



The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

For

January 5 – 11, 2006

Weekly Introduction:

Update of Indian Ocean Tropical Cyclone Activity

Tropical Cyclone 4S has dissipated and is not considered a threat to the area. This is consistent with the current relatively cool sea surface temperatures and the upper atmosphere wind patterns that are not conducive to active cyclone development. The exception is the Mozambique Channel where strong activity exists that may lead to cyclonic development. We will continue to monitor the situation for any signs that the patterns are changing and will issue the Indian Ocean Tropical Cyclone Updates as necessary. At this time, the system may produce locally heavy showers and gusty winds along the southern Mozambique coast. However, widespread problems are not anticipated at this time.

Locust Update:

The FAO site (<http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html>) was last updated on January 3. The FAO anticipates that small-scale breeding is expected to commence in the coming weeks in northern **Mauritania** and **Western Sahara** where good rains fell in December.

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1. Severe drought continues to plague southeastern Ethiopia, southern Somalia, northern and eastern Kenya.

2. A failed short rainy season in the bi-modal areas, combined with little rain over the past several weeks around Lake Victoria and a slow start to the season across central Tanzania has resulted in the development of drought.

3. Erratic and lighter than normal rains during the 2005 rainy season are resulting in degraded pastures and water shortages in and around Djibouti.

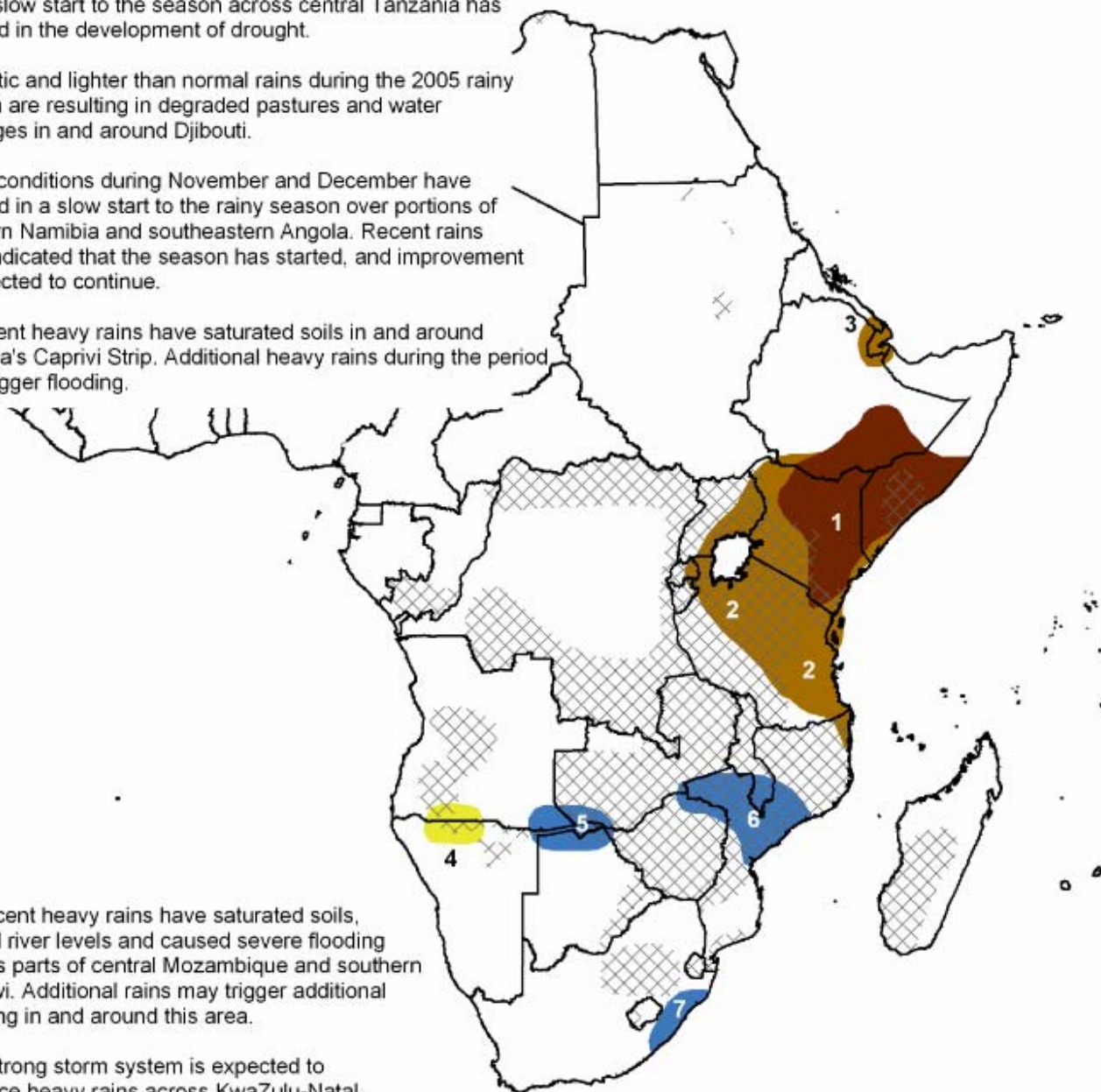
4. Dry conditions during November and December have resulted in a slow start to the rainy season over portions of northern Namibia and southeastern Angola. Recent rains have indicated that the season has started, and improvement is expected to continue.

