MONTHLY CLIMATE BULLETIN

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

No. 02 | October 2026 | Valid for November 2026 to January 2027

Key messages

- **El Niño continues to strengthen**, WMO forecasts about +3.8°C for November-January, and a strong-to-very strong El Niño likely through January-March 2027 with 83% chance.
- **Below average Tropical Cyclone season** is anticipated with tracks shifted southward. This means Mozambique and Madagascar are less likely to get the cyclone rains that often break droughts there. These expected values include the already observed tropical storm AGUEDA (*RSMC La Reunion)*
- **El Niño effects are already being felt**. Since mid-September, the short rains have arrived early and stronger in Somalia and southern Ethiopia. In South Sudan, close to 4 million people are coping with drought-like conditions. September was extremely hot (above 99th percentile) across most of West Africa, the Sahel and Central Africa.
- **November-January 2026/27 outlook:** wet over Uganda, Kenya, northern Tanzania and southern Ethiopia (70-90%). Dry over southern Africa and southern and western Madagascar (50-70%), and along the Gulf of Guinea coast and parts of Central Africa. Hotter than normal almost everywhere.
- Floods will remain a serious threat in the Greater Horn and East Africa. Most of **southern Africa and southern Madagascar** face late, patchy rains and long dry spells just when farmers need to plant. In the **Sahel**, heat warning is still valid in November to January (winter).
- **Action:** WMO and OCHA have jointly called for **urgent anticipatory action**. Contingency plans should not wait they need to be put into action **now**, while the event is at its peak.

1. CURRENT STATE OF EL NIÑO

A historic El Niño, forecast to peak around December 2026. WMO's Global Seasonal Climate Update, released on 21 October, predicts the Niño 3.4 anomaly to reach about **+3.8°C over November 2026-January 2027**. This is well beyond the roughly +3°C reached by the strongest past events, and because models agree closely, confidence in the forecast is very high (WMO GSCU NDJ 2026). NOAA predicts with **more than 83%** chance that a strong to very strong event will persist into January–March 2027. ***Chances remain high for a historic event that would exceed the strength of previous El Niño events dating back to 1950.***

Over other oceans, the positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is expected to fade towards neutral, at about +0.3°C in November-January. The tropical Atlantic, north and south of the equator, should stay warmer than normal.

2. LAST MONTH OVERVIEW: HAZARDS AND IMPACTS (28th September to 28th October 2026)

a. Climate Observations

Climate (temperature and rainfall) monitoring over Africa during end of September to mid-October shows El Niño has already set its footprint. Over the past 30 days, the Sahel, Sudano-Guinean region, as well as southeastern Nigeria and Cameroon experienced rainfall surpluses (50 - 200 mm). However, deficits persisted over Sierra Leone, Liberia, and much of the southern region of the Gulf of Guinean countries, furthermore during the last 30 days, the East Africa region is split into a dry regime across the western half and a wet regime across the East. Deficits of 25 - 100 mm are present through many parts of southern Sudan, South Sudan, northeastern DRC and western Ethiopia. Recent large increases in rain led to surpluses of 100 - 300 mm or more across the Horn of Africa.

These heavy rainfalls are corroborated by stations reports in several countries. The highest daily amounts were 96.9 mm at Pagouda (Togo) on 16 September, 96.0 mm at Goré (Chad) on 28 September and 94.0 mm at Kelle (Congo) on 28 September (ACMAD/AFRIMET database). Southern Africa saw near-normal early showers due to the reminiscence of warm water in the south-west Indian Ocean. However, these early rains should not be considered as an early start of the rainy season since long dry spells are expected over southern Africa in the following weeks.

For temperature, September 2026 was exceptionally hot, 1 to 2.5°C above normal and hotter than 99% of past Septembers across most of West Africa, the Sahel and Central Africa. Maximum temperatures above 40°C were reported at 17 stations, mostly in the Sahel and southern Africa. In Chad, eight stations exceeded 40°C: Djeddah reached 41.8°C on 13th October after 10 days above 40°C, followed by Massakory and Biltine (41.3°C) and Ngouri (41.2°C).

The highest value was 42.9°C at Essbeea (Libya) on 15 September, followed by Kufra (41.7°C) on 16 September. In southern Africa, Mocuba (Mozambique) reached 41.4°C on 28th September, and Livingstone, Mwandi and Sesheke in southern Zambia recorded 40.2-40.5°C on 27-28 September (ACMAD/AFRIMET database).

