iri.columbia.edu/ifrc/forecast/3munusualprecip> It is also important to monitor shorter-range weather forecasts to anticipate specific weather events (see accompanying attachment for some regional monitoring resources).

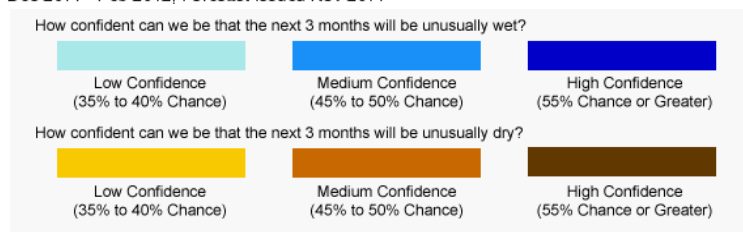
Regional Forecast Map-Pacific

The map below shows the IRI forecast for the total amount of rainfall that is expected from December 2011 to February 2012. The map shows whether this three-month period as a whole is expected to be *unusually* wet or dry.

Pacific Forecast Map: IRI Seasonal Forecast for rainfall in the Pacific over December 2011 -February 2012, issued on 17 November 2011.



Forecast for Dec 2011 - Feb 2012, Forecast Issued Nov 2011



How to read this forecast map: Colours over the map correspond to how confident we can be that the total amount of rainfall over the period December 2011-February 2012 will be either be in the category of unusually wet (indicated by shades of blue; "above-normal") or unusually dry (indicated by shades of yellow;

"below-normal") for the given area and time of year. Above-normal and below-normal rainfall typically each occur about once every three years (i.e., with a probability of 33%), and so shaded areas indicate increased risks of an unusually wet or dry season. Areas with higher confidence levels have darker shades (see colour bar above). For more guidance on interpreting the forecast, see accompanying attachment labelled: 'Important Guidance and Resources for Forecast-Based Decision Making.'

Note: The forecasts are not a direct indication of flooding risks because floods can occur as a result of exceptionally heavy rainfall over only a few hours or a few days, and because prolonged "good" rains over a three-month period may not produce any flooding at all. However, the map does provide a reasonably good indication of areas that might be at increased risk.

Forecast Interpretation/Highlighting Areas of Concern for December 2011-February 2012

IRI's forecast shows substantially increased chances of unusually **wet** conditions, implying enhanced flood risk for parts of:

- Australia (western)
- Fiji
- New Caledonia
- Niue
- Papua New Guinea
- Tonga
- Vanuatu

IRI's forecast shows substantially increased chances of unusually **dry** conditions, implying enhanced drought risk for:

- Galapagos
- Kiribati (main and east)
- Nauru
- Tuvalu (already facing a water shortage emergency due to drought)

Continued Monitoring Required-

Given the notably increased risk of *heavy rains* in parts of Australia, Fiji, New Caledonia, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Vanuatu, we strongly recommend making contact with national met service and monitoring weather forecasts on shorter timescales over the course of the season to anticipate the specifics in terms of where, when and how severe rainfall events might be. You may also want to consider advanced planning for implications of above-normal rainfall on disaster management, health, WATSAN and livelihoods for instance.

Given the notably increased risk of *drought* on the Galapagos, Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu (which is already facing a water shortage emergency due to drought), we strongly recommend monitoring for any emerging drought conditions that would activate your regional drought contingency plans. You might also consider some pre-emptive actions such as hand washing campaigns, water conservation etc as appropriate in country.

For further guidance and information, please see the accompanying attachment: 'Important Guidance and Resources for Forecast-Based Decision Making.' If you have questions related to this La Niña or to seasonal forecasts, you can e-mail the IFRC Helpdesk at IRI: ifrc@iri.columbia.edu.