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INTRA-ACP CLIMATE SERVICES AND RELATED APPLICATIONS PROGRAMME

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BENEFICIARIES

A. HIGHLIGHTS

- **The rainfall during March:** Rainfall during March 2026 was highly variable across the SADC region, with heavy rainfall recorded over parts of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, the DRC, and Angola, while drier conditions prevailed over Namibia, central Madagascar, and southern South Africa. Despite above-average rainfall in some areas, below-normal rainfall conditions dominated much of the subcontinent.
- **Drought monitoring:** During March 2026 the long-term (SPI-12) and short-term (SPI-3) moisture conditions across the SADC region were predominantly near normal. However, localized very wet conditions were observed in parts of Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, South Africa, the DRC and Mozambique, while very dry to extremely dry conditions persisted across western Angola, Namibia, south-western South Africa and much of Madagascar.
- **Dry days:** During March 2026, prolonged dry spells of up to 30 consecutive dry days affected western parts of the SADC region, particularly Namibia, with isolated impacts in Botswana, South Africa, Mozambique, and Madagascar. Intermediate dry spells of 10 to 14 consecutive dry days were widespread across southern Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa, Mozambique, as well as northern DRC and Tanzania. In contrast, most other areas experienced relatively short dry spells of 0 to 5 consecutive dry days.
- **The minimum temperature anomalies:** In March 2026, the lowest mean minimum temperatures, around 8 °C, were observed over the interior of Lesotho and South Africa, while most of the SADC region experienced mean minimum temperatures ranging from 20 °C to 23 °C. Warmer conditions, with mean minimum temperatures exceeding 23°C, prevailed across southern Tanzania, much of Malawi, Mozambique, and the coastal areas of Madagascar. Mean minimum temperature anomalies were predominantly positive across the region, reaching up to +3 °C over large areas, although isolated pockets of −3 °C anomalies were recorded in north-eastern DRC, central Botswana, and northern Namibia.
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- **Maximum temperatures anomalies:**

Mean maximum temperatures were predominantly above normal across much of the SADC region during March 2026, with the largest positive anomalies recorded over Angola, Namibia, Zambia and Madagascar. Below-normal conditions prevailed over Botswana, Tanzania, eastern DRC, southern Zimbabwe and southern Mozambique.

Heat Waves:

Daytime heatwaves during March 2026 were generally limited in extent and duration across the SADC region, although prolonged events of up to 23 days were recorded over north-western Angola and western Madagascar. In contrast, night-time heatwaves were more widespread, with durations of up to 15 days observed across eastern South Africa, much of Mozambique, and south-western Madagascar.

- **Rainfall and temperature outlook for April 2026:**

For April 2026, above-normal rainfall is favoured across much of the central SADC region, including Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, central Mozambique, Tanzania, and eastern DRC, while near-normal rainfall is expected elsewhere. Temperatures are forecast to be above normal over much of Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, Madagascar, and northern DRC, whereas below-normal temperatures are favoured across parts of Botswana, central South Africa, southern Zimbabwe, and the Zambia–Malawi–Mozambique corridor..

1. REGIONAL RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

During March 2026, rainfall distribution across the SADC region was highly variable. Parts of the region, including most of Mozambique, isolated parts of Zimbabwe, northern Zambia, Tanzania, the southern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and north-eastern Angola, experienced heavy rainfall, with totals ranging between 180 mm and 300 mm. Other areas, including the northernmost parts of the DRC, western Angola, Botswana, parts of South Africa, and parts of Madagascar, recorded average rainfall amounts of around 120 mm. In contrast, drier conditions, with little to no rainfall, were recorded over parts of central Madagascar, southern South Africa, and most of Namibia [Figure 1, left].
Rainfall anomaly analysis showed below-normal conditions across much of the subcontinent, particularly over western Angola, most of Namibia, large parts of the DRC, western Botswana, western Zambia, northern Malawi, northern Mozambique, southern Tanzania, isolated parts of South Africa, and much of Madagascar [Figure 1, right].

