

# *Dominant role of greenhouse-gas forcing in the recovery of Sahel rainfall*

Article

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# Dominant role of greenhouse gas forcing in the recovery of Sahel rainfall

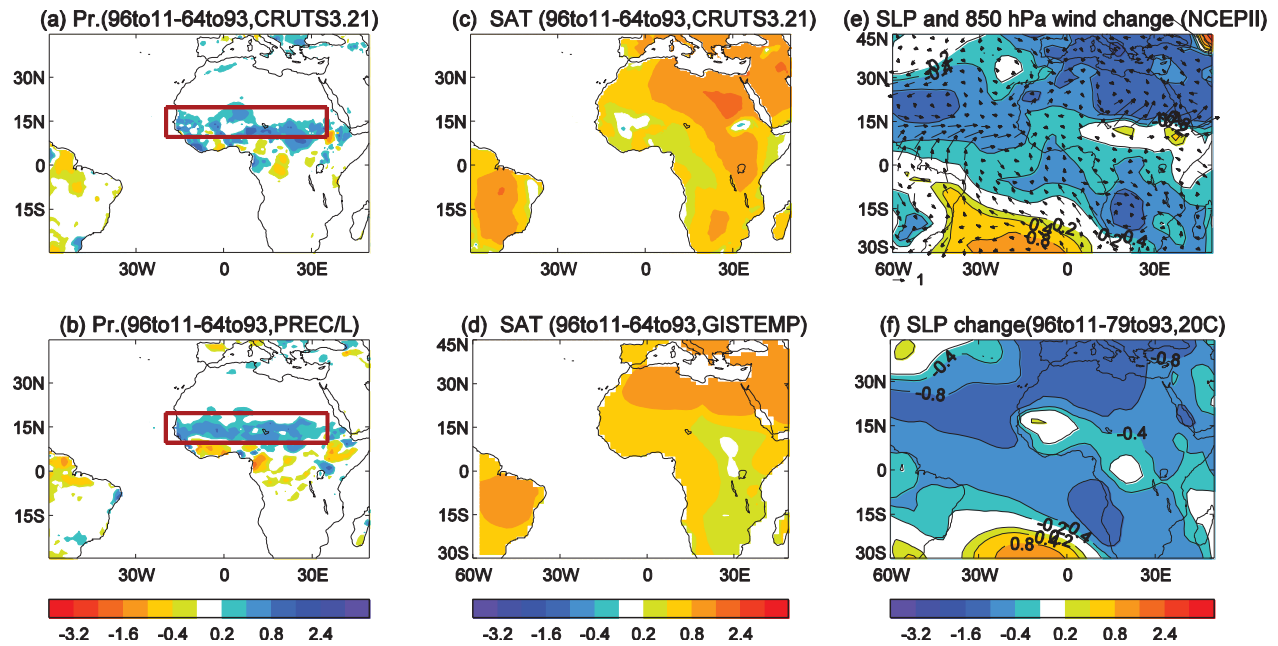
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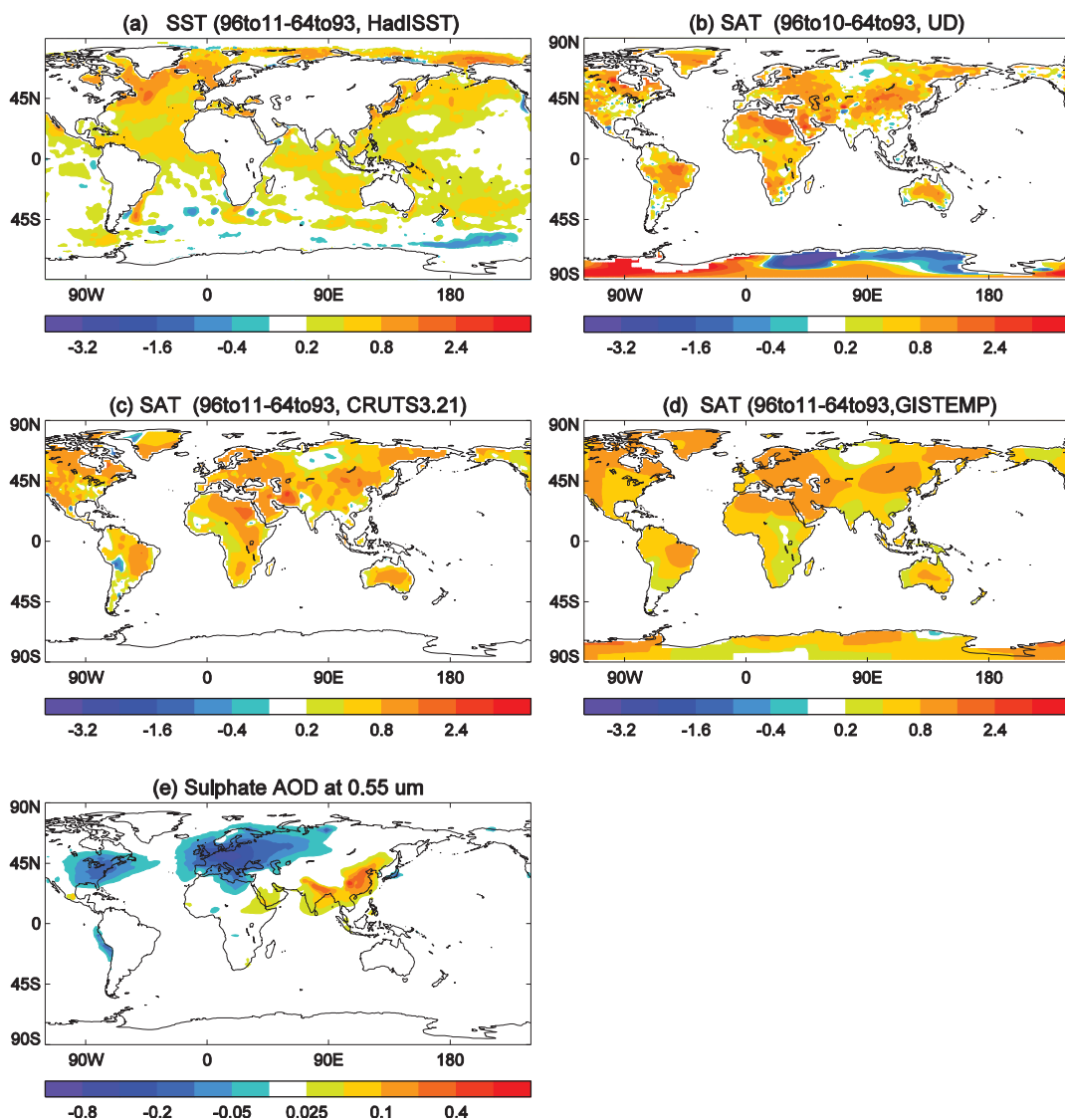
Six numerical experiments have been performed in this study using HadGEM3-A and they are summarized in Table S1. All experiments were integrated from the same initial conditions, taken from a 5 year spin up experiment that was forced by the same forcings as in the CONTROL experiment.