5. Recent heavy rains have saturated soils in and around Namibia's Caprivi Strip. Additional heavy rains during the period may trigger flooding.

NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)

6. Recent heavy rains have saturated soils, raised river levels and caused severe flooding across parts of central Mozambique and southern Malawi. Additional rains may trigger additional flooding in and around this area.

7. A strong storm system is expected to produce heavy rains across KwaZulu-Natal. This may trigger flooding and land slides (Jan 6 - 9)



Valid: January 5 - 11, 2006

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Several poor consecutive rainy seasons have resulted in the development of severe drought across much of eastern Kenya, southeastern Ethiopia and southern Somalia. The poor performance of this year's March-May season and the failure of this year's October-December season have resulted in rainfall totals for the year 2005 that are only 20 to 50 percent of the long term mean, and annual rainfall deficits of 250 to 500 mm. This drought has resulted in crop failures, pasture degradation, water shortages and has raised serious food security concerns for the region. The chances for any relief are very slim and are confined to the southeastern corner of Kenya, where scattered showers are possible. However, the next opportunity for widespread regional improvement will not be until the onset of the long rains in March, some three month from now.
2. Drier than normal conditions since October has resulted in the development of drought across western Kenya, much of Tanzania and the Lake Victoria Basin. In the bimodal areas of southern Kenya, northwestern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania, the short rains have generally failed. Across the Lake Victoria Basin, including eastern Uganda, northwestern Tanzania and eastern Rwanda, rainfall since October 1 has totaled only 100 to 250 mm. This is only 40 to 60 percent of normal, and may have caused crop and pasture stress. Across interior portions of Tanzania in places such as Dodoma, Iringa, Singida and western Morogoro, the rainy season has yet to start and is now 3 to 6 weeks late. This may delay the planting of seasonal crops and stress livestock while resulting in water shortages. Scattered showers are possible across the area. This may result in some localized relief, however the drought is likely to persist. The best chances for improvement over the next several weeks will be in the unimodal areas of Tanzania.
3. Seasonal rains across Djibouti and the surrounding area have been erratic and lighter than normal. This has resulted in pasture degradation and possible water shortages. Although an isolated shower or two is possible, widespread relief is not expected. The next chance for relief will be when the March-May rains set in.
4. Across portions of northern Namibia and southeastern Angola, seasonal rains have been slow to start, with below normal amounts of rain falling during November and December. However, rains have recently picked up across the area. This has resulted in beneficial moisture for seasonal cropping and pasture lands. Additional rains are expected, and the short term moisture situation will improve during the period.
5. Heavy rains over the past few weeks have soaked the Caprivi Strip in Namibia and adjacent parts of Botswana, Angola and Zambia. Between 100 and 200 mm of rain has fallen over the past few weeks. Additional rains are expected, with rainfall totals expected to range between 50 and 100+ mm for the period. This may trigger some flooding in and around the area.
6. Heavy rains have soaked southern Malawi, central Mozambique and adjacent areas over the past few weeks. Many areas have received 100 to 200 mm of rainfall over the past week. This has saturated soils and raised river levels. Flooding has already been reported on the Shire, the Nyamazire, the Lalanje and on the tributaries of the aforementioned rivers. Additional heavy rains are expected to pelt this area. This may trigger additional flooding and cause flooding to occur along other rivers in and around the highlighted area.
7. A strong frontal system is expected to move across the South Atlantic and produce heavy rain and strong thunderstorms across KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa during the middle of the period. These heavy rains may trigger flash flooding and land slides in some areas.

AUTHOR: Chester V. Schmitt

Questions or comments about this product may be directed to Alvin.Miller@noaa.gov or 1-301-763-8000 x7552

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