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# EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

MAY 3, 2012

## IN THE GAMBIA

Period: May 21 - 31, 2012

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Government of The Gambia

Produced and Published by the Multidisciplinary Working Group of the AGRHYMET Regional Programme

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

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### 1. SEASONAL CLIMATE FORECAST FOR THE YEAR 2012 OVER THE GAMBIA

The Department of Water Resources is pleased to present the climate forecast for this wet season (2012). As in the past years, this product is the result of collaboration with the National Meteorological Services within the sub-region and beyond.

#### • 2012 Rainfall Prediction

For the coming July-August-September (JAS) period, the expected rainfall values would be **Normal** (most likely) to **Below-normal** (likely).

Normal onset of the rains is likely in some parts of the country while in other parts of the onset of rains may be late. Temporal and spatial disruptions in the distribution of precipitation during JAS 2012 should be expected.

Continuous monitoring and updates on the regional climate situation in The Gambia will be carried out. **Farming is highly encouraged.**

Based on the above forecast the Department is pleased to make the following advice to the different sectors:

#### ü **Agriculture**

- Give priority to Low land areas
- Sow varieties very resistant to water stress
- Choose crop varieties with short cycle and resistant to the water stress
- Plan early start of the activities against-season

#### ü **Health**

- Malaria: to supervise its incidence (availability and persistence of stagnant waters favourable with the reproduction of the anopheles mosquito)
- Cholera: to increase vigilance at the time of the first rains.

#### ü **Livestock**

- Prepare early collection and fodder storage
- Plan early departure of the herds in transhumance
- Avoid wasting the reserve waters.

#### ü **Social Sector / Disaster Management**

In principle, there is less risk of flooding, but the forecast is related to the total cumulative rainfall during July, August and September, there is no information on the spatial and temporal distribution; therefore, vigilance is still required;

- Prepare for interventions for emergency assistance in case of crop failure;
- Increase vigilance in the management of conflicts related to the occupation of agro-pastoral lands.

## 2. PROGRESS OF RAINY SEASON

The surface position of the Inter-tropical discontinuity (ITD) line was located northern Senegal dipping over Western Mali and rising again over Niger. Weather to the south of this surface position was characterized by convective cloud development which gave rise to thunderstorms and rains over some places in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Gulf of Guinea states. Weather was mostly scattered and occurred in the afternoons and nights. In contrast, the weather that occurred north of the ITD surface position was rather dry and relatively stable with haze and rising sand over Mauritania and Northern Mali. Visibility of less than 2000 meters was frequently reported.

The Azores Sub-Tropical High Pressure system remained quasi stationary over North Atlantic Ocean with a core value of 1020hpa and a ridge extending over Western Sahara and Morocco. The St Helena Sub-Tropical High Pressure system in the South Atlantic Ocean, on the other hand, intensified to a main value of 1030hpa during the dekad.

## 3. RAINFALL SITUATION FOR THE DEKAD 21 – 31 MAY 2012

During the first day of this dekad, rainfall was recorded in the eastern half of the country. The highest of 51.6mm was recorded in Janjangbureh, whilst Sapu and Fatoto recorded the lowest of 14.0mm (Fig. 1a).

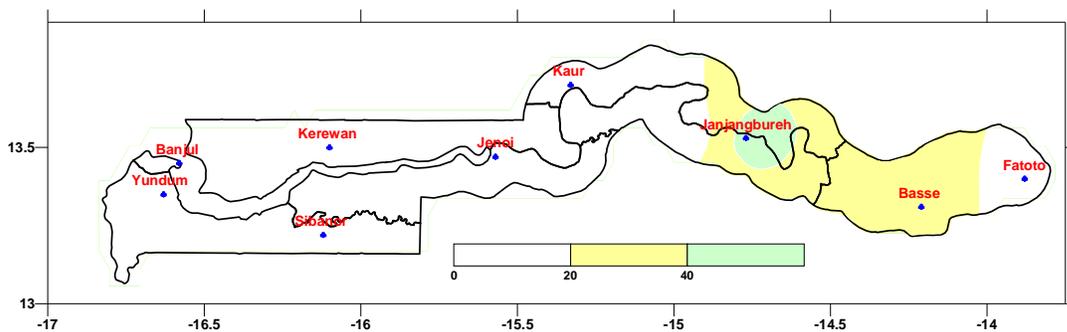


Figure 1a: *Rainfall intensity during May 21 – 31, 2012*

Cumulative rainfall record as at May 31 (Figure 1b) shows that the seasonal total rainfall amount in the country ranged from 4.3mm at Kerewan in the Western Third to 69.6mm at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third of the country. Thus the distribution in space shows that the Middle Third has received more rainfall, followed by the Eastern Third and then the Western Third (Fig. 1b).

