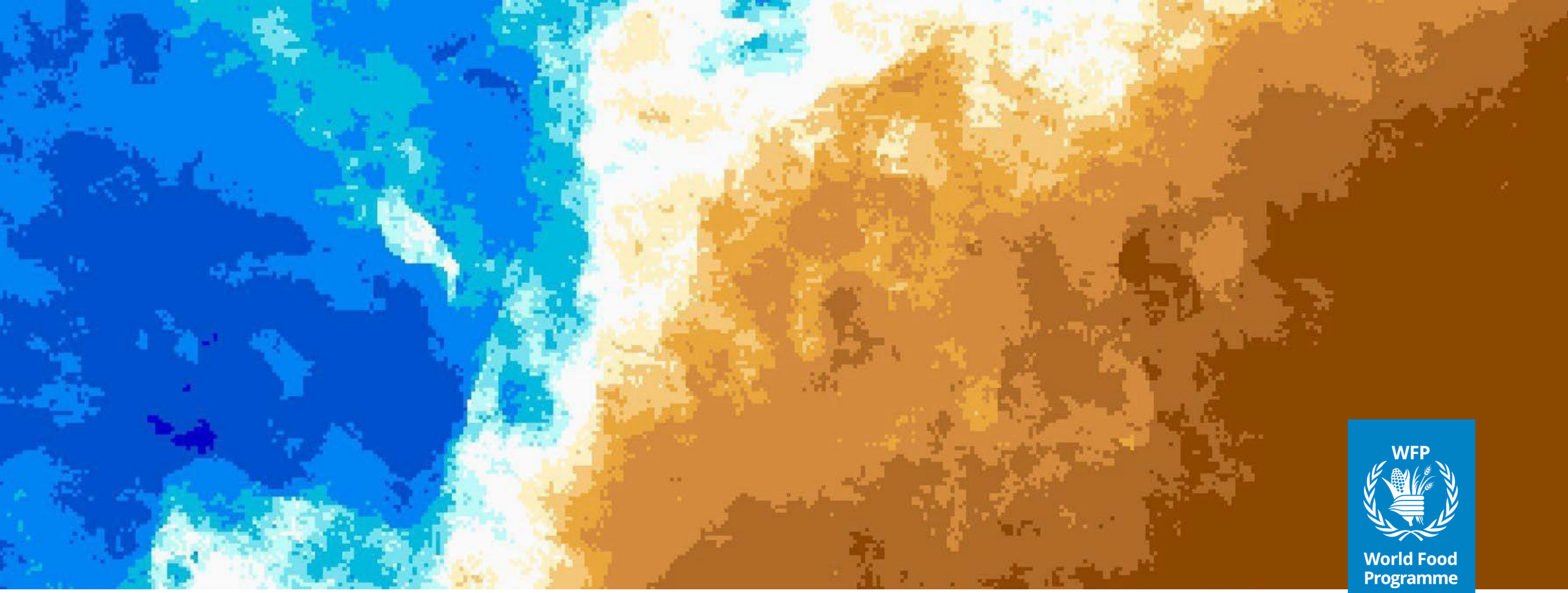


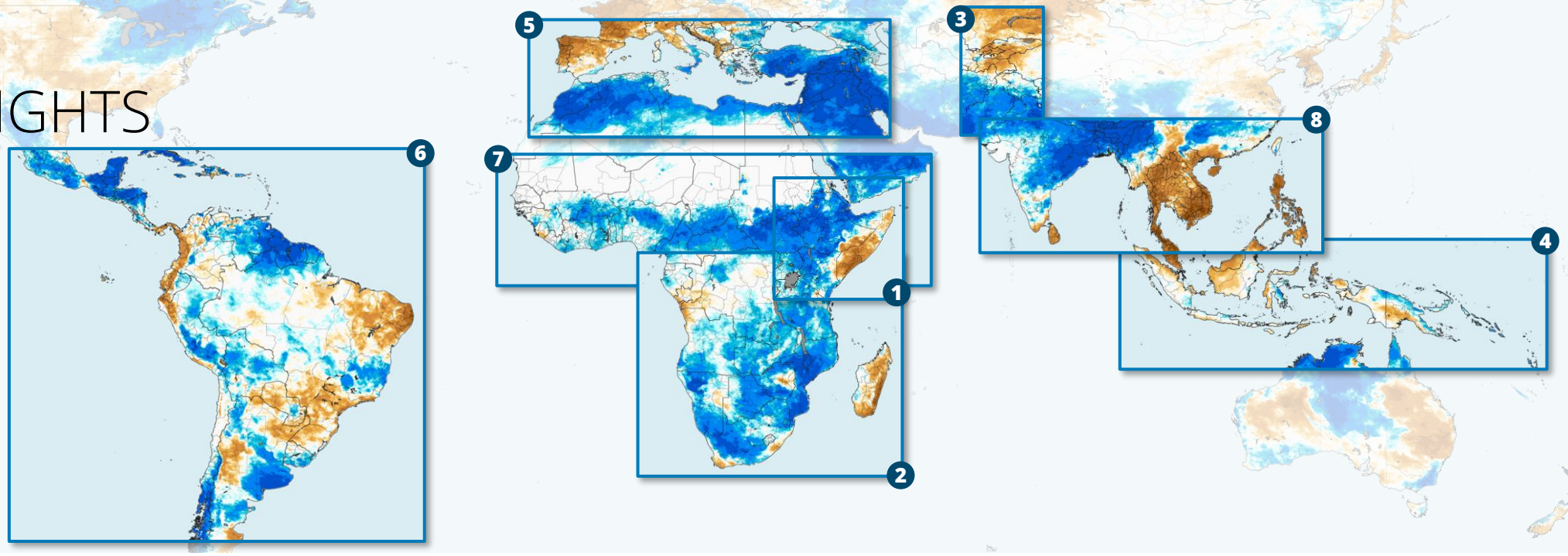
Global Seasonal Outlook

2026 March

WFP
World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

KEY HIGHLIGHTS



Regions are ordered to reflect the seasonal progression — from areas currently in-season to those where the rainy season is expected to begin:

1 HORN OF AFRICA

Flood

Long rains began in early March, bringing above-average rainfall across much of the region, followed by severe flooding. A dry spell is expected through mid April, before rainfall improves again later in April with mostly above-average totals forecast through June.

2 SOUTHERN AFRICA

Flood Dryness

Recent rains have improved conditions in eastern areas of the region, but the season is ending with uneven outcomes following floods dry spells and cyclones, with localized impacts on crop production.

3 CENTRAL ASIA

Dryness

Recent above-average rainfall has provided short-term improvements in the southern part of the region. However, warmer-than-average temperatures are expected to accelerate snowmelt, which may reduce water availability later in the season and increase the risk of water stress in irrigated agricultural areas.

4 INDONESIA & PACIFIC

Cyclone

Recent wet conditions brought flooding and landslides across parts of Indonesia. While tropical activity should remain broadly near average, isolated storm-related impacts may still occur, particularly eastern areas.

5 MENA

Recent rains have improved conditions across much of the region, with continued rainfall expected to support crops and water availability.

6 LATAM

Drought Flood

Above-average rainfall in parts of South America is sustaining localized flood risks, particularly in the western areas. In Central America, emerging signals point to an increased risk of dryness during the Primera season, with potential rainfall deficits raising concerns for crop development especially in the Corredor Seco.

7 EAST & WESTERN AFRICA

Drought

Across Eastern and Western Africa, early-season rainfall is generally expected to support planting activities. However, conditions remain uneven, with a risk of delayed season onset in parts of the Sahel and a potential shift toward drier conditions later in the season in Eastern Africa.

