We Wish You A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

Minimizing Risk Through Science

CONTENTS

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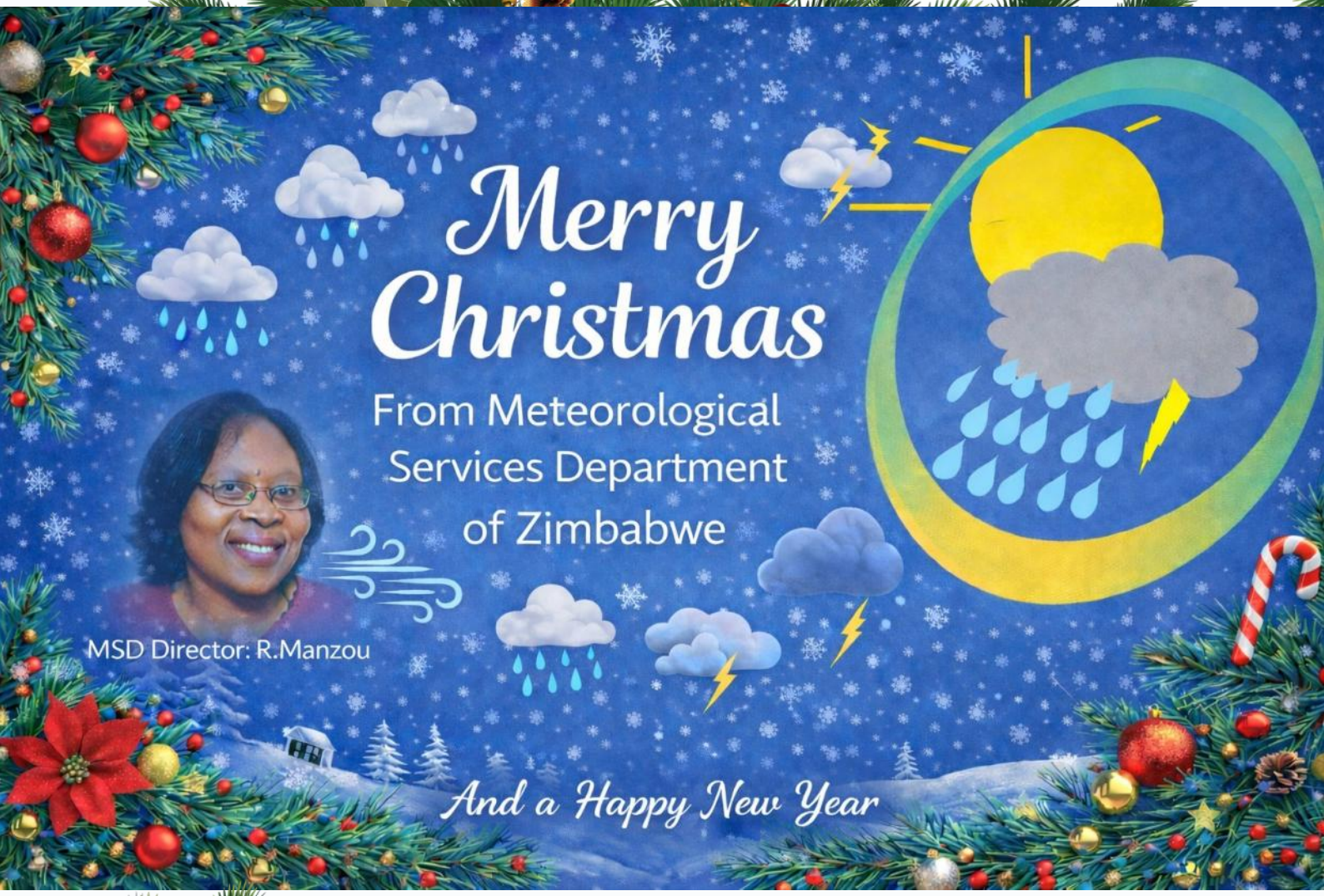
The Director's Remarks

As we close the year, this newsletter stands as a reflection of the steady progress being made in strengthening weather and climate services for the nation. The activities highlighted in this issue demonstrate our continued focus on collaboration, and clear communication, all of which are essential in responding to increasing climate variability and its impacts on communities. Through ongoing partnerships and targeted initiatives, the Meteorological Services Department remains committed to improving early warning systems, supporting informed decision making, and ensuring that climate information reaches those who need it most. I commend our staff and partners for their dedication and shared sense of purpose, and I look forward to the continued collective effort as we work toward a more resilient and climate aware Zimbabwe.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR HONOURABLE MINISTER

December 2025

TOWARDS THE LAUNCH OF THE EW4ALL ROADMAP IN ZIMBABWE

Early Warning For All (EW4All) is a United Nations led global initiative with a clear and urgent purpose: to ensure that every person, everywhere, is protected by life saving early warning systems for climate related hazards by the end of 2027. As climate extremes become more frequent and more intense, the importance of timely, reliable, and actionable early warnings has never been greater. EW4All responds to this challenge by promoting a coordinated global effort that places people, safety, and resilience at the centre of climate risk management. The initiative is structured around four essential and closely interconnected pillars, each of which plays a distinct yet complementary role in the early warning value chain. **Disaster Risk Knowledge and Management** forms the foundation of the entire system. It focuses on understanding hazards, exposure, and vulnerabilities, ensuring that risks are clearly identified and documented. Without this knowledge base, early warning systems cannot be effectively designed or targeted to those who need them most.

