



Average to above average rains expected in most parts of Somalia during the 2020 Gu season

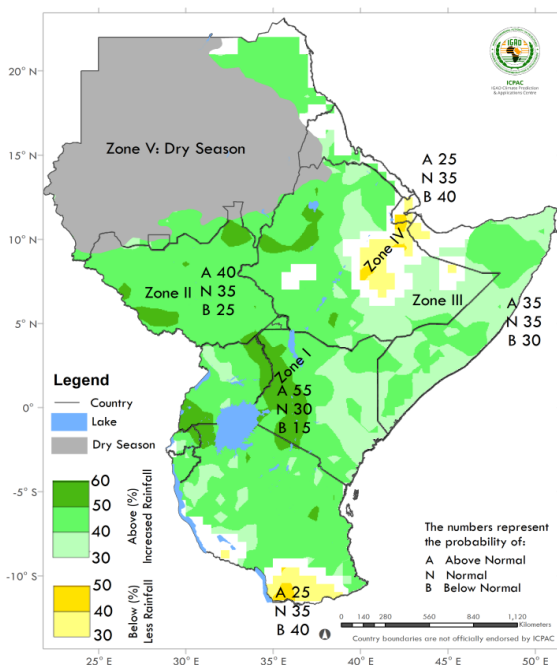
The Gu rains start in March/April and end at different times across Somalia, depending on the north-south movement of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) which is the leading factor for the timing of rainfall in most parts of Africa. Most of the annual rainfall in Somalia (75%) is recorded during the Gu season. As a result, performance of Gu season rainfall is critical both for crop-dependent and livestock-dependent livelihoods across Somalia.

According to the consensus climate outlook for the Greater Horn of Africa (GHACOF54) issued in later January 2020, there is a strong possibility (greater likelihood) of March to May 2020 rainfall being average (35%) and above average (35-40%) in most parts of Somalia with likely warmer than usual temperatures across the whole country. This also includes the Ethiopian highlands which contribute significantly to both Juba and Shabelle river flows inside Somalia. Some areas in the far northwestern parts of Somalia, including Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed and parts of Togdheer regions have higher chances of below normal (40%) to normal (35%) rains. The regional forecast further indicates a likely early start of the season in southern parts of Somalia. On the other hand, a delayed onset of the rainfall is expected over northern parts of the country which is also likely to have prolonged dry periods a few weeks after the start of the season.

The expected average to above average rains will boost crop production prospects and replenish pasture and water sources in most parts of Somalia. This comes after a largely favorable rainy season during the October-December 2019 Deyr season, which will contribute to continued recovery among pastoral and agropastoral livelihoods that have previously been adversely affected by recurrent drought conditions.

On the downside, riverine flooding along the Juba and Shabelle rivers is likely to occur along the entire channels of the two rivers. This will likely exacerbate the devastation that populations along the two rivers experienced during the 2019 Deyr season. Currently, there are many open river breakages along the two main rivers and this will likely worsen given the expected increase in river levels and consequent flooding during the forthcoming Gu season. SWALIM is in the process of updating the river breakages database which will be shared soon.

Map- 1 Rainfall Outlook for March to May 2020



Flash floods are likely to occur in low lying and built up areas especially in north east and central regions.

The expected below normal rains in the far northwestern regions could lead to depletion of pasture and water resources with high likelihood of mild drought conditions towards the middle of the year. Therefore, communities should conserve and use available water resources judiciously.

Despite the overall forecast described in the foregoing sections, local and month-to-month variations might occur as the season progresses. Sporadic rainfall events leading to flash floods are likely to occur even in areas with increased likelihood of near to below normal rainfall. Also, dry spells might occur in areas where enhanced rainfall is foreseen.

FAO, through SWALIM and its technical partners, will keep updating this forecast for shorter lead time periods and share update information throughout the Gu season.

This update is produced by the: FAO - Somalia Water and Land Information Management—SWALIM Project. For more information please contact SO-hydro@fao.org or visit <http://www.faoswalim.org>

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