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## PRESS RELEASE

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### The 2017 Hurricane Season Starts Officially on June 1

Although Curaçao is located near the edge of the so-called hurricane belt, it is recommended that the population still prepares every year. During the period of June 1 to November 30 on average twelve tropical storms and six hurricanes will develop over the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Therefore it is important that at the beginning of the hurricane season special attention will be given to the impacts of hurricanes. One must take into account the effects that a tropical cyclone brings with it, like very strong winds, very rough seas and high water levels on the coast and also heavy and prolonged rainfall, which can cause severe flooding.

Last season was rather quiet for Curaçao, until Hurricane *Matthew* developed near the eastern Caribbean island chain late September. Its center moved north of Curaçao on September 29 at a distance of about 190 kilometers. It only caused some heavy rain over parts of our island. While *Matthew* was moving away near Haiti on October 4, heavy swells battered parts of our southern shores. These dangerous waves caused some damage in especially Boka Samí.

The latest forecast for the upcoming hurricane season, issued by the Colorado State University, indicates that eleven named storms, four hurricanes and two intense hurricanes will develop over the Atlantic Basin (North Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico). This means that the activity this year is expected to be about 20% lower than average. The average over the period 1981-2010 is twelve named storms a year, of which six develop into a hurricane and two to a major hurricane (category 3 through 5).

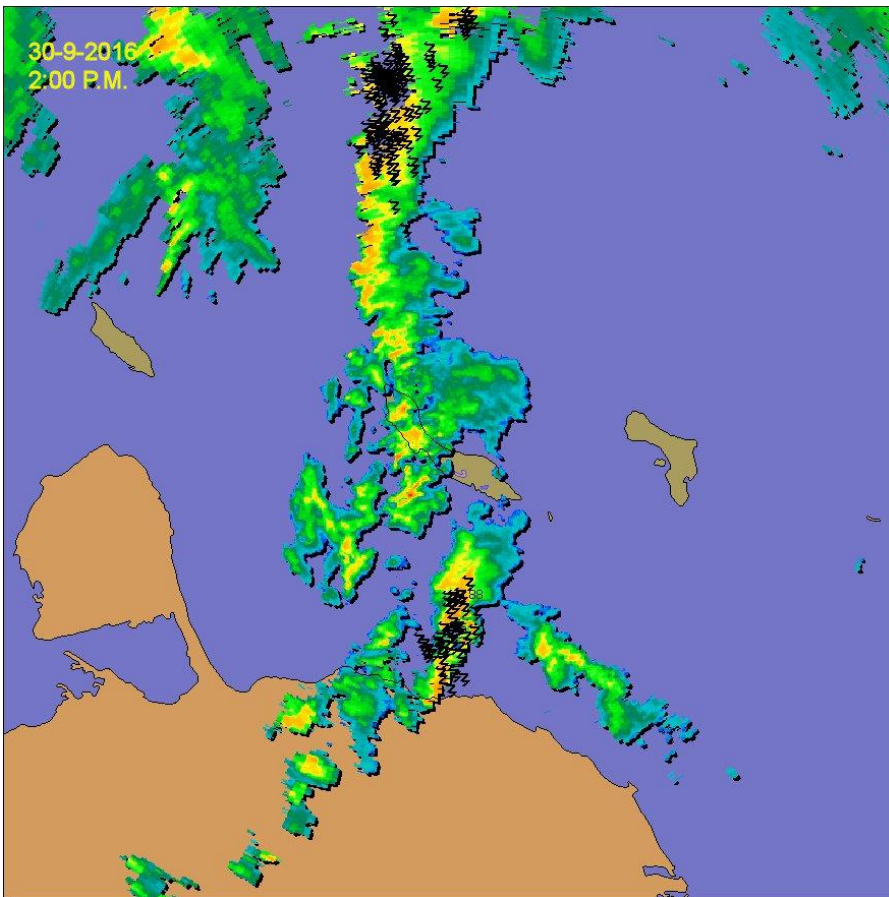
The Meteorological Department Curaçao (MDC) emphasizes again this year that one should not think that it is not necessary to prepare for the potential impact of a tropical storm or hurricane. Experience shows that even in a quiet season it takes only one tropical storm or hurricane making landfall to make this a devastating season for a particular community. The most notorious example of this was Hurricane *Andrew* in August 1992. More recent examples were Hurricane Gonzalo in 2014 (St. Maarten) and Hurricane *Joaquin* (near the Bahamas) in 2015.

Measures you can take are listed in a handy brochure that was issued the MDC and that can be downloaded from our web site, <http://www.meteo.cw>. On our web site you can also see among others the latest forecasts, warnings, surface observations, satellite and radar images. Furthermore, information on significant weather developments will appear on the MDC Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Meteorological.Department.Curacao/>) and the Curaçao Weather app ([http://meteo.cw/about\\_app.php?Lang=Eng&St=TNCC&Sws=R11](http://meteo.cw/about_app.php?Lang=Eng&St=TNCC&Sws=R11)). The latter site offers links to the Appstore (iOS) or the Google Play site (Android) from where this app can be downloaded. You can also consult the web site of the *Directie Risicobeheersing en Rampenbeleid Curaçao*, <http://www.kalamidat.cw> and its app called *Kalamidat* for more information. Moreover, in the phone directory, starting on page 54 of this year's issue, people can also find quite a bit of information in Papiamentu, English and Dutch about measures to take in the event of a hurricane threat.

