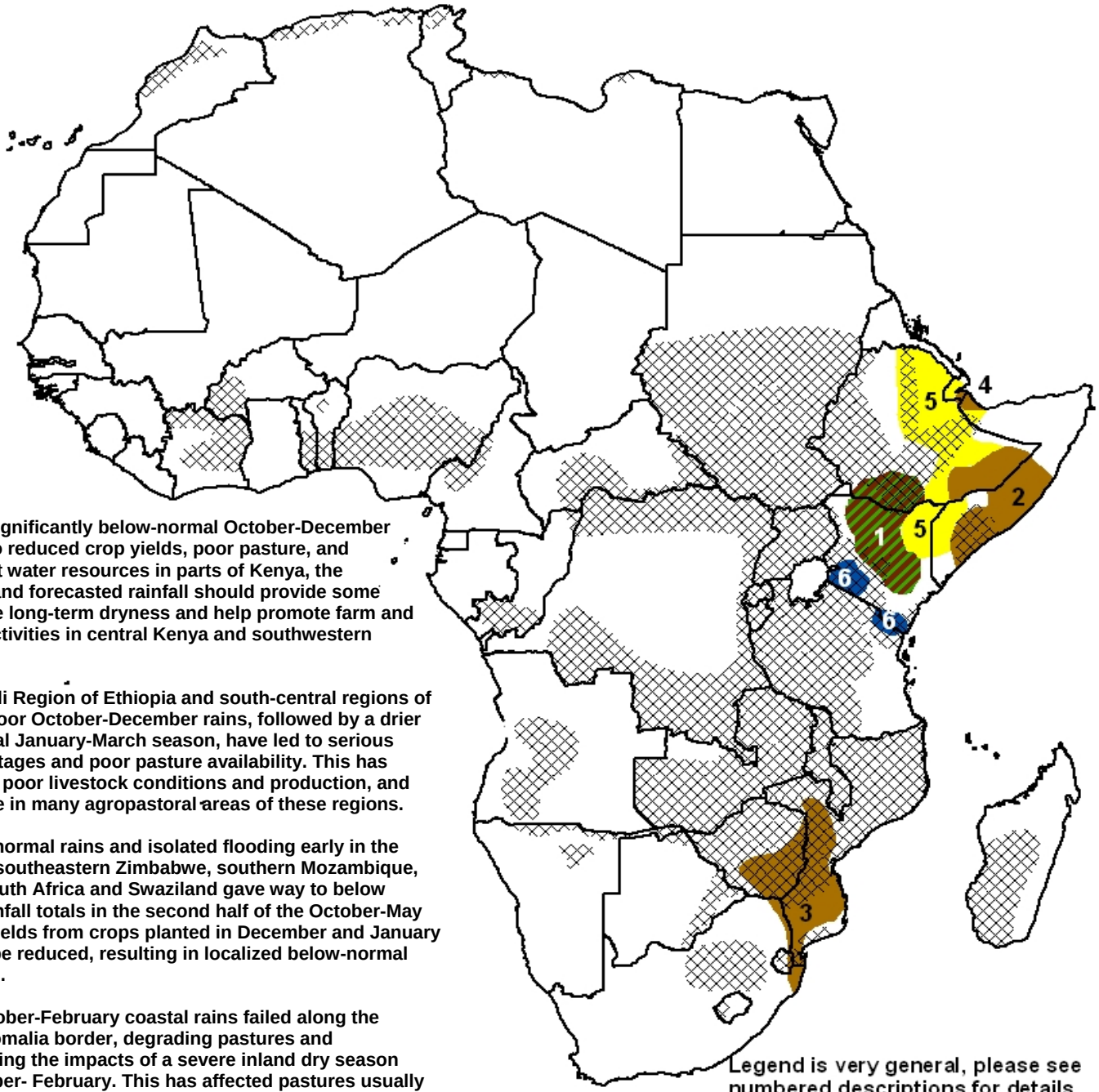
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
April 10 – April 16, 2008

