

# Central America Flood Update

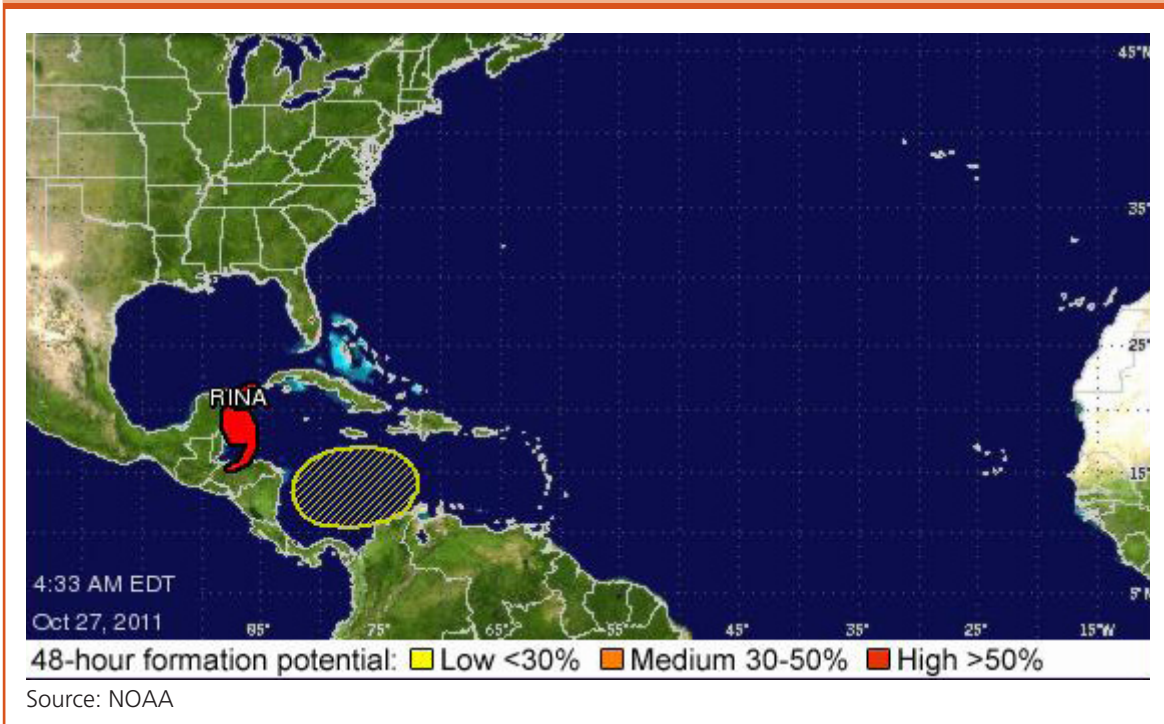
27 October 2011

## Flooding affects large number of people and causes localized crop damage

Intense tropical cyclone activity in the second dekad of October, in particular that associated with tropical depression 12-E, has resulted in torrential rains, landslides and floods across Central American countries, including El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica and parts of Mexico. Overall in the subregion, the heavy rains have resulted in more than 100 deaths and approximately 700 000 displaced people, and caused damage to infrastructure and agriculture. The Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua declared states of emergency. The situation could further deteriorate in the coming days as more heavy rains are expected following the development of Hurricane Rina on 24 October.

The floods occurred when harvesting of the 2011/12 main crop season ("de primera"), which accounts for roughly 60 percent of the annual maize output and 30 percent of annual bean production, was almost completed. However, the standing 2011/12 second season crops ("de postrera"), representing about 25 and 30 percent respectively of annual maize and bean output, were more exposed to flood damage. Although a detailed assessment of crop losses is not yet available, the impact of the floods is reported to have been severe at localized level.

