



CVF
V20

SCIENCE
BULLETIN

NOAA GIVES 75 PERCENT CHANCE THAT THIS EL NIÑO BECOMES STRONGEST ON RECORD

SOUTHERN AFRICA DROUGHT OUTLOOK ISSUED



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BOTTOM LINE

The peak of a potentially record-breaking El Niño is now underway, its global temperature signal has already arrived, and every major regional outlook is issued. The top lines for members are these.

- August 2026 was 1.65°C above pre-industrial, the joint warmest month ever recorded and the first month above 1.5°C since November 2025, on a record extra-polar sea surface temperature of 21.07°C, and it arrived before the El Niño peak, whose larger effect on global temperature lands in 2027.¹
- NOAA holds its greater than 90 percent chance of a very strong El Niño through the Northern Hemisphere fall and winter and raises to 75 percent, from 69 percent in August, the chance of a historic event exceeding every El Niño since 1950, defined as a three-month Relative Oceanic Niño Index at or above +2.5°C during October to December.²
- The ocean has continued to warm toward the historic threshold, with August indices of +1.8°C in Niño-3.4, +2.5°C in Niño-3 and +3.4°C in Niño-1+2, anomalies above +3.0°C in the eastern equatorial Pacific and subsurface anomalies in excess of +10°C,

while the WMO puts persistence through February 2027 at nearly 100 percent.^{2,3}

- Impacts are no longer forecasts. India has recorded its warmest August since 1901 with the monsoon 14 percent below normal; Indonesian fire emissions are on the 2015 trajectory with more than 113,000 people treated for smoke-related illness; four Central American governments have declared drought emergencies; and Vanuatu and Tonga have drought declarations or alerts in place.^{4,5,6,7}
- The last major pending outlook for Southern Africa has now been issued. The 33rd Southern Africa Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-33) favors below-normal rainfall from October to December across Angola, southern Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana, most of South Africa, Eswatini and Lesotho, persisting into January to March 2027, with above-normal temperatures across most of the region.⁸
- The Rasuwa disaster in Nepal on 26 August, with more than 1,300 dead and losses of at least US\$2.5 billion, has put mountain hazards on the loss and damage agenda and shown that a fund which pays in months cannot meet hazards that peak in weeks. This brief adds a Himalaya and Hindu Kush Himalaya row to the regional hazard profile on cryosphere grounds and does not attribute that event to El Niño.^{9,10}



For CVF-V20 members, the planning question is no longer how to prepare for the peak. It is how to manage the peak while it happens, on the basis of seasonal outlooks that are now issued for every major region, and how to carry the evidence of a 1.65°C month and a record El Niño into the Bangkok meetings and COP31.

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE THE AUGUST UPDATE

The single most important shift is that NOAA has moved the historic-event probability from 69 percent to 75 percent while the very strong outcome stayed above 90 percent, so the trajectory across five monthly updates, from roughly 25 percent in May to 63 percent in June, 81 percent in July and more than 90 percent in August and September, has now been joined by a second series that is also rising.¹ NOAA's strength table makes the shape of the event explicit. The probability of a very strong event on the Relative Oceanic Niño Index is 97 percent for September to November, 98 percent for October to December and 93 percent for November to January, then 75 percent for December to February before falling to 39 percent for January to March and 5 percent for February to April 2027.⁴ The peak is therefore the coming quarter, with the decay expected through the first quarter of 2027, which is consistent with the WMO expectation that impacts run well into next year.²

