



## **Update on Current Flood Situation on the Juba and Shabelle Rivers**

**Issued 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2009**

The short Deyr 2009 rains began in the second week of October with widespread coverage over the Juba and Shabelle catchments. This came as a relief to the basins which have been experiencing drought conditions due to poor rainfall performance over the last three rainy seasons ([click here](#)). Lower Juba received the highest amount of rainfall in the second week of October with more than 70mm cumulative rainfall in five days. Reports from the Ethiopian National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA) in Jijiga indicated high rainfall in the Ethiopian highlands over the last few days. This has in turn translated into increased river levels on the two rivers. Today, the observed river level on Shabelle at Belet Weyne is 6.10m, which is 40cm below the moderate flood risk level. At Luuq on the Juba River, today's level is 3.52m which is 1.98m below the moderate flooding risk level.

The rainfall forecast for the coming week, (26th to 30th October) points towards moderate to heavy rains within the two catchments both in Somalia and the Ethiopia (See Figure 1). Changing soil moisture conditions within Somalia is also foreseen due to the moderate to heavy rain forecast for the coming week. With the rainfall forecast and given the current situation there is likelihood of moderate risk of flooding on the Shabelle towards the end of the coming week. However the extent of inundated areas could be worsened by weak river embankments and by numerous cases of farmers cutting river banks for irrigation purposes. It is important to note that much of water spilling over the dozens of cuts or embankment deficiencies could be easily contained within the river embankments, had they been properly maintained. This however requires large, probably long term project.

The rainfall forecast for the week 3<sup>rd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November indicates a slight reduction of rainfall activities in both catchments. Flood forecasts extending beyond the above two-week period would depend on longer term meteorological forecasts, which do not exist. The only tentative meteorological forecast is the seasonal Climate Outlook for the Horn of Africa, which predicts 45% probability of above average seasonal rainfall for the Juba and Shabelle catchments. This means a good rainy season. Extreme floods however, do not necessarily go together with an extended rainy season, because they depend mainly on the short term intensity of rainfall and not the total amount of rainfall in the season.



Somalia Water and Land Information Management  
Ngecha Road, Spring Valley. P.O Box 30470-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.  
Tel +254 020 4000300 - Fax +254 020 4000333,  
Email: [enquiries@faoswalim.org](mailto:enquiries@faoswalim.org) Website: <http://www.faoswalim.org>.



**Funded by the European Union and implemented by the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

**Figure 1: Rainfall forecast 26<sup>th</sup> October to 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Source: NOAA)**

