PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change

DEPARTMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

PROSPECTS FOR THE 2025/2026 CLIMATE OUTLOOK FOR MALAWI

BOTTOM LINE: The upcoming 2025/2026 rainfall season is expected to bring normal to above-normal precipitation with uneven distribution that calls for careful planning and preparedness.

Forecast Summary - 2025/2026 Season

The 2025/2026 rainfall seasonal forecast is summarized as follows:

a) Seasonal Rainfall

- **October to December 2025**: Expect total rainfall amounts to be generally normal to above-normal in most areas of the country, with normal to below-normal rainfall likely over some parts of the northern areas (MAP A). But looking specifically for the month of November, the nationwide forecast predicts a possibility of normal to below-normal rainfall amounts.

- **January to March 2026:** Expect total rainfall amounts to be generally normal to above-normal. Despite this trend, localised pockets, particularly in parts of Mchinji, Dowa, Kasungu and Lilongwe are projected to receive normal to below-normal precipitation (MAP B). Crucially, the month of February is likely to be normal to below-normal nationwide.

b) Temperature

For the upcoming 2025/2026 summer season, the nation is projected to experience an overall anomalously warm condition. This increase in temperature will be most pronounced across the country in December and February. Conversely, January is forecast to offer a brief respite, with most central regions likely to encounter cooler than normal conditions. These high temperatures will significantly increase the risk of heatwaves and moisture stress in some instances.

Impacts

While the 2025/2026 rainfall season is forecast to bring normal to above-normal totals, this overarching outlook masks considerable variability across districts and over time. Such rainfall amounts are likely to be sufficient to meet the water requirements for most crops, creating **relatively** good conditions for agriculture. These rainfall amounts are also likely to sustain the **average** Lake Malawi level, securing vital resources for domestic, industrial, hydropower and agricultural use.

These benefits are counterbalanced by considerable risks. **The season will be marked by dry spells, particularly in critical months like February, along with delayed starts, false onsets, and periods of intense heat, leading to moisture stress and increased pest activity in crops.** Heavy downpours also pose a significant threat, potentially causing severe soil erosion and localized flooding, which could devastate crops and vital infrastructure.

Consequently, sectors vital to daily life—including water resources, health, agriculture, education, transport, and energy—could face disruptions from floods, storms, and heatwaves. **This forecast underscores an urgent need for proactive preparedness, investment in climate-resilient**

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systems, and robust risk management strategies to safeguard communities and economic stability.

Application of the Forecast

This forecast is relevant for relatively large areas and seasonal time scales and therefore may not account for all factors that influence localized climate variability, such as daily and weekly variations. To cater for localized climate variability and monthly variations, the Ministry has produced downscaled district forecasts. Furthermore, daily, five-day, weekly forecasts, ten-day agrometeorological bulletins and seasonal updates will continuously be provided throughout the season. The ministry will also issue warnings and advisories regarding potential extreme weather events that may occur during the season.

Users from various sectors, including Agriculture, Disaster Management, Energy, Health and Water are encouraged to seek advice from the relevant ministries to better apply this forecast in their respective fields.

"Don't let the upcoming rainfall season catch you off guard. Your safety is our top priority – let's prepare together."

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SUBSEASON PROBABILISTIC FORECAST: OND AND JFM

Below are the forecast maps for the 2025/2026 rainfall outlook which cover the period October to December (OND) 2025 - Map A and January to March (JFM) 2026 – Map B presented in the form of probabilities of occurrence of rainfall amounts:

On Map A, Area A1 – Parts of Rumphi, Chitipa, Karonga, Mzimba and Nkhatabay. The chances are as follows:

40% Normal rainfall
35% below-normal rainfall
25% above-normal rainfall

On Map A, Area A2 – Most parts of the country. The chances are as follows:

40% Normal rainfall
35% above-normal rainfall
25% below-normal rainfall

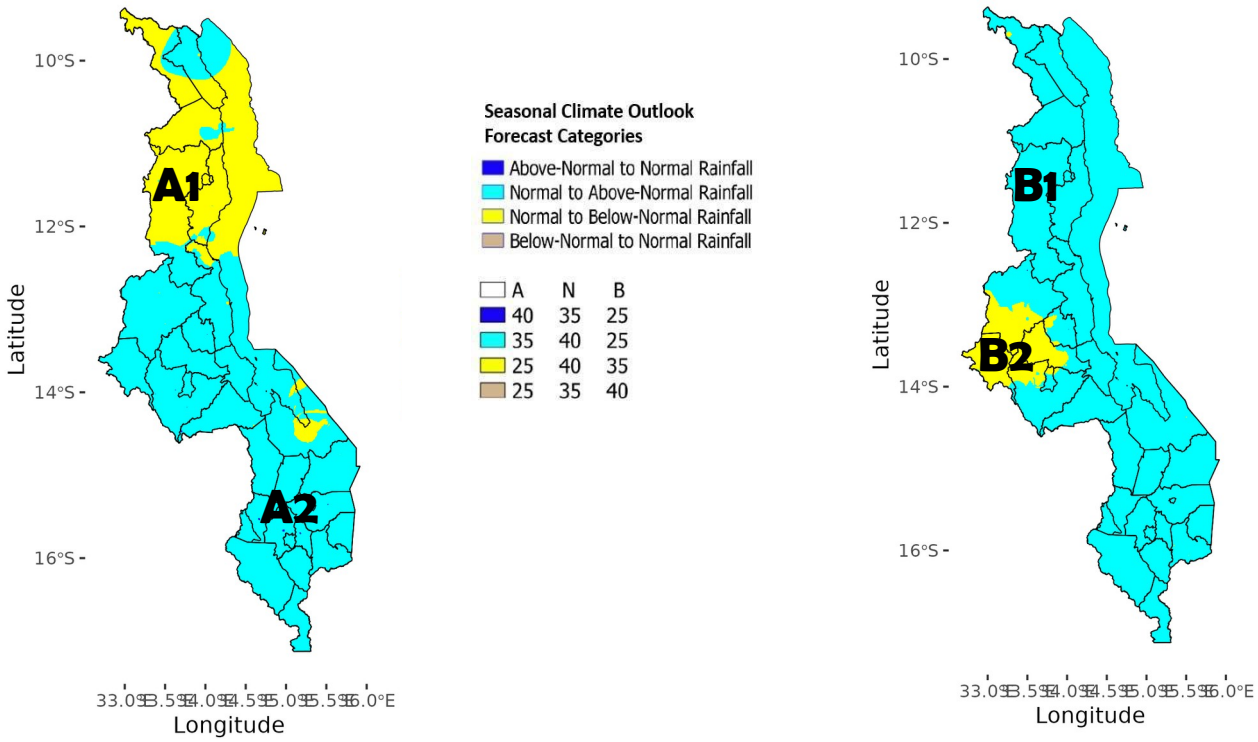
On Map B, Area B1 – Most parts of the country. The chances are as follows:

40% Normal rainfall
35% above-normal rainfall
25% below-normal rainfall

On Map B, Area B2 – Parts of Mchinji, Dowa, Kasungu and Lilongwe. The chances are as follows:

40% Normal rainfall
35% below-normal rainfall
25% above-normal rainfall

MAP A: OND 2025 **MAP B: JFM 2026**



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