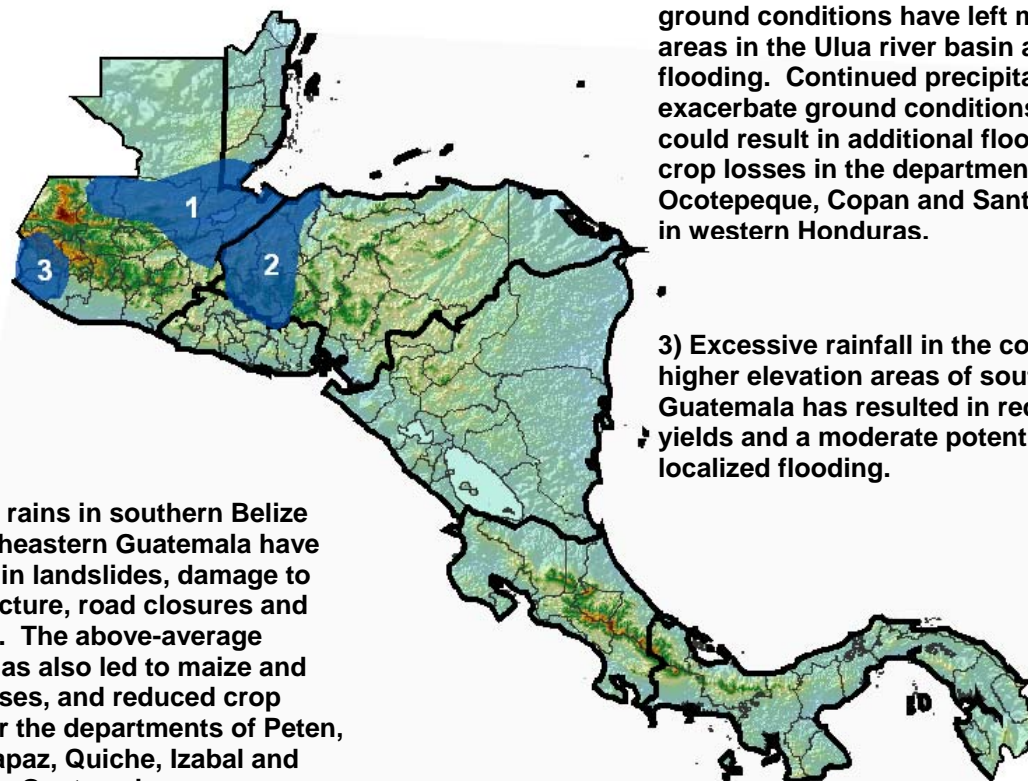


## The MFEWS

# Central America Weather Hazards Assessment

For

August 14 – August 20, 2008



1) Heavy rains in southern Belize and northeastern Guatemala have resulted in landslides, damage to infrastructure, road closures and fatalities. The above-average rainfall has also led to maize and bean losses, and reduced crop yields for the departments of Peten, Alta Verapaz, Quiche, Izabal and Zacapa in Guatemala

2) High river levels and saturated ground conditions have left many local areas in the Ulua river basin at-risk for flooding. Continued precipitation may exacerbate ground conditions and could result in additional flood-related crop losses in the departments of Ocotepeque, Copan and Santa Barbara in western Honduras.

3) Excessive rainfall in the coastal and higher elevation areas of southwestern Guatemala has resulted in reduced crop yields and a moderate potential for localized flooding.

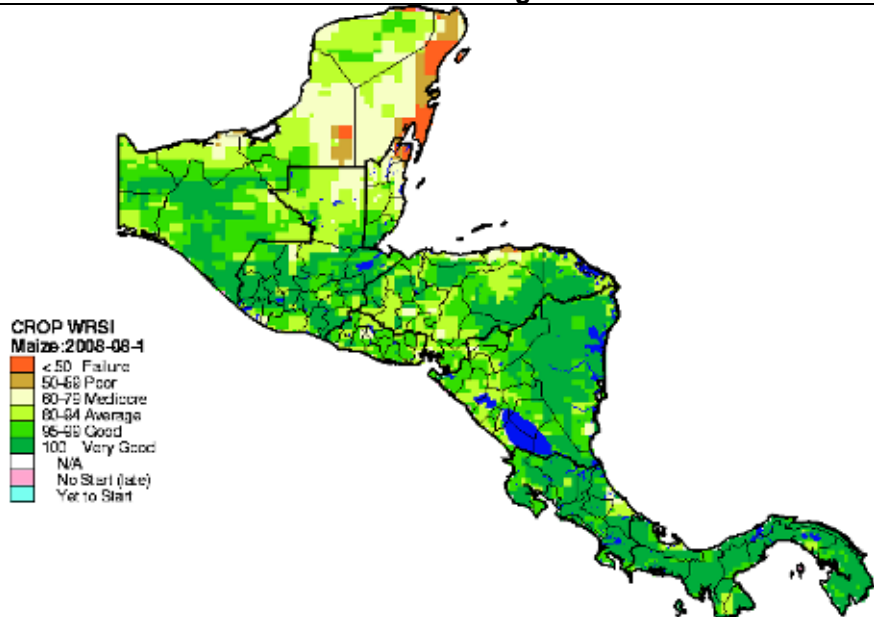
## Hazards Assessment Text Explanation:

