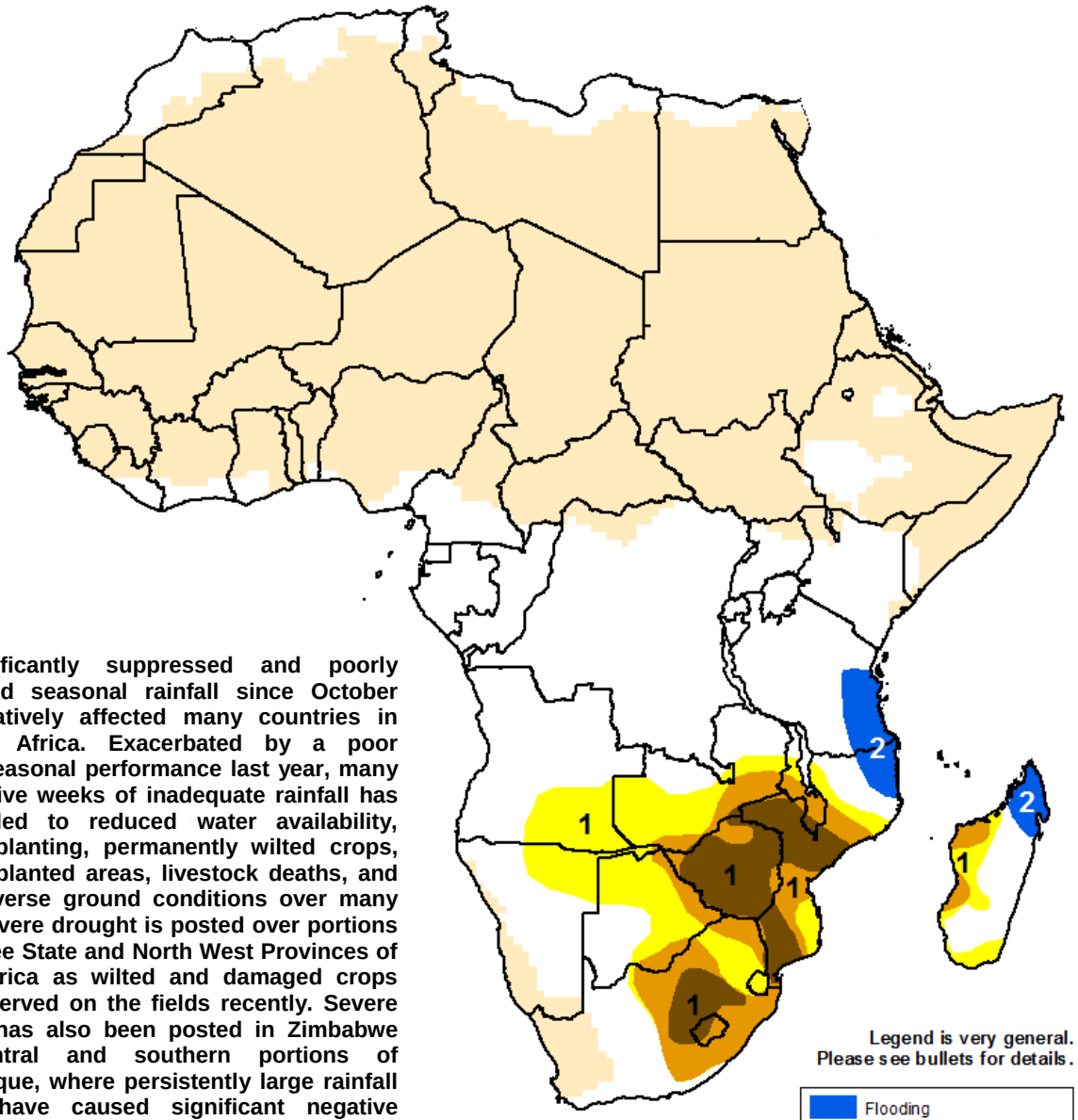
Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook
February 04 – February 10, 2016

- **An erratic rainfall distribution and extremely poor rain totals since the start of the season has led to the expansion of severe drought into many areas of Mozambique and Zimbabwe.**
- **Suppressed conditions are forecast to return for many areas of southern Africa. Heavy rains should continue for the area from northern Madagascar stretching northwestward into continental Africa.**



1) Significantly suppressed and poorly distributed seasonal rainfall since October has negatively affected many countries in southern Africa. Exacerbated by a poor rainfall seasonal performance last year, many consecutive weeks of inadequate rainfall has already led to reduced water availability, delayed planting, permanently wilted crops, reduced planted areas, livestock deaths, and other adverse ground conditions over many areas. Severe drought is posted over portions of the Free State and North West Provinces of South Africa as wilted and damaged crops were observed on the fields recently. Severe drought has also been posted in Zimbabwe and central and southern portions of Mozambique, where persistently large rainfall deficits have caused significant negative impacts.

2) The monsoonal convergence zone which has brought heavy rainfall during the past week is forecasted to persist over the same areas into next week. Heavy rainfall on already saturated ground is likely to cause inundation and swelling of streams and rivers in northern Madagascar, northern Mozambique, and southern Tanzania.

