

Africa Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment

for

April 20, 2006 – April 26, 2006

Weekly Introduction:

Update of CPC Seasonal Outlooks at One-

Month Lead: May-July 2006 Forecasts

Gulf of Guinea Region

The outlook shows a slight tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall along the coast from Ghana to western Nigeria. There is a slight tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall along the western edge of Cote d'Ivoire's coastline.

Northern Horn of Africa

Climatology is expected except, locally, over west central Ethiopia and southwestern Sudan, where there is a slight tilt in the odds favoring above normal rainfall.

Sahel

Climatology is expected across the region except, locally, over western Mali and north central Chad, where there is a slight tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall. There is also a small tilt in the odds favoring above normal rainfall locally over eastern Burkina Faso, southwestern Niger, northern Benin and local parts of northern Nigeria.

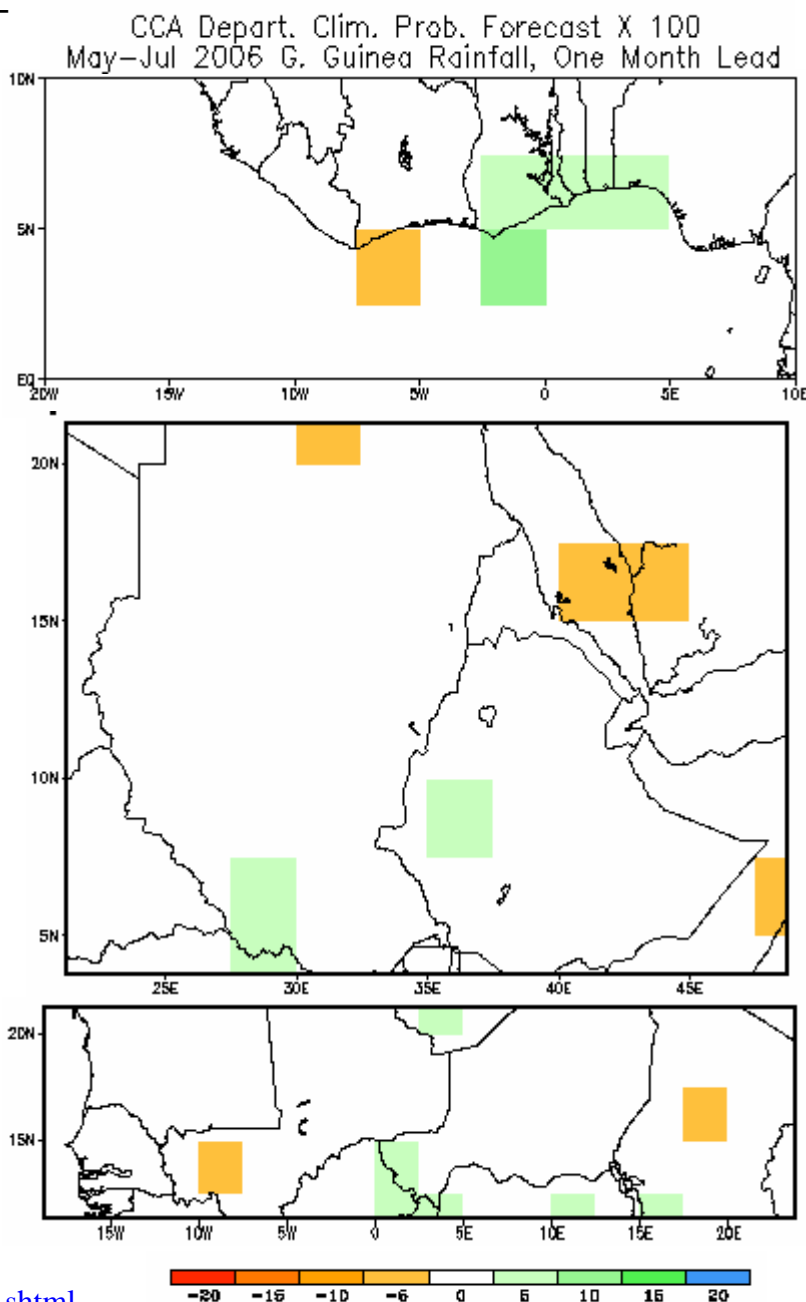
Locust Update:

The FAO site (<http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html>) was last updated on April 3. The situation remains calm.

ITCZ Update:

