



November 17 – 18, 2015

Monell Auditorium

Columbia University

at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory Campus

61 Route 9W, Palisades, NY 10964

El Niño 2015 Conference

Shared experiences - 20 years of climate services
and

Framing next steps in the research and development for climate resilience

Background and Context

Experts are monitoring the development of one of the largest El Niño events of the last 50 years, and notably, the largest since the 1997-98 event that shocked global food, water, health, energy and disaster-response systems and erased years of development gains. The current El Niño is expected to peak toward the end of the calendar year. It offers a unique opportunity for governments, scientists, economists, humanitarian agencies, development professionals and the media to share perspectives on the transformation of climate forecasts to climate services in the past two decades. It also allows us to focus attention on framing next steps in climate services research, which will be critical for helping to achieve the sustainable development goals.

Scope and Objectives

The El Niño 2015 Conference provides a platform for a strategic dialogue to evaluate the big picture and frame big questions related to El Niño, extreme events, variability on multiple time scales, including long-term climate change. The potential regional climate impacts of the current El Niño event are likely to be serious, but climate does not act in isolation. Understanding the interaction of climate with other socio-economic and ecological systems is critical to addressing negative impacts while taking advantage of favorable climate events. To help us "learn forward", the Conference will convene the leaders of science, industry and development as well as stakeholders who offer provocative and multidisciplinary perspectives on to help shape future research and approaches to climate-resilient development.

Key objectives of the El Niño 2015 Conference:

- Provide an overview of the 2015 El Niño and its potential impacts
- Examine the progress over last 20 years in international, national and regional climate services, with a focus on El Niño
- To foster a dialog between high-level scientific experts and development practitioners on next steps for the research and development
- Explore the connection between the current El Niño and Global Change

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Expected Outcomes

- Greater science-development practitioner dialog on the El Niño messaging, impacts and response
- Improved understanding of the societal impacts of this El Niño in today's world, highlighting opportunities and constraints
- Shared perspective and experience on climate services, 20 years in the making
- Fostering new and improved relationships among expert communities to facilitate action for climate resilience and sustainable development
- Framing and coordination on next steps in the research and development agenda for enhanced climate resilience and sustainable development

Key Outputs

- Develop shared recommendations on El Niño messaging (short term, with longer-term engagement) for development and practitioner communities as well as the public
- Establish principles to guide future actions in climate services and frame next steps on research and development to support climate resilience (long-term)

Format of the Conference

The Conference will take place over two days and will host government officials, researchers, economists, and humanitarian and development professionals from around the globe. The sessions will be a combination of plenary and panel discussions designed to foster insight and interaction between attendees.

Organizers

The International Research Institute for Climate & Society (IRI) at Columbia University, in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will convene the 2015-16 El Niño Conference. Other members of the organizing committee include NOAA, USAID, Centro Internacional para la Investigación del Fenómeno de El Niño (CIIFEN), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), and the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. Other sponsors include Initiative on Extreme Weather and Climate at Columbia University and Reinsurance Association of America (RAA). Other participants will include UNEP, WFP, WorldVision and others.

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