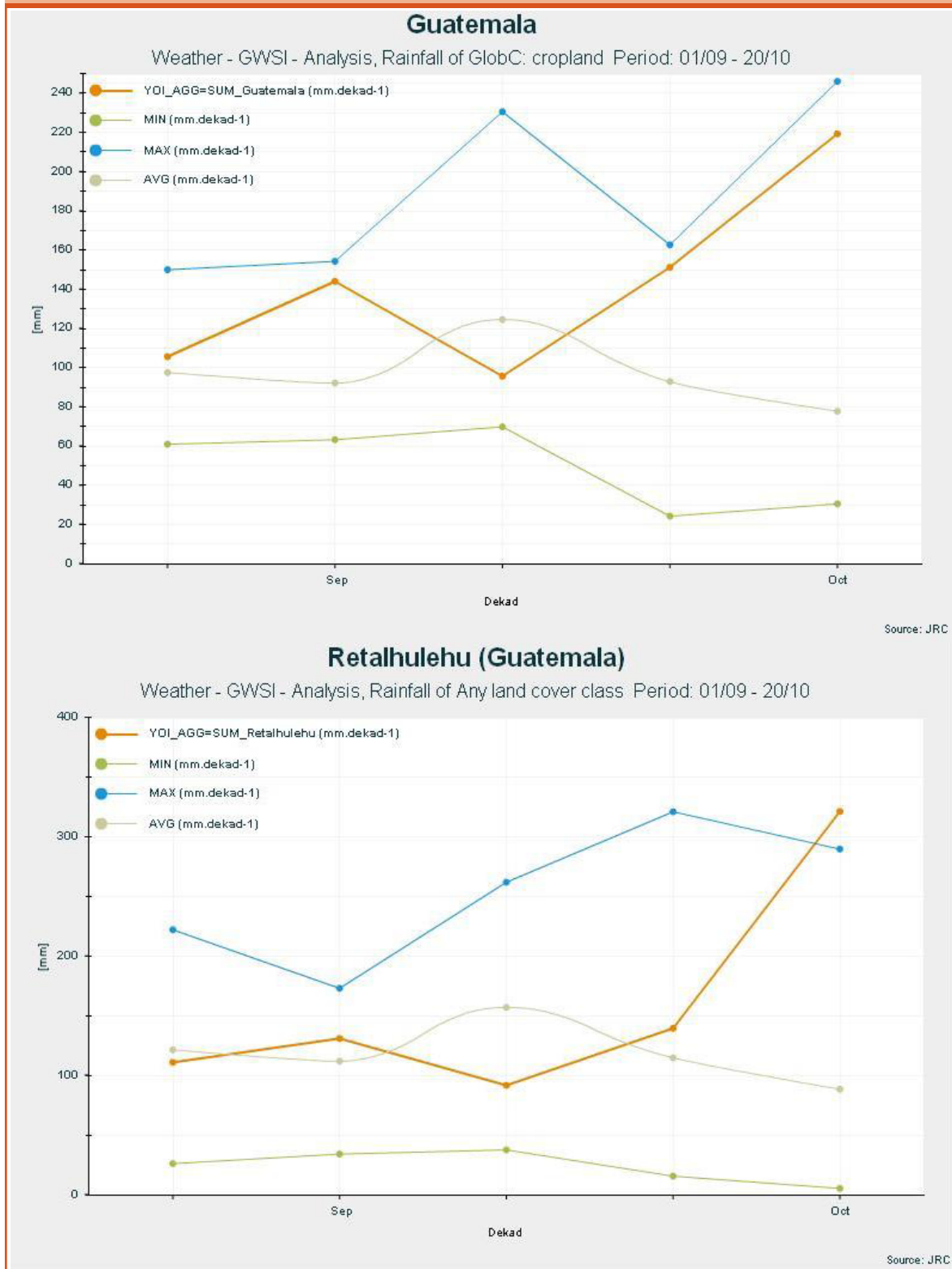
Figure 1: Atlantic tropical weather outlook



## GUATEMALA

Heavy rains from 10 to 20 October mostly affected the southern coastal areas (particularly the department of Retalhuehu), the central highland plains, and the northeast department of Petén. Floods and landslides resulted in 38 deaths and affected about 530 000 people. A preliminary assessment by FAO indicates that maize crops were the most affected. However, losses were localized and as of 21 October, amounted to at least 5 810 hectares. Maize and bean prices have risen nationally in the past two weeks, with increases of at least 25 percent in the worst affected areas in the north, as the heavy rains hampered transportation of the recently harvested main season crops.

