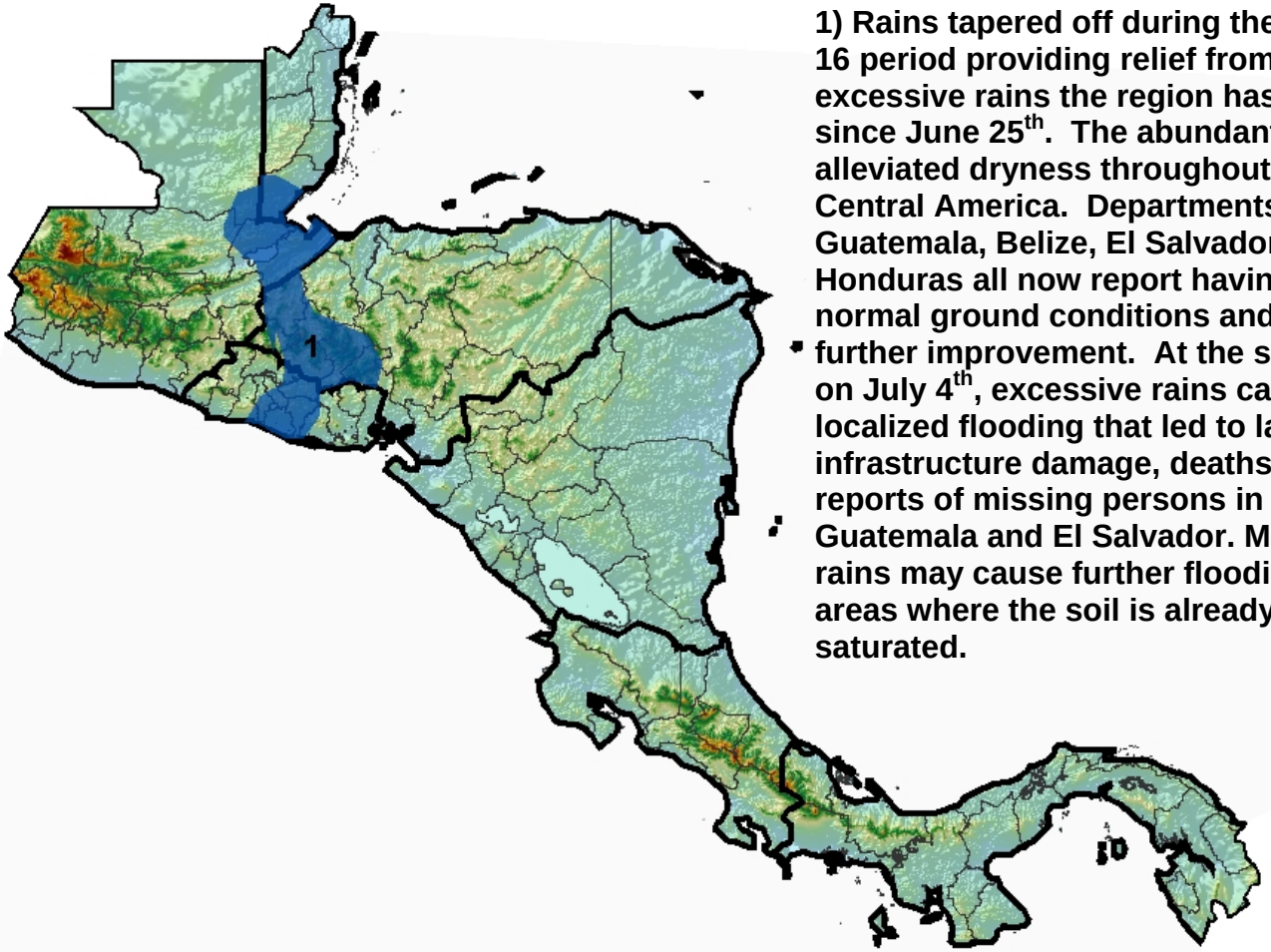
MFEWS Mesoamerican Food Security Early Warning System
Sistema Mesoamericano de Alerta Temprana para Seguridad Alimentaria

The MFEWS

Central America Weather Hazards and Benefits Assessment

For

July 17 – July 23, 2008



1) Rains tapered off during the July 10 – 16 period providing relief from the excessive rains the region has endured since June 25th. The abundant rains alleviated dryness throughout most of Central America. Departments in Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and Honduras all now report having near-normal ground conditions and expect further improvement. At the same time, on July 4th, excessive rains caused localized flooding that led to landslides, infrastructure damage, deaths and reports of missing persons in both Guatemala and El Salvador. Moderate rains may cause further flooding in areas where the soil is already saturated.