8 SOUTH & SE ASIA

Drought Cyclone

Forecasts indicate below-average rainfall during the first phase of the South Asian monsoon, while outlooks point to a potentially above-average tropical storm season in the western Pacific

ENSO OUTLOOK

A transition from La Niña to ENSO-neutral is expected in the next month. In June-August 2026, El Niño is likely to emerge (62% chance) and persist through at least the end of 2026.

2026 El Niño Outlook

SPECIAL FOCUS

Current forecasts of Eastern Pacific sea surface temperatures (SST) and expert judgement point to a **significant likelihood of an El Niño materializing between June and August 2026** and persist through the end of the year, likely peaking during the winter (Figure 1).

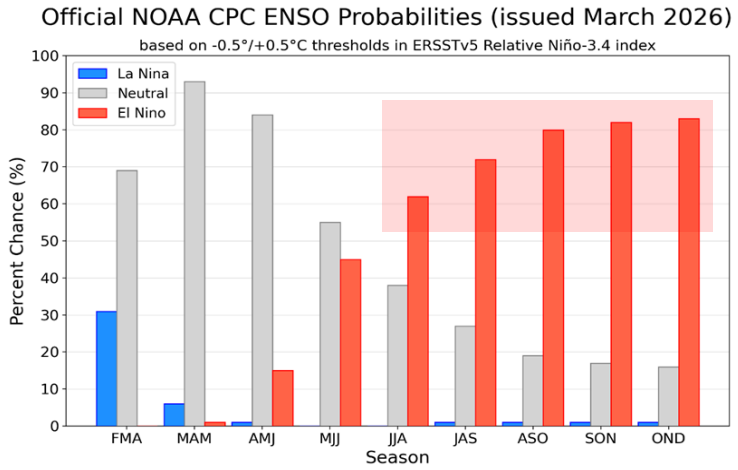


Figure 1: Official NOAA CPC ENSO Probabilities as of Mar-2026
Red bars denote probability of an El Niño developing

Its **main impacts would occur during the 26/27 season in the Southern hemisphere**. Models indicate that the event is rapidly emerging. The ECMWF outlook for July–September already shows a large and intense SST anomaly across the tropical Pacific (Figure 2) and rainfall forecast models already indicate the emergence of El Niño-like patterns during the upcoming cropping seasons in the Northern Hemisphere (see next page).

Should it materialize the **precise strength of the emerging El Niño remains uncertain** at this stage although most models point toward a likely **moderate event** (Figure 3). Yet, a stronger event cannot be ruled out. In fact, the NMME model indicates roughly a one-in-three chance that sea-surface temperatures could reach levels consistent with a strong El Niño (defined as ≥ 1.5 °C above average) by the end of the year.

A **stronger El Niño** would **significantly amplify** its **influence on global climate patterns**, increasing the likelihood of **high-impact weather anomalies** and more extreme events worldwide could worsen food insecurity in vulnerable countries.

