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OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Subject: Declaration of the Start of the 2018 Rainy Season for Trinidad and Tobago

The Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service is officially declaring the start of the 2018 Rainy Season following rainfall activity from the passage of a Tropical Wave. Once the initial episode of rainfall activity is triggered by the ITCZ or a Tropical Wave, it signals the start of the country's rainy season since these features will be the mainstay for the next five (5) months in yielding rainfall.

The Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service has been tracking the progress of this Tropical Wave across the Atlantic Ocean for the past few days. The moist and unstable environment accompanying the Wave produced the much welcomed early season rainfall. Over the 12-hour period beginning at 8:00 am (Saturday 26th May 2018), the Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service recorded 12.0 millimeters of rainfall at Piarco, Trinidad with higher rainfall accumulations occurring in other localities. Moist conditions are expected to continue for at least the next 24 hours.

At the moment, the TTMS rainfall outlook for the overall 2018 wet season indicates near average rainfall accumulated totals have the most likely chance of occurring, when compared with the chance for below average and above average; however the period June to August is likely to be drier than usual, while the September to August period is likely to be wetter than usual. At the same time, the season is expected to be warmer than usual.

A near average wet season or a drier than usual start to the wet season does not mean that there would not be typical wet season impacts, since the country has experienced severe weather events in historical wet seasons with near average rainfall totals or drier than usual periods.

At present, the other main weather producing feature for the rainy season, namely the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone, is well south of Trinidad and Tobago. Consequently, there may be a reprieve in rainfall activity over the next couple of weeks following this episode. The stay, however, will be short lived especially with the expected start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season on 1st June, 2018. Preliminarily, the Atlantic Basin Seasonal Hurricane Forecast for 2018 is likely to be 35% above average, with the expected formation of 10 - 16 named storms, 5 - 9 hurricanes and 1 - 4 major hurricanes (Categories 3 and above). Historically, the averages for named storms, hurricanes and major hurricanes are 12, 7 and 2 respectively. However, it should be noted that for any country all it takes is one tropical cyclone making landfall for that country to experience an active hurricane season.

The Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service wishes to reassure the national community, that in keeping with our mandate, we continue to closely monitor weather conditions around Trinidad and Tobago and will continue to advise the general public in a timely manner, about impending adverse weather conditions which are likely to affect our islands.

The public, relevant agencies and ministries are advised to adopt measures to mitigate the potential impacts of the Rainy Season. Visit our website for daily weather forecasts updates, which are available on a scheduled basis at 6 am, 10 am, and 4 pm and for the seasonal outlook which is updated monthly. These are made available on the TTMS's website at <http://www.metoffice.gov.tt>, on our social media platforms and weather App.

Shakeer Baig,
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Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service.