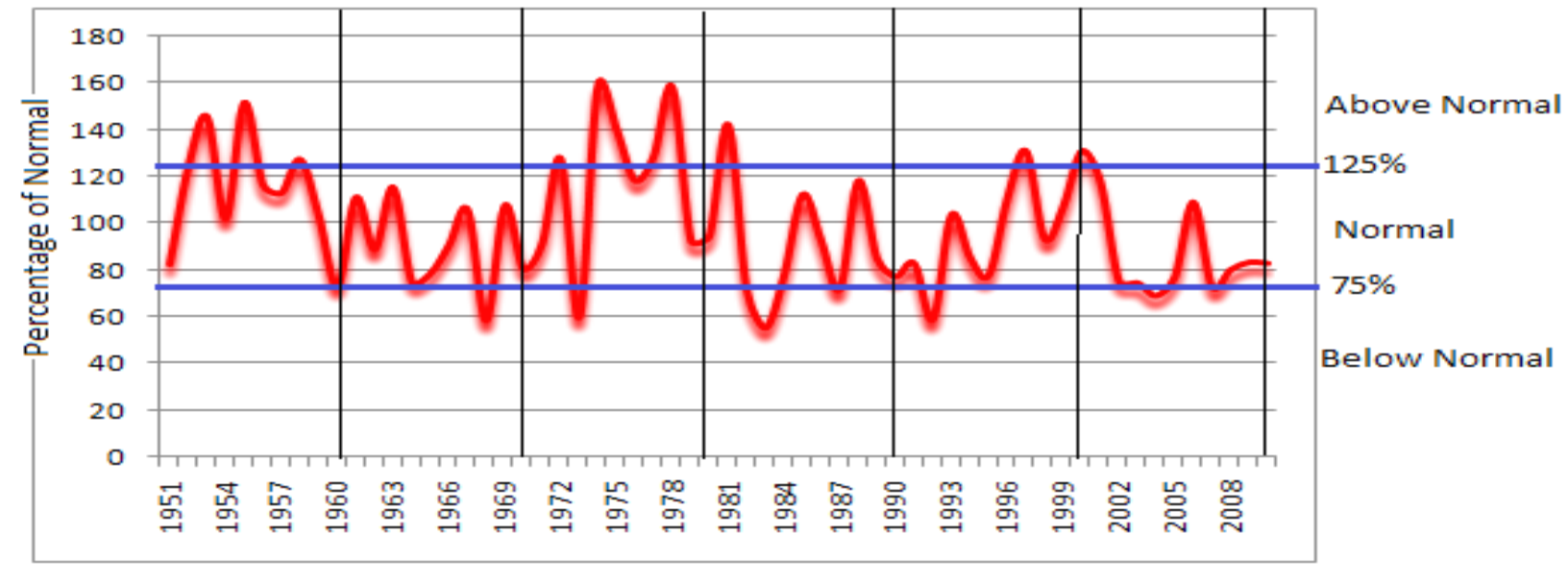
ZIMBABWE

Drought conditions and management strategies in Zimbabwe

Shingirai Nangombe

(Meteorological Department)

Background



- general 10 year recurrence

- 1992 the deadliest
- 75% maize production drop,
- over 1million cattle died

- 2012 drought
- 45% maize deficit
- 1.4 million people faced serious starvation

Drought monitoring and early warning systems:

Carried out by two main ministries:

- Environment, Water and Climate – MSD
  Agriculture - AGRITREX

Their responsibilities are:

- systematic observation and monitoring of agro-meteorological parameters;
- provision and publication of information such as weather bulletin, seasonal forecasts and other services related to weather and climate

MSD uses the SPI while AGRITEX use the WRSI

Both institutions are members of the NEWU

Vulnerability assessment:

- The ZIMVAC report produced every year outlines the vulnerability areas and groups for the country
- Droughts, the most devastating of all the natural disasters in Zim since economy is Agro-based

The 80% of population directly depending on Agriculture are the ones affected first and most

- More than half of population who live in rural areas, affected more
- The woman and children in theses rural areas suffer more as men are working in towns
- Sectors using sub-surface water the last to be affected by droughts
- The dryness increase risks of forest fires, again, in more in rural areas

Emergency relief and drought response:

- The NGOs like CARE, WFP, UNDP, FAO help in food assistance in case of drought

Also support projects that minimize the shocks of droughts

VET field services work with FAO in providing stock feeds

- Do it through RDC, also work with DDF to erect and maintain boreholes although it doesn't work for consecutive drought periods as they dry up
- However, government takes lead in this with other partners coming in to assist

Practices to alleviate drought impacts:

The following practices are encouraged/implemented especially in case of severe drought prone areas:

- - Conservation agriculture
- - Not to rely on indigenous knowledge only
- - Climate Change Adaptation projects (Bee keeping, livestock, etc)
- - Promotion of small grain drought tolerant crops
- - Promotion of short season varieties
- - Water harvesting techniques
- - Irrigation

The need for knowledge and skills on drought management

The country would highly benefit from the following:

- Upgrading and modernizing the hydro-meteorological observation networks,
- Training in drought vulnerability and risk assessment programs;
- Enhancing the cooperation and networking between various hydro-agro-meteorological sectors, other stakeholders and end-users of this data
- Strengthening the capacities for drought preparedness and management, including contingency plans at local and national level; and
- Developing sustainable irrigation systems

Thank you