

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: 24 JANUARY 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE VERY LATEST INFORMATION REGARDING INTENSE
TROPICAL CYCLONE FUNSO**

Tropical Cyclone FUNSO, currently rated as being an Intense Tropical Cyclone continues to dominate the Mozambique Channel and is currently located at 20.5S 039.5E at 08h00SAST this morning. FUNSO is one of the most potent and potentially deadly tropical systems to affect Mozambican waters (and the Mozambique Channel in general) in recent years.

FUNSO briefly made landfall near Quelimane, north-east of Beira (in the Zambezia province of northern Mozambique) at the weekend, with strong, damaging winds and torrential rain lashing the region. Buildings and infrastructure across Zambezia province were apparently devastated whilst as many as 12 fatalities have been reported in the media. Thankfully, FUNSO moved out to sea again during Sunday 22nd January, however the system was able to rejuvenate itself as it was moving over open water with sea surface temperature of 29 C or more.

In the past two days it has deepened and become more organized, prompting its classification as an “Intense” Tropical Cyclone (second only to “Very Intense” Tropical Cyclones, in terms of classification in the SW Indian ocean domain). Strong upper-air winds (known as outflow jets) have developed in the upper reaches of the periphery of the system, thus promoting further intensification at the surface. Local environmental conditions remain very favourable in terms of sustaining FUNSO at its current intensity,

at least for the next 48hrs, or even longer.

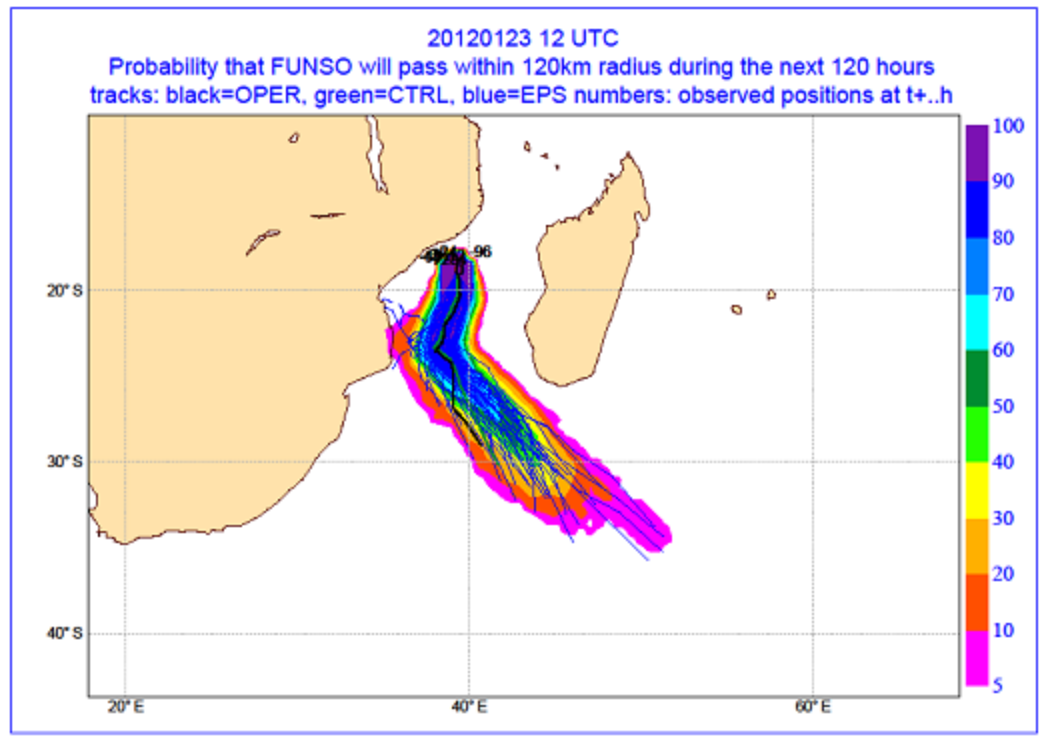


Figure 1: Most recent ECMWF Ensemble output, regarding predicted further movement of FUNSO. Blue colours represent a clustering of the most probable tracks, associated with a higher likelihood of correctness of track.

