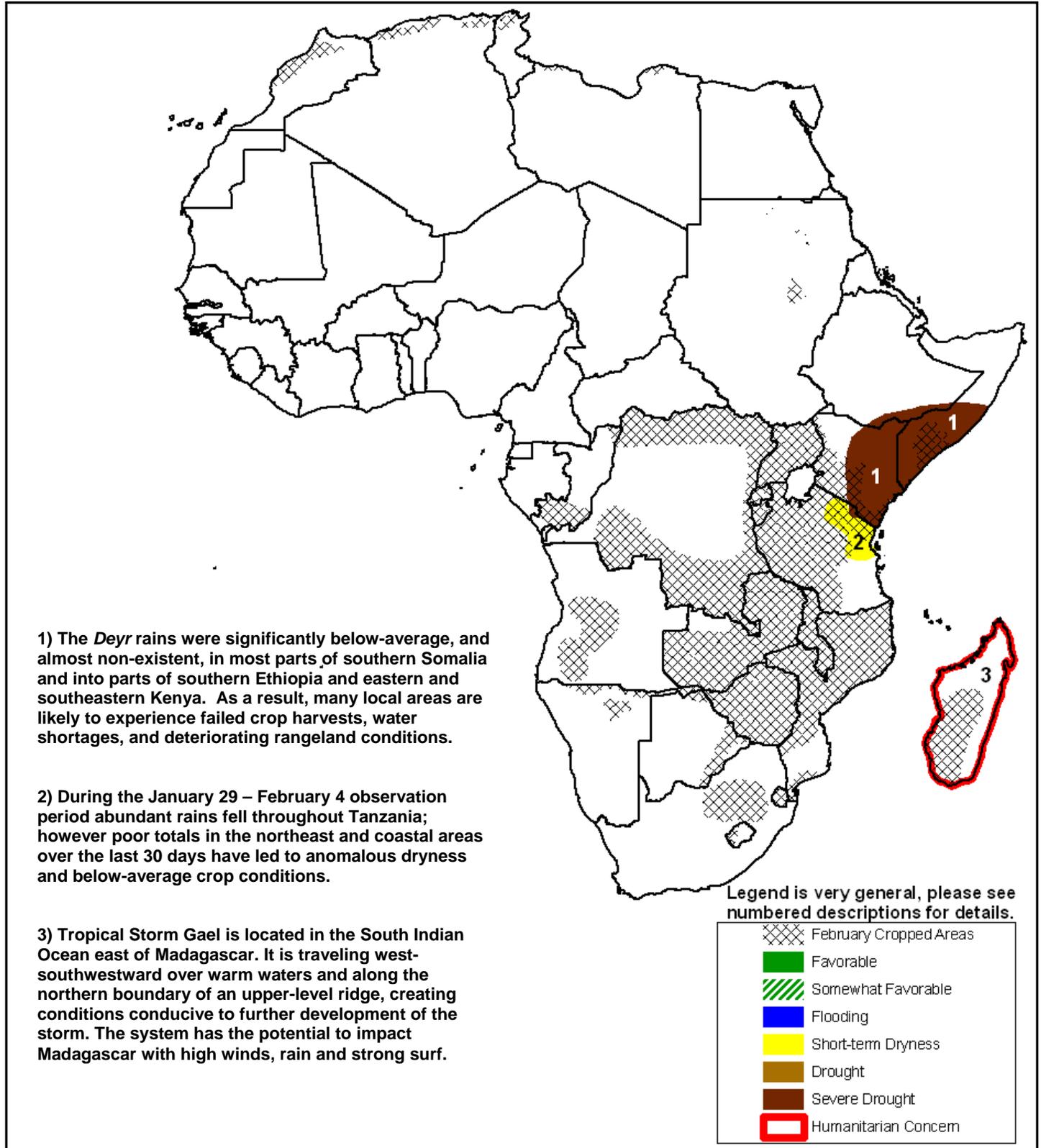


- In recent weeks, Ethiopia has been receiving favorable out-of-season rains. These rains are likely to contribute to improved soil water moisture and pastures.
- Abundant rains fell in Tanzania during the last observation period bringing moderate relief to dry areas.



Dryness Continues in parts of Eastern Tanzania.

Despite abundant rains throughout Tanzania in the past week, many parts of northeastern Tanzania have experienced a poor distribution of rainfall since mid to late December. Thirty day rainfall anomalies show totals near 100 mm below average. Both local gauge observations and satellite estimates indicate the provinces of Arusha, Tanga, Pwani, Morogoro and Lindi have experienced less than 50 percent of their seasonal precipitation totals. This has resulted in insufficient soil moisture conditions, and deteriorating crop development throughout many of the bimodal regions (**Figure 1**). According to the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Agromet Update, “the first *Vuli* crop has been significantly affected by the dryness, with reports indicating that the crops in many areas have reached permanent wilting point and subsequently failed.”

During December, crop wilting was also observed in the unimodal region of the country, but farmers there have used coping mechanisms, such as replanting short-cycle drought tolerant crops. Local reports indicate that crop growth conditions have improved in some of these areas since January; however additional moisture is also needed in these areas for a successful harvest.

