Climate Watch Advisory

The Dry Conditions in Eastern Africa

ICPAC

Watch No. 20251113-01-u3

Area concerned: Climate watch valid for the Equatorial Eastern Africa Region

Initial statement issued on **13 November 2025**

First update issued on **13 December 2025**

Second update issued on **12 January 2026**

Third update issued on **13 February 2026**

Valid until: 12 March 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, southern Ethiopia and some areas in central and northern parts of Tanzania. Analysis of November to January 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 resulted 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.

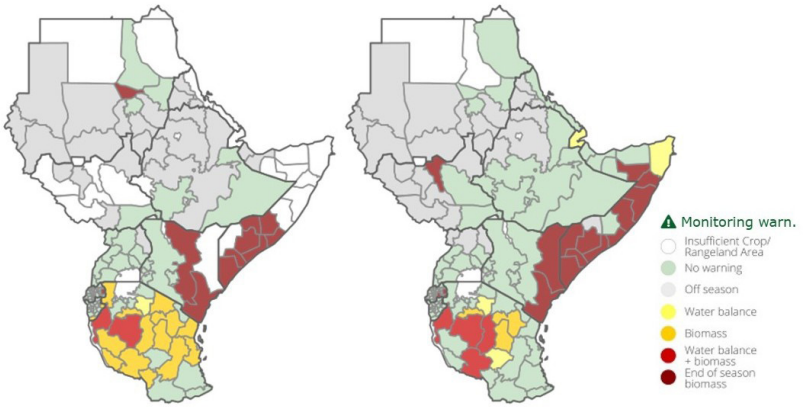
Global climate influences

The current Sea Surface Temperatures (SSTs) and atmospheric circulations anomalies indicate that neutral ENSO conditions are likely to be experienced in the tropical Pacific, while in the Indian Ocean, the IOD conditions are in the neutral phase. The neutral IOD conditions are expected to continue until March, while ENSO is expected (>80% chance) to remain neutral throughout the MAM forecast period. Although the influences of IOD and La Nina are now diminished or weakening, much of the affected areas are now in dry season, between the short and long-rains seasons.

Forecast for the areas concerned

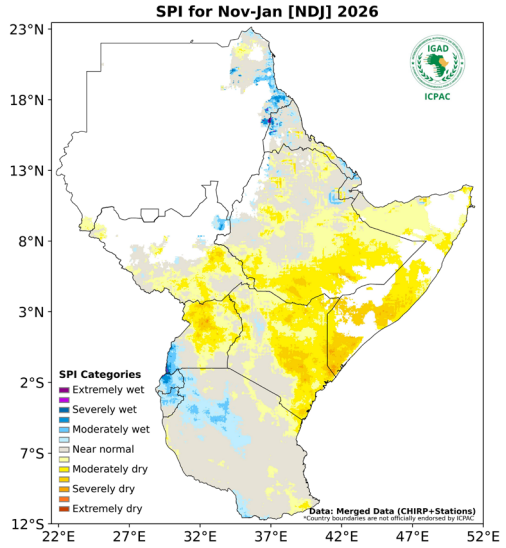
The ICPAC seasonal outlook for March to May 2026 over the affected areas, indicates enhanced chances for above normal rainfall over southern Ethiopia, much of Uganda and central and western Tanzania. In these regions there is potential for improving conditions as the MAM season progresses. In contrast, over eastern Kenya and much of Somalia the chances for below normal-rainfall are equal to those for above-normal rainfall (at 30%), and the chances for either below- or near-normal are slightly elevated at 70%. In these regions there are enhanced chances that accumulated rainfall deficits and associated vegetation impacts will continue through the period of this advisory and likely further into the MAM season.

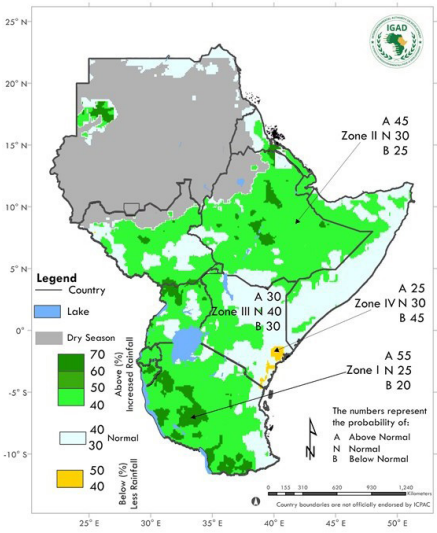
This climate watch is expected to be updated on or before **13 March 2026.**



Observed warning levels for crop (left) and rangeland (right) conditions during the 2nd dekad of January 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).

Disclaimer: The use of political boundaries, geographic names, related information, and potential considerations for response are for references, not warranted to be error free or implying official endorsement by ICPAC Member Countries.





Observed SPI for November 2025to January 2026 (left panel) and rainfall forecast for March to May 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.

