**KEY MESSAGES**

- The onset of the long season (March to July) rains occurred in early March in the bi-modal zone and has been gradually expanding northward to reach parts of the southern Sahelian zone in late April.

- Conditions for wet sowing/planting were normally on time in mid-March for the bi-modal areas and generally on time in April for the Guinean zone outside the bi-modal areas.

- Agrometeorological conditions have generally been favorable since mid-March for normal development of planted crops in the bi-modal and southern part of the Sudanian-Guinean zones with the exception of the extreme western part of the zone where the season has yet to start.

**UPDATE ON SEASONAL PROGRESS**

- The ITF’s (Intertropical Front) northward migration started in early March and is now positioned between 10.0 and 13.0 degrees of latitude in late April. It is located slightly (1-2 degrees) south of its climatological position.

- Over the bi-modal zone, and the Sudanian-Guinean zone, where the onset of rains has been effective, April total rainfall amounts (Figure 1) from the first dekad of April are mostly average to above average (Figure 2). Areas affected by severe deficits are limited to a small portion in southwestern Cote d'Ivoire, southeastern Nigeria, southwestern Cameroon and the central area of the CAR.

- Rainfall analysis indicates that moisture conditions have been generally adequate and favorable for the development of planted crops over most of the Bi-modal and Sudanian-Guinean zones. The aforementioned severe deficits, however, are not concerning at this time because it is either too early in the season for deficits to seriously affect crops, or because crop water requirements in some affected areas are met even under severe deficit conditions.

- According to the short and medium term forecasts from NOAA/CPC, rainfall is expected to continue expanding northward normally and no significant dry spell is expected within the next two weeks. The ITF is expected to make significant progress in its northward migration during this time period.
FORECASTS

- The seasonal forecast from NOAA-NCEP for the next three-month periods (June-August, July-September and August-October) calls for average to above average rainfall over most of the Sahel and below average rainfall over portions of Senegal during the June-August period and over portions of Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea countries for all three periods (June-August, July-September, August-October).

SEASONAL CALENDAR IN A TYPICAL YEAR

Source: FEWS NET