



CUARTOCUERO/MOISES PABLO

High-tension electricity posts were knocked down by Hurricane Wilma.

# Hurricane season to begin

The 2009 Atlantic hurricane season officially began on Monday and runs through Nov. 30. Experts have predicted it will be a quieter season than last, when 16 tropical storms and hurricanes formed in the Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. Some of them hit parts of Mexico's coastline hard.

Here are some facts about Atlantic hurricanes and the population areas and economic sectors they threaten:

- The word hurricane is derived from "Hurican," the Carib Indians' god of evil.
- Hurricanes are cyclones but not all cyclones are hurricanes. A tropical cyclone is a circular weather system

spinning around a low pressure zone. Cyclones with sustained winds below 39 mph (63 kph) are depressions. When winds hit 39 mph (63 kph) they are tropical storms and when sustained winds reach 74 mph (119 kph) they are hurricanes.

- Energy fields off the U.S. Gulf Coast, which account for about 25 percent of U.S. domestic oil production and 15 percent of natural gas production, are vulnerable to hurricanes. Hurricanes also threaten production in the Bay of Campeche, home to the Cantarell Field, Mexico's largest oil field.

- Nine million people in impoverished Haiti and millions more living in shanties along the Caribbean coast of Central America are among the region's most vulnerable.

- A glancing blow from Tropical Storm Jeanne in 2004 killed 3,000 in Haiti, while the toll from 180-mph (290-kph) Hurricane Mitch, which devastated Nicaragua and Honduras in 1998, was estimated at 10,000.

- Hurricane Stan, in 2003, and Hurricane Wilma, which hit in 2005, are among the two most devastating hurricanes to have hit Mexico throughout its history.

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