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# EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2011/11

## IN THE GAMBIA

Period: August 11 - 20, 2011

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Government of The Gambia

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

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### 1. PROGRESS OF THE RAINY SEASON

The Azores high pressure cell remained quasi-stationary and mainly dormant over the North Atlantic Ocean with a core value of 1024/26hpa. Its counterpart over the South Atlantic Ocean, St. Helena high pressure cell was more active and kept intensifying and relaxing, while drifting eastwards towards South Africa. Its core value varied between 1022 -1034hpa during the dekad.

This in effect advected a lot of warm moist air most especially into the Western Sahel. A series of heat lows 'cyclonic vortex' were featured over western Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, and Burkina Faso. These low pressure systems accompanied by rain and thunderstorms generally propagated slowly westwards into The Gambia, Senegal, and or Guinea's Coast.

The mean surface position of Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD) was centred over the central coast of Mauritania, extending northeastwards into northern Mali, then sloping southeastwards towards Southern Algeria and eastern Niger.

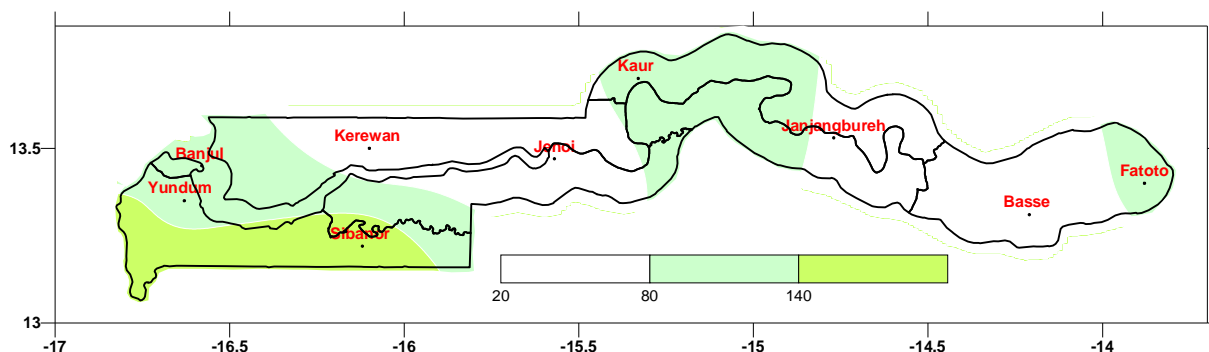
Southerly and southwesterly winds dominate the flow over much of West Africa south of the ITD but were variable over The Gambia's coast and environs.

### 2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR AUGUST 21 – 31, 2011

Humid and variably cloudy conditions are expected with an outburst of scattered moderate rain and/or drizzle.

