

Issue 04 Month: November Dekad 1-2 Season: 2007-2008 Release date: 30-11-2007

Highlights

- ❑ Onset of planting rains occurring on time in most areas in the region
- ❑ Short rains performing poorly in Tanzania, forecasts not suggesting much relief
- ❑ Low rains received in South Africa and surrounding areas, but vegetation conditions still good

Rainfall activity during 1-20 November

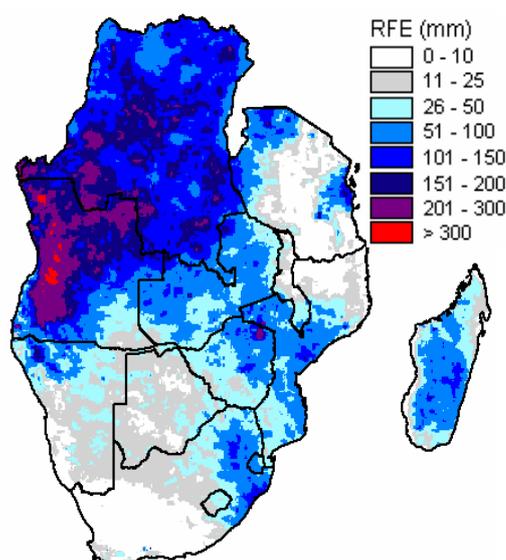


Figure 1a. Total rainfall (in mm) for 1-20 November 2007, based on satellite rainfall estimates
Data Source: NOAA/FEWSNET

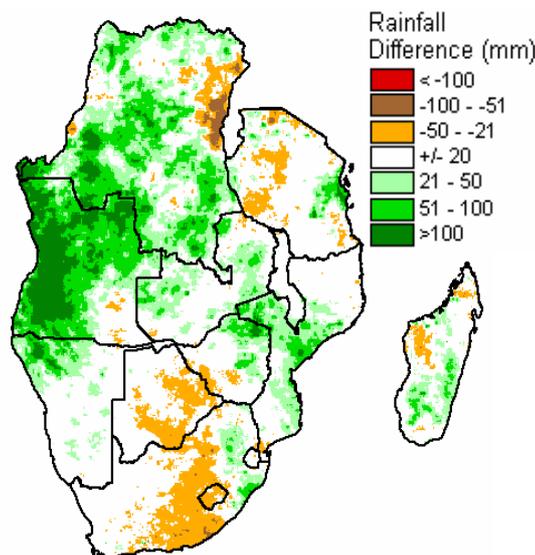


Figure 1b. Rainfall for 1-20 November 2007 compared with average conditions for the same period.

During the period of 1 to 20 November, rainfall was mainly below normal in the northern-eastern and southern parts of the region (yellow and brown colours, Figure 1b), while most of the other parts of the region received normal to above-normal rainfall (white and green colours, Figure 1b). Parts of Tanzania received below-normal rains, particularly in the unimodal areas in western Tanzania. However, some of the bimodal areas in the north-western parts of the country received good rains. Tanzania has been affected by poor rains in the (northern) bimodal areas in particular, but also by poor pasture and water availability in other parts, particularly in the south-west. Below-average rains were also observed across parts of Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa and southern Zimbabwe (Figure 1b). This is in contrast to the high rainfall that had been received in these areas in September and October. As such, in most of these southern areas, the residual moisture from the earlier rains should be enough to prevent serious disturbances to early crop activity due to the short dryness. Angola received high rainfall (purple, red colours, Figure 1a), particularly in the north-western half of the country. Other areas that received good rains during the period under review included Madagascar, eastern South Africa, Swaziland, central Mozambique, southern Malawi, Zambia and the northern half of Zimbabwe. In most of these areas, the season usually starts in November mainly, and the recent rains suggest a good start to the rainfall season, though this will only be confirmed by good follow-up rains.

Vegetation Conditions

Despite the low rainfall amounts received between 1 and 20 November in the southern parts of the region (see rainfall activity section above), the vegetation in this area is still significantly better than normal conditions. Figure 2 shows how the vegetation compares to average conditions, the green

colours indicating better-than-average conditions. Reports from Lesotho indicated that the winter wheat crop had recovered from an earlier drought due to the good September/October rains, and was still in good to fair condition. In contrast, southern Mozambique has been showing poor and below-normal vegetation conditions, based on satellite image analysis (Figure 2, red colours).

