



# Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research **INFOSHEET**

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## Regional El Niño Workshops

A partnership of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Global Programs, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and International Research Institute (IRI) for Climate Prediction along with regional institutions joined together to hold a series of three meetings that included a climate outlook forum, a workshop to design regional pilot applications projects, and a conference on the 1997-98 El Niño and its impacts and potential applications of climate forecast information. For the first time in history, the state of climate science provided an opportunity for governments, policy makers and managers in climate-sensitive sectors to utilize probabilistic, seasonal forecast information to reduce El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)-related socioeconomic disruption.

These 3-day meetings were held from October 1997 to January 1998 for the following regions: Pacific South America (Lima, Peru); southeast South America (Montevideo, Uruguay); and northeast South America (Fortaleza, Brazil).

During these meetings, climate scientists from regional universities and institutes, national meteorological services, IAI, WMO, NOAA and IRI worked to formulate a consensus regional precipitation forecast for a given time period. These same participants then joined potential users of this information to develop regional pilot applications projects tailored for climate-sensitive sectors (e.g. health, agriculture, fisheries, disaster management, water resources). On the third day of these meetings, participants from these workshops shared this information with representatives of government, industry, media, and the general public.

During the regional applications workshops, participants designed regional applications projects for climate-sensitive sectors such as health, agriculture, fisheries, disaster management, water resources, and others. Proposals for these projects are being or will be considered by several funding sources. Additional information on these proposals will be available in reports of these workshops.

For each climate outlook meeting, the participants issued a statement explaining the methodology used to formulate the forecast and then provided the forecast itself. Below are highlights of the consensus regional precipitation forecasts for Pacific South America, southeast South America, and northeast South America.

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Please see the following web site for the full statements and accompanying maps:  
<http://iri.ucsd.edu/forecast/sup/>

**Pacific South America Forecast for December-January-February-March 1997-98:**

Above normal rainfall along the coast of Ecuador and northern Peru. The regions of eastern Ecuador, Colombia, and northern Peru with drier than normal conditions, especially the northwest region of Colombia. The altiplano region of the southeast Peru and western Bolivia was also forecast to be drier than normal.

**Southeast South America Forecast for January-March 1998:**

The forecast for this region was above-normal rainfall in southern Paraguay, the southwestern part of southern Brazil, western Uruguay and northeastern Argentina. Normal to above normal rainfall was forecast in central eastern Argentina. Near the Andes, dry conditions were forecast in northwestern Argentina, and there is a zone immediately to the east where average conditions are anticipated. Temperatures during January-March were forecast to be cooler than average where above-average rainfall is indicated.

**Northeast South America Forecast for February-March-April-May 1998:**

All regions have enhanced probability of drier than normal except the southern parts of Northeast Brazil (Bahia) and the southwestern coastal region of Colombia. In particular, the northern parts of Northeast Brazil (eastern Maranhão, Piauí, Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba and Pernambuco and parts of northern Bahia) have particularly high probabilities of a drier than normal period.

These collaborative activities related to ENSO will definitely continue in the Americas. One important activity will be to evaluate the success and impact of these forecasts and look for ways to improve the process.

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The Inter-American Institute for Global Change is an international non-profit organization established to promote regional collaborations in the Americas. The IAI pursues the principles of scientific excellence, international cooperation, and the open exchange of scientific information to increase the understanding of global change phenomena and their socio-economic implications and to augment the region's overall scientific capacity.

For more information on the IAI and its programs, please contact::

IAI Directorate  
c/o INPE  
Avenida dos Astronautas, 1758  
São José dos Campos  
São Paulo, Brazil

Telephone: 55-12-345-6855/56  
Fax: 55-12-341-4410  
E:mail: [iaibr@dir.iai.int](mailto:iaibr@dir.iai.int)  
Homepage: <http://www.geo.nsf.gov/iai>