

## MONTHLY CLIMATE BULLETIN

Special El Niño 2026/27:  
Climate Outlook, Expected Impacts and Recommended actions

No. 01 | September 2026 | Valid for October 2026 to January 2027 | Next issue: October 2026

### Key messages

- El Niño is well established and expected to become very strong, peaking towards the end of 2026. WMO gives a likelihood of nearly 100% that it will **last until February 2027**.
- Above-normal rainfall is expected over the **Greater Horn and East Africa**, with a high risk of floods, while most of **Southern Africa** should receive below-normal rainfall during the main planting season.
- The Sahel will face exceptional heat: **66,800 additional heat-related deaths are projected** over the next six months, nearly half of them in Nigeria (*source: Climate Impact Lab (University of Chicago)*).
- **Anticipatory action and contingency plans should be activated now**, before the peak of the season.

### 1. CONTEXT

El Niño is a couple ocean-atmosphere phenomenon due to unusual warming of sea surface waters of the tropical eastern Pacific, while La Niña event is the reverse. WMO and all Global Climate Centres forecast an exceptionally El Niño with high likelihood (nearly 100%) that will persist until February 2027. This will increase the likelihood of extreme weather and climate hazards, ranging from drought to floods and storms.

In Africa, El Niño historically leads to various impacts such as floods in eastern Africa during October to December season and moderate to severe drought in southern Africa in October to January season. During El Niño 2015/2016, and 2023/2024 many countries in southern Africa Region were food insecure, mainly due to drought exacerbated by that extreme event or due to a combination of drought and conflict which affected food security and agricultural production, with cascading effects on livelihoods, health, water, sanitation, education and other sectors.

***This exceptional El Niño demands exceptional preparation and response. Seasonal forecasts, such as one done by experts during African Continental Climate Outlook Forum (ACCOF), provide a vital window of opportunity to inform key stakeholders as well as the communities to be well prepared.***

### 2. WHAT DOES EL NIÑO 2026/27 MEAN FOR AFRICA?

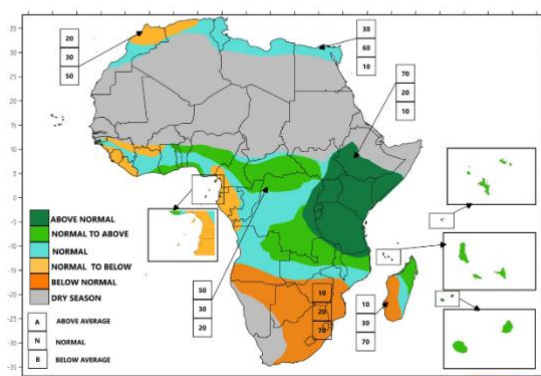
In Madagascar, El Niño risks are aggravating an already grim forecast of 3.7 million people facing crisis or worse food insecurity during the October-January lean season. In South Sudan, the below-average rainfall and soaring temperatures, likely linked to El Niño, could deepen one of the world's biggest hunger crises. But well before the drought's worst impacts, humanitarian and Government actors were responding. ([WFP](#))

Recent study from Climate Impact Lab reveals total estimated additional heat-related deaths due to the current El Niño event is the highest over countries across the Sahel with an additional 66,800 heat deaths from September-February compared to a normal year, with nearly half of those lives being lost in Nigeria (31,400), Sudan will face 17,500 additional heat deaths, Niger will face 10,000, and Chad 8,000. ([University of Chicago](#))

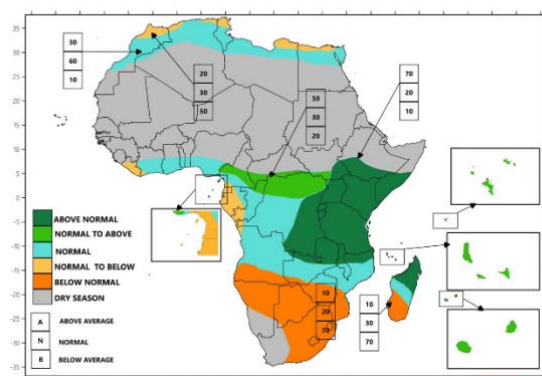
Climate-related risks could further compound existing challenges. Base on the rainfall deficit (30–40%) associated with the worst-case scenario of El Niño event on record, access to drought-tolerant seeds and other agricultural inputs could be critical to helping farmers sustain production and avoid further deterioration in food security ([FAO](#)).

