

2007 HURRICANE SEASON – THE BARBADIAN EXPERIENCE

The 2007 Atlantic hurricane season represented another one of average tropical cyclone activity, despite a total of fourteen named storms by the end of October. During the month of September eight systems formed in the Atlantic Basin, with three of these developing into hurricanes and only one becoming a major hurricane. Although this number equaled the record for the most formations during the month of September, activity as determined by the measure of combined strength and duration was the lowest since 1997.

Activity during the month of October was also below average with only two tropical cyclones being recorded, while a single hurricane has been recorded, so far, in the month of November.

Barbados was directly or indirectly affected by hurricane Dean and developing tropical storm Felix. The centre of Dean passed about 70 miles north of Barbados during the night of August 16, generated maximum sustained winds of 72km/h and a peak gust of 89km/h and produced about 42 millimetres of rain. Although tropical storm force winds were experienced on the island during the passage of Dean, reported damage was minimal in Barbados.

Felix, on the other hand generated a maximum wind gusts of 55km/h, a peak gust of 80km/h and 21.6mm of rainfall. The island was placed under a tropical storm warning for Dean, but it was determined that a similar alert was not unnecessary in the case of Felix.

Weather conditions were quite unsettled during the months of June, August, October, resulting in rainfall totals in excess of the respective historical averages by significant amounts. Frequent outbreaks of moderate to heavy rain resulted in some localized flooding in parts of the island especially during the month of October. The inclement weather has continued into November with some periodic moderate to heavy events.

During the months of July and September rainfall totals represented about fifty per cent of the historical average. Overall the total rainfall recorded by the end of October suggests an above average amount for the first ten months of the year.