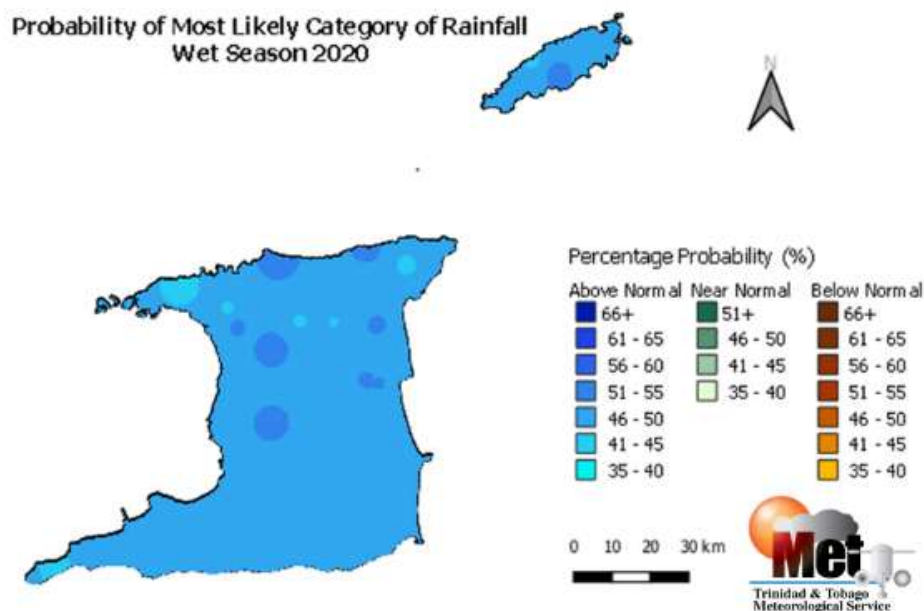


## **Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service hosts virtual National Climate Outlook Forum ahead of 2020 Wet/Hurricane Season**

As part of ongoing efforts to implement the Global Framework for Climate Services Programme at the national level, the Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service (TTMS) hosted its 2020 Wet Season-Tenth National Climate Outlook Forum (NCOF X) via video conferencing on May 12, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season set to officially begin on June 1, Acting Assistant Director of TTMS, Shakeer Baig emphasised the heightened importance of the early warning platforms to provide useful, actionable and easily understood national early warnings in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Senior meteorologist, Saide Shakeer elaborated on the TTMS's risk-based early warning system, which complies with the World Meteorological Organization's international standard for effective early warnings. She highlighted the features of the system, including the risk assessment matrix, which combines the probability of hazard occurring and the severity of impacts to determine the colour-coded risk level. She also explained what the colours mean, the likely impacts and how stakeholders should respond when public warnings messages are issued at each risk level.

According to Acting Chief Climatologist, Kenneth Kerr, above-normal rainfall is likely over the 2020 wet season (June to December) in Trinidad and Tobago. Above-normal rainfall totals are favoured during the first half of the season – June to August. A slight increase in the number of wet days and wet spells is also expected. However, near-normal rainfall totals are likely for September to November in most parts of Trinidad with the exception of south-western Trinidad and Tobago, where above-normal rainfall is favoured. The risk of flooding is elevated for the entire period.



**Figure 1: Category of rainfall most likely for the 2020 wet season with the highest chance of occurrence expressed as probabilities and colour coded on the map**

“The 2020 wet season is likely to be warmer than average with a 75% chance for maximum temperatures to be above-average. This brings an elevated chance of hot spells with the risk being highest in September,” he said.

Mr. Kerr also presented the 2020 Hurricane Season Outlook for the Area of Interest (Aoi) for Trinidad and Tobago, which spans the area south of 15° North Latitude, from the Eastern Caribbean to West Africa. He explained, “It is only when a tropical cyclone traverses or forms within this area that they tend to become a direct or indirect threat to Trinidad and Tobago.”

The TTMS predicts there is an 85% chance for above-average tropical cyclone activity in the Aoi. The area is likely to have 6 named storms (with a likely range of 4-8) from which 2 are most likely to become hurricanes in the area.

Stakeholders from priority climate-sensitive sectors, the media and other key agencies and NGOs participated in NCOF-X. Some of the stakeholders in attendance included officials from Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management, Trinidad & Tobago Amateur Radio Society, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, Ministry of Public Utilities, Sewa International TT, Atlantic LNG, Caribbean Airlines Limited and the Caribbean Meteorological Organization.

NCOF is a WMO (World Meteorological Organization) spearheaded initiative designed to strengthen the provision of seasonal outlooks at the national level. NCOF-X provided an opportunity for the TTMS to share information on how to use its colour-coded early warning risk matrix effectively, provide an assessment of the current dry season (which has been drier than normal), discuss the upcoming wet and hurricane seasonal climate outlooks, and possible implications for the country. Stakeholders were also able to share their concerns and provide feedback.

2020 Wet Season Outlook for Trinidad and Tobago is available at:

<http://www.metoffice.gov.tt/rainandtemp>

2020 Hurricane Season Prediction for Trinidad and Tobago’s Area of Interest for Tropical Cyclone Activity is available:

[http://www.metoffice.gov.tt/sites/default/files/2020\\_TTMS\\_hurricane\\_prediction.pdf](http://www.metoffice.gov.tt/sites/default/files/2020_TTMS_hurricane_prediction.pdf)