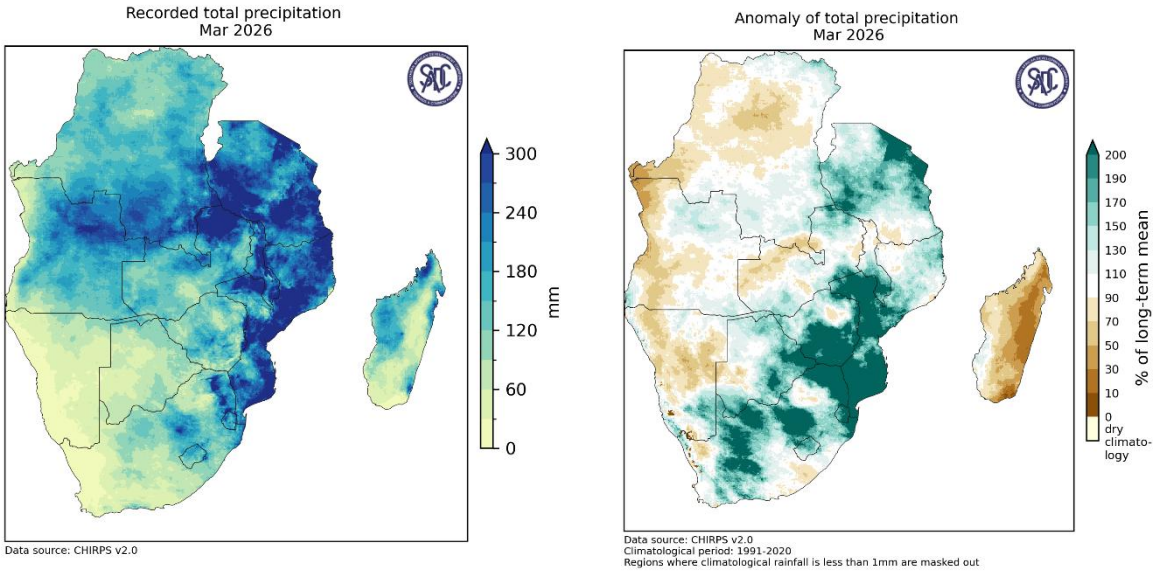

Figure 1: Observed rainfall (left) and rainfall anomaly (right) for the month of March 2026.

1.1 Drought Monitoring

1.1.1 Seasonal and Annual Drought Assessment

During March 2026, long-term moisture conditions, as depicted by the 12-month Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI-12), were characterised by very wet conditions over isolated areas of Tanzania near the borders with Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, north-eastern Zambia, parts of eastern Angola, and sections of South Africa. In contrast, very dry to extremely dry conditions were observed across the western parts of the subcontinent, particularly over Angola, Namibia, south-western South Africa, and much of Madagascar. Nevertheless, near-normal moisture conditions predominated across most of the SADC region [Figure 2, left].

Short-term moisture conditions, based on the 3-month Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI-3), indicated very wet conditions over much of Tanzania, north-eastern Zambia, north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and southern Mozambique. Near-normal conditions prevailed across large parts of the subcontinent, while moderately dry to extremely dry conditions were recorded over western Angola, south-western Namibia, parts of South Africa, areas of the DRC, and much of Madagascar. Overall, the majority of the region experienced near-normal short-term moisture conditions, despite the occurrence of localized wet and dry anomalies [Figure 2, right].

