



NECJOGHA

Network
of Climate
Journalists
of the Greater
Horn of Africa

REPORT FOR THE SUB NATIONAL CLIMATE CAFÉ HELD ON NOVEMBER 18th, 2019 AT HURSEY RESORT HOTEL, SOROTI, UGANDA



A group photo of participants who attended the Soroti Climate Café.

1.0 Introduction

The Network of Climate Journalists of the Greater Horn of Africa (NECJOGHA) held a sub-national climate café at Hursey Resort Hotel, Soroti in eastern Uganda on Monday, November 18, 2019. The theme of this climate café was “**The Climate Impacts on the Teso – Karamoja Region**”

A climate café is a platform that brings together producers of climate information, communication, and end users of climate information to discuss and bring their expertise together to accelerate the demand and use of climate information.

The climate café also gives a chance for the media to rub shoulders and interact with the providers of climate information. This gives a chance to each party to iron out its differences with the other.

Climate cafés are solely an idea developed by the Network for Climate Journalists of the Great Horn of Africa (NECJOGHA). NECJOGHA brings together journalists who cover climate in the 11 countries of the Greater Horn of Africa namely Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

2.0 Attendance

The Soroti climate café was attended by 38 participants who were drawn from the 10 districts of the Teso region and one boarder district of Karamoja. The participants were carefully selected different sectors impacted by climate namely agriculture, fisheries and pastoralism. The media and civil society organisations (CSO) attended as disseminators of climate information. The Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA) was represented by four officials with one from the headquarters in Kampala and three from the Soroti Flying School. It was also attended by academicians from universities in the Teso sub region.

3.0 Official opening

The café was officially opened by the Resident District Commissioner of Soroti, Wilberforce Tukei who urged farmers to use weather information for planning and making right decisions.

“Many farmers lost their crops in the region after the heavy rains in October that left their gardens water-logged. Had they got climate information in time they should have found ways of adapting,” Tukei said.

He also thanked NECJOGHA for taking the climate café to Soroti at a time when the farmers most need climate information because it is raining.

He however asked the Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA) to improve on the accuracy of their forecast and to always release it on time.

4.0 UNMA presentation



Bataze of UNMA gives his presentation during the Soroti Climate Café.

The first presentation was by James Bataze a senior meteorologist with the Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA). Bataze's presentation was on the rainfall performance and seasonal forecast for SOND and the November forecast.

4.1.1 Products generated by UNMA

Bataze started his presentation by naming the products generated by UNMA which include;

- Hourly weather forecasts especially for aviation in the country.
- Six hourly weather forecasts
- Daily weather forecasts
- Marine forecasts
- Weekly weather forecasts
- Ten day weather bulletin (dekadal)
- Alerts and special forecasts

- Monthly weather updates
- Seasonal Weather forecasts
- Climate projections

4.1.2 March-April and May (MAM) 2019 rainfall forecast

Bataze then went on to review the MAM 2019 weather forecast and said the season started off well as predicted for early onset of the rainfall season across the country.

- At the beginning of March 2019, a Tropical cyclone INDAI developed in the Indian Ocean, and persisted for 3 weeks becoming a super cyclone, hence creating a massive low pressure depression.
- This led to the reversal of the flow of the winds from our region towards the Indian Ocean which caused prolonged dry conditions during the whole month not only in Uganda but the whole of the Greater Horn Africa.
- After the land fall of the Tropical cyclone that hit Beira City along the Mozambique channel, it continued to proceed inland as far as Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia where caused great destruction of life and property.

In April after the disappearance of the cyclone the weather conditions normalised, the wind pattern changed and started blowing from Indian Ocean as (South Easterlies) hence bring rain to our region.

4.1.3 Rainfall updates issued for MAM 2019

On the rainfall alerts issued for MAM 2019, Bataze said during MAM, UNMA issued five weather updates namely;

- An alert about the development of the tropical cyclone IDAI was given.
- In March an update of dry conditions that was persisting in the country was issued.
- April rainfall outlook was issued
- May 2019 rainfall outlook was issued.

