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OUTLOOK FOR FEBRUARY-APRIL 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

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LA NINA UPDATE

- La Niña condition is expected to continue during most of the southern summer 2012 .

Outlook Highlights

- Above-normal to normal rainfall is expected across eastern half of continental SADC region, Madagascar and Mauritius.
- Normal to above-normal rainfall conditions are likely to be over south-eastern continental SADC.
- The northern and western parts of contiguous SADC will be normal to below-normal

Tropical Cyclone Season

The current tropical cyclone season is quite active. There is likelihood of tropical cyclones continuing to visit the eastern seaboard of contiguous SADC, Madagascar and Mauritius from time to time. Their indirect influence will likely be extensive. Some regions significantly farther away from the vicinity of a cyclone may also experience continued excessive dryness.

SUMMARY

- Tropical cyclones have induced moderate to heavy rains across many parts of contiguous SADC and Madagascar. This led to the deluges which have been reported in media.
- Meantime, the February to April 2012 rainfall projections for most of SADC including the Island States are still for persistent heavy rains. However, portions with greater chances of normal to above-normal have are confined more across the eastern portions of the region. The projected chances of normal to below-normal conditions persist in the western fringes. The details of the outlook for January to March 2011 are provided in pages 3 and 4.

La Niña Update

A majority of models predict a weak or moderate strength La Niña to peak during the January/February and then to continue during southern summer season before dissipating during the March to May period.

LA NINA UPDATE - WEAK TO MODERATE COLD EPISODE PERSISTS

- The current SSTs in tropical east Pacific have continued to be below average and subsurface temperatures across the equatorial Pacific, maintaining at weak to moderate La Niña conditions in the short term (Fig.2). There is a good chance for continuing at the current weak to moderate strength for another month or so before beginning to weaken .
- As of mid-January, most of the dynamical and statistical models (Fig.3) predict La Niña conditions for the February to April.

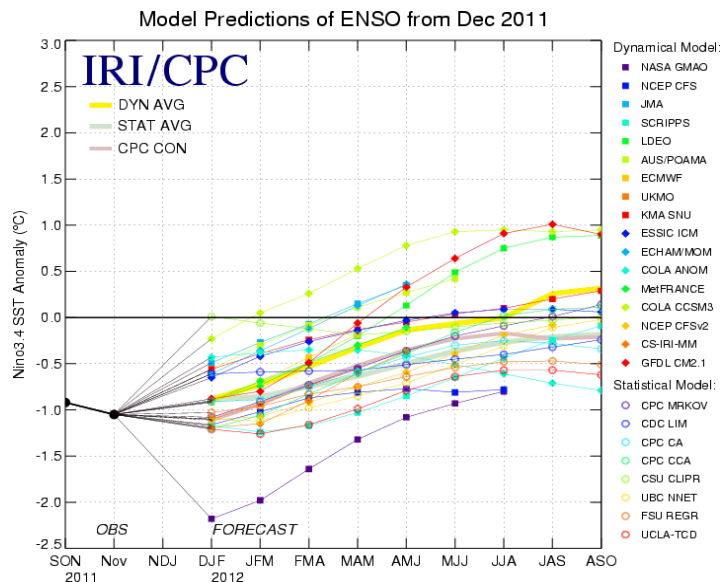


Fig.3: Model forecast for La Nina event (Source: IRI)

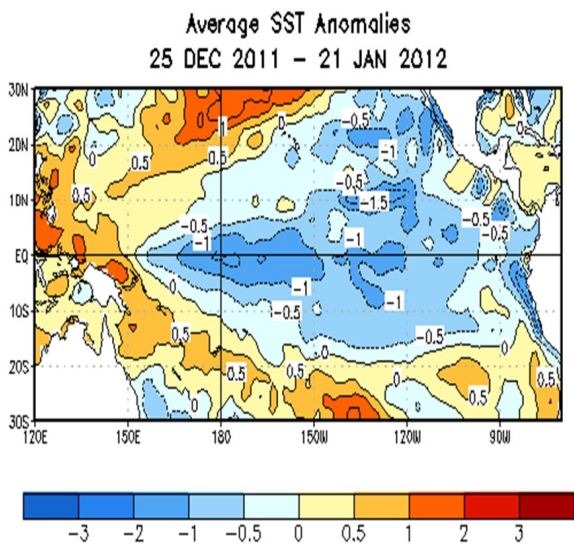


Fig 2, Current Pacific SST anomalies (Source: NOAA)