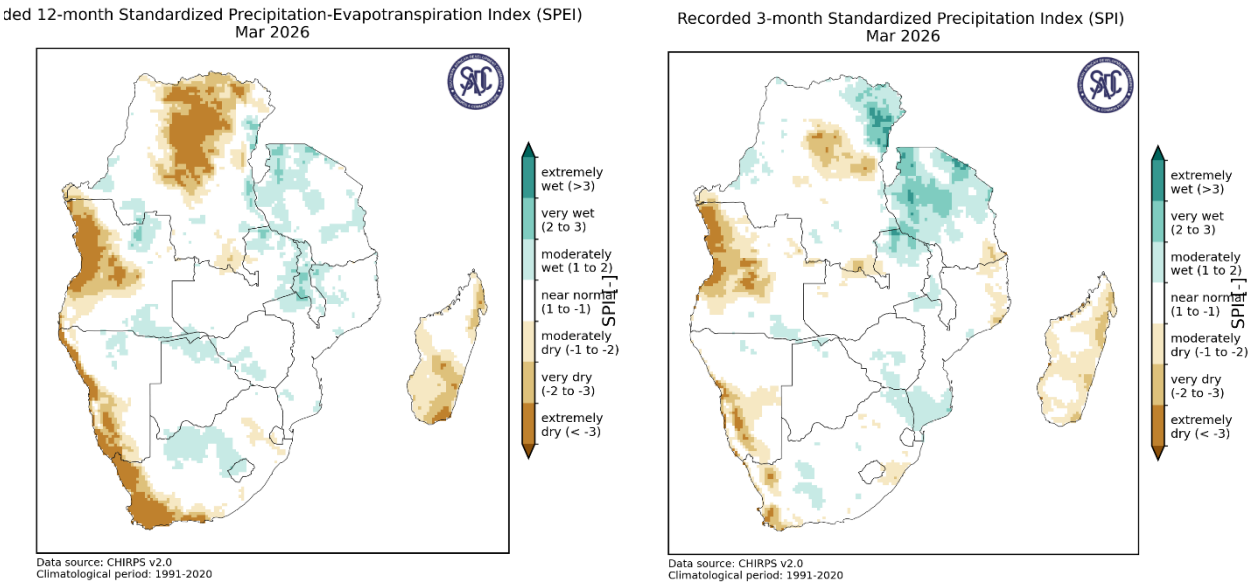

Figure 2: Drought assessment: SPI for 12-months (left) and 3-months SPI (right), for March 2026.

1.1.2 Short term drought (dry spells)

During March 2026, prolonged dry spells of 27 to 30 consecutive dry days were observed across the western parts of the SADC region, particularly over most of Namibia, as well as isolated areas of western Botswana, much of South Africa, southern Mozambique, and the eastern coast of Madagascar. Intermediate dry spells of 10 to 14 consecutive dry days were recorded across large portions of the southern half of the region, including southern Angola, most of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa, and Mozambique. Similar intermediate dry spells were also observed in the northernmost parts of the region, particularly in northern DRC and Tanzania. In contrast, most of the remaining areas experienced relatively short dry spells ranging from 0 to 5 consecutive dry days, including the western parts of Madagascar [Figure 3].

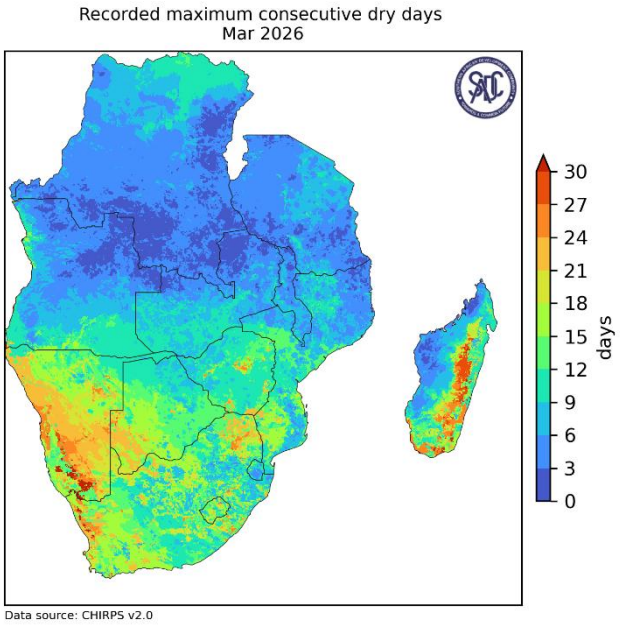

Figure 3: Dry spells prevalence during the month of March 2026.