As usual the MDC, in cooperation with the National Hurricane Center, will monitor all tropical cyclones that pose a threat to its area of responsibility (Curaçao and the associated airspace and surrounding sea). If necessary, the MDC will start issuing Tropical Cyclone Bulletins (TCBs) 72 hours prior to a possible threat. These messages have a color code, in order to illustrate the level of seriousness of the threat.

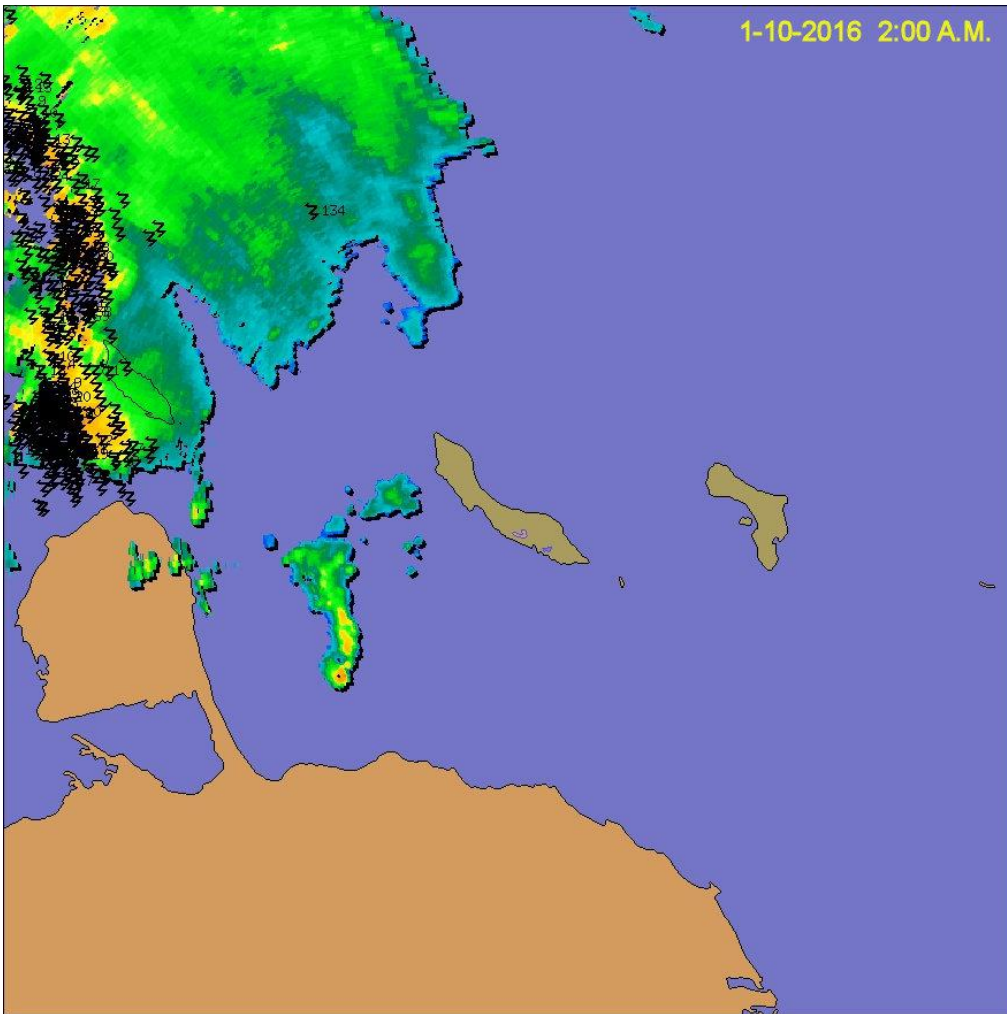
The names that have been reserved for the tropical storms and hurricanes of this year are: *Arlene, Bret, Cindy, Don, Emily, Franklin, Gert, Harvey, Irma, José, Katia, Lee, Maria, Nate, Ophelia, Philippe, Rina, Sean, Tammy, Vince* and *Whitney*. Not as early as Hurricane *Alex* in January 2016, but we still had an early unofficial start of the season this year as well. It was Tropical Storm *Arlene* that developed on April 19 over the North Atlantic Ocean. It weakened however rather quickly after only two days, about mid-way between the Azores and the northeastern United States' coast.

The MDC recommends everyone to prepare, although a slightly below average season is expected. As already indicated, it only takes one tropical storm or hurricane to reach our island, to make this a devastating year for the community. In case our island would indeed be threatened, everyone is advised to only consult the official alert messages, such as those issued by the MDC and by the *Directie Risicobeheersing en Rampenbeleid Curaçao*.



*Radar image of feeder band related to Hurricane Matthew with thundershowers mainly north of Bándabou and south of Bándariba on September 30, 2016 at 2 P.M.*





*Feeder band related to Matthew with severe thunderstorms just west of Aruba on October 1, 2016 at 2 A.M.*