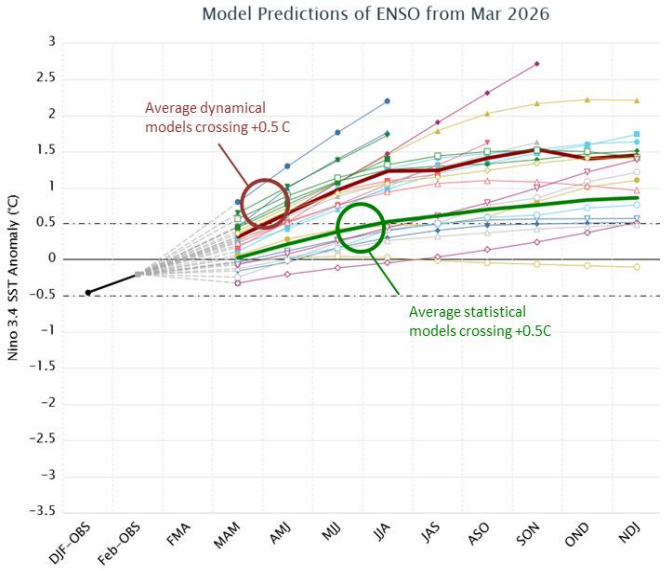


Figure 3: IRI ENSO Predictions Plume issued in March-26

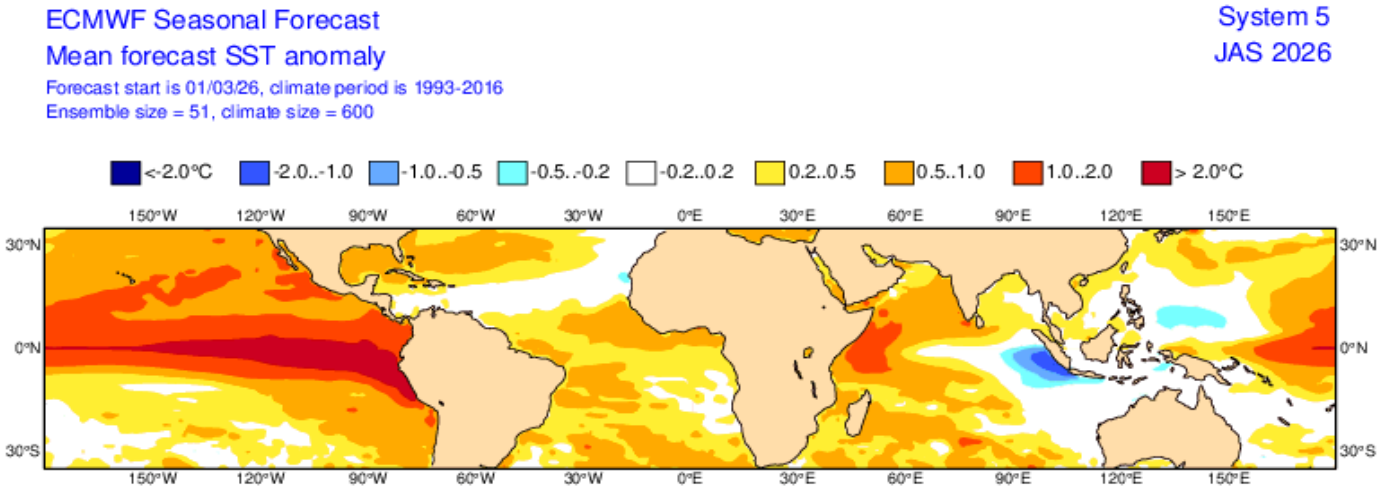


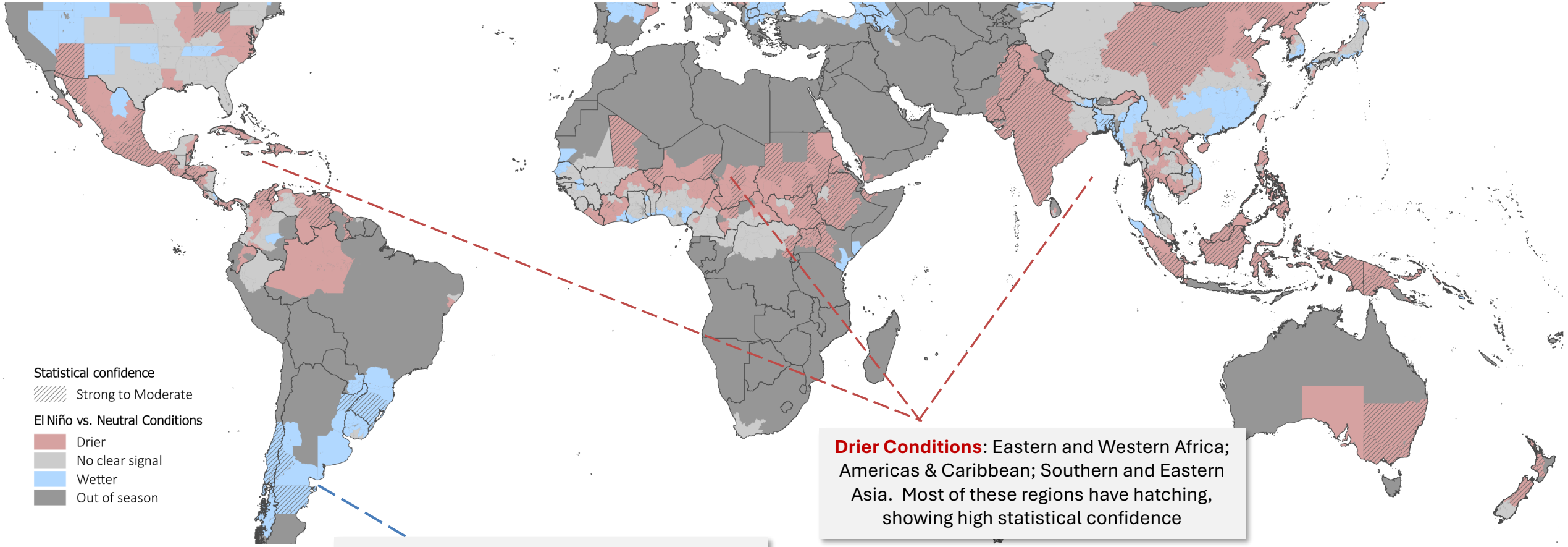
Figure 2: ECMWF mean forecast sea surface temperature anomaly for July-Sept

Jul-Sept Rainfall & El Niño

SPECIAL FOCUS

The map illustrates the likely changes during the core period of the upcoming Northern Hemisphere rainfall season (July–September), comparing El Niño years with neutral conditions since 1981. It highlights regions that typically experience significantly **wetter** or **drier** conditions during El Niño events.

These patterns represent the most likely scenario based on historical evidence. It is important to note, however, that while El Niño provides a strong large-scale climate signal, seasonal outcomes can also be influenced by other climate drivers. These additional drivers may modulate or even override typical El Niño-related anomalies at regional scales.



HORN OF AFRICA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

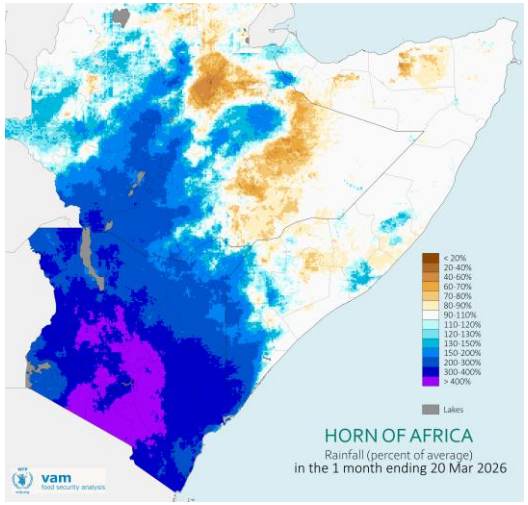
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
HOA Long Rains, Ethiopia (Belg)			■	■	■							
HOA Short Rains										■	■	■

Severe March Floods and Emerging April Rainfall Deficits

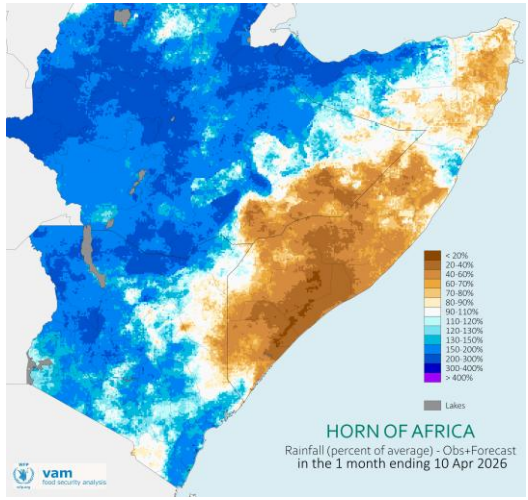
The first 20 days of March marked the onset of the long rains, bringing wetter-than-average conditions across Kenya, western Ethiopia, and southern Somalia, while the northern part of the Ethiopian Somali Region experienced below-normal rainfall. Severe weather linked to intense rainfall affected central and southern Kenya, causing flooding across 21 counties.

Afterwards, a drier-than-average period has been forecast across much of the region through 10 April. As a result, the southern part of the Ethiopian Somali Region and large areas of Somalia are likely to experience a prolonged dry spell that could negatively impact agropastoral communities by reducing water availability for crops and degrading pasture conditions on top of an already stressed situation caused by the failure of the last short-rains season.

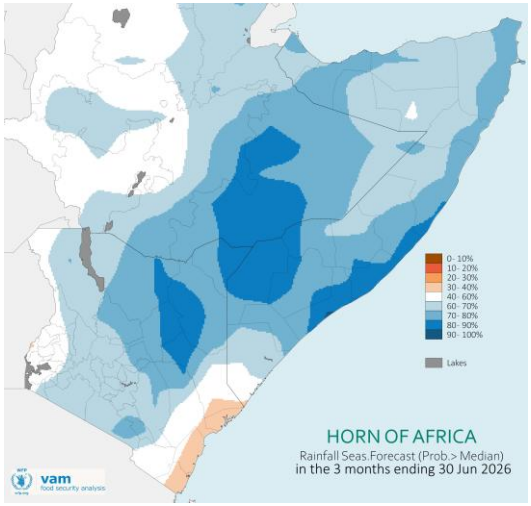
Conditions are expected to improve in the following week. Seasonal forecasts through the end of June continue to indicate mostly above-average rainfall across much of the region.



Rainfall observed for the 1-month ending **20 Mar 2026**, as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Rainfall observed and forecast for the 1-month ending **10 Apr 2026**, as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **Apr-Jun 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Southern Africa												

A Season of Extremes, Yet a Favorable Yield Outlook Ahead

The 2025–2026 rainy season is now drawing to a close for most Southern African countries, as April typically marks the final month of significant rainfall across much of the region.

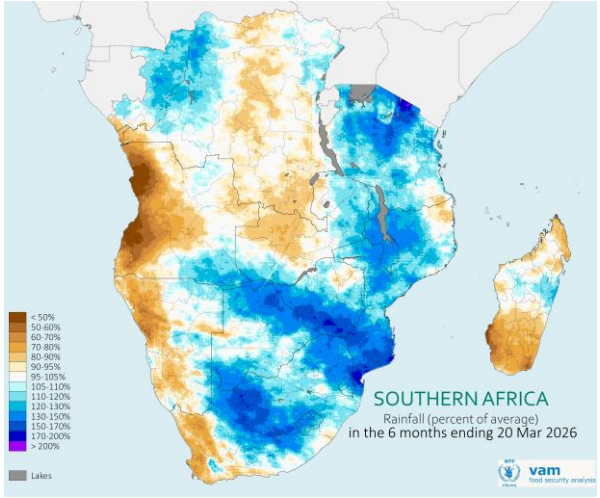
To date, average to above-average seasonal rainfall has been recorded across the eastern part of the region. Elsewhere, rainfall performance has been mixed, with notable dryness affecting the western coastal zones of Angola, Namibia, and South Africa, as well as central DRC, north-western Zambia, and southern Madagascar (top figure).

