



FOOD SECURITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Agromet-Update

2006/2007 Agricultural Season



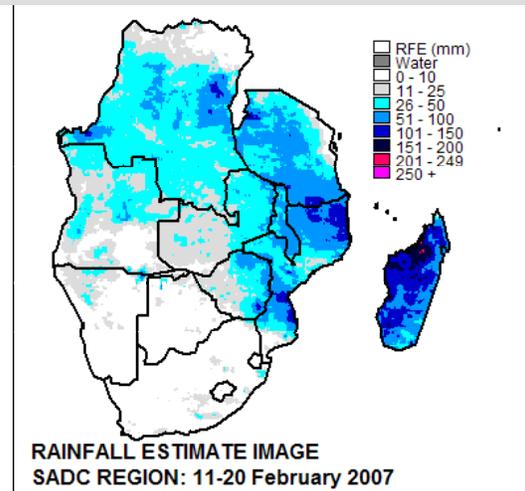
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Highlights

- ❑ Heavy and excessive rains are received across the north-eastern half of the SADC region
- ❑ Flooding affects several countries in the region.
- ❑ Prolonged dry spells and a moderate drought developing in the southern SADC

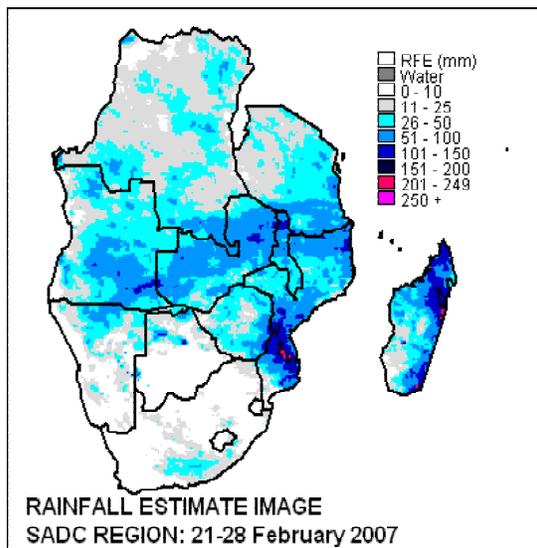
The dekadal rainfall performance during the second dekad of February (figure 1) indicates that Tanzania had widespread rains ranging from light showers to heavy rainfall in both the bimodal and unimodal rainfall systems. Satellite rainfall estimates and ground data also indicate that rainfall performance in northern Mozambique performed better than the normal and the major maize growing areas benefited from these rains which were good for crop development. Parts of central and southern Mozambique and eastern Zimbabwe received substantial amounts of rain due to cyclone Favio which established itself towards the end of the second dekad. Malawi received light showers to heavy rains but the rains were less than those experienced in the previous dekads. From the onset of the rainy season up to January, Malawi experienced good rains and farmers were anticipating good harvest yields. As the rains

Figure 1. Rainfall Performance for 11 to 20 February 2007



continued in the northern half of the region, many areas in Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia experienced flooding problems due to the excessive rains. Figure 1 also indicates that the southern half of the region continued to experience very dry conditions which might impact negatively on the final production.

Figure 2. Rainfall Performance for 21 to 28 February 2007



The eastern side of the SADC region received the heaviest rains in third dekad of February. Parts of northern Madagascar received rainfall that was above 200 mm and this could be attributed to cyclone Favio, whose excessive rains persisted into the third dekad. The cyclone also contributed to the heavy rains received in central Mozambique and eastern Zimbabwe leading to flooding in some areas. Malawi received decreased rainfall in the central and northern parts. Northern Mozambique and extreme southern Tanzania received substantial amounts of rainfall. In contrast, the south-western half of the region received little or no rainfall thus prolonging the dry spells that have had negative impact on crops. The countries affected by the prolonged dry spells include Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Note that February is expected to be the wettest month of the season hence the non-availability of rains will have an impact on the final national, and the overall regional production.