1.2 Extreme Rainfall

Large parts of the SADC region did not experience significant extreme single-day rainfall events during March 2026. These areas included much of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Angola, Namibia, and Botswana, most of Zambia, parts of western South Africa, and large areas of western Madagascar. In contrast, much of the eastern half of the region, including isolated areas of eastern DRC, Tanzania, Malawi, eastern Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, the eastern half of South Africa, and several parts of Madagascar, recorded maximum daily rainfall totals ranging between 25 mm and 50 mm. Higher single-day rainfall amounts, reaching approximately 100 mm, were observed in isolated areas of Mozambique, north-eastern South Africa, and along parts of the coastal fringes of Madagascar [Figure 4].

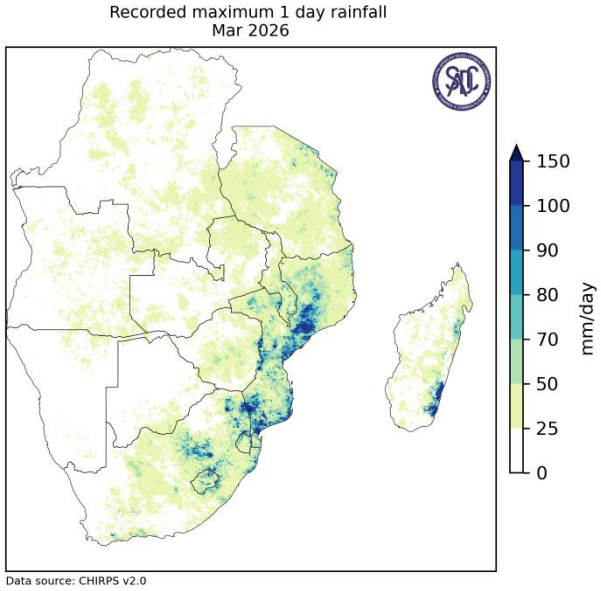

Figure 4: Maximum rainfall recorded over a one-day period during the month of March 2026.

2. REGIONAL TEMPERATURE

2.1 Minimum Temperature

In March 2026, the lowest mean minimum temperatures, reaching approximately 8 °C, were recorded over much of the interior of Lesotho and South Africa. In contrast, most of the SADC region, including large parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Madagascar, experienced mean minimum temperatures ranging between 20 °C and 23 °C. Higher mean minimum temperatures, exceeding 23 °C, were observed across the eastern parts of the region, including southern Tanzania, much of Malawi, most of Mozambique, and the coastal areas of Madagascar. Meanwhile, isolated areas across the region recorded mean minimum temperatures of around 14 °C [Figure 5, left].

Mean minimum temperature anomalies were predominantly positive across the region, with values of up to +3 °C recorded over large areas, including most of Angola, southern Namibia, southern South Africa, much of central Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, western Tanzania, and south-western Madagascar. Near-normal anomalies were observed across much of the DRC, northern Angola, northern Namibia, most of Tanzania, Botswana, northern Mozambique, northern South Africa along the Botswana border, and the north-eastern parts of Madagascar. In contrast, isolated areas of north-eastern DRC, central Botswana, and northern Namibia recorded negative anomalies of approximately −3 °C [Figure 5, right].

