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## El Niño to lose grip by mid-year, UN weather agency predicts



30 March 2010 – The El Niño weather pattern – blamed for this year’s heavy snows in the United States and a long-running drought in Australia – has peaked, but is expected to influence climate patterns worldwide until mid-year before dying out, the United Nations weather agency said today.

“The most likely outcome by mid-2010 is for the El Niño event to have decayed and near-neutral conditions to be reestablished across the tropical Pacific,” the World Meteorological Organization ([WMO](#)) said in a [statement](#).

El Niño, whose latest cycle started in June 2009, is a seasonal warming of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean that upsets normal weather patterns from the western seaboard of Latin America to East Africa.

For example, since last October, Uganda has been experiencing heavy rains believed to be tied to El Niño. Deadly mudslides killed at least 80 people earlier this month and left an estimated 20,000 households in need of housing and food.

The warmer temperatures associated with El Niño are usually followed by a cooling spell known as La Niña.

According to WMO, the climate phenomenon may have peaked in November or December, but its effects should still be felt through April to June.

The organization cautioned, however, that the period from March to June is a particularly difficult time of the year for forecasting developments in the tropical

Pacific region and that it is still possible for El Niño to persist or for the early stages of a La Niña pattern to be present by mid-year.

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