

THE ZANYENGO E-NEWSLETTER

——— *Be Wise! Be Weather Wise!* ———



“NG’OMA YALIRA”



“THE DRUM HAS SOUNDED”



Ministry of Natural Resources

Department Of Climate Change
& Meteorological Services

SEPTEMBER 2026

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Edition - Vii

THE DCCMS



Be Wise! Be weather Wise!

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Welcome to the seventh edition of the ZANYENGO E-Newsletter. This quarter, one question has guided us: how can Malawi act early based on what the forecast tells us?

On 2 September, Hon. Patricia Wiskes, MP, Minister of Natural Resources, released the 2026/2027 Seasonal Climate Outlook at NACOF-5. As El Niño strengthens, the outlook points to a high chance of below-normal rainfall over most of Southern and Central Malawi, and normal to above-normal rainfall over much of the North.

To turn these numbers into survival tools, we partnered with DoDMA and sector experts to build a practical impact matrix, connecting weather predictions directly to real-world consequences and early triggers.

Our Grand Dossier follows this climate intelligence from regional platforms like SARCOF-33 down to grassroots, translating into local-languages (including Chichewa, Tumbuka and Yao), downscaling to district level, addressing the community questions that matter most.

Reliable weather observations and trained staff support every forecast. With UNDP and SOFF, we began an investment phase to rehabilitate four surface stations and establish a new upper-air station.

The newsletter have also given us an opportunity to share lessons from our AI pilot project that was presented in Geneva and study tour for quality management for aviation weather



Dr. Lucy Mtilatila- DCCMS Director services in Seychelles. We also report the visit by Dr Agnes Kijazi, WMO Director for Africa, who reaffirmed support for early warnings and encouraged progress on proposed legislation for meteorological services.

We share the tour to Kamuzu International Airport (KIA) by the Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and the discussions with UN Resident Coordinator, who considered closer early warning coordination.

On the ground, we also engaged the climate journalists and worked with partners to make warnings more accessible to older people and persons with disabilities.

As the season unfolds, we will keep you updated. In the meantime, stay tuned to official DCCMS forecasts—prepare early, and heed the warnings.

I wish to thank our staff, partners, media practitioners and communities for ensuring that information reaches those who need it.

Strengthening Early Preparedness for the 2026/2027 Rainfall Season amid Strong El Niño



Minister of Natural Resources Hon. Patricia Wiskes, MP (centre), releases the 2026-2027 Seasonal Climate Outlook at NACOF-5 in Lilongwe

By James Pagona & Mikaila Issa

Malawi has an early signal for the coming rains. The 2026/2027 seasonal outlook, released by the Minister of Natural Resources on 2 September, indicates a high chance of below-normal rainfall over most of the Southern and Central regions.

Much of the Northern Region has a normal to above-normal outlook. El Niño conditions have developed, and climate expert expect them to strengthen further as we get to December and early next year.

The difference between regions matters: preparations for dry conditions in one area must not obscure the possibility of heavy rain and flooding elsewhere.

Early action is already under way. In the week before the outlook was released, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) activated Tier One of the national anticipatory-action framework for agricultural drought after monitoring indicators crossed agreed thresholds.

This dossier follows the forecast from DCCMS's technical work to the regional consensus at the Thirty-Third Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-33).

It continues to the Fifth National Climate Outlook Forum (NACOF-5) in Lilongwe, and ends with a media training in Blantyre on carrying the forecast to the public.



SARCOF-33: Malawi in the regional climate conversation

By Keennes Mang'anda

A week before the national outlook was released, climate experts met in Swakopmund, Namibia, for the 33rd Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-33), held from 25 to 28 August. National meteorological and hydrological services, the SADC Climate Services Centre and sector representatives considered the coming season across Southern Africa.

For Malawi, the forum supplied regional context for the more detailed work DCCMS would present at home.

The regional statement presented four overlapping three-month outlooks from October 2026 to March 2027.

The maps change as the period advances. In October–December, extreme northern Malawi lay within an area favouring above-normal rainfall, while central Malawi was in a broader area favouring normal to above-normal rainfall.

For January–March, the regional signal favoured below-normal rainfall in central and southern Malawi, with normal to above-normal conditions more likely in the north.

These are probabilities over three-month periods, not a promise that every week will follow the dominant colour on a map.



SARCOF-33 participants from across SADC gather in Swakopmund, Namibia.

DCCMS's national outlook for the season as a whole indicates a high chance of below-normal rainfall over most southern and central areas, with a different signal in much of the north.

Reading the regional and national products together helps planners see both the wider climate pattern and the local distinctions that matter for action.

SARCOF-33 also reviewed the previous season and brought climate information into discussions on agriculture, food security, water, energy, health and disaster risk.

The forum's consensus is

developed collectively by SADC climate experts.

Its value for Malawi lies in the next steps: national interpretation, regular updates and sector advice that make the information useful before and during the rains.

