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# EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2008/02

**IN THE GAMBIA**

Period: May 11 - 20, 2008

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Government of The Gambia

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Working Group of the AGRHYMET Regional  
Programme

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## 1. PROGRESS OF RAINY SEASON

Over the West African Region, the Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD) separating the moist air masses from the South (source of the rainfall) from the drier air moving southwards from northern Africa was located over Kolda (Senegal), Segou (Mali), Tillaberi and Eoure (Niger) and Ati (Chad).

A stable atmosphere accompanied by frequent dust haze and occasional rising / drifting sand were prevalent over sectors north of the ITD. Whereas, misty conditions prevailed, over the coastal and forested areas stretching from Dakar, Senegal onto Bissau, Guinea during the early morning hours.

Instability prevailed over south of the ITD resulting to the evolution of convective cloud developments during the daytime. Thus causing isolated/scattered thunderstorm and rain over the southern Sahel particularly over, parts of Guinea Bissau, southern/southwestern Mali, Burkina Fasso, southern Niger and southern Chad. However, slight rains affected The Gambia, southeastern Senegal and central Mali towards the middle of the dekad. This occurred due to the presence of medium layered clouds generated by the passage of a mid-level wedge of unstable weather condition. Further south into the Gulf of Guinea States, occasional moderate outburst of thunderstorm and rain were also prevalent.

## 2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK

Over the Gambia particularly in the eastern sector, the rain generating mechanisms are on course and will be favourable by the end of May. Hence, scattered to widespread, slight / moderate thunderstorms and rain are expected during the end of the third dekad of May and into the first dekad of June.

## 3. RAINFALL SITUATION

During this dekad, most stations in the country registered signs of the impending rains, with some droplets resulting to measurable rainfall of 1.0mm and 0.9mm in Sara Soffie and Basse respectively. Other stations (Fatoto in the Eastern Third, Kuntaur and Jenoi in the Middle Third and Yundum and Banjul in the Western Third recorded only traces (un-measurable rainfall) of rain.

However, compared to last year and the normal during the same period, deficits ranging from 0.1mm to 8.6mm were observed in the entire country.

## 4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

As in the preceeding dekad, temperatures remained high during this dekad, particularly in the Eastern and Middle Thirds of the country. Highest temperatures remained above 40.0°C in almost all stations except those near the coast (Jambanjelly, Yundum and Banjul), where the highest temperatures were below 34.0°C.

The minimum temperatures followed the same trend as the maximum temperatures; ranging between 18.6°C at Kerewan in the Western Third to 25.3 °C at Basse in the Eastern Third.

Maximum relative humidity decreased slightly compared to the previous dekad. The highest recorded was over 80% around the coast, reducing gradually to a minimum of 61% in the Eastern part of the country.

Winds during the dekad were generally moderate to light in speed (26km/hr maximum).

#### 4. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

The major on-field activities by farmers continued to be field clearing, acquisition of seeds and preparation and the repair of farming implements.

#### 5. FOOD SITUATION

Average prices at the cereal markets continued to fluctuate depending on the volume of the commodities supplied and demand at the markets.

With the drastic rise in food prices worldwide, the average prices of imported rice (long grain and broken rice) increased by over 30% during the same period last year. However, price of coarse grains (maize, millet and sorghum) this year is relatively higher than the price of imported rice (fig. 1).

Millet, maize sorghum and local rice are available in all the markets. Despite the world food crisis, sufficient quantities of imported rice (broken and long grains) are also available in stores, retail shops and in weekly markets countrywide.



Figure 1: Cereal prices from May 11 to 20, 2008 (Source: Department of Planning)

<p><b>Composition of MWG:</b>          Department of Water Resources          Department of Planning - NADA          Department of Extension Services - NADA          Department of Veterinary Services - NADA          Department of Technical Services - NADA          National Environment Agency</p>	<p><b>Direct your comments and questions to:</b>          The Director          Department of Water Resources          7 Marina Parade, Banjul          The Gambia          Tel: (+ 220) 422 76 31/422 28 72/ 422 41 22          Email: <a href="mailto:dwr@gamtel.gm">dwr@gamtel.gm</a></p>
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