The threshold NOAA is describing has never

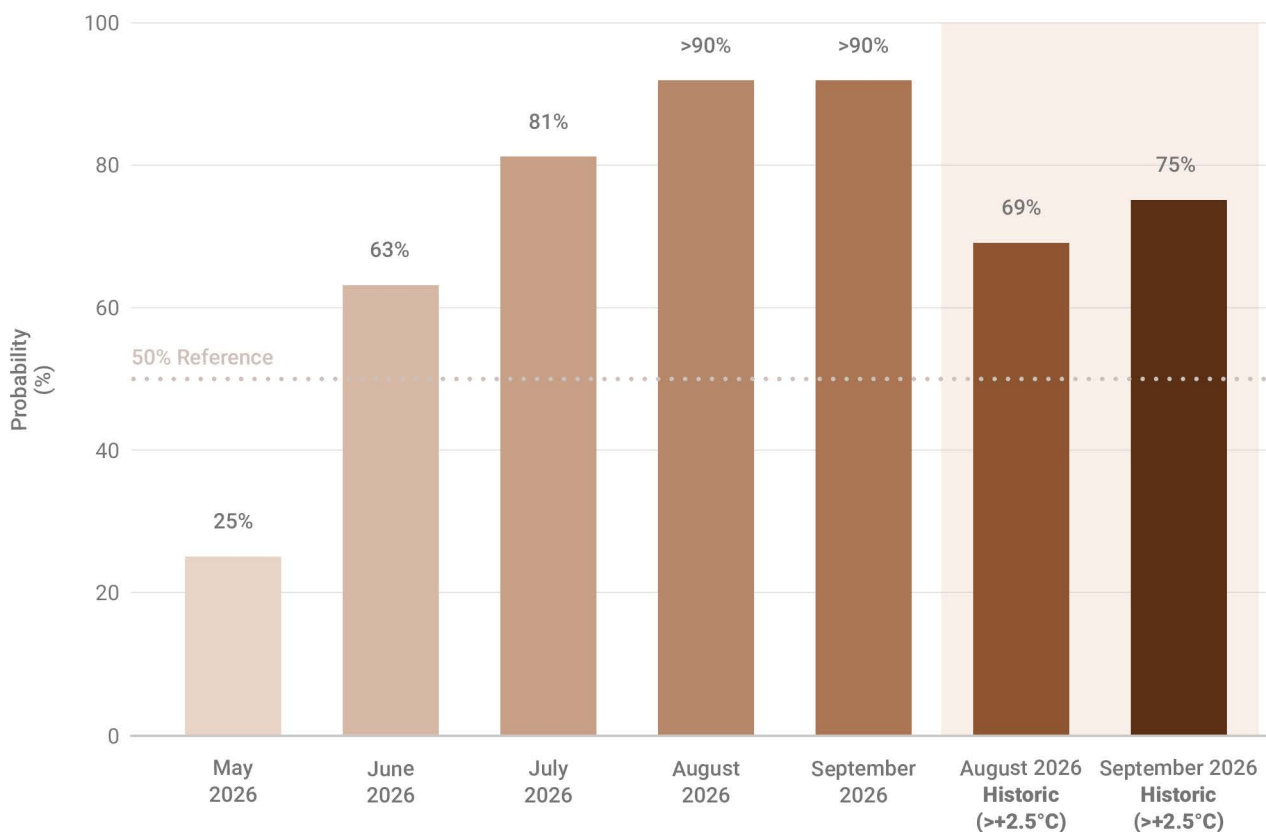
been reached, since the historical Relative Oceanic Niño Index peaked at +2.4°C in 1982 to 1983 and at +2.3°C in both 1997 to 1998 and 2015 to 2016, so a three-month value at or above +2.5°C would sit above every event in the instrumental record, which is why NOAA describes it as historic.⁵ The ocean has continued to warm toward that mark. Between the July and August indices, Niño-3.4 rose from +1.4°C to +1.8°C, Niño-3 from +1.7°C to +2.5°C, and Niño-1+2 from +2.9°C to +3.4°C, while the central Pacific Niño-4 index fell to +0.1°C, which marks this as an eastern Pacific event of the kind that has historically produced the strongest teleconnections.¹ The latest weekly values in NOAA's status update stand at +1.8°C for Niño-3.4, +2.7°C for Niño-3 and +3.9°C for Niño-1+2.⁶

The WMO has moved in step and now speaks in the same terms as NOAA, since its 3 September update gives a nearly 100 percent probability of persistence through both September to November 2026 and December 2026 to February 2027, reports that Niño-3.4 in its own dataset reached +2.0°C in July with weekly values of +2.2 to +2.6°C between late July and mid August and expects a positive Indian Ocean Dipole with a September to November mean of 0.9°C.² Members should note that NOAA and the WMO report Niño-3.4 from different sea surface temperature products. Hence, the WMO weekly values run higher than NOAA's monthly index for the same period without any disagreement on direction or magnitude. The WMO Secretary-General has described the mobilization of national meteorological services for this event as the largest in the organization's history.²

As before, "very strong" is NOAA's formal category for a Niño-3.4 anomaly above +2.0°C on the Relative Oceanic Niño Index, and "super El Niño" is the informal public synonym.⁴ The next NOAA discussion is scheduled for 8 October 2026.¹

**FIGURE 1:
NOAA "VERY STRONG" EL NIÑO PROBABILITY ACROSS THE MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2026 OUTLOOKS, WITH THE HISTORIC-EVENT ODDS (THREE-MONTH RONI AT OR ABOVE +2.5°C) OF 69 PERCENT ON 13 AUGUST AND 75 PERCENT ON 10 SEPTEMBER.**

Bars 1 to 5: probability of a "very strong" El Niño (Niño-3.4 above + 2.0°C) in successive NOAA monthly outlooks. Final two bar: the 13 August and 10 September 2026 outlooks' 69% and 75% chances of a historic event (three-month RONI at or above +2.5°C) exceeding any El Niño since 1950.