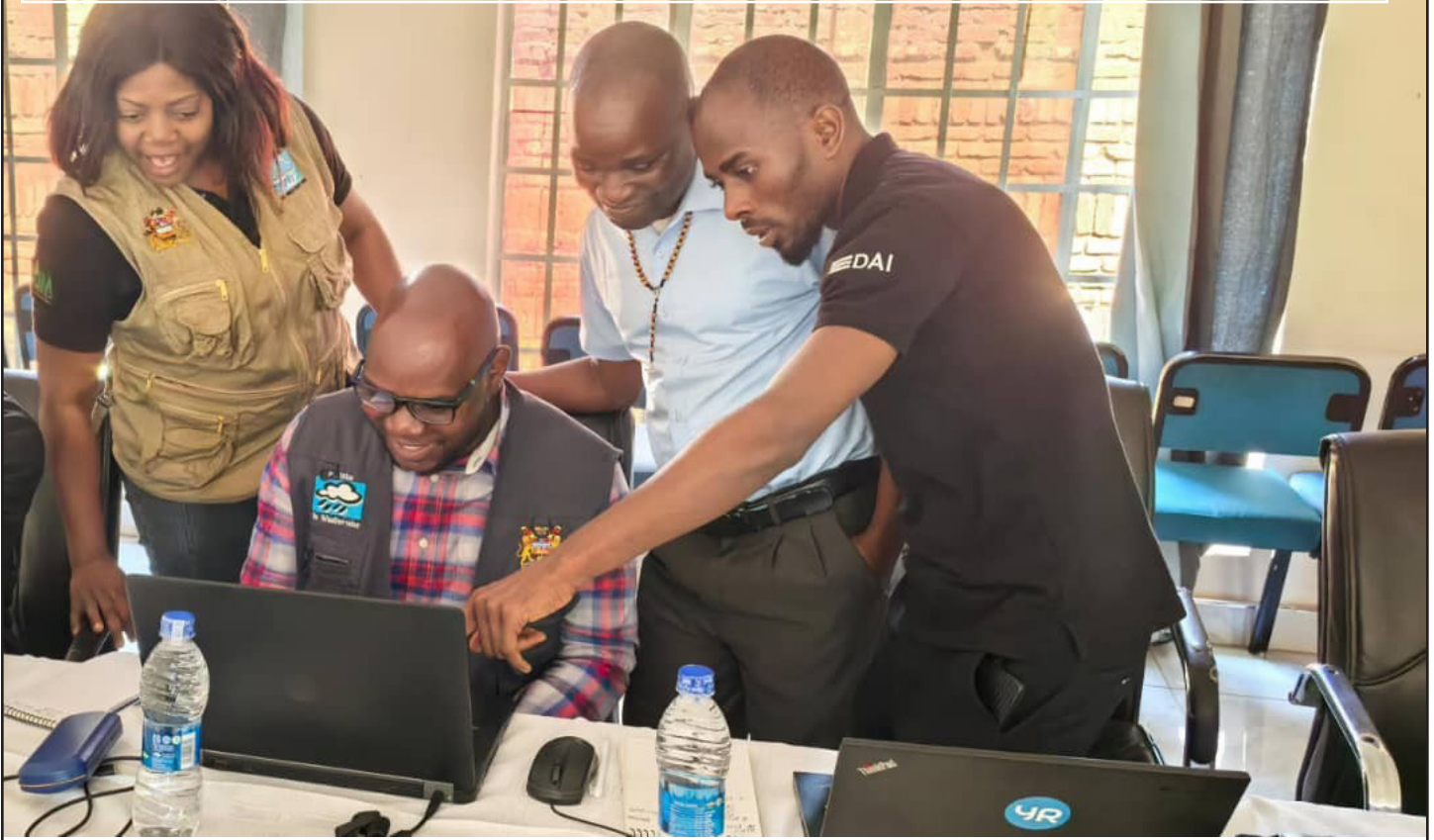
No single regional map can tell a farmer when to plant or a district when to open a shelter. Those choices require DCCMS's more local and shorter-range information, together with guidance from the relevant services.

The regional forum begins that chain of decisions; the national outlook carries it closer to the people who must act.



DCCMS Chief Meteorologist Keennes Mang'anda reviews meeting materials during the SARCOF-33 in Swakopmund.

HOW DCCMS DEVELOPS THE SEASONAL FORECAST



Weather forecasters appreciating the model products during the first session of seasonal rainfall forecast production.

Robert Namakhwa

The forecast most people see is a map and a short statement about the months ahead. Producing it takes weeks. DCCMS forecasters bring together observations from weather stations, past climate records, climate model guidance and regional analysis, then judge what those sources suggest for Malawi.

So how does DCCMS reach a statement such as “high chances of below-normal rainfall over most of the southern and central areas, and normal to above-normal rainfall over most of the north”?

The answer began at Mulunguzi in Zomba, where DCCMS forecasters gathered for intensive working sessions. The sessions took almost a

month as described by the DCCMS Director at NACOF-5.

The evidence beneath the map

The team starts by checking recent rainfall and temperature observations and preparing historical records for analysis. Forecasters compare them with the 1991–2020 climate reference period, which gives meaning to terms such as “normal” and “below normal”.

Gaps or inconsistencies in the records need attention before the data can inform a forecast.

They then examine possible clues to the coming season: conditions in the oceans, air pressure, winds and other

large-scale climate drivers. El Niño is an important influence for 2026/2027, but it does not determine how much rain will fall in every district.

Earlier seasons with similar conditions can offer clues without providing an exact picture of the months ahead.

Testing the signals

DCCMS has worked with forecasting tools including SEAFORDS, the Climate Forecasting Tool (CFT), PyCPT and the Weather Research and Forecasting (WRF) model.

Each was chosen because it had shown accuracy, reliability, skill, consistency and robustness. The

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tools use different approaches, so their results call for comparison and expert judgement. Forecasters also test how the guidance would have performed in past seasons, a process known as hindcasting.

This helps them assess which signals have been useful for predicting rainfall in Malawi.

The analysis considers the October-to-April rainfall season through monthly and three-month views. A three-month outlook indicates which rainfall category is more likely across an area.

Checking against the region

Climate patterns cross borders. At SARCOF-33 in Swakopmund, Namibia, Southern African meteorological services and the SADC Climate Services Centre developed a regional consensus outlook.

DCCMS considers that wider signal alongside Malawi's observations and analysis as it prepares the national forecast.



A team of weather forecasters during the first session of seasonal rainfall forecast production at Mulunguzi, Zomba

Packaging for the last mile

The regional map provides context; the national work brings the assessment closer to Malawi's conditions. The Ministry released the national outlook at NACOF-5 on 2 September.

The work continues through district forecasts, versions in Chichewa, Tumbuka and Yao, and explanations that help people use the information where they live.

As the season unfolds, shorter-range forecasts and updates add the detail needed for decisions about planting,

livestock, water management and immediate preparedness.

They reach the public through broadcasts, community radio, SMS and DCCMS digital channels.

As the Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Patricia Wiskes, MP, put it at NACOF-5:

“A forecast is not a prophecy. It doesn't tell us that hardship must happen. What it does instead is warn us before it happens, so that we are able to prepare and take anticipatory action.”



Calling all teachers!

Use the Children & Youth Corner in class and help learners become weather-wise. Send learners' answers, drawings or ideas to



metdept@metmalawi.gov.mw

NACOF-5: FROM FORECAST TO POSSIBLE IMPACTS

By James Pagona

“Chakudza sichiimba ng’oma”

is a Malawian saying about what comes does not beat the drum.

At NACOF-5, the Minister of Natural Resources turned it around: “We have a drum,” she told participants. “And that drum is our seasonal climate forecast.”

On 2 September at Sunbird Capital Hotel in Lilongwe, Hon. Patricia Wiskes, MP, formally released DCCMS’s 2026/2027 outlook. The question for the room was what institutions could do with the lead time it offered.

The Ministry, through DCCMS, convened the Fifth National Climate Outlook Forum together with the National Co-Production Workshop for Impact-Based Forecasting under the theme **“From Forecast to Action”**.