The second pillar, **Detection, Observation, Monitoring, Analysis and Forecasting**, builds upon this foundation by applying science, technology, and data to anticipate hazardous events. Through systematic observation and continuous monitoring, this pillar enables the analysis and forecasting of weather and climate related hazards. Accurate and timely forecasts are essential for transforming raw data into meaningful warnings that can inform decision making before impacts occur. **Warning Dissemination and Communication** is the third pillar and serves as the critical link between technical information and the people at risk. This pillar focuses on ensuring that warnings are delivered clearly, promptly, and through multiple communication channels. The fourth pillar, **Preparedness and Response Capabilities**, emphasises readiness at all levels, from national institutions to local communities. This pillar supports planning, coordination, and capacity building so that when warnings are issued, there are clear procedures and the ability to respond swiftly and effectively.

At the national level, Zimbabwe has taken important steps to align with the EW4All initiative. A technical team comprising various organizations has been established to guide and coordinate implementation efforts. This team brings together diverse expertise and institutional mandates, reflecting the cross cutting nature of early warning systems. Governance responsibilities for each pillar have been assigned to specific national agencies, ensuring clear leadership and accountability while maintaining alignment with the global framework. Key national institutions involved include the Department of Civil Protection, the Meteorological Services Department, ITU and POTRAZ. Each of these partners plays a vital role within its assigned pillar, contributing to a coordinated national approach that mirrors the global EW4All structure. This alignment strengthens coherence, avoids duplication of effort, and promotes effective collaboration across sectors. The immediate national focus is the development and launch of Zimbabwe's EW4All roadmap by the end of February 2026.

This roadmap will provide a structured plan for strengthening early warning systems across all four pillars, guided by national priorities and supported by the World Meteorological Organization. Through these efforts, Zimbabwe is laying the groundwork for a more robust, inclusive, and effective early warning system. The EW4All initiative offers a pathway toward protecting lives, livelihoods, and development gains by ensuring that early warnings lead to early action, leaving no one behind.

HALOS: DECODING THE CELESTIAL RINGS OF LIGHT

A halo captured on 24 Nin Bulawayo around 10 am

For millennia, the sudden appearance of a luminous ring around the sun or moon has captured human attention. This striking atmospheric phenomenon, known as a halo, is more than a passing visual display. It reflects a precise interaction between light and the atmosphere and offers insight into the physical processes taking place high above the Earth. Long regarded as a sign of change in the skies, it has served both as an ancient signal and a modern meteorological indicator. At its core, a halo is formed through a precise optical process in the atmosphere. It develops when sunlight or moonlight passes through thin layers of cirrostratus clouds. These high altitude clouds, typically found between 6,000 and 12,000 meters above the surface, are made up of countless microscopic ice crystals with hexagonal shapes. Each crystal behaves like a tiny prism suspended in the air. As light enters one side of a crystal and exits through another, it bends at a specific angle through refraction. This process produces the most familiar type of halo, the 22 degree halo, which appears as a near perfect circle surrounding the sun or moon.

The same refraction process explains the gentle coloration often seen in a halo. Different wavelengths of light bend by slightly different amounts as they pass through the ice crystals. This causes the light to separate, creating a faint reddish tint along the inner edge of the ring and a bluish hue along the outer edge. The effect resembles a soft and subdued rainbow drawn across the sky. Beyond their visual appeal, halos carry important scientific and practical meaning. They are widely recognised as indicators of changing weather conditions. Cirrostratus clouds often appear in advance of a warm front and an associated low pressure system. As a result, the presence of a halo frequently signals the approach of rain or storms. In many cases, it can provide a warning window of 12 to 24 hours before weather conditions deteriorate. This information remains valuable today, just as it was for sailors, farmers, and travellers in earlier times. In Zimbabwe, halos are most commonly observed during the summer rainy season from November to March. During this period, increased atmospheric moisture and active cloud development create favourable conditions for the formation of high altitude ice crystals. The Highveld region, with its wide open skies, offers particularly good viewing conditions. Here, a halo can be an early and subtle sign of an approaching weather system forming beyond the horizon. Ultimately, a halo stands as a clear demonstration of natural precision. It shows how light interacts with the geometry of ice crystals in the upper troposphere. Understanding the science behind this phenomenon allows the sky to be read with greater clarity. What first appears as a mysterious ring of light becomes a meaningful signal, revealing the delicate and dynamic connections between sunlight, atmospheric processes, and the weather patterns that influence daily life.

