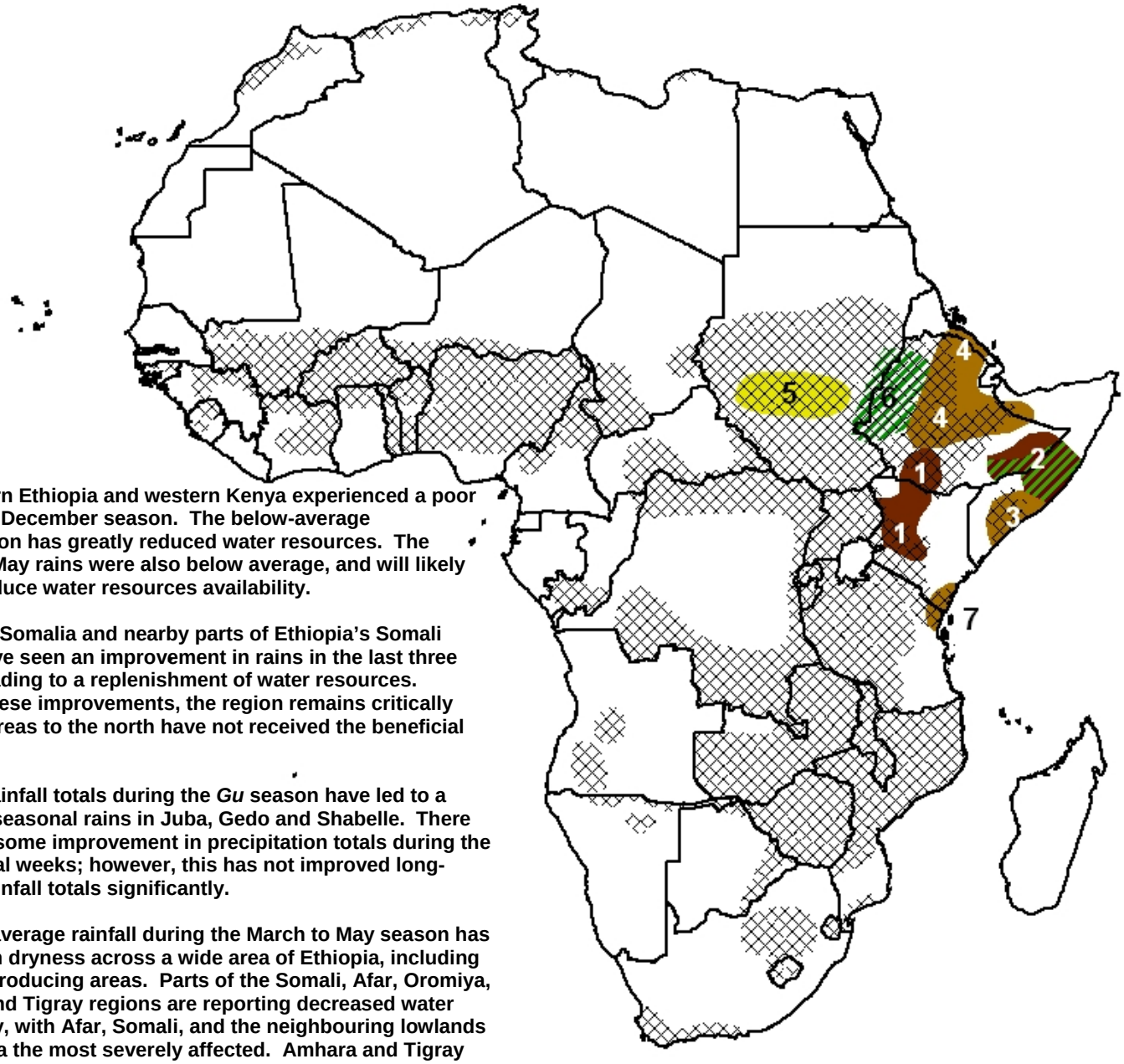
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
June 12 – 18, 2008

- **Below average rainfall has been observed across many areas of the Greater Horn since February. Some areas have now experienced several consecutive below-average seasons, especially in areas of Kenya and Somalia. Western Ethiopia where precipitation remains above average, is an exception.**

- **Although there have been isolated reports of dryness in west Africa, the region has experienced near average precipitation overall.**



1) Southern Ethiopia and western Kenya experienced a poor October – December season. The below-average precipitation has greatly reduced water resources. The March to May rains were also below average, and will likely further reduce water resources availability.

2) Central Somalia and nearby parts of Ethiopia's Somali region have seen an improvement in rains in the last three weeks, leading to a replenishment of water resources. Despite these improvements, the region remains critically dry, and areas to the north have not received the beneficial moisture.

3) Poor rainfall totals during the *Gu* season have led to a failure of seasonal rains in Juba, Gedo and Shabelle. There has been some improvement in precipitation totals during the last several weeks; however, this has not improved long-season rainfall totals significantly.

4) Below average rainfall during the March to May season has resulted in dryness across a wide area of Ethiopia, including the Belg producing areas. Parts of the Somali, Afar, Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions are reporting decreased water availability, with Afar, Somali, and the neighbouring lowlands of Oromiya the most severely affected. Amhara and Tigray have both seen some improvement recently.

