Climate Watch Advisory

The Evolving Dry Conditions in Eastern Africa

ICPAC

Watch No.20251113-01-u2

Initial Climate Watch

Area concerned: The equatorial parts of the Eastern Africa Region

Issued on: 14 January 2026

Valid until: 13 February 2026

To: The National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, and Tanzania.

Snapshot

Current status

Several drought hotspots have persisted across Eastern Africa, including eastern Kenya, large parts of Somalia, central Uganda, and some central and northern parts of Tanzania. Analysis of October–December rainfall using the Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) reveals that significant rainfall deficits across most of these areas have persisted in the last 3 months. Corresponding crop and pasture warning levels indicate that these deficits have translated into soil moisture shortages, vegetation stress, or a combination of both. Collectively, these conditions have elevated alert levels in the affected areas, signaling heightened vulnerability to agricultural and pastoral impacts.

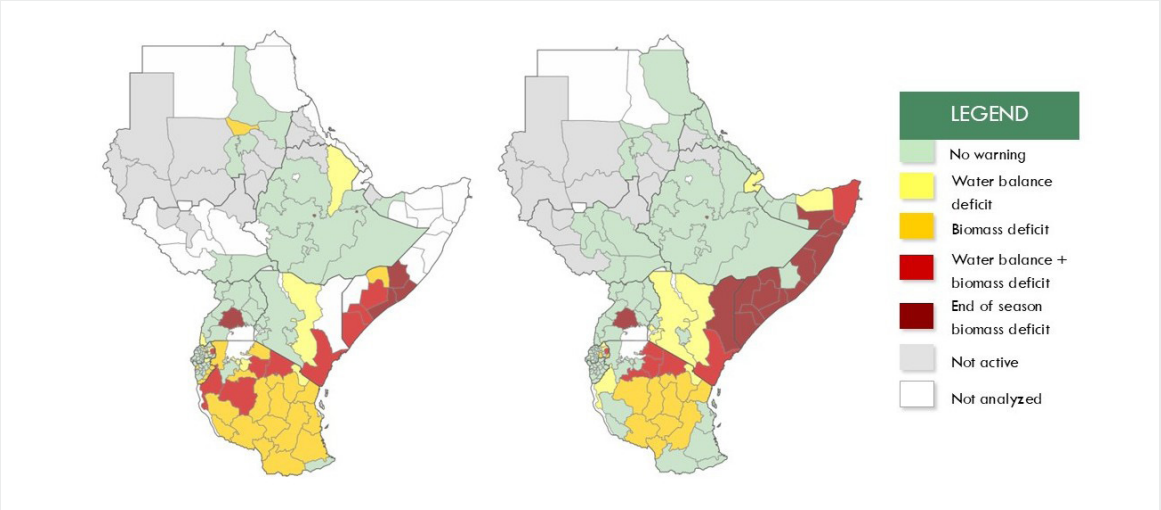
Global climate influences

The current Sea Surface Temperatures (SSTs) and atmospheric circulations anomalies indicate that La Niña is likely to continue in the tropical Pacific, while the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) has moved from negative phase to neutral. The neutral IOD conditions are expected to continue through the advisory period, while La Niña is expected to weaken and most likely end during February 2026. Although the influences of IOD and La Nina are now diminished or weakening, much of the affected area is now in dry season, between the long and short-rains seasons, with little prospect of sufficient rainfall to alleviate rainfall deficits and vegetation stress.