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Prolonged dry spells and a moderate drought developing in the southern SADC

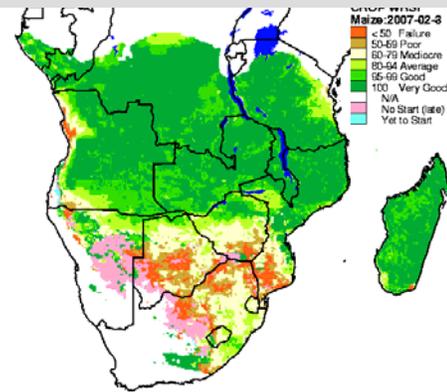
There are prolonged dry spells and a moderate drought developing in the southern half of the SADC region. Countries affected are southern and SE Zimbabwe, southern Mozambique, most of Botswana and Namibia (except Caprivi), large parts of South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho. In most of these countries, last significant rains were received at the end of December, and the last 40-50 days have been extremely dry and accompanied by high temperatures. Indications are that there has been an early end to the rainy season in the southern parts of SADC, and the rain bearing systems have moved and remained in the north. This pre-mature cessation of the rains has had a devastating effect on the crops. The early planted maize crop, now at the tasseling and cob-formation stages, is under severe water stress as this is the period when the crop needs a lot of water, and shortage of water will lead to a reduction in yields.

MOZAMBIQUE Floods in Tete, Zambezia, Manica, Sofala and Nampula provinces have destroyed crops and livestock, displaced people and resulted in loss of life. Parts of central and southern Mozambique received the highest amounts of rainfall brought by cyclone Favio, with Machaze, Mabote, Vilankulo, Inhassoro districts registering amounts above 250mm for the dekad. For the extreme southern Mozambique, poor and erratic rains continued into the second and third dekads of February. Agricultural activity has been characterized by re-plantings, followed by crop failure. Reports indicate that the first season crop (the south has two cropping seasons) is almost a write off unless good rains are received soon. Expectations are for a better second season crop.

MALAWI. Rainfall performance since the onset of the season was good for the entire country. The second and third dekads of February were just below normal to normal in most parts of the country especially over the central and northern parts of the country but this had little impact on general crop development and condition as most crops were surviving on residual moisture following good rains in previous dekads. In most parts of the country, crops were in good condition with maize ranging from flowering to maturity stages.

SWAZILAND. Very little rainfall was received over the entire country during the second dekad of February. Isolated northern areas received showers during the third dekad while elsewhere no rainfall was recorded. By the end of February, crops, especially maize at the critical tasselling stages, were wilting due to moisture deficiency. A poor harvest is likely unless more rains are received soon.

Figure 3. Crop Condition as at 28th February 2007



Analysis of WRSI (Fig.3 above) reveals that most of Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, southern Mozambique, southern Zimbabwe and northern South Africa have been affected by dry spells as their maize crop water requirement satisfaction index values suggest poor crop condition and failure in some parts. Yield reductions are expected in some other areas.

BOTSWANA The country was relatively dry during the second dekad of February. Widespread dry conditions persisted into the third dekad and only isolated pockets in the northern parts of the country received light to moderate showers. The poor and erratic rains this season have resulted in very poor crop conditions as well as poor grazing conditions.

LESOTHO Rainfall has been poor and erratic over much of Lesotho during the second and third dekads of February. The drought conditions, coupled with high temperatures, that have prevailed over most parts from the last dekad of December, have negatively affected the crops especially in the southern lowlands and the Senqu river valley.

ZIMBABWE Very little rainfall was recorded over almost the entire country during the second dekad of February. The eastern parts received moderate rains during the second dekad and substantial amounts during the last dekad of February due to the effects of cyclone Favio. Over the eastern and southern parts of Zimbabwe, where some areas last had significant rains in December, received substantial amounts of rainfall brought by cyclone Favio. February is expected to be the wettest month but it was characterised by poor erratic rains and high temperatures. The early planted maize crop has been affected by water stress at the critical tasseling and cob-formation stages, and poor yields are expected.

For more details, contact: **SADC Food Agricultural and Natural Resources Directorate.**

Gaborone, Botswana. Tel: 267-3951863; Email: kmasamvu@sadc.int Web:

<http://www.sadc.int>