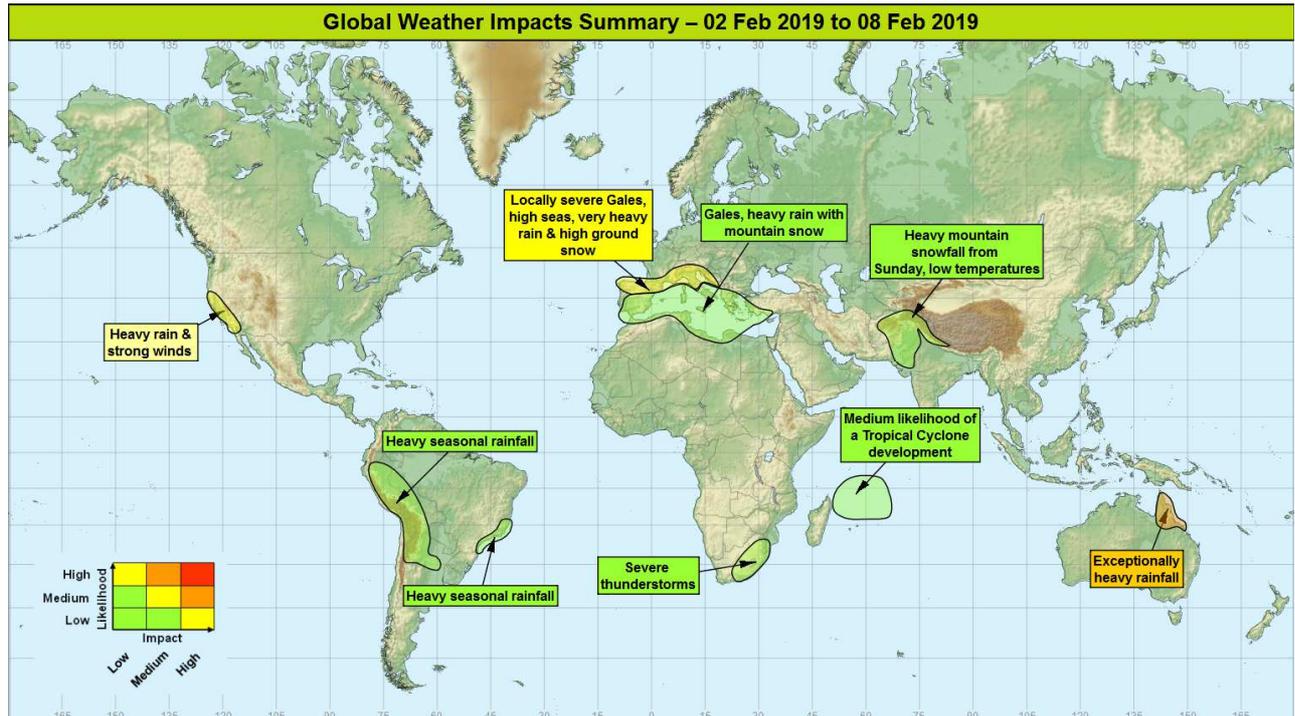


Global Weather Impacts – Saturday 2nd to Friday 7th February 2019

Issued on Saturday 2nd February 2019

HEADLINES

- Exceptional, perhaps unprecedented, amounts of heavy monsoon rainfall over northeastern Australia.
- Further widely unsettled weather for southern Europe and the Mediterranean.
- Heavy rainfall and mountain snow for much of California through the next few days.



DISCUSSION

Tropical Cyclones

There are currently no active tropical cyclones.

The following regions are being monitored for potential tropical cyclone development:

Southwestern Indian Ocean

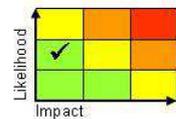
Weather

There is a moderate likelihood of at least one tropical cyclone development to the northeast of Madagascar next week. Although any developments would likely remain offshore through most of this period, there is a small risk that if one system were to form it could go on to affect La Reunion and Mauritius towards the end of next week.

Discussion

An area of shear instability on the ITCZ is signalled to generate an enclosed circulation over the weekend. This will likely begin to organise deep convection in its vicinity with conditions becoming favourable for the gradual development of a tropical cyclone during the early part of next week, perhaps aided by a westerly propagating Rossby Wave. There is still low confidence regarding this development, with the signal markedly varying between different model output. The GM now has support from ECMWF regarding this feature, but there is no support from the GFS, which continues to develop a different area of low pressure further east. The extended range EC deterministic suggests a system close to Mauritius next weekend.

Expected Impacts



This forecast may be amended at any time

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Since any development is likely to remain offshore during the majority of this period, impacts will be restricted to strong wind and rough sea impacts on marine transport.

Europe

Much of southern Europe and the Mediterranean, along with northern parts of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya

Weather

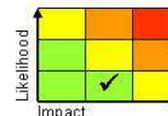
Remaining very unsettled during the coming week, initially across the west, then later for central and eastern parts. Periods of heavy rain and thunderstorms will affect much of this region. Through the next week many locations could see 50-100 mm of rainfall, with peak accumulations of up to 300 mm possible in the Balkan mountain region (which would be approaching twice the average February rainfall) through the course of this weekend. At higher elevations the rainfall will fall as snow, as low as 1000 M over the southern Alps, and 800 M over the Pyrenees. Very strong winds will also be seen across large parts of this region, with gales and very rough seas likely. The winds will be strong enough across parts of North Africa to lift dense dust storms that could extend north into southern Europe at times.