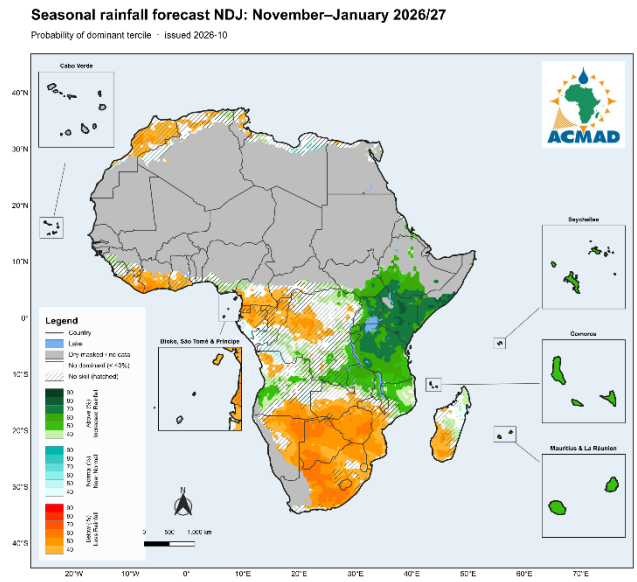
b. Reported impacts

Reports are already showing climate extreme on the ground: late-season floods in Niger, Nigeria and Mauritania, rising rivers and early flooding in Somalia and southern Ethiopia, failing harvests in the drought belt, and disease outbreaks straining health systems.

- According to WFP, El Niño 2026/27 could push **at least 49 million additional people** into acute food insecurity across 45 countries (**from 225 to 274 million, +22%**). In West and Central Africa, food insecurity is projected to rise by 12%, i.e. **6 to 7.4 million more people** (WFP, 5 August 2026; WFP, 11 September 2026).
- Drought and heat are already biting: below-average rainfall triggered early action in seven provinces of Chad (**170,000+ people assisted**), while extremely high temperatures and poor rains threaten South Sudan. Malawi expects both flash floods and dry spells, with **2.6 million people at risk** during the 2026/27 lean season (WFP, 11 September 2026).
- Floods have affected **1.5 million people in 15 countries** of West and Central Africa as of 30 September 2026: **595,000 displaced, 533 killed, 117,000 houses damaged or destroyed**, plus 300 schools and 26 health facilities hit. DR Congo, Nigeria and Ghana account for about 88% of those affected; Ghana's toll is four times that of 2025 (239,000 vs 60,000), Nigeria's is up 30%. Eight countries, including Senegal, Chad and Burkina Faso, have not yet reported data (OCHA - WCA 2026 Flooding Snapshot, 30 September 2026).

3. MULTI-HAZARD OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS (NOVEMBER-JANUARY 2026/27)

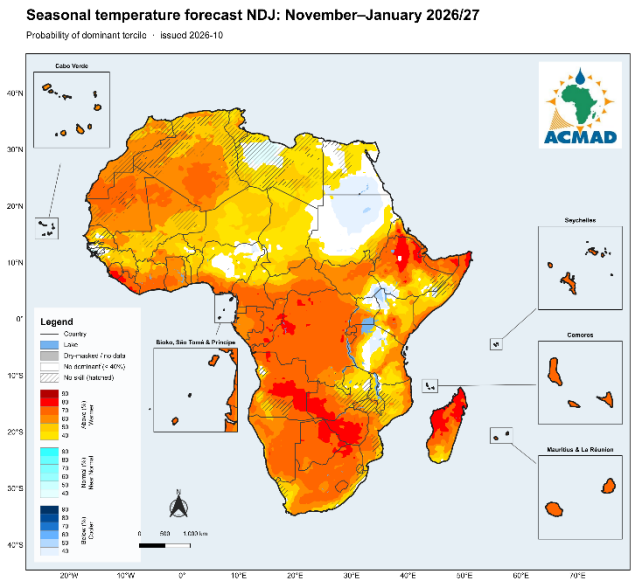
Each region experienced different risk over November-January 2026/27. In East Africa, the flood season is reaching its peak: above-normal rainfall is most likely over Uganda, Kenya, northern Tanzania, southern Ethiopia and Indian Ocean Island, and rivers are already high in Somalia. Southern Africa and southern Madagascar are heading into the heart of the planting season under a drought signal. In West and Central Africa, 1.5 million people are recovering from floods while the Gulf of Guinea coast and parts of Central Africa turn drier than normal. And heat is expected almost everywhere.



