Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Update on 2018 Deyr Season Rainfall and Impact in Somalia

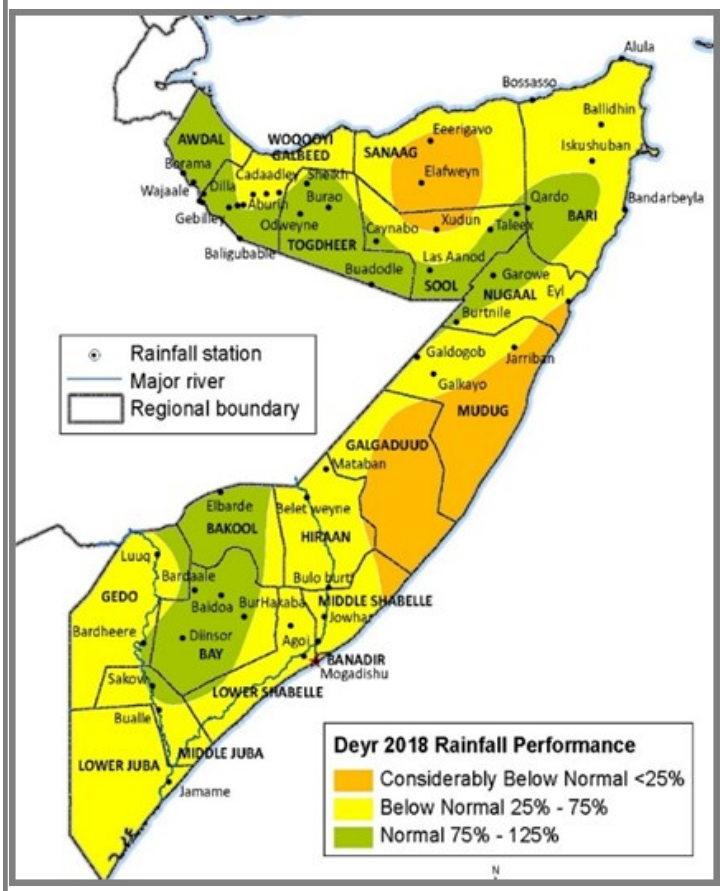
Issued: 19 February 2019

Summary

Following a below average Deyr 2018 (October-December) rainy season (Map 1) parts of Somalia are facing abnormally dry conditions, particularly large parts of the central and northern regions. The Deyr 2018 rainfall pattern in these region was poorly distributed in term of space and time. Most stations recorded less than five days of rainfall. The situation is expected to worsen during this Jilaal *dry season* (January–March) owing to the continued depletion of available water resources in the country until the start of the next rainy season of Gu 2019.

The southern parts of the country was dominated by below normal conditions during the same period, However, a few pockets of Bay and and Bakool received slightly enhanced rains during the month of November 2018. The Ethiopian highlands that produce about 90% of the river flow in Somalia experienced depressed rains and this has significantly affected the river flow inside Somalia along the two major Rivers.

Map-1: Observed Rainfall Performance Deyr 2018



Water resources and pasture conditions have deteriorated in parts of northern and central Somalia triggering earlier than usual livestock migration and increasing competition among pastoralists on dwindling pasture and water resources. This is especially seen in Sanag, Sool, Nugaal, Bari and Mudug Regions (Northern Inland Pastoral Livelihood Zone) as well as the central regions of Muduug and Galgadud (Addun Pastoral livelihood Zone). In general, pasture conditions are poor in northern Somalia with the exception of Wooqoyi Galbed, large parts of Togdheer, Sool and Awdal regions (Guban pastoral) areas that recorded good rains towards end of the Deyr rainy season.

In the north western coastal areas of Awdal Region (Guban pastoral livelihood zone), unseasonal moderate rains in November followed by near normal *Hays* rains in December contributed to moderate improvement in terms of pasture and water availability. However due to the high pressure of in migration on limited available resources, it is expected to lead to faster depletion of these resources. The overuse of ground water resources which are the only reliable source of water in the region may lead to deterioration of groundwater quality triggering water borne diseases.

SWALIM Somalia Water and Land Information Management

This update is produced by the: FAO - Somalia Water and Land Information Management—SWALIM Project.
For more information please contact SO-hydro@fao.org or visit http://www.faoswalim.org