Supported through the UK-funded WISER ActionFirst initiative, World Food Programme and technical collaboration with the UK Met Office, the programme brought forecasters together with government ministries, DoDMA, development and humanitarian partners, civil society, youth networks, academia and the media. DCCMS Deputy Director Amos Ntonya and NORCAP expert Mikaila Issa co-facilitated the

Early action already under way

DoDMA Commissioner Wilson Moleni told the forum that Tier One of the national Anticipatory Action Framework for agricultural drought had been activated in the preceding



DCCMS Director Dr Lucy Mtilatila explains how the Department produces the 2026 - 2027 Seasonal Climate Outlook

week after monitoring indicators crossed agreed thresholds. DoDMA had also prepared an El Niño Preparedness Plan and was seeking partner support through the humanitarian clusters and the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on El Niño Preparedness. Activation is a step in preparing a response; it is not a declaration that drought impacts have already occurred.

Speakers made the case for acting while there is still time. WFP Representative Aachal Chand cited evidence that anticipatory action in Malawi can bring a return of about three dollars for each dollar spent.

Deputy British High Commissioner Ben Nicholson warned that, if response approaches remain unchanged, as many as 6.5 million people could need humanitarian assistance in the coming year.

These were arguments for preparedness, with the latter figure presented as a conditional projection.

From hazard to impact

The technical session moved from the developing El Niño and past analogue years to questions of exposure and likely impacts.

DCCMS specialists James Pagona and Tolani Kanyenda discussed climate drivers and comparable seasons. Keenness Mang’anda showed how rainfall information can be considered alongside exposed people, crops, water resources and infrastructure.

DCCMS forecaster Tapiwa Khutakumutu discussed action-based forecasting protocols and pilot districts; DoDMA’s Blessings Same explained how anticipatory - action triggers connect to financing.

In the afternoon, five sector groups worked with DCCMS and DoDMA facilitators on an impact matrix.

They considered what might happen to livelihoods

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and services, which indicators should be watched, and what action could follow. The exercise produced proposals for further technical validation, costing and assignment of responsibilities. It did not put every proposed measure into operation.

Among the proposals and risks raised were:

- The health and education group proposed using a confirmed cholera case as a trigger for supplies, staff deployment and treatment readiness, alongside community sensitisation.
- The energy, water and transport group proposed regular temperature forecasts for the energy sector and monthly information on Lake Malawi inflows, as well as closer monitoring of water infrastructure.
- Agriculture discussions pointed to area-specific advisories, protection of livestock water points and early provision of drought-tolerant crops. Other groups raised drainage, pest preparedness and warning channels.
- Several groups also identified possible flooding in northern Malawi. Planning for dry conditions in the south and centre should therefore leave room for a different risk farther north.

The work after the forum

Participants recommended translating and distributing forecast messages more widely, including to districts, and reviewing where anticipatory-action protocols could be extended or adapted.

The impact matrix gives institutions a starting point; each proposed action still needs a responsible lead, resources and a workable trigger.

DCCMS's continuing role is to update the climate information and help sectors understand how the risk changes as the season approaches.

The Minister's closing appeal gave the discussion its urgency: "We should not wait for the rain to tell us what the forecast has already told us. The drum has sounded. Let us listen, and let us act."

The forum received support from WFP, the Development Fund of Norway, WISER ActionFirst, the World Bank, Save the Children and the Ministry of Health's Malawi Health Emergency Preparedness, Response and Resilience project.



Representatives of WFP, DoDMA and the UK Met Office's WISER programme display Malawi's 2026/2027 Seasonal Climate Outlook at NACOF-5.



EMPOWERING JOURNALISTS REPORT THE SEASON FORECASTS ACCURATELY

By Tapiwa Khutakumutu

A seasonal forecast can lose its meaning between the forecast desk and a headline. In Blantyre, DCCMS engaged members of the Network of Climate Journalists (NCJ) on how to report the 2026/2027 outlook clearly, especially when a single national message could hide important local differences.

DCCMS Deputy Director Clement Boyce told the journalists that climate information must reach communities in language they can use.

He challenged messages suggesting El Niño means farmers should stay out of their fields and urged reporters to consult district-specific information.

One outlook, different local stories

The national outlook indicates a high chance of below-normal rainfall over most southern and central areas, while much of the north has a normal to above-normal signal. Boyce encouraged reporting that keeps those geographical differences in



Members of the Network of Climate Journalists and DCCMS staff gather for a group photograph during the media training in Blantyre.

view. A seasonal outlook also cannot set an exact planting date. Farmers need nearer-term forecasts and agricultural advice as conditions develop.

Three questions can sharpen a story: Which place does this forecast cover?

What period does it describe? How likely is the stated outcome?

An outlook describes increased chances, not a guaranteed drought or a promise that flooding cannot occur.

Keeping the place, time frame and uncertainty in a headline helps readers use the information without mistaking a probability for a certainty.



DCCMS Deputy Director Clement Boyce during the media training in Blantyre

“El Niño is not stopping anyone from going to the fields,” Boyce said in response to misleading messages. He urged journalists not to spread information that could cause panic, and encouraged farmers to use localised weather briefs to plan their farming activities, not to abandon the season on the strength of one climate label.

Boyce stressed that the relationship between DCCMS and the media should continue beyond one training session. DCCMS can explain a new forecast or warning as it is issued; journalists can ask what the update means for their audiences and point them to the latest local bulletin.

Agricultural extension and disaster management services can then add advice suited to the decisions people face. Clear reporting is part of early preparedness.

Keeping the conversation going

As the season approaches, the practical test will be whether updates reach audiences with the right location, time frame and level of certainty and whether journalists know whom to call when a forecast needs clarification.

The Blantyre discussion fits DCCMS’s wider effort to make climate information easier to explain and use, while building journalists’ confidence in interpreting forecasts in a more accurate and user-friendly manner for their audiences. The Department has also worked with media practitioners in other settings.

The Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Research Programme (MLW) and DCCMS held a media information session in the Lower Shire on 17 and 18 September 2026, under the theme “**El Niño 2026/2027: Preparedness, Response and the Power of Media**”.

The Agriculture and Commercialization for Development Empowerment Society (ACADES) has taken the El Niño conversation to MBC Radio 1, with guests from DCCMS and the Ministry of Agriculture.



