



METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES & ARUBA

Seru Mahuma z/n Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles,
Tel: +599 9 839.3366 Fax: +599 9 868.3999 E-mail: cur-met@meteo.an

PRESS RELEASE

OCTOBER 2009: NO HURRICANES AND DRY

October 2009 was a very tranquil month, as far as tropical cyclones over the North Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico are concerned. Only two tropical storms, so not a single hurricane, developed.

Tropical storm *Grace* developed during the evening of October 4 in an unusual location, just northeast of the Azores. This system then moved toward the northeast and weakened within 24 hours not far southwest of Ireland, while at the same time it became extratropical.

Tropical storm *Henri* formed during the afternoon of Tuesday, October 6 over the western tropical Atlantic at a distance of about 1000 kilometers (620 miles) east of the SSS Islands. This system then moved in a west-northwesterly direction and encountered the same fate as *Ana* and *Erika*, earlier in the 2009 hurricane season. Under the influence of strong upper-level winds, this system weakened the next day to a tropical depression and a day thereafter it virtually dissipated.

Rainfall:

Besides a small number of tropical cyclones in the Atlantic Basin, the amount of precipitation in especially Aruba and Curaçao was far below the average amounts for October. In Curaçao October was, with only 23.1 mm at Hato Airport, about 73% drier than the long-term average amount of 83.7 mm. In Aruba, the drought was less severe and the monthly sum at Aeropuerto Reina Beatrix added up to 39.4 mm. The October average for this station is 65.0 mm, which means that the precipitation in that location stayed 40% below the long-term average.

In Bonaire on the other hand, the precipitation situation was quite varied. Locally a lot more rain was observed there during October than in the other two islands (Playa Pabou, 75.6 mm). At the Flamingo Airport the amount of rain, with a monthly sum of 66.3 mm, was only two percent below the monthly average of 67.3 mm. In the northern section of Bonaire however, much less rain was observed. In Brasil (BOPEC) for instance the monthly sum added up to not more than 26.4 mm. This is only about a third of what was measured in Playa Pabou.

The reason of the fact that most locations got less rain than normal has to be found in the presence of a weak to moderate El Niño. This phenomenon, in which the sea water temperature in the eastern and central Pacific Ocean, near the equator, is warmer than normal causes among others an increase in the upper-level winds over the Caribbean Area. This often leads to the formation of fewer shower producing clouds, which on its turn causes a relatively dry rainy season in the ABC Islands.

As is usually the case, the SSS Islands received more rain but here too the rainfall totals were below average. At the Princess Juliana Airport (St. Maarten), an amount of 89.6 mm was measured. This is 21% below the October average of 113 mm.

The rainfall outlook for the ABC Islands during the months of November 2009 through January 2010 are, as a result of El Niño, unfavorable for some of the interests. The latest forecasts indicate that the chance of a normal or below normal rainy season is about 75%. For the SSS Islands, an average rainfall amount is still in the forecast in this same period. A preliminary outlook indicates that El Niño will diminish gradually during the second quarter of 2010.

As is usually the case, the Meteorological Service will closely monitor the development of tropical disturbances. In case it's necessary, warnings will be issued for the local authorities and population of the islands.
