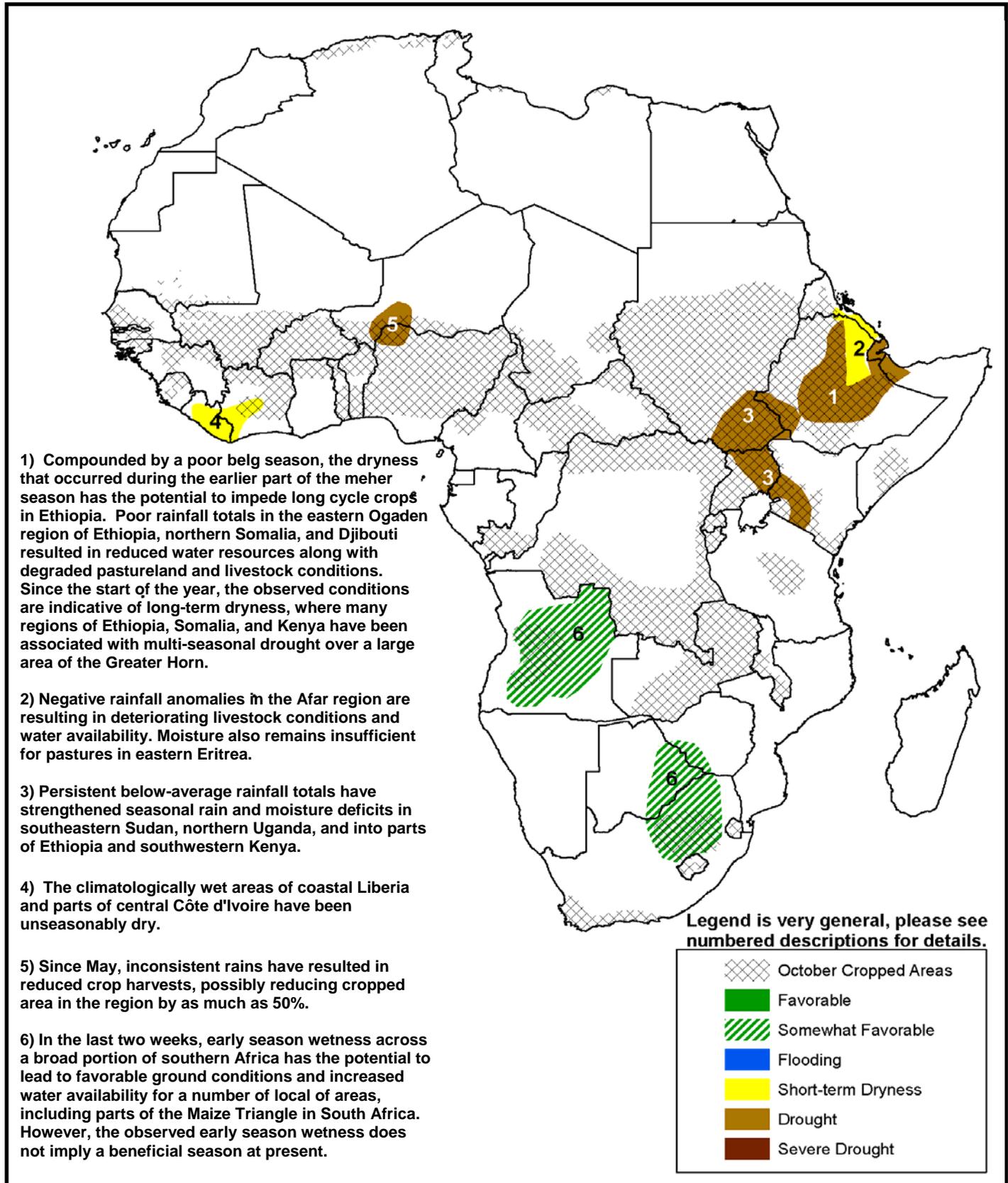


- In the last 30 days, above-average rainfall totals in southern Africa suggest an early start to the rains season. This has the potential to benefit early-season cropping activities for parts of Angola and the Maize Triangle in South Africa.
- With the departure of rains across the Sahel, inconsistent rainfall since May is likely to result in significant reductions of crop yields for many local areas along the Niger and Nigeria border.



Persistent and favorable rains for southern Africa

During the last observation period, well-distributed rains were received across a broad portion of southern Africa. Widespread precipitation totals ranging between 25-45 mm were observed across portions of Angola, Namibia, Botswana, and into parts of western Zambia and northern South Africa (**Figure 1**). Locally heavier rainfall totals in excess of 50 mm were seen in areas south of the Caprivi Strip, and extending southward into parts of the Maize Triangle and along the South Africa coast in association with a deep frontal passage in the last week.