- **Moderate amounts of rainfall during the last week continue to relieve short-term dryness and promote cropping activities across parts of southern Ethiopia. Much of this rainfall also continues to alleviate the long-term dryness that has impacted many areas in northern Kenya**
- **Lack of seasonal rainfall since February continues to limit potential crop harvests in southern Mozambique and southeastern Zimbabwe. With less opportunity for precipitation as the season winds down, this dryness may lead to water shortages, increased food insecurity and/or other more severe long-term impacts.**



1) While significantly below-normal October-December rains led to reduced crop yields, poor pasture, and insufficient water resources in parts of Kenya, the observed and forecasted rainfall should provide some relief to the long-term dryness and help promote farm and pastoral activities in central Kenya and southwestern Ethiopia.

2) In Somali Region of Ethiopia and south-central regions of Somalia, poor October-December rains, followed by a drier than normal January-March season, have led to serious water shortages and poor pasture availability. This has resulted in poor livestock conditions and production, and crop failure in many agropastoral areas of these regions.

3) Above-normal rains and isolated flooding early in the season in southeastern Zimbabwe, southern Mozambique, eastern South Africa and Swaziland gave way to below normal rainfall totals in the second half of the October-May season. Yields from crops planted in December and January will likely be reduced, resulting in localized below-normal production.

4) The October-February coastal rains failed along the Djibouti/Somalia border, degrading pastures and compounding the impacts of a severe inland dry season from October- February. This has affected pastures usually used by migrant herdsmen.

5) Lack of rains during the current March-May season has worsened dryness across much of central and northern Ethiopia. This dryness has also led to poor soil conditions and degraded pastures for some local areas in northeastern Kenya and southern Somalia.

6) Very heavy rainfall along the Kenya/Tanzania border has led to localized flooding, fatalities and cholera outbreaks amongst Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps.

Rainfall continues to provide relief for parts of northern Kenya and benefits crops in southern Ethiopia.

During the last week, moderate precipitation totals exceeding 20mm fell over many parts of southwestern Ethiopia and northwestern Kenya (**Figure 1**). This precipitation continues to hold seasonal rainfall totals slightly above-normal for the March-May rains particularly for areas including KibreMengist, Nekemte, and Gamela in southwestern Ethiopia. With these early above-normal rainfall totals, latest crop analyses maintain a normal progression of maize and pasture development since the start of season.

North of Addis-Ababa, precipitation totals continue to fall below normal for the Shewa, Harerge, Weso and Tigray provinces of northern Ethiopia. This dryness also extends southward into parts northeastern Kenya and southern Somalia where some local areas are beginning to experience a late start to cropping activities. This current lack of precipitation does not pose an immediate threat to pastoralists and agro-pastoralists; however dry soil conditions may inhibit the growth of maize and sorghum for parts of Ethiopia, and degrade pastures for parts of northeastern Kenya in the next several weeks.

In the eastern and rift valley provinces of Kenya, fair amounts of rainfall (> 15 mm) were observed in many areas east of Lake Turkana. This rainfall continues to alleviate areas that had experienced water shortages and degraded pastures due to a significantly below normal October–December rains season. Along the Kenya/Tanzania border, isolated precipitation totals in excess of 50 mm have also benefitted cropping conditions in the Taita/Taveta districts of Kenya. There have been no additional reports of flooding.

Precipitation forecasts show considerable improvement in the next seven days for northern Kenya, much of Ethiopia, and northward into Djibouti. Moderate to significant amounts of rainfall (> 50mm) are expected for of western Ethiopia while seasonally drier areas in the northeastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia should anticipate rainfall totals greater than 20-25 mm for the upcoming week.

