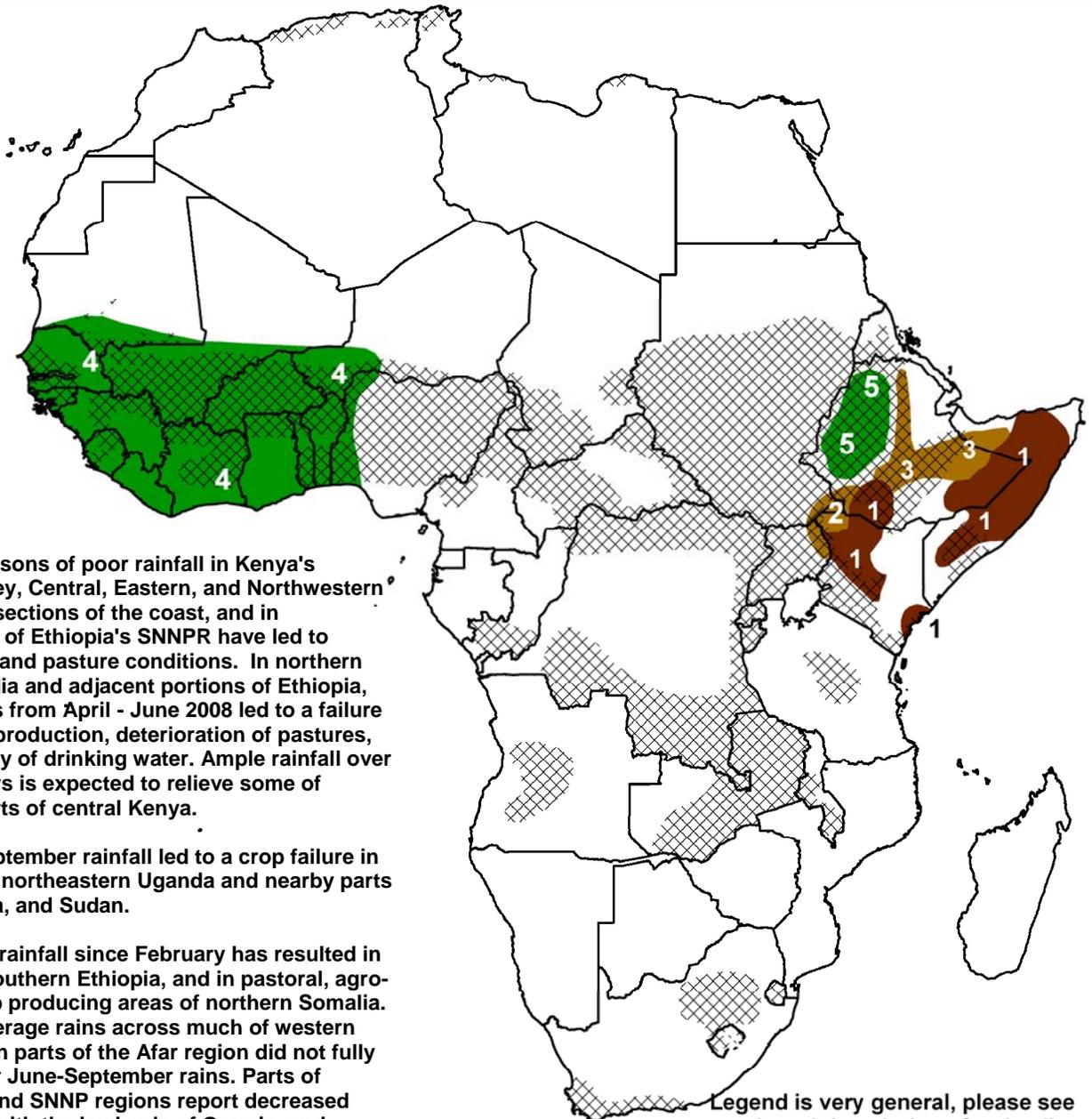


- Consistent early season rainfall across many parts of Somalia and eastern Ethiopia continue to alleviate many local areas that have experienced long-term dryness from previously failed rain seasons. Increased moisture is expected to help improve pastures, regenerate soils and promote early season cropping activities.
- As the West Africa rains season comes to an end, above-average rainfall across Senegal, Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso has led to increased water availability and favorable crop and pasture conditions.



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 deteriorated crop and pasture conditions. In northern and central Somalia and adjacent portions of Ethiopia, poor rainfall totals from April - June 2008 led to a failure of seasonal crop production, deterioration of pastures, and low availability of drinking water. Ample rainfall over the last seven days is expected to relieve some of dryness felt in parts of central Kenya.

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

3) Below-average rainfall since February has resulted in dryness across southern Ethiopia, and in pastoral, agro-pastoral, and crop producing areas of northern Somalia. Despite above-average rains across much of western Ethiopia, rainfall in parts of the Afar region did not fully recover from poor June-September rains. 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 damaged 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.



Early season East African rainfall looks to mitigate effects of long-term dryness.

