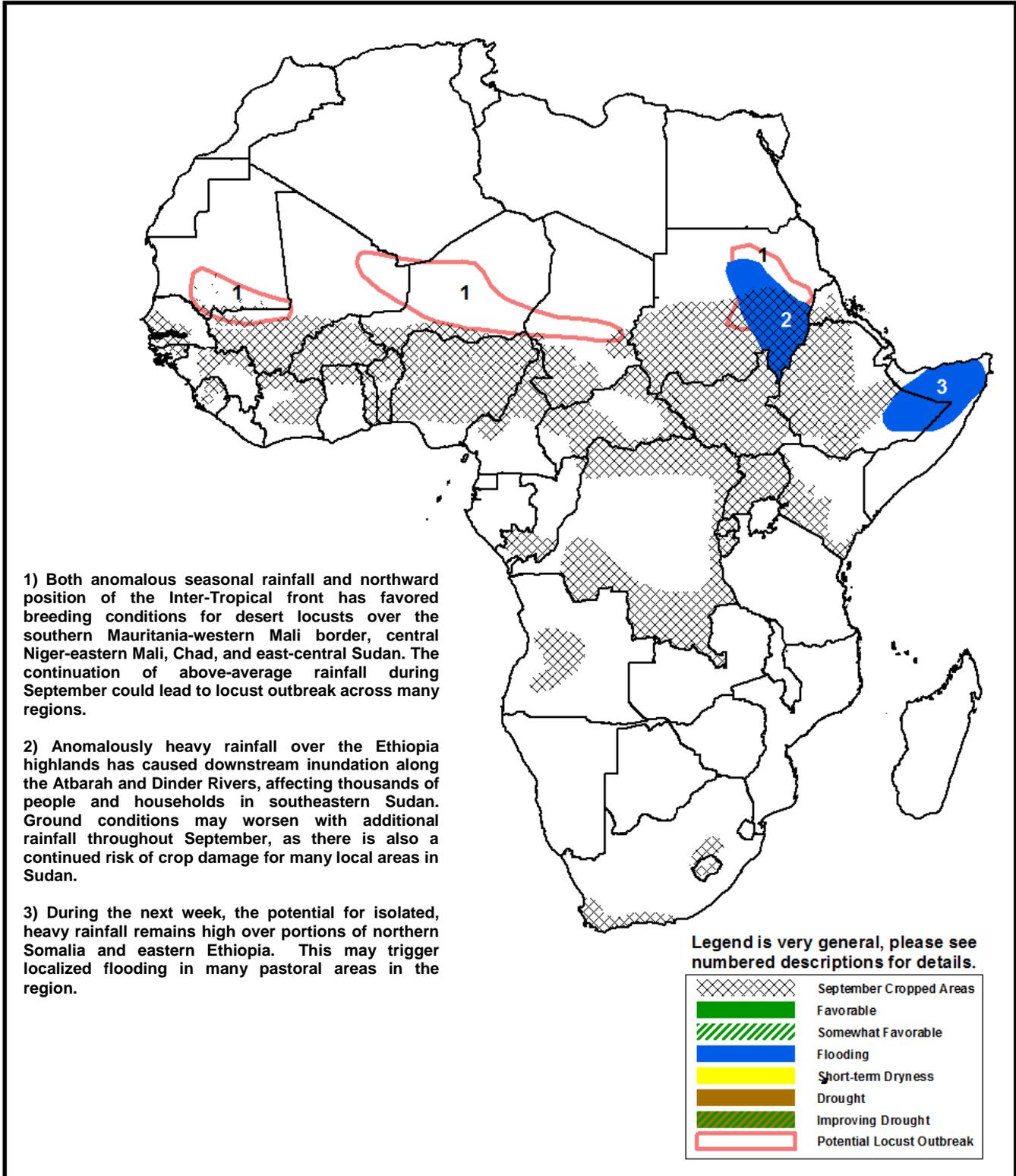


Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook For USAID / FEWS-NET September 27 – October 3, 2012

- Last week, above-average rains were again received throughout many anomalously wet areas in West Africa.



A return of heavy rainfall observed in West Africa.

After a brief reduction in precipitation during the second dekad of September, heavy rainfall returned once more across West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea region during the last week. Weekly rainfall accumulations in excess of 75mm were received throughout much of far West Africa, affecting Guinea, southern Senegal, northern Cote d'Ivoire, and western Mali (Figure 1). More moderate (30-75mm), but well distributed rainfall was also received further east across portions of Ghana, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Niger. The lightest rainfall amounts were observed over parts of the central and eastern Sahel.

The excessive rainfall received during the last seven days fell over many areas that have experienced an unusually wet West Africa monsoon season. 30-day precipitation surpluses greater than 100mm have persisted over much Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, and parts of west Niger. Both the spatial extent and magnitude of anomalously wet conditions in West Africa have been associated with an anomalous Inter-Tropical Front (ITF) position (Figure 2). Typically, the ITF experiences an equatorward retreat in September to signal a gradual decline in monsoon rainfall across West Africa, however, this has not yet been the case. During the second dekad of September, the combination of high moisture availability and unusually strong winds has led to an extension of seasonally high rainfall across the Sahel. Oversaturated ground conditions have already resulted in numerous flooding events, river basin inundation, locust outbreaks, and many displaced populations throughout parts of West Africa this season. A continuation of anomalously heavy rainfall is expected to sustain the threat of localized flooding, and may lead to crop damages which may reduce yields by the end of season.

For the upcoming outlook period, forecasts suggest a more seasonable distribution of rainfall in West Africa. However, the potential for locally heavy rainfall (>50mm) is expected for many countries in Gulf of Guinea region.

Early season rains lead to high soil water conditions in South Africa.

Three consecutive weeks of above-average precipitation have been observed over the Lesotho, Swaziland and the Kwa-Zulu Natal region of South Africa. Although a very heavy period of rainfall led to localized flooding for many areas along coastal South Africa, the anomalous rainfall in September has already led to elevated soil water conditions in southern Africa. Excess ground moisture during this time of the year is expected to be favorable for early season cropping activities for Lesotho, Swaziland, and several states in South Africa. Precipitation forecast indicate a continuation of moderate to locally heavy rainfall in the region. Weekly rainfall amounts between 10-30 are expected over the Free State, Mpumalanga and Kwa-Zulu Natal regions of South Africa, with the highest rainfall (>50mm) expected over Lesotho.

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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