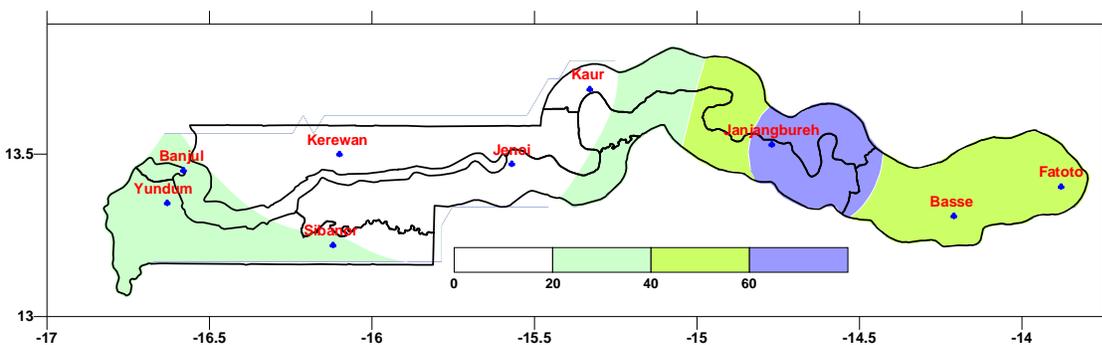


Figure 1: *Cumulative rainfall from May 1 – 31, 2012*

When compared to last year, surplus amounts ranging from 2.0 to 49.5mm were recorded within the country, thus indicating an early start of the rains this year. However, this should not be regarded as the real onset date for rainfed agricultural operations.

#### 4. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR JUNE 1 - 10, 2012

Some weather disturbances are expected during this period.

#### 5. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

During this dekad, maximum temperatures decreased slightly as compared to the previous dekad, while minimum temperatures increased by 1.0°C throughout the country. Average temperature recorded was highest (39.4°C) at Jenoi in the Middle Third and lowest (26.8°C) at Banjul in the Western Third of the country.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed. However, a line squall with a maximum wind gust of 56.9km/h was recorded at Janjangbureh traversing the country on May 22, 2012 causing damages to houses and felling down trees.

#### 6. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

The major on-field activities by farmers continued to be field clearing, acquisition and preparation of seeds and the repair of farming implements. Meanwhile, dry sowing of early millet has been reported in parts of North Bank and Central River Regions.

#### 7. SITUATION OF MARKETS

##### Cereal Prices

**Table 1: Evolution of Cereal prices during May 20 – 26, 2011 (Source: Planning Services - DOA)**

Cereals	Banjul	Serekunda	Latrikunda	Brikama	Bakau
Maize	19.1	18.6	15.8	17.9	15.8
Millet	18.9	18.6	13.2	15.8	15.8
Sorghum	18.9	19.0	15.8	17.9	15.8
Local rice	N/A	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0
Broken rice	20.0	20.0	20.0	25.0	20.0
Long grain rice	24.0	24.0	24.0	25.0	24.0
Findi	62.5	62.6	60.0	70.0	75.0

Prevailing prices of these commodities continued to fluctuate depending on the volume supplied and the demand at the markets. Average price of coarse grains remains lowest (D15.00 per kg) at Latrikunda retail market and highest (D19.00 per kg) at Banjul. The average price of *Findi* (D66.00/Kg) remained high as compared to D50.00/Kg recorded during the same period last year.

As shown in Table 1 above, the coarse grains (i.e. millet, maize and sorghum), as well as rice and “hungry” rice locally called *Findi* are available in the retail markets within the Greater Banjul Area (GBA).

##### Price of Beef

The price of beef (meat & bones) remained stable at D100.00 / Kg during the period under review, whilst the price of Beef steak varied from D115.00 to D120.00 in GBA.

<p><b>Composition of MWG:</b>                  Department of Water Resources                  Planning Services - Department of Agriculture (DOA)                  Communication, Extension &amp; Education Services - DOA                  Animal Health &amp; Production Services - DOA                  Plant Protection Services - DOA                  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 41 22 / 890 52 29                  Email: <a href="mailto:dwr@mofwrnam.gov.gm">dwr@mofwrnam.gov.gm</a></p>
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