

Above average rainfall in September ended the unusually long minor dry season in the bimodal zone

KEY MESSAGES

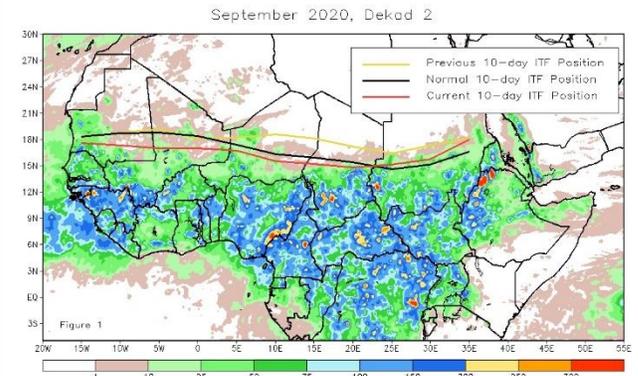
- The Intertropical Front (ITF) has started its southward retreat (Figure 1), which is a clear indication that the dry season in the Sahelian zone is nearing.
- Above average rainfall during the last 30 days resulted in a significant improvement of the cumulative seasonal rainfall in the western Sahel (Figure 2).
- From late August to early September heavy and frequent rains caused flooding along major rivers.
- The significant rainfall amounts received since the beginning of September in the bimodal zone has allowed the start of the minor growing season.

UPDATE ON SEASONAL PROGRESS

- The Intertropical Front (ITF) has started its southward seasonal retreat in early September. It was positioned between 15 to 17 degrees north during the second dekad of September. The retreat has been significant and is now 2 to 3 degrees south of its climatological position throughout the region. This is a clear sign that the end of the growing period is nearing in the Sahelian zone.
- Throughout the current rainy season, the region has received mostly average to above average and well distributed rainfall. Very few localized areas of limited size have experienced dryness. Most of these deficits have been mostly light to moderate and short lived.
- The heavy rainfall recorded frequently over most of the region from late August to early September, and high soil moisture have caused flooding in many parts of the region, particularly along the major rivers. According to [Reuters](#) these floods have affected about 760,000 people in West and Central Africa. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal are among the worst hit with at least 111 fatalities according to OCHA.
- The western Sahel, Senegal-Mauritania border area, and the bimodal zone were affected by severe deficits and long dry spells that persisted from June through the end of August. However, these areas have received above average rainfall since the beginning of September as (Figure 1 and Figure 2)
- The significant rainfall activity in the bimodal zone as a result of the southward retreat of the ITF has put an end to the longer than normal minor dry season and has indicated the start of the minor growing season.

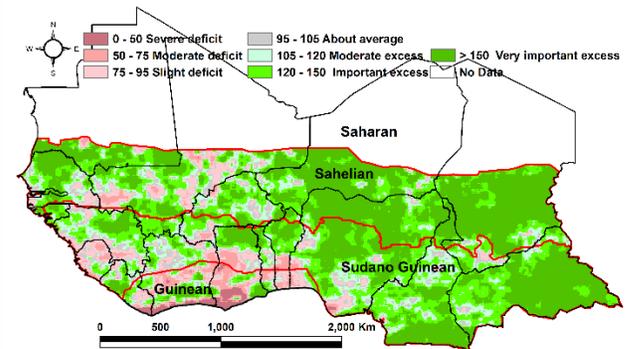
FORECASTS

Figure 1. ITF position in September compared to normal



Source: NOAA

Figure 2. 3rd dekad of August – 2nd dekad of September total rainfall estimate (RFE) anomaly compared to the 2009-2018 mean



Source: NOAA/USGS/FEWS NET

More information on remote sensing can be found at: http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/african_desk/cpc_intl/ and <http://earlywarning.usgs.gov/?l=en>

- According to the short and medium term forecasts from [CHC/UCSB](#) and from [NOAA/CPC](#) above average rainfall is expected over areas south of the Sahelian zone, and no significant dry spells are expected within the next four weeks.
- The [NOAA-CPC](#) Northern American Multi-Model Ensemble (NMME) seasonal forecasts for October, the final month of the season, generally predicts climatology to increased chances for below average rainfall.

SEASONAL CALENDAR IN A TYPICAL YEAR