Sources: NOAA CPC ENSO Diagnostic Discussions.

EXPECTED REGIONAL IMPACTS ON CVF-V20 MEMBERS

Members should read this brief alongside the CVF-V20 Regional Climate Outlook Digest, which

the Secretariat is updating to carry the SARCOF-33 outlook in full. Since the August brief, every major regional outlook forum has issued, four Central American governments have declared El Niño drought emergencies, and a cryosphere disaster in Nepal has put mountain hazards on the loss and damage agenda, so this section is longer than usual.

The highest-stakes pending outlook for Southern Africa has now been issued, and it confirms the drought tendency. SARCOF-33, convened in Swakopmund from 25 to 28 August 2026, favors below-normal rainfall for October to December

across much of Angola, southern Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana, most of South Africa, Eswatini and Lesotho, with the dry signal persisting into January to March 2027 over Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and parts of South Africa. It also expects above-normal temperatures across most of the region from October to January.⁷ Normal to above-normal rainfall is favored over eastern DRC, most of Tanzania, northern Malawi and Zambia, Comoros and Seychelles.⁷ The forum attributes the pattern explicitly to a strong to very strong El Niño. The outlook now matches the 2015 to 2016 analog that left an estimated 40 million people acutely food insecure and cut regional maize yields by around 15 percent, which means drought contingency plans in the affected members should move from planning to implementation before the planting window closes.⁸ UNICEF has put a first number on the exposure, with more than 162 million children at risk across 13 Eastern and Southern African countries and a requirement of US\$173 million within its 2026 appeal.⁹

The Greater Horn picture set out in Version 4 holds, with the GHACOF74 outlook for October to December remaining the issued consensus, carrying a 90 percent chance of enhanced rainfall over southern Ethiopia, central to southern Somalia and northeastern Kenya and flood, flash-flood and landslide plans in the short-rains belt already in the implementation phase.¹⁰

South Asia has moved from forecast to outcome, since India recorded its warmest August since records began in 1901 and the all-India monsoon stood 14 percent below the long-period average to 7 September, with the southern peninsula 27 percent below. The IMD forecasts a below-normal September with strong El Niño named as the driver.¹¹ Nepal's meteorological service has reported season-to-date rainfall well below its expected pace in a year it flagged in advance as an El Niño monsoon, while the end-of-season totals

and the post-monsoon outlooks for the region are due at the end of September.¹²

This edition adds the Himalaya and Hindu Kush Himalaya as a distinct row in the hazard profile, covering our members Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic, because the region's hazards do not map onto the South Asia row and because the past month has shown what is at stake. On 26 August 2026, a mass of bedrock and glacier ice broke away from Langtang-Lirung in Rasuwa district, fell some 2,000 meters into the Lhende Khola, temporarily dammed the river and sent a flood wave down the Bhote Koshi and Trishuli that reached Mugling, more than 130 km downstream, within hours.¹³ More than 1,300 people are dead, several thousand remain missing, and the government estimates losses of at least US\$2.5 billion.¹⁴ Two points matter for how members use this row. First, the Rasuwa disaster is a cryosphere and permafrost hazard, not an El Niño impact, since neither ICIMOD nor the published attribution commentary identifies any El Niño mechanism, which means the brief should not be read as claiming one.¹³ Glacier area loss in the Langtang catchment has increased more than fourfold since 1964 and more than two-thirds of High Mountain Asia rock-ice avalanches start in probable permafrost zones, so the flood score reflects a warming-driven baseline hazard that this El Niño is unfolding on rather than a teleconnection.¹⁴ Second, the El Niño signal that the literature does support is the one already playing out on the plains and in the mid-hills. El Niño years tend to weaken the Nepal monsoon by about 9 percent on average and by 17.6 percent in 2015, though 1997 and 1998 delivered above-average rain, and to run hot over the Indo-Gangetic plain and the Tarai, while El Niño winters tend, on balance, to bring more western disturbance precipitation to the western Himalaya and Karakoram, a tendency the snowless El Niño winter of 2023 to 2024 conspicuously failed to follow.¹² Those tendencies

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land on a region whose seasonal snow reservoir was 27.8 percent below the long-term average this spring, the fourth consecutive below-normal year, with ten of twelve major basins below normal and ICIMOD already recommending that drought preparedness plans be activated.¹⁵ The row therefore scores water stress and heat high on documented evidence, drought medium because the post-monsoon deficit is documented but the winter sign is uncertain, flood high on cryosphere grounds that we mark explicitly as non-El Niño, and cyclone risk low.