Table S1: Summary of numerical experiments

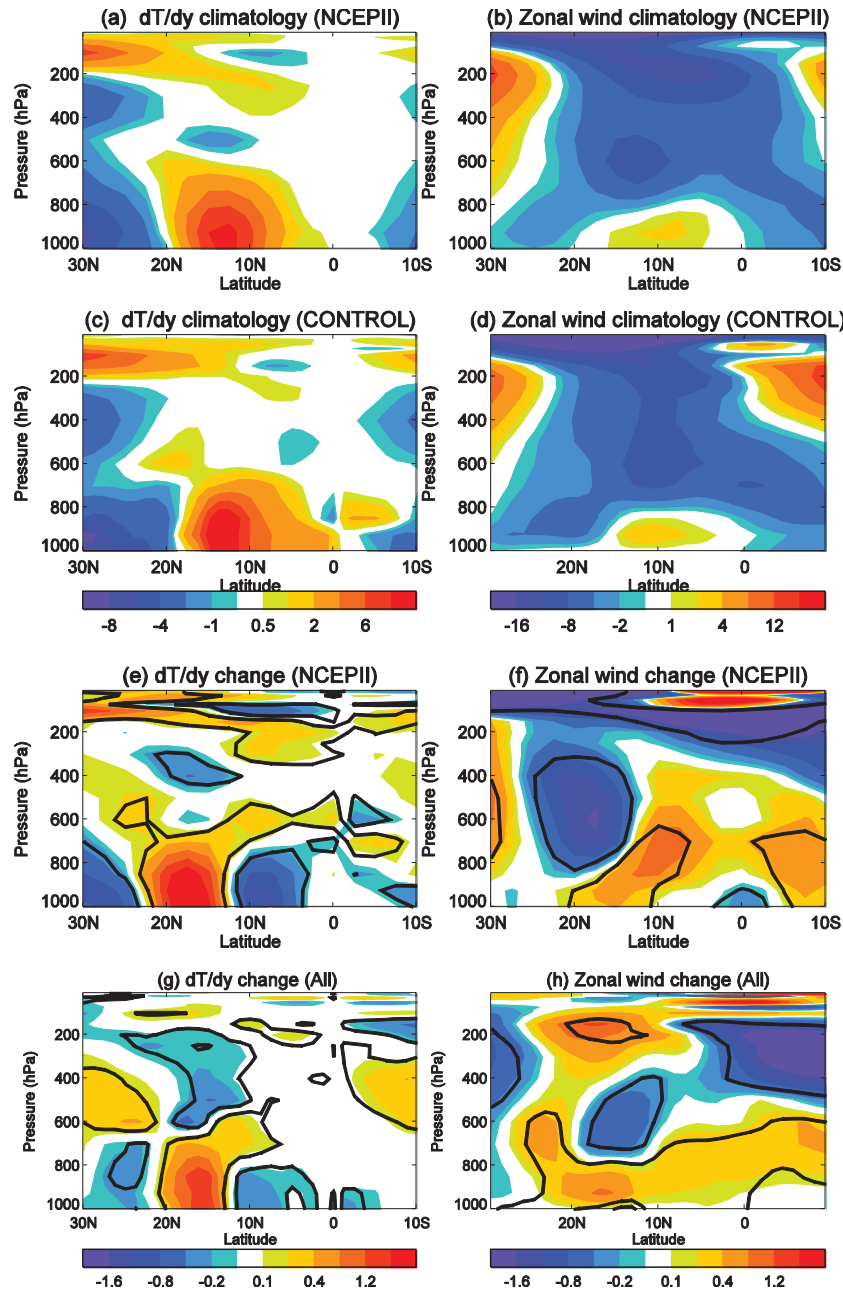
Experiments	Boundary conditions	
CONTROL	Monthly climatological sea surface temperature (SST) and sea ice extent (SIE) averaged over the period 1964 to 1993, using HadISST <sup>25</sup> with anthropogenic greenhouse gases (GHG) concentrations set at mean values over the same period, and anthropogenic aerosol (AA) precursor emissions <sup>30</sup> at mean values over the period 1970-1993.	32 years
ALL	Monthly climatological SST/SIE averaged over the period of 1996 to 2011, with GHG concentrations set at mean values over the period 1996-2009, and AA precursor emissions at mean values over the period 1996-2010.	27 years
SSTGHG	Monthly climatological SST/SIE averaged over the period of 1996 to 2011, with GHG concentrations set at mean values over the period 1996-2009, but with AA precursor emissions at mean values over the period 1970-1993.	27 years
SSTONLY	Monthly climatological SST/SIE averaged over the period of 1996 to 2011, with GHG concentrations and AA precursor emissions the same in the CONTROL experiment.	27 years
GHGAA	Monthly climatological SST/SIE averaged over the period 1964 to 1993, but with GHG concentrations set at mean values over the period 1996-2009, and AA precursor emissions at mean values over the period 1996-2010.	27 years
GHGONLY	As in the GHGAA experiment, but with AA precursor emissions at mean values over the period 1970-1993.	27 years



