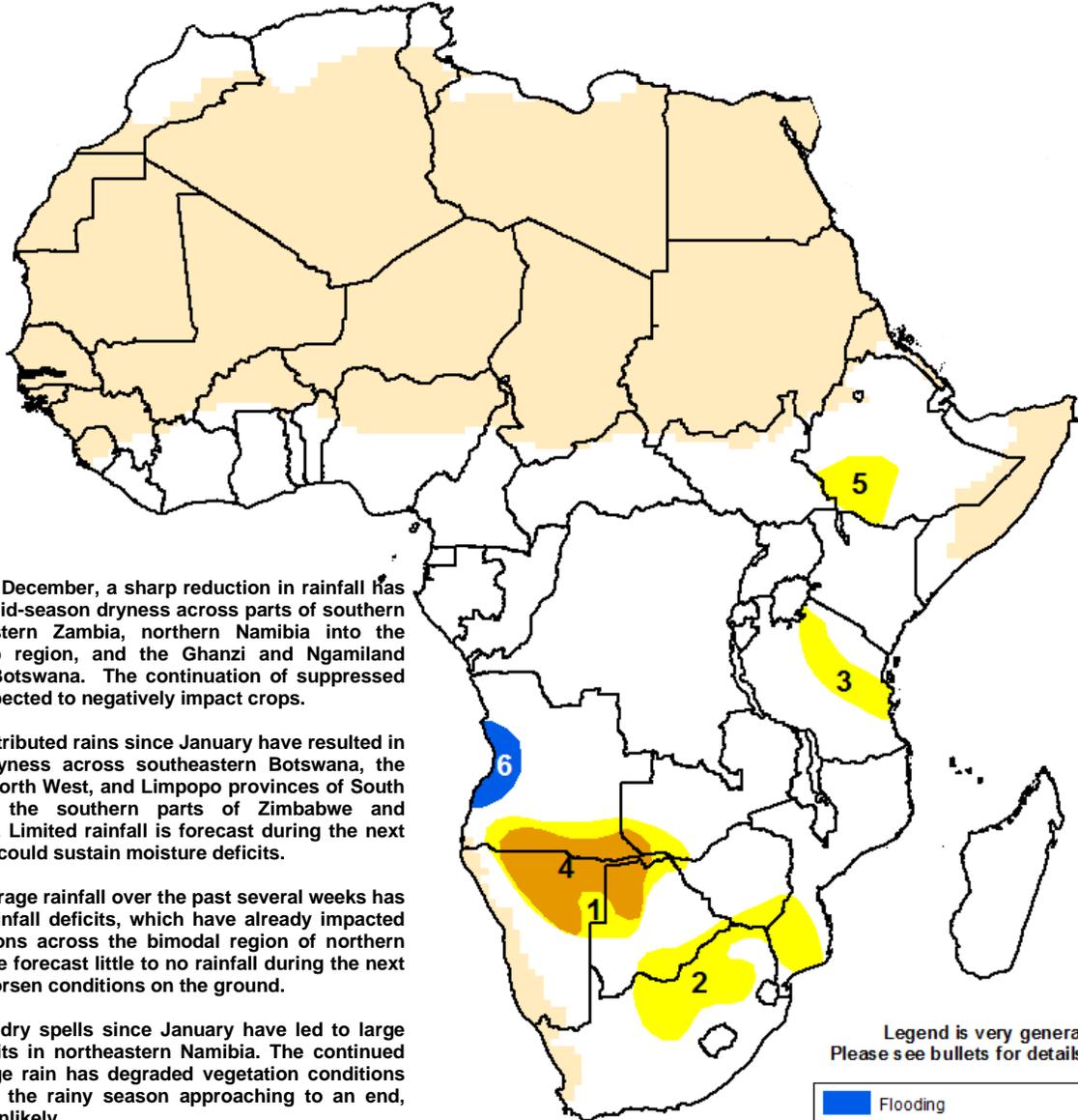




Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook March 19 – March 25, 2015

- Heavy and above-average rains caused flooding and fatalities in western Angola.
- Onset of the rainy season expected in Eastern Africa during the next week.