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District forecasts

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www.metmalawi.gov.mw/products/downscaled-seasonal-climate-outlook/

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Your Livelihoods

Stay
Safe

DCCMS ADVANCES SOFF FOR BETTER FORECASTS



DCCMS Director Dr Lucy Mtilatila addresses participants as the meeting sets out plans to strengthen Malawi's weather observation network

By Amos Mtonya

Before DCCMS can issue a forecast, it needs a reliable picture of what is happening in the atmosphere. That picture begins with observations at the surface and higher above in the atmosphere.

On 21 July, DCCMS and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) brought partners together in Lilongwe to begin the 2026–2030 investment phase of the Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF).

The meeting moved the work from planning towards implementation. Participants reviewed Malawi's completed observation gap analysis and National Contribution Plan, proposed station locations, and arrangements for managing risks, safeguards and long-term support.

The SOFF project that was formally launched in February had the July meeting focusing on how to move into the investment phase.

The USD 3.84 million, five-year programme will rehabilitate four surface observation stations: Kasungu; Ngabu in Chikwawa; Mlowe in Rumphi; and Bilira in Ntcheu. It will also establish an automatic upper-air station to measure conditions such as wind, temperature and humidity above the ground.

These improvements will help DCCMS collect and share observations that meet the World Meteorological Organization's Global Basic Observing Network standards.

The value of those readings extends beyond the stations. Observations from Malawi feed global forecasting models. DCCMS can then interpret model guidance alongside national data and expertise to prepare forecasts and warnings for people across the country.

More dependable observations give forecasters a stronger basis for assessing developing weather and helping farmers, communities and disaster managers prepare.

Equipment alone will not keep that flow of information going. The programme also supports technology upgrades, staff capacity, and long-term operation and maintenance. At the inception meeting, Dr Hamilton Kamwana, Director

of Planning in the Ministry of Natural Resources, called on government institutions, development partners, the private sector and other stakeholders to help sustain the gains made through the programme.

UNDP Malawi's Portfolio Manager for Resilience and Sustainable Growth, Rabi Gaudo, commended the Government's leadership.

“The success of SOFF will not simply be measured by the number of weather stations we install,” Gaudo said.

“It will be measured by lives saved, livelihoods protected and communities that are better prepared for climate-related risks.”

DCCMS is leading implementation with UNDP, with funding from SOFF, and peer advice from MET Norway and the Icelandic Meteorological Office.



UNDP Rabi Gaudo, speaks at the SOFF inception meeting



FROM FORECAST TO FIRESIDE: DCCMS ENGAGES INKOSI GOMANI V

By Edwin Tadeyo

A seasonal forecast becomes more useful when people can discuss what it means for their own area.

At Gomani V Headquarters in Ntcheu, the Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services (DCCMS) met Inkosi ya Makosi Gomani V to explore how weather and climate information could reach communities under his leadership.

DCCMS officers James Pagona and Edwin Tadeyo discussed the 2026/2027 seasonal forecast, El Niño and climate variability with the Paramount Chief.

They also considered how scientific forecasts and indigenous knowledge could inform local conversations. Inkosi Gomani V offered to help share the outlook with communities across Mwanza, Neno, Ntcheu, Balaka and parts of Dedza.

DCCMS forecasts normal to below-normal seasonal rainfall



DCCMS officers James Pagona and Edwin Tadeyo during the engagement at Gomani Headquarters in Ntcheu.

for most districts in southern and central Malawi. This outlook can help farming households and other sectors plan ahead. Regular forecasts and advisories will remain important as conditions develop during the season.

A place to ask questions

One proposal is a series of Gomani Fireside Chats bringing together traditional leaders, DCCMS specialists, agricultural extension officers and community representatives.

People could ask what the outlook

means for their area, share local experience and discuss how to use the information. Recording the conversations for radio, television and digital channels could extend their reach.

Inkosi Gomani V's willingness to work with DCCMS opens a promising route for these conversations. If developed with communities, the fireside chats could help people understand both what the seasonal forecast says and what it can tell them about rainfall in a particular place or week.

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Malawi's AI EARLY WARNING PILOT DRAWS GLOBAL ATTENTION

By Hussein Milanzi

At the AI for Good Global Summit in Geneva on 7 July, DCCMS Director Dr Lucy Mtilatila joined Dr Roar Skålin, Director General of the Norwegian Meteorological Institute, to discuss Malawi's AI for Early Warnings for All pilot.

Their session brought a practical question to the global discussion: can artificial intelligence help a national weather service produce useful forecasts with less computing power?

AI weather models can run forecasts much faster and with fewer computing resources than traditional numerical models. That possibility matters to services that cannot operate large supercomputers.

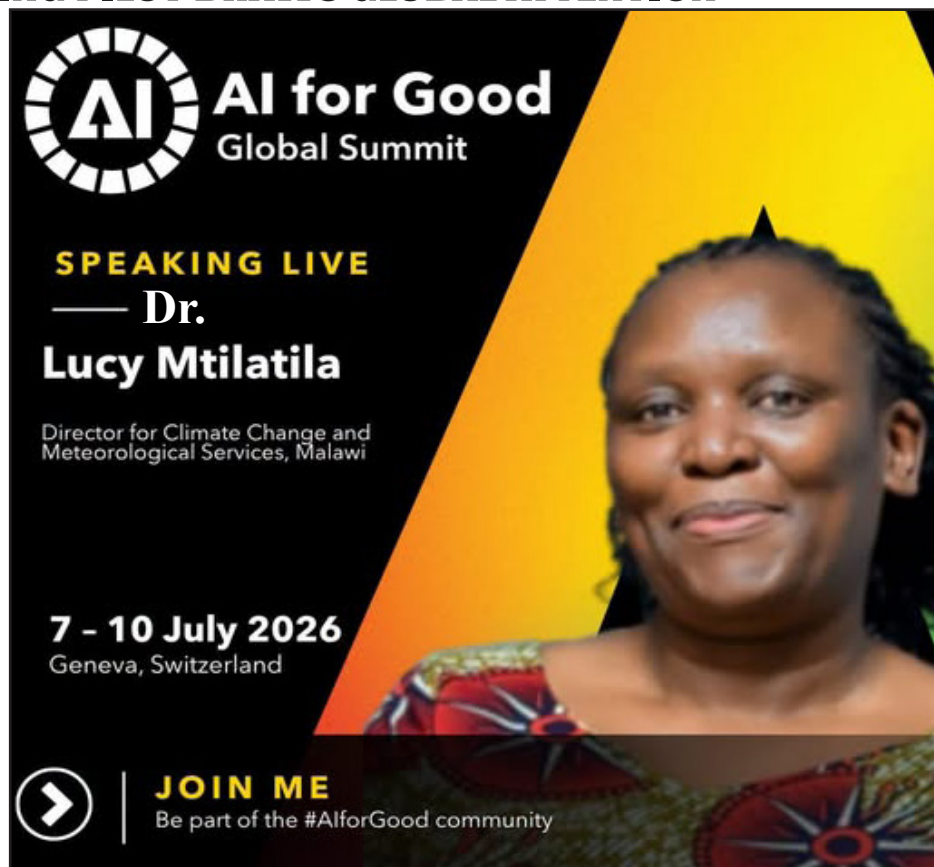
Inside the pilot

From April to October 2025, DCCMS worked with MET Norway and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) on a system tailored to Malawi.