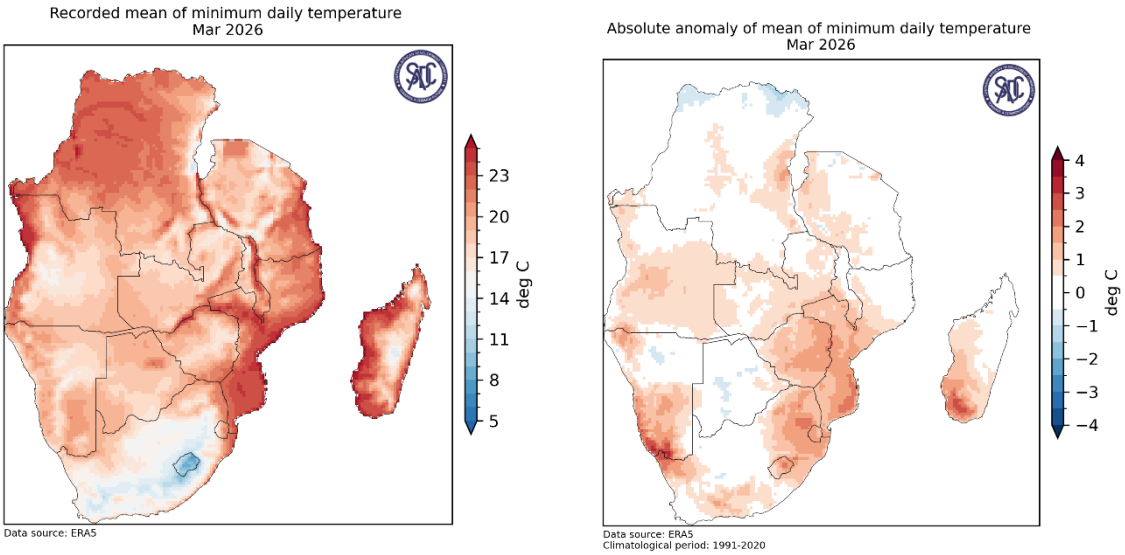

Figure 5: Observed average minimum temperature (left) and anomalies (right) for March 2026.

2.2 Maximum Temperature

During March 2026, mean maximum temperatures across much of the SADC region ranged between 33 °C and 35 °C. Lower mean maximum temperatures, ranging from 17 °C to 23 °C, were recorded over the eastern half of South Africa, including the Kingdom of Lesotho, parts of central Angola, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), isolated areas of Tanzania, and central Madagascar [Figure 6, left].

Mean maximum temperature anomalies during March 2026 were predominantly positive across north-western DRC, much of Angola, Namibia, Zambia, parts of central Mozambique, the southern tip of the subcontinent, and most of Madagascar, with anomalies reaching up to +4 °C. In contrast, negative anomalies of up to −4 °C were observed over Botswana, southern Zimbabwe, southern Mozambique, much of Tanzania, and eastern DRC [Figure 6, right].