4.1.4 September-October-November and December (SOND) 2019 rainfall forecast

Bataze then went on to the SOND rainfall forecast and said that the September to December (SOND) constitutes the second major rainfall season over most parts of Uganda. He explained that during the 53rd Climate Outlook Forum (COF53) for the Greater Horn of Africa that was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from August 26th to 28th August, 2019 the national, regional and international climate scientists reviewed the prevailing/current and expected state of the global climate systems and their implications on the performance of seasonal rainfall over the eastern Africa region. It was observed that the major

physical conditions likely to influence weather over Uganda for the forecast period of September to December 2019 are as follows;

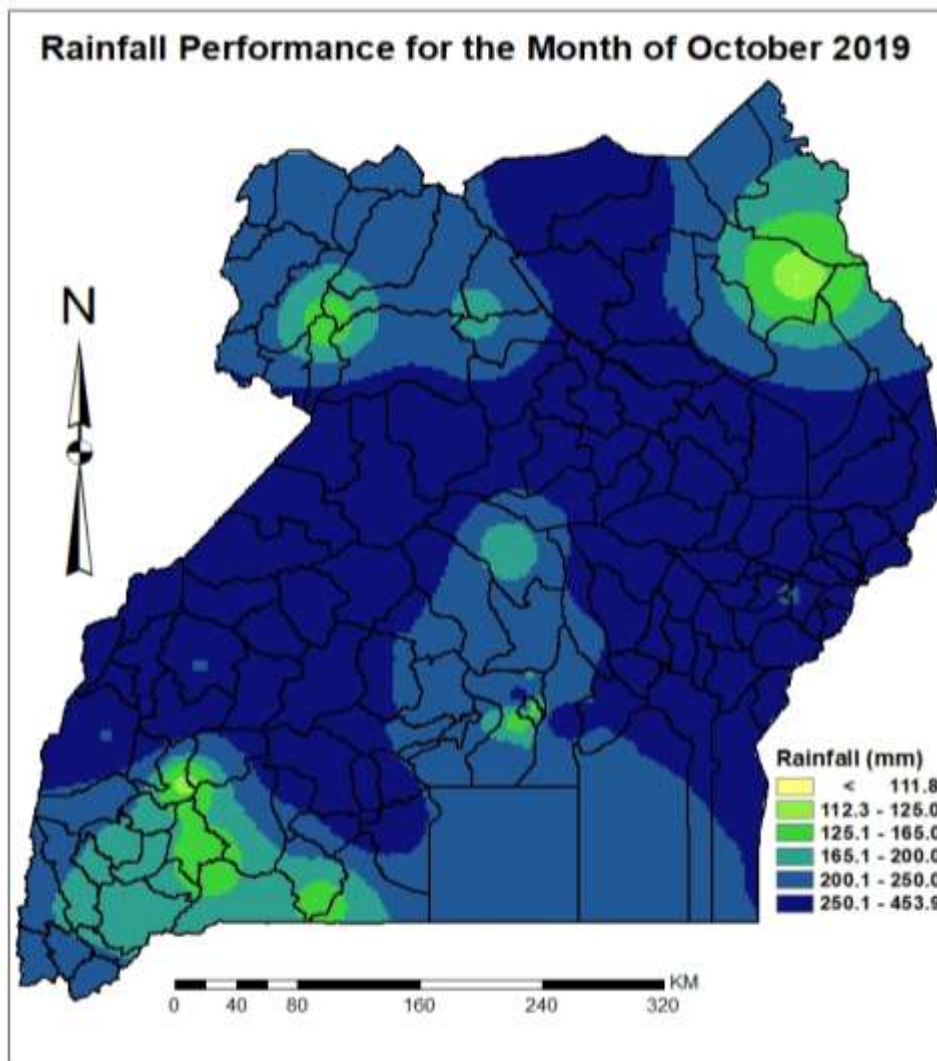
- The predicted warmer (positive phase of) the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD).
- Natural ENSO conditions in the central and eastern Pacific
- The influence of regional circulation patterns, topographical features and large inland water bodies

4.1.5 Review of rainfall performance in September 2019

Bataze then went on to review the rainfall performance for September 2019. He explained that the rainfall performance in the month of September 2019 indicates that most stations across the country recorded above average rainfall.

