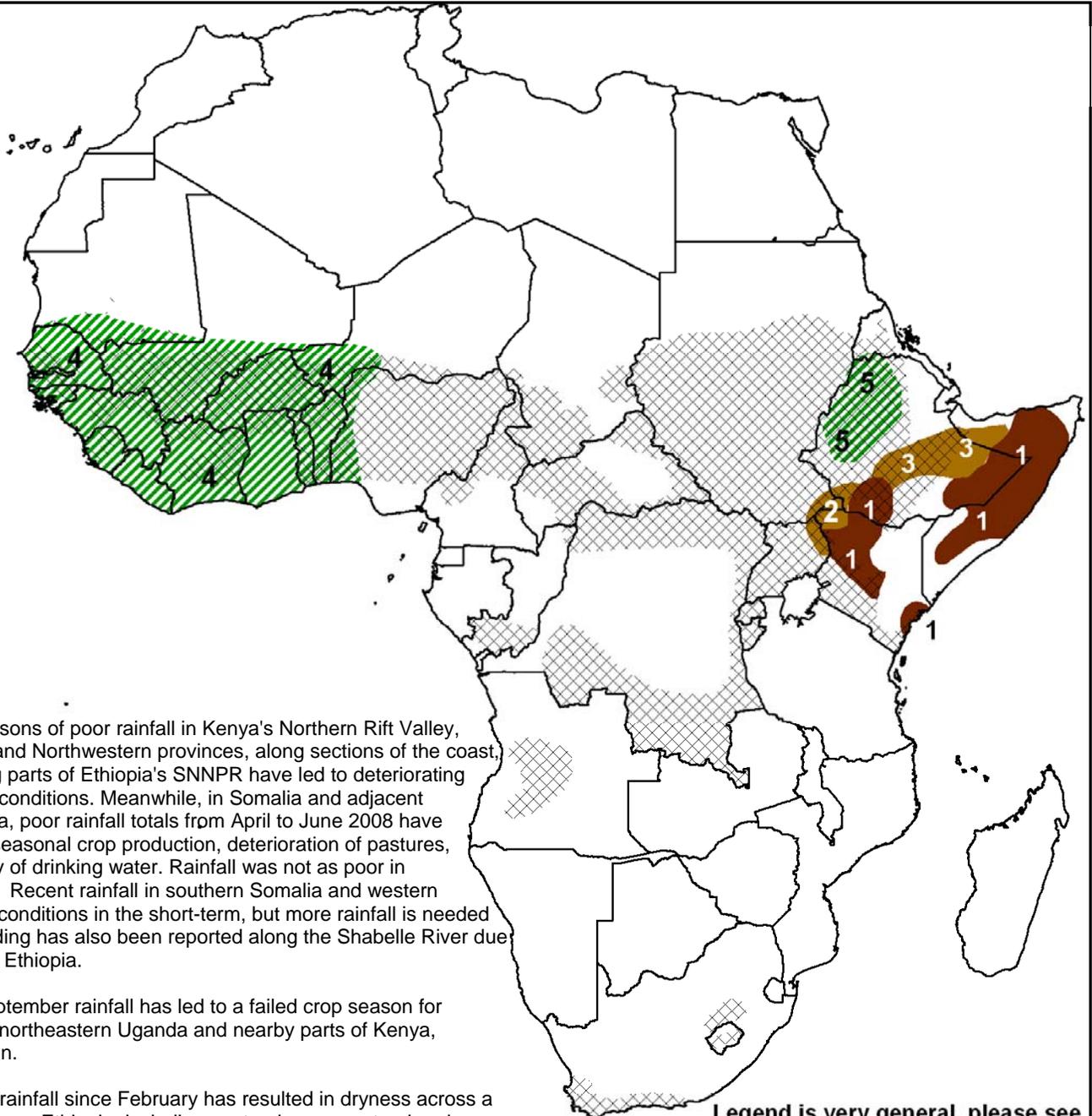


- Above-average precipitation across western Africa has benefited crops, pastures and water resources; however, it has also resulted in localized flooding and flood-related damage to bridges, roads, railways, and other infrastructure.
- Rainfall has improved significantly across the Afar region of Ethiopia and nearby areas of Djibouti and Eritrea.