With this system following close on the heels of Tropical Disturbance DANDO (which, as readers will recall hit southern Mozambique and the Lowveld little more than a week ago) the public at large are naturally anxious to have fresh, reliable information regarding further predicted movement of FUNSO. Evolution and movement of tropical cyclones worldwide are extremely difficult to predict, as they are notoriously fickle, unpredictable systems. It is quite normal for such systems (in the absence of strong steering influences, to show quite erratic movement). Whilst, to date, there has been much uncertainty regarding movement of FUNSO, the latest ensemble model guidance from ECMWF (European Centre for Medium term Weather Forecasts, see Figure 1, above), is

beginning to suggest an increasing likelihood that FUNSO is likely to remain over open water in the Mozambique Channel whilst moving predominantly southwards.

Furthermore, whilst the likelihood of FUNSO moving towards southern Mozambique and making landfall (still) cannot be ruled out completely, this eventuality (given the current ECMWF ensemble guidance) is judged to be less likely at this time. This is undoubtedly encouraging news for residents and holidaymakers in the Vilanculos and Inhambane area of southern Mozambique.

Notwithstanding the above, the South African Weather Service still urges the public to maintain a high level of awareness and to monitor radio and TV news updates in this regard.

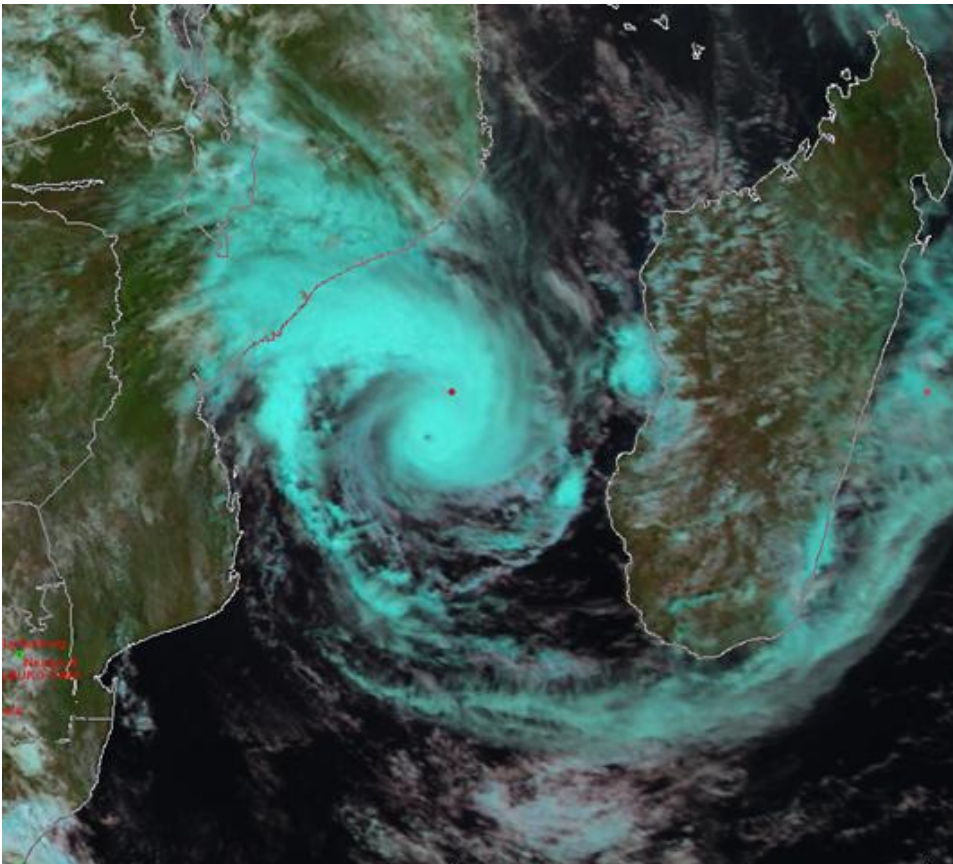


Figure 2: Intense Tropical Cyclone FUNSO in the Mozambique Channel this morning at 10h00SAST (METEOSAT 9 satellite image: © EUMETSAT 2012).

Issued by:

South African Weather Service (SAWS)

For media enquiries contact:

Ms Kenosi Machepe (Senior Manager: Corporate Communications)

Tel: (012) 367 6075

Cell: 083 259 7223

E-Mail: kenosi.machepe@weathersa.co.za

For technical enquiries contact:

Mr. Kevin Rae (Chief Forecaster)

Tel: (012) 367 5009

Cell: 082 870 5879

E-Mail: kevin.rae@weathersa.co.za

ENDS