The season has been marked by a succession of extreme weather events. Following an early to timely onset of rains in November and December, record rainfall in January triggered severe flooding across central and southern Mozambique, making it the wettest season in 45 years in these areas. Flooding was also reported in Zimbabwe and Madagascar, the latter experiencing three tropical storms within just 20 days.

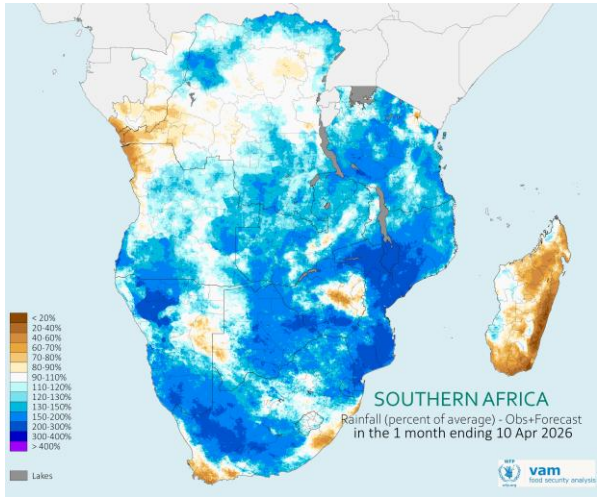
This very wet period was followed by mid-season dry spells of around one month in parts of Mozambique, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, north-eastern South Africa, Zambia, and Angola. Although rainfall resumed in early March, it remains uncertain whether crops in the hardest-hit areas suffered irreversible stress or can still benefit from the renewed moisture.

Recent forecasts indicate favourable rainfall conditions across much of the region during the first part of April (bottom figure), with the exception of Madagascar.

Overall, an average to above-average regional harvest is expected, although some localized areas are likely to face reduced production, potentially affecting food availability at the sub-national level.



Rainfall observed for the 6-month **ending 20 March 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 10 Apr 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.

CENTRAL ASIA

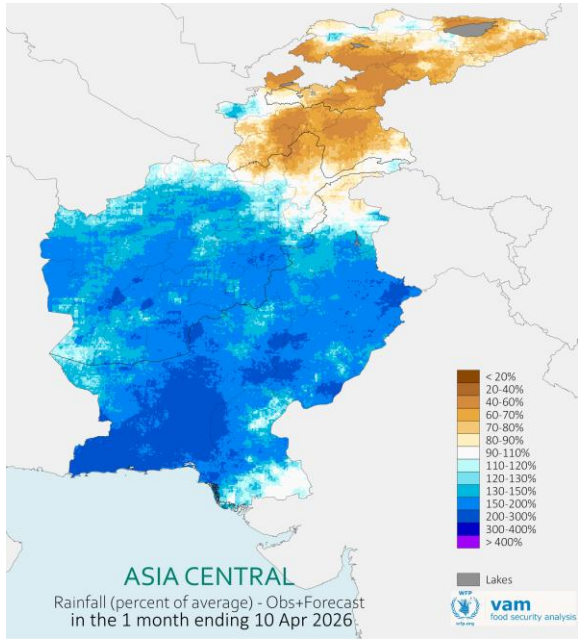
Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Central Asia												

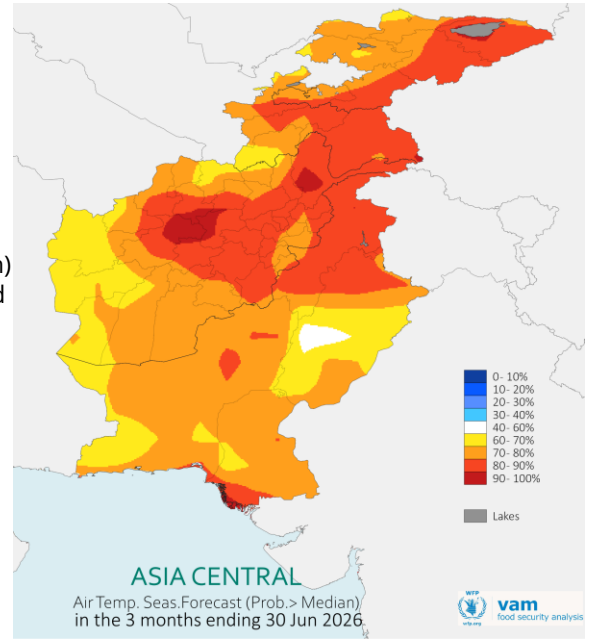
Improved Conditions, but Limited Recovery Under Warm Outlook

The region enters the late season with above-average rainfall, supporting short-term improvements following a dry start. This wetter trend is expected to persist into early April, helping to replenish soil moisture and improve water availability. Nonetheless, conditions remain below average across northern countries.

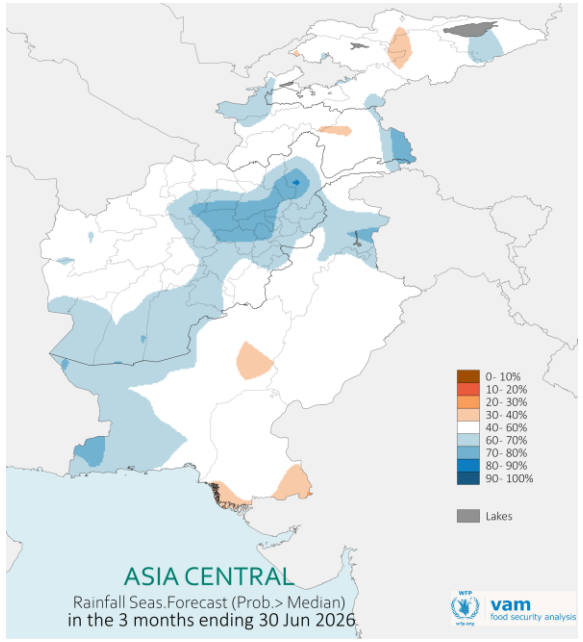
Looking ahead, the outlook through June indicates continued wet conditions in eastern Afghanistan alongside widespread above-average temperatures. While additional rainfall may offer some benefits, the warmer conditions are likely to accelerate snowmelt, increasing the risk of river flooding. Higher temperatures may also intensify evapotranspiration, potentially reducing water availability later in the season. In Afghanistan, the combination of a rapidly diminishing snowpack and elevated temperatures raises concerns about reduced irrigation and water supply, pointing to a high likelihood of continued water stress as the country transitions into the dry season.



Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 10 Apr 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Temperature forecast for the 3-month periods **Apr - Jun 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely colder (hotter) than usual conditions.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **Apr - Jun 2026**, as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

INDONESIA & THE PACIFIC

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

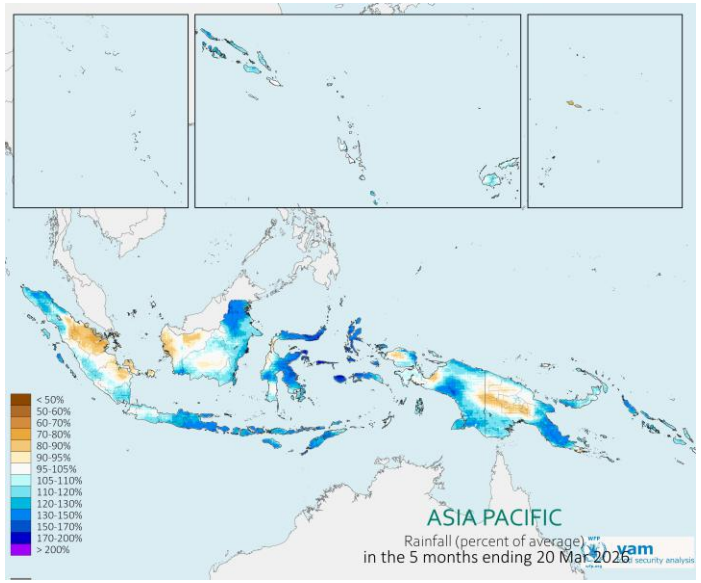
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Indonesia and Pacific												

Transition Toward Drier Conditions After a Wet Period

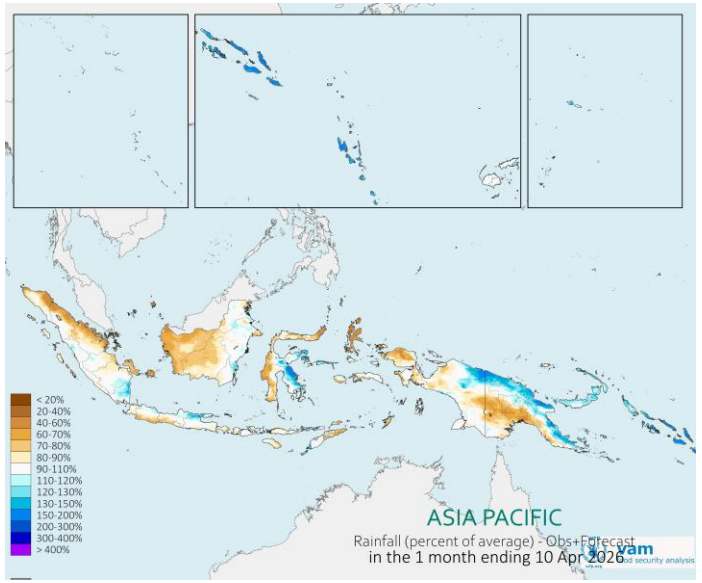
The region are entering the transition from the wet season, which typically ends in May, after a period marked by spatially mixed but overall above average rainfall. Recent months brought episodes of heavy rainfall, flooding and landslides across parts of the region, although the impacts were linked to late season variability.

As the season concludes, the outlook indicates a shift toward drier than average conditions across much of the region. Forecasts suggest that rainfall may decline below average through the end of the season.

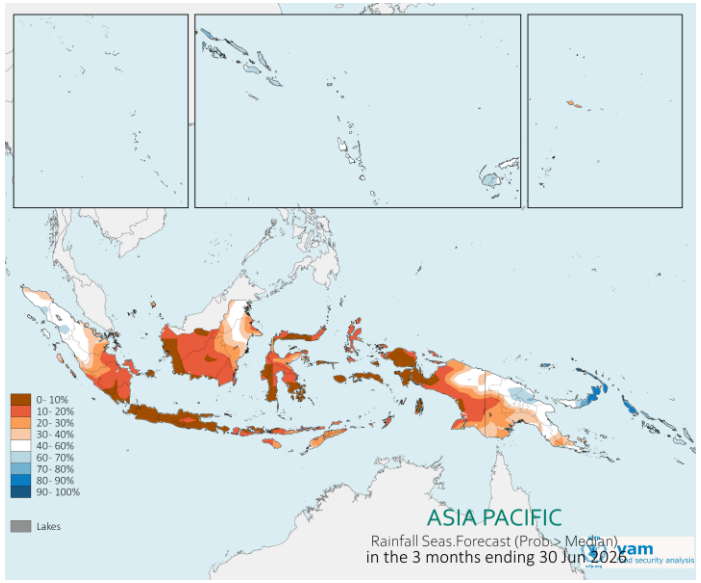
Tropical storm activity is expected to remain broadly near average, although exposure to localized impacts persists, particularly in eastern Indonesia and Pacific island regions.



Observed Rainfall for the 5-month **until 20 Mar 2026**, as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **until 10 Apr 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **Apr - Jun 2026**, as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

MIDDLE EAST & NORTHERN AFRICA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

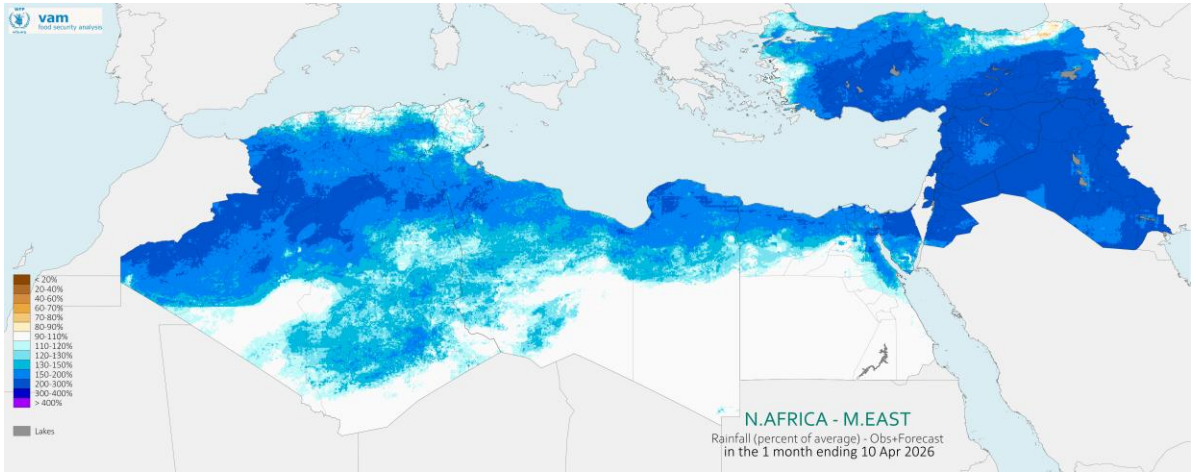
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MENA Region												

Late-Season Rainfall Improves Conditions

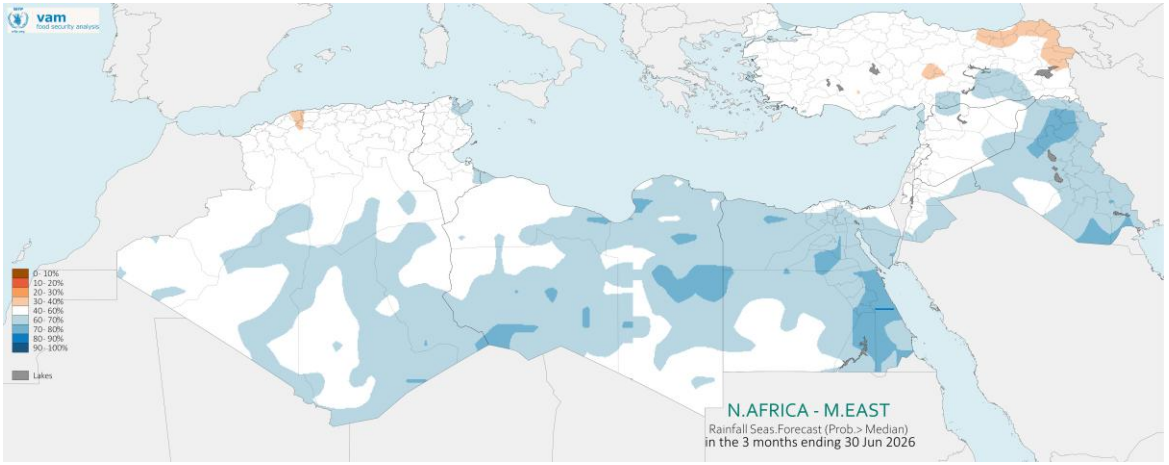
Rainfall conditions across the MENA region improved in March and early April, with above-average rainfall observed across much of the region. These rains are supporting the development of winter crops, particularly in rainfed areas of the Middle East.

