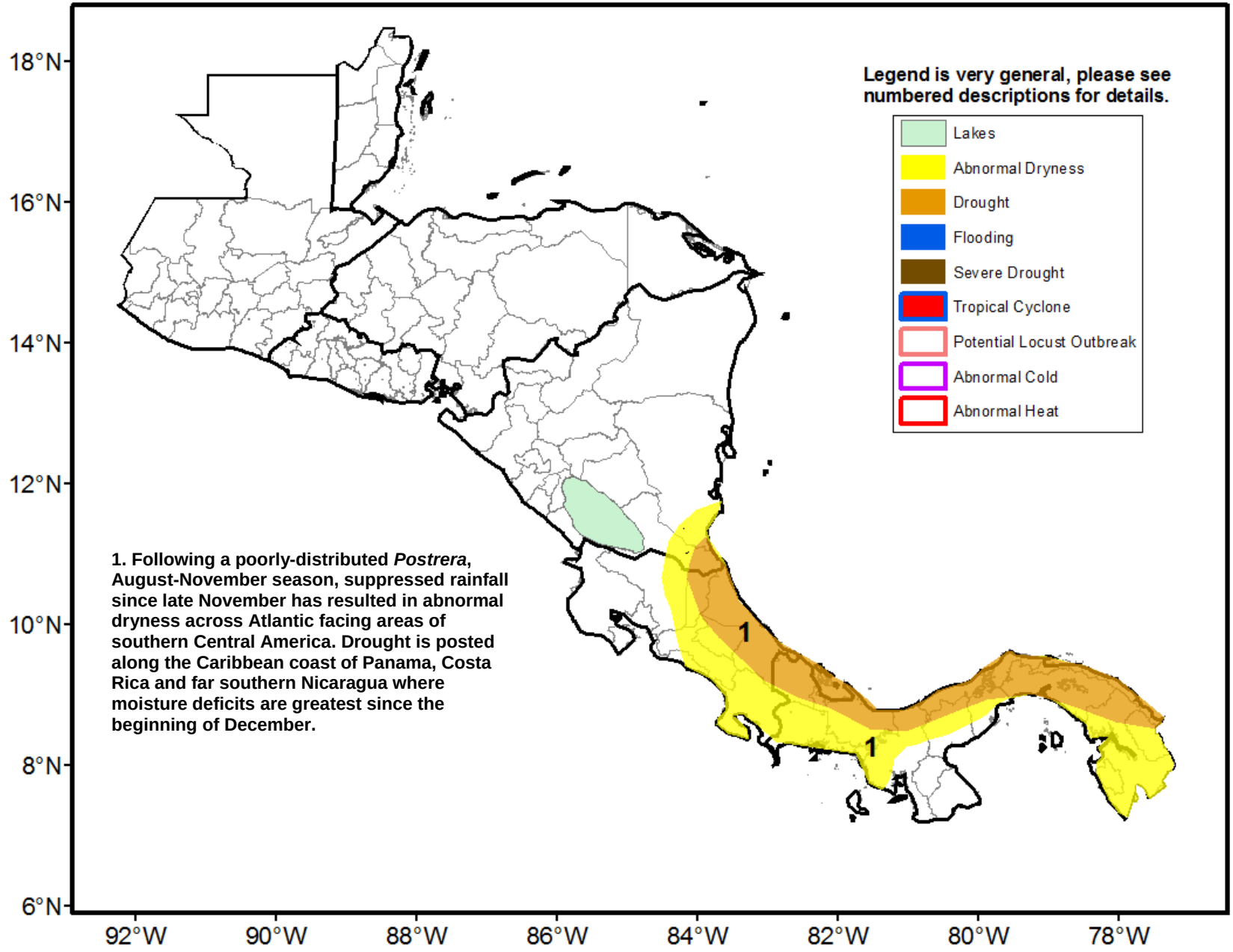
Climate Prediction Center's Central America Hazards Outlook
February 21 – 27, 2019

Below-average rainfall since the beginning of December of the past year has maintained droughts in the south.



1. Following a poorly-distributed *Postrera*, August-November season, suppressed rainfall since late November has resulted in abnormal dryness across Atlantic facing areas of southern Central America. Drought is posted along the Caribbean coast of Panama, Costa Rica and far southern Nicaragua where moisture deficits are greatest since the beginning of December.

