



TSR Launches Email Alert Service for Tropical Storms Threatening Landfall

Automatic email service warns of the probability that a given country and major cities therein will be affected by tropical storm and hurricane (Cat 1) strength winds during the next five days. Users include civil defence, (re)insurers and media.

London, 21 July 2006 - Tropical Storm Risk (TSR), the award-winning consortium of experts on insurance, risk management and seasonal climate forecasting led by the Benfield Hazard Research Centre at University College London, today announced the launch of an email alert service for tropical storms worldwide. The system extends the capability of TSR's market-leading Tropical Storm Tracker by allowing users to receive email warnings on the severity of impending storm landfall risk.

The email alert denotes the severity of windspeed risk by the use of Red/Yellow/Green alert levels which are distinguished by forecast wind speed strength and its chance of happening. Users may select the basin areas for which they wish to receive alerts (choice of seven worldwide), their preferred risk level for an alert to be triggered, and how often they wish to receive alerts when a storm is triggering.

Registration is straightforward and includes the option to view an example email alert and the technical background to the service.

The probabilities which underpin the contents of the email alerts are based on TSR's innovative modelling and mapping of tropical cyclone forecast windspeed probabilities. These probabilities have been operational since July 2005. When hurricane Katrina targetted New Orleans in late August 2005, the TSR system forecast that New Orleans would be struck by hurricane strength winds to high (80%) probability 12 hours before the system operated by the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

Professor Mark Saunders, the TSR lead scientist and Head of Seasonal Forecasting and Meteorological Hazards at the Benfield Hazard Research Centre, commented: "We have launched the TSR storm email alerts to meet the needs of government officials, (re)insurance industry professionals and media who require accurate and timely information on the occurrence and status of tropical storms threatening landfall."

Further information on the TSR storm email alert service may be accessed through the website www.tropicalstormrisk.com.

Tropical Storm Rainfall Forecasts

In addition to today's storm email alert service, TSR also announced that the consortium will be launching forecasts of tropical storm accumulated rainfall during autumn 2006. This further service will be available for tropical storms worldwide and will include forecasts of accumulated rainfall at leads out to 5 days as well as forecasts of the likelihood that the rainfall at a given location will exceed thresholds of 5cm, 10cm and 15cm.

-ENDS-

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About Tropical Storm Risk (TSR):

Founded in 2000, Tropical Storm Risk (TSR) offers a leading resource for forecasting the risk from tropical storms worldwide. The venture provides innovative forecast products to increase risk awareness and to help decision making within the (re)insurance industry, other business sectors, government and society. The TSR consortium is co-sponsored by Benfield, the world's leading independent reinsurance and risk intermediary, Royal & Sun Alliance, the global insurance group, and Crawford & Company, a global claims management solutions company. The TSR scientific grouping brings together climate physicists, meteorologists and statisticians at University College London and the Met Office.

Tropical Storm Risk has won two major insurance industry awards during the past three years. In 2006 TSR was awarded the prestigious Risk Management Award at the British Insurance Awards, and in 2004 won the British Insurance Award for London Market Innovation of the Year.

Recent innovations include a breakthrough in the seasonal prediction of hurricane activity reaching the coast of the U.S., the first demonstration of the business relevance of seasonal U.S. hurricane forecasts, and the introduction of forecast windspeed probabilities for tropical cyclones worldwide. TSR provides tropical storm alert feeds to Reuters AlertNet (www.alertnet.org), the humanitarian news portal, and to the United Nations World Food Programme (<http://www.hewsweb.org>).

About Benfield Hazard Research Centre:

Benfield Hazard Research Centre is sponsored by Benfield, the world's leading independent reinsurance and risk intermediary. With over forty researchers and practitioners, the Benfield Hazard Research Centre is Europe's leading multidisciplinary academic hazard research centre and comprises three groups: Geological Hazards, Meteorological Hazards and Seasonal Forecasting, and Disaster Studies and Management. The Centre is based at University College London, which along with Oxford and Cambridge, is one of the UK's top three multi-faculty teaching and research institutions. www.benfieldhrc.org