



The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

August 18 - 24, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

Update of ENSO:

Sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies decreased throughout the eastern equatorial Pacific during July. By early August, equatorial SSTs were near average in most areas between 180°W and the South American coast, while positive anomalies persisted between Indonesia and 180°W. The decrease in SST anomalies in the eastern equatorial Pacific during July was reflected by a decrease in the SST departures in the Niño 3, Niño 3.4, and Niño 4 regions. By the end of July the patterns of tropical convection, atmospheric circulation, SST and subsurface ocean temperatures were near average, indicating ENSO-neutral conditions.

The large range (weak La Niña to weak El Niño) in the statistical and coupled model forecasts indicates considerable uncertainty. However, current conditions and recent trends support the continuation of ENSO-neutral conditions for the next 3-6 months.

This discussion is a consolidated effort of NOAA and its funded institutions.

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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. Less than normal 2005 long season rainfall has led to a large area of dryness in eastern Kenya and southern Somalia.

2. Lake Victoria water levels are running approximately 0.9 meters below normal due to poor 2004-05 seasonal rains. Lake levels continue to decline during the past few weeks.

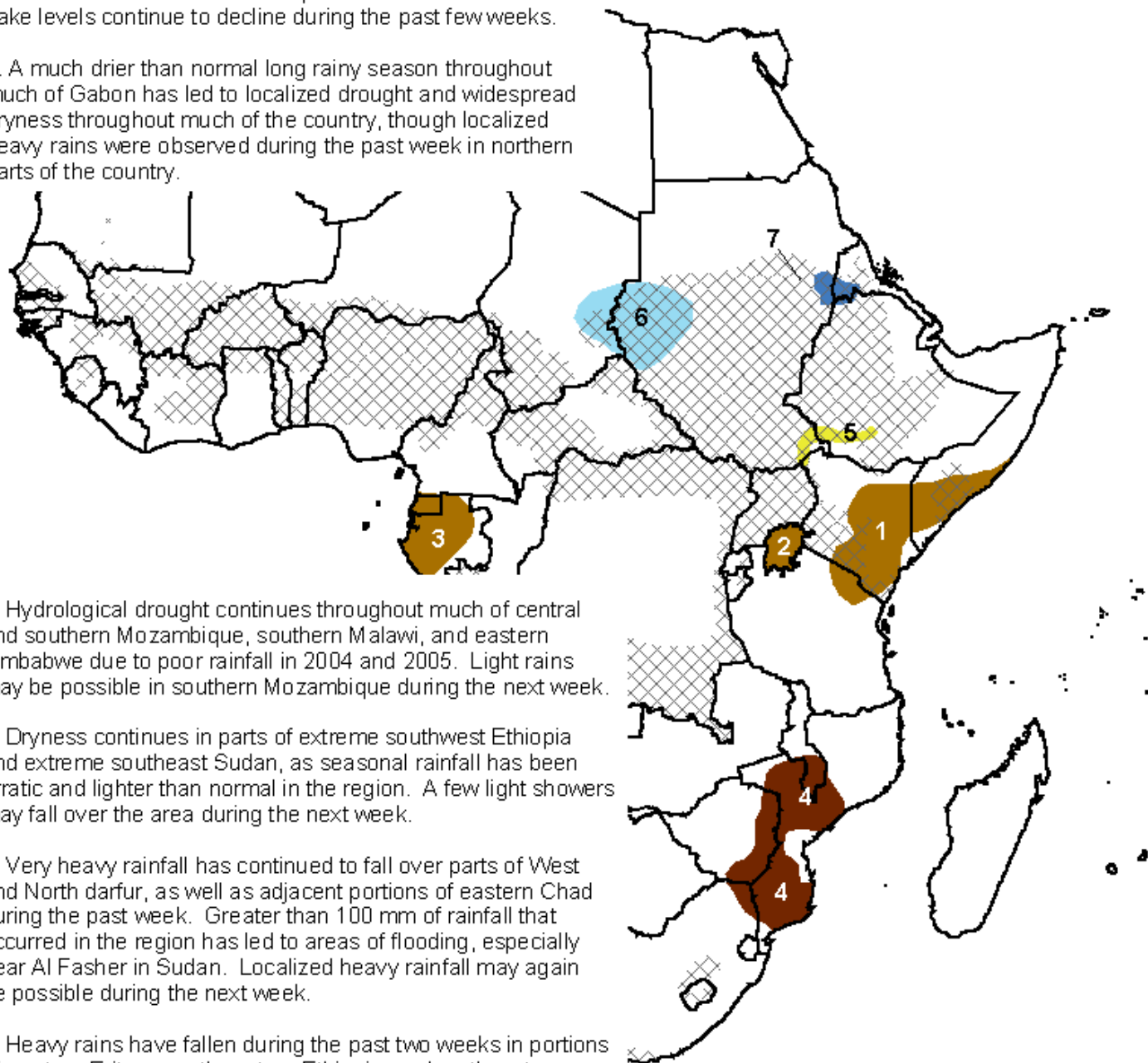
3. A much drier than normal long rainy season throughout much of Gabon has led to localized drought and widespread dryness throughout much of the country, though localized heavy rains were observed during the past week in northern parts of the country.

