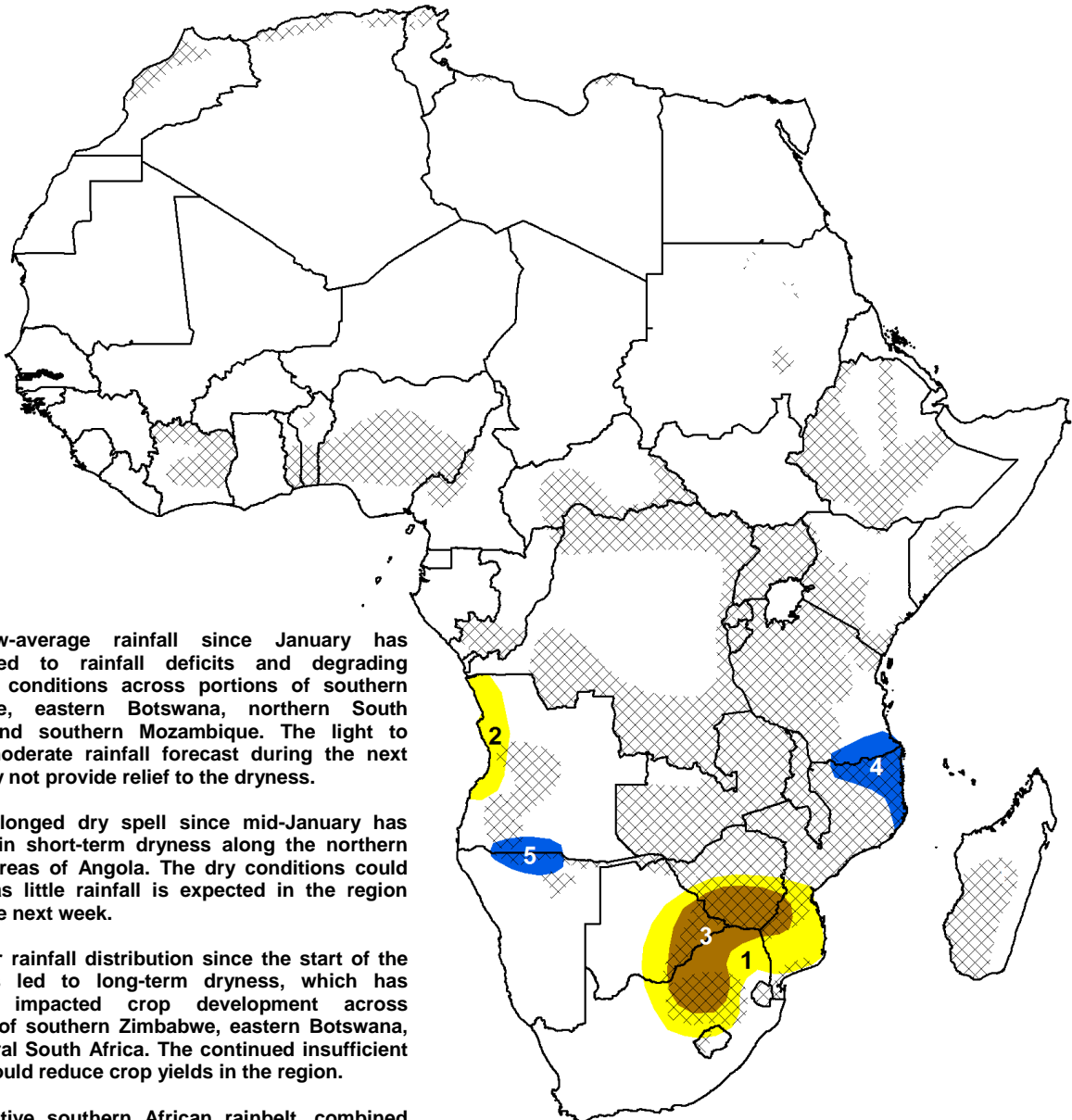


## Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook For USAID / FEWS-NET March 15 – March 21, 2012

- A long-term dryness has developed across portions of southern Africa due to an erratic rainfall distribution since January.
- Since the beginning of the month, average to below-average rainfall has been observed in eastern Africa.