THE DIRECTOR OUTLINES ZIMBABWE'S WEATHER OUTLOOK AND THE ROLE OF EARLY WARNINGS


Lightning Strike at Denney's farm in Gwanda


Flash floods in Chitungwiza


Altocumulus Castellanus clouds indicating instability

Speaking on Face the Nation, ZBC News Online, the Director of the Meteorological Services Department, Mrs Rebecca Manzou, provided a detailed account of the department's mandate, its growing capacity, and what Zimbabweans can expect during the 2025–2026 rainfall season. Her remarks focused on weather and climate services, preparedness, and the shared responsibility of turning forecasts into action that protects lives and livelihoods. Mrs Manzou explained that the Meteorological Services Department is responsible for weather, climate, and seismology in Zimbabwe. This includes monitoring atmospheric conditions, providing forecasts, and issuing alerts related to extreme weather and ground movement. While the department produces scientific information and warnings, it works closely with other institutions, particularly the Department of Civil Protection, which leads response actions when hazards pose a threat to communities.

Reflecting on the department's performance, she noted that significant progress has been made in recent years. Increased investment in infrastructure, technology, and skills development has strengthened forecasting and monitoring capabilities. Although there is still room for improvement, she expressed confidence that the department is now operating from a much stronger position than in the past. Turning to the 2025–2026 rainfall season, Mrs Manzou described it as a favourable one for most parts of the country. Northern regions are expected to receive normal to above normal rainfall, while the southern parts are forecast to experience above normal rainfall particularly between November and January. She emphasised that this outlook is encouraging for an agriculturally based economy such as Zimbabwe's, where rainfall performance has a direct impact on food security and livelihoods.

She went on to explain that Zimbabwe's seasonal rainfall is influenced by large scale climate systems beyond its borders. Conditions in the Pacific Ocean, commonly referred to through the El Niño Southern Oscillation, play a significant role. At present, the system has shifted towards La Niña conditions, which generally favour higher

THE DIRECTOR OUTLINES ZIMBABWE'S WEATHER OUTLOOK AND THE ROLE OF EARLY WARNINGS [CONT…]

rainfall over Zimbabwe. In addition, conditions in the Indian Ocean are also supportive of good rains. While these global indicators increase the likelihood of a wet season, she cautioned that no single factor guarantees outcomes everywhere and at all times. Mrs Manzou took time to clarify technical terms often heard during seasonal forecasts. She explained that these global systems can be thought of as engines that drive weather patterns. When conditions are neutral, their influence is limited, but when they shift, they can enhance or suppress rainfall. The key message, she stressed, is that the current combination of factors points toward a good season overall.

Addressing farmers directly, she advised against planting decisions based solely on the first rains. She highlighted the importance of working closely with agricultural extension officers in each ward, who interpret meteorological forecasts alongside local conditions. Farming, she noted, is now a business that requires informed planning, including decisions on crop choice and planting dates based on expert guidance. On the issue of hazards, Mrs Manzou reframed the conversation away from disasters and towards preparedness. With normal to above normal rainfall, flooding is likely in areas already known to be flood prone, such as low lying valleys and river basins. She emphasised that these risks are not unexpected and that relevant authorities are already informed through regular forecasts and alerts. Preparedness, she said, is about acting on information before impacts occur.

She explained that the department provides continuous updates through daily, three day, five day, and ten day forecasts. These products give enough lead time for authorities and communities to prepare. Information is disseminated through multiple channels including television, radio, social media, and local language broadcasts, ensuring that warnings reach as many people as possible. The guiding principle, she noted, is early warning leading to early action. December is expected to be the wettest month of the season, and this period requires particular vigilance. Mrs Manzou highlighted the close working relationship between the Meteorological Services Department and the Department of Civil Protection. Forecasts are jointly interpreted so that their potential impacts on health, agriculture, energy, and other sectors are clearly understood and addressed.

