



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
DILG-NAPOLCOM Center, EDSA cor Quezon Avenue, West Triangle, Quezon City
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MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
No. 2023-065

TO : ALL GOVERNORS, CITY AND MUNICIPAL MAYORS, DILG REGIONAL DIRECTORS, BARMM MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : MITIGATION AND PREPAREDNESS MEASURES FOR THE EL NIÑO PHENOMENON 2023

DATE : APR 25, 2023

1. Background

- 1.1. DOST-PAGASA, on March 24, 2023, has raised the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Alert and Warning System to El Niño Watch, based on the recent conditions and forecast models indicating that the El Niño season will likely develop in July-August-September (JAS) of 2023 and may persist until 2024;
- 1.2. El Niño (the warm phase of ENSO) is characterized by unusually warmer than average sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific (CEEP). When conditions are favorable for the development of El Niño within the next six months, and the probability is 55% or more, an **El Niño Watch** is issued;
- 1.3. El Niño increases the likelihood of below-normal rainfall conditions, which could bring negative impacts (such as dry spells and droughts) in some areas of the country. However, over the western part of the country, above-normal rainfall conditions during the Southwest monsoon season (Habagat) may also be expected;
- 1.4. Forecast Rainfall Conditions:
 - 1.4.1. April 2023 - generally below-normal in Luzon are likely while mostly near normal in Visayas and Mindanao and high probability of below-normal rainfall conditions in most parts of Luzon while mostly near to above normal in Visayas and Mindanao;
 - 1.4.2. May 2023 - generally near normal throughout the country and high probability of near to above normal rainfall conditions in most parts of the country;

- 1.4.3. June 2023 - generally near normal in most parts of the country, except for the western section of central Luzon where above normal is expected and high probability for above normal rainfall conditions in most parts of the country while some areas in Mindanao show below normal rainfall;
- 1.4.4. July 2023 - generally near normal in most parts of the country and high probability for near normal rainfall conditions expected in most parts of the country;
- 1.4.5. August 2023 - Generally near normal in most parts of the country with some areas in western Luzon likely to receive above normal and some patches of below normal in Visayas and Mindanao and high probability for above normal in the western section of Luzon, while the probability for below normal in Visayas and Mindanao is high;
- 1.4.6. September 2023 - Generally near-normal rainfall conditions are likely all over the country, high probability for near to above-normal conditions is expected.

1.5. Forecast Temperature:

- 1.5.1. Generally, surface air temperatures range from below average to above average throughout the country during the forecast period.
- 1.5.2. Warmer and humid weather conditions are expected in the coming months as the WARM AND DRY season has started.

1.6. The following are the possible sectoral impacts of El Niño:

- 1.6.1. **Agriculture** – decline in soil moisture availability, the decline in crop production due to delayed onset of the rainy season, and increase in pests and diseases;
- 1.6.2. **Water Resources** – reduced stream flows and groundwater due to less rainfall, reduced water supply and quality, which may affect dams, irrigation and power generation; over-extraction of groundwater and less rainfall will have a negative impact on forest resources;
- 1.6.3. **Marine Resources** – fish kills and red tide; decline in fish production;
- 1.6.4. **Human Health** –
 - 1.6.4.1. Increase in water-borne diseases, such as cholera, due to water scarcity;
 - 1.6.4.2. Increase in vector-borne disease outbreaks, such as malaria, and dengue;
 - 1.6.4.3. Increased number of people affected by infectious diseases, such as measles and meningitis, especially in humanitarian situations;
 - 1.6.4.4. Disruption of health services due to lack of water supply;
 - 1.6.4.5. Respiratory diseases due to smoke from wildfires and deteriorated air quality;

1.6.4.6. Increase in food-borne diseases, such as salmonellosis, due to higher temperature;

1.6.5. **Environment** – land or soil degradation due to loss of vegetation, increase in forest or peatland fires, poor air quality due to occurrences of smoke, haze and forest fires.

2. Purpose

2.1. The purpose of this Circular is to mitigate and prepare for the ongoing and potential adverse effects of El Niño in the country.

3. Scope/Coverage

3.1. All Provincial Governors, City and Municipal Mayors, Punong Barangays, DILG Regional Directors, BARMM Minister of the Interior and Local Government and all others concerned.

4. Policy Content and Guidelines

4.1. All LCEs are enjoined to take precautionary measures within their respective areas of responsibility through the following actions:

4.1.1. Urgently enact ordinances curbing illegal connections and encouraging the prudent use of water, which includes using broom, instead of a water hose, in cleaning sidewalks and driveways; fixing leaky faucets; using pail or bucket, instead of hose in cleaning cars; using recycled or leftover water for houseplants; and watering gardens during the coolest part of the day;

4.1.2. Allow water concessionaires and water utilities to conduct emergency repair of leaks prior to securing the necessary excavation permit, provided the said permit shall be secured within a reasonable period from the commencement of the repair works;

4.1.3. Lift the application of number-coding schemes, as applicable, with respect to the water tankers that will be used by water concessionaires, and water utilities to immediately address the water supply needs of their affected customers;

4.1.4. Implement and update the existing contingency plans related to the El Niño Phenomenon;

4.1.5. Coordinate with the Regional Office of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) for planning and aligning actions to be undertaken in reference to the Expanded Roadmap for Addressing the Impact of El Niño (E-RAIN);

