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MEDIA RELEASE

3pm Friday 14 October 2016

ELEVATED RISK OF TROPICAL CYCLONES PREDICTED FOR 2016/2017 SEASON

With tropical cyclone season approaching, the Fiji Meteorological and Hydrological Service have released its annual Tropical Cyclone Seasonal Outlook.

The official 2016/17 tropical cyclone season begins on 1 November 2016 and ends on 30 April 2017, although cyclones can form in months outside this period. The peak period for cyclones in the region is usually from January to March.

The Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre based in Nadi is responsible for monitoring cyclone activity in a specific area of the Pacific, known as its Area of Responsibility or AoR. The area covers Fiji to Samoa and Tonga to New Caledonia. Specifically it is the area bounded from 160 degrees East to 120 degrees West Longitude and from Equator to 25 degrees South Latitude.

Based on the latest information, the probability of tropical cyclone occurrences is elevated for Fiji and Tonga while Cook Islands, New Caledonia, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Vanuatu and Wallis & Futuna is predicted normal during the upcoming 2016/17 season.

Last cyclone season, there were 8 cyclones within the AoR, one of which was TC Winston.

In comparison, this cyclone season is expected to have five to seven tropical cyclones within the AoR, with three to five (3-5) predicted to reach Category 3 with one to two (1-2) predicted to reach Category 4 or 5 status.

In regards to Fiji, we expect as many as two to three tropical cyclones to pass through Fiji waters this season with one anticipated to reach Category 3 or above.

These are predictions based on statistical and scientific evidence, not actual forecasts.

Similar patterns in the past have shown that tropical cyclones have mainly affected areas in the northern and western parts of Fiji.

However, it is critical that communities across Fiji act responsibly and pay close attention to all weather forecast, warnings and advisories issued by the Fiji Meteorological Service and Government. We learn from TC Winston which affected Fiji in February this year.

It is very important that Fijians are quick to take heed of warnings and take the necessary precautions in order to save lives and protect property.

These are predictions to give the public a general idea about what to expect for the upcoming cyclone season and not definite numbers.

A detailed version of the 2016/17 Tropical Cyclone Season Outlook issued by the Fiji Meteorological Service is available www.met.gov.fj (website), **Fiji Ministry of Infrastructure & Transport** (facebook) and **infra_fj** (twitter).

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