Looking ahead, the April–June seasonal outlook indicates a wetter-than-average tendency across parts of the Middle East, especially in Iraq and sections of Syria, while no consistent signal emerges for North Africa. As the season enters its final phase, crop outcomes will depend largely on rainfall performance through April and May and the amount of water retained in the soil.

At the same time, above-average rainfall in the upstream areas of the Tigris and Euphrates is expected to support water availability for irrigated agriculture in the coming months.

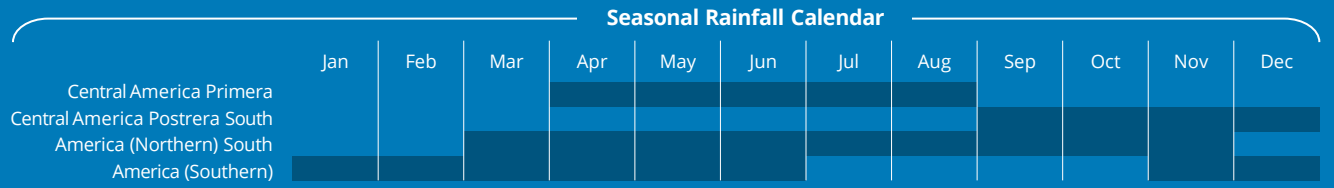


Observed and forecast rainfall 1-month ending **10 Apr 2026**, as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month period **Apr-Jun 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

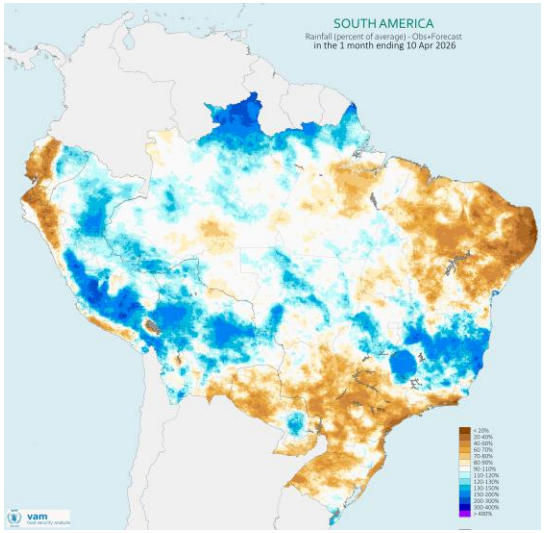
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN



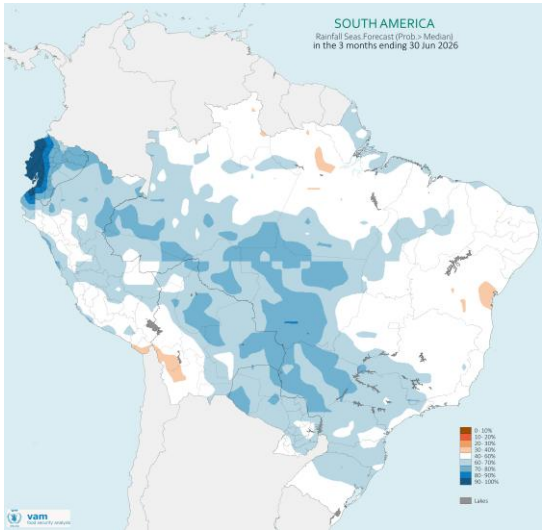
Increasing Dryness Risk in Central America

Central America and the Caribbean: The onset of the rainy season is approaching under conditions expected to transition from ENSO-neutral toward El Niño during the summer months. Seasonal and oceanic indicators increasingly point toward a drier-than-average scenario across much of the region, particularly in the Dry Corridor and Haiti. This emerging pattern is consistent with typical El Niño teleconnections and raises concerns for the upcoming Primera season, which is critical for annual crop production.

The early stages of the Primera season are especially sensitive to rainfall performance. Early signals of below-average or irregular rainfall could disrupt planting and early crop development, particularly for smallholder farmers who lack access to irrigation. Any delays or deficits in the initial rains may have significant implications for household food production and seasonal food availability.



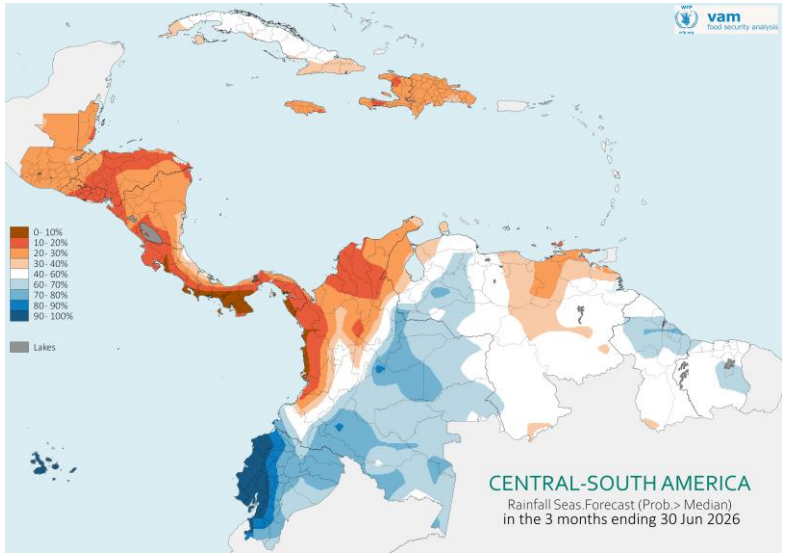
Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 10 Apr 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Rainfall forecast for **Apr – Jun 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual condition.

South America: rainfall patterns across South America this season have been characterized by strong spatial contrast. Persistent above average rainfall has affected parts of the Andean region, particularly Peru and Bolivia, where recurrent heavy rainfall has led to flood and landslides.

Looking ahead, forecasts suggest a wetter than average conditions across much of the continent through the end of the rainy season. While this support vegetation recovery in some deficits areas, it is also expected to sustain hydrological risks, especially in regions already impacted by excess rainfall.



Rainfall forecast for **Apr – Jun 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual condition.

EAST AFRICA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

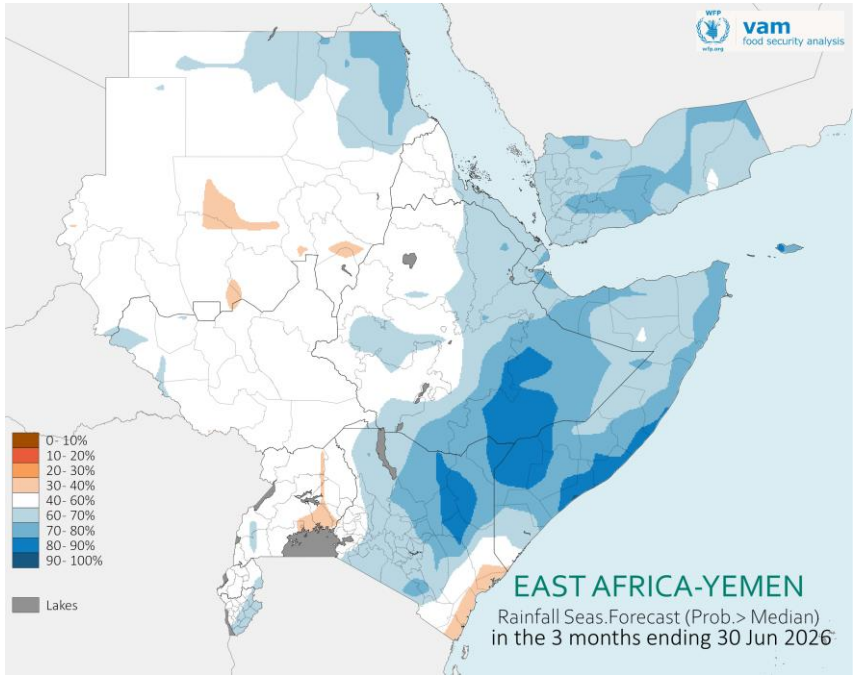
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eastern Africa (Sudans and Ethiopia (Meher))				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		