The pilot, supported through the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative with World Meteorological Organization oversight, brought together Bris, a high-resolution AI weather model developed by MET Norway, and ECMWF's Forecast-in-a-Box.

DCCMS staff received technical training, while interviews, focus groups and workshops gathered forecasters' views on using the tools in their daily work.

The pilot gave DCCMS a way to



DCCMS Director Dr Lucy Mtilatila featured in the AI for Good Global Summit programme in Geneva

produce AI-based forecasts and compare them with existing guidance. It also gave forecasters a voice in judging whether the system is practical and useful.

Before such tools can become a dependable part of public warning services, their performance must be checked across different conditions, and their outputs interpreted alongside observations and established forecasts.

That is the value of Malawi's experience. The pilot explored a new technical option while building the Department's capacity to assess it. DCCMS forecasters remain responsible for judging uncertainty and turning a weather prediction into information people can use.

From pilot to lasting capability

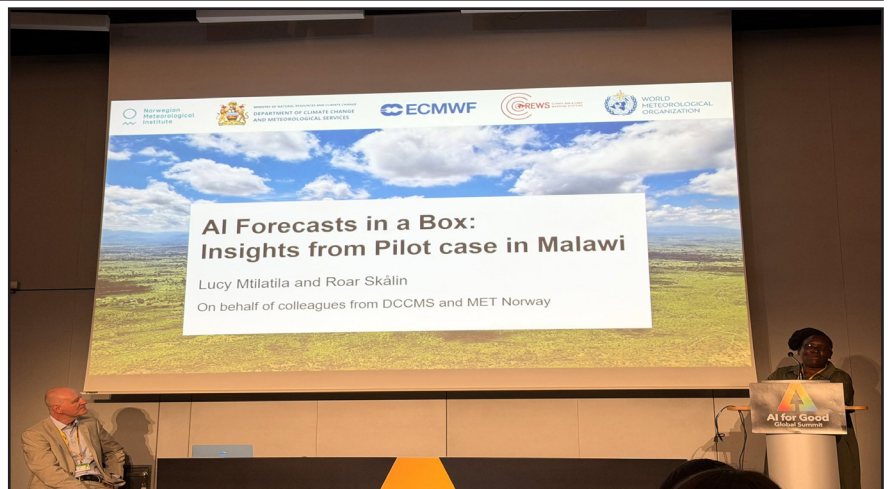
The wider summit session examined what it takes to move AI tools into national early warning systems: reliable data, skilled institutions, clear responsibilities, partnerships and sustained financing.

It also launched the report Leveraging AI to Enhance Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems, which looks at applications across forecasting, risk knowledge, warning communication and preparedness.

For DCCMS, the next step is to keep testing where AI adds value to Malawi's forecast work and where further development is needed.

The aim is a system that helps forecasters issue timely, trusted warnings for the people who depend on them.

Read the report Leveraging AI to Enhance Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems on the ITU website: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Emergency-Telecommunications/Pages/Publications/ai-ew4all-report.aspx>



Dr Njoloma and DCCMS Director Dr Lucy Mtilatila with DCCMS staff after the all-staff meeting.

Behind the forecast: Principal Secretary Visits DCCMS

By Charity Mapondo

A weather bulletin on radio and television, or an alert on the ZANYENGO app, may take only minutes to read, but many teams and systems at DCCMS make it possible. On 19 August 2026, Dr Henrie Njoloma, Principal Secretary for Administration in the Ministry of Natural Resources, toured the Department's headquarters in Blantyre to meet the people and see the systems behind those services.

This tour included the National

Meteorological Centre, the television weather studio and Public Weather Services. He also met staff working in data management, ICT and engineering, as well as Human Resources, Accounts, Stores and Archives. The visit showed how technical and support teams each contribute to getting weather information to the public.

The visit closed with an all-staff meeting, where DCCMS Director Dr Lucy Mtilatila presented the Department's structure, workforce and operations.

Discussion then turned to the pressures on service delivery: staffing and financial constraints, the condition of office and ICT infrastructure, the maintenance of observation stations and forecasting systems, and staff motivation and working conditions. Participants also highlighted the need to strengthen the institutional systems that support the Department's daily work.

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Those concerns are connected. Observations depend on maintained stations. Forecasters need working ICT systems to receive and analyse information.

Administrative teams help ensure that staff and equipment have the support to keep services running. The tour gave the Principal Secretary a view of those links across the Department.

Dr Njoloma commended staff for their dedication and spoke of the importance of capacity development, motivation and a supportive working environment. Dr Mtilatila welcomed the opportunity for Ministry leadership to hear directly about the Department's priorities.

The visit brought DCCMS's operational needs into the same conversation as the forecasts and warnings Malawians see each day. Sustained attention to its people, stations and systems will help the Department keep those services dependable.



At the National Meteorological Centre, a forecaster briefs the Principal Secretary through the work behind Malawi's daily forecasts



In the Archives section, staff show the Principal Secretary where decades of weather and climate records are kept.



Dr Njoloma, Principal Secretary for Administration, speaks with DCCMS staff during his familiarisation visit.

5 WEATHER MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE EVERY RAINY SEASON

When the rainy season begins, most people think they are prepared. After all, rain comes every year. But year after year, the same mistakes lead to **avoidable damage**, injuries and even loss of life.

“IT'S NOT THE RAIN THAT CAUSES DISASTER—IT'S HOW WE RESPOND TO IT.”

Preparedness is not about fear—It's about awareness and action. Changing just a few habits can significantly reduce risk.

HERE ARE **FIVE** CRITICAL MISTAKES PEOPLE CONTINUE TO MAKE – AND WHY THEY MUST STOP

1 IGNORING EARLY WEATHER WARNINGS



2 POOR WASTE DISPOSAL HABITS



3 CROSSING FLOODED AREAS



4 WEAK HOUSEHOLD PREPAREDNESS



5 RELYING ON ASSUMPTIONS INSTEAD OF INFORMATION



REMEMBER →



Stay informed. Listen to official weather updates.