Update on the Juba and Shabelle Rivers

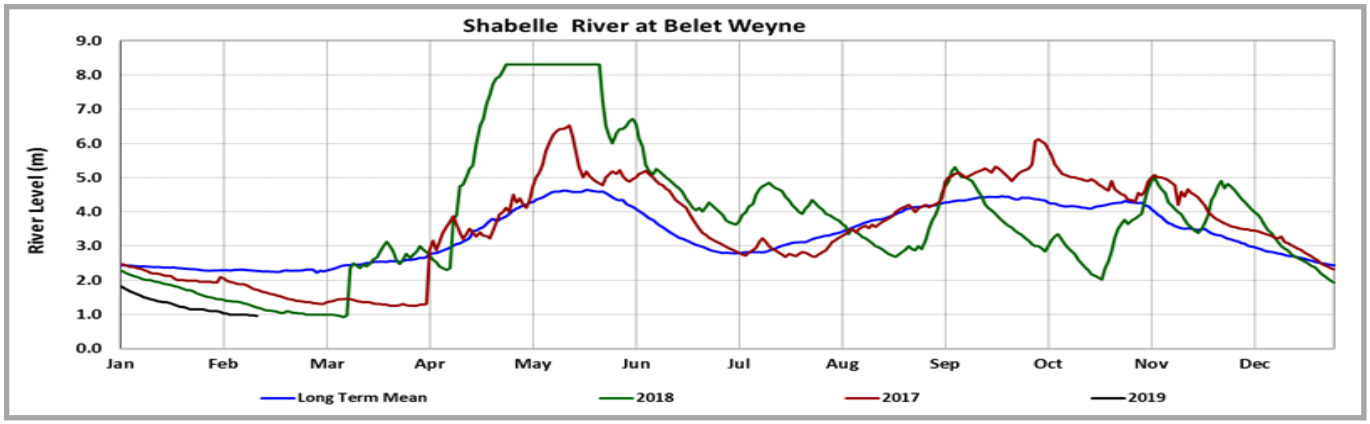
Observed river levels along the Juba and Shabelle were below normal in October and November, but improved in December 2018 following moderate rains in the catchments. Currently, river levels are very low. The graphs below show comparison of current and long term average levels for both the Shabelle and Juba Rivers at Belet Weyne and Luuq stations, respectively.

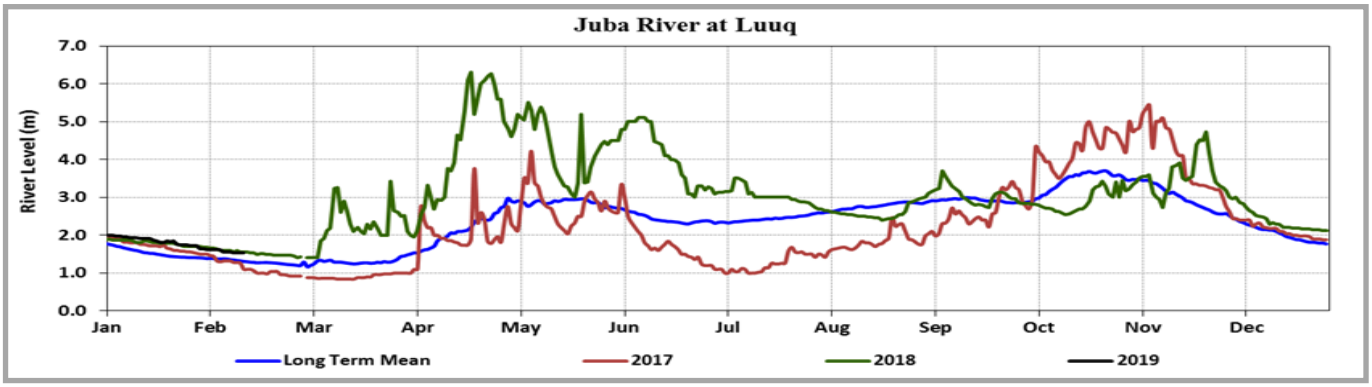
Belet Weyne, located in the upper reaches of Shabelle River inside Somalia, is currently at the lowest minimum levels in the recent past. If this trend continues, the Shabelle River may see another period of Dry River beds similar to what was experienced in January to March of 2016, 2017 and 2018. Jowhar, in the mid reaches of the same river, is following the same trend with less than half a meter (0.30m) to get to the river bed.

The Juba river levels are also low and expected to decrease further in the coming weeks.

Besides the low rains in the Shabelle river basin, high sedimentation and over utilization of the river waters has contributed to the reduced river flow, which is inadequate for pump irrigation further reducing irrigation possibility and overall agricultural production prospects along the rivers.

The river levels are updated on a daily basis and can be found in this link: http://systems.faoso.net/frrims





Potential Impacts

Below average to poor Deyr 2018 season rainfall has adversely affected cereal production, with below average to poor crop production reported in many areas. Water resources and pasture conditions have deteriorated, triggering increased livestock migration and increased resource competition among pastoralists. This is especially seen in northeast, adjacent areas of north-west and central regions of the country.

Dry and hot conditions are expected to continue across most parts of the country during this dry Jilaal (January-March) season. The negative trends are not expected to reverse until the arrival of Gu season rainfall in April 2019.

Reduced riverine irrigation is also expected along the two rivers due to reduced river flow which cannot support pump irrigation during the Jilaal period .

FAO SWALIM Technical Partners:

unicef
FSNAU
FEWS NET FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK
JRC EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SWALIM is Managed by FAO and Currently Funded by:

UKaid from the British people
AGENZIA ITALIANA PER LA COOPERAZIONE ALLO SVILUPPO
USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft Confédération suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC