



REPUBLIC OF VANUATU/RÉPUBLIQUE DE VANUATU

VANUATU METEOROLOGY AND GEO-HAZARDS DEPARTMENT
DÉPARTEMENT DE LA MÉTÉOROLOGIE ET DES GÉORISQUES DE VANUATU

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Our Ref: PV/MET

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cyclone season is here: Vanuatu to have 1 -3 tropical cyclones for 2017/18 season.

Vanuatu is expected to have 1 to 3 Tropical Cyclones (TC) in 2017/2018 cyclone season. The Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazard Department (VMGD) appeals to the general public to prepare for this season. Possible impacts coupled with current forecast for weak La Niña event can have adverse impacts (extreme rainfall periods and strong winds), on the livelihood of our people.

The 2016-17 South Pacific tropical cyclone season (November to April) was the least active since 2011-12, and one of the quietest on record with only four cyclones occurring east of 160°E. Vanuatu experienced 2 tropical cyclones past season, TC Donna (May) and TC Cook (April).

Vanuatu is located in the hotspot of tropical cyclone activity in the region. Each year Vanuatu and New Caledonia experience the greatest cyclone activity with at least 2-3 cyclones passing close to the countries. At the Regional-scale, south Pacific tropical cyclone outlooks for the upcoming November to April season favors near average (1-3) numbers of tropical cyclones in the southwest Pacific. TC activity for Vanuatu is anticipated to be near average this season which means between one and three tropical cyclone events.

This past year Vanuatu has witnessed El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral conditions. Near La Niña conditions were present in late 2016 and in late February 2017, some international climate models surveyed by VMGD favored El Niño conditions from June. While an El Niño did not eventuate and remained within ENSO neutral, warmer than normal central and eastern Pacific sea surface temperatures enhanced and shifted the South Pacific Convergence Zone north eastward generally from about May to September. This resulted in below normal rainfall throughout Vanuatu.

The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) state is currently neutral trending towards La Niña thresholds. Near La Niña conditions are likely to affect Vanuatu towards the end of 2017 with resulting impacts on rainfall. For the coming three months near normal to above normal rainfall is forecasted for Vanuatu. This means more than 200mm of rainfall for the southern region (Shefa and Tafea), and more than 400mm of rainfall for the northern region (Malampa, Penama and Sanma) with the exception of Samna expecting more than 1000mm of rainfall for the three month period (November 2017 - January 2018).

During La Niña events, there is high possibility of elevated tropical cyclones activities in the Coral Sea and these systems forming in this area normally move southeastwards towards Vanuatu. In Vanuatu, tropical cyclone activity is at its peak during the months of December to February but highest in January. From 1969/70 to 2009/2010 seasons, Vanuatu experienced 116 cyclones that have passed within a 500km of Port Vila. With the forecasted Weak La Niña conditions, Sea surface temperatures have increased in the western Pacific region which would greatly influence the occurrence of TC events in Vanuatu region. With similar conditions, there is a higher probability of experiencing category 3 cyclone with a slight change of a category 4 system occurring this season based on selected analogs.

(To contact VMGD Divisions directly)

Observations:	Ph: 22433 Email: observers@meteo.gov.vu	Climate :	Ph: 23866 Email: climate@meteo.gov.vu
Forecast:	Ph: 22932 Email: forecast@meteo.gov.vu	Geo-Hazards :	Ph: 24686 Email: geohazards@meteo.gov.vu
Climate Change:	Ph: 22331 Email: piccap@vanuatu.com.vu	ICT and Engineering :	Ph: 24686 Email: helpdesk@meteo.gov.vu

As such communities should make sure that they are well prepared by taking appropriate action and stay up to date with the latest information from VMGD. All communities should remain alert and vigilant at all times well prepared for severe events, as risk of tropical cyclone activities are expected to be within the near average range (2-3 TC's). People are advised to take heed of this information, and undertake preparedness actions for this season knowing that any tropical cyclone impact coupled with the current weak La Niña will have great effect on the socio-economic livelihood of people living in Vanuatu.

NDMO advise community to prepare their cyclone response plan and cyclone safety kits ready for this cyclone season. Hold regular Community Disaster Committee meetings to inform all the community members and stakeholders for preparedness.

Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazards Department (VMGD) will continue to monitor the cyclone season with daily five day Tropical Cyclone Outlook. Information can be accessible through VMGD website (www.meteo.gov.vu), or VMGD's Facebook page. Tropical cyclone information is also included in the monthly Vanuatu Climate Update bulletin. SMS will be disseminated during any event while people are advice to listen to all radio outlets at all times.

For specific planning advice, contact the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department on telephone 24686 / 22932.

Further information:

Esline BULE Acting Director, Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD).

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