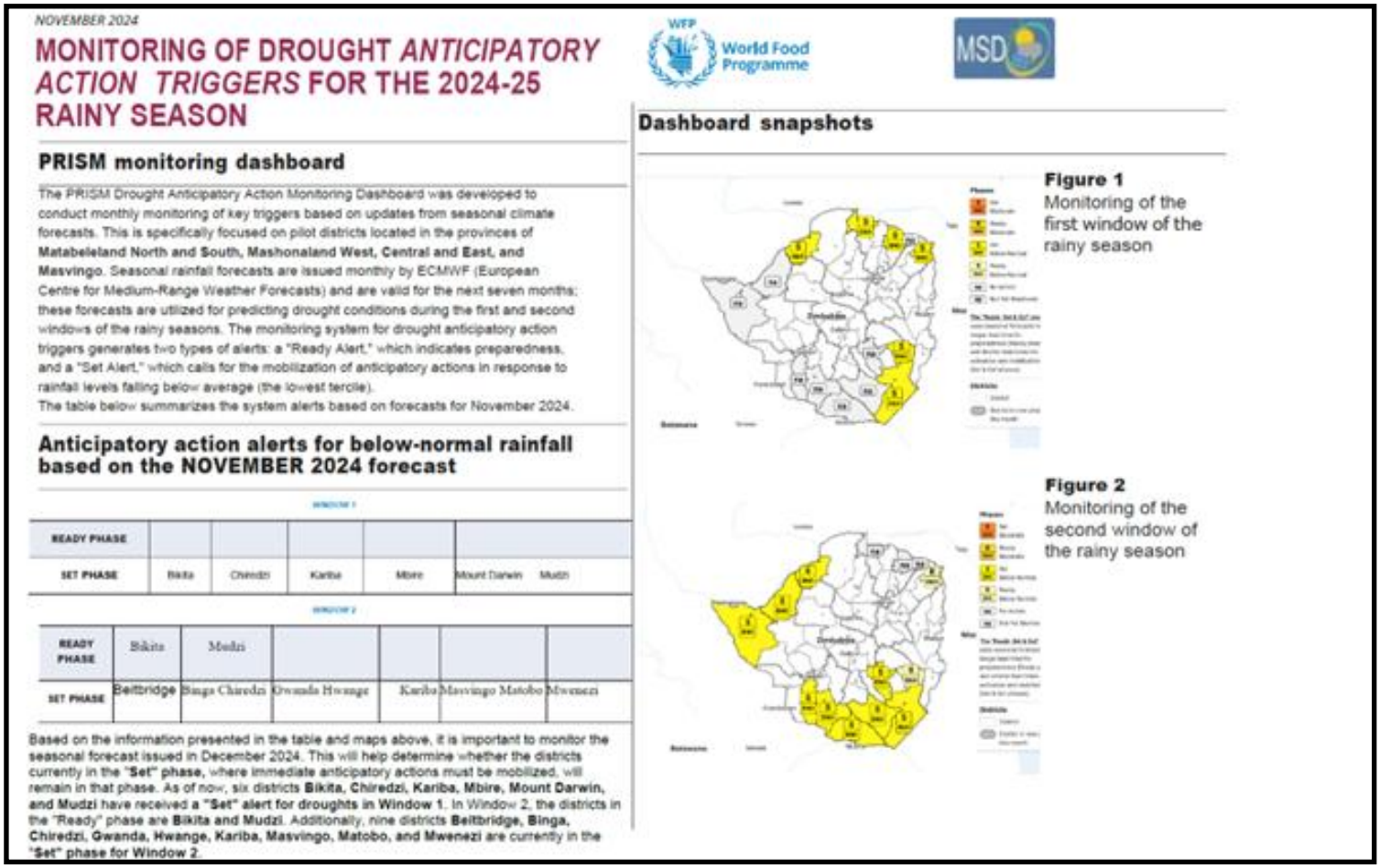
She also spoke about the accuracy of forecasts, explaining that seasonal outlooks are developed through regional and international collaboration, using multiple scientific models before being refined for national and local use. Short range forecasts, she said, are especially reliable and should be taken seriously. She likened seasonal forecasts to a compass that shows general direction, while daily forecasts act like a guide that helps avoid immediate dangers along the way. On capacity, Mrs Manzou noted major improvements in observation infrastructure. For the first time in decades, weather radar now provides national coverage, allowing storms to be tracked in real time. There is an increased number of Automatic Weather Stations being installed across the country, supplementing traditional observation sites. While these developments have improved accuracy and timeliness, she acknowledged that further expansion is still needed.

In her closing remarks, she described the current season as full of opportunity, provided that people work with the information available to them. Farmers were urged to collaborate closely with agricultural experts, communities were reminded to follow official forecasts and instructions, and all Zimbabweans were encouraged to prioritise safety. Knowledge, she concluded, is a powerful tool, and when used wisely, it can turn favourable weather into lasting benefits for the nation.

DROUGHT ANTICIPATORY ACTION IN ZIMBABWE

The Meteorological Services Department (MSD), working together with the Community of Practice (CoP), monitors and supports the implementation of Anticipatory Action activities before and during the rainfall season, which runs from October to March. The department collaborates with a range of partners involved in anticipatory and early warning activities. These partnerships support coordinated planning and response efforts aimed at reducing the impacts of climate related hazards. Anticipatory Action activities are coordinated at the national level to ensure alignment with the Early Warning for All (EW4All) initiative. This coordination promotes coherence among stakeholders, reduces disaster risk, and strengthens the resilience of communities to the effects of climate variability and change. Over time, the CoP for Anticipatory Action has adopted drought monitoring approaches that focus on preparedness and early mobilization, based on clearly defined trigger phases.