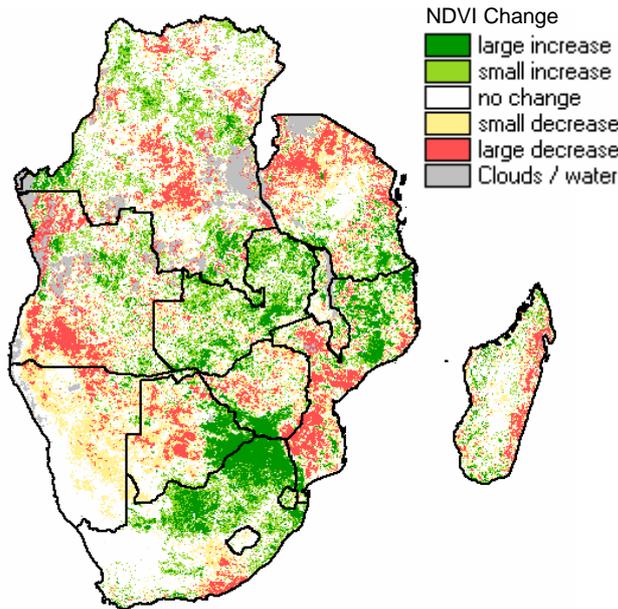


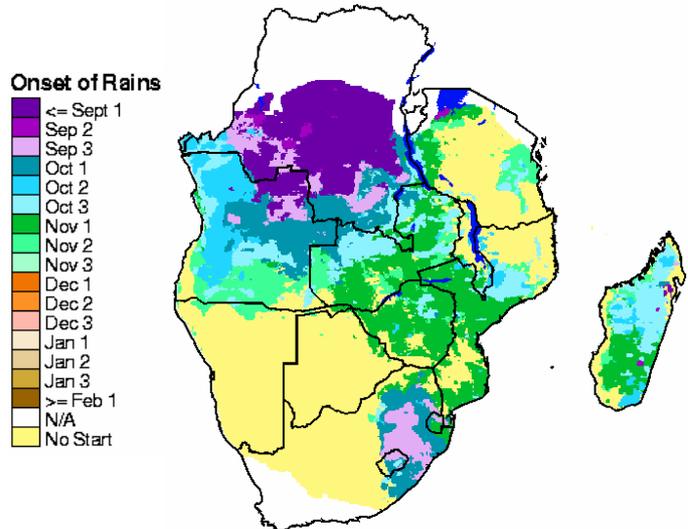
Figure 2. Vegetation for dekad 2 of November 2007 compared to average conditions based on AVHRR NDVI (Data Source: NASA/FEWSNET)

There was improvement in the satellite observed-conditions from dekad 1 to dekad 2 of November due to rains received during dekad 1, but still the situation remains below normal. With the positive seasonal forecasts for this area however, there are good chances for improvement in vegetation conditions. Satellite image analysis is also showing good vegetation development in northern Mozambique and Zambia – this is due to the good rains that fell in these areas in the 3rd dekad of October (Mozambique) and the 1st dekad of November (Zambia).

Readers should note that although red colours in Figure 2 can indicate below average vegetation conditions, this is not always the case; not all red-coloured areas in Figure 2 are negatively affected, and contextual interpretation is often required.

Start of Planting Season

The occurrence of the onset of effective planting rains is regularly monitored so that areas where rains are significantly late can be quickly detected. This season, rains have been mostly been starting on time in most areas, and actually 10 to 20 days earlier than usual. The season has started in most areas where it would normally have started by now. Other areas are still awaiting the onset of effective planting rains, but in the majority of outstanding areas, this is not yet a concern as the normal time for start of rains has not yet come. However, in some of the northern parts of Tanzania, the start of the rainfall season is more than 30 days late. Figure 3 shows the areas where it has been observed that effective onset of planting rains has occurred, based on a model used by FEWSNET.



Seasonal forecast update for period November 2007 to January 2008

The latest seasonal climate outlook update, issued by the Drought Monitoring Centre, indicates good rainfall across most parts of the region, particularly in the north-western, central and eastern parts of the region. However, the forecast also indicates poor rainfall in Tanzania, where the bimodal rains are currently not performing well.

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>