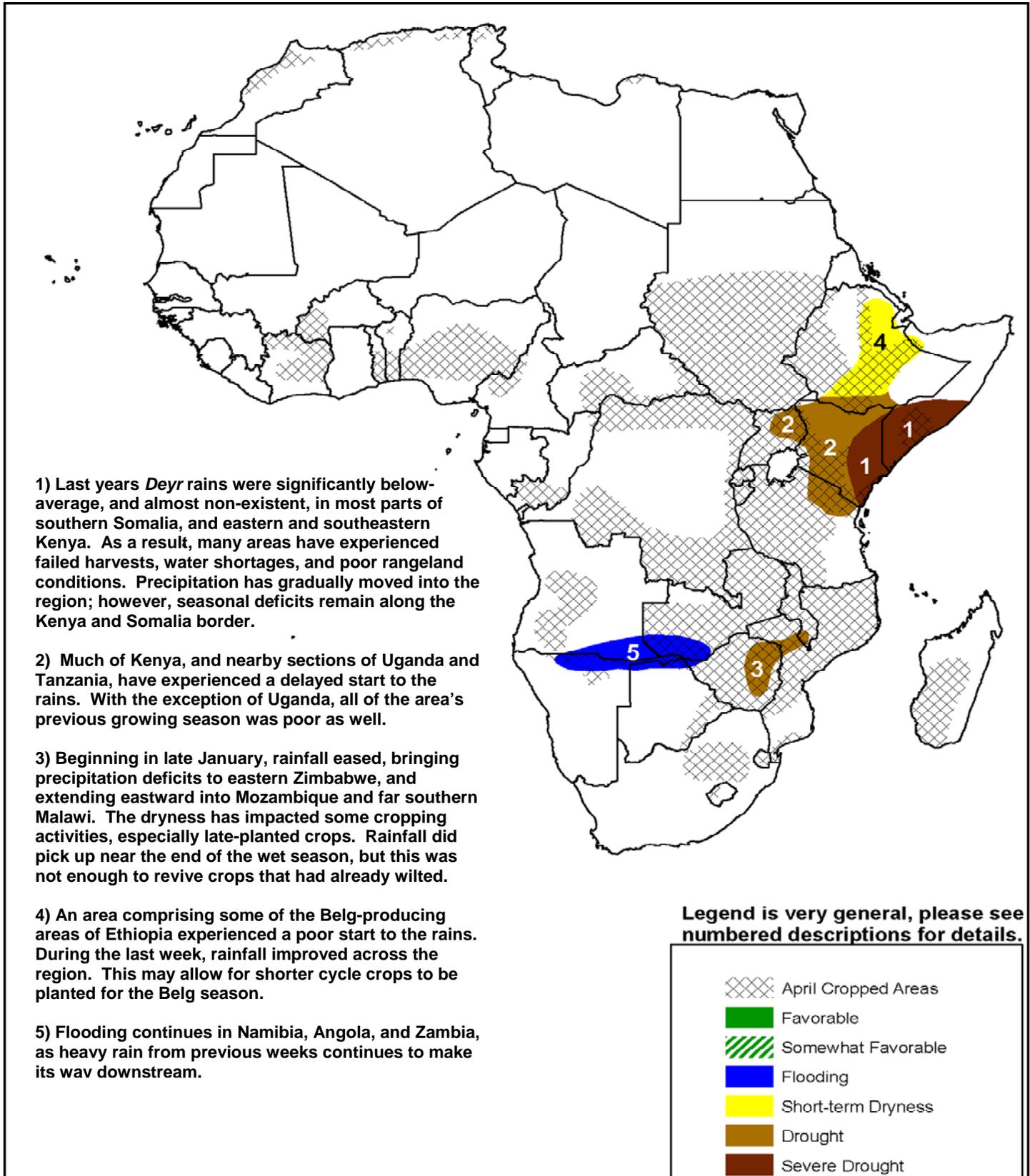


- Although well-distributed rainfall has been observed over the Belg producing areas of Ethiopia in the last week, a reduced Belg harvest is still expected due to the late onset of rains and a below average seasonal accumulation since March.
- Heavy amounts of precipitation were observed over parts of central Kenya and southern Somalia during the last week. This rainfall is expected to help regenerate soils, as well as replenish water resources for many local areas.



Favorable rains continue across Ethiopia

In the last seven days, precipitation amounts in excess of 25mm were widespread throughout many Belg-producing areas of Ethiopia. Locally heavier rainfall totals (50-75mm) were observed in the Oromia and Harerghe regions south of Dire Dawa, as well as across much of the SNNP region in southwestern Ethiopia. Favorable amounts of precipitation were also observed further north in the Amhara and Tigray regions, as many of these areas had experienced a slow start to the Belg season (**Figure 1**).

Since the middle of March, precipitation deficits have been markedly reduced as a result of increased rains in April. Satellite-derived rainfall anomaly analyses are beginning to show positive rainfall anomalies for some areas in the Tigray and Amhara regions. In the last 30 days, strong negative rainfall anomalies have been considerably weakened across much of the central and southern regions, likely leading to some improvement in soil water and ground conditions.

Precipitation model guidance suggests the persistence of moderate to locally heavy rains across Ethiopia over the next seven days (**Figure 2**). A large portion of the rainfall is expected to fall over the Oromia and Somali regions of Ethiopia, with totals in excess of 40mm also extending into parts of central and southern Somalia. If this pattern of abundant rains and moisture continues into May, increased ground moisture is likely to mitigate the impacts of early-season dryness, and benefit both Belg and Meher-producing crops across Ethiopia.

Onset of rainfall over central Kenya and southern Somalia to help relieve long-term dryness

To the south, rainfall totals in excess of 50mm were observed throughout many parts of central Kenya, with heavier totals extending eastward along the Kenya/Somalia border over the last seven days. The character of last weeks' rains marks the onset of significant rainfall over central Kenya, as many local areas had not observed any substantial precipitation amounts since the season began in March. Consequently, this is expected to help neutralize rainfall deficits that have been strengthening over the last several weeks. Many areas south and east of Lake Turkana are still experiencing less than half of their average precipitation accumulation since March.

Further east along the Kenya/Somalia border, rainfall deficits also remain below average for April. However, soil water analyses indicate some improvement in the last two weeks across the Gedo region of Somalia and northeastern Kenya. However, parts of southern and coastal southeastern Kenya are still experiencing a pronounced late start (**Figure 3**).

