



Multi-time Scale Processes Control Development of the 2015-16 El Niño

Michael McPhaden

NOAA/PMEL, Seattle, United States (michael.j.mcphaden@noaa.gov)

A strong El Niño developed in the tropical Pacific in the past year, with peak amplitudes comparable in magnitude to the 1997-98 El Niño. The 2015-16 El Niño, one of the strongest on record, has had major climatic impacts around the world. This presentation will describe the evolution of the climate system in the tropical Pacific in 2015 and 2016, with emphasis on the oceanic and atmospheric processes that gave rise to the unusual development of this event. Emphasis will be on the interplay between high frequency weather noise in the form of westerly wind bursts and low frequency dynamics associated with recharge oscillator and delayed oscillator physics. Unique aspects in the evolution of the 2015-16 El Niño relative to previous major El Niños will also be described.