CURRENT STATUS OF RAINY SEASON

- Seasonal rainfall has been erratically distributed across many areas of Southern Africa since the beginning of the season.
- However, an increase in rainfall has been observed since the beginning of 2012, particularly, in eastern Southern Africa and Island



States due largely to developments of tropical cyclone (Fig.4).

- In the recent past, Tropical Cyclones Dando and Funso induced above-average rainfall, with thirty-day moisture surpluses exceeding 100 mm over portions of Zimbabwe, southern Malawi, the Nampula and Maputo regions of Mozambique, and western Madagascar, Fig.4.

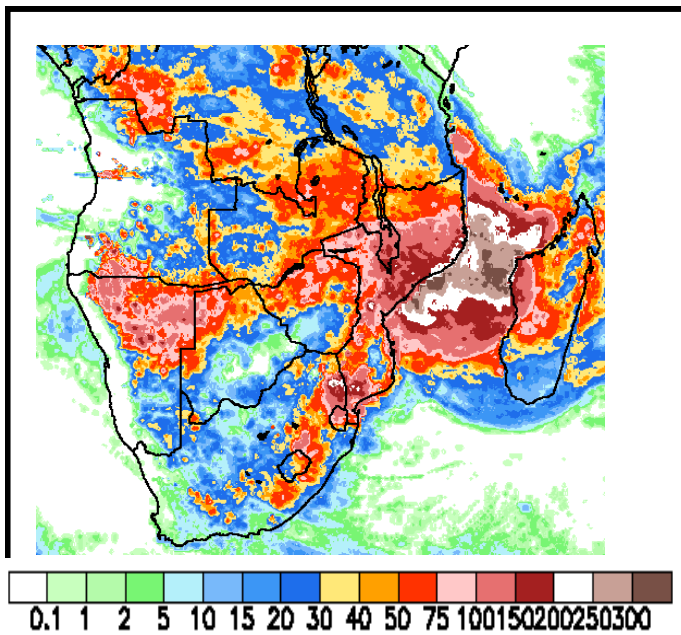


Fig. 4. Satellite Estimated Rainfall (Source: NOAA/CPC)

THIRTY–YEAR MEAN RAINFALL (1971 - 2000) FOR FEBRUARY- APRIL

The mean total rainfall for SADC from January to March has maxima of 500 to 600 mm over much of Malawi, Zambia, Angola, southern DRC, bulk of Mozambique as well as Mauritius and Madagascar, Fig 5. The remainder of the region receives rainfall less than 300 mm gradually decreasing southwestwards to southwest South Africa and Namibia where the mean rainfall is below 100 mm (Fig. 5).

RAINFALL FORECAST (FEB -APR 2012)

Against the back drop of an active Tropical Cyclone Season, the following are forecast details for February-April 2012.

Details of the Forecast:

Zone I: (Northern DRC, bulk of Angola, south-western Zambia, northeastern Namibia and northernmost Botswana)

