Sea Surface Temperatures Warmed to Neutral ENSO Conditions Favoured to Persist for the Rest of the 2017 Dry Season

The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) returned to a neutral state during the last four weeks, with most indicators close to their average values. During the four weeks ending February 25, 2017, the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean have shown surface warming which resulted in SSTs that are near-to-below average in the central tropical Pacific Ocean and notably above average in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. Looking ahead, most climate models favour this warming to continue during the remainder of the 2017 local dry season and start of the wet season with at least six models suggesting a possible tilt towards El Niño threshold levels by the middle of the 2017 wet season. However, at this time of year, due to what is known as the spring barrier, ENSO has its greatest variability and lowest model accuracy, therefore caution must be taken when using the state of ENSO to determine possible local climate conditions for this time of the year. Nevertheless, ENSO-neutral on the warm side has shown some association with tilting the odds towards drier and warmer conditions in Trinidad and Tobago and the south-eastern Caribbean region but these effects vary from one ENSO-neutral event to another.

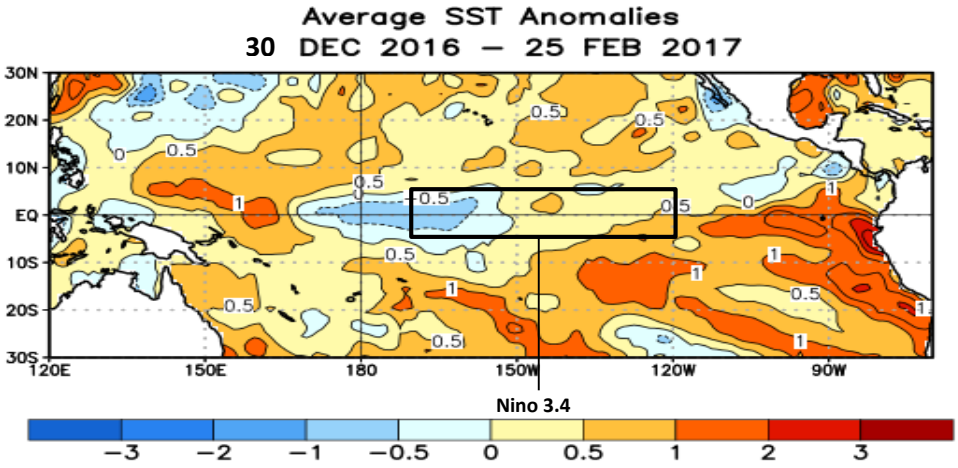

Figure 1: SST Departures (^{0}C) in the Niño-3.4 (5°N-5°S, 170°W-120°W) region during the last four weeks. Source & Adapted from http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/MJO/enso.shtml

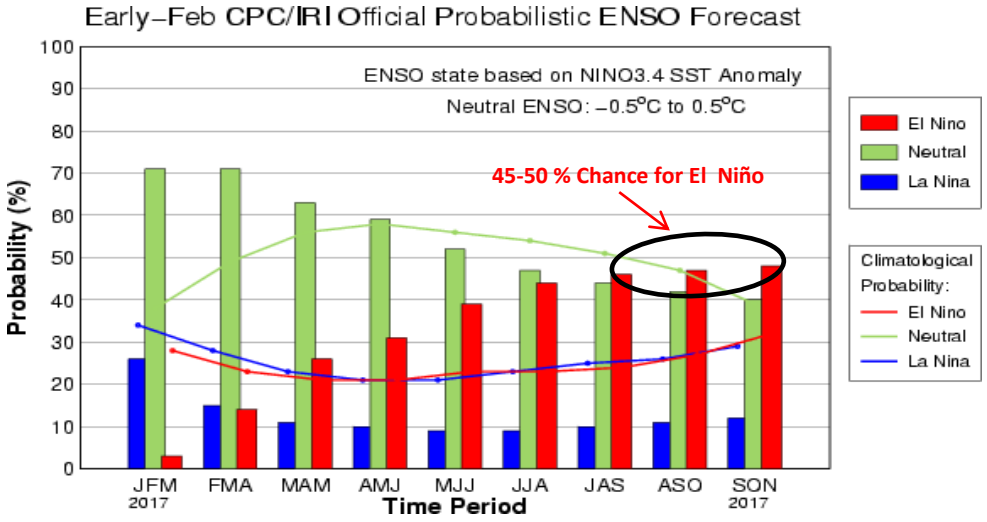

Figure 2: IRI/CPC Pacific Consensus Probabilistic ENSO Forecast showing ENSO-neutral is slightly favoured (55-60% chance) for the rest of the local 2016 wet season. Source & Adapted from http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/MJO/enso.shtml