4. Hydrological drought continues throughout much of central and southern Mozambique, southern Malawi, and eastern Zimbabwe due to poor rainfall in 2004 and 2005. Light rains may be possible in southern Mozambique during the next week.

5. Dryness continues in parts of extreme southwest Ethiopia and extreme southeast Sudan, as seasonal rainfall has been erratic and lighter than normal in the region. A few light showers may fall over the area during the next week.

6. Very heavy rainfall has continued to fall over parts of West and North darfur, as well as adjacent portions of eastern Chad during the past week. Greater than 100 mm of rainfall that occurred in the region has led to areas of flooding, especially near Al Fasher in Sudan. Localized heavy rainfall may again be possible during the next week.

7. Heavy rains have fallen during the past two weeks in portions of western Eritrea, northwestern Ethiopia, and northeastern Sudan, leading to areas of flooding especially along the Gash River near the town of Kassala in Sudan. Additional rainfall is likely during the next week.



Valid: August 18 - 24, 2005

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Little improvement has been seen during the past few weeks in portions of eastern Kenya and southern Somalia where March through May 2005 rainfall totals were significantly less than normal. This past seasonal lack of rains has led to localized drought and widespread dryness throughout the area. Although agricultural losses have already occurred, current problems include degraded pasture conditions and low drinking water levels, which will not be improved until at least October when short season rains normally begin to intensify. There is a slight possibility for some localized coastal precipitation during the next week, though totals will be less than 5-10 mm generally.
2. The past week saw some light showers fall over Lake Victoria and regions to the north and east, with 7-day rainfall accumulations exceeding 20 mm in some locations. This will help to replenish lake levels, though according to NASA telemetry methods, the current lake level remains around 0.9 meters below the long term mean, and it near the 10-year low. Little precipitation is expected during the next week, as problems associated with the lower than normal water level will continue.
3. Areas of northern Gabon received locally heavy rainfall during the past week, with a thunderstorm producing up to 75 mm in some locations, with widespread light precipitation in the area. This moisture will be beneficial to areas that continue to suffer from a hydrological drought due to seasonal precipitation that ended a month to a month and a half early. Continued light rainfall is expected during the next week in northern Gabon, and the region should begin to see increased precipitation in the next few weeks as the ITCZ begins its southerly movement.
4. Though some heavy rains were seen during the past week in areas of southeastern South Africa, areas of central and southern Mozambique, eastern Zimbabwe, southern Malawi, and extreme northeastern South Africa remained dry and continue to feel the effects of a long term hydrological drought. Seasonal precipitation should resume around October.
5. Continued erratic rainfall has led to areas of short term dryness primarily in southwestern lowland Ethiopia and adjacent portions of extreme southeastern Sudan, and little precipitation is expected during the next week. Concerns at the moment are more toward agricultural stress, however areas of dry pasture conditions appear to be increasing
6. Very heavy rains fell again during the past week in areas of West and North Darfur in Sudan as well as adjacent portions of eastern Chad, with localized rainfall totals exceeding 100 mm and widespread areas of greater than 50-75 mm for the 7-day period. These rains have led to areas of localized flooding during the past few weeks. Areas noting flooding include the Abu Shouk refugee camp and the town of Al Fasher in Darfur. The recent rainfall has been helpful to replenish drinking water reserves, increase pastoral moisture, and increase local agricultural water supply, though road conditions have deteriorated, making overland transportation difficult. Generally from 50-75 mm of rainfall is likely during the next week.
7. Heavy rainfall has continued in much of western Eritrea, portions of western Ethiopia, and much of eastern Sudan during the past week, with 7-day accumulated precipitation totals exceeding 100 mm locally and greater than 50 mm regionally. The recent rainfall has led to areas of localized flooding, most recently along the Gash River flowing into Kassala in Sudan. Additional heavy rains are likely during the next period, and localized river flooding will continue, especially downstream of the more intense daily thunderstorms.

AUTHOR: Timothy B Love

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

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