A more widespread distribution of rains was observed during the past week.

During the last observation period, heavy seasonal rains expanded in scope and shifted to cover areas farther south than the previous week. Below-average rains remained in many parts of Botswana and South Africa. According to satellite information, the highest weekly rainfall accumulations (>200mm) were registered in southern Tanzania, northern Mozambique, localized areas of central Mozambique, and northwestern Madagascar (**Figure 1**). Moderate to heavy rainfall was also received across Zimbabwe, Zambia and central Tanzania. Conversely, suppressed rainfall was recorded across parts of Angola, northern Namibia, South Africa, and southern Madagascar.

During January, the anomalous dryness associated with the poor southern Africa monsoon has taken a new shape compared to the anomalously dry conditions observed earlier in the season. In many areas in Angola and South Africa where monsoon rains typically see an earlier start of season compared to other areas in southern, increased and more frequent January precipitation have been observed in many of these areas, which has helped to alleviate the seasonal dryness and replenish water availability on the short term. Analysis of vegetation health conditions in late January reflects the most positive changes have occurred mainly over southern Angola and in parts of South Africa's Maize Triangle region.

However, the largest precipitation deficits have been concentrated over western Madagascar, southern Zambia, central and western Mozambique, southern Malawi, and large portions of Zimbabwe. Despite last week's increase in rain, many local areas in eastern Zimbabwe and Mozambique are still experiencing less than a quarter of their normal rainfall since the beginning of January (**Figure 2**). Because it is this region where monsoonal rainfall is climatologically higher and most frequent compared to other regions in southern Africa in January, the absence of rainfall in the southeast has led to an alarmingly rapid strengthening of moisture deficits. Furthermore, the erratic distribution in rainfall since the beginning of the season has resulted in wilted and damaged maize crops over portions of the Free State and North West Provinces of South Africa. The continuation of infrequent and low rainfall accumulations is beginning to lead to many adverse ground conditions and negatively impact ongoing cropping activities over an expanded area.

During the next outlook period, models suggest that the monsoonal convergence over southeastern Africa will persist over similar regions, though the southern end will likely shift farther north. This should lead to areas such as the Zambezi River basin, and southern Madagascar returning to abnormally dry conditions. Above-average weekly rainfall accumulations in excess of 200mm, and even locally 300mm, are forecast across coastal areas of northern Mozambique, southern Tanzania, and over northern Madagascar (**Figure 3**), leading to potential flooding.

Satellite-Estimated Rainfall (mm)
Valid: January 26, 2015 – February 01, 2016

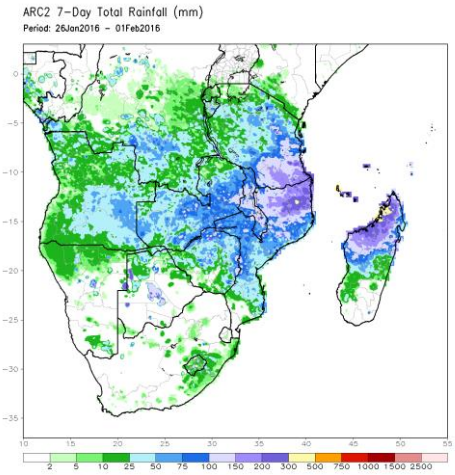


Figure 1: NOAA/CPC

Satellite Estimated Percent of Normal Rainfall Anomaly (%)
Valid: January 01, 2015 – February 01, 2016

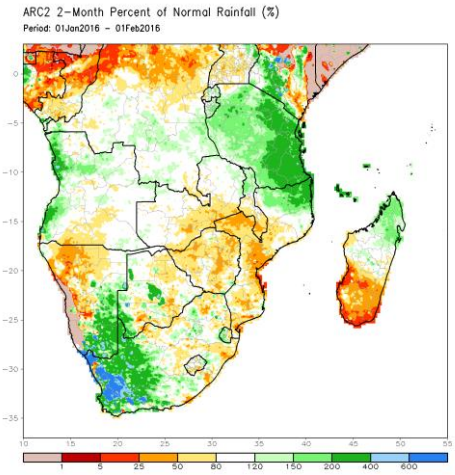


Figure 2: NOAA/CPC

Southern Africa Precipitation Forecast (mm)
Valid: February 03 – February 10, 2016

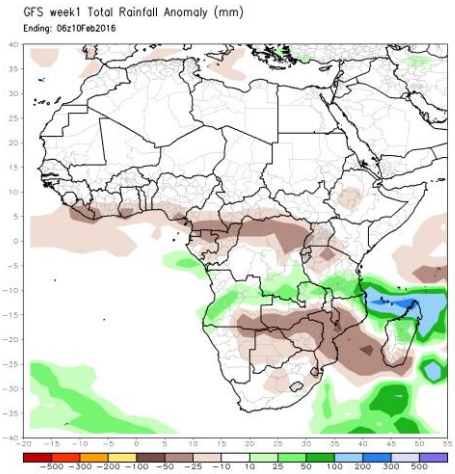


Figure 3: NOAA/CPC

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.