Elsewhere, the direction set out in Version 4 holds, and the evidence has firmed, starting in the Maritime Continent, where the ASEAN Specialized Meteorological Center forecasts below-normal rainfall for September to November, has activated Alert Level 3 for the southern ASEAN region with widespread hotspots over Kalimantan and Sumatra and warns of heightened transboundary haze risk.¹⁶ Indonesian fires had released 76 million tonnes of carbon by 7 September, which puts 2026 on the same trajectory as 2015, when the full season released 333 million tonnes, while 113,336 people had been treated for fire-related respiratory conditions by 9 September.¹⁷ In the

Pacific, the Island Climate Update of 21 August gives a 100 percent chance that El Niño continues through 2026 and forecasts much drier than normal conditions, with a high chance of extreme dryness, across a large arc from western Micronesia and Papua New Guinea east to the Tuamotu Archipelago.¹⁸ Members should note a refinement to the drier belt described in [Science Bulletin No. 4](#), since the same outlook now places the equatorial island groups, including Kiribati, Tuvalu and Tokelau, on the wetter side of the pattern as convection shifts east, while the drier arc covers Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga and the Solomons.¹⁸ Vanuatu declared the first stage of meteorological drought on 21 July, Tonga has a national drought alert in place and the United Nations rates Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Timor-Leste, the Philippines and Indonesia as very high concern, with an additional 8.2 million people facing acute food insecurity across Asia and the Pacific.¹⁹

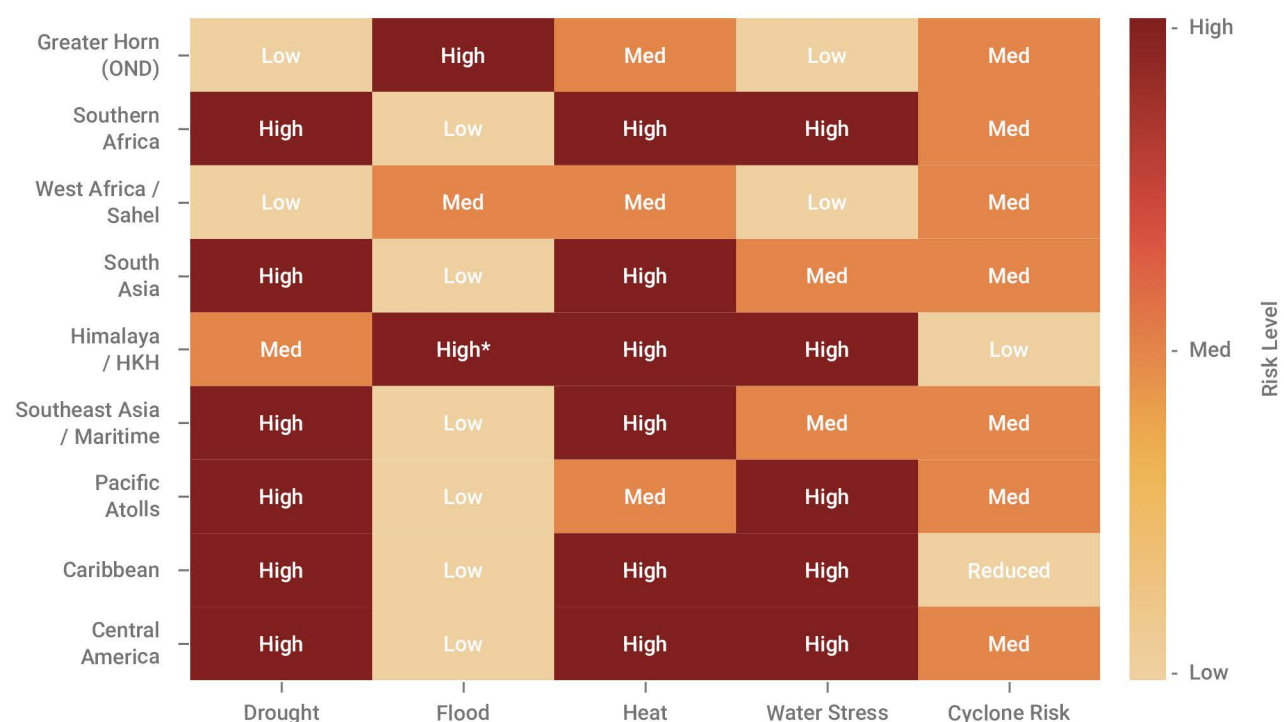
In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) outlook of 2 September names the islands where short-term drought is expected by the end of November, namely the ABC Islands, Antigua, the northern and northwest Bahamas, the