The MSD coordinates the production and dissemination of the Drought Monitoring Bulletin, which is issued seasonally from July to December. In support of this process, the PRISM drought anticipatory action monitoring dashboard was developed to enable monthly monitoring of drought triggers. This monitoring is informed by updates from seasonal climate forecasts and is currently applied in selected districts across several provinces. Seasonal rainfall forecasts, issued on a monthly basis and covering a seven month outlook, are used to assess drought risk during the early and late parts of the rainy season.



NOVEMBER 2024

MONITORING OF DROUGHT *ANTICIPATORY ACTION TRIGGERS* FOR THE 2024-25 RAINY SEASON

WFP World Food Programme

MSD

PRISM monitoring dashboard

The PRISM Drought Anticipatory Action Monitoring Dashboard was developed to conduct monthly monitoring of key triggers based on updates from seasonal climate forecasts. This is specifically focused on pilot districts located in the provinces of **Matabeleland North and South, Mashonaland West, Central and East, and Masvingo**. Seasonal rainfall forecasts are issued monthly by ECMWF (European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts) and are valid for the next seven months; these forecasts are utilized for predicting drought conditions during the first and second windows of the rainy seasons. The monitoring system for drought anticipatory action triggers generates two types of alerts: a "Ready Alert," which indicates preparedness, and a "Set Alert," which calls for the mobilization of anticipatory actions in response to rainfall levels falling below average (the lowest tercile).
The table below summarizes the system alerts based on forecasts for November 2024.

Anticipatory action alerts for below-normal rainfall based on the NOVEMBER 2024 forecast

READY PHASE						
SET PHASE	Bikita	Chiredzi	Kariba	Mbire	Mount Darwin	Mudzi

READY PHASE	Bikita	Mudzi				
SET PHASE	Beitbridge	Binga Chiredzi	Gwanda Hwange	Kariba	Masvingo Matobo	Mwenezi

Based on the information presented in the table and maps above, it is important to monitor the seasonal forecast issued in December 2024. This will help determine whether the districts currently in the **"Set" phase**, where immediate anticipatory actions must be mobilized, will remain in that phase. As of now, six districts **Bikita, Chiredzi, Kariba, Mbire, Mount Darwin, and Mudzi** have received a **"Set" alert for droughts in Window 1**. In Window 2, the districts in the "Ready" phase are **Bikita and Mudzi**. Additionally, nine districts **Beitbridge, Binga, Chiredzi, Gwanda, Hwange, Kariba, Masvingo, Matobo, and Mwenezi** are currently in the **"Set" phase for Window 2**.

Dashboard snapshots

Figure 1 Monitoring of the first window of the rainy season

Figure 2 Monitoring of the second window of the rainy season

November 2024 Anticipatory Action Bulletin: Monitoring Drought Triggers

DROUGHT ANTICIPATORY ACTION IN ZIMBABWE [CONT…]

The bulletin is shared monthly from July through December with stakeholders involved in Anticipatory Action in Zimbabwe. It is important to recognise that some regions, particularly in the southern and eastern parts of the country, experience persistent vulnerability. In such cases, drought triggers alone may not fully capture local risk conditions. This highlights the importance of complementing forecast based triggers with vulnerability assessments to support timely and equitable allocation of resources to at risk communities.

Information from the bulletin is disseminated to partners through established communication channels and made available on relevant monitoring platforms. As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen EW4All implementation, the sustainability of the drought monitoring mechanism remains a priority. Continued capacity building within the department is essential to maintain and enhance these systems. There are also plans to expand monitoring coverage to additional districts that are not currently included. Looking ahead, the department aims to play a broader role in Anticipatory Action in collaboration with respective sector heads.

Key priority areas for national implementation include the wide dissemination of seasonal forecasts to all districts, the integration of indigenous knowledge into forecasting processes, the development of robust and locally informed trigger models, and the delivery of early warning messages to remote and marginalised communities. Strong collaboration between government institutions and humanitarian partners remains essential for the effective implementation of anticipatory activities. Such cooperation will contribute to reducing disaster impacts and improving the livelihoods and resilience of vulnerable communities across the country.

2025/2026 SEASONAL RAINFALL OUTLOOK UPDATE

The temperature anomalies in the Nino 3.4 region in the Pacific Ocean are cooler than normal since mid-October 2025 translating to a La Niña phase of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), and is projected to persist until February 2026 before reverting back to neutral. Furthermore, the status of other key climate drivers is favourable for wetter than normal rainfall conditions over Zimbabwe; with a negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) expected to last until at least January 2026 and a positive Subtropical Indian Ocean Dipole (SIOD) likely to remain until at least February 2026. The combined influence of these phenomena is to enhance the likelihood for normal to above -average rainfall in Zimbabwe. Consequently, the updated seasonal forecast indicates an increased chance of normal to above-normal rainfall from December 2025 to March 2026. The season has already commenced in most parts of the country. Temperature-wise, cooler-than-normal conditions are expected during the period December 2025 to February 2026 while March is expected to be mostly warmer than normal in the southern parts and cooler than normal in the bulk of the northern parts. Despite the promising rainfall outlook, the risk of dry spells, violent storms, and flash floods remains, necessitating proactive measures such as water harvesting, irrigation planning, drainage maintenance, and public health preparedness, with the public advised to rely on continuous updates for detailed short-term guidance as the Meteorological Services Department will continuously monitor the climate and weather systems throughout the season.