**ACMAD consolidated forecast from contribution of all Regional Climate Centres (ICPAC, SADC-CSC, AGRHYMET, North Africa RCC Network, IOC Network and CAPC-AC)**

SEASONAL PRECIPITATION FORECAST  
FOR OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2026  
ISSUED ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2026



SEASONAL PRECIPITATION FORECAST  
FOR NOVEMBER-DECEMBER-JANUARY 2026-27  
ISSUED ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2026



Seasonal precipitation forecast for October to December 2026 (left) and November 2026 to January 2027 (right): green to purple colors depicts respectively regions of excess to deficit rainfall and numbers in the three stacked boxes are probabilities of occurrence for each category: wet (top), normal (center) and dry (below).

### 3. RECOMMENDATION

Forecasted climate conditions for the October-November- December (OND) and November-December-January (NDJ) periods will influence different sectors in unique way and to varying degrees. Consequently, the responses required by stakeholders will differ across sectors.

| SECTOR                                                   | POTENTIAL IMPACTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | ADVISORIES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Disaster Risk Reduction &amp; Anticipatory Action</b> | Loss of life, injury and sudden displacement from flash and riverine floods in East Africa; damage to homes, roads and critical infrastructure; slow-onset drought emergency in Southern Africa that exhausts household coping capacity; response systems overstretched by simultaneous or unexpected extreme events                        | Trigger and communicate anticipatory-action protocols ahead of flood-prone windows in East Africa; pre-position relief stock and update contingency plans in the Southern Africa drought corridor; brief National Disaster Management Authorities before any public release.                    |
| <b>Agriculture &amp; Food Security</b>                   | Crop losses from waterlogging, flooding and pest outbreaks in East Africa; failed or delayed planting, reduced yields, and livestock losses and poor body condition in Southern Africa; lower household income and higher food prices; worsening food insecurity and acute malnutrition.                                                    | Advise early-maturing, flood-tolerant varieties and staggered planting in high-rainfall zones; promote drought-tolerant seed, water harvesting and destocking advice in Southern Africa; scale up pest/disease surveillance bulletins ahead of the planting window.                             |
| <b>Water Resources</b>                                   | Contaminated water supplies and damage to water points, sanitation and treatment systems during floods; falling reservoir and groundwater levels in Southern Africa; reduced hydropower output and power cuts; urban water rationing and increased competition for water between households, livestock and agriculture.                     | Issue joint water-authority/met advisories on safe reservoir operating levels and downstream release timing; flag contamination/WASH risk in flood zones; advise Southern Africa utilities and power authorities to activate conservation and rationing plans ahead of the dry season.          |
| <b>Health</b>                                            | Outbreaks of cholera and other waterborne diseases; increased malaria, dengue and Rift Valley fever transmission; more heat-related illness, especially among older people, young children and people with chronic conditions; malnutrition-related illness in drought areas; interruption of care where facilities are flooded or cut off. | Pre-position disease surveillance and WASH response ahead of the rains in flood-prone districts; issue heat-health advisories for the warmest corridor; coordinate joint climate-health messaging with public health authorities rather than releasing forecast and health guidance separately. |

***The question is no longer if El Niño will happen, but what we must do to mitigate its impacts***

***ACMAD actively monitors this strong El Niño and will provide forecasts concerning the anticipated impacts throughout the forthcoming months. This proactive approach will help mitigate the potential risks and enable better preparedness to cope with the challenges posed by this climatic event.***

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