Likelihood of Normal to Normal to below-normal rainfall

FMA 30 YEAR MEAN
1971 - 2000

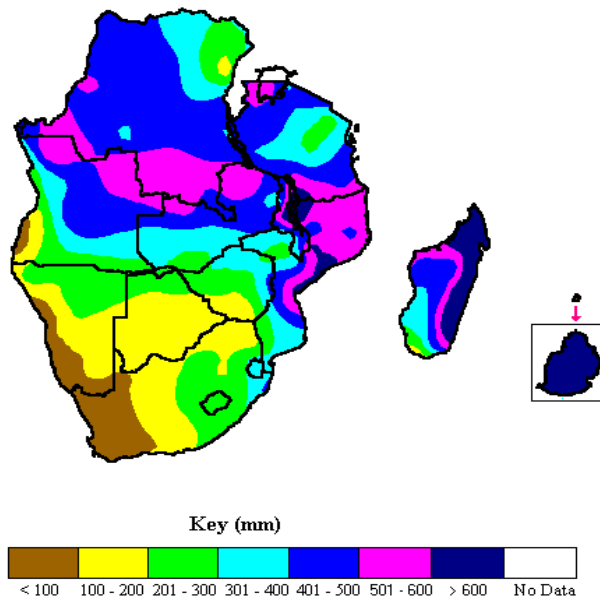


Fig 5. 30-year mean rainfall (1971-00), Feb-April

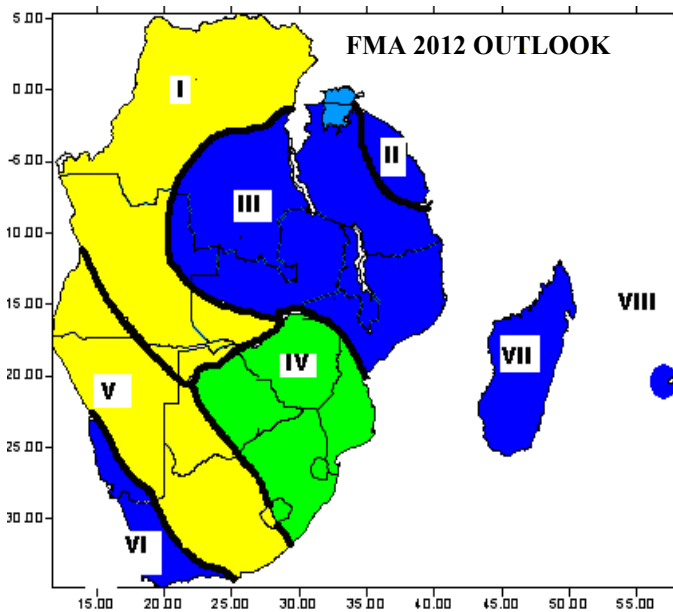


Fig 6. Rainfall outlook for SADC February to April 2012

Zone II: (Northeastern Tanzania)

Likelihood of Above-normal to normal rainfall

Zone III: (Southern DRC, northeastern Angola, southwestern Tanzania, Malawi and northern Mozambique)

Likelihood of Above-normal to normal rainfall

Zone IV: (Southern half of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, northeastern half of South Africa, Swaziland, and eastern half of Lesotho)

High likelihood of Normal to above-normal rainfall

Zone V: (Southwestern Angola, bulk of Namibia, western Botswana, northwestern half of SA and western Lesotho)

Likelihood of Normal to Below-normal rainfall

Zone VI: (Southwestern flank of Namibia and southwesternmost South Africa)

Likelihood of Above-normal to Normal rainfall

Zone VII: (Madagascar)

High likelihood of Above-normal to normal rainfall

Zone VIII: (Mauritius)

Likelihood of Normal to Above-normal rainfall

Map caption

The number for each zone indicate the probabilities

of rainfall in each of the three categories: Above normal, Normal and Below normal (Fig. 6). The top number indicates the probability of rainfall occurring in the Above-normal category, the middle number for Normal and the bottom number for Below-normal. For example, in the case of Zone IV there is a 35% probability for rainfall occurring in the Above-normal category; a 40% probability for rainfall in the Normal category; and 25% probability for rainfall for a Below-normal category. It is emphasized that boundaries between zones should be considered as transition zones.

Note: This update is relevant only for three monthly time scales and relatively large areas. Local to month to month variations may occur.

The users are strongly advised to contact their NMHSs for interpretation of this Outlook, finer details, updates and additional guidance.

Acknowledgements:

SADC NMHSs

Global climate monitoring and prediction centres

WMO

SADC CSC in conjunction with other partners will continue to closely monitor the status of evolution of La Niña, tropical cyclones and relevant information and updates will be issued from time to time.