Hazards Assessment Text Explanation:

During the July 10 – 16 period, light to moderate rains characterized the region. Although a needed break from heavier rainfall, this past week's accumulation may have furthered poor conditions in areas that suffered from flooding, landslides, and infrastructure damage as a result of excessive rains during the June 25th to July 9th period. The abundant return of rains to the region has helped restore water availability and prevented further loss of crops to drought. The only reported crop losses due to the dryness that entered into Central America during the mid-May to June period were in southern and central Honduras. Elsewhere, crop losses are associated with flooding and pest infestation. In Ocotepeque, Honduras and the RAAN area of Nicaragua, there are reports of crop losses due to floods. MAGFOR, Nicaragua's ministry of Agriculture, is conducting a field assessment of rice crops to verify the situation. In Guatemala's southern departments, farmers report pest infestation of blind hen and collojero worm are destroying crops.

According to the National Hurricane Center as of 1800 UCT on Wednesday, July 16th, an area of low pressure located 200 miles east of the Windward Islands remains well-organized. The area is suspected to have formed into a tropical depression or will do so in the near future. This system is expected to move westward and has the potential to bring gusty winds and heavy rains to Nicaragua northward to Belize by Monday. Also, a tropical wave is located over the southwestern Caribbean approximately 300 miles east of Nicaragua and is showing signs of organization. This system has the potential for further development before moving into Central America late tomorrow. Heavy rains and gusty winds are likely to move over portions of Nicaragua and Honduras Thursday with flash flooding and mudslides possible, especially in higher terrain.

GFS 7 day Forecast
Valid Jul 16 – Jul 23

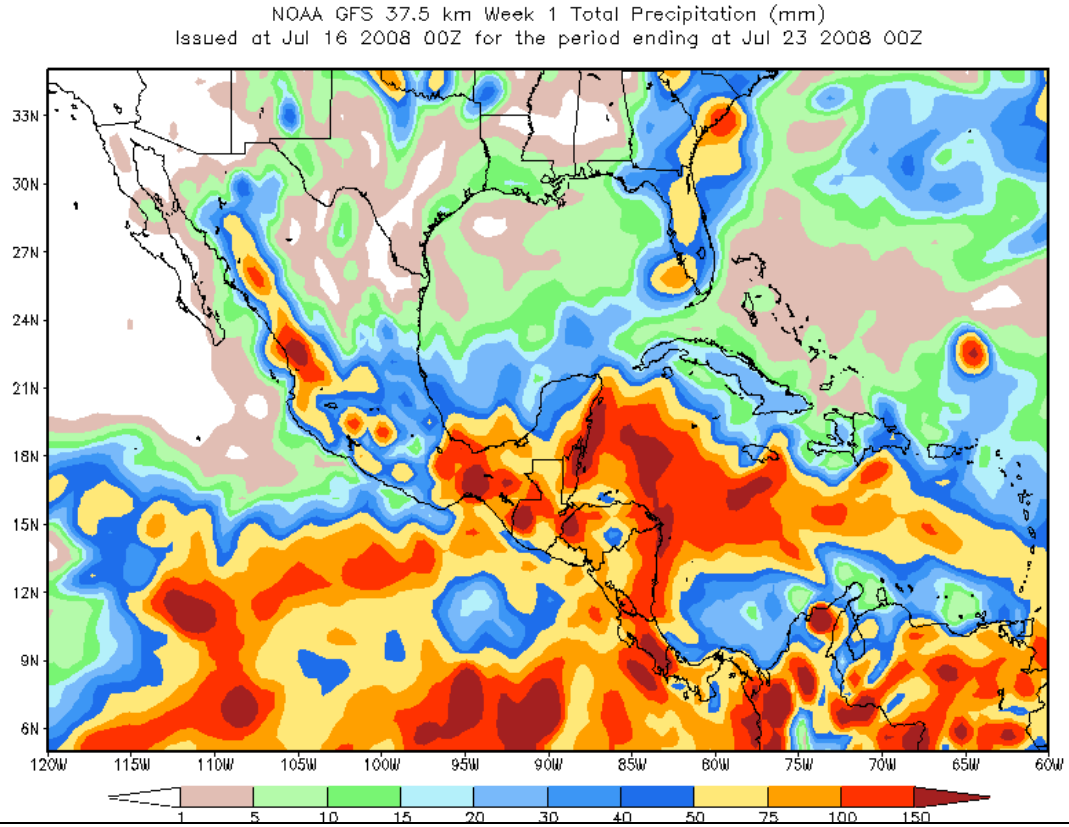


Figure 1
Source: NOAA

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