Keep drains clear. Dispose of waste properly.



Avoid flooded areas. Turn around, don't drown.



Prepare early. Secure your home and have an emergency kit.



Work together. Community action saves lives.

DCCMS BENCHMARKS QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN SEYCHELLES

By Edwin Tadeyo and Francis Alexander

Pilots and air traffic controllers need weather information that is clear, timely and dependable. Providing it consistently requires accurate forecasts, agreed procedures and regular checks.

The Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services (DCCMS) is drawing on Seychelles' experience as it develops a quality management system (QMS) for Malawi's aviation weather services.

Learning from certified practice

In the first week of August 2026, a delegation led by Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Hon. Chipiliro Mpinganjira visited the Seychelles Meteorological Authority (SMA) in Victoria. Supported by the World Bank, the visit allowed Ministry and DCCMS officials to learn how SMA achieved

ISO certification in 2022 and how it manages service quality, oversight and financing.

Hon. Mpinganjira thanked Seychelles for sharing its experience.

He reaffirmed Malawi's plan to implement and seek certification for its own QMS, highlighted the need for a stronger legal framework for meteorological services, and proposed staff exchanges and internships between DCCMS and SMA.

Building technical cooperation

Seychelles' Minister for Environment, Climate, Energy and Natural Resources, Marie-May Jeremie, welcomed Malawi's initiative.

She said certification had improved SMA's service delivery and revenue collection, and stressed the importance of government support.

She also expressed hope that the visit would lead to wider cooperation between the two countries.

For DCCMS, the next step is to apply the relevant lessons to Malawi's aviation weather services.

Clear procedures, trained staff and sustained support can help the Department deliver information that flight crews and air traffic services can rely on each day. The visit offers a practical starting point as Malawi works towards certification.



The Malawian delegation meets Seychelles Meteorological Authority officials to exchange experience on quality management for aviation weather services.

El Niño BEYOND THE FORECAST



Picture by Mikaila Iss/ARCS Malawi

A farmer in Mzimba preparing his field as the first rains signal the start of the agricultural season.

By Daniel Chinyama

To a meteorologist, El Niño describes warming in the tropical Pacific that can shift weather patterns worldwide. To a Malawian farmer, it may raise a more immediate question: will the rains come, and will my crops survive? DCCMS's 2026/2027 seasonal outlook, released on 2 September, gives that question fresh urgency.

It points to normal to below-normal rainfall in much of southern and central Malawi from October to December and below-normal rainfall there from January to March.

From forecast to fear

An informal poll on the DCCMS Facebook page invited followers

to share their first reactions to the prospect of a strong El Niño and how they might prepare. One commenter worried:

"We will not have enough harvest this season." Others linked El Niño with drought or wanted to learn more. These are individual responses; the poll cannot show how Malawians in general understand the forecast.

The harvest concern shows how quickly a seasonal outlook can become a question about food at home. It is a fear, not a prediction of crop failure.

The outlook describes likely rainfall across broad areas and months; conditions can still differ by place and change from week to week.

Knowing the risk and finding a way to act

Among the ideas shared in the comments were reviewing planting plans, seeking more rainfall information, conserving water, storing food and considering early-maturing or drought-tolerant crops.

A comment does not tell us whether someone has taken these steps or whether they suit that person's location. DCCMS updates and local agricultural advice can help people weigh their options as the season progresses.

One comment brought a harder constraint into view. A person who had considered protective measures said they could not afford them: "There was nothing to do." Another said they would consider

<<< 17

Among the ideas shared in the comments were reviewing planting plans, seeking more rainfall information, conserving water, storing food and considering early-maturing or drought-tolerant crops.

A comment does not tell us whether someone has taken these steps or

A conversation that continues

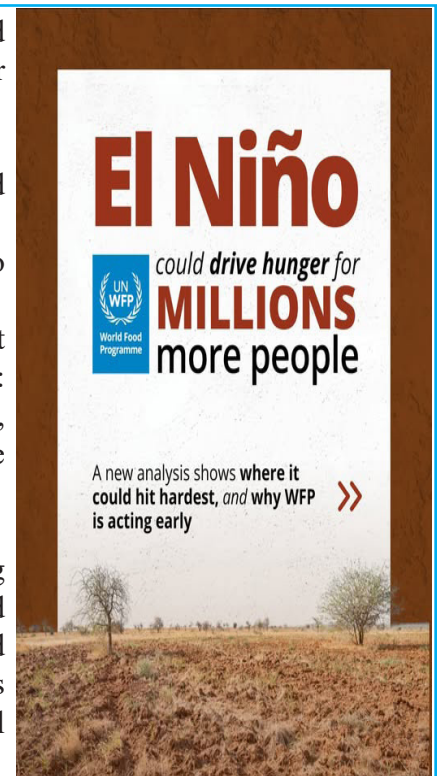
DCCMS's Facebook page can be a place to listen as well as inform. Questions about a forecast map, the meaning of "below normal" or conditions that seem different from local experience deserve clear answers.

As the season unfolds, updated forecasts can help people adjust their plans.

Explaining what an outlook can and cannot say is part of earning trust. These comments are an invitation to keep talking.

The test for early warning is what happens after it reaches someone: can they understand the information, decide what is relevant and find the means to act?

Behind the map is a farmer deciding when to plant, or a household weighing how to manage its food and water. For them, a warning becomes useful when it connects to local advice and options they can use.



'Tilime, koma mwanzeru': Farming through the 2026/2027 season

By Robert Namakhwa

As the 2026/2027 farming season begins, the practical question for farmers is how to manage the season wisely.

The answer depends partly on location. Past El Niño seasons have tended to bring drier conditions to the south and wetter ones to the north, where heavy rain and flash floods can pose a greater risk.

Soil health is one of the strongest defences in either case. Soils with better fertility and organic matter hold water longer during dry spells and cope better with heavy rain and runoff.

Practices that improve soil condition can therefore help farms withstand both drier and wetter periods, as well as warmer temperatures.

Crop choice and water management also matter. Where dry spells are



Organic manure improves soil structure and support crops during dry spells.

likely, early-maturing varieties can reduce the risk of crops being affected if the rains end early.

Soil and water conservation can help fields make better use of the rain that does fall.

