REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORESTRY
KENYA METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES AUTHORITY, MERU COUNTY OFFICE
P. O. Box 493 Meru, Kenya.
Phone : 0729287479/ 0735809085
E-mail: nthuni@gmail.com
E-mail: director@meteo.go.ke, info@meteo.go.ke **Website:** http://www.meteo.go.ke

TECHNICAL STATEMENT MERU COUNTY OND 2026 CLIMATE OUTLOOK

Issue Date: 2nd SEPTEMBER 2026

1. CLIMATE OUTLOOK FOR THE OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER (OND) 2026 "SHORT RAINS" SEASON

1.1 Rainfall Outlook for the October-November-December (OND), 2026

The "Short Rains" (October–November–December, OND) season is an important rainfall season in Kenya, especially over Meru where it contributes to over 50% of the total annual rainfall. More than 700 mm of rainfall is received in some parts of the county during this season.

The season occurs due to the southward migration of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ). Its duration and performance are influenced by the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), which enhances rainfall when in the positive phase. The ongoing strong El Niño event also enhances rainfall when it occurs concurrently with a positive IOD. On shorter timescales, rainfall intensity is influenced by the Madden–Julian Oscillation (MJO) and the development of tropical cyclones over the Southwest Indian Ocean.

The Climate Outlook for the October–December 2026 "Short Rains" season indicates that above-average rainfall is expected over entire county of Meru.
See figure 1 and 2

According to the most recent update, the 2026 El Niño event continues to intensify across the central-eastern equatorial Pacific. The traditional Niño 3.4 index shows a clear and sustained increase, with the most recent seasonal mean reaching +1.51 °C during May–July 2026. and the July monthly value rising to +2.03 °C. The latest weekly Niño 3.4 index, taken on 12 August 2026, reached +2.7 °C. These observations indicate that El Niño is strengthening further and evolving toward a very strong event.

The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently neutral. As of 23 August 2026, the weekly IOD index stood at +0.17°C which is below the positive IOD threshold (+0.4°C). Sustained values above this threshold are required for eight consecutive weeks before a positive IOD event is considered established. The current IOD value is expected to increase in magnitude and surpass the threshold from September 2026 although some uncertainty remains regarding its timing and strength. The maximum predicted IOD value for the season is +0.7, which is closer to the level observed in 2015 than to those recorded in 2023 or 1997. The Kenya Meteorological Service Authority (KMSA) will continue to closely monitor El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and IOD conditions.

1.2 Expected Distribution of the OND Rainfall, Onset and Cessation Dates

1.2.1 Distribution

The predicted onsets, cessations, and distribution of rainfall were derived from dynamical models and statistical analysis of the selected analogue years, which showed similar characteristics to the current year, and are indicated in **Table 1.**

The analogue (similar) year is 2015 based on the most recent evolution and prediction of both the ENSO and IOD. The rainfall outcomes for this analogue year (2015), is for reference only and should not be interpreted as the forecast. Analogue years provide a sense of the rainfall outcomes that can occur under broadly similar global climate conditions.

The OND 2026 rainfall is expected to be fairly well distributed, both in time and space, over several parts of the county. This season will be marked by prolonged wet spells and occasional isolated storms over several parts of the county.

1.2.2 Onset and Cessation

Table 1: Expected Onset and Cessation for the OND 2026 Rains

Counties	Onset Dates	Cessation Dates	Distribution
Meru, Embu and Tharaka-Nithi	2nd to 3rd week of October	Continues into January	Fair to good

NB: Updates on the onset, distribution, and cessation of rainfall will be provided regularly through weekly, monthly forecasts as the season approaches. These updates will offer detailed insights into any changes and developments in rainfall patterns to keep stakeholders informed and support timely decision-making.

1.3 Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) forecast

The SPI forecast for the October–November–December (OND) 2026 season indicates that the probability of the occurrence of mild, moderate or severe drought events is low over most parts of the county. **Figure 4**.

1.4 OND 2026 Temperature Outlook

October-November-December Temperature Climatology

The October-November-December season in Meru is generally warm with mean temperatures ranging from about 12°C to 27°C across the County

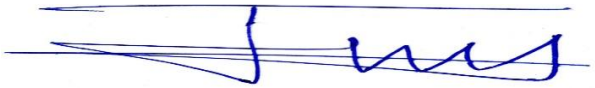
The warm temperatures are due to the southward migration of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) that is associated with warm humid air. During this season, day-to-night temperature variations is generally small across much of Meru as illustrated **in figure 5a.**

1.5 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE OND 2026 RAINS

The expected enhanced rainfall during the months of October to December rainfall season is expected to have both negative and positive impacts across various sectors. The most likely impacts on various sectors will be highlighted by the sector leads.