Increased rainfall possible over localized areas of Central America during the next week

During the past week, suppressed rainfall was observed throughout much Central America, except a few areas along the Caribbean coasts, which received little to light rainfall. Compared to climatology, this past week's total rainfall was near-average, indicating a typical progression of the dry season. Over the past thirty days, accumulated rainfall was, however, below-average along the Atlantic Basin of the region from the Gulf of Honduras, eastern Honduras, eastern Nicaragua, to eastern Costa Rica, and Panama. Since December of the past year to present, negative anomalies were also registered along these dry portions of Central America but with larger (> 50 mm) rainfall deficits, particularly Costa Rica and Panama. In Panama, reports have already indicated drought conditions, impacting water resources. The most recent Vegetation Health Index (VHI) depicted below-average and deteriorated conditions over areas of northern and central Guatemala, southern Honduras, southeastern Nicaragua, central Costa Rica, and eastern Panama. The short-term tendencies in VHI indicated further degradation over many areas of Central America, including the southern Caribbean. Ground conditions may worsen if the lack of rainfall persists over the upcoming weeks.

During the next outlook period, model rainfall forecasts suggest a possible increase in rainfall over localized areas of Central America, including the Caribbean coasts and parts of central Guatemala and southern Caribbean. Suppressed or very little rainfall is expected elsewhere. As far as temperature is concerned, minimum temperature is expected to average near-normal. However, temperatures could still fall near or below-freezing point, which may negatively affect the livelihoods of residents over elevated terrains during nighttime or early morning.

Week 1 Rainfall Total Forecast and CMORPH climatology (mm)
February 20 – 27, 2019

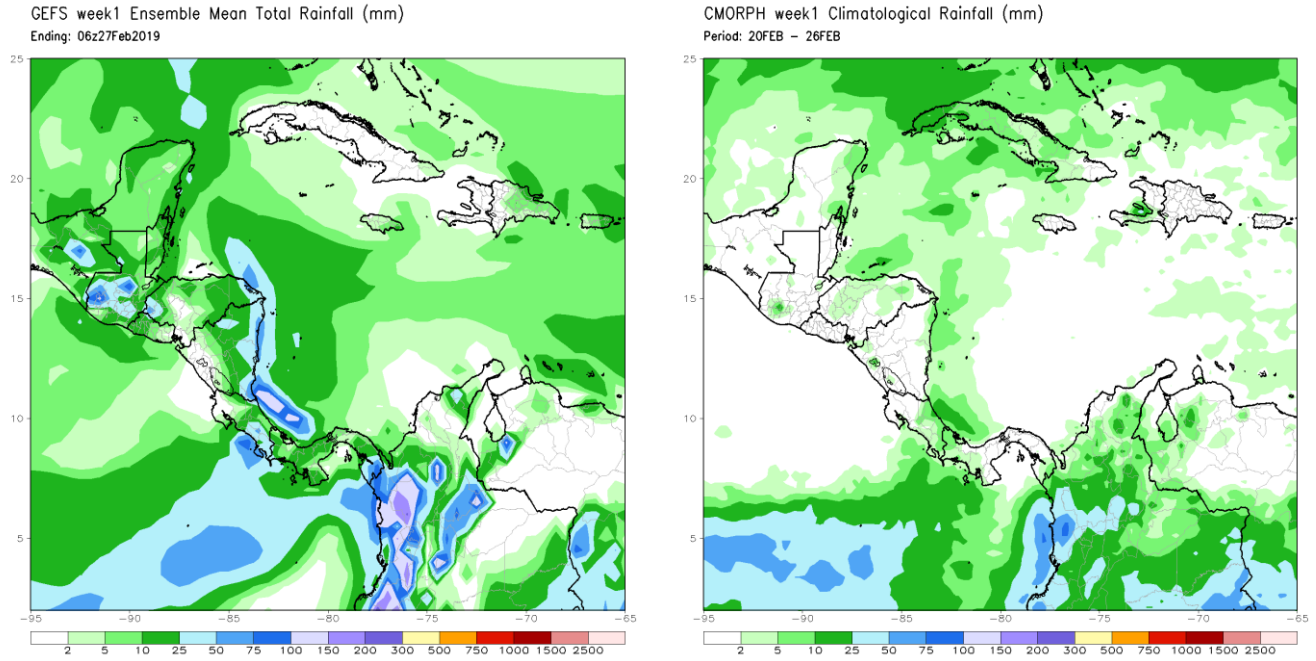


Figure 1: Source NOAA / CPC

Questions or comments about this product may be directed to Wassila.Thiaw@noaa.gov or 1-301-683-3424.