



Tropical cyclones/depressions in the Indian Ocean and the expected rainfall situation across SADC from 27 February to 14 March 2012

Preamble

A moderate tropical depression Irini has hit north coast of Madagascar named Irina made landfall on the Madagascar, with direct threat to communities. Meantime, as Irina enters the Mozambique Channel, it is projected to move in a south-westerly direction, bringing rain to the western coast of Madagascar. As it heads towards central Mozambique it is likely to strengthen to a tropical cyclone in the next couple of days, possibly by 29 February 2012.

Tropical Cyclones in the Indian Ocean

There continues to be a cluster of evolving tropical depression/cyclone in the Indian Ocean stretching from east of Island States into the vicinity of SADC waters, Figs.1 (a). The projected track of tropical depression Irina currently just northwest of Madagascar is depicted in Fig 1 (b). It is expected to trudge through the Mozambique Channel in the next few days.

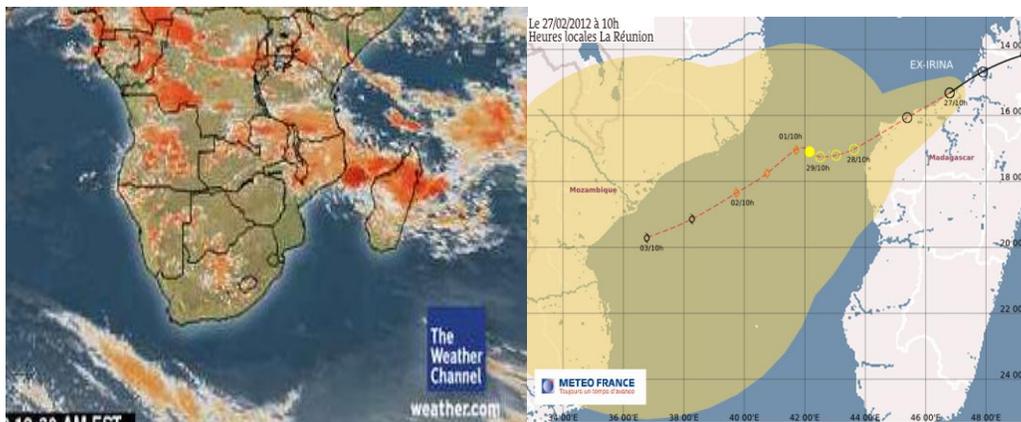


Fig. 1 (a) Satellite picture of southern Africa taken 15.30UTC, 17 Feb 2012 (courtesy Weather Channel)-left panel
1(b) Projected tracks or tropical cyclones in the southwest Indian Ocean (courtesy Meteo-France)-right panel

These tropical depressions/cyclones will trudge erratically toward the region, Fig 1 (b). Due to this erratic nature of the tropical depressions/cyclones, there is always uncertainty as to the exact track and intensity of these tropical storms as they approach the region.

Rainfall outlook from 27 February to 14 March 2012

The rainfall season is now beginning to taper off across most of SADC countries that have uni-modal rains in austral summer. The areas that experience bimodal rains will have more pronounced rains. Meantime, the rain-producing systems will continue to be largely active for next several days across mostly the eastern and central as well as western sections of contiguous SADC.

The short- and medium-range atmospheric conditions are likely to remain conducive for persistence of rains across eastern, central and western sections of conterminous SADC and Madagascar and Mauritius in the next 14 days, Fig 2 (a) and (b). This includes intense rainfall activity in those portions of SADC already experiencing heavy rains, in particular across Malawi, northern Mozambique, Zambia and portions of Angola. Heavier rains will occur in Madagascar and Mauritius. However, the dry conditions will persist across most of Botswana, southwestern Zimbabwe and northern sections of South Africa and expanding southwestward in the latter half, 5-14 March 2012, Fig 2 (b).

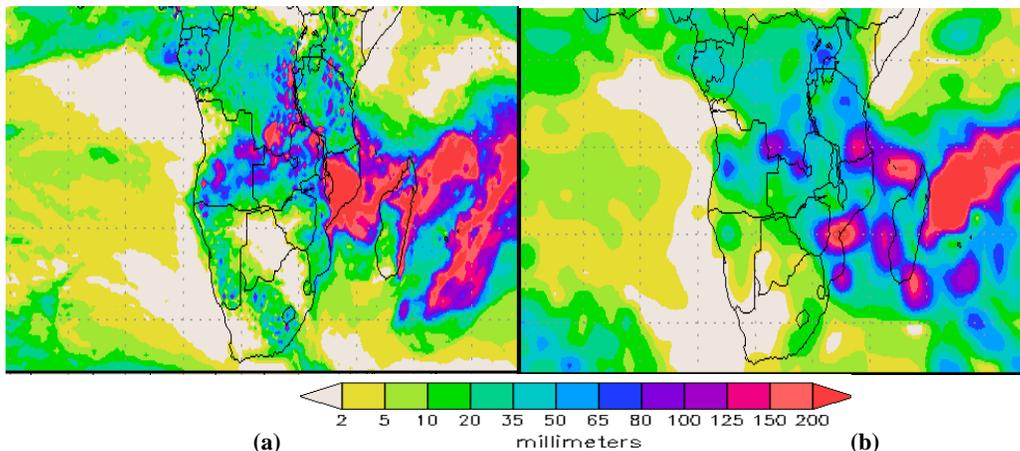


Fig. 2: Precipitation forecast for the period (a) 27 Feb-4 March 2012, (b) 5 -14 March 2012 (COLA/IGES)

Outlook February to April 2012

Meantime, the February to April 2012 rainfall projections for most of SADC including the Island States are still for extended rainy periods. However, portions with greater chances of normal to above-normal are confined more across the eastern portions of the region. Persistent tropical depressions/cyclones from the southwest Indian Ocean are, however, inducing very dry conditions in most portions in the southwest of conterminous SADC.

The March to May 2012 update will be available in the next few days.