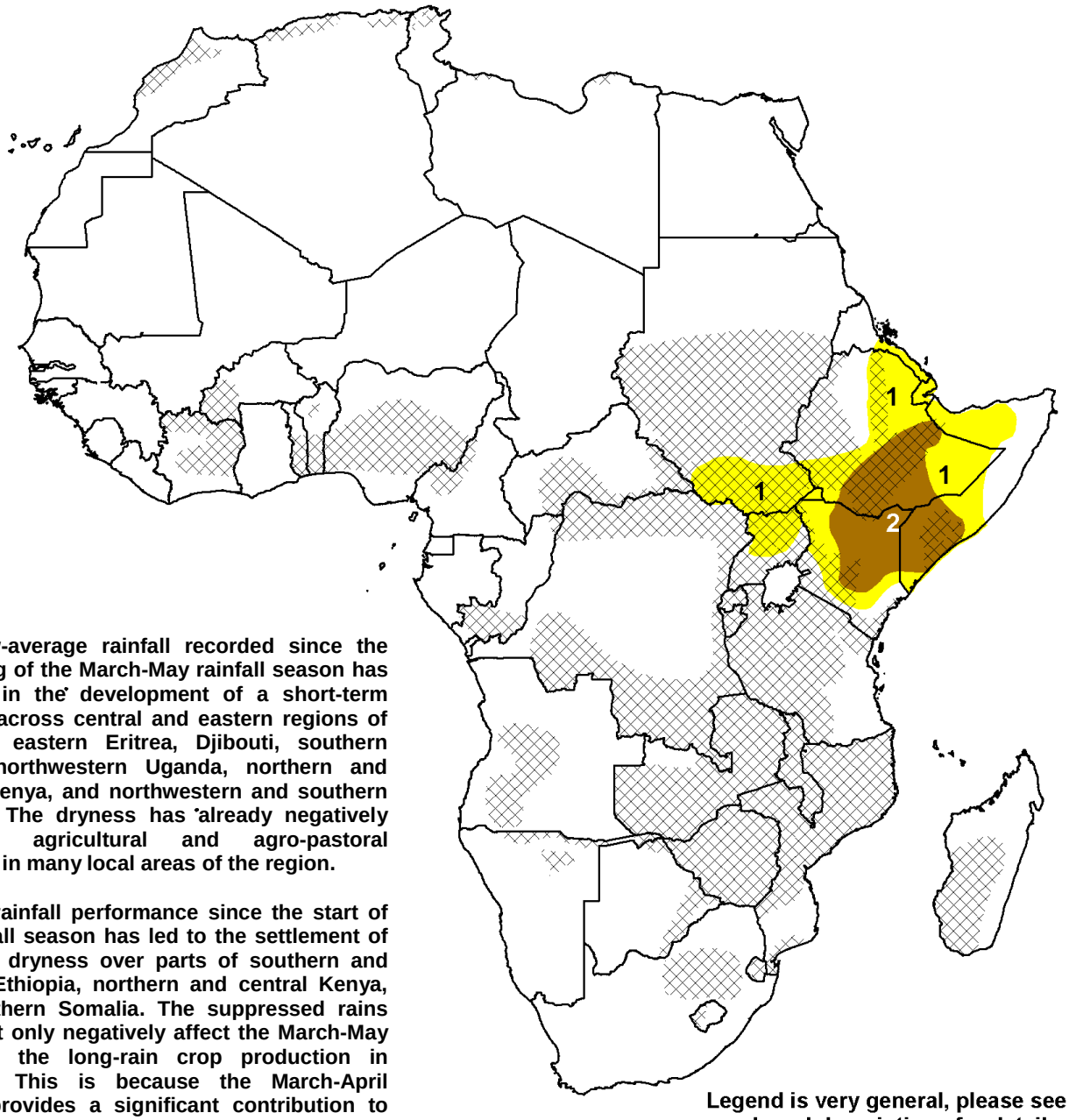
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
April 28 – May 4, 2011

- **Dry conditions continued in the Greater Horn of Africa during the last observation period.**
- **However, moderate to heavy rains that are expected during the next week may help to relieve the dryness affecting the region since the start of the season.**



1) Below-average rainfall recorded since the beginning of the March-May rainfall season has resulted in the development of a short-term dryness across central and eastern regions of Ethiopia, eastern Eritrea, Djibouti, southern Sudan, northwestern Uganda, northern and central Kenya, and northwestern and southern Somalia. The dryness has already negatively impacted agricultural and agro-pastoral activities in many local areas of the region.

2) Poor rainfall performance since the start of the rainfall season has led to the settlement of an acute dryness over parts of southern and eastern Ethiopia, northern and central Kenya, and southern Somalia. The suppressed rains could not only negatively affect the March-May but also the long-rain crop production in Ethiopia. This is because the March-April rainfall provides a significant contribution to the seasonal and annual total rainfall.

Legend is very general, please see numbered descriptions for details.

- April Cropped Areas
- Favorable
- Somewhat Favorable
- Flooding
- Short-term Dryness
- Drought
- Improving Drought

Dryness continue in eastern Africa

During the last thirty days, below-average rainfall prevailed over much of the Greater Horn of Africa, with moisture deficits ranging between 50 and 100mm, except portions of western Ethiopia and eastern Kenya, where marginal rainfall surpluses were observed during the last thirty days (**Figure 1**). Compared to the previous week, the thirty-day rainfall anomalies expanded in areal coverage during the past seven days, indicating poor rainfall performance and enhanced dryness in the region. In southern and northeastern Ethiopia, in particular, rainfall has been 4-6 dekads late and has resulted in severe seasonal moisture deficits ranging between 100 and 150mm or accounting for only 5-25% of the long-term average. As a result, the dryness has already affected crops and land preparation for the next crop cycle in many areas of Ethiopia.