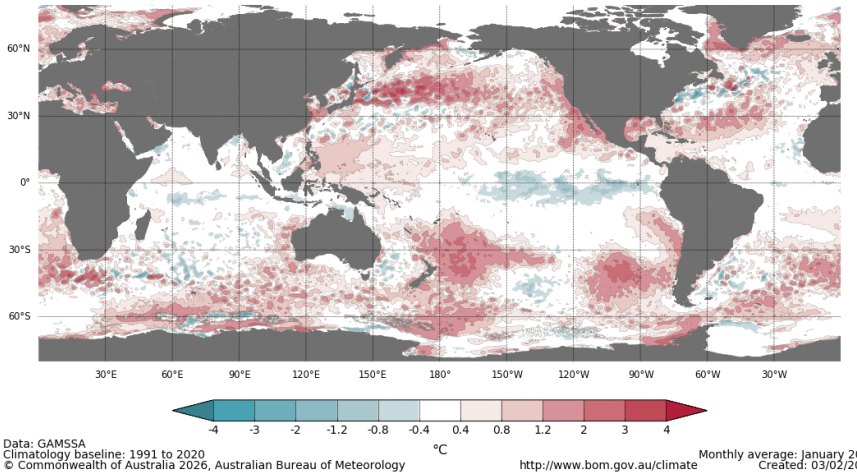
— The sub-region covers parts of at least two countries and the population exposed to the hazard exceeds 5 million people.

— 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[4]

Sea surface temperature anomaly: 01/01/2026 to 31/01/2026



Data: GAMSSA
Climatology baseline: 1991 to 2020
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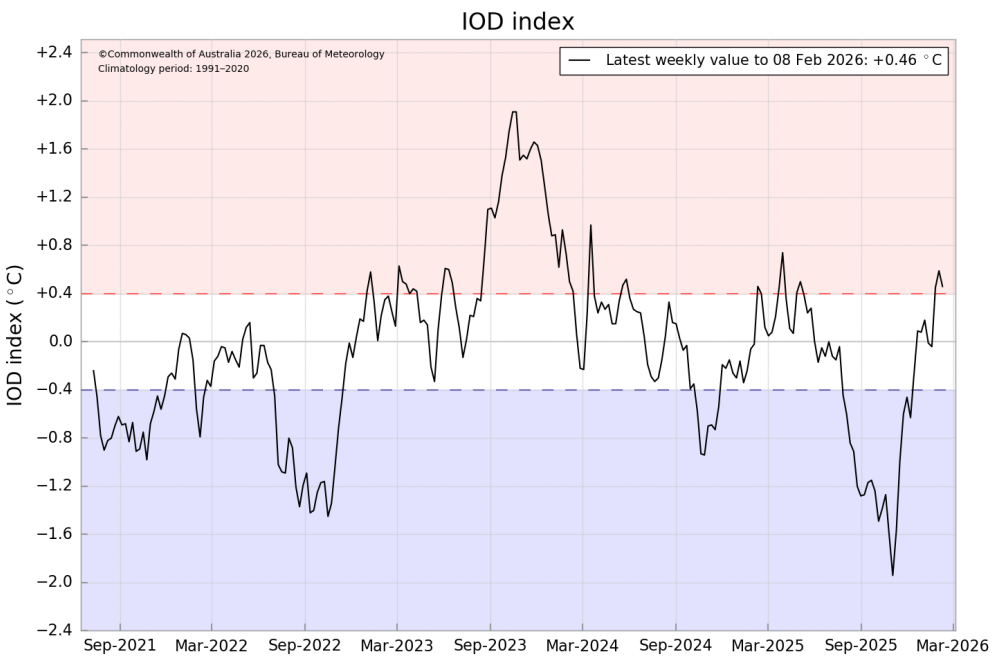
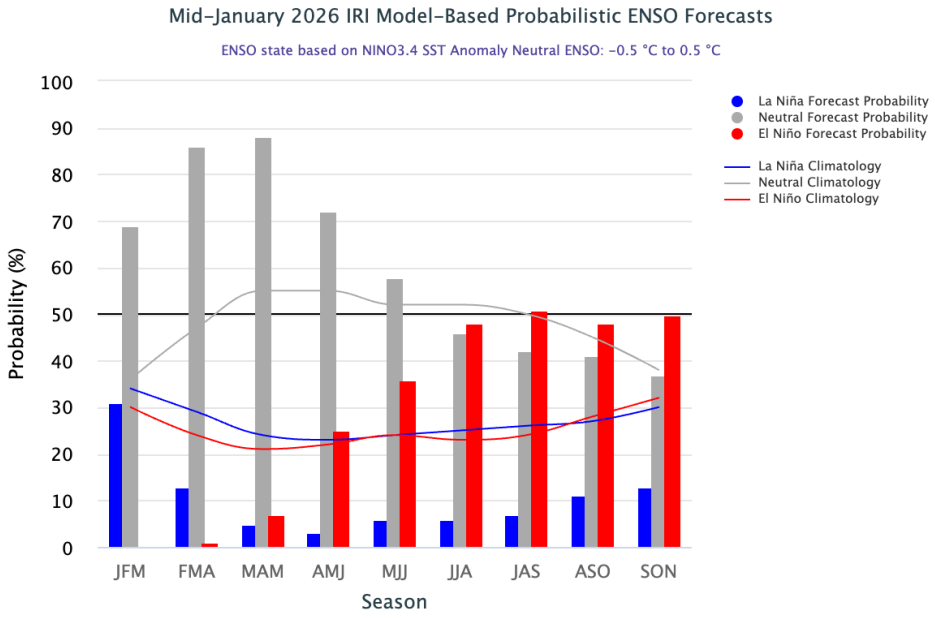
http://www.bom.gov.au/climate
Monthly average: January 2026
Created: 03/02/2026

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

IOD[5]



ENSO[6]



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/