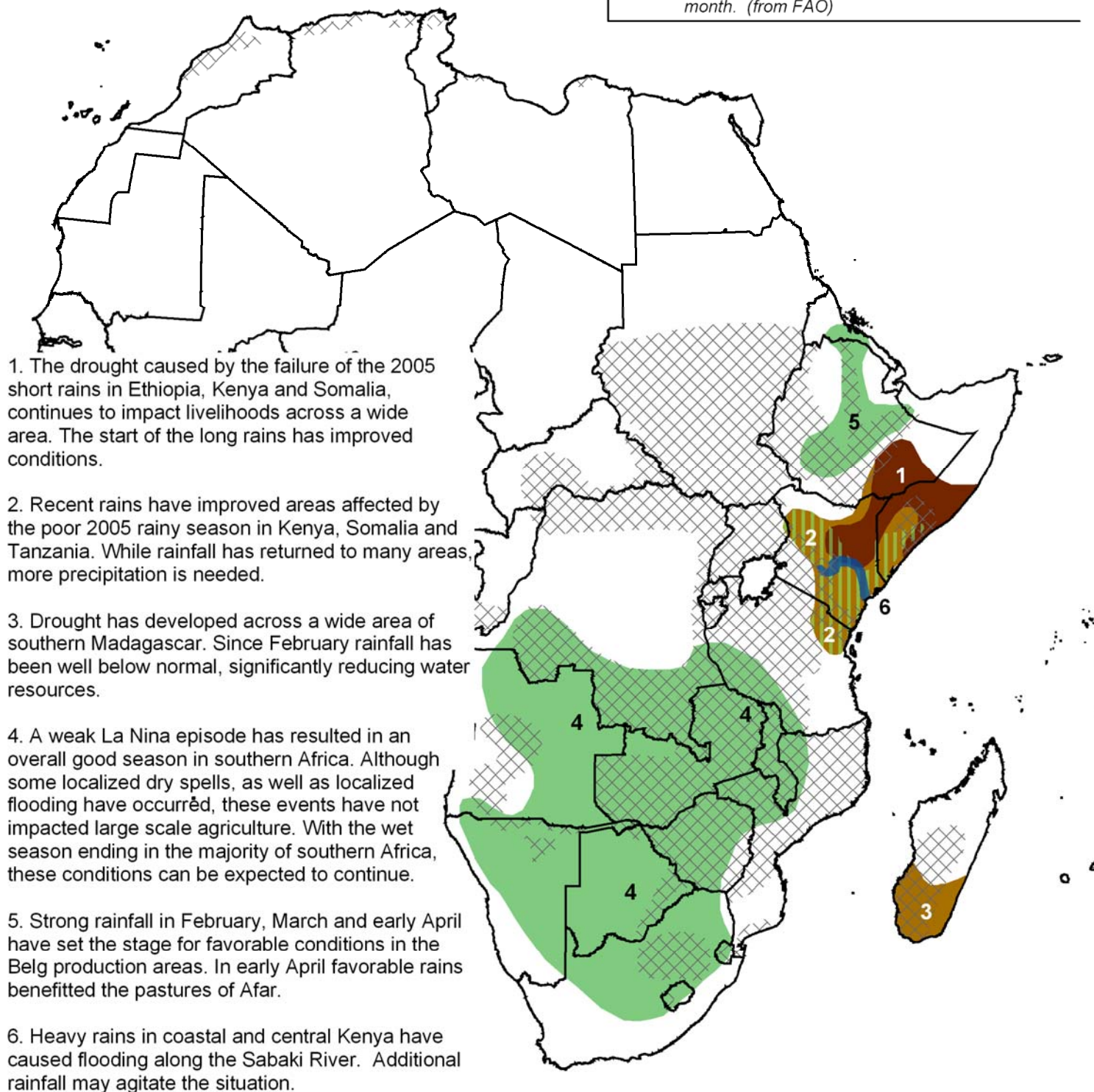
The URL for the ITCZ information has been changed slightly. The new URL is:

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/fews/ITCZ/itcz.shtml>



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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)



Valid: April 20 - 26, 2006

Weather Hazards Benefits Text Explanation:

1. Consecutive poor wet seasons, including the complete failure of the 2005 short rains, have devastated northeast Kenya, central Somalia, and southern Ethiopia. 2005 saw a poor March – May long rainy season, while the October – December season never began. Annual deficits range between 250 and 500 mm, or 20 to 50 percent of normal. The severe drought has destroyed livelihoods, by reducing water available for agriculture, pasture, and drinking. These impacts have been eased significantly during the month of April as the long rains have had a strong start. It should be noted, however, the rains have fallen on weakened human and livestock populations that are vulnerable to water borne disease. Light rains fell over the area during the past week, and slightly higher totals are anticipated during the coming period.
2. A poor 2005 short rainy season in most of Kenya, as well as neighboring sections of Tanzania, and Somalia has reduced water availability. The poor season reduced crop yields, as well as degraded pasture, and has limited drinking water. Although there has been substantial improvement during the month of April, deficits still remain with some areas well below their seasonal totals, especially in Kenya. Improvement has come to the area, with the long rains performing well in most areas. The areas receiving the most relief are near Lake Victoria, and along the Kenyan and Somali coast. Continued improvement is expected during the coming week.
3. The current drought across southern Madagascar is the result of erratic and light precipitation between February and early April. Although the season started off well, the break in the rains will cause a reduction in crop yields on the southern portion of the island. Precipitation deficits range between 100 and 200 mm, and with the wet season ending in the area it is unlikely that those deficits will be erased in the near future. During the last week rainfall has been plentiful with some areas receiving over 50 mm of precipitation. However, that trend is not expected to continue, as dry conditions move in during the next seven days.
4. Favorable temperatures, and well distributed rainfall has led to an excellent growing season across much of southern Africa. The major growing areas of South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana extending to the pastureland in Namibia have enjoyed favorable growing conditions, which are expected to continue as the season winds down. Although in most areas, these conditions were prevalent in some localized areas in southern Africa, excessive rains have lead to minor flooding as well as ponding in fields causing disease related problems. Conversely some locations may have seen a brief pause in the rains, causing crop stress and damage. These events however are isolated and few in number compared to the overall good outlook for the remainder of the season in southern Africa.
5. Seasonal rains had a fantastic start in the Belg areas of Ethiopia, with significant rain extending into the southern Afar region as well as the Rift Valley and briefly into Eritrea Djibouti and Somalia. This has led to favorable crop and pasture conditions over a wide area in the northern Horn of Africa. The strong rains did ease during the past week, and while this may allow some of the more excessive rainfall in the area to wash away, it would unfavorable for the rains to halt. This, however, does not look likely as higher precipitation totals are expected during the next week.
6. The Sabaki River, which flows from central Kenya to the Indian Ocean, has flooded at several points along its path. Several thousand people have been affected by the flooding which comes as the population contends with a drought. The precipitation that has caused the flooding, has been easing drought conditions in the area. With additional rainfall expected this week, drought conditions are likely to continue to improve, however, flooding will remain a threat.

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