In the last seven days, moderate amounts of rain (25 – 75 mm) were observed across many parts of Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, with heavier totals (> 60 mm) observed near the Gulf of Fonseca in El Salvador, eastern Nicaragua, and along the Honduras / Guatemala border. Last week's high rainfall in Guatemala and western Honduras continues to worsen ground conditions and threaten cropping activities. In Guatemala, the Zacapa, Quiche and Peten departments have been the most severely impacted, with a large percentage of maize and bean crops lost due to localized flooding and excessive rains. In western Honduras, above-average rainfall continues to sustain high-river levels and reduce crop yields along the Chamelecon and Ulua rivers. However, there has been some moderate relief according to local gauge reports in the Ocotepeque, Copan and Santa Barbara departments of Honduras.

Elsewhere, many regions in Central America have remained anomalously wet for the Primera season according to satellite-derived rainfall analysis. In Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, precipitation has consistently ranged between 150 to 200 percent above average since May, with higher anomalies found in parts of Costa Rica and Panama. With high rainfall amounts in August observed across much of the region, an above-average start to the Postera season may be expected for many local cropping areas.

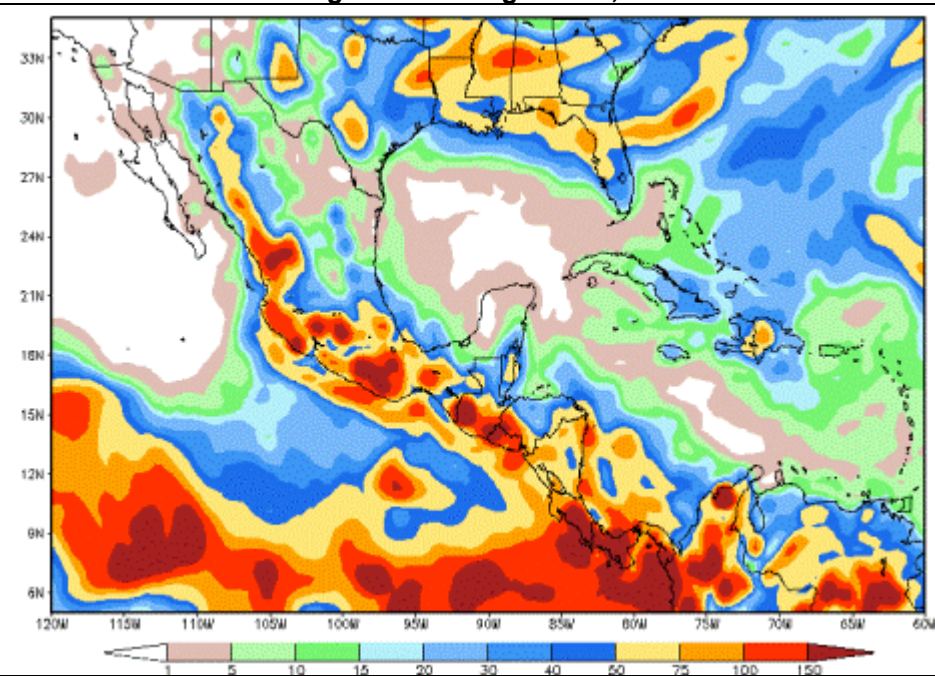
Rainfall forecasts over the next seven days show heavy rainfall totals for many areas that have experienced above-average rainfall since July. In Guatemala, rainfall amounts exceeding 50-75 mm may be expected to further saturate soils and reduce crop yields, as well as sustain the potential for landslides, flooding and other infrastructure damage. An active ITCZ is also expected to result in increased rainfall for many coastal areas in Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama throughout the week.

**WRSI for Maize**  
As of 1<sup>st</sup> Dekad of August 2008



Source: USGS

**GFS 7-Day Rainfall Totals**  
August 12<sup>th</sup> – August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008



Source: NOAA

The evaluation of climatological threats of MFEWS include the participation of the central and local offices of MFEWS, NOAA-CPC, USGS, NASA, INETER of Nicaragua, Meteorological Service of Honduras, IMN of Costa Rica, INSIVUMEH of Guatemala, ETESA of Panama, NMS of Belize and SNET of El Salvador. Any questions or comments on this product can be directed to [Wassila.Thiaw@noaa.gov](mailto:Wassila.Thiaw@noaa.gov)