Favorable Start, Risk of Mid-Season Dryness

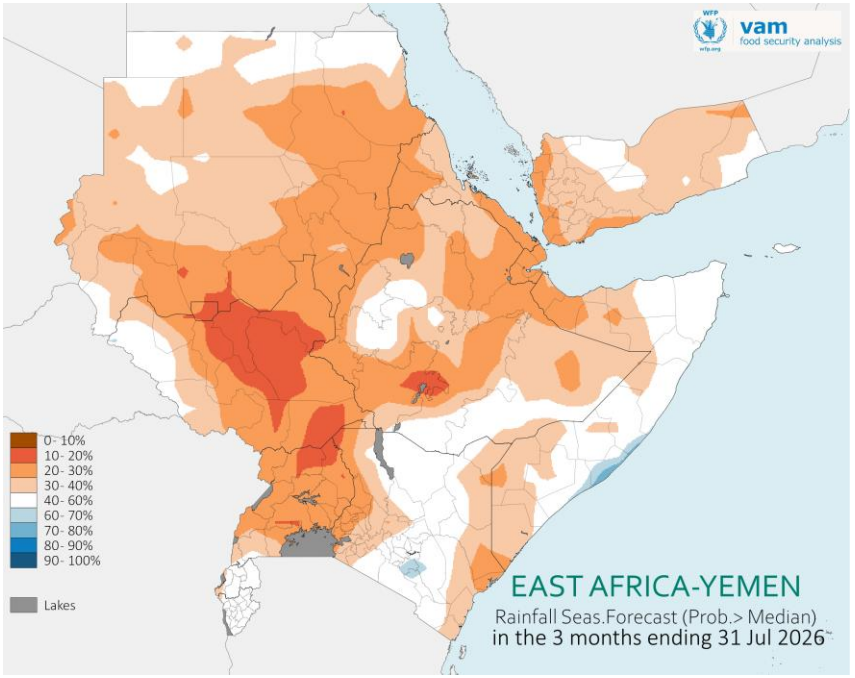
The April–June seasonal outlook points to a likelihood of average to above-average rainfall across most of Eastern Africa, which should favour planting and support early crop development at the start of the April–October agricultural season.

In contrast, the May–July forecast indicates a shift toward drier-than-average conditions across much of the region, suggesting that rainfall may weaken as the season advances.

This evolving pattern is consistent with the anticipated transition toward El Niño conditions during the coming summer. While longer-lead forecasts carry lower confidence at sub-regional scales and should therefore be viewed as preliminary, the signal highlights the need for close monitoring of rainfall performance throughout the coming season.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month period **Apr-Jun 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month period **May-Jul 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

WESTERN AFRICA

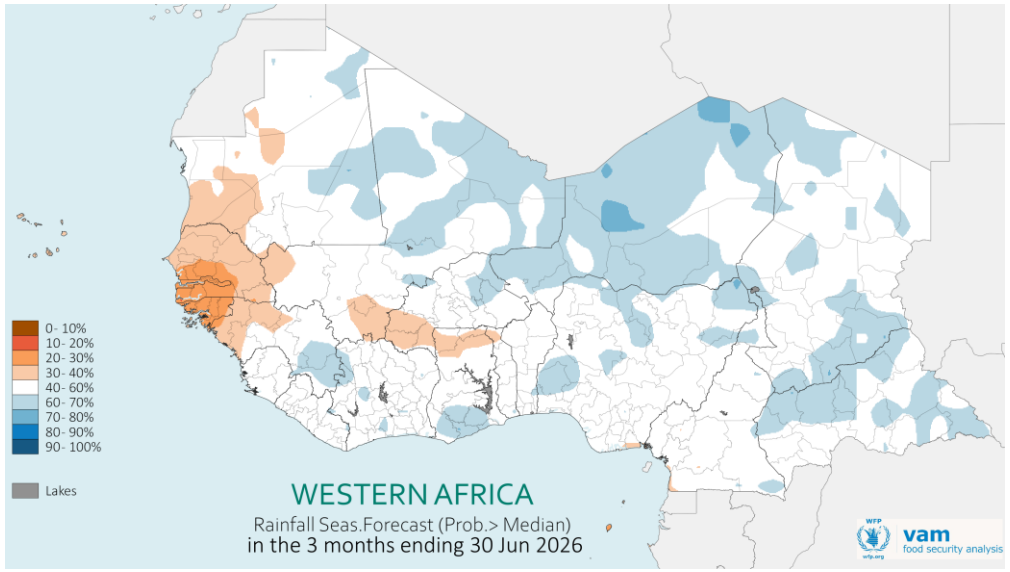
Seasonal Rainfall Calendar



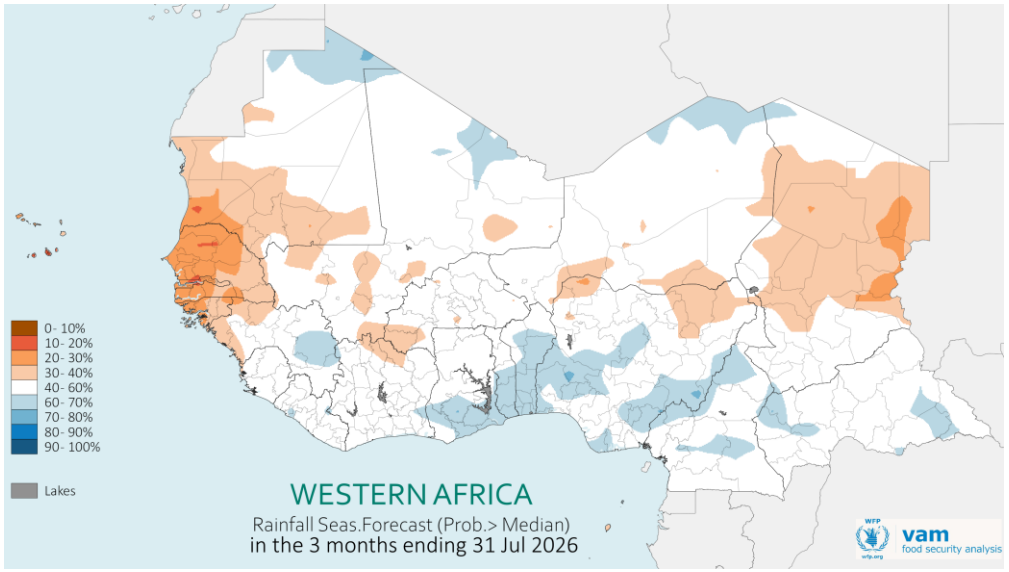
Gulf Of Guinea Rainfall Near Average; Sahel Early-Season Dryness

In the Gulf of Guinea, where the rainfall season is about to begin or has just started, the outlook through the end of June does not indicate any particularly evident rainfall anomaly signals. This overall pattern is broadly confirmed in the forecasts extending to the end of July, although above-average rainfall is projected over parts of Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria.