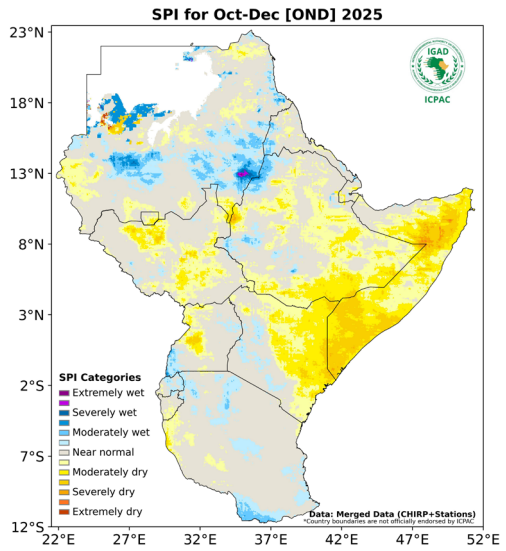
Forecast for the areas concerned

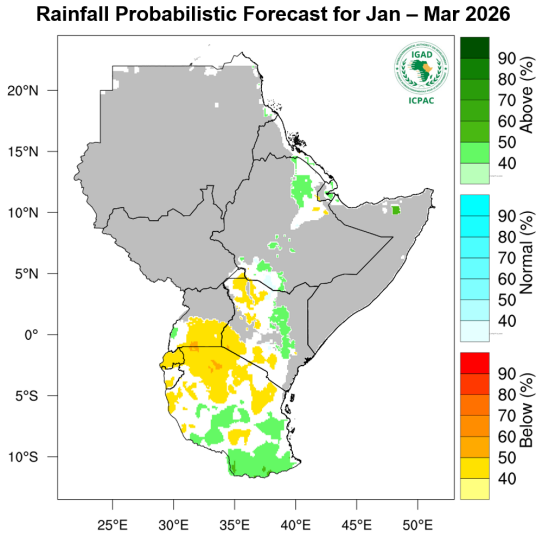
The ICPAC seasonal outlook for January 2026 to March 2026 over the affected areas, not in dry season (Kenya, Tanzania Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi), indicates high chances for drier than normal conditions to continue. This is expected to worsen the existing conditions with significant impacts in socio-economic sectors including Agriculture and food security, water resources, livestock, and health among others.

This climate watch is expected to be updated on or before **13 February 2026.**



Observed warning levels for crop (left) and rangeland (right) conditions during the 3rd dekad of December 2025 across the Eastern Africa region. The map highlights (in red) areas in Somalia, Kenya, and parts of Tanzania experiencing both water and biomass stress. Source: East Africa Agriculture Watch (EAAW).





Observed SPI for October to December 2025 (left) and rainfall forecast for January 2026 to March 2026 (right).

Annex 1

The criteria for issuance of a Climate Watch for drought for a GHA sub-region are:

— The Combined Drought Indicator (CDI) in the sub-region is at **Watch**, **Warning** or **Alert** levels or the observed warning levels for crops and rangelands are in the **Water balance+biomass deficit** or **End of season biomass deficit**. Refer to the East Africa Drought Watch[1] (EADW) and East Africa Agriculture Watch[2] (EAAW) for the definitions.

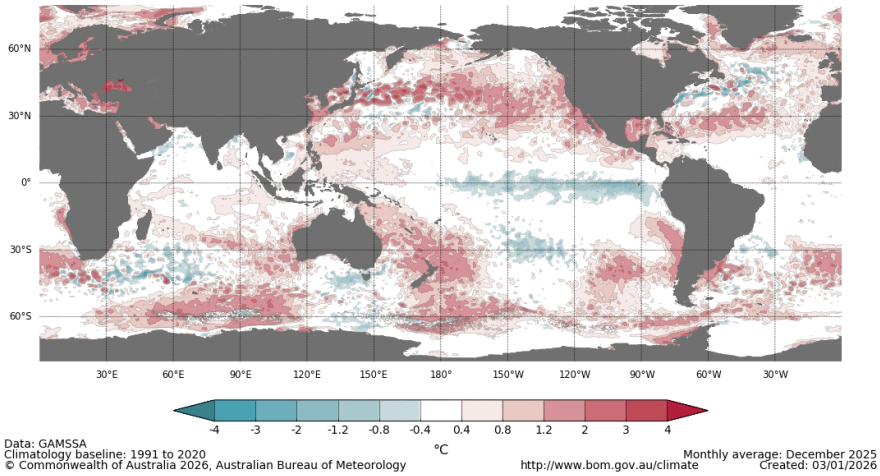
— The sub-region covers parts of at least two countries and the population exposed to the hazard exceeds 5 million people.

— Combined forecast probability of the Near-Normal and Below-Normal categories is greater than 70% or the sub-region is in dry season.