1) Successive seasons of poor rainfall in Kenya's Northern Rift Valley, Central, Eastern, and Northwestern provinces, along sections of the coast, and in neighboring parts of Ethiopia's SNNPR have led to deteriorating crop and pasture conditions. Meanwhile, in Somalia and adjacent portions of Ethiopia, poor rainfall totals from April to June 2008 have led to a failure of seasonal crop production, deterioration of pastures, and low availability of drinking water. Rainfall was not as poor in southern Somalia. Recent rainfall in southern Somalia and western Kenya has eased conditions in the short-term, but more rainfall is needed for recovery. Flooding has also been reported along the Shabelle River due to heavy rainfall in Ethiopia.

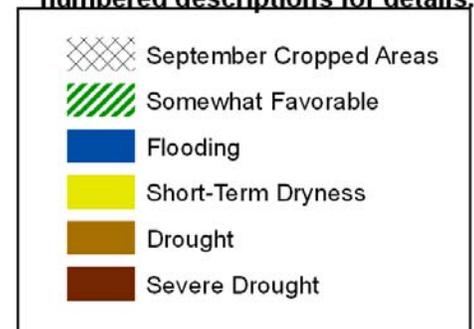
2) Poor March-September rainfall has led to a failed crop season for localized areas of northeastern Uganda and nearby parts of Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan.

3) Below-average rainfall since February has resulted in dryness across a wide area of southern Ethiopia, including pastoral, agro-pastoral and crop producing areas in parts of northern Somalia. Parts of Oromia, Somali, and SNNP regions report decreased crop production, with the lowlands of Oromia, and Somali regions being the most severely affected.

4) Above-average rainfall since the beginning of July has resulted in increased water availability and favorable crop conditions across much of western Africa. However, localized flooding has caused damage to bridges, roads, railways, and other infrastructure and agriculture throughout the region.

5) Much of western Ethiopia has experienced abundant and well-distributed rainfall since late March. These rains have recently pushed eastward, into areas affected by dryness since February.

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



Persistent rainfall reduces moisture deficits in northeastern and southern Ethiopia

Although rainfall in northeastern portions of Ethiopia and nearby areas of Djibouti and Eritrea was poor, from February until June, precipitation began to increase in July. This precipitation prevented rainfall deficits from increasing, but did not significantly reduce previous moisture deficits. In late August and early September, rainfall began to increase in intensity (Figure 1).

Currently, slight deficits remain, and isolated locations in Tigray and Afar may still be experiencing drier than average conditions. Impacts from early in the season will not be completely mitigated, but the improved rains mean that pastures, drinking water supplies and shorter cycle crops will benefit.

To the south, in the Oromia and Somali regions, and in central and southern Somalia, unusual rains for this time of year have benefited pastures and drinking water supplies. Significant precipitation does not normally return to these areas until October. The increase in rainfall in Ethiopia has led to flooding along the Shabelle River, downstream in Somalia.

Rainfall intensity increasing over Sudan, Chad, and Niger

With the wet season starting to wind down across Sudan and Chad, there was a limited amount of time to make up for the small rainfall deficits in this area and in Niger. The largest moisture deficits had been over Sudan, although these deficits were not severe. During the last month precipitation began to slowly increase across the region, mitigating most remaining deficits.

Neither Niger, nor Chad have any significant dryness left. Niger's cropping regions have now received an average of about 120 percent of their annual rainfall. This sudden increase in rainfall has caused localized flooding; however, this has not been wide-spread or severe. The only area with deficits remaining is located near the southern border with Chad, a semi-arid region with few, if any crops. In Chad, rainfall has returned to near average across most of the country. Only around Lake Chad and the Niger border are any deficits still in place (Figure 2).

Sudan had the most extreme deficits in the area, however these too are reducing. Significant positive anomalies exist along the Red Sea coast, however further south there is a small area with precipitation deficits of 30 to 50 percent of average. This is a marginal area that is primarily irrigated by rivers making their way out of western Ethiopia, where rainfall has been heavy all season long. In central and southern Sudan most areas are near average, with some areas, mainly to the east, experiencing minor rainfall deficits of about 20 percent of average (Figure 1).