1) Below-average rainfall since January has contributed to rainfall deficits and degrading cropping conditions across portions of southern Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, northern South Africa, and southern Mozambique. The light to locally moderate rainfall forecast during the next week may not provide relief to the dryness.

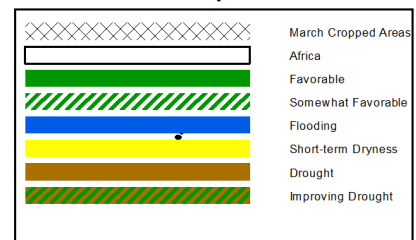
2) A prolonged dry spell since mid-January has resulted in short-term dryness along the northern coastal areas of Angola. The dry conditions could worsen as little rainfall is expected in the region during the next week.

3) A poor rainfall distribution since the start of the year has led to long-term dryness, which has severely impacted crop development across portions of southern Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, and central South Africa. The continued insufficient rainfall could reduce crop yields in the region.

4) An active southern African rainbelt, combined with a possible development of a cyclonic circulation over the Mozambique Channel heightens the risks for flooding across southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique during the next week.

5) A potential for flooding exists along the Angola-Namibia border due to above-average rainfall frequency since mid-February. The moderate rainfall forecast during the next week increases the likelihood of water level rise over the already-saturated grounds of the region.

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



### Suppressed rainfall has led to long-term dryness across portions of southern Africa.

While widespread heavy (> 50 mm) rainfall has continued throughout southern Angola, northern Zambia, portions of northern Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, and northern Mozambique, little to no (< 5 mm) rainfall has been recorded over eastern Botswana, southern Zimbabwe, and northern South Africa during the past seven days (**Figure 1**). Since the beginning of the year, a poor distribution of rainfall has resulted in persistent rainfall deficits across the dry portions of central southern Africa. The dryness has already negatively impacted crop development in many local areas of the region. Little rainfall was also observed across northwestern Angola, where prolonged dry spells have resulted in short-term dryness along the Angolan western coastlines. In contrast, localized moderate to heavy (30 - 50 mm) rainfall fell across central Namibia, northern and eastern South Africa during the past week. In northern South Africa, the observed rainfall amounts have helped to partially relieve moisture deficits in the region.

The continued suppression of rainfall over the past two weeks has further impacted crop conditions across the dry portions of southern Africa as depicted in the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) anomaly during the 1<sup>st</sup> dekad of March, 2012 (**Figure 2**). Below-average (negative anomaly) conditions were observed along the western coastlines of Angola as well as over many local areas of eastern Botswana, southern Zimbabwe, northern South Africa, and Mozambique. Further degradation of the crop conditions could ultimately lead to a significant reduction in crop yield for southern Africa.

During the next week, model forecasts suggest a slight increase in rainfall over central southern Africa, with heavy rainfall forecast in western Botswana and localized areas of northern South Africa. Heavy rainfall is also expected across eastern Angola, northern Zambia, Malawi, northern Zimbabwe, southern Tanzania, and northern Mozambique. Light (< 20 mm) rainfall is, however, expected elsewhere. Despite the marked increase in rainfall, the forecast amounts may not be sufficient to make up for ongoing moisture deficits.

### Average to below-average rainfall has been observed in eastern Africa.

Since the beginning of the month, rainfall has been above-average across Tanzania, southern Kenya, southern Uganda, Rwanda, and many local areas of western Ethiopia (**Figure 3**). Conversely, below-average rainfall has been observed across central Ethiopia and localized areas of Somalia. In many regions of eastern Africa, the March – May rainfall season plays an important role as it contributes significantly to the total annual rainfall amounts. For the next week, little (< 10 mm) rainfall is forecast in local areas of central Ethiopia and southern Kenya, while no rain is expected elsewhere. This could enhance early-season deficits and impinge on cropping activities in the region.

**Note: The hazards outlook map on page 1 is based on current weather/climate information and short and medium range weather forecasts (up to 1 week). It assesses their potential impact on crop and pasture conditions. Shaded polygons are added in areas where anomalous conditions have been observed. The boundaries of these polygons are only approximate at this continental scale. This product does not reflect long range seasonal climate forecasts or indicate current or projected food security conditions.**

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