NB: There are intra-seasonal drivers of variability, such as tropical cyclones and the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO), that are only predictable at shorter lead times. It is therefore imperative to stay up to date with subsequent forecasts and updates.

This outlook should be used together with the 24-hour, 5-day, 7day, monthly, special forecasts and regular updates/advisories issued by this Authority as well as weekly and monthly county forecasts developed and availed by County Meteorological Offices.



Justin Murithi

Meru County Director of KENYA METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE AUTHORITY

Annexes

Figure 1, October to December Climatology

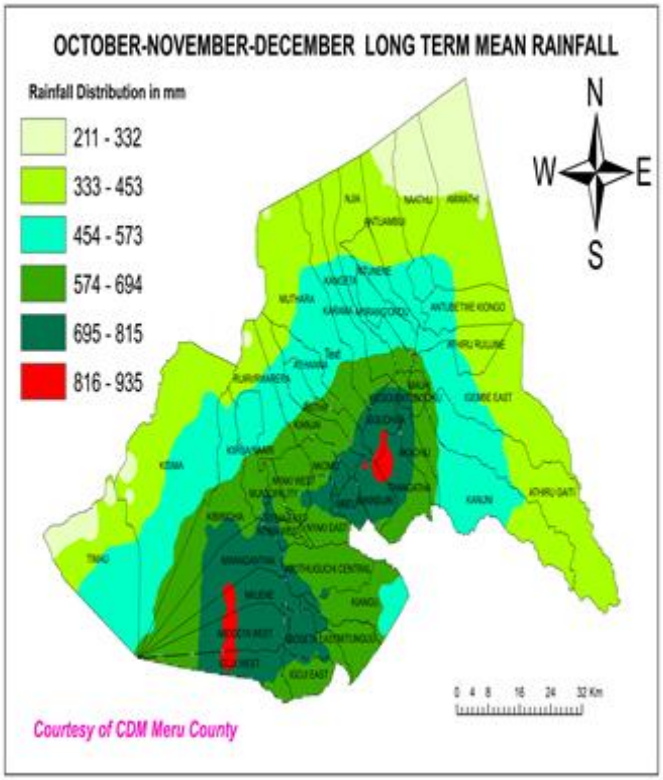
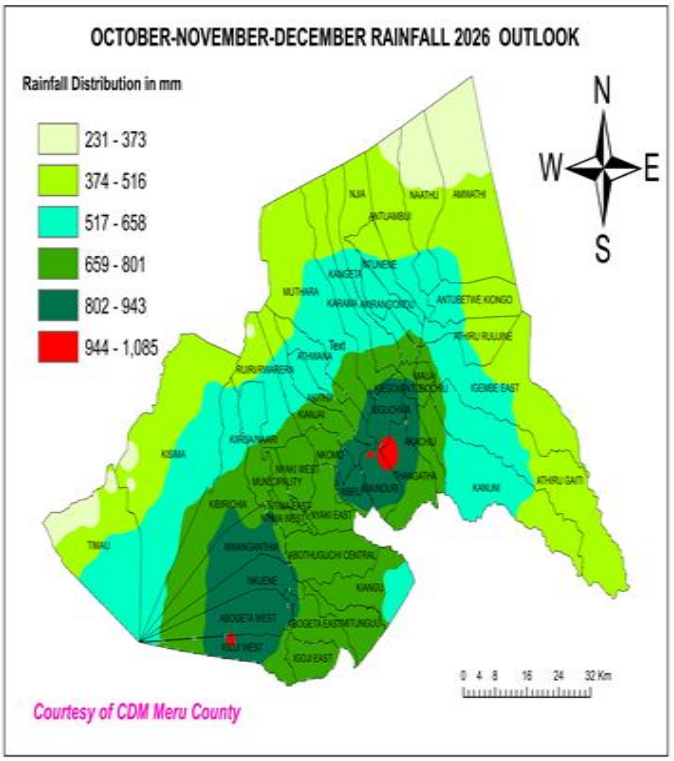