Rainfall Outlook:

Forecast for November 2026-January 2027 shows the El Niño dipole clearly over Africa.

Above-normal rainfall is favoured over East Africa, with the highest probabilities (70-90%) over Uganda, Kenya, northern Tanzania and southern Ethiopia, extending to Rwanda, Burundi, eastern DR Congo, southern Somalia, northern Zambia, Malawi, northern



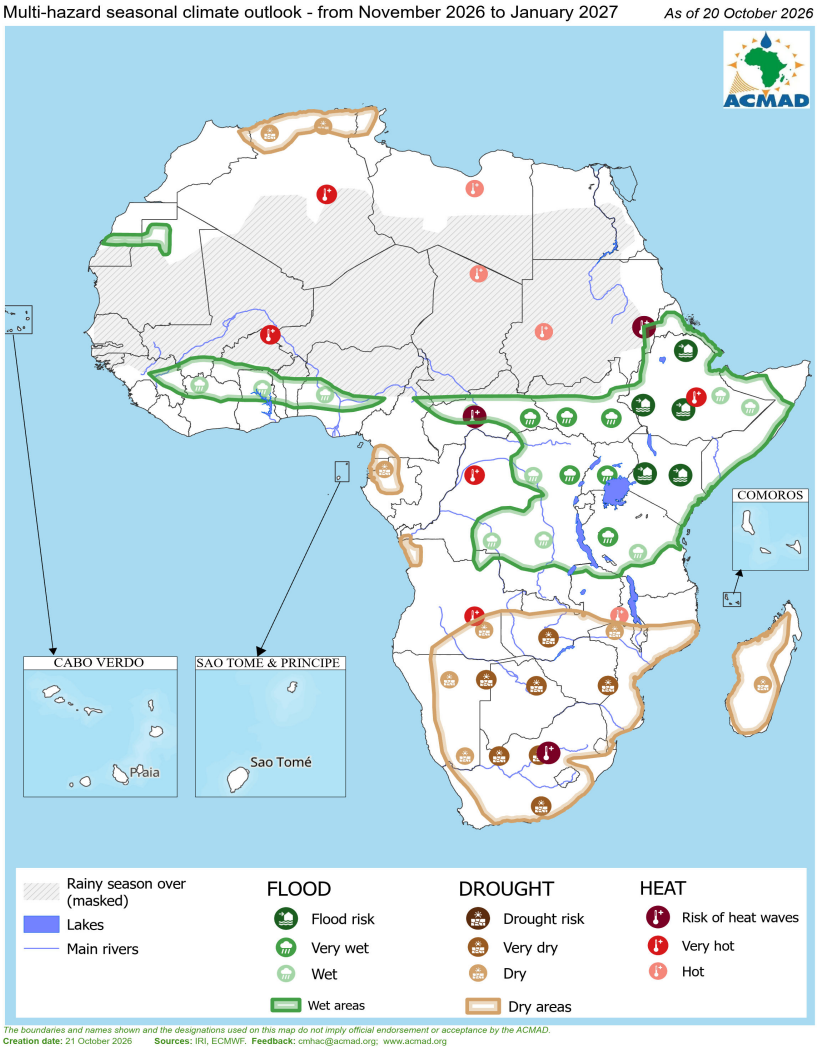
Temperature Outlook:

Forecast for November 2026-January 2027 projects temperature to be:

Above normal over almost the whole continent, with probabilities above 80% over coastal Sierra Leone and Liberia, the Ethiopian highlands, parts of the Congo basin, central Angola, the Zambia, Zimbabwe,

Mozambique most parts of the Indian Ocean Island namely Seychelles and Comoros. **Below-normal** rainfall is favoured (50-70%) over most of southern Africa, from southern Angola, Namibia and Botswana to Zimbabwe, southern Zambia, southern Mozambique, South Africa, Lesotho and Eswatini, and over southern and western Madagascar. Similar conditions are also favoured along the western Gulf of Guinea coast, over Sao-Tomé-and-Principe, Guinea Equatorial, much of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Gabon and Congo, and along parts of the Moroccan and Algerian coasts.	Botswana border area , eastern Madagascar and Indian Ocean Island. **The warming signal** is weaker (40-60%) over the central Sahel and North Africa, and absent over eastern Libya, Egypt, northern Sudan and the area around Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika.