5) In central Sudan, rainfall was approximately half of the average during May. These rains are mostly pre-seasonal showers and could be made up in the coming weeks.

6) Western Ethiopia, in contrast to much of the Horn of Africa, has experienced abundant and well distributed rainfall since the season began, in late March.

7) Coastal sections of Kenya and Tanzania have experienced below average precipitation since last October.

Legend is very general, please see numbered descriptions for details.

- Cropped Areas
- Somewhat Favorable
- Short-Term Dryness
- Drought
- Severe Drought
- Improving Severe Drought

Pattern of Suppressed Rainfall Remains in East Africa, except in Western Ethiopia

Precipitation continues to be suppressed over a wide area of East Africa. Western Kenya, southern and central Somalia, and much of Ethiopia have experienced poor rains since February. In parts of Kenya and Somalia this is latest in a series of below-average wet seasons. More recently, precipitation totals have been around 50 percent of average over central Sudan. Rainfall anomalies however, are significantly above normal in western Ethiopia.

The lack of rainfall has reduced water resources, and with many areas now approaching the dry season, there is little hope for improvement until the rains return. This will happen first in Ethiopia, with rains typically returning to the area in July, while Somalia and Kenya will have to wait until October.

In Sudan the prognosis is better. Rainfall has not been as drastically below normal, with rainfall anomalies much smaller and the season only just beginning to get underway. Rainfall deficits of around 100 mm in the central part of the country could easily be corrected for during the coming weeks. This has, however, kept water resources below average for this time of year.

Western Ethiopia continues to receive above-average precipitation. Rainfall totals are generally 150 percent of average and nearly twice normal in some areas. (See Figure 1)

The outlook for the next wet season in eastern Africa shows that ocean temperatures are favoring above normal precipitation for the October to December period.

Satellite Rainfall Estimation
May Standard Deviations

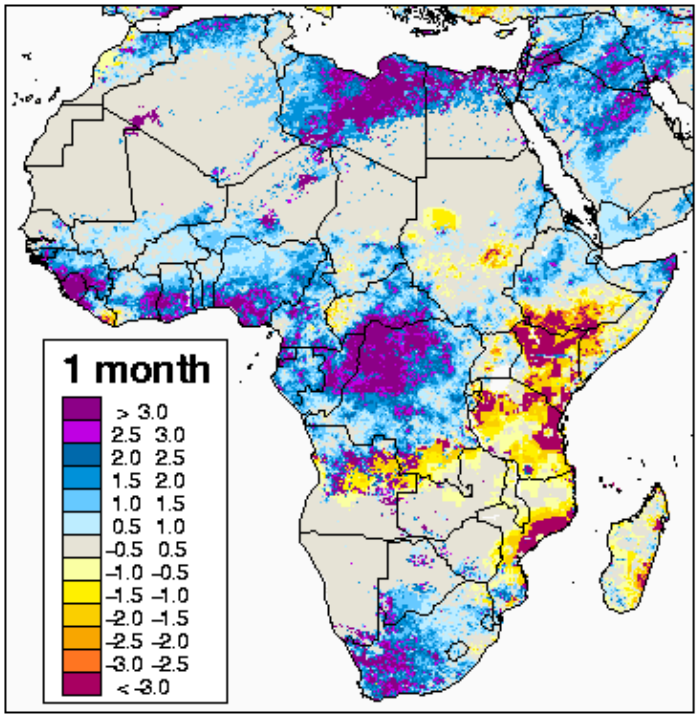


Figure 1:. Kenya, and nearby portions of Somalia and Ethiopia were up to 3 standard deviations below normal, continuing a multi-seasonal trend. West-central Sudan experienced up to w deviations below normal precipitation. While much of west Africa was above average as was northern Ethiopia.

Source: USGS/FEWS NET

West Africa Showing a Normal Start to the Season, Some Isolated dry Pockets

Rainfall in west Africa has generally been near normal, although some areas have experienced localized dryness.

The areas that have been below normal include west-central Nigeria, and northern Ghana. Niether of these anomalies is currently significant with both regions having at least 80 percent of average rainfall thus far this season. A similar situation exists in extreme western Mali, near the Senegal border.

Earlier in the season, dryness in the Guinea Highlands lead to below-average river levels along the Niger river, mainly in the area north of Niamey. However, rainfall over this area has intensified, and as the runoff makes its way downstream river levels should return to normal. (See Figure 2)

The weakening La Nina, along with warm Atlantic Ocean temperatures is favoring above normal rainfall for the current west Africa season.

Satellite Rainfall Estimation Anomalies
May 1 – June 7, 2008

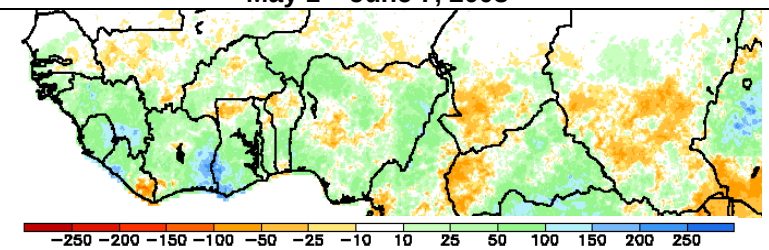


Figure 2: Much of West Africa remains wetter than normal; however there are pockets of slightly drier than normal conditions.

Source: NOAA/FEWS NET