Information completes the picture. Farmers should follow community radio, SMS alerts, DCCMS updates and advice from agricultural extension workers throughout the season.

The seasonal outlook gives the broad picture; shorter-range forecasts can help guide decisions closer to the day, including planting and field management. The message is simple: **"Tilime, koma mwanzeru."**

Let us farm, but wisely. We cannot control the weather, but farmers can reduce risk by combining timely information with healthy soils and practical choices in the field.

Picture by Mikaila Iss/ARCS Malawi

WMO Africa Director pledges support for Malawi's weather services



WMO Africa Director Dr Agnes Kijazi (middle) with the Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Patricia Wiskes, MP, and Ministry and DCCMS officials during the courtesy call in Lilongwe

By James Pagona

How can a forecast reach people early enough to help them act?

That question ran through a 29 September meeting between the Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Patricia Wiskes, MP, and Dr Agnes Kijazi, Director of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Office for Africa.

The Minister welcomed WMO's technical support and called for continued investment in Malawi's early warning services.

She highlighted work under the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative and Early Warnings for All, including efforts to carry messages beyond national bulletins to communities.

DCCMS's work on impact-based

forecasting is part of that effort:

it aims to explain what hazardous weather could mean for different sectors and what action may be needed.

The Minister also expressed Malawi's intention to address its assessed WMO contribution, which have been long overdue.

Dr Kijazi recognised Malawi's contribution to regional and global data sharing. She also pointed to the lessons emerging from the country's pilot of artificial intelligence in weather prediction.

The partners discussed a proposed second phase of CREWS support, which is being developed, and the need to sustain the systems and skills on which early warnings depend.

The conversation also turned to the proposed legislation for Malawi's meteorological services.

Dr Kijazi recalled that the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET) made a resolution for all meteorological services in African to become semi-autonomous, and welcomed Malawi's steps in that direction.

She urged the Government to advance the Bill that would transform DCCMS into a semi-autonomous entity, strengthening its authoritative voice and its ability to recover appropriate costs.

Parliamentarians see the needs behind Malawi's weather services



Members of the Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources visit meteorological facilities at Kamuzu International Airport.

By Amos Mtonya

The weather information that pilots rely on depends on instruments, trained staff and reliable systems on the ground.

Members of the Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources saw part of that work during a visit to Kamuzu International Airport on 30 September 2026, ahead of discussions on proposed legislation for Malawi's meteorological services.

The visit brought operational needs into the legislative conversation. Participants raised the absence of weather radar, the condition of meteorological offices, and the funding required to strengthen services at the airport.

Members described the MK240 million needed at the airport as modest and asked the Ministry to consider it in its mid-term budget review.

They also discussed quality management and the path towards certification for aviation weather services.

The proposed Bill prompted practical questions. Committee members called for comparison with laws in other countries and considered whether an authority structure would give meteorological services more room to grow.

They discussed how aviation-related fees could support the service, how decisions of the Director could be appealed, and how the Bill should align with the Civil Aviation Act.

They also welcomed a provision on the use of climate information in planning public infrastructure.

Members suggested further engagement before the Bill reaches Parliament, including

a possible study visit to learn how other countries finance and manage aviation meteorology.

The discussions did not settle the Bill's final form. They did, however, give lawmakers a closer view of the people, equipment and resources needed to deliver a dependable service.



DCCMS, WMO and UN Malawi join forces amid strong El Niño

By Mikaila Issa

Early warnings work best when the institutions that produce them and the partners that help people act are connected.

That was the focus of a 1 October meeting between Dr Agnes Kijazi, Director of the WMO Regional Office for Africa, and the UN Resident Coordinator in Malawi, Ms Rebecca Adda-Dontoh.

Dr Kijazi introduced DCCMS Director Dr Lucy Mtilatila in her role as Malawi's Permanent Representative with WMO.

The meeting considered how WMO-supported work in Malawi relates to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for

2024–2028, which includes a pillar on climate change and energy transformation.

Although WMO is not a signatory to the framework, Ms Adda-Dontoh indicated that its activities could be reflected in reporting and that WMO would be engaged as the next framework is prepared.

Ms Adda-Dontoh welcomed a closer technical relationship with Dr Mtilatila and called for broader development partner participation in Early Warnings for All.

Participants also discussed coordination as Malawi prepares for El Niño-related risks. Dr Mtilatila offered DCCMS's

technical support to the UN system in Malawi.

The World Food Programme, which joined the meeting, described its work with partners on anticipatory action, impact-based forecasting and drought monitoring.

These efforts depend on climate information that can be interpreted alongside the risks faced by households and services.

The meeting opened a clearer channel between DCCMS, WMO and UN Malawi.

The next step is to use that connection to coordinate plans and bring more partners into early warning work as the rainfall season unfolds.



Dr Agnes Kijazi, DCCMS Director Dr Lucy Mtilatila and the UN Resident Coordinator, Rebecca Adda-Dontoh, with UN and WFP colleagues at the UN Malawi offices.

Making early warnings work for everyone

By Mphatso Tawakali

An early warning protects people only if they can receive it, understand it and act on it.

That principle guided a three-day Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Co-Production Workshop convened by DCCMS in Zomba from 21 to 23 September 2026.

Representatives from DCCMS, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), the Ministry of Gender, the Malawi Network of Older Persons' Organisations (MANEPO) and the Malawi Council for Disability Affairs (MACODA) examined how impact-based forecasting (IBF) and action-based forecasting (ABF) can better serve older people, persons with disabilities and others who may face barriers to using warnings.

Same hazard, different impacts

Impact-based forecasting considers what hazardous weather could do, who may be affected and what action could reduce harm.

A flood, for example, may present different challenges to an older person living alone, a caregiver with young children and someone with limited mobility. A person who cannot access the usual communication channels may never receive the warning.

Participants brought these questions to the impact tables and forecasting matrices used to develop warnings.

They looked for risks that might be overlooked and actions that might be difficult for some people to take. They also considered the circumstances of people with albinism and called for better age- and disability-disaggregated

data to help identify who is exposed and where additional support may be needed.

Designing messages people can use

Over three days, participants moved from discussing IBF, ABF and GEDSI to reviewing impact tables and warning messages.

They examined whether messages were clear, accessible, relevant to local conditions and practical enough to support early action.

The barriers they identified include limited mobility, unsuitable facilities, inaccessible formats and limited participation in planning.

Reaching people in different ways

Participants highlighted the value of using several communication channels. Audio and visual formats, text or SMS, and local leaders and community networks can reach people in different circumstances.