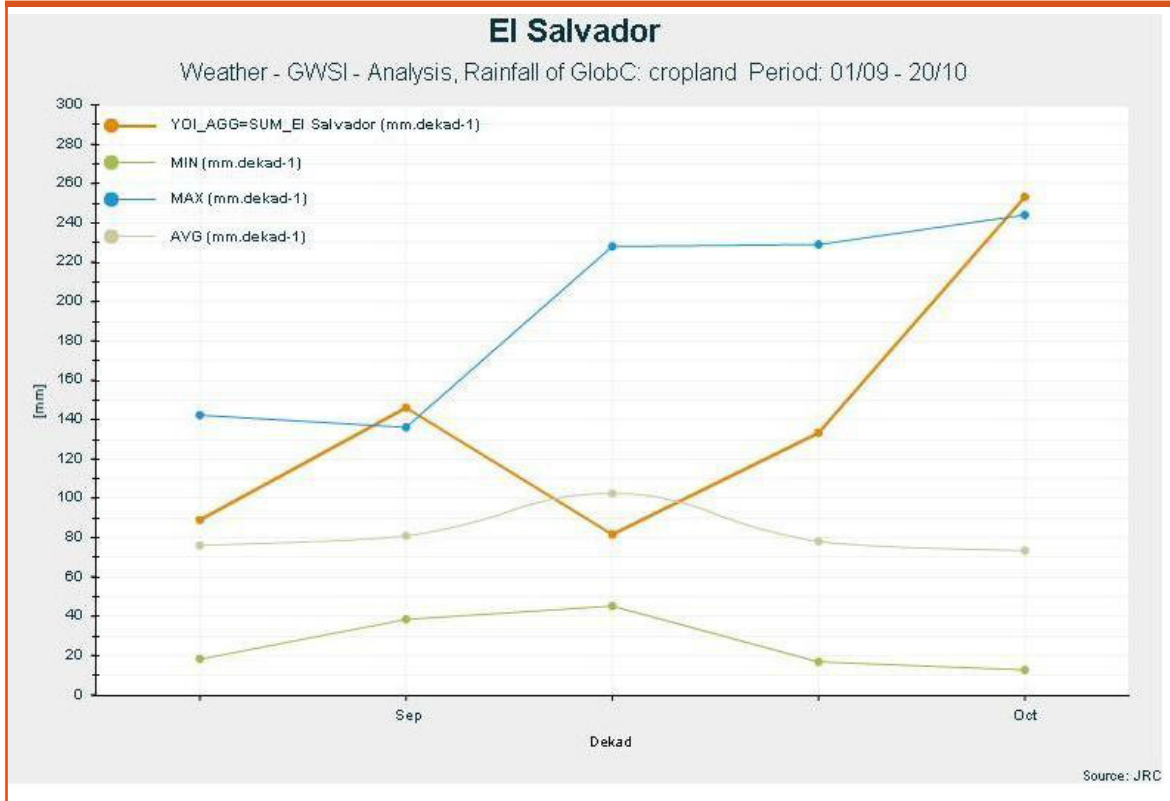
Figure 2: Estimated rainfall



## EL SALVADOR

The mid-October torrential rains have caused the loss of more than 30 lives and adversely affected approximately 300 000 people. The Government has requested international humanitarian assistance after having declared a state of emergency. Official preliminary assessments indicate that the crops of some 264 000 farmers have been damaged. Losses of maize are estimated at 46 000 tonnes so far, representing 5 percent of the total production expected in 2011. In addition, some further 180 000 tonnes may be lost if rehabilitation activities are not undertaken soon. The impact of the crop losses has been felt in the markets, with the wholesale prices of white maize increasing by more than 50 percent from 12 to 17 October.

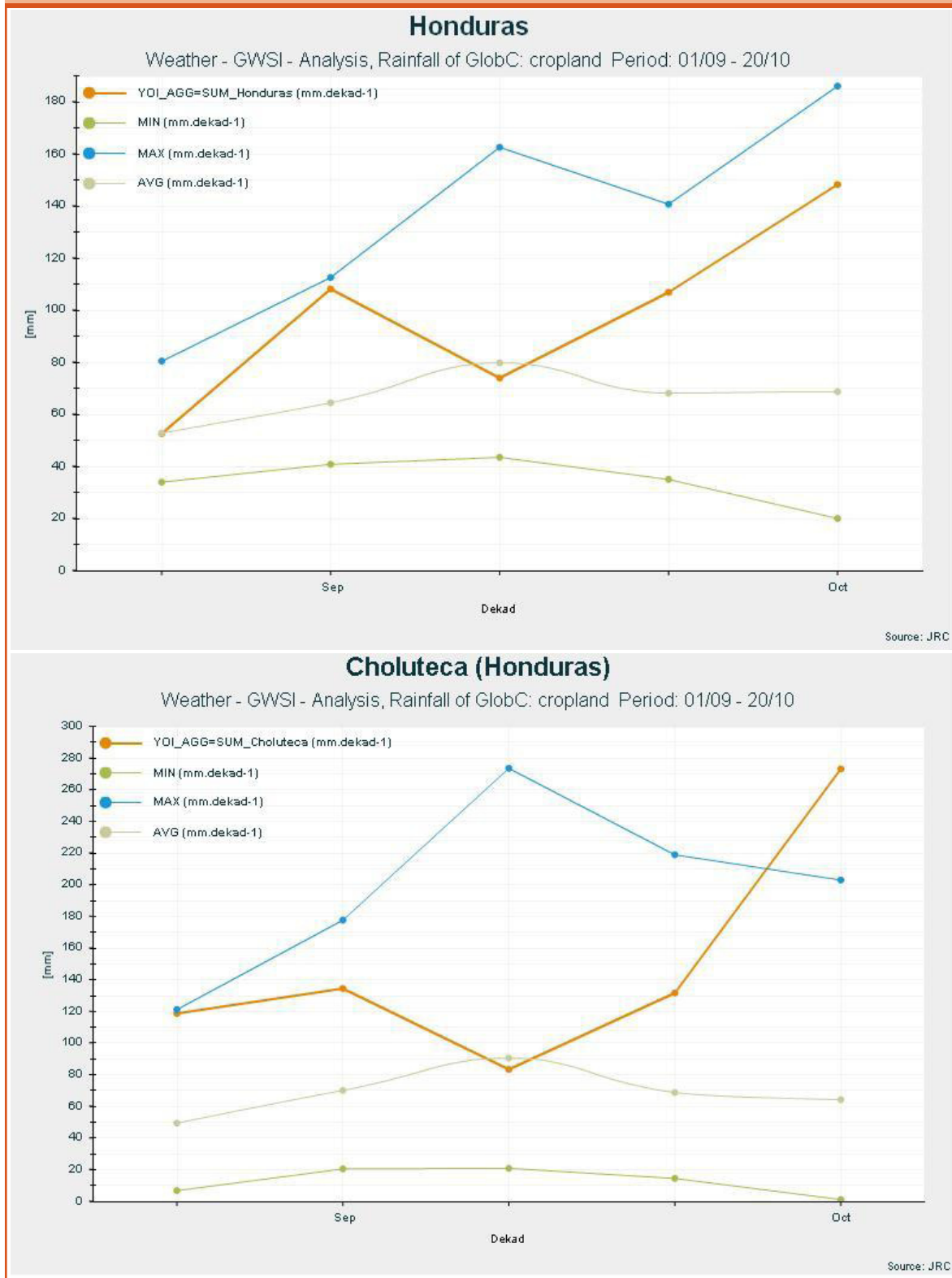
Figure 3: Estimated rainfall



## HONDURAS

Well above-average rains associated with tropical depression 12-E in mid-October caused severe damage to infrastructure and agriculture in the southern parts of the country, particularly in the departments of Choluteca, Valle and Intibuca, and affected at least 60 000 people. Although a definitive assessment of the crop losses is not yet available, official reports indicate that some 7 600 hectares of the 2011/12 second season (“de postrera”) crops were affected, including some 1 850 hectares of maize, which was at the mid-growing stage. While the damage is limited at national level, it is severe in some communities, particularly in the department of Intibuca.

