Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

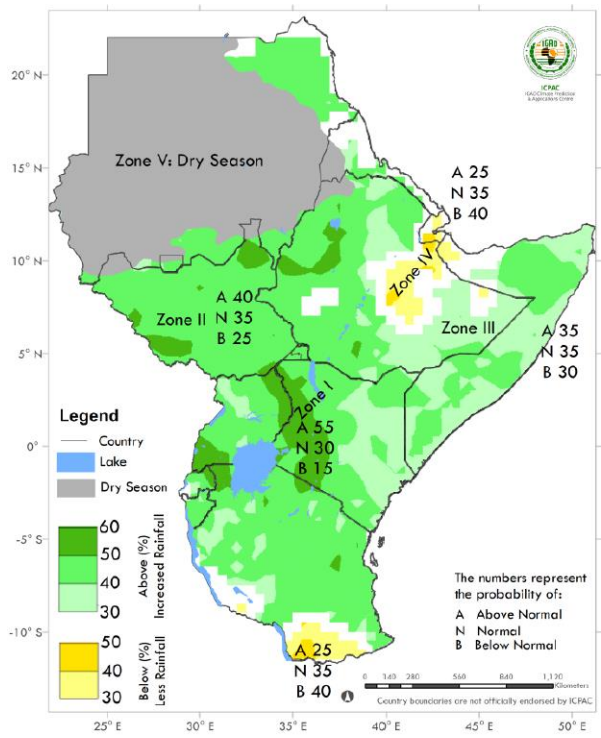
March to May 2020 Climate Outlook for South Sudan – FAO Key Messages

Based on the 54th Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF 54)
27 – 29 January 2020, Mombasa, Kenya

March to May constitute an important rainfall season in South Sudan as this is the beginning of cultivation period in both the bimodal (*first season crop cultivation*) and unimodal (m*ain season crop cultivation from April to May*) areas of the country.

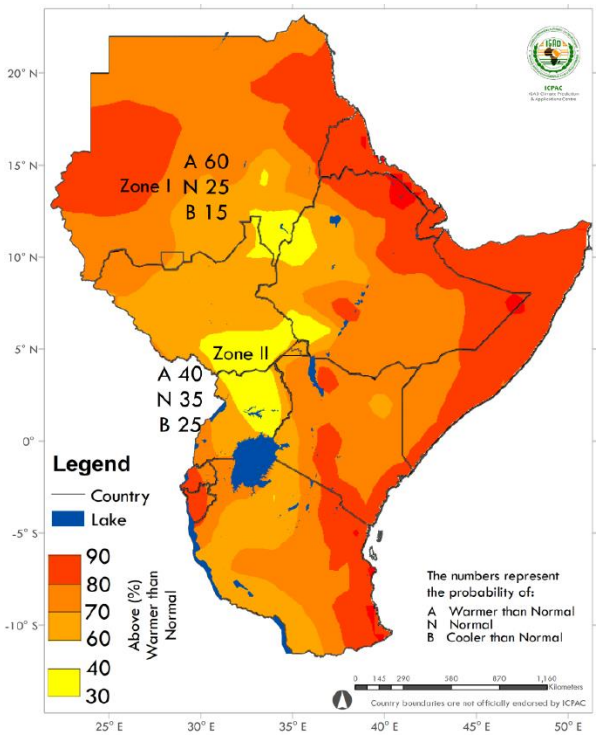
As indicated in the Greater Horn of Africa consensus maps on rainfall and temperature outlooks below, between March and May 2020, there is an increased likelihood of above normal rainfall over much of South Sudan, with some locations experiencing an earlier than normal start of the rainy season. At the same time, temperature forecasts indicate an increased likelihood of warmer than normal surface temperatures over much of the country, with the southeastern parts likely to experience near normal temperatures.

Figure 1: Greater Horn of Africa Objective rainfall Outlook for the March to May 2020 rainfall season



Zone I – High probability (55%) for above normal rainfall.
Zone II – High probability (40%) for above normal rainfall.
Zone III – High probability (35%) of above and near normal rainfall conditions.
Zone IV – High probability (40%) of below normal rainfall.
Zone V – High probability of dry conditions.

Figure 2: Greater Horn of Africa Mean Surface Temperature Outlook for March to May 2020 season



Zone I – Increased likelihood (60%) of above normal (i.e., warmer) mean temperatures.
Zone II - This Zone delineates areas with a likelihood of above normal (40%) mean temperatures. The probabilities of near and below normal are 35% and 25%, respectively.

This report is produced by FAO South Sudan's project (*Strengthening the Livelihoods of Pastoral and Agropastoral Communities in South Sudan's Cross-border Areas with Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda*) which is funded by the European Union.

RAINFALL OUTLOOK

The rainfall forecast (*Figure 1*) indicates a higher chance of wet conditions (*normal to above normal rainfall*) in most parts of South Sudan during March to May 2020. Wetter conditions are expected in Maban and Melut counties of Upper Nile State; Ibba, Yambio, Nzara, Ezo, and Tambura of Western Equatoria State; and the southern parts of Budi and Kapoeta South in Eastern Equatoria State. Compared to 1981-2010 averages, earlier than normal start of rains is expected across much of the country.

TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK

The climate outlook for March – May 2020 season indicates an increased likelihood of warmer than normal conditions across most of the country. However, near normal temperature conditions are expected in Maban and the eastern parts of Renk in Upper Nile State, as well Eastern Equatoria State, Central Equatoria State, and Mundri East and Mundri West in Western Equatoria State.

IMPLICATION OF CLIMATE OUTLOOK ON AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

- The above normal rainfall is likely to encourage farmers to start the agricultural season early and the anticipated adequate moisture content will support high germination rates.
- During crop growth, the above normal rainfall will likely reduce incidences of Fall Armyworm by destroying the pest's larvae.
- The rainfall in the pastoral areas of the country will enhance pasture growth and water availability for livestock thus contributing to increased availability of milk.
- Incidence of waterborne livestock diseases is likely to increase due to the wet conditions. This hazard is likely to worsen as the wet season progresses.
- The above normal rainfall will enhance availability of fishing grounds including seasonally flooded areas that can serve as fishing grounds thus contributing to increased availability of fish.
- Early start of the rains will encourage fishers to start their fishing season early- particularly in areas where fishing is a seasonal activity that is limited by availability of water in fishing grounds.
- The wet and warm conditions are likely to favour desert locust reproduction should swarms find their way into South Sudan, particularly in the eastern parts of the country bordering Ethiopia and Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continuous rainfall monitoring in order to provide early warning for early action, especially with the threat of flooding that may destroy crops during establishment and early stages of growth.
- Enhance access to improved fishing inputs to better utilize available fishing grounds;
- Promote improved fish preservation technologies to reduce fish post-harvest loss that likely would be higher due to the rainy weather and the warmer than normal temperature;
- Promote planting of roots/tubers and water resistance crops in order to take advantage of excessive rainwater.
- Enhance livestock disease surveillance systems for early detection, identification and reporting for timely intervention.
- Vaccination against deadly priority waterborne livestock diseases during this period is recommended. Prepositioning of livestock inputs will be important, as access is likely to reduce. Actions related to carcass disposal will be important based on experience from the impact of the 2019 extensive flooding.