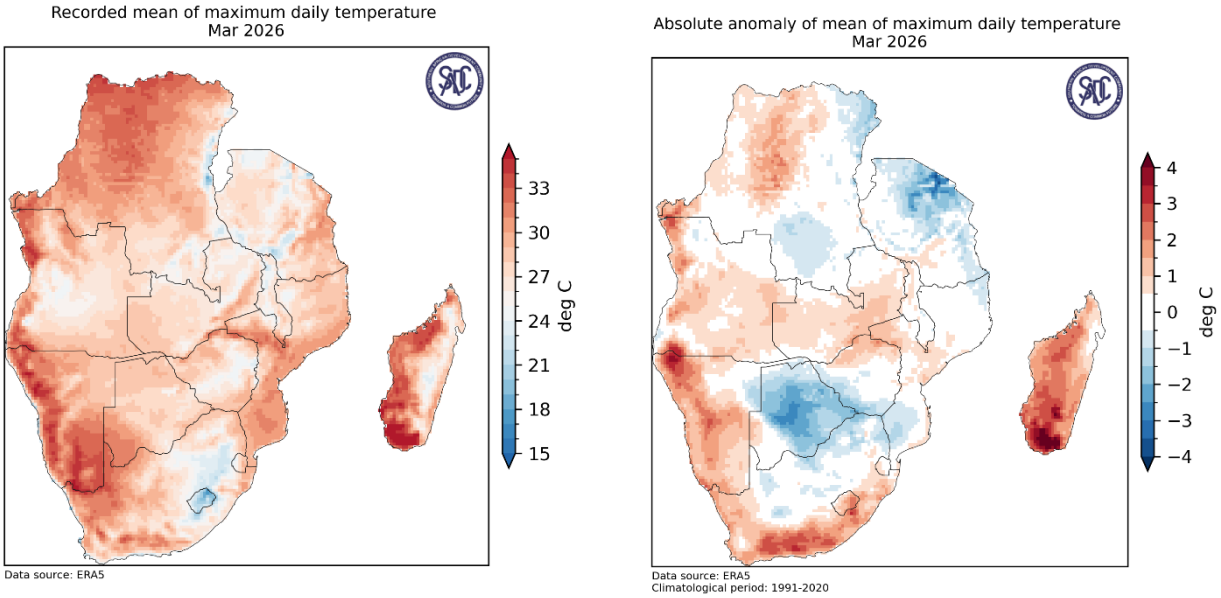

Figure 6: Observed maximum average temperature (left) and anomalies (right) for March 2026.

2.3 Heatwaves

Two types of heatwaves are distinguished in this analysis due to their differing impacts on human health and socio-economic sectors: daytime heatwaves, defined using maximum daytime temperatures, and night-time heatwaves, defined using minimum night-time temperatures.

Daytime heatwaves of less than 7 days were observed over isolated areas of western South Africa and Namibia, central Angola, north-western DRC, and parts of the north-eastern SADC region. Longer-duration daytime heatwaves, reaching up to 23 days, were recorded over north-western Angola and western Madagascar. Most of the remaining areas of the region did not experience daytime heatwaves [Figure 7, left].

Night-time heatwaves of less than 7 days were recorded over isolated areas of central DRC, central Angola, and the western fringes of Namibia and South Africa. In contrast, longer-duration night-time heatwaves of up to 15 days were observed across eastern South Africa, much of Mozambique, and south-western Madagascar. The remainder of the region did not experience significant night-time heatwave conditions [Figure 7, right].