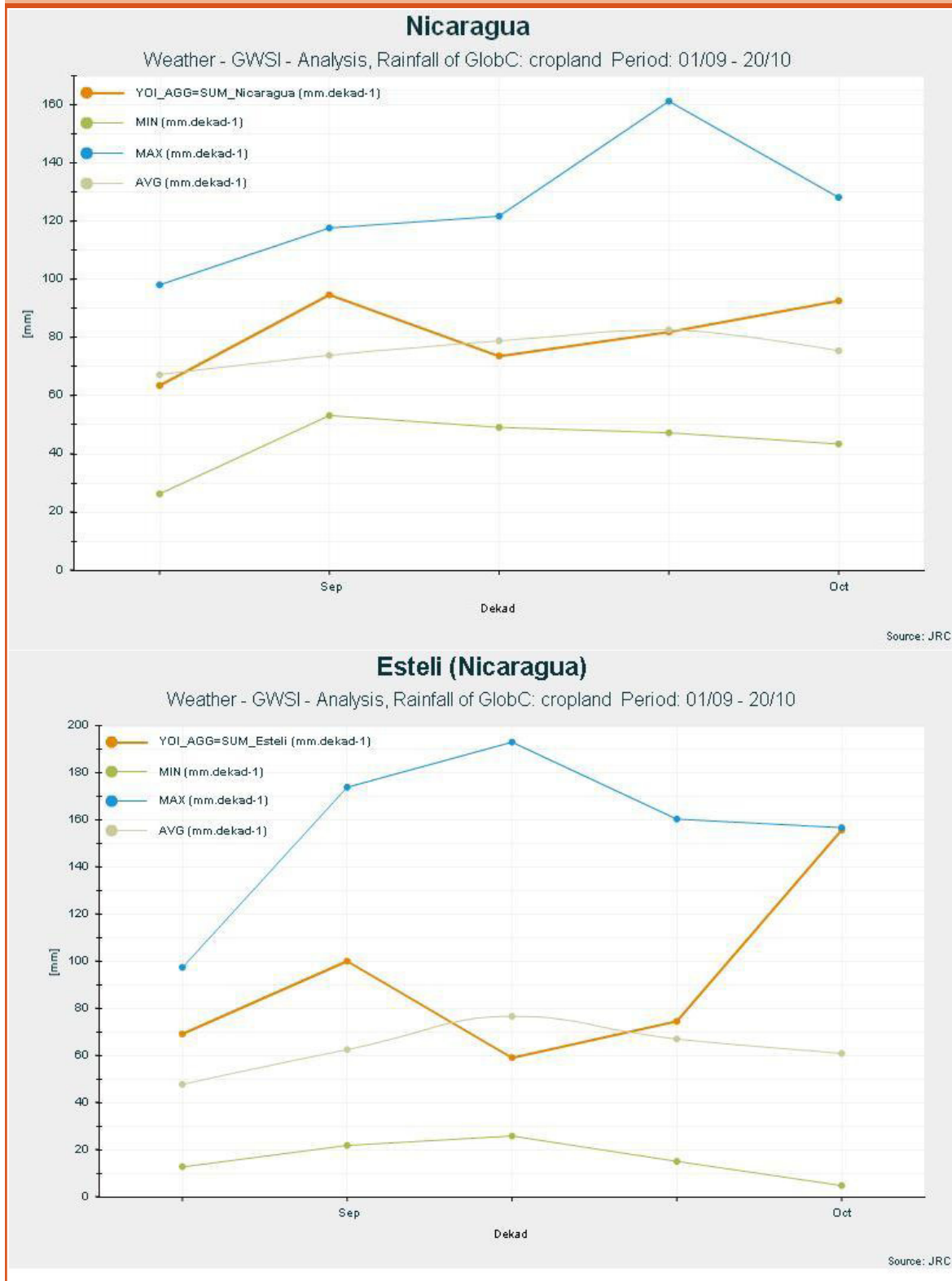
Figure 4: Estimated rainfall



## NICARAGUA

Flooding and landslides throughout Nicaragua from 10 to 20 October resulted in 12 deaths and adversely affected 140 000 people. The most hit departments were León and Estelí. As a result, the Government of Nicaragua requested assistance from the international community, after having declared a state of emergency. The floods occurred during planting of the second season (“de postrera”), when about 60 percent of the planned area under maize had been already sown, and planting of beans was almost complete. Preliminary estimates indicate that some 12 and 17 percent respectively of the areas already planted to maize and beans were affected. This would amount to 2 percent of the total annual maize area and some 5 percent of that of beans. A detailed assessment of the crop losses is not yet available.

Figure 5: Estimated rainfall



## COSTA RICA and PANAMA

Heavy rainfall in Costa Rica in the second dekad of October resulted in the displacement of approximately 1 000 people and caused damage to infrastructure and agriculture. The most affected area was the rice growing province of Guanacaste. Although no precise estimate of crop losses is yet available, the second season paddy crop, which accounts for about 30 percent of annual output, was at the critical growth stage and some 8 000 hectares of paddy are reported to have been affected by the floods. This represents some 10 percent of the total area cultivated with paddy annually. In Panama, above-average precipitation in the first and second dekad of October mostly affected the province of Chiriqui, delaying rice harvesting activities.

Figure 6: Estimated rainfall

