



The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

January 6 - 12, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

Conditions across tsunami affected portions of Africa:

The earthquake that occurred in the eastern Indian Ocean Basin on December 26th created a series of tsunamis that reached parts of the African east coast. Areas affected included coastal Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, and eastern Madagascar. Seasonably dry weather should favor clean-up operations across coastal Somalia, Kenya and northern Tanzania. Showers are expected across southern coastal Tanzania. Heavy rains are expected along the east coast of Madagascar, which will hamper clean-up efforts.

Tropical Cyclone Updates:

Although there has not been any major influence on the African continent thus far this year, we continue to monitor the position, strength and forecast position at:

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/fews/CYCLONES/cyclones.html>. For the current season, there have been 6 cyclones in the South Indian Ocean through December which compares with the average for this season of 6.3 as calculated by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center.

Locust Update:

The report from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations on the locust situation in western Africa was last updated on December 28 <http://www.fao.org/NEWS/GLOBAL/locusts/Locuhome.htm>). In the past few days, locust infestations have appeared in cropping areas in northern Guinea Bissau. These arrived from southern Senegal where low numbers of swarms are present.

Additional details can be found at the USAID web site for Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement (AELGA) at <http://www.aelga.net> and the AGRHYMET site at <http://www.agrhymet.ne>.

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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)



1. Rainfall during 2004 was well below normal across portions of eastern Ethiopia, Kenya and northeastern Tanzania. The resultant dryness reduced moisture for pastures and water supplies.
2. Dry season water resource problems continue in and around western Afar Province of northern Ethiopia due to a lack of 2004 rains.
3. Lighter than normal seasonal rains in central Darfur in Sudan and adjacent parts of Chad have reduced water supplies and stressed pastures.

4. Rainfall during the past few months has been 50-70 percent of normal, possibly reducing second crop yields.

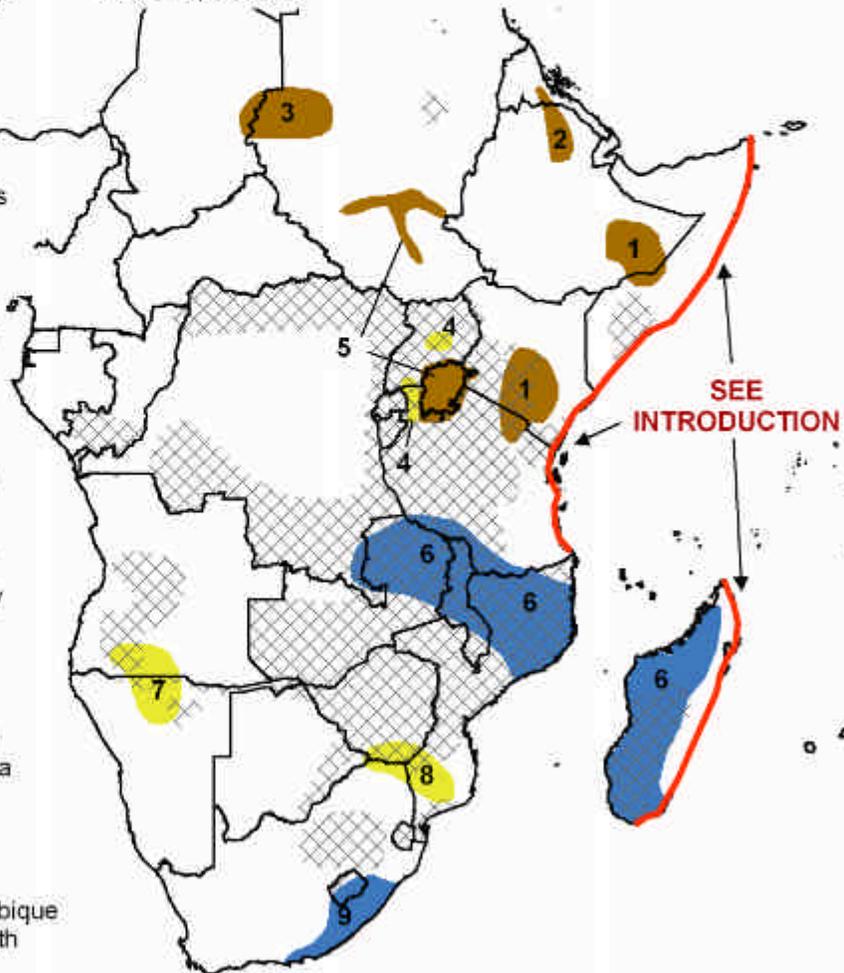
5. Lake Victoria's level remains near the 10-year low. This has reduced seasonal floods downstream along parts of the upper Nile, and the availability of fish and water lilies.