Discussion

A series of trough extensions and disruptions will occur across this region over the coming week, and these features will help develop deep surface lows in the Western and Central Mediterranean. Bands of heavy rainfall will surround these systems, and strong winds will help to orographically enhance the precipitation totals across high ground. A significant Mistral is signalled through Sunday into early Monday. On the northern edge of these lows colder continental air will result in a threat of significant snowfall, especially at higher elevations.

Expected Impacts

Flash flooding and river flooding are significant threats in this region, with an enhanced likelihood of landslides in areas where the terrain is steep. Dangerous marine conditions are expected, with large waves and the possibility of coastal flooding. Heavy snowfall chiefly over the regions mountains, but could transiently impact some cities in northern Italy too. Lifted dust storms may impact on aviation and the air quality across North Africa and southern Europe.



Northern and western Iberia, southern France and northern Italy, Balkans Coast

Weather

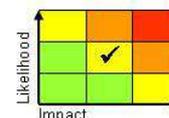
Within the broader green zone highlighted above (that will bring impacts through the coming week), Storm Helena (named by the Spanish Met Service) will bring a period of severe gales (gusts up to 60 mph). Some very heavy rainfall and mountain snow (to low levels across northern Italy) through Saturday, this persisting into Sunday for the Balkans.

Discussion

Through Saturday a deep area of low pressure (named Storm Helena) will be forced by a trough extension and disruption driving southeast from Biscay into the western Med, with Helena emerging into the western Mediterranean Saturday morning. The strongest winds will transfer into the Catalan regions of Spain and France on Saturday as a strong Mistral flow develops on the lows western flank. Strong N to NW'y wind will lead to a further 50 to 75 mm of precipitation falling on the hills facing this direction. This precipitation will fall as snow above 800 M in the post frontal airmass showers. Strong SW flow to the east of the low will drive frequent heavy showers and thunderstorms into the mountains of western Italy and The Balkans.

Expected Impacts

Flash flooding and river flooding are significant threats in this region, with an enhanced likelihood of landslides in areas where the terrain is steep. Dangerous marine conditions are expected, with large waves and the coastal flooding likely. Heavy snowfall is expected over fairly modest hills across Iberia through Saturday.



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North America

California

Weather

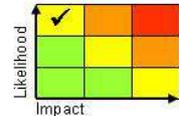
Heavy rainfall, falling as snow on the Sierra Nevada mountains, is expected to affect much of California on Saturday and Sunday, including Los Angeles. As much as 100 to 150 mm of rain could fall near the coast, with peak rainfall of 350 mm in the mountains (accumulating as snow at above 1500 M). There is also the threat of gale force winds across California for a time, building very rough coastal seas. The unsettled weather looks likely to continue into next week.

Discussion

An active cold front extending south from this low will bring heavy rainfall and mountain snowfall to California on Saturday and Sunday. Frequent showers in the cool northwesterly flow that follows the system will then bring further precipitation to the region through Monday and likely into the middle part of next week.

Expected Impacts

Flash flooding is likely, along with an enhanced threat of mudslides (especially in burn scar regions). Very strong winds could disrupt aviation and bring down some trees, and could build dangerous marine conditions and cause coastal flooding. Snowfall over the Sierra Nevada mountains may disrupt travel on high passes and will enhance the risk of avalanche here.



Central America and Caribbean

Nil significant.

South America

Peru, Bolivia, northern Chile, Ecuador, northwest Argentina and western Brazil

Weather

Frequent heavy showers and thunderstorms will affect this area through the coming week, resulting in heavy seasonal rainfall. Up to 100 mm of rain is possible in 24 hours, with a weekly peak total of up to 400 mm (around twice the monthly average).

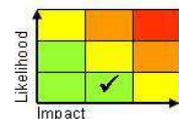
There is the potential for significant water to run towards the Pacific through the desert regions of northwestern Chile and southwestern Peru. In northwestern Argentina is at threat of severe thunderstorms that could result in intense rainfall, frequent lightning, large hail, strong winds and tornadoes.

Discussion

The progression of the MJO into Phase 7 through the next week is likely to be contributing to a period of enhanced seasonal rainfall in this part of South America. In addition an unusually strong sub-tropical high located in the River Plate region, will continue to drag the monsoon plume south across this part of South America. This high will also cause a weakening of the trade winds across the Eastern Pacific (off the northern Chile and southern Peru coastlines), resulting in sea breezes drawing moist oceanic air inland, allowing some isolated convection to break out across the usually very dry Atacama desert and western Andes.

