

ANOTHER LIVELY HURRICANE SEASON IN 2005

Following on from last year's exceptionally active hurricane season, it looks as if this year could also be pretty dynamic. Based upon current and projected climate signals the Tropical Storm Risk consortium, led by UCL's Benfield Hazard Research Centre, forecasts that Atlantic Basin and US landfalling tropical cyclone activity will be 160 percent of average in 2005. In its March Forecast Update, TSR forecasts 14.0 (± 3.2) tropical storms, of which 7.9 (± 2.3) are predicted to be hurricanes. 3.6 (± 1.6) of these are forecast to be intense hurricanes in the category 3 - 5 range. The consortium forecasts that 4.3 (± 2.1) tropical storms will make landfall in the US, with 2.0 (± 1.6) of these having hurricane status.

The TSR February forecast spans the period from June 1st to November 30th, 2005, and employs data through to the end of February 2005. The consortium's two predictors are the forecast July-September 2005 trade wind speed over the Caribbean and tropical North Atlantic, and the forecast August-September 2005 sea-surface temperature in the tropical North Atlantic. The first of these influences cyclonic vorticity - how easy it is for rotating storm systems to develop - in the main hurricane track region, while the second provides moisture and heat to power incipient storms in the main track region.

Monthly Forecast Updates will be issued through to August 2005 and can be accessed at: www.benfieldhrc.org/