eastern Dominican Republic, northeast Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, Tobago and the US Virgin Islands, and expects recurrent episodes of excessive humid heat culminating in heatwaves through the season alongside unusually irregular and infrequent tropical cyclone activity.²⁰ NOAA's August update keeps its range of seven to 13 named storms with a 75 percent probability of a below-normal season. Every strong El Niño season since 1950 has produced below-normal Atlantic activity.²¹ Central America has crossed from outlook into emergency. Honduras declared a red alert on 19 August that now covers 103 of 298 municipalities. El Salvador declared a red alert on 30 August with first-cycle crop losses of 20 to 30 percent. Panama declared a national emergency

with 11 basins under water stress, Canal transits cut to 32 a day, and Guatemala declared a red alert in the Trifinio and a national orange alert on 11 September.²² A rapid assessment by Oxfam and regional partners finds that surveyed Dry Corridor communities in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala have lost close to 100 percent of their maize and bean crops, with around seven million people potentially at risk.²³ In West Africa and the Sahel, AGRHYMET's 31 August update expects a drier-than-normal end to the season, with rainfall declining more rapidly in September and October and deficits over southern Mauritania, Senegal, much of Mali and northern Guinea, which is a modest El Niño signal on the forum's own assessment and should be read on its own terms.²⁴

**FIGURE 2:
EXPECTED HAZARD PROFILE ACROSS CVF-V20 REGIONS IN A VERY STRONG EL NIÑO
(2026 TO 2027).**

Qualitative scale (Low, Med, High) based on the issued regional outlooks and the 1997-98 and 2015-16 events. The Greater Horn row reflects the GHACOF74 outlook (wetter, flood risk) and the Southern Africa row the SARCOF-33 outlook. The Himalaya / HKH flood score reflects cryosphere hazard, not an El Niño teleconnection.



Source: Synthesis by Office of the Chief Scientist, CVF-V20, drawing on NOAA, WMO, BoM, GHACOF 74, SARCOF-33, and peer-reviewed literature.

FISCAL AND LOSS-AND- DAMAGE IMPLICATIONS

The fiscal case is now anchored by a probability rather than a possibility, on the basis of a peer-reviewed assessment that estimated cumulative global losses of approximately US\$3.9 trillion from the 2015 to 2016 event over the following years, equivalent to roughly 4 to 5 percent of global GDP at the time, with the burden falling disproportionately on developing economies.²⁵ NOAA now gives three-to-one odds that this event exceeds 2015 to 2016 on the index that defines it, so the central planning case should carry a correspondingly larger bill, and it arrives as many members already face tripled debt-service burdens and constrained fiscal space.¹

The Rasuwa disaster has given the speed argument a live case, since Nepal petitioned the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage on 31 August, the first country to do so, and on 9 September received confirmation of US\$20 million under the Barbados Implementation Modalities, but that sum comes from proposals submitted earlier in 2026, the emergency request itself remains pending and the Board is not due to meet until December, which means a government facing losses of at least US\$2.5 billion has secured under one percent of them two weeks after the event, from a window designed before it.²⁶ The Fund's co-chairs have written that they are engaging the Board to address the request as rapidly as possible, while Nepal has said it intends to lead the mountain and loss and damage agenda at COP31 in Antalya and will host the eleventh Board meeting in Kathmandu in March 2027.²⁶ For the CVF-V20, the lesson is the one we

have made before, now with a number attached, that a fund that pays in months cannot respond to hazards that peak in weeks. The Secretariat will carry this case into the Bangkok meetings.

A note on attribution, directly relevant to the financing case. It would overstate the science to claim that warming caused this El Niño or intensified the Pacific warming itself, and our communications should not assert otherwise, just as they should not attribute the Rasuwa avalanche to El Niño. The IPCC finds no model consensus that anthropogenic forcing has changed the amplitude of El Niño sea surface temperature swings.²⁷ The defensible and stronger claim is that the event is unfolding on a baseline that warming has already made roughly 1.3 to 1.5°C hotter than pre-industrial, so the absolute heat, marine heatwaves, and temperature records during the event are human-caused even where the El Niño rhythm itself is natural, and the IPCC assesses it as very likely that the rainfall extremes that define strong El Niños will intensify in a warming world.²⁷ August 2026 illustrates the point, since a month that tied the warmest ever recorded arrived before the El Niño peak, on a record extra-polar sea surface temperature of 21.07°C.³ Because the global temperature response lags the Pacific peak by about three months, the larger effect of this event will land in 2027, for which Carbon Brief now gives a best estimate of 1.71°C above pre-industrial, a 92 percent chance of a new global record and a 94 percent chance of exceeding 1.5°C, directly into the COP31 cycle.²⁸ This shifts the event from a purely natural act of God toward a natural cycle whose harms are foreseeably amplified by emissions for which our members bear little responsibility, which is the stronger foundation for concessional finance, debt relief and Loss and Damage claims. The forthcoming CVF-V20 statement to the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings in Bangkok develops these asks in full.