multi-hazard outlook



- Heat waves are expected over most of Africa;
- Flooding areas forecasted over east Africa and could bring cholera, malaria and Rift Valley fever and landslides;
- Desert locust breeding sites expected over the Horn of Africa;
- marine heatwaves forecasted around the Indian Ocean islands;
- Tropical cyclone activity is expected to be well below normal, with tracks shifted southward : Mozambique and Madagascar less likely to be impacted

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Sector	Potential impacts	Advisories
Disaster Risk Reduction & Anticipatory Action	Loss of life, injury and mass displacement from riverine and flash floods in East Africa, where above-normal rainfall is most likely (70-90%) over Uganda, Kenya, northern Tanzania and southern Ethiopia and rivers are already high along the Juba and Shabelle; landslides in highland areas; slow-onset drought emergency across southern Africa and southern and western Madagascar; long recovery for the 1.5 million people hit by floods in West and Central Africa; response capacity overstretched by simultaneous floods, drought and heat	Keep flood anticipatory-action active in East Africa through January, prioritising evacuation readiness in the Juba, Shabelle, Tana and Lake Victoria basins and emergency repair of breached riverbanks, and prepare for rains extending into February; Activate drought triggers and contingency plans now in the southern Africa drought corridor (Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Lesotho, Eswatini, southern Angola, southern Zambia, southern Mozambique) and in southern Madagascar; Prepare for both flash floods and dry spells in Malawi; sustain shelter and recovery support for flood-displaced families in West and Central Africa;
Agriculture & Food Security	Waterlogging, crop and livestock losses, pests and Rift Valley fever in East Africa; failed or repeated planting, wilting at flowering, poor pasture and livestock losses in southern Africa; deepening lean season in southern Madagascar; reduced second-season harvests along the Gulf of Guinea coast and in parts of Central Africa; post-flood crop losses in West and Central Africa; rising food prices, with WFP warning that at least 49 million more people could face acute food insecurity across 45 countries	Support post-flood replanting with short-cycle seed and recession agriculture in East, West and Central Africa; in southern Africa, advise drought-tolerant and early-maturing varieties, staggered planting after confirmed onset, water harvesting, fodder reserves and early destocking; issue dry-spell advisories for second-season crops on the Gulf of Guinea coast and in Central Africa; scale up pest and disease bulletins; pre-position food and cash assistance ahead of the early-2027 peak in needs
Water Resources & Energy	Contaminated water points and damaged sanitation in flood zones; falling reservoir and groundwater levels across southern Africa and parts of Central Africa; reduced hydropower output and power cuts; higher electricity and water demand during heat episodes; urban water rationing and competition between households, livestock and agriculture	Issue joint water-authority/met advisories on safe reservoir operating levels and release timing in East Africa; flag contamination and WASH risks in flood zones; advise southern African utilities and power authorities to activate conservation, rationing and load-management plans now, before the main rainy season fails; plan for peak power demand during heat episodes
Health	Cholera, typhoid and other waterborne diseases in flood zones, with cholera already active in Cameroon, Chad, the Central African Republic, Angola, Mozambique and Zambia; malaria, dengue and Rift Valley fever in flooded areas of East Africa; heat-related illness and deaths almost everywhere, especially in the Sahel (66,800 additional deaths projected) and where temperatures above 40°C keep recurring, as in Chad; malnutrition in drought areas; disrupted care where facilities are flooded	Sustain disease surveillance, cholera vaccination and WASH response in flood-affected districts; vaccinate livestock against Rift Valley fever in high-risk zones; issue heat-health warnings and set up cooling and hydration points, prioritising older people, young children, outdoor workers and people with chronic conditions; scale up nutrition screening in drought areas; coordinate joint climate-health messaging with public health authorities

Next issue: November 2026

ACMAD actively monitors this strong El Niño and will provide forecasts concerning the anticipated impacts throughout the forthcoming months (https://acmad.org/products/el-nino-africa/).

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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