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New System in the Atlantic Could be Threat to Lesser Antilles in 7-10 Days

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A system in the Atlantic is seeing favorable conditions for development as it tracks west-northwest at about 10-15 mph, which means the storm could be a threat to the Lesser Antilles in the next 7-10 days.

According to the National Hurricane Center, the system could become a tropical depression by Thursday or Friday as it moves westward in the Atlantic. N.H.C. said the small but concentrated area of showers and thunderstorms is redeveloping along a tropical wave located a few hundred miles southwest of the Cabo Verde Islands, and environmental conditions are expected to become more conducive for development.

According to Dr. Jeff Masters of the Yale Climate Connections, 98L has strong model support for development, and conditions appear quite favorable for it to intensify throughout the week. Wind shear is predicted to be light to moderate, sea surface temperatures (SSTs) will be at least 28 degrees Celsius (82°F), and the atmosphere is predicted to be moist, with a mid-level relative humidity of 60-70%. The system's development will be slowed, though, by its close proximity to the equator (near 9°N), which will keep 98L from gaining much spin from the Earth's rotation, said Dr. Masters.

The system's future track will depend heavily on how quickly it develops, and how strong it gets. A stronger storm is more likely to track farther to the north and miss the Lesser Antilles; a weaker and slower-to-organize storm will track farther to the west and potentially enter the Caribbean, stated Dr. Masters.

The storm's future track will also depend upon the timing and strength of troughs of low pressure passing to the north next week, and possibly on how strong the remains of tropical storms Peter, Odette, and Rose are. Remains of these storms could create a weakness in the ridge of high pressure steering 98L, allowing it to track farther to the north and miss the Lesser Antilles.

N.H.C. said formation chance through 48 hours is 60 percent, while the five-day forecast pins development at 90 percent.