



## PRESS RELEASE

### Variant Rainfall Patterns across the Greater Horn of Africa Region

**The consensus regional climate outlook for the next three months shows that the rains are likely to be near normal over most parts of the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) region**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016 - Kigali, Rwanda:** According to the consensus regional climate outlook for the March to May 2016 rainfall season released in Kigali on Tuesday last week, the far northern region of GHA including northern parts of Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti are expected to remain dry.

The rest of Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, northern half of South Sudan, northern half of Ethiopia, and northern Somalia including the southern and eastern parts of the GHA comprising most of Tanzania, extending to southern, eastern and coastal parts of Kenya, as well as south western parts of Somalia, is expected to experience near normal rainfall tending to below normal over the same period of time.

The Equatorial parts of GHA including the whole of Uganda, Rwanda and most of Burundi, parts of northern, western and central Kenya, southern half of South Sudan and southern half of Ethiopia and central parts of Somalia are anticipated to receive near normal to enhanced rainfall during the March and May 2016 season.

The forum brought together approximately 150 climate scientists and experts from various sectors including Food Security, Agriculture, Livestock and Water in the GHA region. The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources of Rwanda; **Dr Vincent Biruta** officially opened the **two day forum**. The UNDP Country Director Rwanda; **Mr Stephen Rodrigues** also graced the opening ceremony. They both commended the Governments which, together with development partners, made available significant resources for preparedness and early action.

Speaking when he released the regional outlook on Tuesday, the Director General of the Rwanda Meteorological Agency, Mr John Ntaganda Semafara said that the outlook is only relevant for this season. He noted that local and month-to-month variations might occur as the March to May 2016 season progresses.

In his opening remarks, Mr Zachary Atheru, the representative of ICPAC Director stated, *“Resilience building to cope with climate variability and change is key to the long-term prosperity of our region. This is the reason IGAD is keen to implement all aspects of climate change including climate change science, mitigation and adaptation.”*

Some of the lessons learned which were captured during this meeting include;

- Facts about El Niño should be made clear, e.g. that El Niño builds up over time and its impact is spread out and not just a one day phenomenon.
- Messages should help people/public to understand and interpret seasonal forecasts by giving the expected start of rains and expected impact by areas.
- There should be improved coordination between climate information providers, to agree on what messages are sent out to avoid confusing users and the general public.
- There is need to improve partnership between early warning and early action by state and non-state actors.
- Systematically documenting what has worked and what hasn't is key as well as to develop guidelines for future references to stakeholders.

The Global climate centres under the coordination of World Meteorological Organisation will continue to provide global climate updates, ICPAC will also provide regional updates on regular

basis while the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) will provide detailed national and sub-national updates.

The Forty Second Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF42) was convened by ICPAC and sponsored by UNDP, USAID, World bank and HELIX; hosted by the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwanda Meteorology Agency, to formulate a consensus regional climate outlook for the March to May 2016 rainfall season over the GHA region. The GHA region comprises of Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

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**About ICPAC:**

ICPAC is the specialised IGAD institution which covers IGAD member states plus Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. ICPAC provides climate information in the GHA regions to support environment management and disaster risk reduction for sustainable development. ICPAC extends its services to four main sectors including water, agriculture, and health and disaster risk management.