As the rainfall season progresses to the 2nd dekad of April in eastern Africa, localized heavy rains (> 50mm) fell over western Ethiopia, southern Somalia, central and eastern Kenya during the past week (**Figure 2**). The return of large amounts of rain was observed over parts of southwestern Sudan associated with a northward movement of moist air from the Democratic Republic of Congo, bringing partially a relief to the dryness that has settled in since the beginning of March. Isolated heavy rains were also recorded in eastern Uganda, central and eastern Kenya during the past seven days. The heaviest rains were observed in eastern Tanzania, while little to no rain has been recorded in the bimodal areas to the north of the country for two consecutive weeks. In general, little to no amount of rain was observed over the already dryness-affected areas of eastern Africa. If the suppression of rainfall continues during the remainder of the month, it will likely negatively impact the seasonal crop production as the March-April rainfall performance contributes largely to the seasonal and annual rainfall totals in the region.

Rainfall forecasts for the next seven days indicate moderate to heavy rains over southern and central Ethiopia, Somalia, western Kenya, and eastern Uganda. This is expected to partially relieve the dryness in the region.

Satellite Estimated Rainfall Anomaly (mm)
Valid: March 27th – April 25th, 2011

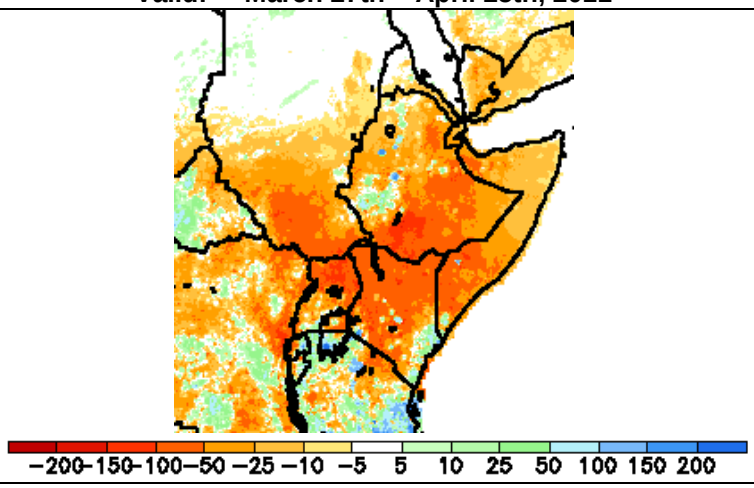


Figure 1: NOAA/CPC

Satellite Estimated Rainfall (mm)
Valid: April 19th – April 25th, 2011

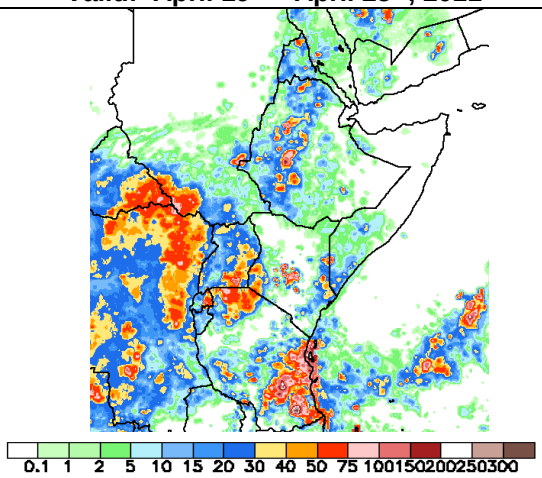


Figure 2: NOAA/CPC

Slight improvement in crop conditions observed despite poorly-distributed rainfall

During the past week, crop conditions improved slightly over the few areas where rainfall has been above average, including southwestern Ethiopia, southwestern and eastern Kenya (**Figure 3**). Good cropping conditions were also observed over parts of high-potential cropping areas of southern Somalia as a response to the moderate to heavy rains recorded during the past two weeks. However, mediocre crop conditions remained over much of the marginal cropping areas of southern Somalia, central Kenya, and southern Sudan due to the lack of rainfall observed so far. If the good rain forecast for the upcoming week materializes, it will likely help to reduce water deficits in the region.

Water Requirement Satisfaction Index
Valid: As of 2nd Dekad of April, 2011

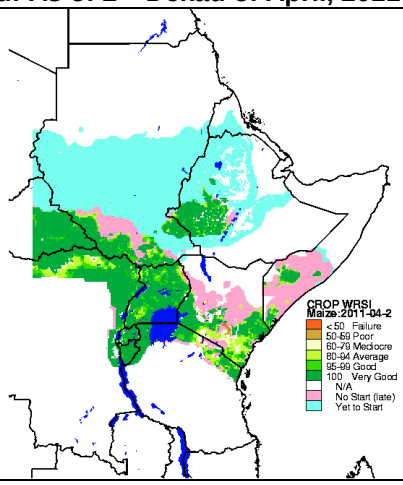


Figure 3: USGS/EROS

Note: The hazards assessment map on page 1 is based on current weather/climate information and short and medium range weather forecasts (up to 1 week). It assesses their potential impact on crop and pasture conditions. Shaded polygons are added in areas where anomalous conditions have been observed. The boundaries of these polygons are only approximate at this continental scale. This product does not reflect long range seasonal climate forecasts or indicate current or projected food security conditions.