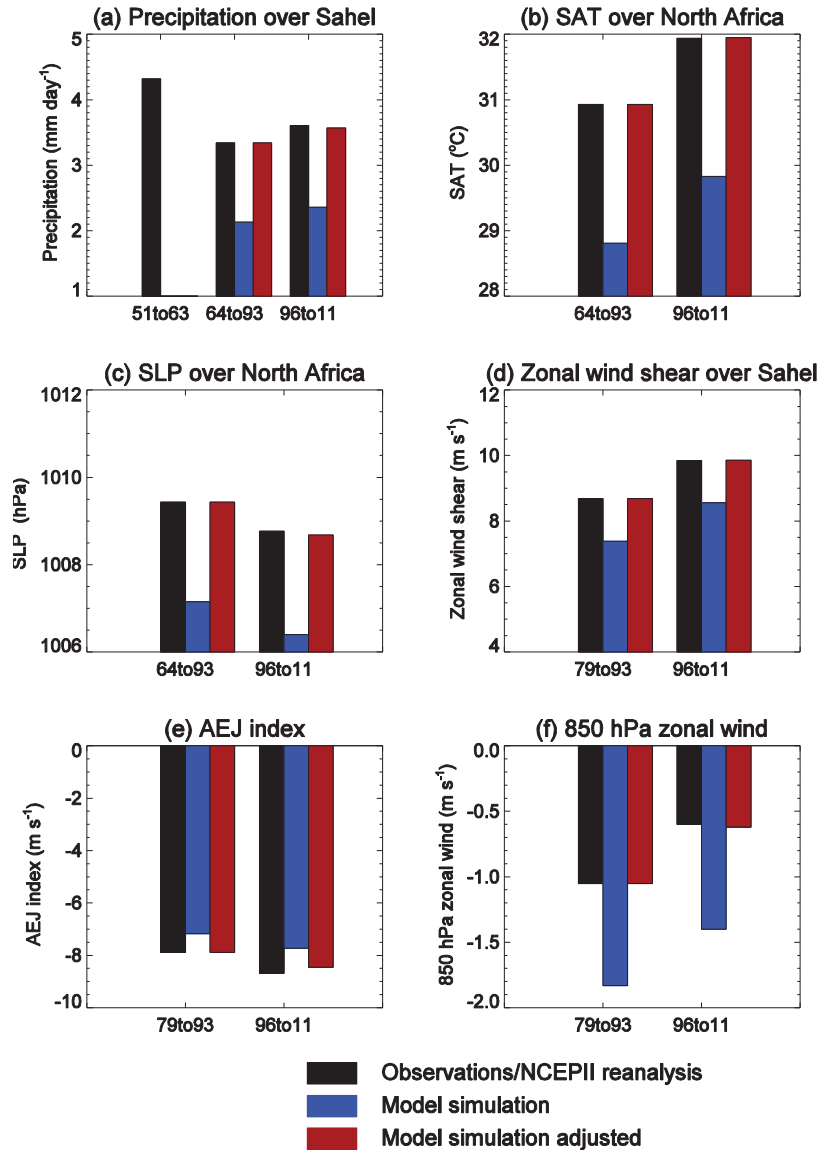
**Figure S1. Spatial patterns of seasonal mean (JAS) changes in observations/reanalysis.** a-b, Precipitation changes (mm day<sup>-1</sup>) between the periods 1964-93 and 1996-2011, based on CRUTS3.21 and NOAA PREC/L data sets. c-d, SAT differences (°C) between the same periods, based on CRUTS3.21 and GISTEMP data sets. e, SLP (hPa) and 850 hPa wind difference for NCEP reanalysis 2 (1996-2011 minus 1979-1993). f, SLP (hPa) difference for the 20<sup>th</sup> century reanalysis (1996-2011 minus 1979-1993). In panel e and f, the period 1979-93 is used in preference to 1964-93 as the base period as 1979 is the year when significant amounts of satellite data first became available – see Methods.