4.1.6. Coordinate with the Philippine Council for Agricultural, Aquatic, and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), through the Regional Offices of the DOST, for possible and available technology that could help mitigate the effects of El Niño in local agriculture and commerce;

- 4.1.7. Stockpile relief goods (food and non-food items) for immediate relief assistance;
- 4.1.8. Conduct massive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns in communities on the following:
 - 4.1.8.1. Read monthly climate advisories issued by DOST-PAGASA and get updates on your local disaster risk reduction and management councils;
 - 4.1.8.2. Check and immediately fix water leaks or report problems to appropriate authorities;
 - 4.1.8.3. Maximize rainwater harvesting and storage;
 - 4.1.8.4. Implement water conservation measures;
 - 4.1.8.5. Cooperate on local measures to help manage the impacts of El Niño;
 - 4.1.8.6. Get crop insurance and check advisories from local agricultural officials;
 - 4.1.8.7. Set air-conditioning units between 22 degrees Celsius to 25 degrees Celsius.
- 4.1.9. Disseminate and implement water conservation tips to all concerned:
 - 4.1.9.1. Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth. Better yet, use a glass;
 - 4.1.9.2. Remove all leftover food before washing the dishes. Wash them using a small basin. Store and reuse the final rinse water to flush toilets;
 - 4.1.9.3. Store and reuse laundry water to clean floors, flush toilets, etc;
 - 4.1.9.4. Water plants early in the morning or late in the afternoon to minimize evaporation;
 - 4.1.9.5. Do not hose down your vehicle. Clean it using a washcloth and pail;
 - 4.1.9.6. Use water-efficient gadgets, such as high-pressure, low-volume hoses and showerheads, faucets with aerators and double-flush toilets.
- 4.1.10. Coordinate with respective Department of Agriculture (DA) Regional Offices for the following recommended mitigating measures to address the effects of El Niño:
 - 4.1.10.1. Conduct of cloud seeding operations (CSO) by the concerned DA Regional Offices;
 - 4.1.10.2. Implement rotational irrigation scheme and other water-saving technology, such as Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD);
 - 4.1.10.3. Strategize areas to be irrigated, and re-use wastewater from drainage canals;
 - 4.1.10.4. Utilize solar pump irrigation;
 - 4.1.10.5. Adapt drought-resistant and early-maturing seed varieties;
 - 4.1.10.6. Maximize and optimize the production in non-threatened areas by the provision of seeds and planting materials, fertilizers, soil ameliorants, flower inducers, mulching film,

- pesticides/herbicides, drugs and biologics, provision of pumps and engine sets, fuel subsidy;
- 4.1.10.7. Save vulnerable areas through appropriate water management and other related interventions, by conducting cloud seeding operations, shifting to other crops, provision of pumps and engine sets, fuel subsidy, provision of short gestation/drought-tolerant seed varieties, planting materials, fertilizers, soil ameliorants, flower inducers, mulching film, pesticides/herbicides, drugs and biologics;
- 4.1.10.8. Adjust the cropping calendar and pattern of planting in some areas;
- 4.1.10.9. Maintain canal embankments and paddy bunds to minimize conveyance and farm losses;
- 4.1.11. The Department of Health (DOH) also recommended the following mitigating measures to control the health consequences of the unusual drier conditions due to El Niño:
- 4.1.11.1. Strengthening disease surveillance and control;
- 4.1.11.2. Safe water and sanitation services;
- 4.1.11.3. Health and hygiene promotion;
- 4.1.11.4. Availability of emergency health supplies and vaccines; and
- 4.1.11.5. Continued and easy access to health care and health information.
- 4.2. Closely monitor and immediately report any manifestation of El Niño to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, or through the Local DRRM Council.
- 4.3. Utilize the Local DRRM Fund for the necessary expenditures, and be guided by current accounting and auditing rules and regulations.
- 4.4. Enjoin the Bureau of Fire Protection to refrain from unnecessarily drawing water from fire hydrants, and limit the same only for purposes of putting out fires.
- 4.5. All DILG Regional and Provincial Directors are hereby directed to cause the widest dissemination of this Memorandum Circular.
- 4.6. For proper documentation, all activities should be documented and attached to the final report to be submitted to the Municipal/City/Provincial/Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices for consolidation.

5. References

- 5.1. DILG Memorandum Circular 2019-64 dated May 3, 2019, "Preparedness Measures for the El Niño Phenomenon 2019";

- 5.2. DOST-PAGASA Climate Outlook (April - September 2023);
- 5.3. DOST-PAGASA Press Statement dated March 23, 2023, "El Niño Watch";
- 5.4. DOST-PAGASA Press Statement dated March 23, 2023, "Preparation for Warm and Dry Season"; and
- 5.5. NDRRMC Final Report re Preparedness Measures and Effects of El Niño (November 2018 to August 2019).

6. Effectivity

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately.

7. Approving Authority

ATTY. BENJAMIN C. ABALOS, JR.
Secretary



8. Feedback

Related queries may be directed to the Central Office Disaster Information Coordinating Center (CODIX) through telephone number (02) 8876-34-54 local 6102.

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