The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

For

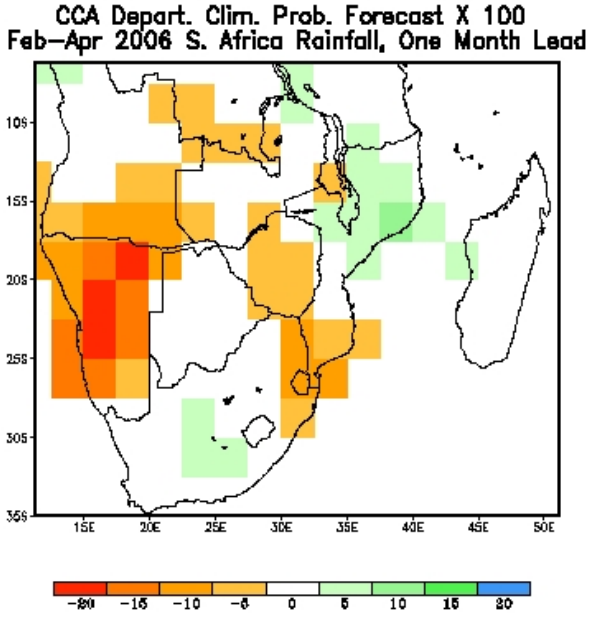
January 26 – February 1, 2006

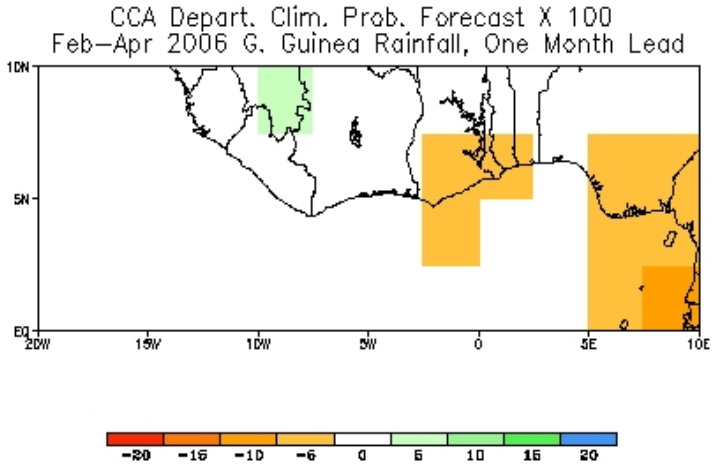
Weekly Introduction:

Update of Seasonal Outlooks at One-Month Lead: February – April 2006

Southern Africa:

The outlook for Feb-Apr 2006 southern Africa rainfall shows a moderate to high tilt in the odds favoring below average rainfall over Namibia and southern Angola. There is a tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall over portions of northeastern South Africa, southern Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and locally over central Malawi, and portions of southern Zambia. However, there is a tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall over northern Mozambique and southern Malawi, locally over central South Africa and the west coast of Madagascar.





Gulf of Guinea Region:

There is a slight tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall along portions of the Gulf of Guinea coast from Ghana to Benin, and over southeastern Nigeria. However, a slight tilt in the odds favoring above normal rainfall exist in southeast Guinea.

Weather Hazards Assessment Graphic:

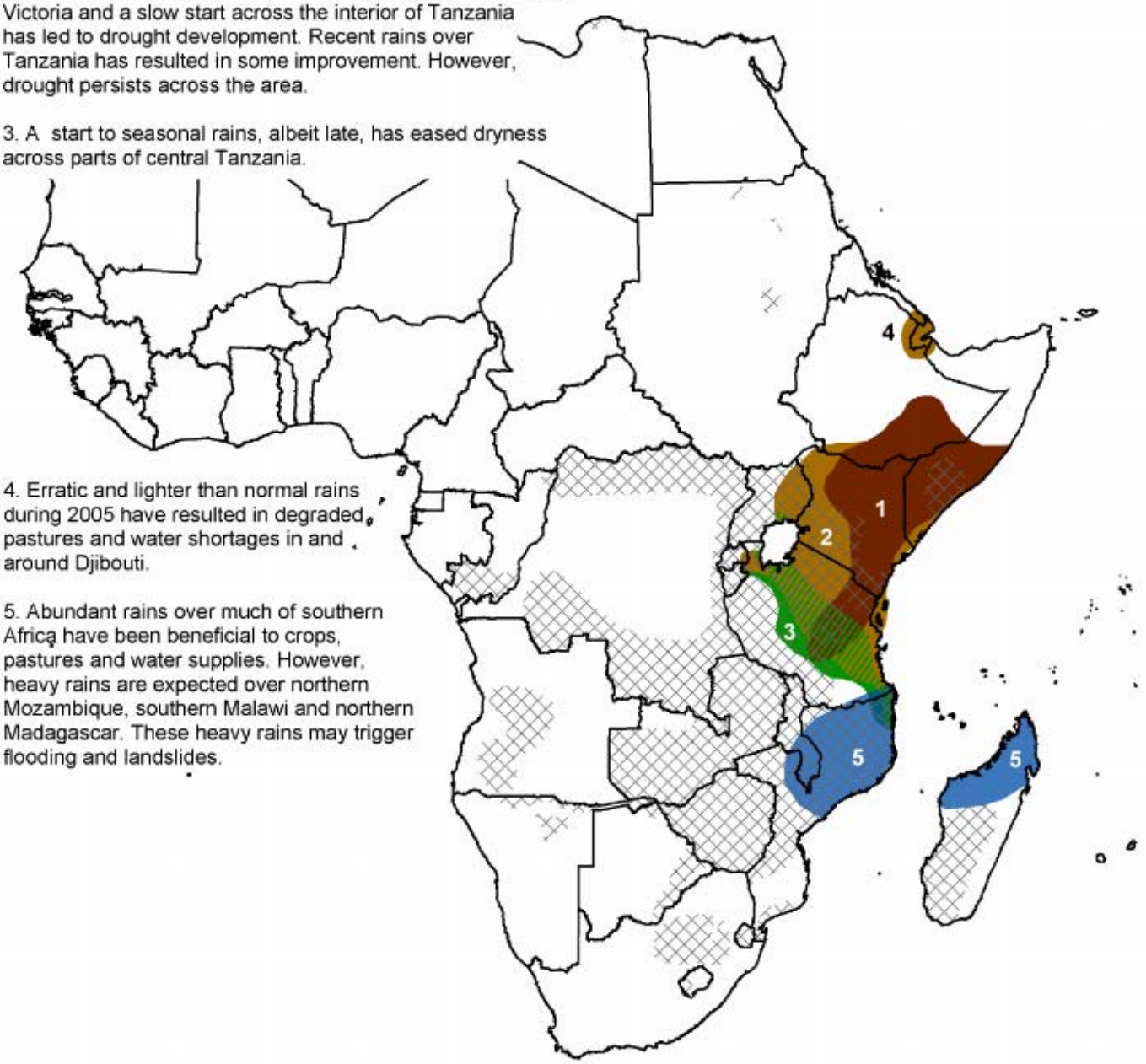
Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

