

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

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IN THE GAMBIA

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Government of The Gambia

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Multidisciplinary Working Group

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1. SEASONAL CLIMATE FORECAST FOR YEAR 2018 OVER THE GAMBIA

The Department of Water Resources is pleased to present the **climate forecast** for this **Wet Season (2018)**. As in past years, this product is the result of collaboration with the National Meteorological Services within the sub-region and beyond.

To understand the forecast, the following facts must be noted:

- Seasonal forecasting relies on prediction of averages over space and time, and may not reflect all the various factors that influence regional and national climate differences;
- The forecast is relevant only for the entire season and within relatively large areas, since local and month-to-month variations may occur;
- Rainfall results are usually expressed as being either **Below Normal, Normal, or Above Normal**, with Normal rainfall defined as the average rainfall during a 30-year period; and
- Finally, the forecast is only valid for the combined period of July, August and September (**JAS**), when approximately 80 per cent of the total seasonal rainfall occurs in the sub-region, including The Gambia.

Consequently, for the rainy season of JAS 2018, the forecast is one of Below Normal (most likely) to Normal rainfall (likely), that is a threshold of at least 580mm of rainfall in The Gambia.

As at now, the above forecast is based on the best estimate of the impact of the various factors affecting rainfall in the country, and would be updated on a monthly basis starting from the end of June 2018.

Furthermore it is worthy of note that the 2018 rainfall season is expected to undergo more variability than the 2017 season with events such as late onset, occasional flash flooding and wet/dry spells. Accordingly, this department will continue to provide ten-days outlooks and daily weather forecasts to better anticipate impacts of intra-seasonal climate events. This product can be obtained from our website: www.mofwrnam.gov.gm

The forecast is highly recommended for use in the planning of interventions in several socio-economic sectors.

1.1 Seasonal Variability

The 2018 rainfall is expected to start **after June 15** in the Eastern Half (Upper River Region - URR and Central River Region - CRR) of the country; and **after June 25** in the Western Half (West Coast Region, Kanifing Municipal Council, Banjul City Council, North Bank Region and Lower River Region).

The Cessation of Rainfall is expected **after 10 October** in the Eastern Half **and after 15 October** in the Western Half.

Long dry spells of about 7 to 14 days are expected during both the beginning and end of the seasons.

2. PROGRESS OF RAINY SEASON

The Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD), demarcating boundary between the dry and moist regions over West Africa continued its northward movement especially along its eastern axis. However, the mean surface position of the ITD was located over southern Senegal, stretching across southern Mali, northern Burkina Faso and then slanting onto south-western Niger. Thus, the ITD was situated south of The Gambia.

Places to the north of the ITD experienced dry and stable atmosphere with dust haze observed over Algeria, Mali and Niamey. Conversely, places to the south of the ITD were characterized by convective activities which resulted to rain and thunderstorms over the southern parts of Togo, Benin, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.

3. WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (21ST - 31ST MAY 2018)

Cool morning and partly cloudy to cloudy conditions will affect the western part of the country during the night, becoming warm in the afternoon. The inland sector will be mostly warm, dry and stable throughout the dekad.

4. RAINFALL SITUATION

As during the last dekad, no rainfall was recorded during this one. However, compared to the same period last year (2017), a deficit was observed in Fatoto in the Eastern Third of the country.

5. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Extreme temperatures across the country ranged from a minimum of 15.0°C recorded at Kerewan in the Western Third of the country, to a maximum of 42.1°C recorded at Basse in the Eastern Third as indicated in figure 1 below. When compared to the last dekad, mean temperatures in this dekad registered a drop in all the stations except at Yundum in the Western Third.

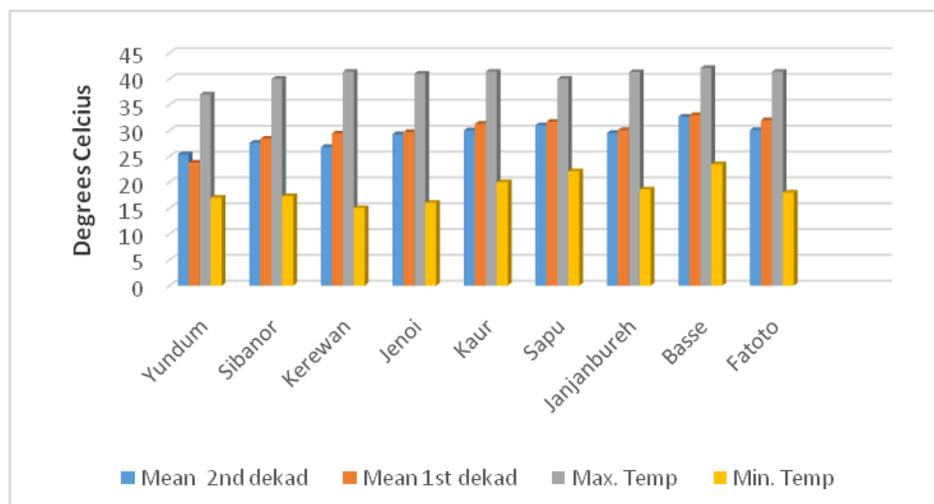


Figure 1: Comparison on minimum, mean and maximum temperatures.

Wind recorded in this dekad continued to be light to moderate in speed across the country as in the last dekad, thus has no negative impacts to lives and properties.

The average sunshine duration recorded across the country in this dekad varied from 9 to 10 hours in the Western Third, 6 to 10 hours in the Middle Third and 6 to 8 hours in the Eastern Third of the country. The regions with lesser sunshine durations can be link to the cloud cover of the sky during this period.

Relative Humidity (RH) across the country ranged from a minimum of 41% recorded at Kaur in the Middle Third, whilst the maximum of 66% was recorded at Yundum in the Western Third of the country. The higher relative humidity recorded over the Western Third can be attributed to its proximity to the ocean which influences the influx of moist winds from the ocean.

6. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

The main agricultural engagement of farmers throughout the country continues to be clearing and burning of agricultural fields, acquisition of different seeds for sowing in the forth coming rainy season and preparation of farming implements. In the Western Third, women are still engaged in vegetable gardening in the low lands.

7. LIVESTOCK SITUATION

The livestock situation across the country is not impressive as farmers continue clearing and burning of agricultural fields in preparation of the coming rainy season, thus impeding the grazing process and imposing negative impacts to milk production as well as causing weaknesses to livestock.

8. SITUATION OF MARKETS

8.1 Cereal Prices

Commodity prices at retain and weekly markets continued to depend on the availability of stocks and their demand. During this period under review, the price for maize was as low as 14.50 Dalasis per kilo at Kaur in the Middle Third of the country, whilst the highest of 24.67 Dalasis was observed at Brikama. The price of imported rice (broken) remained the same, D24.00/kg and D26.00/kg for Urban and rural markets respectively as compared to the last dekad.

8.2 Price of beef and mutton

The price of beef (steak) ranged from as low as D175.00 per kilo at Ndugukebbeh in the North Bank Region to D250.00 per kilo at Brikama in the West Coast Region whilst the price of mutton is D 200.00 per kilo at Brikama, Ndugukebbeh and Farafenni.

*Banjul May 24 2018.
National MWG of The Gambia*

Composition of MWG:

Department of Water Resources
Planning Services - Department of Agriculture (DOA)
Communication, Extension & Education Services - DOA
Animal Health & Production Services - DOA
Plant Protection Services - DOA
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