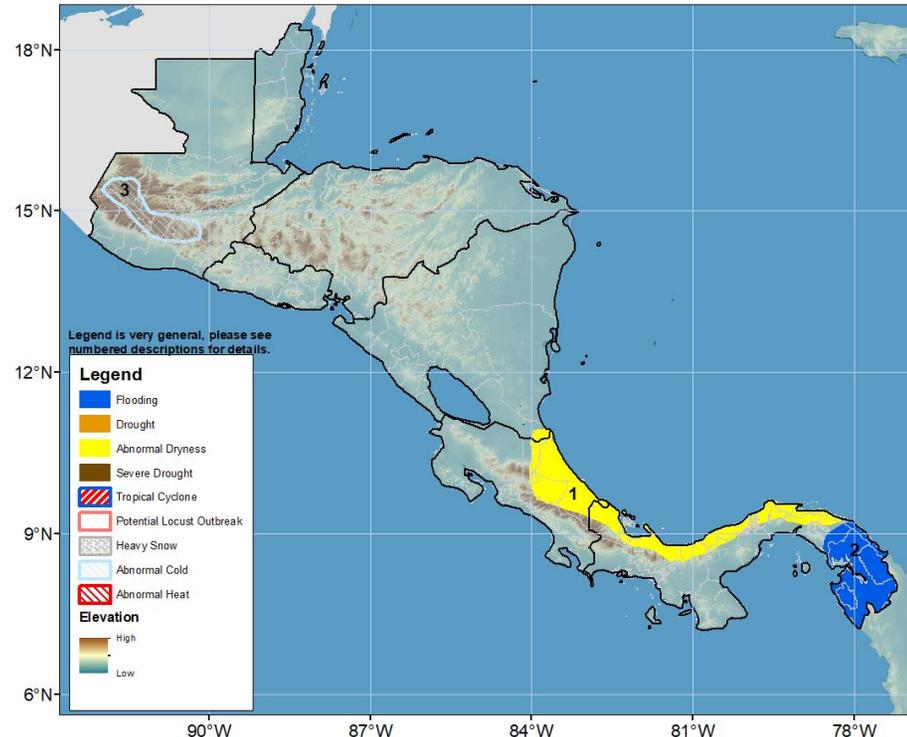


Climate Prediction Center's Central America Hazards Outlook For USAID / FEWS-NET 12 – 18 January 2023

Below-average rain has led to abnormal dryness in Costa Rica and Panama. However, heavy rainfall is expected in southern Panama.



1. Suppressed rainfall since December of the past year and the corresponding low SPI values in eastern Costa Rica and northern Panama have led to abnormal dryness.
2. The forecast suggests above-average rain conditions for next week, where rain values higher than 50 mm are expected in parts of southern Panama.
3. Near-average to below-freezing temperatures are expected to persist over the higher elevations in Guatemala as a result of frontal systems moving across northern Central America during the next week. In addition, despite the high daytime temperatures, the thermal amplitude favors frost conditions in western Guatemala.

Note: The Hazards outlook map is based on current weather/climate information, short and medium-range weather forecasts (up to 1 week), sub-seasonal forecasts up to 4 weeks, and assesses the potential impact of extreme events on crop and pasture conditions. Shaded polygons are added in areas where anomalous conditions have been observed and predicted to continue during the outlook period. The boundaries of these polygons are only approximate at the spatial scale of the map. This product takes into account long-range seasonal climate forecasts but does not reflect current or projected food security conditions. FEWS NET is a USAID-funded activity whose purpose is to provide objective information about food security conditions. Its views are not necessarily reflective of those of USAID or the U.S. Government. The FEWS NET weather hazards outlook process and products include participation by FEWS NET field and home offices, NOAA-CPC, USGS, USDA, NASA, and a number of other national and regional organizations in the countries concerned.

Questions or comments about the hazards outlooks may be directed to Dr. Wassila Thiaw, Head, International Desks/NOAA, wassila.thiaw@noaa.gov. Questions about the USAID FEWS NET activity may be directed to Dr. James Verdin, Program Manager, FEWS NET/USAID, jverdin@usaid.gov

Above-average rain conditions are forecast over Panama during the next week

During the beginning of January, normal conditions dominated Central America, showing little to light rain was observed in Belize, southeastern Honduras, along the Caribbean coasts of Nicaragua, and parts of Costa Rica and Panama. Over the past 30 days, below-average rain with departures from the average ranging between 50-100 mm was observed along the eastern Littorals in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama, whereas near-average conditions were depicted elsewhere. Additionally, the Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) and the thirty-day anomaly rainfall maps showed abnormal dryness conditions across Central America, with the largest negative values in eastern Costa Rica and Panama. For vegetation conditions, the latest Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) analysis showed neutral to positive anomalies over most areas in Central America, indicating seasonable to favorable conditions.

During the next week, rainfall forecasts suggest that rain between 50-100 mm is expected along the coastal areas of Costa Rica and Panama, while heavy downpours (> 100 mm) might happen across central and southern Panama. Therefore, the weekly rain accumulation could fall near to above average across Costa Rica and Panama, this rainfall might help to alleviate the dry soil moisture conditions in the region. In terms of mean surface temperatures, the forecast suggests near-average to below-average conditions across Guatemala, while the expected passage of cold fronts across northern Central America might push the minimum temperature to descend below-freezing across the higher terrains in the Huehuetenango, Totonicapán, Quiché, Chimaltenango, Sacatepéquez, Guatemala Departments in Guatemala.