RECOMMEN- DED ACTIONS FOR MEMBER STATES OVER THE NEXT 60 DAYS

The peak quarter has begun, so the recommendations from our August brief shift from preparation to execution. CVF-V20 members are encouraged to:

1. Adopt an event that exceeds the 2015 to 2016 magnitude as the central planning scenario, recognizing that NOAA now assigns a 75 percent chance to a historic event on the index that defines it.¹
2. Move Southern African drought plans from planning to implementation now that SARCOF-33 has been issued, prioritizing seed, water and livestock measures in Angola, southern Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana, Eswatini and Lesotho before the planting window, while Greater Horn members keep flood, flash-flood and landslide response in place through December.⁷
3. For Himalayan members, stand up or extend cryosphere hazard monitoring and downstream early warning on transboundary rivers, secure post-monsoon water supply in the plains and mid-hills on the assumption of a deficient monsoon, and prepare the mountain hazard case for COP31 on the loss and damage evidence from Rasuwa rather than on an El Niño attribution the science does not support.¹³
4. Pre-position water storage, seed stocks and essential medicines in high-risk subnational zones, with Pacific members in the drier arc from Papua New Guinea to the Tuamotus and Caribbean members named in the CariCOF drought outlook prioritizing drinking-water security and Maritime Continent members activating haze health protocols.¹⁸
5. Pre-arrange contingent liquidity now rather than relying on post-disaster appeals, and accelerate pending applications to the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund and Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage ahead of the Bangkok meetings, citing the Nepal timeline as evidence of what the current windows can and cannot deliver.²⁶
6. Communicate clearly that an El Niño Advisory is in effect, that a very strong event is near certain through the coming quarter, and that a record-breaking event now carries a 75 percent probability, while continuing to note that local impacts remain variable and that the 1997 to 1998 monsoon is the standing reminder that strong El Niños do not guarantee any single regional outcome.¹



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WHAT THE CVF-V20 SECRETARIAT WILL DO

The Office of the Chief Scientist will issue its next technical update following the NOAA ENSO Diagnostic Discussion scheduled for 8 October 2026, and will circulate an updated Regional Climate Outlook Digest carrying the SARCOF-33 outlook and the end-of-September South Asian outlooks in full. Fiscal implications of the event will be circulated ahead of the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings in Bangkok in October 2026 to reflect the historic-event outlook and the Nepal loss and damage timeline, while the Secretariat supports Nepal and other mountain members in carrying the mountain hazard case into COP31 in Antalya in November.