Seasonal Forecast Terminology

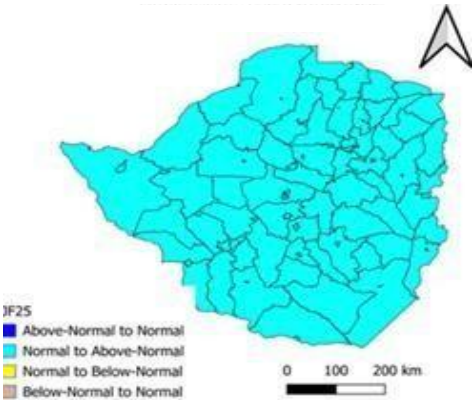
Tercile Category	Colour Codes	Percentage of Normal
Above Normal	Above normal	Above 125% of long-term average rainfall accumulation
Normal category	Normal to above	100-125% of long-term average rainfall accumulation
	Normal to below	75% - 100% of long-term average rainfall accumulation
Below Normal	Below Normal	Below 75% of long-term average rainfall accumulation

The Rainfall Season Forecast

The seasonal rainfall forecast is probabilistic indicating the likelihood of receiving rainfall within, below or above the long-term average accumulative rainfall for the forecast period for each place across the country. The rainfall zones are dynamic. Places with same forecast signal in each forecast period will fall in same zone.

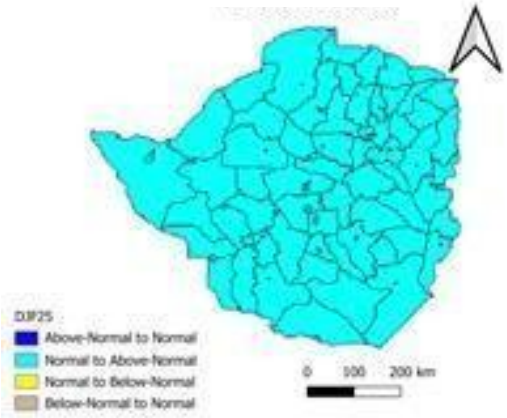
2025/2026 SEASONAL RAINFALL OUTLOOK UPDATE [CONT…]

DECEMBER - JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2025/26



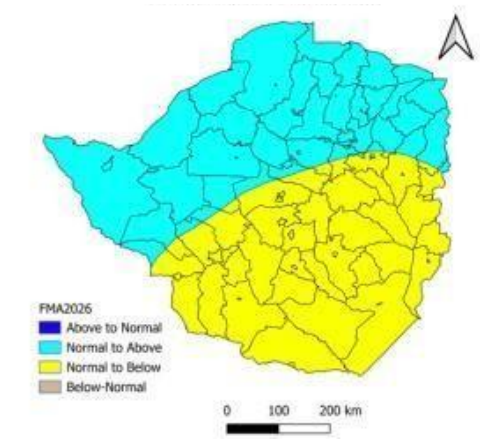
There is an increased chance of normal to above normal rainfall across the country during the December 2025 to February 2026 period.

JANUARY - FEBRUARY - MARCH 2026



There is an increased chance of normal to above normal rainfall across the country during the January to March 2026 period.

FEBRUARY - MARCH - APRIL 2026

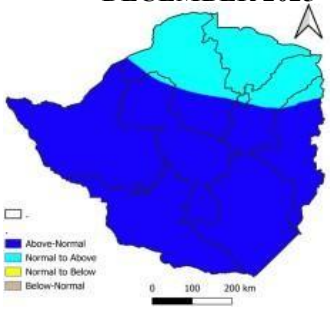


There is an increased chance of normal to above normal rainfall in the northern and western parts of the country (cyan) while the southern parts of the country should have an increased chance of normal to below rainfall (yellow) during the period February to April 2026.

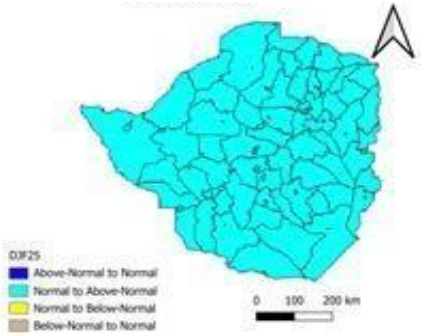
MONTHLY FORECASTS

An increased chance of normal to above normal rainfall is expected in December 2025 in most parts of the country except for the northern parts where normal to above normal rainfall is anticipated. In January 2026 normal rainfall is expected across the country with a bias towards above normal. Normal to above normal rainfall across the country is expected during the month of February 2026. In March, normal rainfall with a bias towards below is expected in the southern parts of the country (yellow) while the northern parts should have a bias towards wetter conditions (cyan).