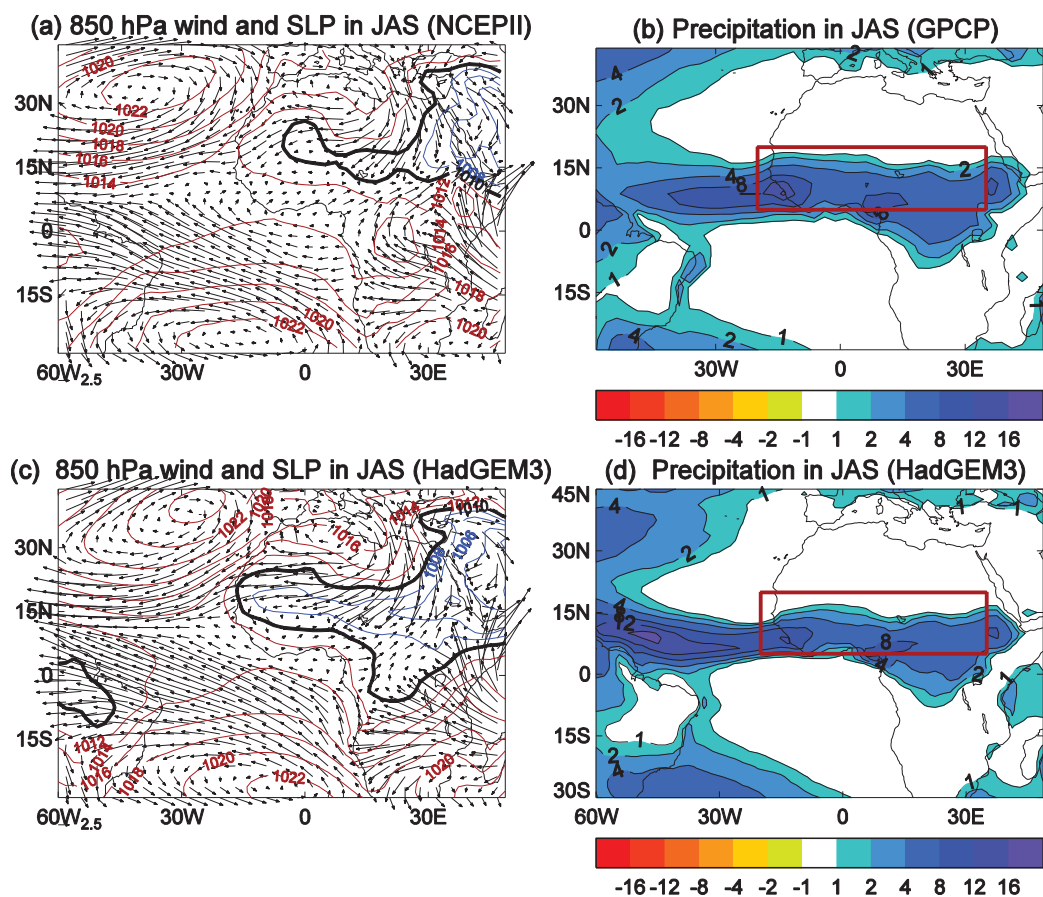
**Figure S2.** The spatial patterns of global mean changes in JAS between the two periods of 1996-2011 (1996-2010 for UD data) and 1964-1993. **a**, SST anomalies ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) based on HadISST. **b-d**, SAT anomalies ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) based on University of Delaware, CRUTS3.21, and GISTEMP data sets. **e**, The change in sulphate aerosol optical depth (AOD) at 0.55  $\mu\text{m}$  between two experiments (ALL–CONTROL).



**Figure S3: Observed and model simulated seasonal mean (JAS) and zonally (20°W-35°E) averaged variables. a-b,** Climatological meridional temperature gradient  $dT/dy$  ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$  per 1000 km) and zonal wind ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ ) for the NCEP reanalysis 2 (1979-2011). **c-d,** The same as in **a-c**, but for the model CONTROL simulation. **e-f,** The same as in **a-b**, but for the changes between the two periods of 1996-2011 and 1979-1993 for the NCEP reanalysis 2. **g-h,** The same as in **e-f**, but for the model responses to the changes in SST/SIE, GHG concentrations, and AA precursor emissions (ALL-CONTROL). Thick lines highlight regions where the differences are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level using a two-tailed Student t-test.