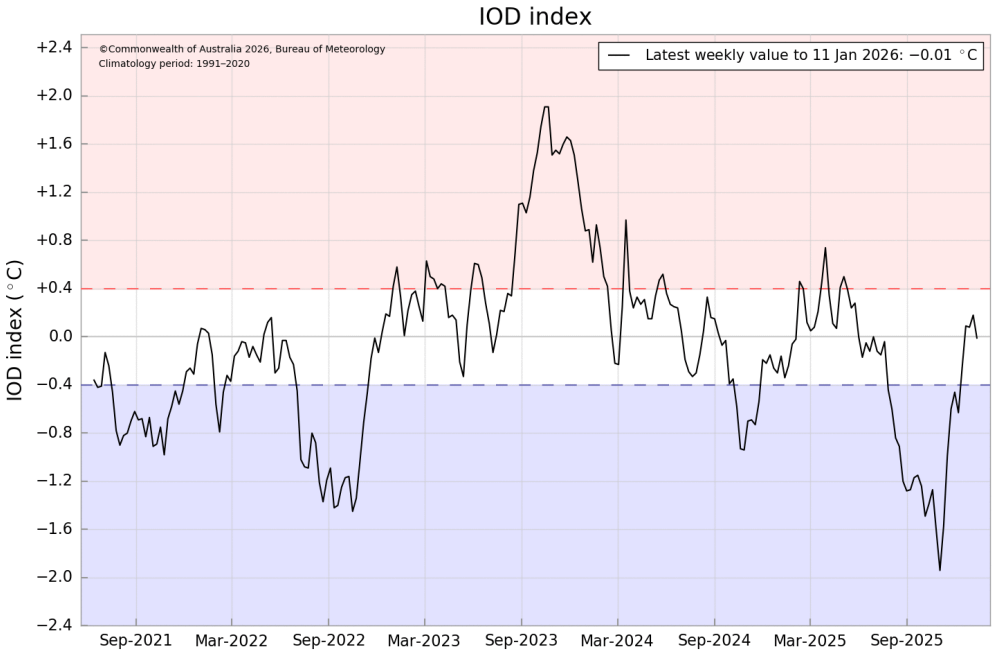
Drivers of Climate

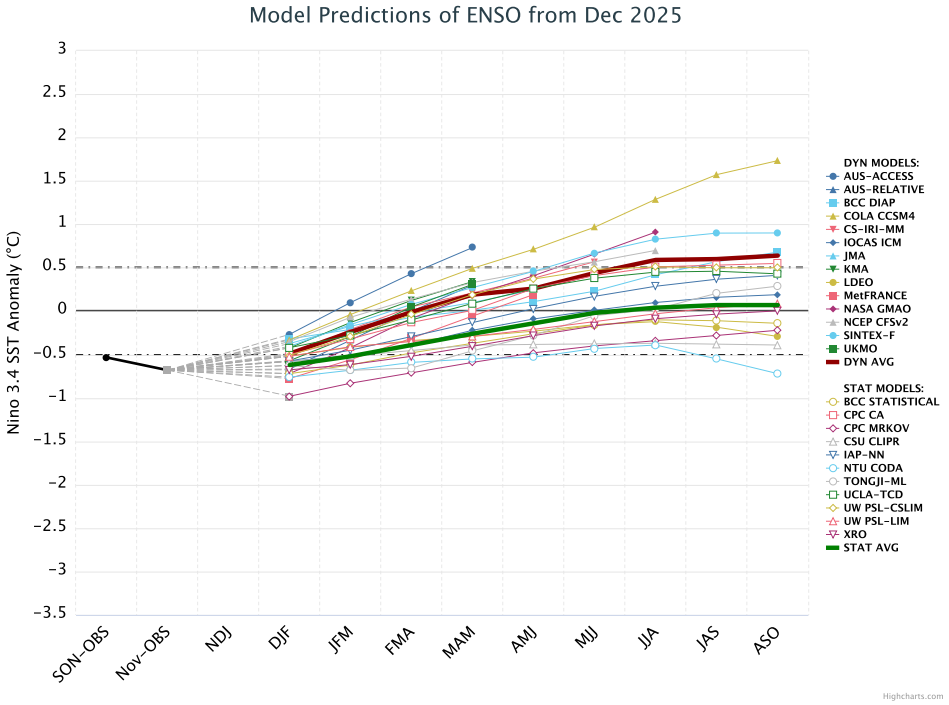
Observed SST Conditions[3]

Sea surface temperature anomaly: 01/12/2025 to 31/12/2025



1. EADW: https://droughtwatch.icpac.net/mapviewer/
2. EAAW: https://agriculturehotspots.icpac.net/
3. Observed SSTs: https://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ocean/sst/#/anom/global/weekly/20251102





5. IOD: https://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/?ninoIndex=nino3.4&index=rnino34&period=weekly#tabs=Indian-Ocean
6. ENSO: https://iri.columbia.edu/our-expertise/climate/forecasts/enso/current/