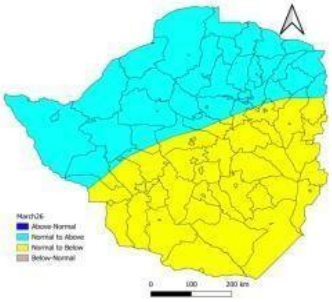
DECEMBER 2025



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2026



MARCH 2025



2025/2026 SEASONAL RAINFALL OUTLOOK UPDATE [CONT…]

Mean Start and End of Season

The mean start to the rainfall season in Zimbabwe is in the month of November into early December. The bulk of the country normally records the start of the season between 10 November and 30 November. The extreme northern and southern parts of the country have an average start of season between the 1st and 15th of December. The climatological end of season ranges between 1st March and 20th of March except for few places where the season can stretch as far as 31st of March.

The Temperature Forecast

The probabilistic temperature forecast indicates the likelihood of condition within normal, cooler (below normal) or warmer (above normal) than the long-term average conditions while the deterministic forecast shows the range of actual forecast temperature figures. Cooler than normal conditions are expected in December across much of the country except for the extreme northern tip of the country where warmer than normal conditions are anticipated. Cooler than normal conditions are expected in January across the country. Cooler than normal conditions are expected in February 2026 across the country. Cooler than normal conditions are expected in the bulk of the eastern and north western parts of country while the rest of the country should experience warmer than normal conditions during the month of March 2026.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The forecast is for cumulative rainfall for three-month periods: DJF, JFM and FMA. The monthly forecasts for December, January, and February indicate an increased chance of normal to above normal rainfall while March shows a likelihood of wetter than average conditions in the northern parts of the country while the southern parts have an increased chance of normal to below normal conditions. It should be noted that although normal to above normal conditions are expected, chances of extreme conditions cannot be ruled out during the forecast period. Occurrence of dry spells remains probable during the month. The MSD propose the following recommendations to be considered among others that maybe proposed by the relevant sectors:

- **General Preparedness:** Implement robust water harvesting, conservation programs, and irrigation strategies to manage possible prolonged dry spells.
- **Extreme Event Contingency:** Develop plans for violent storms, flash floods, and tropical cyclones, including prepositioning response resources, clearing drainage systems, and issuing early warnings.
- **Water Authorities:** Conduct pre-season dredging and manage dam levels for flood control.
- **Health Services:** Launch disease prevention campaigns and stockpile essential medicines.
- **General Public:** Clear drains, weatherproof structures, use mosquito nets, and stay informed via official updates

MSD PART-TAKES IN THE GCF SATELLITE DATA DEBIASING & TAILORED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TRAINING [CONT…]

The GCF Satellite Debiasing Training on Error Identification and Correction of Satellite Rainfall Estimates, Gridded Stations, and Data Fusion was held from 1 to 5 December 2025 at the Monomotapa Hotel in Harare, with an additional on the job field based and virtual training component conducted thereafter. The workshop brought together technical staff from the Meteorological Services Department (MSD), the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to strengthen national capacity in the use, correction, and application of satellite and gridded climate data for operational climate services.

The training was designed to address practical challenges associated with the use of satellite derived environmental datasets, particularly the systematic errors that limit their direct application in decision making. Over the duration of the workshop, participants were taken through both conceptual foundations and applied methods for error identification, bias correction, and data fusion, with a strong emphasis on operational use.

The workshop opened with a focus on rainfall, highlighting its importance in agriculture, water resources management, and disaster risk reduction. Participants examined the differences between conventional rain gauge observations and satellite rainfall estimates such as CHIRPS, CMORPH, GPM, and PERSIANN. Sessions covered the physical principles behind satellite rainfall retrieval, common sources of error, and issues of spatial and temporal resolution. These sessions were followed by hands on exercises in which participants downloaded, visualised, and processed daily rainfall data using Google Earth Engine and Python. Practical work included extracting rainfall time series at station, ward, and provincial levels, as well as applying bias correction methods such as ratio adjustment, linear scaling, quantile mapping, and elevation based approaches.

