SYNOPTIC SITUATION

During the period 21–31st January, the Azores and Siberian anticyclones remained intense with an extended ridge axis toward the north eastern highlands areas. The zonal component of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) was active over the southern parts of the country. The meridional component of the ITCZ to the west remained active with associated rainfall activities over the western part, southern western highlands and southern regions. On the other hand, St. Helena and Mascarene anticyclones were relatively weak and the passage of the fronts systems over the southern tip of Africa contributed more to their weakening. The northeasterly wind flow becoming northerly on reaching the southern coast became evident during the dekad. Over western and southern parts of Tanzania, the convergence of northwesterly wind flow from the Congo basins and northeasterlies from western Indian Ocean led to rainfall activities over those areas.

RAINFALL SUMMARY

During the period, a marked decrease in rainfall activity was observed across the country as compared to the previous dekad. Figure 1, shows the spatial rainfall distribution as observed during the third dekad of the month. Most areas received total rainfall less than 20 mm with some areas of the northern coast, northeastern highlands and central regions received no rainfall at all. The highest total rainfall recorded for the dekad was 109.7 mm over Tunduru station in the southern region. Rainfall performance over areas with a unimodal rainfall pattern (western, southwestern highlands, central and southern coast), indicates that seasonal rains have been below normal since November 2005.

Graph 1 compares the current cumulative rainfall to the long-term mean for the period from December 1st dekad to-date at Songea Airport.

Rainfall over this area indicates a shortfall of about 64 mm during the past 10-days and about 229 mm since the beginning of the season (December 2005).
Agrometeorological
The dekad experienced soil moisture deficits due to observed decrease in rainfall activity. This condition threatened cropping activities including planting and weeding, and subsequent crop growth and development over unimodal sector of the country. Areas over the western sector (Kigoma, Rukwa and western Tabora regions), maize crop was at tasseling stage with moderate state. Over the southern sector (districts of Makete, Mufindi and Ludewa in Iringa region and Namtumbo in Ruvuma region), maize crop was in moderate state at various growth stages ranging from emergence to early vegetative stage. Wilting of crops was observed over lowlands in all districts of Morogoro region, except for a few highland locations of Mahenge and generally swampy areas of Kilombero district where the crop was fairing well. Most fields though ploughed, have not been planted with any crop due to the widespread soil moisture stress gripping most of central and southern coast as such the growing season has been shortened.

For bimodal areas mainly over few areas in the Lake Victoria Basin, besides poor crop yields expected, harvesting of Vuli crop was coming to an end, while land preparations for long rains (Masika) season started although at low pace.

Hydrometeorological
Water levels in rivers, lakes and dams remained low during the period. Water for domestic and industrial purposes should be used sparingly.

Environmental
Warm/hot conditions and high evaporation rates were experienced in many parts of the country.