During the last observation period, relatively moderate to heavy rainfall was observed across many regions of East Africa. In Somalia, rainfall totals ranging between 5 to 30 mm were observed in the southern and central regions. Higher, isolated totals in excess of 35 mm were observed north of the Mogadishu area in the Shabelle region. In Ethiopia, many parts of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia experienced heavier precipitation amounts (> 50 mm).

Further south, portions of western Kenya also saw considerable rain amounts in (> 50 mm) to also alleviate areas that have experienced short and long term dryness. For many local parts of the central Rift Valley, this is first sign of significant rainfall observed since mid-April.

Despite many of these areas having lost large percentages of their agriculture crop production, this early season rainfall is expected to mitigate some of the pastoral and agro-pastoral effects caused by long-term dryness in 2008. The current pattern of precipitation over the last several weeks continues to provide an opportunity to recharge water resources, as well as improve pasture conditions across many parts of Somalia and Ethiopia (Figure 1). In addition, above-average precipitation in October would also reduce the possibility of drought and reduced crop harvests for the October to December rains season, as rains are expected to increase in magnitude and in distribution by the end of the month.

Precipitation forecasts over the next seven days in East Africa do not suggest much change in the current rainfall distribution. While some models indicate a more southward shift of the rains into Kenya and Tanzania for the near-term, it is probable that early season rains will persist across parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia (Figure 2).

Above-average rains in West Africa will remain one of the wettest seasons in recent years.

As the West Africa rain season comes to an end, above-average rainfall was prominent across the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea region. Upon comparison with previous rain seasons, the 2008 May-September rains season is seen as having the highest number of regions marked by above-average seasonal totals (> 100 percent) over the last several years. Many parts of Senegal, Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso observed widespread percent of averages well above 150% by the end of September (Figure 3). The 2008 rains season in West Africa also yielded the fewest areas with below average seasonal totals, as rainfall deficits remained consistently marginal from May to October 2008.

Figure 1: Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) As of September 30th, 2008

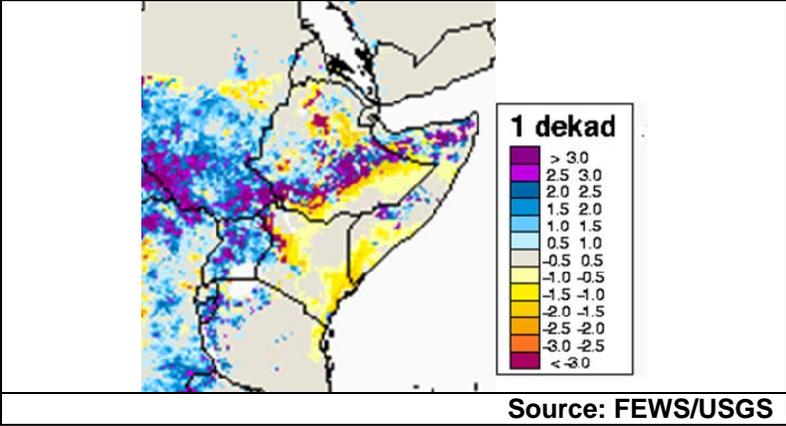


Figure 2: 3-Day Total Precipitation Forecast (mm) October 6th – October 9th, 2008

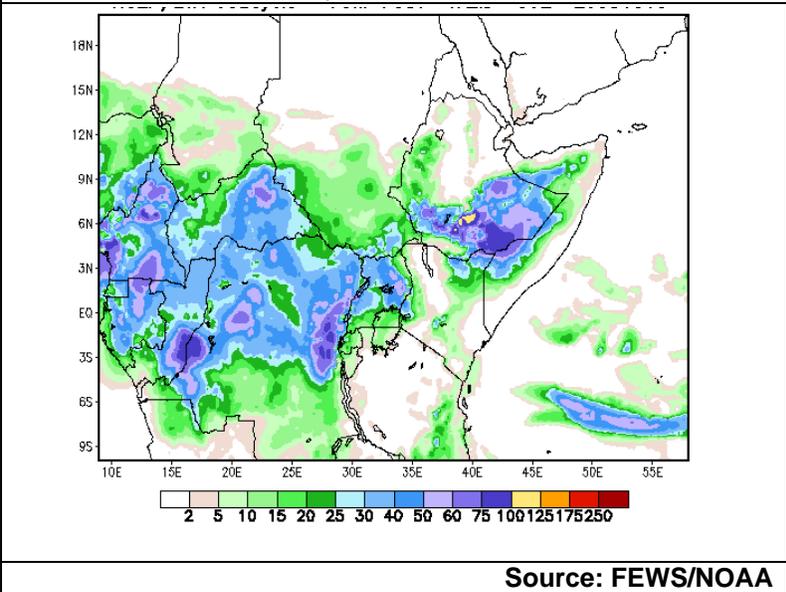


Figure 3: RFE Percent of Normal Rainfall (%) May 1st – September 30th, 2008