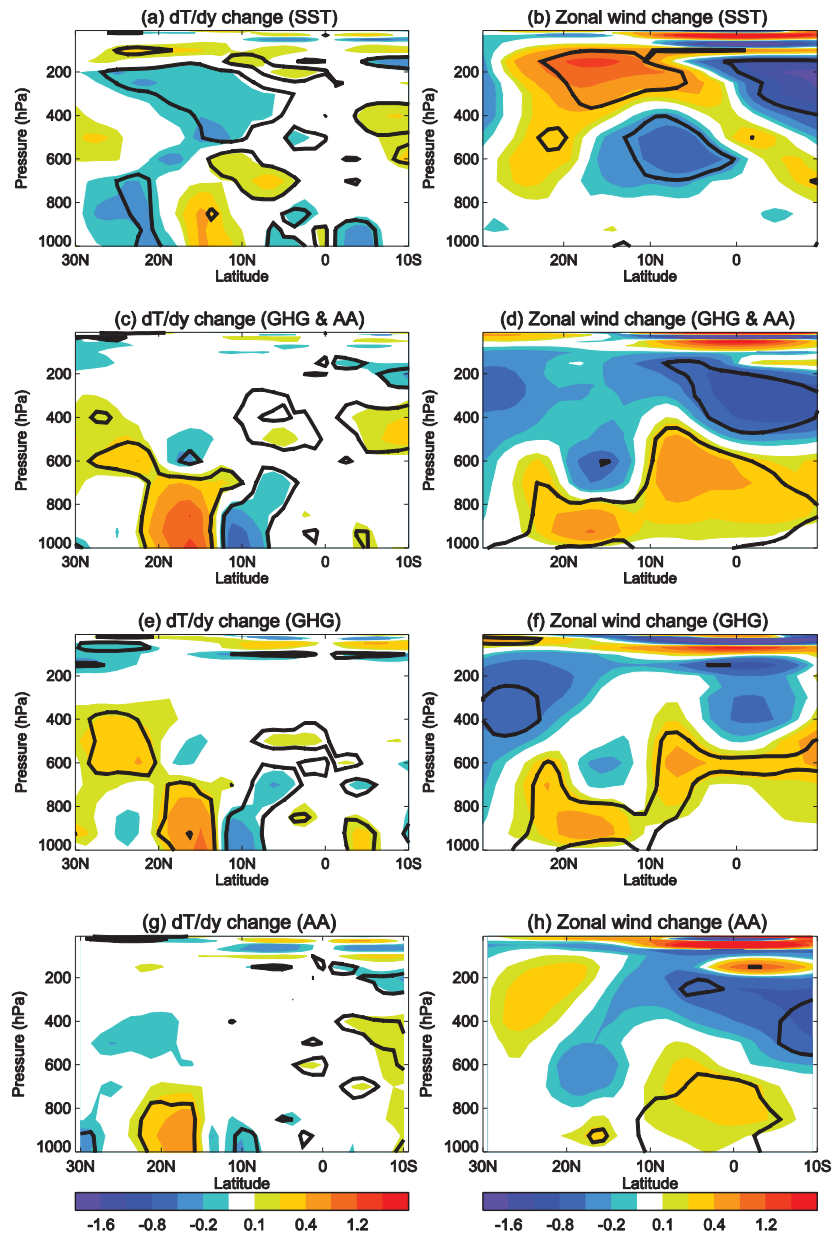


**Figure S4: Observed and model simulated seasonal mean (JAS) and area averaged monsoon indices for the Sahel drought period and the recent wetter period.** Model results are from the CONTROL and ALL experiments respectively. **a-b**, Precipitation (mm day<sup>-1</sup>) over the Sahel (the observed value for the period 1951-1963 is also shown) and SAT (°C) over North Africa based on University of Delaware data sets. **c**, SLP (hPa) over North Africa based on the 20<sup>th</sup> century reanalysis, **d-f**, Vertical zonal wind shear (m s<sup>-1</sup>) between 925hPa and 600 hPa over the Sahel, African Easterly Jet (AEJ, m s<sup>-1</sup>), defined as area averaged zonal wind at 600 hPa over the Sahel, and zonal wind (m s<sup>-1</sup>) at 850 hPa over the Sahel based on NCEP reanalysis 2. Note the late period is 1996-2010 for precipitation and SAT and the early dry period for zonal wind shear and zonal wind is 1979-1993 for the reanalysis. The model adjusted values are the values with the model bias in the 1964-1993 simulation corrected.

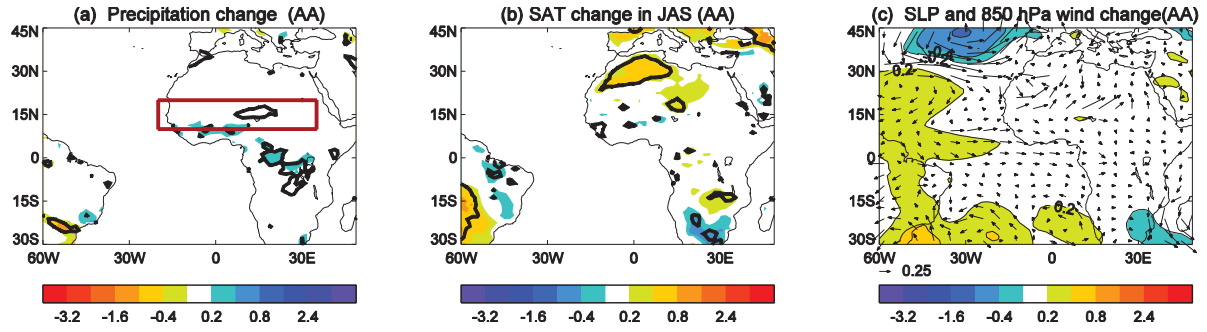


**Figure S5. The spatial patterns of JAS climatology for observations and model simulation. a-b, SLP (hPa) and 850 hPa winds ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ ) for NCEP reanalysis 2, and precipitation ( $\text{mm day}^{-1}$ ) for GPCP v2.2 (1979-2011). c-d, The same as in a-b but for the model CONTROL experiment.**