Tropical Storm Gael heads toward Madagascar

As of Wednesday, February 4th, Tropical Storm *Gael*, was located east of Madagascar to the north of La Reunion. The system had maximum sustained wind speeds of 40 mph with wind gusts reaching 52 mph. The storm is moving at 9 mph in a west-southwestward direction (**Figure 2**). It is traveling over anomalously warm waters. Warm sea surface temperatures, in addition to favorable atmospheric conditions, are likely to cause this system to further develop into a Category 1 storm before sunset Thursday, February 4th. Whether or not the storm center will make landfall in Madagascar is unknown at this time, but it is likely that the eastern half of the country will experience strong winds, heavy rains, and high surf.

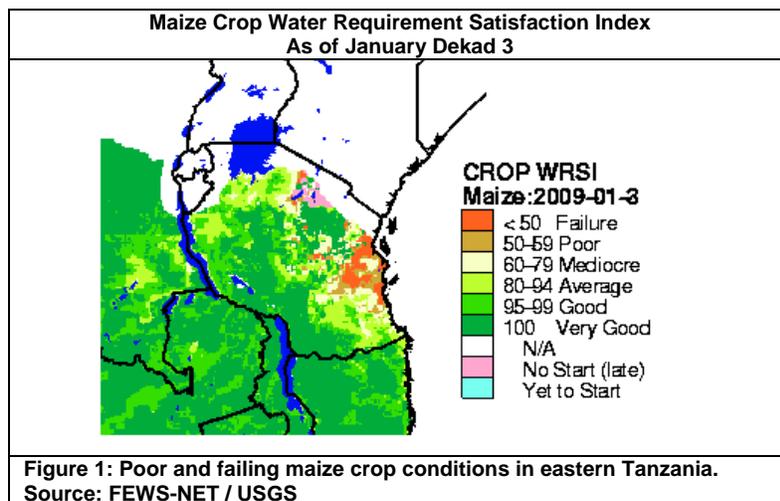


Figure 1: Poor and failing maize crop conditions in eastern Tanzania.
Source: FEWS-NET / USGS

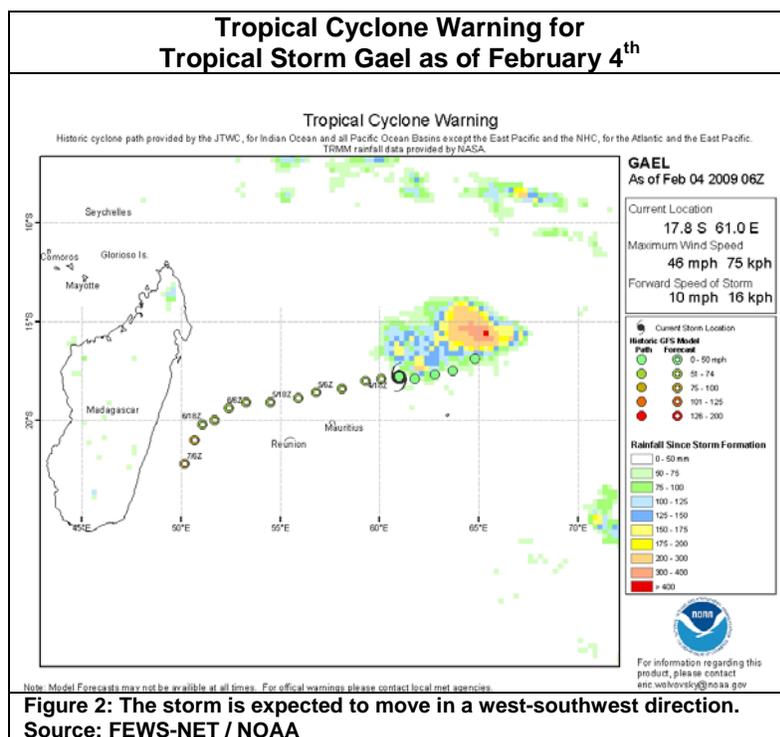


Figure 2: The storm is expected to move in a west-southwest direction.
Source: FEWS-NET / NOAA

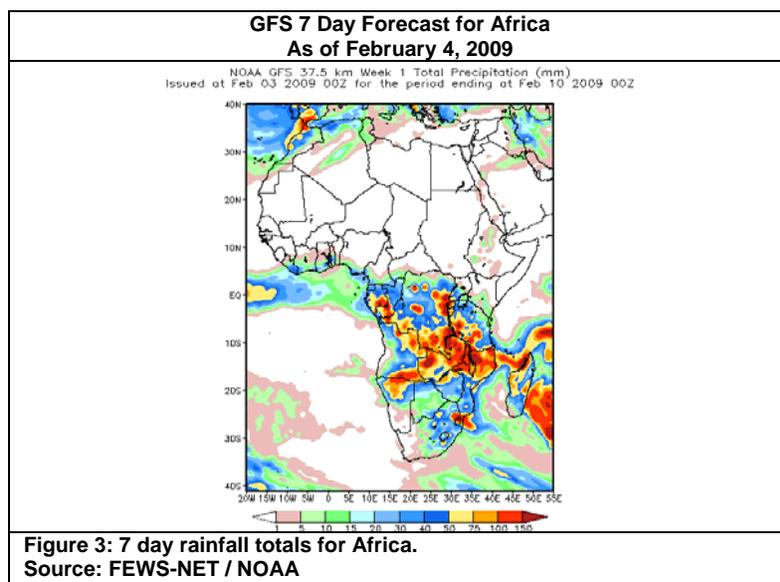


Figure 3: 7 day rainfall totals for Africa.
Source: FEWS-NET / NOAA