1) Since late December, a sharp reduction in rainfall has resulted in mid-season dryness across parts of southern Angola, western Zambia, northern Namibia into the Caprivi Strip region, and the Ghanzi and Ngamiland districts of Botswana. The continuation of suppressed rainfall is expected to negatively impact crops.

2) Poorly-distributed rains since January have resulted in abnormal dryness across southeastern Botswana, the Free State, North West, and Limpopo provinces of South Africa, and the southern parts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Limited rainfall is forecast during the next week, which could sustain moisture deficits.

3) Below-average rainfall over the past several weeks has increased rainfall deficits, which have already impacted crop conditions across the bimodal region of northern Tanzania. The forecast little to no rainfall during the next week may worsen conditions on the ground.

4) Extended dry spells since January have led to large rainfall deficits in northeastern Namibia. The continued below-average rain has degraded vegetation conditions further. With the rainy season approaching to an end, recovery is unlikely.

5) Below-average rainfall since February has resulted in increasing rainfall deficits in southwestern Ethiopia. Enhanced rains are forecast during the next week, which should help to reduce moisture deficits.

6) Heavy and above-average rains triggered flooding, causing many fatalities in Lobito area of the Benguela province of western Angola during the past week. Heavy downpours are forecast to continue during the next week, which may exacerbate the ground conditions or lead to new flooding in the area.

Legend is very general.
Please see bullets for details.

	Flooding
	Abnormal Dryness
	Drought
	Severe Drought
	Tropical Cyclone
	Potential Locust Outbreak
	Heavy Snow
	Abnormal Cold
	Abnormal Heat
	Seasonally Dry

Rainy season is coming to an end in Southern Africa.

During the past week, suppressed rains were observed over central Southern Africa. Little to no rainfall fell across southeastern Angola, western Zambia, northeastern Namibia, northern Botswana, Zimbabwe, northern South Africa, and the southern two-thirds of Mozambique (**Figure 1**). In contrast, moderate to heavy rains were recorded over Madagascar, eastern South Africa, and western Angola. In Angola, this past week's heavy downpours resulted in flooding and many fatalities in Lobito of the Benguela province, according to media. In Madagascar, the continued enhanced rains have exacerbated conditions over many already-saturated areas and increase the risks for waterborne disease outbreaks. The Southern Africa monsoon has been characterized by an erratic rainfall distribution such that a delayed onset of rains was followed by consistent, heavy rains in the east, including northern Mozambique, southern Malawi, and Madagascar. Meanwhile, insufficient and below-average rainfall has been observed across the west, extending from southern Angola, northern Namibia, northwestern Botswana, to South Africa since the beginning of the season.

Drier than average conditions have persisted in Southern Africa as rainfall has already started to decline over many areas. An analysis of cumulative rainfall since mid-February has indicated that a wide area from southeastern Angola, northeastern Namibia, northern Botswana, southern Zimbabwe, northern South Africa, to southern Mozambique has received only less than 25 percent of its average (**Figure 2**). This may indicate an early cessation of the rainy season over the sub-region. In addition, many vegetation indices such as the Normalized Difference Vegetation and Water Requirement Satisfaction indices have already exhibited further degradation of biomass toward the east over South Africa and the bimodal region of northern Tanzania to the north. During the next week, little to no rainfall is forecast across much of Southern Africa, except western South Africa, where heavy showers are expected. Farther north, heavy rains are forecast in southern Tanzania and along coastal areas of western Angola. This could trigger new flooding or exacerbate conditions on the ground.

Start of the rainy season expected in Eastern Africa.

During the past week, suppressed rainfall was again observed over much of Eastern Africa. This has increased rainfall deficits over southwestern and east-central Ethiopia and Uganda since the beginning of February. The delayed onset of the current season may have already delayed and negatively impacted cropping activities over many local areas. During the next week, a return of seasonal rains is, however, forecast as model guidance suggests widespread, heavy rains across Ethiopia (**Figure 3**). Light to moderate rains are expected over central and northern Somalia. The forecast enhanced rains may announce the onset of the current rainy season in Eastern Africa and should help reduce moisture deficits and benefit agricultural and pastoral activities over many local areas.

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.

Questions or comments about this product may be directed to Wassila.Thiaw@noaa.gov or 1-301-683-3424.