Figure 2 : OND outlook 2026 Rainfall



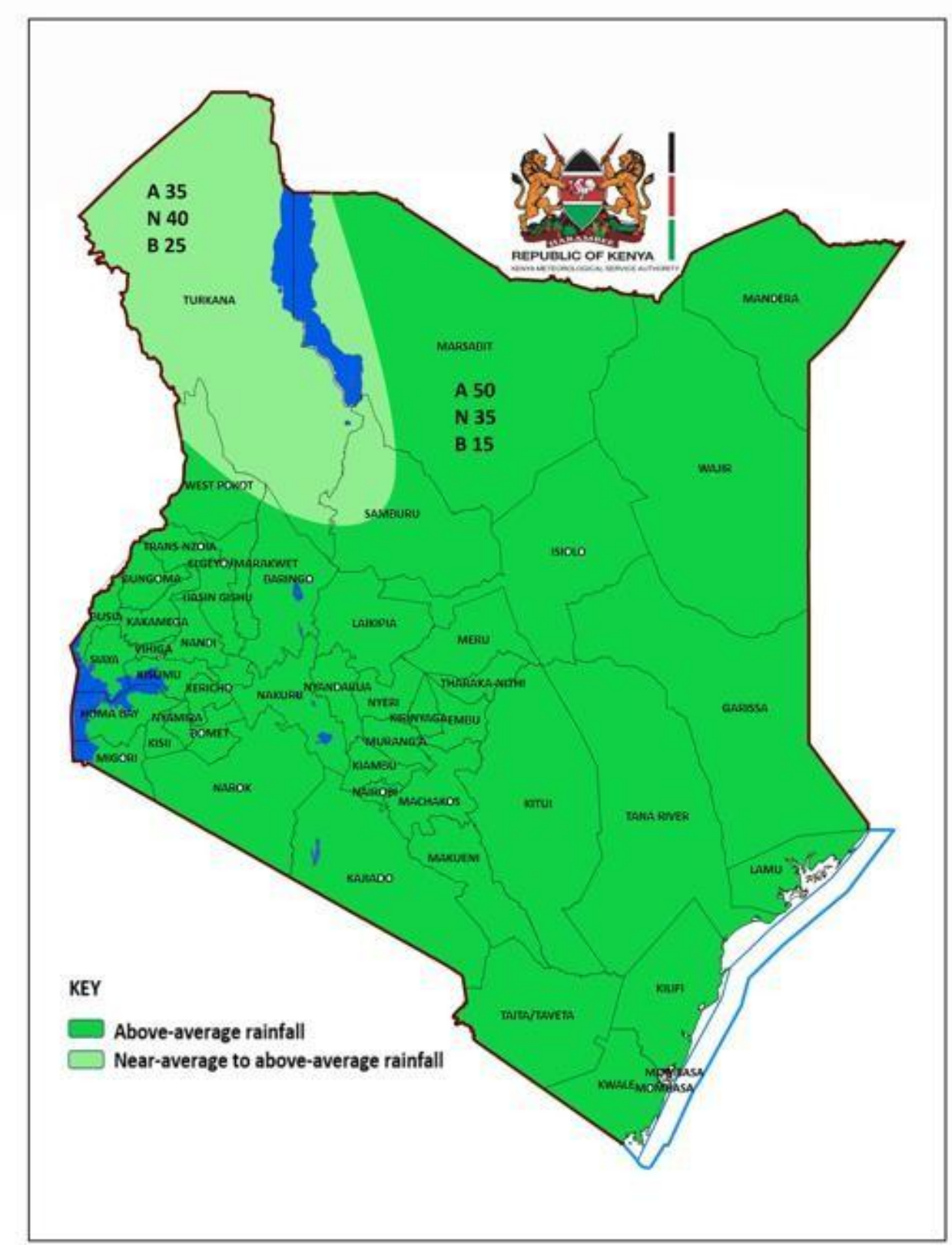
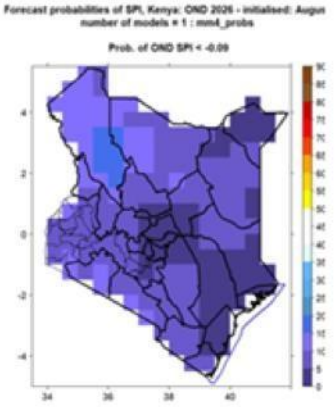
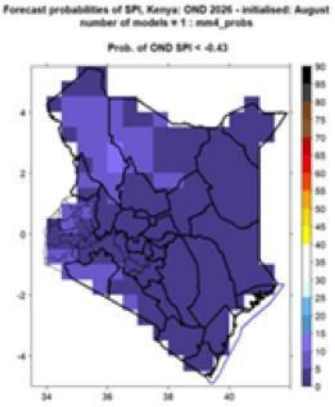


Figure 2: OND 2026 Rainfall Outlook National

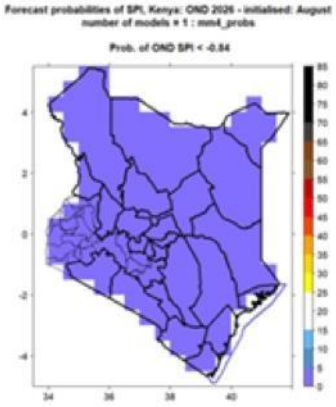
SPI



< -0.09
1.5% to 18%:
0.4 times the climatological chance, or lower. Lowest chance in east



< -0.43
0.2% to 12%:
0.35 times the climatological chance or lower. Lowest chance central and east



< -0.98
0% to 5%:
0.2 times the climatological chance or lower.

Figure 4: OND 2026 SPI Forecast