He also named the weather stations that had received most rainfall and those that had received the least.

4.1.6 Review of rainfall performance in October 2019



Bataze told participants that during the month of October, the country generally received above normal (above average) rainfall. He said that in some areas the amount of rainfall received in October surpassed the seasonal Long Term Means (LTMs).

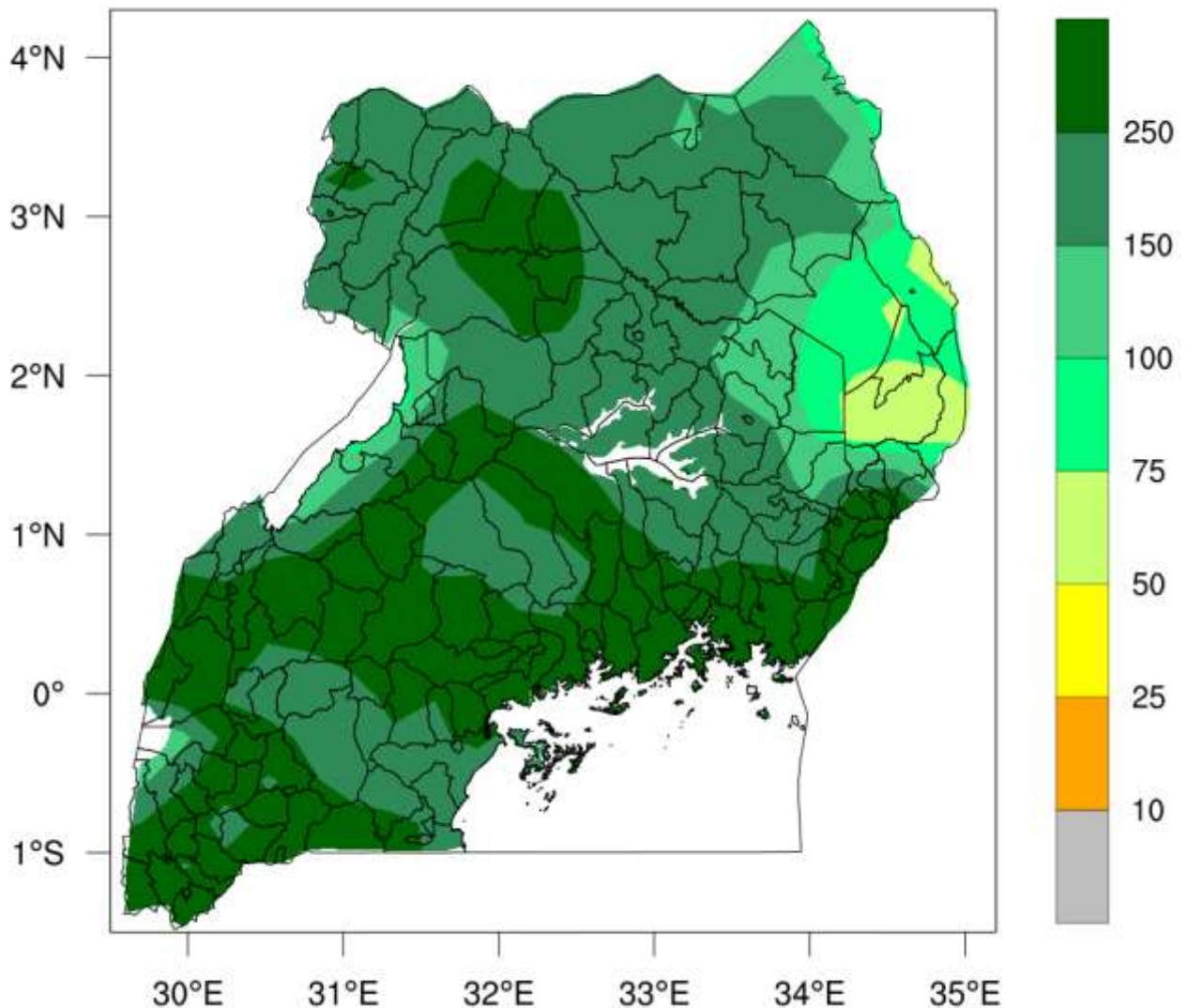
4.1.7 Summary of rainfall performance in September and October 2019