They recommended making warnings more local, including downscaling information to Traditional Authority level where possible.

Taking the work forward

Participants called for closer coordination among institutions working on climate, disaster risk, gender and disability.

They also identified organisations and community representatives who could contribute to future work, including the National Statistical Office, UNICEF, Save the Children, traditional and religious leaders, and caregivers.

Community feedback will be essential. People can help identify risks, share local knowledge and explain whether a warning reached them in time and helped them decide what to do.

Those responses can guide DCCMS and its partners as they refine warnings for the people who rely on them.



Participants gather after the DCCMS workshop in Zomba on making early warnings easier for everyone .



Installation work at the new Neno weather station at the old Neno airfield.

These instruments provide different measures of conditions at the site, helping DCCMS build a clearer record of local weather.

Neno also has an Intellisense electronic system fitted with a modem.

It is designed to transmit observations for remote online access, making readings more readily available to the teams that analyse weather conditions and prepare forecasts.

In Nsanje, WFP supported the new station at the district Agriculture Office. Installation work took place from 12 to 19 September.

DCCMS adds weather stations in Neno and Nsanje

By Noor Anafie

A useful forecast begins with observations close to where people live. In September 2026, the Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services (DCCMS) established one new weather station in Neno and another in Nsanje.

The sites expand the Department's observing network in areas where local records can support

monitoring of the 2026/2027 rainfall season.

The Neno station is at the old airfield, near offices built for the district by the Department of Water Resources. Established with funding from DAI under the Climate Just Communities Project, it has a Stevenson screen, rain gauges, soil temperature sensors and a sunshine recorder.

Its equipment includes a Stevenson screen, rain gauges, soil temperature sensors and a modem-equipped Intellisense system. Installation of the wind sensors and the start of evaporation observations remain outstanding.

The stations can help DCCMS track conditions in both districts and strengthen the data behind weather and climate information for agriculture, water management and disaster preparedness.



Work under way at the new Nsanje weather station at the district Agriculture



An early warning protects people only if they can:



RECEIVE IT



UNDERSTAND IT



ACT ON IT

**Impact-Based and Action-Based Forecasting through
Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)**

Ready for the Rains!

Become a Forecast Explorer



Can DCCMS tell us the exact day it will rain three months from now? **No!**
A seasonal forecast gives us clues about the rain that is more likely over several months. **Let's follow those clues and get ready together.**

Follow the Forecast

1 Observe

Weather stations measure rain, heat and wind every day.



2 Investigate

Forecasters compare this with past seasons and with computer tests of what the weather might do.



3 Make the map

The map shows which areas may get more, normal or less rain.



DCCMS map

- More rain
- Normal
- Less rain

4 Keep checking

DCCMS updates the forecast as the rainy season goes on.



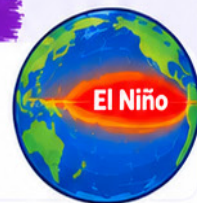
Crack the forecast code

"Below-normal rainfall" means less rain than usual over several months. There can still be rainy days, and some of them may bring heavy rain.



What about El Niño?

El Niño happens when part of the Pacific Ocean gets warmer than usual. It changes weather in many places. In Malawi, El Niño seasons have often been drier, especially in the south.



Weather Safety Tip



If water covers the road, turn back!

Even shallow moving water can sweep you off your feet.

- Never play or swim in rivers or drains during the rains.
- Walk home with friends, on the safe route your family chose.

Mini Activity: Family Rain-Ready Checklist

Tick each box together with your family:

- ☐ Clear drains and ditches around our home
- ☐ Keep food, seeds and water dry and off the floor
- ☐ Put school books and papers in a plastic bag
- ☐ Agree on a safe, high place to go if water rises
- ☐ Listen for DCCMS forecasts and warnings

All ticked? You are a Rain-Ready Helper!



Your Forecast Mission

With an adult, find this season's DCCMS forecast for your district. Listen on the radio, check SMS alerts or the DCCMS website, or ask your agriculture extension worker.

- ➔ What does it say about rain where you live?
- ➔ Write down one question to ask a forecaster.



True or False?

"If the seasonal forecast says below-normal rainfall, it cannot rain heavily on any day."

Think first, then turn the page upside down to check!



False! A seasonal forecast describes the months ahead. Some days are still bring heavy rain.



You Answered!

Last issue: Why should people avoid crossing flooded roads or bridges?

"[Child's answer]" [Name, age, school]

"[Child's answer]" [Name, age, school]



Question of the Month

What signs tell the elders in your family that the rains are coming?

Ask a grandparent, then share the answer with your teacher, parent or community leader.



Remember:

Prepare early, keep checking the forecast and **stay safe.**

Chichewa Weather Words

Mvula · Rain

Bingu · Thunder

Mphelo · Wind

Chigumula · Flood

Ask DCCMS!

Send us your weather question. It could appear in our next issue.





INSIDE

DCCMS Urges Farmers to Plant Drought-Tolerant Crops

<https://www.malawivoice.com/2026/09/09/dccms-urges-farmers-to-plant-drought-tolerant-crops/>

By Malawi Voice

DCCMS Trains Journalists

[https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/poweronlinenews?__eep__=6&__cft__\[0\]=AZjwOtZoR9OwdsuQ1Dprd8rNgKL_zbw4fNO0dhHET0vouq53OYc-5miPK](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/poweronlinenews?__eep__=6&__cft__[0]=AZjwOtZoR9OwdsuQ1Dprd8rNgKL_zbw4fNO0dhHET0vouq53OYc-5miPK)

By Poweronline

The Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services (DCCMS) plans to intensify awareness about meteorology.

https://web.facebook.com/timveniradio/posts/the-department-of-climate-change-and-meteorological-services-dccms-plans-to-inte/1413107200828789/?_rdc=1&_rdr#

By Sam Magwira-Timveni

Climate Change Driving Surge in Extreme Weather, Government Warns

https://www.nyasatimes.com/climate-change-driving-surge-in-extreme-weather-government-warns/#google_vignette

By Nyasatimes

Malawi Trains Journalists to Improve Climate Change Reporting Accuracy

<https://africabrief.substack.com/p/malawi-trains-journalists-to-improve>

By AfricaBrief

MBC Digital News Bulletin

https://web.facebook.com/mbctv.malawi/videos/evening-news-march-31-2026/867071636355141/?_rdc=1&_rdr#



MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE
DEPARTMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE
AND METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES



Be wise, Be weather wise!!



<https://www.metmalawi.gov.mw/>