Over the last two weeks, the persistence of above-average rainfall suggests a favorable early-start to the southern African rains season for many of these areas. Even though much of this precipitation is early, enhanced rains and moisture are expected to saturate soils, increase water availability, and promote early-season cropping activities for parts of central Angola and the Maize Triangle. Soil water index analysis for the last dekad of September reflects the early onset of rainfall, resulting in surpluses for much of Angola, northern Namibia, Botswana, and the Maize Triangle (**Figure 2**).

Precipitation forecasts suggest a continuation of moderate to heavy rains for many cropping areas of Angola and South Africa. Rainfall totals ranging between 35-50mm are expected over the Maize Triangle, with lesser totals expected across Botswana and Namibia in the next seven days.

Deficits strengthen across Gulf of Guinea region, parts of Niger and Nigeria

In the last seven days, a break in the late seasonal rains was observed across much of Western Africa. Rainfall totals less than 35 mm were received across parts of central Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, with lesser totals seen across much of Senegal. However, this decrease in rainfall is expected to help relieve many areas that experienced anomalously wet conditions and a number of localized flooding events across the western Sahel in the last month.

Towards the south, rainfall across the Gulf of Guinea region has continued to remain below-average across many areas in the last 30 days (**Figure 3**). The heaviest rainfall deficits have been observed over coastal Liberia and throughout much of Cote d'Ivoire and southwestern Ghana. In central Nigeria and along the Nigeria / Niger border, rainfall deficits remain approximately 50 – 70 percent of average in the last 30 days; leaving less time for improvement as the rains begin to withdraw this month.

Precipitation forecasts show a considerable increase in rainfall in Nigeria, with lesser amounts expected in parts of Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia in the next seven days.

Satellite Estimated Rainfall Totals for Southern Africa 27 September - 3 October 2009

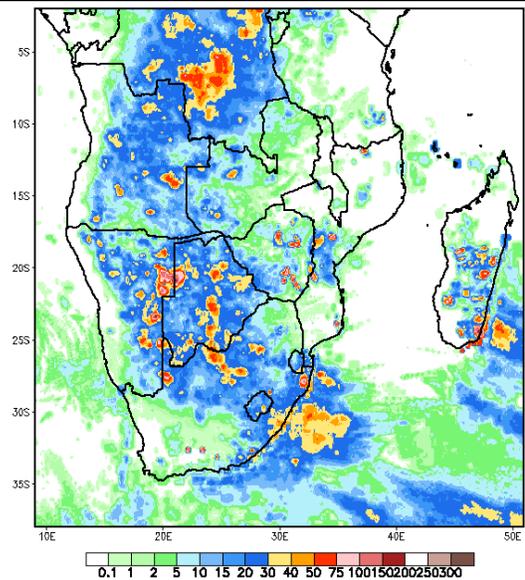


Figure 1
Source: NOAA/CPC

Soil Water Index Anomaly As of 3rd Dekad of September, 2009

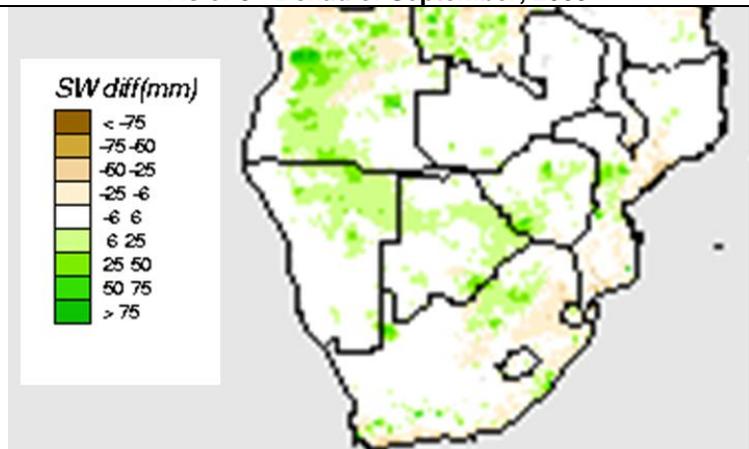


Figure 2:
Source: USGS/FEWS-NET

30-Day Precipitation Percent of Average (%) 4 September – 3 October, 2009

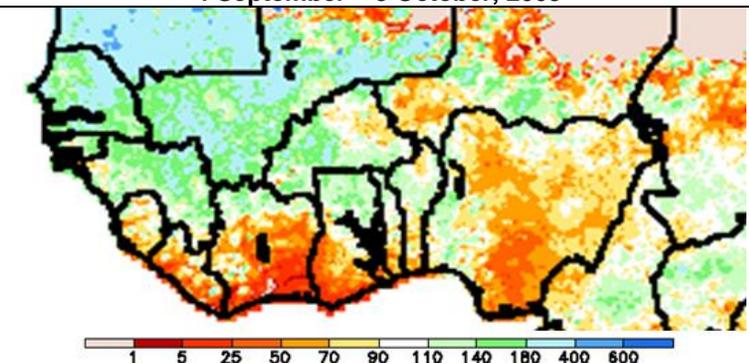


Figure 3:
Source: NOAA/CPC