Bataze explained that the rainfall performance during September and October was in line with the SOND 2019 seasonal rainfall outlook which predicted above normal/above average rainfall. He said that the rainfall was characterized by heavy storms that led to floods in several areas especially Teso and around Rwenzori region. He also stressed that the month of October recorded more rainfall than September.

4.1.8 November 2019 rainfall outlook

Bataze said that the outlook for November 2019 indicates that most parts of the country are likely to continue experiencing rainfall with possible relaxation compared to October over the forecast period. He however said a reduction of rainfall is expected over the North Eastern parts of Uganda.

Rainfall Forecast (mm): for November 2019



4.1.9 Further rainfall outlook beyond November 2019

Bataze told the participants that expected rainfall performance beyond November indicates a reduction in the rainfall performance over most parts of the country in particular Northern, Eastern and North Eastern regions,

The cessation of the seasonal rains is expected to be around mid December 2019.

4.1.10 Reactions to UNMA presentation

- There is a lot of information on forecasting but there is a need for media owners to support these forecasts to run and also be told that weather forecasts don't have to be 100% accurate. UNMA also needs to disseminate climate information as much as well.
- Climate information is available but it does not reach the grassroots for instance the people of Bulambuli who are affected by landslides don't get information in time whether there will be too much rainfall hence leading to landslides.

- Of all the three rainfall forecasts made by UNMA i.e. MAM, JJA and SOND, SOND has so far proved to be the most accurate because almost all areas of the country have got above normal rains. UNMA needs to document these successes. UNMA should also release the forecasts in time for the end users especially farmers to plan well.
- How reliable are the UNMA equipment and why is it that their predictions are sometimes inaccurate?

4.1.10.1 UNMA responds to reactions

- Weather and climate information is for the community but because the weather in the tropical regions is not harsh people here don't take climate information like in Europe or America where they have harsh climate.
- Dissemination of climate information is a big challenge and there is a need to get as many stakeholders as possible and some of this is being achieved through the NECJOGHA climate cafes. Since NECJOGHA is bringing together the media, it is going to be easier.
- Next year UNMA has a project coming where they are going to train journalists from all parts of the country on the dissemination of climate information.

5.0 Panel discussion



Panelists from the different climate related sectors during the Soroti Climate Café.

The panel discussants included Dr. Mary Gorret Kulume, the District Veterinary Officer for Napak who discussed on pastoralism; Paul Lubwama of Bukedde FM and Helen Ogunyu of Etop FM who discussed for the media; Kokoi Rosette, the District Agricultural Officer for Soroti who discussed for agriculture; Enyaku Michael a senior fisheries officer for Soroti who discussed for fisheries; and Ediau Francis of Church of Uganda Teso Diocese Development Office (TEDDO) who discussed for the civil society organisations.

5.1 Media

The presentation for the media was made by Paul Lubwama of Bukedde FM and Aguyo Helen Okello of Etop FM.

Lubwama who said he gets his climate information from UNMA emails and the NECJOGHA WhatsApp mentoring group. Lubwama said when he is giving out information to their listener he stresses to them that the forecasts are a probability and what he says doesn't happen. He, however, said he tells the listeners that it's better to follow the forecast and be prepared. Lubwama gave an example when UNMA

forecast heavy rains in Kampala for three days and it didn't happen he told his listeners that it would have been better to be prepared for the heavy rain.