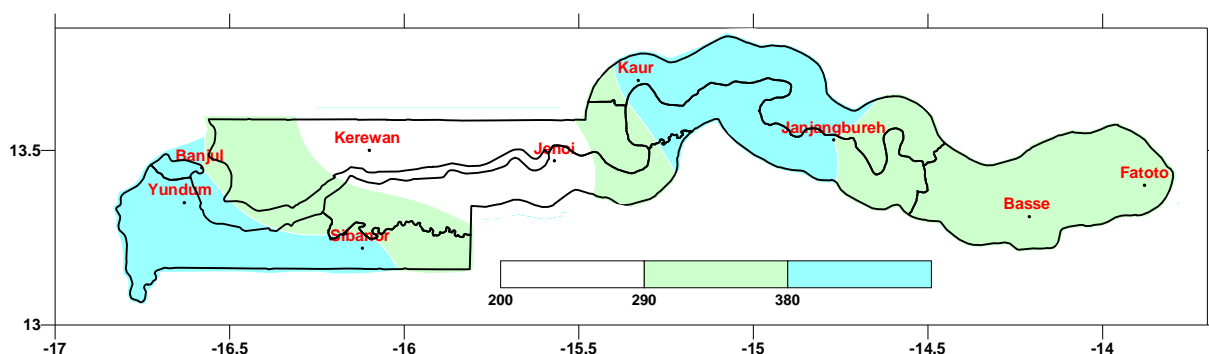
### 3. RAINFALL SITUATION

The heavy downpour registered during the last dekad continued during this present one. Daily amounts of more than 50mm were recorded in Banjul (70.4mm), Serekunda (56.0mm), Yundum (60.7mm), Sibanor (62.1mm) all in the Western Third and Fatoto (93.7mm) in the Eastern Third of the country. The number of rainy days ranged from 2 to 9 days leading to end-of-dekad totals ranging from 25.6mm at Kerewan to 138.4mm at Serekunda both in the Western Third of the country (Fig. 1a). However, consecutive rainless days from the previous dekad ranging from 5 to 8 days were recorded at Basse and Fatoto in the Eastern Third of the country.



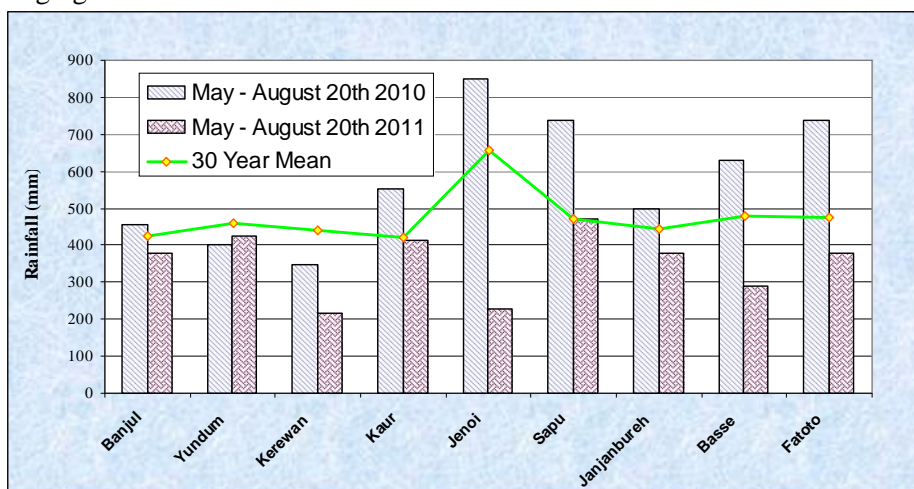
**Figure 1a:** Rainfall intensity during August 1 – 20, 2011

The seasonal total rainfall accumulated from May 1 to August 20, 2011 ranged from a minimum of 217.4mm at Kerewan to a maximum of 475.1mm at Serekunda both in the Western Third of the country (Fig. 1b).



**Figure 1b:** Seasonal total from May 1 to August 20, 2011

Generally average rainfall from May 1 to August 20 remained below the normal during the same period (Fig. 1c). When compared to last year, only Yundum recorded surplus. The rest of the network stations recorded deficits ranging from 32.8mm at Serekunda to 622.7mm at Jemai.



**Figure 1c:** Rainfall comparison

*The country average as at August 20, 2011 rose to 369.6mm which is 36% below last year (580.5mm) 22% below the normal (473.9mm) during the same period.*

#### **4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION**

Temperatures were mainly high in the Eastern Third during this dekad than the previous dekad, while Banjul recorded the lowest in the Western Third of the country. The extreme temperatures ranged from 32.2°C at Yundum in the Western Third to 38.5°C in the Eastern Third of the country.

Maximum Relative Humidity continued to be above 90% throughout the country, except Banjul (89%) in the Western Third and Fatoto (87%) in the Eastern Third of the country.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed with a maximum gust of 64.8km/hr recorded at Sapu on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

#### **5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION**

##### **Crop situation**

Farmers are mainly engaged in second weeding on both cereal and groundnut fields in parts of the country. However, in the Western Third (West Coast and Lower River Regions) farmers are still on first weeding.