Dryness persists for parts of Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The absence of seasonal rains since early February continues to exacerbate drought conditions for much of southern and western Mozambique and southeastern Zimbabwe. Monthly rainfall deficits exceeding 100 mm are becoming more widespread (**Figure 2**) and are more likely to reduce maize, millet and sorghum yields for areas north of Maputo, Mozambique and along the Zimbabwe / Mozambique border near Cahora Bassa Lake (**Figure 3**).

Despite the significant rainfall amounts and flooding across many parts of central Mozambique in early January, the prolonged departure of rains are becoming increasingly evident in the long-term precipitation anomalies. With the season ending and less opportunity for rainfall, it is likely some local areas in Mozambique and Zimbabwe may experience the effects of a long-term drought. This includes the potential for insufficient water resources and reduced drinking water availability in the next couple of months.

Forecasts do not indicate any major changes in the precipitation pattern, with little rainfall accumulation forecast over the next seven days.

7-Day Rainfall Estimate
March 30th – April 5th , 2008

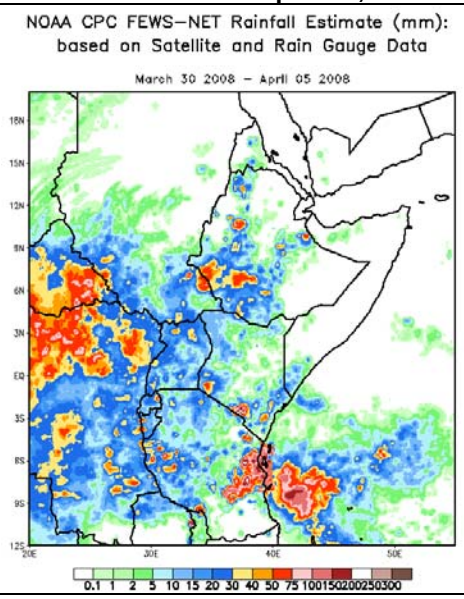


Figure 1:
Source: NOAA

Short-Term Precipitation Anomaly
March 7th- April 5th 2008

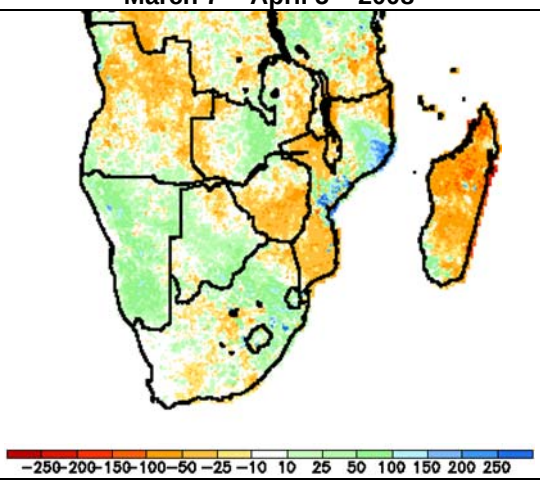


Figure 2:
Source: NOAA

Soil Water Index for Maize
April 5th, 2008

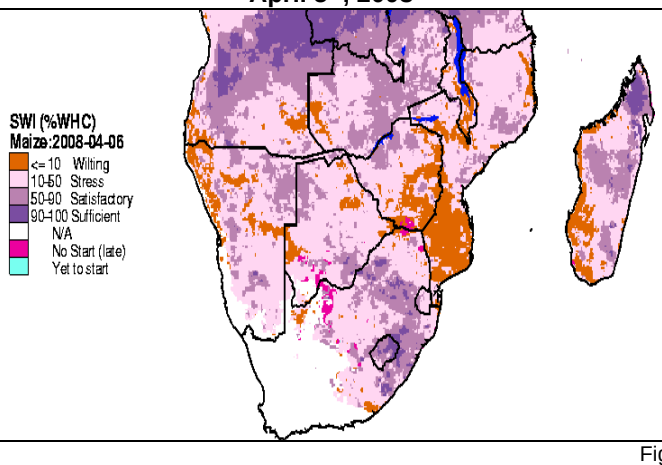


Figure 3.
Source: USGS