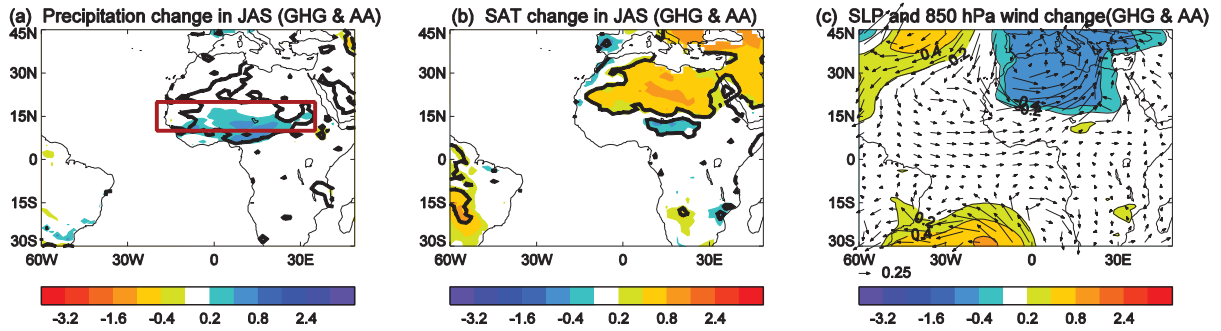




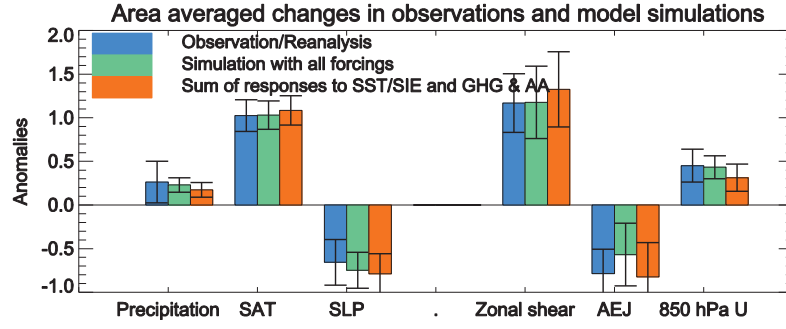
**Figure S6: Model simulated seasonal mean (JAS) and zonally (20°W-35°E) averaged changes in response to different forcings.** **a-b**, Changes in meridional temperature gradient  $dT/dy$  ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$  per 1000 km) and zonal wind ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ ) for the responses to the changes in SST/SIE (SSTONLY–CONTROL). **c-d**, The same as in **a-b**, but for the responses to changes in GHG concentrations and AA precursor emissions (ALL–SSTONLY). **e-f**, The same as in **a-b**, but for the responses to changes in GHG concentrations (SSTGHG–SSTONLY). **g-h**, The same as in **a-b**, but for the responses to changes in AA precursor emissions (ALL–SSTGHG). Thick lines highlight regions where the differences are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level using a two-tailed Student t-test.