Phenological development of crops varied in different areas across the country. In the Middle and Eastern Thirds (Central and Upper River Regions) maize, millet and sorghum have reached advanced phenological stages ranging from stem elongation to their early reproductive stages (heading, cob formation...). Groundnuts are also on flowering or pod formation in some parts of the Middle and Eastern Thirds.

In the Western Third of the country, the phenological development stage of early millet, maize and sorghum are at vegetative stages ranging from tillering to shooting. Meanwhile, in the North Bank Region these crops are at stages ranging from shooting to flowering. Groundnut is at advanced vegetative stage in most parts of the Western Third.

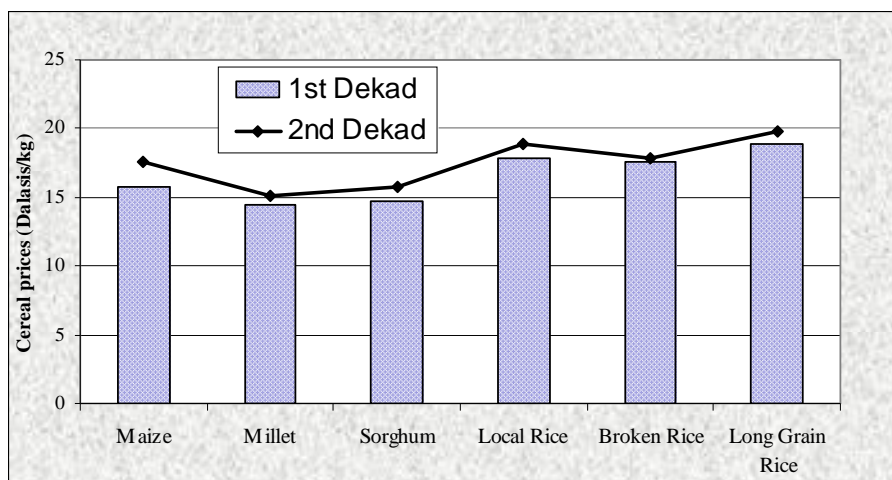
Up-land rice across the country is at varying vegetative stages ranging from tillering to shooting and weeding is largely in progress. In the lowlands fields, ploughing and transplanting is in progress in most parts of the country.

#### **6. SITUATION OF MARKETS**

##### **Cereal Prices**

Average cereal prices continued to fluctuate depending on the volume of the commodities supplied and demand at the markets. During this dekad, average prices for coarse grains recorded an increase ranging from D0.65/kg to D1.83/kg as compared to the preceeding dekad. The main staple food, rice also registered an increase in price of D0.16/kg to D1.10/kg (Fig. 2).

At the retail markets, the prices of coarse grains (maize, sorghum and millet) remained the same as in the preceeding dekad and varied from D10.00/kg to D11.33/kg. Whilst at the weekly markets, the prices of these crops had increased and varied from D14.90/kg to D21.95/kg.



**Figure 2:** Evolution of cereal prices (Source: Planning Services - DOA)

The price of rice (local and imported) remained higher in retail markets and ranged from D16.00/kg to D20.00/kg. Whilst at the weekly markets, the price of rice varied from D16.66/kg to D18.75/kg.

### Beef Prices

As the demand for beef during this month of *Ramadan* is high, its price had also registered an increase. The price of meat & bone ranged from D80.00/Kg to D100.00/kg throughout the country (table 1). Whilst the price of steak beef ranged from

D100.00/kg to D120.00/kg in markets around the country.

**Table 1:** Evolution of meat prices (Source: Planning Services - DOA)

	Retail Markets					Weekly Markets
	Banjul	Serekunda	Latrikunda	Bakau	Brikama	Brikamaba
<b>Beef Meat &amp; Bones</b>	80.00	100.00	90.00	90.00	80.00	80.00
<b>Beef Steak</b>	100.00	120.00	120.00	100.00	120.00	100.00

#### 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  
 National Environment Agency

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