1. Severe drought continues to plague southeastern Ethiopia, southern Somalia, portions of Tanzania, northern and eastern Kenya.

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)

2. A combination of failed short rains, light rains around Lake Victoria and a slow start across the interior of Tanzania has led to drought development. Recent rains over Tanzania has resulted in some improvement. However, drought persists across the area.

3. A start to seasonal rains, albeit late, has eased dryness across parts of central Tanzania.



4. Erratic and lighter than normal rains during 2005 have resulted in degraded pastures and water shortages in and around Djibouti.

5. Abundant rains over much of southern Africa have been beneficial to crops, pastures and water supplies. However, heavy rains are expected over northern Mozambique, southern Malawi and northern Madagascar. These heavy rains may trigger flooding and landslides.

Valid: January 26 - February 1, 2006

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Several poor consecutive rainy seasons have resulted in the development of severe drought across much of eastern Kenya, southeastern Ethiopia and southern Somalia. The poor performance of this year's March-May season and the failure of the October-December season have resulted in rainfall totals for the year 2005 that are only 20 to 50 percent of the long term mean, and annual rainfall deficits of 250 to 500 mm. This severe drought has resulted in crop failures, pasture degradation, water shortages and has threatened the overall food security situation in the region. To the south, an early end to last year's season has combined with seasonal rains that are 1 ½ months late over the central Tanzania to result in yearly totals for 2005 that are only 50 to 60 percent of normal. This has resulted in the development of hydrological drought. The drought is resulting in serious problems in the Rufiji basin. Although an increase in shower activity due to the start of the wet season has resulted in some improvement across interior central Tanzania, the rest of the region remained dry. Scattered showers are possible over northeastern Tanzania and southeastern Kenya during the period. However, long term drought will persist for at least the next 3 months.

2. Drier than normal conditions since October has resulted in drought across western Kenya, much of Tanzania and the Lake Victoria Basin. In the bimodal areas of southern Kenya, northwestern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania, the short rains have failed for the 2005 season. In the southern and eastern parts of the Lake Victoria Basin, rainfall since October 1 has totaled only 200 to 300 mm. This is only 45 to 70 percent of normal, and has caused crop and pasture stress. On Lake Victoria, passenger ships failed to find docking stations in some areas due to the shallow water levels in recent weeks. People had to be ferried off of ships by small boats. Although the dry conditions in and around the basin have contributed to the low water levels, other factors such as downstream dam releases may play a more substantial role. Recent rains have provided some relief. The rainfall around Lake Victoria broke a dry spell that lasted 4 to 8 weeks. However, deficits of 50 to 200 mm still remain. Across Tanzania's interior, widespread rainfall a few weeks ago signaled the start of the season. However, these rains did start 4 to 6 weeks late, and deficits stand at 50 to 150 mm. Therefore, more rain is needed. The best chances for rain during the period will be over interior Tanzania, where seasonal rains will continue and further improvement is expected. Scattered showers are possible around Lake Victoria, however deficits are likely to persist.

3. Seasonal rains have begun falling over portions of central Tanzania's unimodal rain areas. These rains have helped to ease the developing drought in the area. However, the arrival of the rains was about 1 ½ months late. Additional shower activity should result in a continuation of the improving trend.

4. Seasonal rains across Djibouti and the surrounding area have been erratic and lighter than normal. This has resulted in pasture degradation and possible water shortages. Rainfall totals for 2005 are around half of the long term mean. Scattered showers occurred over the past few weeks across southern Djibouti, however little in the way of improvement was observed. The next chance for relief will be when the March-May rains set in.

5. Heavy rains have soaked northwestern portions of Madagascar, raising antecedent moisture levels and swelling rivers and streams. Additional heavy rains are expected during the period, with heavy rainfall possible over the northeastern areas as well. Rainfall amounts during the period are expected to range from 75 to 150 mm, with locally heavier amounts possible. In northern Mozambique and southern Malawi, heavy rainfall is expected during the middle and later part of the period, with rainfall totals of 100 mm or more expected. These heavy rains may trigger small stream and urban flood problems, as well as localized land slides in mountainous areas. These rains may also trigger minor flooding along the lower stem of the Zambezi.

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