MSD PART-TAKES IN THE GCF SATELLITE DATA DEBIASING & TAILORED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TRAINING [CONT…]

The second day focused on air temperature, exploring both station based observations and gridded or reanalysis products including CHIRTS and ERA5. Participants reviewed the role of temperature in crop development, evapotranspiration, and heat stress. Technical sessions addressed temperature retrieval methods, lapse rate concepts, and diurnal variability. Hands on sessions guided participants through downloading, regridding, and spatially processing temperature data, followed by practical bias correction using lapse rate adjustments and monthly scaling. Participants were then assigned tasks to generate corrected temperature time series for selected wards. On the third day, attention shifted to evapotranspiration, a key variable for irrigation planning and water balance analysis. Participants compared traditional estimation methods with satellite based products derived from MODIS, Landsat, and WaPOR. Through guided practical exercises, they generated evapotranspiration maps, validated satellite estimates against reference data, and applied bias correction and data fusion techniques. The fourth day addressed soil moisture, emphasising its role in drought monitoring, irrigation scheduling, and early warning systems. Participants explored both in situ measurements and satellite based products such as SMAP, Sentinel 1, and ASCAT. Practical sessions involved retrieving soil moisture datasets, generating anomaly maps, and applying debiasing techniques including rescaling and distribution matching.

The fifth day was divided into two components. Morning sessions focused on streamflow and dam levels, examining their links with rainfall, evapotranspiration, and soil moisture. Participants worked on building and validating streamflow and reservoir level time series, integrating ground observations with gridded climate products. The afternoon sessions focused on virtual gridded climate stations and data fusion, where participants learned how debiased rainfall, temperature, evapotranspiration, and soil moisture datasets can be merged into consistent daily grids to support district level climate services and advisory products. Learning throughout the workshop was reinforced through hands on practical exercises and structured assignments. Participants actively developed workflows, processed real datasets, and received feedback on their outputs, ensuring that the skills gained could be directly applied within their respective institutions. The programme concluded with discussions on sustainability, institutional roles, and pathways for integrating gridded station systems into routine operations. An on the job field training component included visits to meteorological observation sites, soil moisture validation locations, and dam level monitoring points. These activities enabled participants to directly compare in situ observations with satellite and gridded products, further strengthening practical understanding.

Overall, the workshop enhanced technical capacity within MSD, ZINWA, and UNDP to apply satellite data debiasing, data fusion, and tailored climate product development in support of improved climate services, early warning systems, and informed decision making.

THE MINDCLIMATE PROJECT LAUNCHED TO BRIDGE CLIMATE INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

The MINDCLIMATE project inception workshop was held on 16 December 2025 in Harare. The meeting marked the official start of the project titled Integrating Mental Health into Climate Change Policy in Zimbabwe: A Multi-Sectoral Approach. The workshop brought together partner institutions working with the Meteorological Services Department, including Zvitambo Institute of Maternal Health and Child Care, CAIRNS, the Food and Nutrition Council of Zimbabwe, and CIMMYT.

Discussions during the workshop highlighted the challenge of information dissemination, with particular focus on how weather and climate information can be translated into forms that are understandable to the common person. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that climate information is communicated clearly and in a way that enables communities to understand it and act accordingly. An example from a study conducted in Zambia was referenced to illustrate how the packaging of climate information can influence public uptake.

The project will be implemented through clearly defined work packages, with each major activity treated as a standalone component. For example, the installation of Automatic Weather Stations will form its own work package. It was proposed that sensitisation activities should begin at the onset of the project so that communities are aware of and included in the process from the beginning, rather than being introduced after activities have already started in their areas.

MINDCLIMATE will be implemented across seven study sites located in different provinces and agro-ecological zones. These include areas in Masvingo, Mashonaland West, Midlands, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Manicaland, and Matabeleland North. The Meteorological Services Department will advise on the specific locations where weather stations will be installed within these study areas.

Given the sensitive nature of mental health research, the workshop emphasised the need for careful and context-appropriate approaches. The use of local dialects and appropriate translations was highlighted as important to ensure that messages are correctly understood. Surveys will be designed in a manner that avoids causing emotional distress, and established research protocols will be followed.

The workshop also discussed the characterisation of climate and weather conditions within the study areas. Attention will be given to observed changes in rainfall patterns and shifts in agro-ecological zones, recognising these as important aspects that require detailed analysis within the project.

Overall, the inception workshop provided a platform for aligning partners on the project objectives, structure, and approach. The discussions underscored the importance of effective communication, early community sensitisation, and coordinated implementation as the project moves into its next phases.

ZIMBABWE

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

'Where Science Meets The Sky'

MSD

Vision

A world class provider of meteorological, climatological and seismological products and services by 2025.

Mission Statement

To provide customer and stakeholder driven quality seismological, weather and climate services for socio economic development.

Core Values

- **Teamwork:** We value unity of purpose
- **Equality:** We offer equal status, rights and opportunities to all
- **Customer focus:** We prioritize and address customer needs.
- **Transparency:** We are open to scrutiny
- **Integrity:** We have strong moral principles
- **Creativity:** We focus on innovation and continuous improvement.
- **Accountability:** We take responsibility for one's own actions.

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