

THE REPUBLIC



OF THE GAMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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UPDATE ON 2018 SEASONAL RAINFALL FORECAST OVER THE GAMBIA

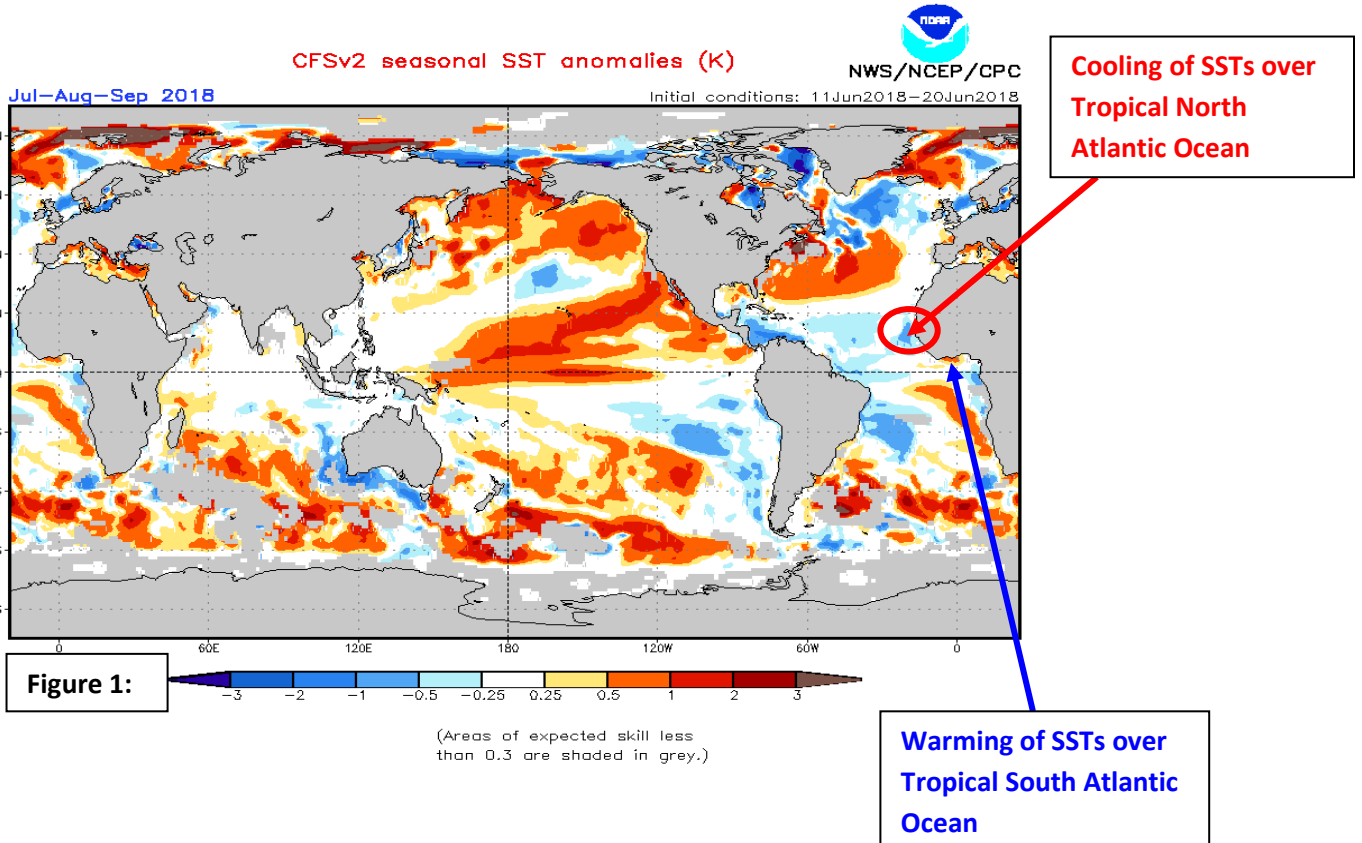
The Department of Water Resources is pleased to present the **update** on Seasonal rainfall forecast for 2018 Wet Season. To understand the forecast, the following facts must be noted:

- Seasonal forecasting relies on prediction of the evolution of Sea Surface Temperatures (SSTs) over the Global Oceans and may not reflect all the various factors that influence regional and national climate systems;
- The forecast is relevant only for the entire season and within relatively large areas, since local and monthly variations may occur;
- Finally, the forecast is only valid for the combined period of July, August and September (JAS), which constitute about 80 per cent of the total seasonal rainfall precipitation in The Gambia.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE EVOLUTION OF SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURES

The current state of the evolution of the Global Oceans as depicted below in figure 1 indicates the cooling of Sea Surface Temperatures (SSTs) over Tropical North Atlantic Ocean. This cooling has been experiencing during the past three (3) months and will persist through the period of JAS. Consequently, it causes depletion of moisture concentration and hence suppresses precipitation over western part of Sahel region including the Gambia.

The above average SSTs around Gulf of Guinea states is also a mechanism that disrupts the inflow of Monsoon moisture into the Gambia and its environs, hence reducing the intensity of precipitation in the country.



UPDATE FORECAST: The update on 2018 rainy season is the same with the initial forecast of **Below Normal Rainfall category**. That means a maximum precipitation value of about **580mm** or less for JAS is expected in The Gambia. This decision is based on the best estimate of the impact of the various factors affecting rainfall in the country, notably the evolution of the Sea Surface Temperatures over the Global Oceans as indicated above in figure 1.

SEASONAL VARIABILITY

On Seasonal Variability for late onset and cessation, the country has already experienced **late arrival of the rains** across the entire country with first major downpour recorded on the 27th June 2018.