In the Sahel, the season typically begins in May, and current forecasts through the end of July indicate likely drier-than-usual conditions in parts of Chad, northern Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso and the Atlantic-coast countries, potentially affecting sowing and early vegetation development. This could represent an early signal of the emerging El Niño event. However, such longer-lead forecasts carry lower confidence at sub-regional scales and should be interpreted as preliminary guidance, to be reviewed and refined as shorter-term forecasts become available.

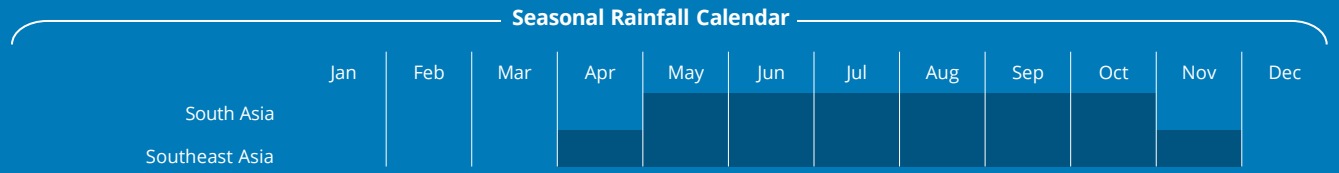


Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **Apr-Jun 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month period **May-Jul 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

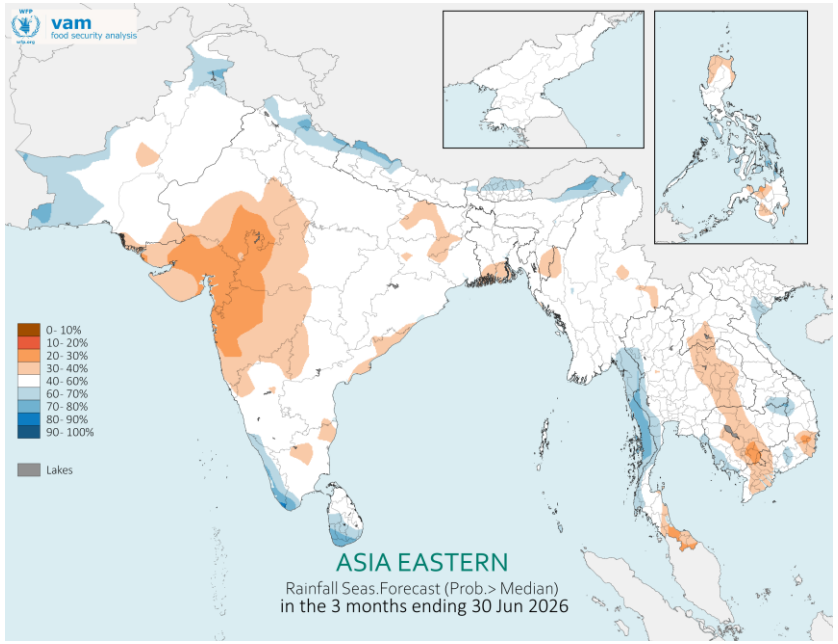


Mixed Start with Drier Outlook

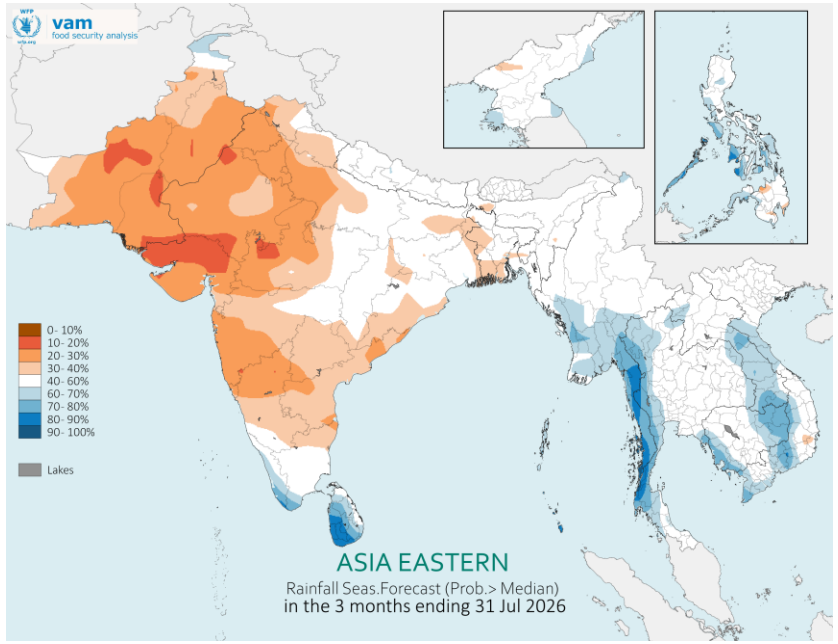
The monsoon season is expected to establish gradually between May and June. Early-season rainfall outlooks for Southeast Asia indicate a likelihood of below-average rainfall in some areas at the onset of the monsoon. However, conditions are forecast to improve toward mid-season

In South Asia, the situation appears notably different. Forecasts point to an expanding area of below-average rainfall during the development of the monsoon season, particularly across central and western India and Pakistan. This dryness is consistent with the emerging El Niño conditions. As a result, the onset phase of the South Asian monsoon may be weaker than usual, raising concerns for timely planting, water availability, and early crop development. Moreover, current forecasts do not indicate a strong likelihood of improvement later in the season, suggesting that suppressed rainfall may persist across key agricultural areas.

At the same time, outlook indicate a potentially above average tropical storm season in the western Pacific.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **Apr - Jun 2026**, as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.c



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **May - Jul 2026**, as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.c

NOTES

All satellite data (rainfall, vegetation index and land surface temperature) both current and historical are stored and processed at the WFP-HQ Humanitarian Data Cube AWS cloud system.

Rainfall: Primary dekadal data (CHIRPS) from Univ California St Barbara Climate Hazards Centre (https://www.chc.ucsb.edu/data/chirps)
Various accumulations are computed on a dekadal basis and anomalies derived relative to a 25 year-long mean (1994-2018).

Land Surface Temperature: Primary data from MODIS-AQUA (NASA), cloud cleared and gap-filled, both daytime and nighttime images. Thermal amplitude derived from difference between the two. Long term averages 2002-2018 used to derive anomalies

Vegetation Index: Primary data from MODIS-AQUA and TERRA (NASA), cloud cleared and gap-filled. Long term averages 2002-2018 used to derive anomalies

Seasonal Forecast: ECMWF seasonal forecasts **(SEAS5)** | The forecast anomalies are presented as the probability of exceeding the median, indicating the likelihood that seasonal precipitation will be above the median of the 24-year climatological distribution. These anomalies are derived from a 51-member forecast ensemble and are calculated relative to a 24-year model climatology (based on a 25-member ensemble reforecast) spanning 1993–2016

What is ENSO? ENSO is a recurring climate pattern in the equatorial Pacific, alternating between El Niño, La Niña, and Neutral phases. Shifts in ocean temperatures and atmospheric pressure during these phases influence global weather, affecting rainfall, temperatures, and the risk of extremes such as droughts, heavy rains, and tropical cyclones.
(https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/)

Water level in reservoirs: G-REALM data from USDA Foreign Agricultural Service.

Flood Forecast: GLOFAS-Copernicus and GOOGLE Flood Hub

WFP World Food Programme

For further information please contact:

hq.geospatial@wfp.org