



Tropical cyclone Giovanna and the expected rainfall situation across SADC from 15 February to 01 March 2012

Preamble

The current tropical cyclone season is quite active. There continues to be greater likelihood of tropical cyclones continuing to visit the eastern seaboard of contiguous SADC, Madagascar and Mauritius from time to time during the remainder of the rainy season. Tropical cyclones have induced moderate to heavy rains across many parts of contiguous SADC and Madagascar. This has led to the deluges which have been reported in media. Their indirect influence will likely be extensive as well. However, some regions significantly farther away from the vicinity of a cyclone may also experience continued excessive dryness.

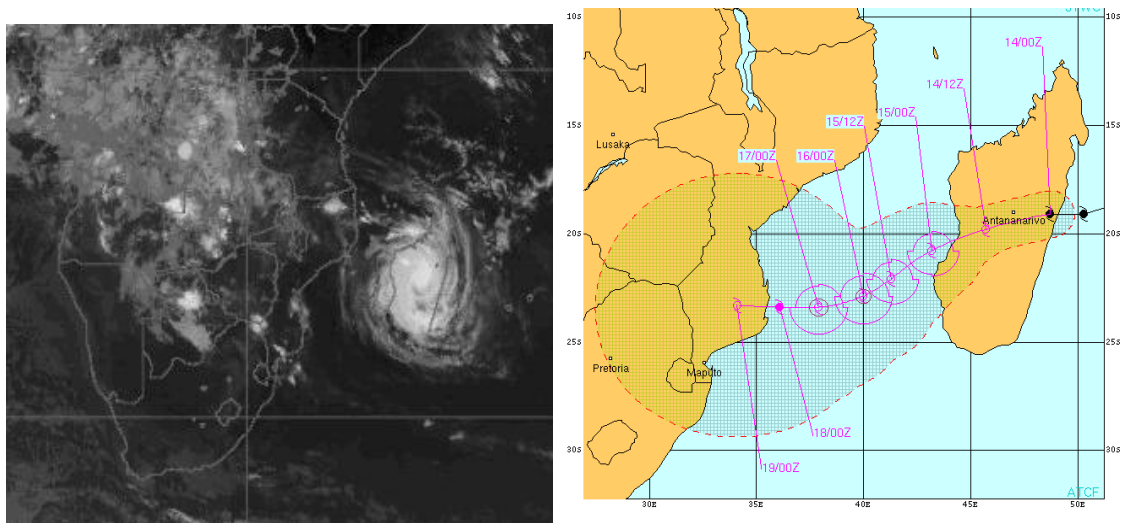


Fig. 1 (a) Satellite picture over southern Africa taken 0600UTC, 14 Feb 2012 (courtesy Eumetsat);
1(b) Projected track of tropical cyclone Giovanna (courtesy JTWC)

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 are confined more across the eastern portions of the region.

Tropical Cyclone Giovanna

Currently, Tropical Cyclone Giovanna has made landfall over Madagascar, with heavy rains and sustained strong winds, Fig 1 (a).

Though Tropical Cyclone Giovanna is weakening in intensity over Madagascar, it will still be a tremendously strong storm capable of causing significant damage to areas along its path. Giovanna is projected to move westwards before recurving southeastwards, Fig 1(b). There continues to be incessant moderate to heavy rains with strong damaging winds across the bulk of Madagascar. Heavy rains and windy conditions should continue as Giovanna trudges westwards to affect the eastern seaboard of contiguous SADC. By 1200 UTC February 15th, Giovanna should be entering over water again inside the Mozambique Channel. Current track and intensity forecasts have briefly strengthening Giovanna over the Channel before weakening again and making a second landfall across southern Mozambique on the 18th. There is still uncertainty as to the exact track and intensity of Giovanna after it enters into the Mozambique Channel.

At the same time, as the rainfall season reaches its peak across most of SADC, the rain-producing systems will continue to be largely active for next several days.

Rainfall outlook from 15 February to 01 March 2012

The atmospheric conditions remain increasingly favourable for persistence of rains across sections of SADC from time to time. This includes intense rainfall activity in those portions of the region already experiencing heavy rains, Fig 2 (a) and (b). In particular, there should be more persistent rains across the parts of the north and central areas of contiguous SADC and Madagascar for the next several days. This should quite likely exacerbate the problems of localized flooding that have affected portions of Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. However, the rainfall activity will be rather diminished over southwesternmost and southern portions of continental SADC. During especially the latter half of period, the frequency of the rains will diminish in most of the southern and westernmost portions of contiguous SADC, Fig 2 (b).

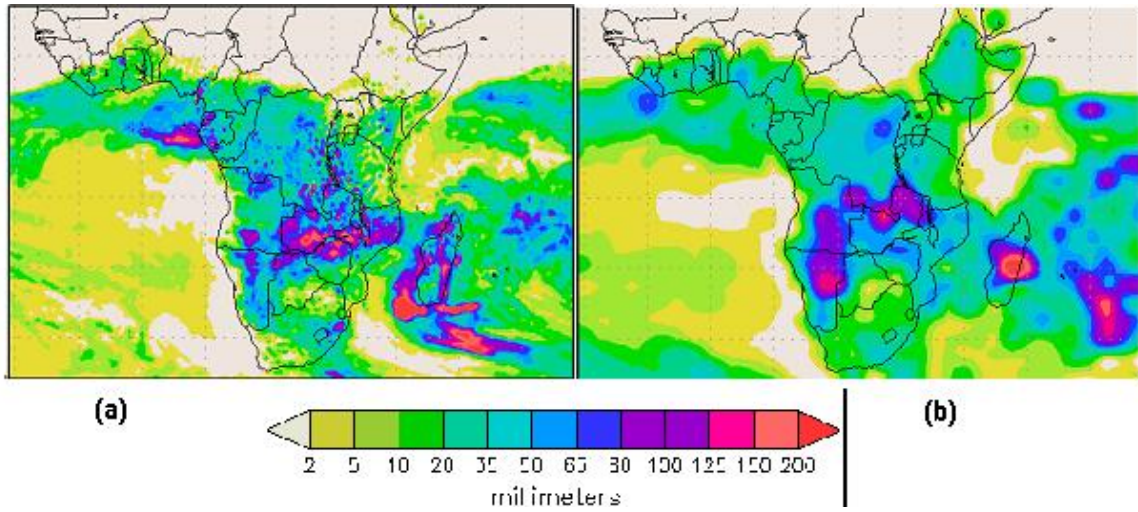


Fig. 2: Precipitation forecast for the period (a) 14 to 21 Feb, (b) 22 Feb. to 01 March 2012 (COLA/IGES)