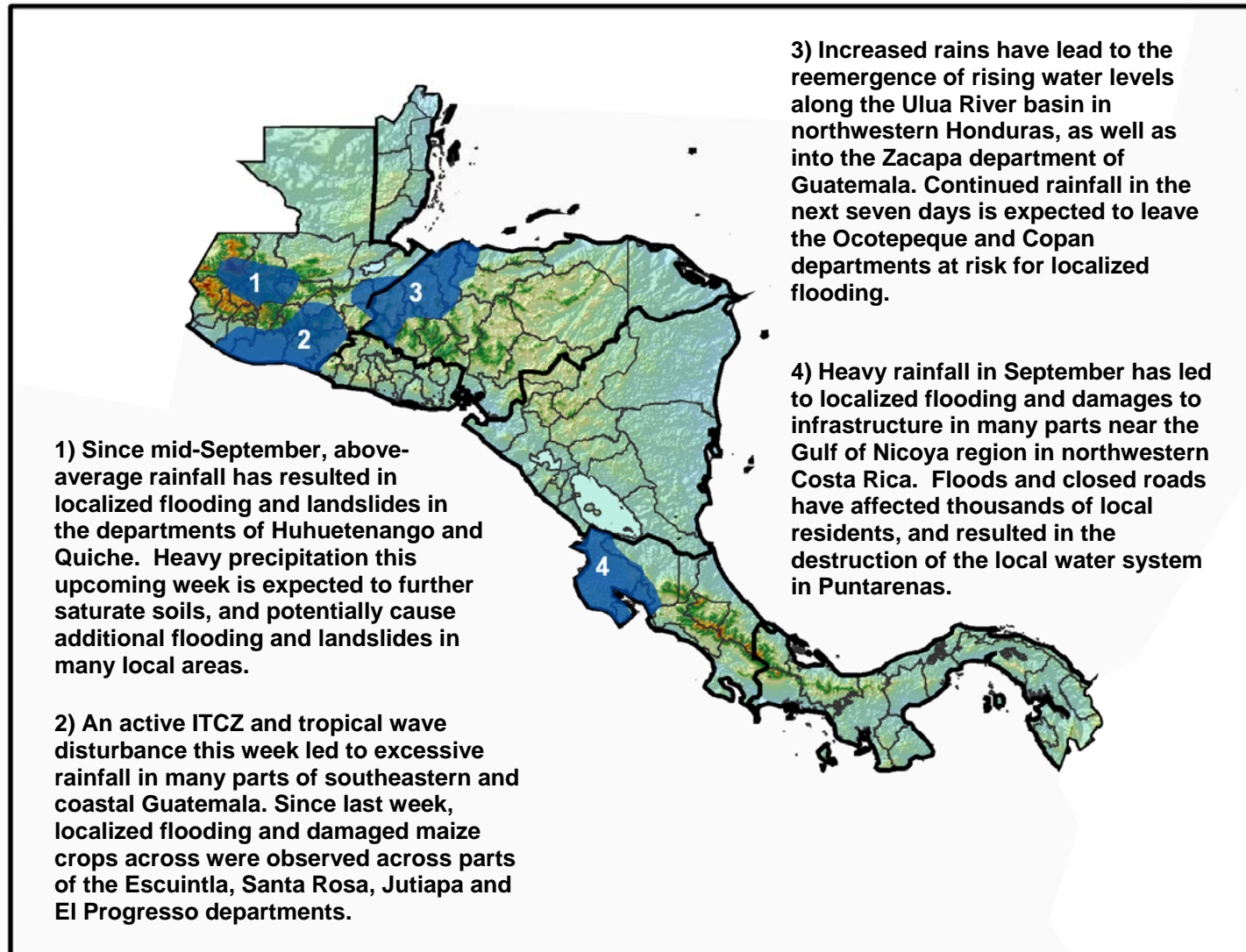


The MFEWS

Central America Weather Hazards and Benefits Assessment

For

September 25 – October 1, 2008

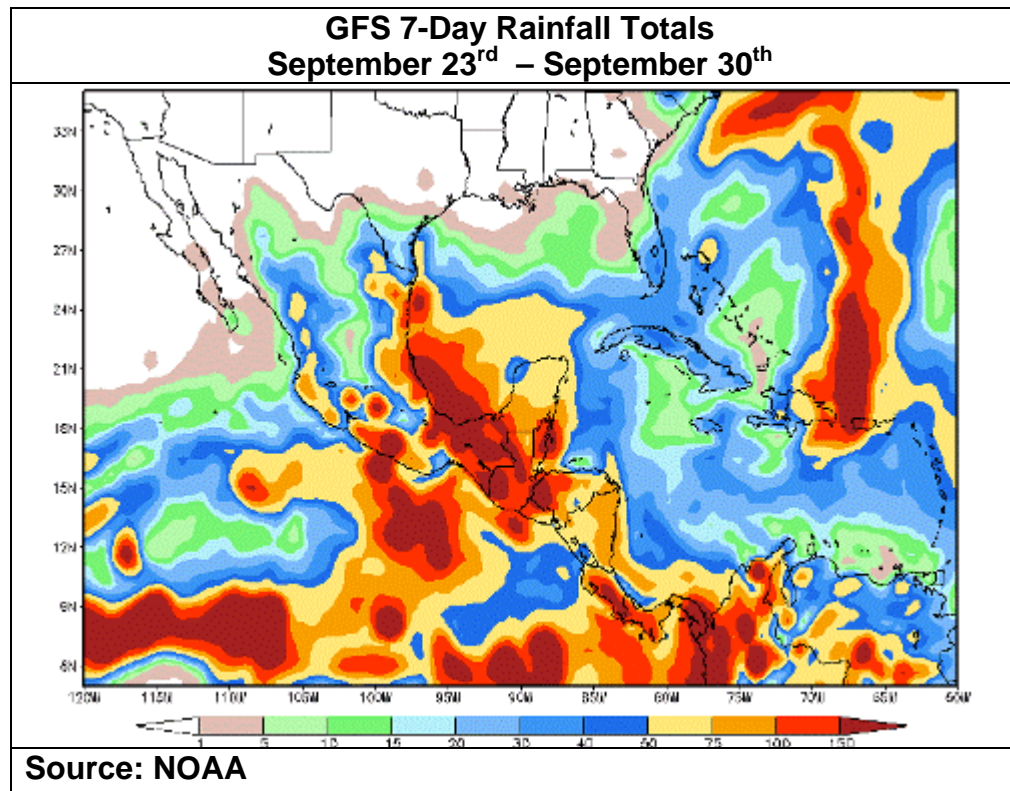


Hazards Assessment Text Explanation:

In the last seven days, an active Inter-tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) and a tropical wave passage resulted in increased precipitation across many parts of Central America. Significant rainfall (> 125 mm) was observed near the Gulf of Fonseca region, providing ample moisture in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In Guatemala, precipitation totals ranging between 50- 75 mm have sustained seasonal rainfall that remains approximately 175 percent above-average in many areas. As a result, many municipalities of the Quiche and Huhuetenango departments have experienced localized flooding and landslides in the last two weeks. In southeastern Guatemala, above-average rainfall (> 200 percent) has also impacted many municipalities in the Escuintla, Santa Rosa, Jutiapa, and El Progreso departments. Infrastructure damages, landslides, and acute losses in maize crops have been reported due to the heavy rains.

In Costa Rica, heavy precipitation (> 150 mm) last week is expected to exacerbate localized flooding in areas neighboring the Gulf of Nicoya Region. Government authorities have declared a state of emergency for residents in the Guanacaste Province, where excessive September rainfall has caused several landslides, road closures and damages to infrastructure in many local areas. Rainfall also reportedly led to the destruction of a local water system in Puntarenas, which may lead to reduced drinking water availability over the next several weeks. Increased rains have also led to the reemergence of rising water levels and localized flooding along the Ulua River Basin in northwestern Honduras. Local authorities have issued alerts for the Ocotepeque and Copan departments due to the overly saturated ground conditions. Rainfall in this region has also led to a landslide in the La Union municipality of the Zacapa department of Guatemala.

For the September 23rd - September 30th observation period, above-average precipitation totals are expected over many parts of Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica. Heavier totals (> 125 mm) are expected to lead to additional crop and infrastructure damage in Guatemala, as well as worsen flooding in northwestern Costa Rica and Honduras. Rainfall over northern Guatemala also has the potential to lead to localized flooding along rivers in the Alta Verapaz and Izabal departments of Guatemala.



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