Questions on this brief should be directed to the Office of the Chief Scientist and Science Advisor at kq@cvfv20.org and sgoffice_ml@cvfv20.org, respectively, copy to secretariat@cvfv20.org.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ NOAA Climate Prediction Center, ENSO Diagnostic Discussion, 10 September 2026. [El Niño Advisory](#); greater than 90 percent chance of a very strong event during NH fall and winter 2026 to 2027; 75 percent chance of a historic event (three-month RONI at or above +2.5°C) during October to December, exceeding every event since 1950; August Niño-3.4 +1.8°C, Niño-3 +2.5°C, Niño-1+2 +3.4°C, Niño-4 +0.1°C; eastern Pacific anomalies above +3.0°C; subsurface anomalies in excess of +10°C; next discussion 8 October 2026.
- ² World Meteorological Organization, El Niño/La Niña Update and press release ["El Niño set to become very strong, raising risks of extreme weather into 2027"](#), 3 September 2026. Nearly 100 percent likelihood of persistence through February 2027; very strong intensity peaking toward the end of 2026 with impacts well into 2027; Niño-3.4 (WMO dataset) +2.0°C in July and weekly +2.2 to +2.6°C late July to mid-August; positive Indian Ocean Dipole with a September to November mean of 0.9°C.
- ³ Copernicus Climate Change Service, [August 2026 climate bulletin](#), 10 September 2026. August 2026 at 16.96°C, 1.65°C above the 1850 to 1900 average, joint warmest month ever recorded with July 2023 and the first month above 1.5°C since November 2025; extra-polar sea surface temperature 21.07°C, a record for August and a joint record for any month, with a daily record of 21.11°C.
- ⁴ NOAA Climate Prediction Center, [official ENSO strength probabilities on the Relative Oceanic Niño Index, September 2026 issue](#). Very strong (RONI at or above +2.0°C) at 97 percent for September to November, 98 percent for October to December, 93 percent for November to January, 75 percent for December to February, falling to 39 percent for January to March and 5 percent for February to April 2027.
- ⁵ NOAA Climate Prediction Center, [historical Relative Oceanic Niño Index table \(ERSSTv6\)](#). Three-month RONI peaks of +2.4°C in 1982 to 1983 and +2.3°C in both 1997 to 1998 and 2015 to 2016, so a value at or above +2.5°C would be unprecedented in the record.
- ⁶ NOAA Climate Prediction Center, [ENSO evolution, status and forecast presentation](#), 8 September 2026. Latest weekly sea surface temperature departures of +0.1°C for Niño-4, +1.8°C for Niño-3.4, +2.7°C for Niño-3 and +3.9°C for Niño-1+2; June to August 2026 RONI of +1.4°C.
- ⁷ SADC Climate Services Centre, [SARCOF-33 consensus statement and press release](#), Swakopmund, Namibia, 27 to 28 August 2026. Below-normal rainfall favored for October to December 2026 across much of Angola, southern Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana, most of South Africa, Eswatini and Lesotho, persisting into January to March 2027 for Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and parts of South Africa; normal to above-normal over eastern DRC, most of Tanzania, northern Malawi and Zambia, Comoros and Seychelles; above-normal temperatures October 2026 to January 2027; explicit attribution to a strong to very strong El Niño.
- ⁸ AGRA, ["Drought Crisis in Southern Africa: The 2015 to 2016 El Niño-induced drought"](#).
- ⁹ UNICEF, ["El Niño threatens more than two-thirds of children in Eastern and Southern Africa"](#), 1 September 2026. More than 162 million children at risk across 13 countries; UNICEF requires US\$173 million within its 2026 humanitarian appeal.
- ¹⁰ ICPAC, [GHACOF74 outlook for October to December 2026](#), Kigali, 17 to 18 August 2026 (wetter than normal; 90 percent chance of enhanced rainfall over southern Ethiopia, central to southern Somalia and northeastern Kenya).
- ¹¹ India Meteorological Department briefings of 1 September 2026 as [reported by Business Standard](#), 1 and 8 September 2026. Warmest August since records began in 1901 (28.01°C); June to August rainfall 13.8 percent below the long-period average and 14 percent below to 7 September, with the southern peninsula 27 percent below; September forecast below normal

(under 91 percent of the long-period average) with strong El Niño cited by the IMD Director General.

¹² Shrestha, A. B. et al., International Journal of Climatology (2000), on the strong correlation between all-Nepal monsoon precipitation and the Southern Oscillation Index; Nepal Department of Hydrology and Meteorology as reported by Nepalnews, 3 June 2026 (monsoon rainfall about 9 percent below average in El Niño years, 17.59 percent below in 2015, but above average in 1987 and 1998); Cannon, F. et al., [Climate Dynamics](#) 48 (2017) and Dimri, A. P., Climate Dynamics (2014), on the tendency for El Niño winters to bring enhanced western disturbance precipitation to the western Himalaya and Karakoram, with the snowless 2023 to 2024 El Niño winter as a documented exception.

¹³ ICIMOD, [press release](#) of 26 August 2026 on the Rasuwa flash flood and the Kyirong-Rasuwa Flood 2026 knowledge portal (updated 10 September 2026). An ice-rock avalanche from Langtang-Lirung temporarily dammed the Lhende Khola, and the dam burst sent a flood wave down the Bhote Koshi and Trishuli to Mugling, more than 130 km downstream; ICIMOD states that it is too early to determine what role climate change played and makes no reference to El Niño.

¹⁴ Carbon Brief, ["Q&A: What can and cannot be said about global warming's role in the 2026 Himalayan floods,"](#) 8 September 2026. More than 1,300 dead; property and infrastructure losses of at least US\$2.5 billion; glacier area loss in the Langtang catchment rose more than fourfold from 1964 to 2023; more than two-thirds of High Mountain Asia rock-ice avalanches start in probable permafrost zones; no single-event attribution is possible and no El Niño mechanism is identified.

¹⁵ ICIMOD, [HKH Snow Update 2026](#), April 2026. Snow persistence across the Hindu Kush Himalaya 27.8 percent below the long-term average, the fourth consecutive below-normal year, with ten of twelve major basins below normal; ICIMOD recommends activating drought preparedness plans.

¹⁶ ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre, [seasonal](#)

[outlook](#) updated 2 September 2026 and regional haze advisory of 10 September 2026. Below-normal rainfall over most of the Maritime Continent for September to November; strong El Niño; Alert Level 3 activated for the southern ASEAN region with widespread hotspots over Kalimantan and Sumatra and a heightened risk of transboundary haze.

