



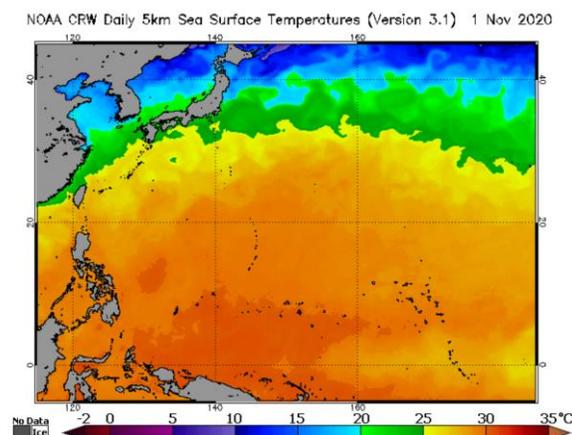
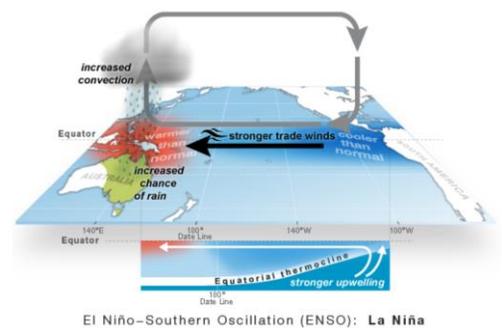
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 Office of the President

Palau Successfully Participates in the 7th Pacific Islands Climate Outlook Forum (PICOF-7)

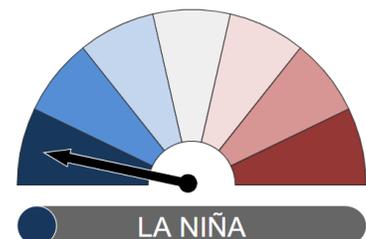
From October 22-23, the Republic of Palau through the National Weather Service Office (WSO Palau) including media representatives from Palau successfully participated in the virtual 7th Pacific Islands Climate Outlook Forum (PICOF-7) held over Zoom, an online video conferencing platform.

PICOF-7 brought together Weather/MET Services representatives, climate experts, the media and other stakeholders, over the course of two days to discuss the Pacific region’s upcoming typhoon season, seasonal outlooks of the past, current and future state of the climate and the likely impacts.

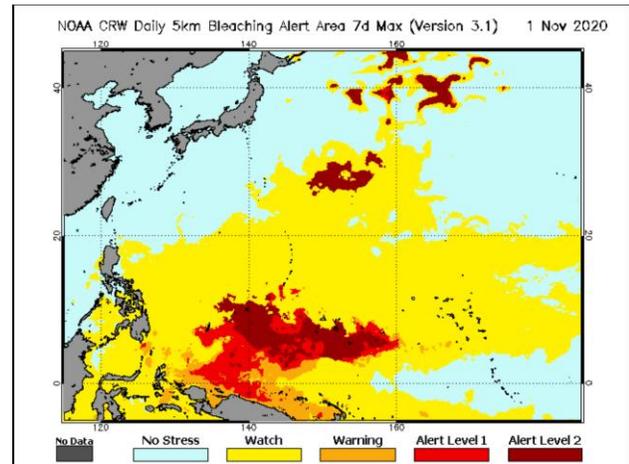
Part of the discussion was reviewing observations from the past three to six months and the future outlooks for the upcoming three to six months, including the three phases of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO). ENSO is a natural, recurring, irregular, climate variability pattern, not climate change, where about 3 to 7 years climate conditions over the Pacific Ocean basin change dramatically. ENSO represents three possible phases of the state of the climate, ENSO-neutral, the Warm and the Cold phase. The extremes of these phases are what we know as El Niño (Warm phase) and La Niña (Cold phase).



Although Palau was not among the speakers at the Forum, Ms. Kikuko Mochimaru, PICOF-7 participant and WSO Palau’s Staff Meteorologist, has stated that Palau’s current state of the climate is La Niña, one of three ENSO phases.



In terms of Palau's outlook over the next few months, Ms. Mochimaru explains, "La Niña conditions may continue through February-April 2021, after a peak in December. The intensity (weak, moderate or strong) determines its impacts. Therefore, constant monitoring of the equatorial Pacific Ocean is crucial. The current outlook is a moderate La Nina that may become strong. During a La Nina event, Palau's surface and upper level winds, air temperatures, ocean temperatures at the surface and subsurface, sea levels, and rainfall are above normal. Palau's dry season from January to April may be wetter than normal. Coral bleaching stresses are possible during a La Nina event. NOAA's Coral Reef Watch's 5km Bleaching Alert Level 7 day Maximum shows northern Babeldaob on a Watch level and southern Babeldaob on Alert 1. Dr. Golbuu, CEO of Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) stated that his researchers found some bleaching in the reefs. According to PICRC, Dr. Golbuu and his team are on the field, mobilizing research across the areas, and a report may be available soon. Typhoon activity is expected to be normal or below normal through December in the western North Pacific."



As a member of the National Emergency Committee (NEC), WSO Palau works closely with the National Emergency Management Office and relevant agencies to educate and provide Weather and Climate information necessary for the community to adequately prepare for extreme events, while also continuing to monitor and interpret Palau's climate.

For WSO Palau, the PICOFS validates on a regional and global scale what we take from the local and monthly Online Climate Outlook Forums (OCOF). Additionally, PICOFS is a global arena for weather and climate specialists, researchers, oceanographers, model developers, various stakeholders and users to gather as one and discuss the state of the climate (past, current and future), global model outputs and its uncertainties, potential impacts from climate extremes, suggestions/examples of mitigation/recovery efforts and sharing of ideas on how climate information is disseminated and how it could be improved.

The overall objective of the virtual PICOFS7 is to produce relevant climate outlook guidance in real time to reduce climate-related risks and to also support sustainable development for the coming season.

More information detailed information about the Pacific's climate can be found at Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) Australia: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/> and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) Coral Reef Watch: <https://www.coralreefwatch.noaa.gov>

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