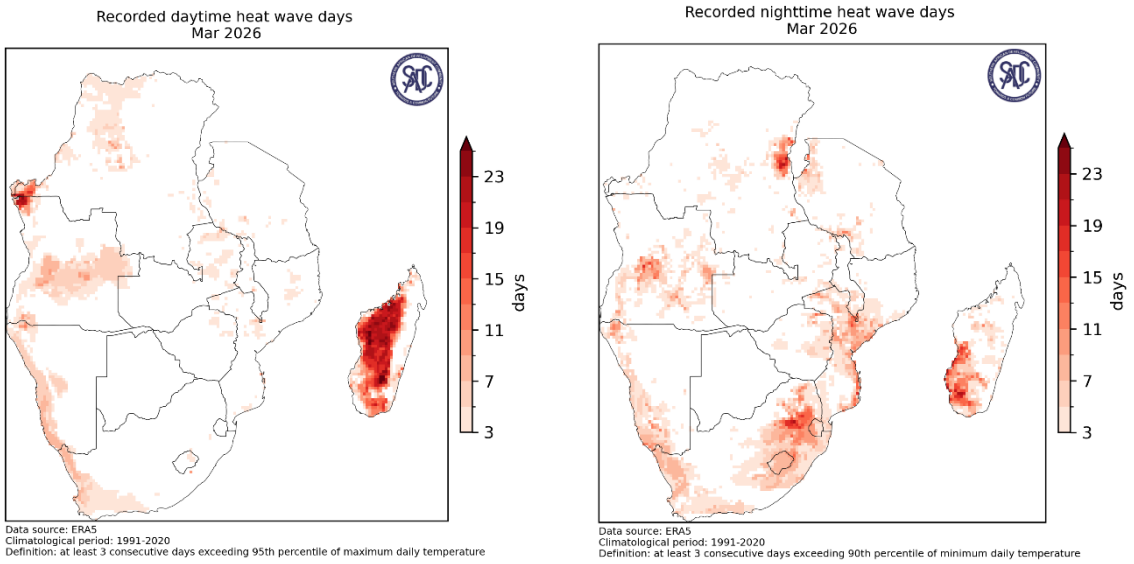

Figure 7: Heatwaves detected during the month of March 2026

3. REGIONAL MONTHLY OUTLOOKS

3.1 Rainfall Outlook

Based on the statistical multi-model ensemble forecast issued in February 2026, increased probabilities of above-normal rainfall are expected over the central parts of the subcontinent during April 2026, including northern South Africa, Botswana, most of Zimbabwe and Zambia, central Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, and eastern DRC. Conversely, below-normal rainfall is expected over isolated areas of north-eastern DRC, northern Angola, and the western fringes of South Africa. The remainder of the continental SADC region, as well as Madagascar, is expected to experience near-normal rainfall conditions [Figure 7].

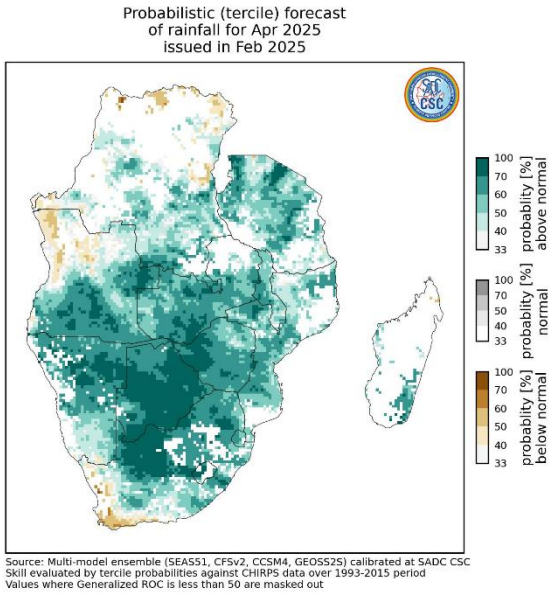

Figure 7: Rainfall probabilistic forecast for April 2026

3.2 Temperature Outlook

For April 2026, based on the multi-model ensemble forecast issued in February 2026, there is an increased likelihood of above-normal temperatures across much of northern DRC, Angola, Namibia, western South Africa, southern and western Tanzania, most of Mozambique, and Madagascar. Conversely, increased chances of below-normal temperatures are forecast over parts of the central SADC region, including Botswana, central South Africa, southern Zimbabwe, and areas extending from eastern Zambia through Malawi to western Mozambique [Figure 8].

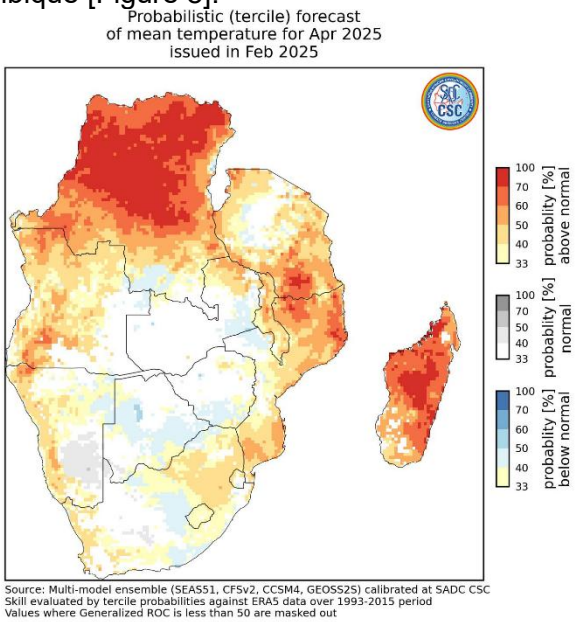

Figure 8: Temperature probabilistic forecast for April 2026

NOTE:

This bulletin used CHIRPS and ERA5 data. While these datasets are considered broadly representative to local conditions over the SADC region, the results presented here October differ from those derived using local observations from Member States.

Users are therefore, urged to consult the local National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) for local conditions and detailed interpretation of the contents of this bulletin.

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