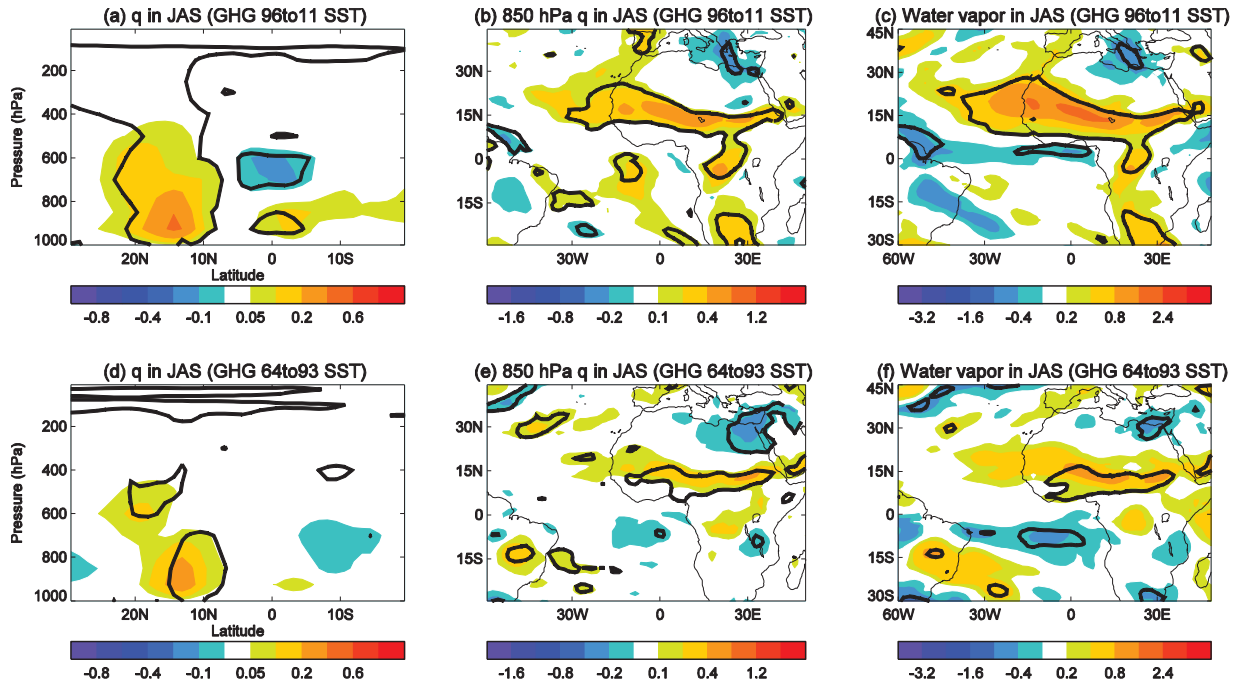
**Figure S7: Model simulated seasonal mean (JAS) responses to changes in AA precursor emissions (ALL-SSTGHG).** a-c, Seasonal mean (JAS) changes in precipitation (mm day<sup>-1</sup>), SAT (°C), SLP (hPa) and 850 hPa wind (m s<sup>-1</sup>). Thick lines in **a** and **b** highlight regions where the differences are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level using a two-tailed Student t-test.



**Figure S8: Model simulated seasonal mean (JAS) responses to changes in GHG and AA precursor emissions (GHGAA-CONTROL) in the context of the drought period SSTs.** a-c, Seasonal mean (JAS) changes in precipitation (mm day<sup>-1</sup>), SAT (°C), SLP (hPa) and 850 hPa wind (m s<sup>-1</sup>). Thick lines in **a** and **b** highlight regions where the differences are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level using a two-tailed Student t-test.



**Figure S9: Observed and model simulated seasonal mean (JAS) changes in Sahel rainfall and related variables.** Observed changes and simulated responses to changes in all forcings are the same as in Figure 2a and compared with the sum of the response to changes in SST/SIE (SSTONLY-CONTROL) and the response to changes in GHG concentrations and AA precursor emissions in the context of the drought period SST (GHGAA-CONTROL). The coloured bars indicated the central estimates and the whiskers show the 5-95% confidence intervals of the seasonal mean changes in both observations and model experiments based on a two tailed Student t-test. See Methods for details of data sets and model experiments, and analysis and figure 2 caption for various indices.



**Figure S10: Model simulated seasonal mean (JAS) responses to changes in GHG.** **a-c,** Responses in the context of the recent period SSTs (SSTGHG-SSTONLY). **d-f,** Responses in the context of the drought period SSTs (GHGONLY-CONTROL). **a and d,** Seasonal mean (JAS) changes in zonally averaged (20°W -35°E) specific humidity ( $\text{g kg}^{-1}$ ). **b, and e,** Seasonal mean changes in specific humidity ( $\text{g kg}^{-1}$ ) at 850 hPa. **c and f,** Seasonal mean changes in column integrated water vapor ( $\text{kg m}^{-2}$ ). Thick lines highlight regions where the differences are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level using a two-tailed Student t-test.