



FOOD SECURITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Agromet Update

2007/2008 Agricultural Season



Issue 03 Month: October Dekad 3 Season: 2007-2008 Release date: 9-11-2007

Highlights

- ❑ Short rains performing poorly in Tanzania
- ❑ Significant rains continue falling in South Africa and surrounding areas
- ❑ Significant improvement in vegetation conditions in the southern parts of the region

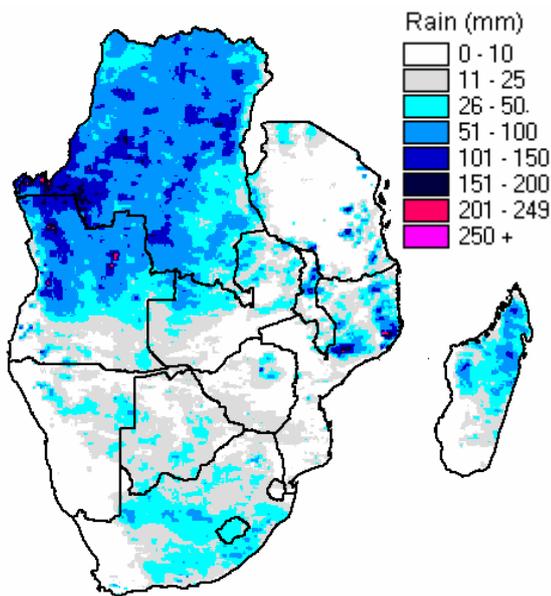


Figure 1. Rainfall for 21-31 October 2007, from rainfall estimates (data source: NOAA/FEWSNET)

Rainfall activity during 21-31 October

Most parts of the SADC region received good rainfall during the period of 21-31 October, in accordance with the early stages that the season is currently in. Most countries in the region received above normal rains. Of note, Angola, DRC, Lesotho, parts of northern Mozambique, northern Malawi, northern Madagascar, and South Africa received moderate to heavy rains. Parts of Botswana and Namibia also received relatively high rainfall (compared to normal). Lower than usual rainfall was received in Swaziland and surrounding areas in Mozambique and South Africa, as well as north-western Tanzania. Generally, these areas are expected to experience their start of season in late October/early November, and an analysis of rainfall compared to average conditions also suggested that the amount of rainfall they received was below average for the third dekad of October. In Tanzania in particular, the short season rains are performing poorly, and there are reports of delayed season start and moisture-stressed crops. However, an analysis based on cumulative rainfall from 1 September to 31 October showed that most of areas in the region have received good rainfall since September 2007.

Vegetation Conditions

The impacts of the unseasonable heavy rains that have been falling in the southern parts of the region since September are becoming more perceivable, as the vegetation rapidly greens up in these areas. Eastern Botswana, southern Mozambique, southern parts of Zimbabwe, and the eastern half of South Africa, have recorded rapid improvement in vegetation during the last dekad of October. Figure 2 shows the current status of the vegetation as it compares to average conditions, as derived from satellite imagery. The green colours show areas where vegetation conditions are better than normal, while orange and red colours show areas with below average conditions. The areas described above are showing significantly above average vegetation conditions due to the rains that fell in these areas, and good pasture conditions have been reported here. Southern Tanzania is still showing below average vegetation conditions, and grazing conditions and water supply in these areas are poor. Other areas where good vegetation development is being observed include northern and north-western Zambia, as well as various parts of Angola.

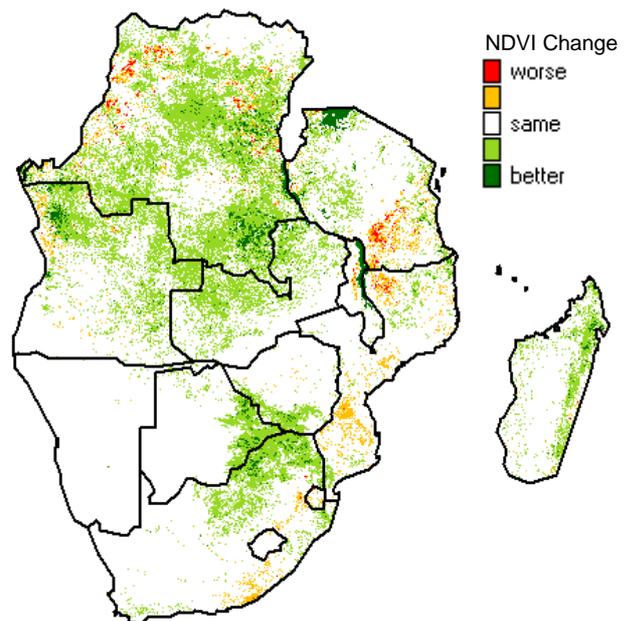


Figure 2. Vegetation for dekad 3 of October 2007 compared to average conditions (data source: SPOT VGT provided by FAO)

Summary of seasonal status in SADC region by country

Country	Normal start of rains	Current start of rains	Agricultural Activity & Crop Condition	Inputs	Pasture/Livestock
Angola	Mainly October Southern Angola: November	Started	N/A	N/A	N/A
Botswana	Northern/eastern Botswana: Nov Central Botswana: December	Started	Mainly land preparation; farmers in north and east have started planting	N/A	Good pasture condition in the east/north; poor condition in the south/west
DRC	Mainly September and before Southern DRC: October	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lesotho	Mainly October	Started	Land preparation (cultivation) and planting	Inputs available; Government subsidies available	Pasture in good condition after rains; livestock recovering after drought
Madagascar	Mainly November Western areas: December	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Malawi	Southern Malawi: Mid November Northern Malawi: Late Nov to Dec	Not yet	Land preparation (very few have planted)	Inputs available; Input subsidy coupons being distributed	Pasture in good condition
Mauritius	November to December (mostly mid-December)	Pre-season rains	Sugar-cane harvesting; average yield down by 7.4% from previous season	N/A	Not applicable
Mozambique	Northern Mozambique: December Central Mozambique: Nov/Dec Southern Mozambique: Dec/Jan	Not yet (most areas); very early season rains in south	Land preparation most areas; some early season planting in the south	N/A	Pasture improving in the south, but overall vegetation still below average
Namibia	Northern Namibia: November	Not yet	Land preparation	Inputs available	N/A
South Africa (RSA)	Eastern RSA: October Central/Northern RSA: Nov/Dec	Started (in some areas, particularly eastern and central)	Some farmers have planted, particularly in northern and some central areas	Inputs available	N/A
Swaziland	November	Started	Mostly land preparation. 15-20% of farmers have planted (mainly maize); germination has occurred	Inputs available	Pasture fine in most parts except east where pasture recovering from last year's drought
Tanzania	Eastern half: December Western half: Oct (north) – Nov (South) Northern (bimodal): Sep/Oct	Short rains have started poorly in bimodal (northern) areas	Land preparations in unimodal areas; planting in bimodal (northern) areas - poor rainfall has slowed down planting, while planted crops are water stressed.	N/A	Pasture mainly in poor condition, especially in the south-western and central areas.
Zambia	North-Western half: October South-Eastern half: November	North-western parts started	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zimbabwe	Mostly November	Not yet	Land preparation	Some inputs available; government sourcing more inputs	Good pasture conditions in the south and west due to good rains.

N/A = Information Not Available

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>