¹⁷ Carbon Brief, ["El Niño: Indonesia fire emissions in 2026 on track to match record for this century,"](#) 11 September 2026, using Global Fire Emissions Database data (76 million tonnes of carbon to 7 September 2026, against 333 MtC for the whole of 2015); Scientific American, 10 September 2026 (113,336 people treated for fire-related respiratory conditions by 9 September, more than 12.5 million exposed to haze).

¹⁸ Earth Sciences New Zealand (NIWA), [Island Climate Update 311](#), September 2026, issued 21 August 2026. 100 percent chance that El Niño continues through the rest of 2026; much drier than normal conditions likely across a large arc from western Micronesia and Papua New Guinea east to the Tuamotu Archipelago, with a high chance of extremely dry conditions; above normal rainfall across eastern Micronesia and island groups along the equator including Kiribati, Tuvalu and Tokelau.

¹⁹ United Nations, [Asia-Pacific El Niño snapshot](#), 28 August 2026. Vanuatu declared the first stage of meteorological drought on 21 July 2026 (Torba and parts of Sanma, Penama and Malampa); Tonga issued a drought warning for Ha'apai and a national drought alert; Indonesia, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji rated very high concern; an additional 8.2 million people facing acute food insecurity across Asia and the Pacific.

²⁰ Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, [CariCOF newsletter](#) for September to November 2026 and December to February 2026 to 2027, issued 2 September 2026. Continued El Niño through both seasons at about 100 percent confidence; rainfall the usual or less across most of the Antilles, the northwest Bahamas and coastal Guyana; short-term drought by end November for the ABC Islands, Antigua, the

northern and northwest Bahamas, the eastern Dominican Republic, northeast Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, Tobago and the US Virgin Islands; recurrent excessive humid heat culminating in heatwaves; unusually irregular and infrequent tropical cyclone activity.

²¹ NOAA, [August 2026 Atlantic hurricane season update](#), 6 August 2026, as summarized by Moody's, 21 August 2026. Seven to 13 named storms, two to six hurricanes and zero to two major hurricanes, with a 75 percent probability of a below-normal season; every strong El Niño season since 1950 has produced below-normal Atlantic activity.

²² Government emergency declarations in Central America tied to El Niño drought, August to September 2026, as [reported by Infobae/EFE](#) (Honduras, 19 August 2026), *El Tiempo* (El Salvador and Panama, 30 August 2026) and *Infobae* (Guatemala, 12 September 2026). Honduras red alert first in 75 municipalities and later in 103 of 298; El Salvador red alert with first-cycle losses of 20 to 30 percent; Panama national emergency with 11 basins under water stress and Canal transits cut to 32 a day; Guatemala red alert in the Trifinio and a national orange alert.

²³ Oxfam and the Regional Risk Management Concertation (CRGR) rapid assessment of the Central American Dry Corridor, as [reported by Infobae](#), 11 September 2026. Surveyed communities in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala have lost close to 100 percent of their maize and bean crops, with the life and health of around seven million people potentially at risk.

²⁴ AGRHYMET Regional Climate Centre for West Africa and the Sahel, [Technical Note No. 3](#), update of the 2026 seasonal forecasts, 31 August 2026. A drier-than-normal end to the season with rainfall declining more rapidly in September and October, deficits over southern Mauritania, Senegal, much of Mali and northern Guinea, and El Niño expected to reach very strong intensity toward the end of the year.

²⁵ Nature Communications, ["Nonlinear El Niño impacts](#)

[on the global economy under climate change"](#) (2023); see also Callahan and Mankin, "Persistent effect of El Niño on global economic growth," *Science* 380 (2023).

²⁶ [The Kathmandu Post](#), 9 and 10 September 2026. Nepal secured confirmation of US\$20 million from the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage under the Barbados Implementation Modalities from proposals submitted earlier in 2026, while its urgent request of 31 August following the Rasuwa disaster remains pending; the Fund's co-chairs wrote that they are engaging the Board to address the request as rapidly as possible; Nepal intends to lead the mountain and loss and damage agenda at COP31 and will host the eleventh Board meeting in Kathmandu on 17 to 19 March 2027.

²⁷ [IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, Working Group I, Chapter 4](#) (no model consensus on systematic change in ENSO SST amplitude; very likely increase in ENSO rainfall variability).

²⁸ Carbon Brief, ["State of the climate: Rapidly developing El Niño raises chance of record-warm 2026,"](#) Z. Hausfather, 24 July 2026. Best estimate for 2027 of 1.71°C above pre-industrial (90 percent range 1.49 to 1.93°C), a 92 percent chance that 2027 sets a new global record and a 94 percent chance that it exceeds 1.5°C; 2026 best estimate 1.51°C.



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