On her part, Aguyo who said she has been writing climate stories for over 10 years said she has been getting her information from UNMA. She said when she is doing a story may about floods due to too much rain, she brings in the UNMA forecast to show it was accurate if it predicted above normal rains like the one for SOND.

5.2 Agriculture

The presentation for agriculture was made by Ms Kokoi Rosette, the District Agricultural Officer for Soroti. Kokoi said she is into tree planting project but was first messed up by the weather until she got in touch with a meteorologist who provided her with weather forecasts. She said that she now uses the forecast to plan well for instance if she learns there is going to be a drought in the coming months she harvests water and buys enough petrol for her water pumps to enable her do irrigation. Kokoi said as an agriculture officer she has been also getting climate information from the district agriculture office and the production office.

5.3 Fisheries

The presentation for fisheries was made by Enyaku Michael a senior fisheries officer for Soroti. Enyaku said they get their climate information from UNMA and the Soroti Flying School. He said the climate information helps them to plan. Enyaku also said the climate information will tell them if for instance it's a year of El Nino which has an impact on fishing as there will be a lot of fish. Since too much rain also affects roads, Enyaku said this would also affect the transportation of fish from the landing sites to the markets. He also said the breeding of fish takes place during El Nino. Regarding the dissemination of climate information Enyaku said fishermen like farmers want to know when the rain is starting, how it will be distributed and when it will be ending.

5.4 Pastoralism

The presentation for the pastoralism was made by Dr. Mary Gorret Kulume, the District Veterinary Officer for Napak. She said they get climate information from the district agriculture and production offices. Kulume said they use climate information to make their disaster plans. She said for instance if little rain is forecast they know there will be drought and they plan for relief during famine. She said they also share the climate information with the people they serve in the villages especially farmers. Kulume said most people in Teso have turned to agro-pastoralism where they look after cows during the dry periods and practice farming during the rainy season. She therefore said they need information to know which of the two activities they are going to engage in and at what time.

5.5 CSOs

The presentation for the pastoralism was made by Ediau Francis of Church of Uganda Teso Diocese Development Office (TEDDO). He said as TEDDO they always get their climate information from the natural resource offices at the districts. Ediau said they also work with the district agricultural offices. He

said that after getting the information basically for early warning purposes, they use the church structures to disseminate it down to the end users who are mostly farmers. He said they have now decided to get the climate information from UNMA because what they were getting from the districts was not timely. He said that like his colleague said what farmers are interested in is when is it going to start raining, how much rain it will be and when it will end which calls for better packaging of the climate information to reflect this.

6. 0 Presentation on NECJOGHA mentoring forums and website

This presentation was made by the Documentation and Publication Officer of NECJOGHA, Andrew Kaggwa who also doubles as the lead mentor on the NECJOGHA WhatsApp mentoring forums.

Kaggwa briefed participants that NECJOGHA has three WhatsApp mentoring groups each c East for Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda which are the countries under the Weatherwise project which NECJOGHA is implementing now. He said these groups help to develop story ideas and generate stories for the NECJOGHA website www.necjogha.com.

As things stand now, Kaggwa said the Uganda group had 80 participants followed by Tanzania which has 67* participants and Kenya with 37 participants. He encouraged members to sign to and join the Uganda group.

7.0 Way forward

After the presentations there was a general discussion on the improvement on the dissemination of climate information:

- Participants agreed to join the NECJOGHA WhatsApp Mentoring group for mentorship and to continue the climate discussion even after the end of the NECJOGHA Wiser project which is sponsoring climate cafes. By the end of the cafe 20 members had signed up and have already been added to the mentoring group.
- There should be an engagement between media owners and the generators of climate information to discuss better ways of disseminating climate information and giving space and airtime to climate stories.
- Bataze informed the participants that from next year UNMA has a project where they are going to train journalists in all parts of Uganda to improve on the dissemination of climate information.
- Civil society organisations concerned with climate and related sectors were also asked to organise regular workshops to empower the media on the coverage of climate stories.
- UNMA was asked to release timely and user friendly information to help the population on their adaptation to climate change.