6. Persistent heavy rains have continued over eastern Zambia, much of Malawi, northern Mozambique, and Madagascar. This has resulted in flooding problems in and around these areas. Additional heavy rains and flooding are expected during the next week.

7. After a wet November, rainfall for the month of December has been well below normal across portions of southern Angola and northern Namibia. Improvement is expected.

8. Rainfall has been well below normal across much of Gaza Province in Mozambique and adjacent parts of Zimbabwe and South Africa over the past several weeks.

9. A storm system may produce isolated severe weather and flooding across parts of southeastern South Africa and southern Lesotho Jan 9-10.



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Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Rainfall during both the long and short rainy seasons of 2004 was well below normal across portions of Ethiopia's Somali region, adjacent parts of Somalia, as well as portions of southern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania. The dry conditions have reduced moisture for pastures in pastoral areas and crops in the bi-modal growing areas. Conditions are expected to be dry during the period. Although showers occasionally occur during January and February over southern Kenya, the next chance for significant seasonal rains will come in March. In eastern Ethiopia, the next chance for significant seasonal rains will come in April with the onset of the long rains.
2. Rainfall during 2004 was about 50 percent of average across western portions of Ethiopia's Afar region and adjacent parts of the Tigray and Amhara regions. This has resulted in degraded pastures and water supply problems in and around the area. Conditions are expected to remain dry over the next few weeks. The next opportunity for relief will come in late February and March with the onset of the Belg rains. The best chances for significant improvement will come in July and August, which tend to be the wettest months of the year.
3. Hot, dry Sahara winds caused the seasonal rains to end early this year across much of central and northern Darfur in Sudan, as well as adjacent parts of Chad. This has resulted in a reduction of the already meager forage for grazing and scarce drinking water supplies. The impact of the poor grazing conditions and low water supplies will be exacerbated by the ongoing crisis in the region. Conditions will remain seasonably dry until the onset of the rainy season in late June or July. Therefore, no improvement is expected for several months.
4. Rainfall over the past three months has been lighter than normal over portions of southern Uganda and northwestern Tanzania, with totals ranging from 50 to 70 percent of the long term average. These lighter than normal rains have likely stressed second season crops and may result in yield reductions.
5. Long term dryness over Lake Victoria has resulted in very low lake levels. Although recent rains have resulted in a modest rise in the lake's level, Lake Victoria remains near its lowest level in 10+ years. As the source of the Nile, Lake Victoria plays an important role in ensuring household food security in southern Sudan by promoting seasonal flooding along the Nile, which is crucial for fish and wild plants (water lily) production and pasture replenishment during the dry season (November to May). This flooding has been well below normal this year. For more information on the food security effects of this anomaly, please visit the southern Sudan country site at www.fews.net/sudan. Conditions over and around Lake Victoria are expected to be dry during the period. Rainfall over Lake Victoria tends to be light during January and February. However, heavier rains typically fall during March and April, with April being the wettest month of the year.
6. For several weeks heavy rain has soaked much of Madagascar, northern Mozambique, Malawi and eastern Zambia. During December, 250-500+ mm of rain had fallen over the region, which is more than twice the normal amount. These persistent heavy rains have saturated soils and swollen rivers across the area, and flooding has been reported. Additional heavy rains are expected to fall during the period. With an additional 100-200+ mm of rainfall expected, flooding problems are expected.
7. After a very wet November, a December dry spell dried out top soils across portions of south-central Angola and north-central Namibia. 75 to 150+ mm of rain fell during November, which is 200 to 400+ percent of normal. By contrast, only 5 to 50 mm of rain fell during December, which is 10 to 50 percent of normal. The shift from wet to dry may have stressed emerging main season crops. However, showers during the first days of January have helped to boost top soil moisture. Additional rains are expected during the period, resulting in further improvement and easing stress on emerging crops and pastures.
8. Rainfall has been lighter than normal across much of Gaza province in Mozambique as well as far southern Zimbabwe and the northern most portion of Limpopo province in South Africa over the past several weeks. Many areas have gone three consecutive weeks without measurable rainfall. This has dried out top soils and may be resulting in stress to crops and pastures. Dry weather is expected to continue during the period, which will only serve to worsen the dryness, increase stress to crops and increase moisture deficits.
9. A storm system is expected to develop near the South African coast near Eastern Cape on January 9 and 10. The system may produce localized strong winds, hail, heavy rain and flash flooding across Eastern Cape, southern KwaZulu-Natal and southern Lesotho.

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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