

Summary

The Bulletin contains a brief review of the performance of the last rainfall season (Vuli), evolution of the climate systems and outlook for the March to May 2009 (Masika) rainfall season. The season (Masika) is more significant for the eastern and northern sectors of the country (northern coast, northeastern highlands and Lake Victoria basin) and is expected to be mainly normal except for eastern Shinyanga and eastern Mara, where normal to below normal rainfall is expected. This Outlook is relevant only for seasonal time scales and over relatively large areas and month-to-month variations may occur. It should be noted that heavy and short duration episodic events are common even in below normal rainfall conditions.

SUMMARY OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2008 RAINFALL SEASON

The performance of the October to December 2008 short rains (*Vuli*) failed over much of the bimodal areas except the western and southern areas of the Lake Victoria basin. Performance of seasonal rains over the unimodal areas fared well except for southern coast (Lindi and Mtwara regions).

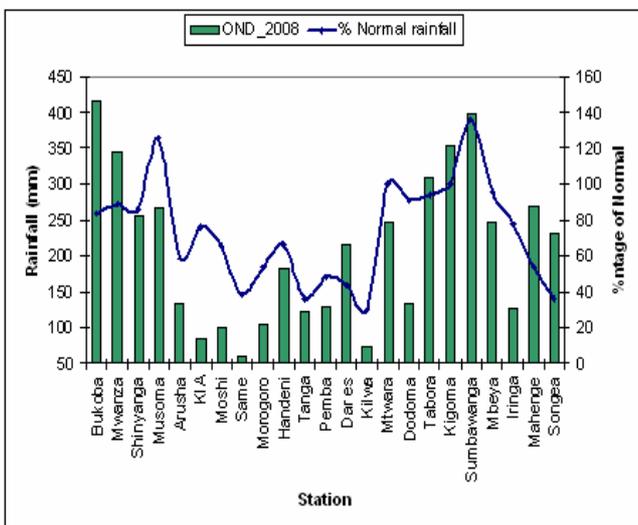


Figure 1: Seasonal rainfall and its percentage against long-term mean

During the months of October - December 2008, development of tropical cyclones over the south-west Indian Ocean contributed to rainfall enhancement over most of the unimodal areas of the country. However, over the bimodal areas, normal to below normal rainfall was recorded.

EXPECTED WEATHER AND CLIMATE SYSTEMS DURING MARCH- MAY 2009

Currently much of the equatorial Pacific Ocean is cool while the East Atlantic Ocean is warm and much of the south-western Indian Ocean is relatively warmer than average conditions. The near normal Sea Surface Temperatures (SSTs) over the equatorial Pacific Ocean and south-western Indian Ocean are expected during the March-April-May rainfall season. Other influencing factors are dynamics of atmospheric wind flow and pressure patterns.

Seasonal Outlook

Long Rains (*Masika*)

The long rains season in the northern sector (bimodal areas) of Tanzania is due to commence in the second to fourth week of March 2009. The details are as follows:

Lake Victoria basin: Rains started in the first week of March in areas near the lake in Kagera region and are expected to spread and the rest of the region during the second week. In much of Mwanza, Mara, western Shinyanga regions and northern parts of Kigoma region the rains are expected to start during the third week of March 2009. These rains are expected to be mainly normal with pockets of above normal over much over the area except for eastern Shinyanga and eastern Mara, where normal to below normal rainfall is expected.

Northern coast and hinterland: (Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Coast, northern Morogoro regions and isles of

Zanzibar and Pemba). The rains are expected to start during second to third week of March and are likely to be mainly normal.

Northeastern highlands: (Kilimanjaro, Arusha and Manyara regions) the onset of rains are expected during the third week to fourth week of March. The rains over these areas are expected to be normal over much of the area with few areas getting below normal.

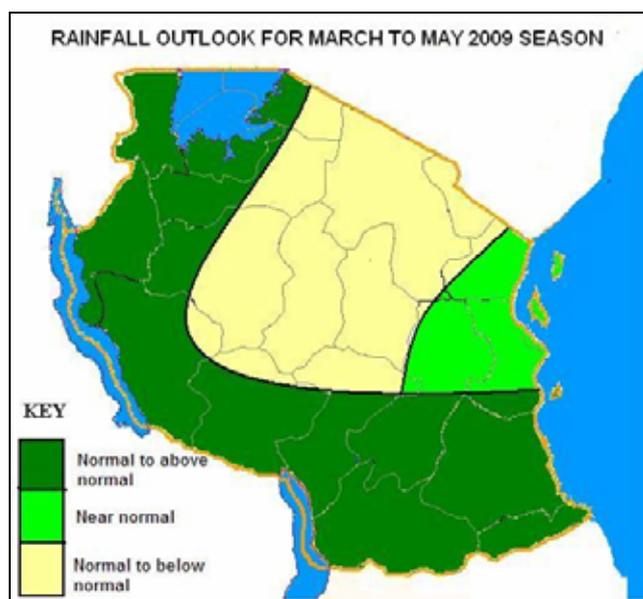


Figure 2: Rainfall outlook for March to May 2009

Seasonal Rains

Seasonal rains pertain to areas with only one rainfall season and these are:

Western areas: (western parts of Tabora region, Kigoma, and Rukwa regions). The ongoing rains are expected to continue with normal to above normal trend over much of the areas except eastern parts of Tabora which are likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall. The rains are expected to last until the end of April 2009.

Central areas (Singida and Dodoma): The ongoing rains are expected to be normal with few areas receiving below normal rainfall. The rains are expected to recede towards the end of April 2009.

Southern coastal areas (Mtwara and Lindi regions): Most of these areas are expected to get normal to above normal rainfall. Cessation of rains is expected towards the end of April 2009.

Southern and South-western areas: (Rukwa, Mbeya, Iringa, South Morogoro and Ruvuma,). The seasonal rains are expected to end towards the end of April. Most of these areas are expected to get normal to above normal rainfall.

Advisory

Over north eastern highlands, farmers are advised to plant fast maturing crops. In northern Iringa and Dodoma regions, farmers should plant sweet potatoes to salvage the remaining rains in the season. Over Singida region, western and Southwestern highlands, farmers should continue with normal practice as crops get into maturity. Over Lake Victoria Basin, farmers should go for a normal *Masika* season.

Pastures and Water for Livestock

The ongoing rains over the unimodal areas will provide sufficient soil moisture that will continue to support crops and pastures. In the bimodal areas, the expected rains will also support crops and pastures.

Pasture and water for livestock and wildlife is expected to flourish.

Water Levels in dams and Lakes

Water levels in dams, rivers and Lakes are expected to get a boost. However, it is important to manage water resource sparingly over the country to be able to sustain livelihood and meet the demand for electric energy production.

The current status of seasonal forecasting allows for prediction of spatial and temporal averages and may not fully account for physical and dynamical factors that influence short term national climate variability. Users of this outlook are, therefore urged to make good use of daily, ten day and monthly updates issued by the Tanzania Meteorological Agency.

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