Expected Impacts

Flash flooding and landslides are a significant threat in the mountainous areas. Flash flooding also possible if thunderstorms impact urban areas. Severe thunderstorms also bring the threat of large hail damage, frequent lightning that could disrupt aviation and power networks, strong gusty winds and isolated tornadoes. Across the desert regions the unusually high level of rainfall runoff may bring severe flooding in the usually dry alluvial plains that many people live and farm along.



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Central eastern Brazil.

Weather

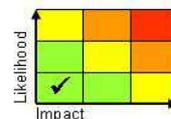
Spells of heavy rain and thunderstorms are expected along Brazil's Atlantic coastline on Sunday and Monday. Around 50-100mm could fall each day, with the area of heavier rainfall generally migrating northeast with time. Some locations could see as much as 200 mm, with some major population centres at risk including Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

Discussion

A strong subtropical high located over the River Plate region (discussed in the previous section), will drive a mid-latitude cold front northwards across this area. This front will act as a focus for heavy rain and thunderstorm activity. Model profiles show over 2000 j/kg CAPE and high perceptible water moisture, and suggest convection will be very efficient at generating heavy precipitation.

Expected Impacts

Flash flooding and landslides are a significant threat in areas where terrain is steep (particularly where developments are unplanned and poorly located). Some large and vulnerable cities such as Sao Paulo and Rio De Janeiro lie in this region.



Africa

Northern parts of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya – See *Europe* section.

Madagascar, La Reunion and Mauritius – See *Tropical Storms* section.

Central and eastern South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and southwest Mozambique

Weather

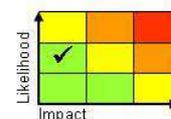
Severe thunderstorms are expected to affect this region through until Tuesday, with the peak activity tending to migrate northeast with time. These storms will produce intense rainfall, with up to 75-100 mm of rain falling in a few hours (the equivalent of a month's worth of rain). Frequent lightning, large hail and strong winds are also likely.

Discussion

A complex upper trough will become slow moving and constantly re-enforced across southeast South Africa, with the marked upper forcing engaging a very warm plume that has been brought south from sub-tropical latitudes. This will result in large CAPE (2000-2500 j/kg) storms, with good vertical wind shear allowing for severe, long lasting storms to develop.

Expected Impacts

Severe thunderstorms will bring the threat of flash flooding, large hail damage, frequent lightning that could disrupt aviation and power networks, strong gusty winds.



Middle East

Nil significant.

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Asia

Afghanistan, Pakistan, northern India and Nepal

Weather

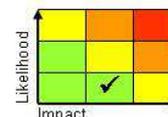
Rainfall and heavy mountain snow will move east across this region between Sunday and Thursday. Across Afghanistan 50-100 cm of snowfall could affect the high mountains on Sunday and Monday, with up to 20 cm possible in Kabul. But as this region moves east to affect Kashmir and Nepal the precipitation will become even heavier with between 1-2 M of snowfall across the southern parts of the Himalayas. It will also draw some unusually cold air south across much of Pakistan and NW India.

Discussion

Blocking in the upper air across eastern Europe will lead to a longwave trough extension taking place across this region over the coming week, forming an almost mid-latitude style depression. This will lead to the strong southwesterly flow drawing warm moist air northeastwards from the Gulf region. Forced ascent of this air mass due to the upper trough, and later in the period increased orographic enhancement will lead to rainfall and above 2500 M heavy mountain snow.

Expected Impacts

Snowfall over the mountains will likely block some high road passes in the region and enhance the risk of avalanches. Overall the impact of the snowfall is likely to be positive as it will top up the snowpack in the region, when this melts in the spring and early summer it provides much of this region's water prior to the monsoon arrival. Below average temperatures may impact vulnerable populations.



Australasia

Northern Australia

Weather

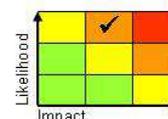
Frequent spells of intense rainfall and thunderstorms are expected throughout the next week. Urban areas along the northern Queensland coastline are likely to see some intense downpours, this includes Cairns, Townsville and Mackay. At this stage, large parts of northern Queensland look likely to see a further 200-400 mm during this period with some areas seeing as much as 1000 mm. Average monthly rainfall for this region is between 200-500 mm, with Townsville having already seen around 850 mm of rain in the past seven days.

Discussion

The monsoon trough currently sits over the north of Queensland focusing convection here. A tropical low is embedded within it and this will probably help to focus severe convection and heavy rainfall. In addition, the MJO now moving over the western Pacific (phase 7) may be having some influence in enhancing activity here. The main models are now in pretty good agreement as to the areas affected, and the likely rainfall totals.

Expected Impacts

Rainfall will be the primary cause of impacts, with severe flash and river flooding already occurring in and around Townsville, with other parts of northern Queensland at threat. This is leading to the disruption of transport and utilities, with increasing numbers of properties being flooded. There is the potential for some isolated communities to be cut-off for a number of days or weeks. Since Townsville (a city of around 180,000 people) is being severely impacted, and the Australian military are now involved in humanitarian efforts, with this event being called an unprecedented flood event for the city, this event has been raised to a high of medium impacts.



Additional information

Nil.

Issued at: 020810 UTC **Meteorologist:** Mark Sidaway

Global Guidance Unit

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