The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

November 18 - 24, 2004

Weekly Introduction:

Update of El Niño:

Synopsis: Warm-episode conditions are expected to continue into early 2005

Positive sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies greater than +0.5°C (~1°F) persisted across most of the equatorial Pacific during October 2004. By early November, positive equatorial SST anomalies greater than +1°C (~2°F) were found from 160°E eastward to 150°W and locally in the area around 120°W. The increase and eastward expansion of the area of anomalous warmth in the central and east-central equatorial Pacific during July-October indicates the early stages of a warm (El Niño) episode. Based on the recent evolution of oceanic and atmospheric conditions and on a majority of the statistical and coupled model forecasts, it seems most likely that warm episode (El Niño) conditions will persist through early 2005. The actual outlooks for impacts on Africa will be presented next week.

This discussion is a consolidated effort of NOAA and its funded institutions.

Locust Update:

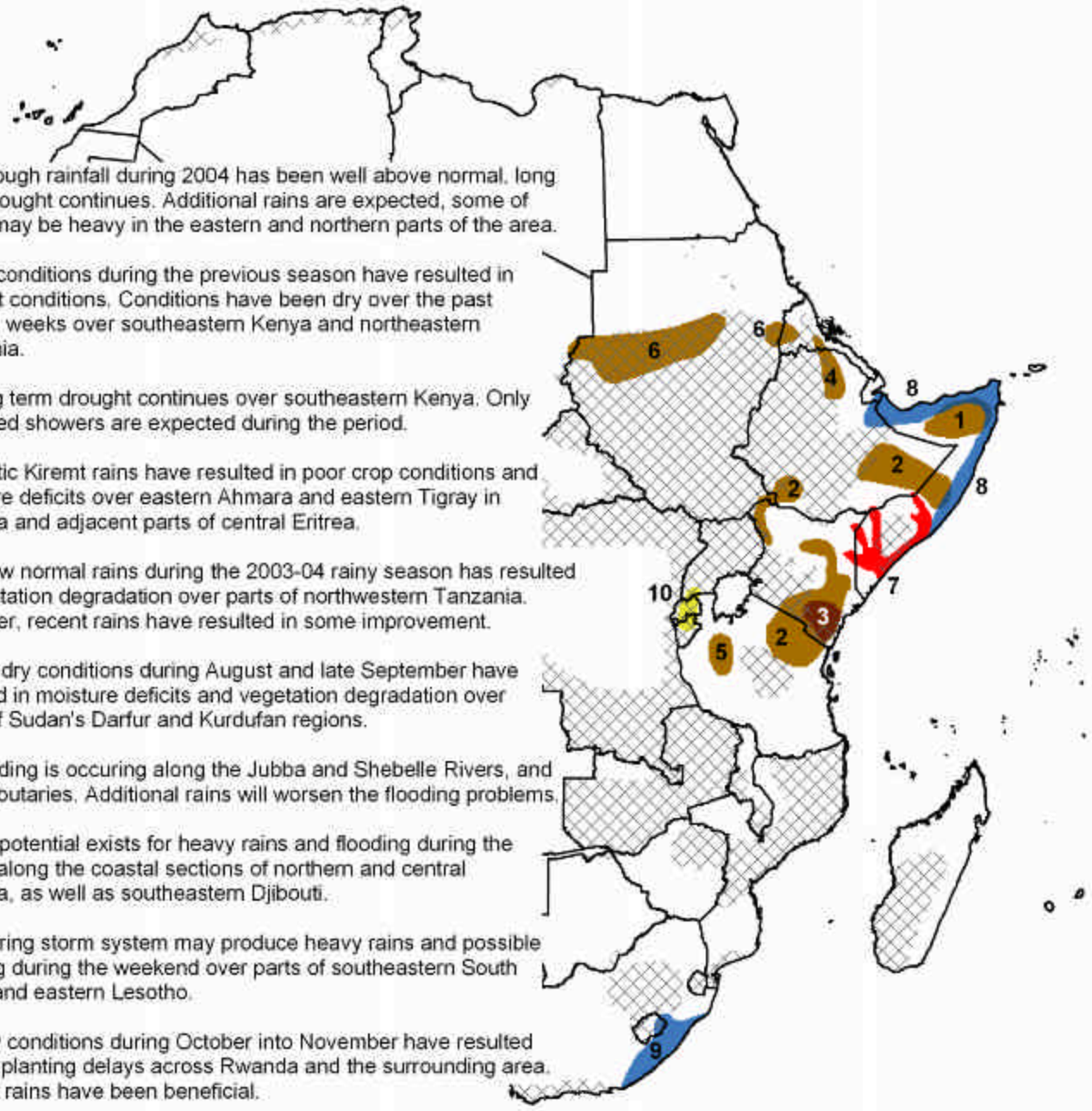
The report from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations on the locust situation in western Africa was last updated on November 15. They assert that the desert locust situation remains very serious in Northwest Africa where aerial and ground control operations are in progress in Morocco and Algeria against numerous immature swarms that continue to reach the Atlas Mountains.

Additional details can be found at the USAID web site for Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement (AELGA) at http://www.aelga.net and the AGRHYMET site at http://ww.agrhymet.ne.

Weather Hazards Assessment Graphic:

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)



1) Although rainfall during 2004 has been well above normal, long term drought continues. Additional rains are expected, some of which may be heavy in the eastern and northern parts of the area.

2) Dry conditions during the previous season have resulted in drought conditions. Conditions have been dry over the past several weeks over southeastern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania.

3) Long term drought continues over southeastern Kenya. Only scattered showers are expected during the period.

4) Erratic Kiremt rains have resulted in poor crop conditions and moisture deficits over eastern Ahmara and eastern Tigray in Ethiopia and adjacent parts of central Eritrea.

5) Below normal rains during the 2003-04 rainy season has resulted in vegetation degradation over parts of northwestern Tanzania. However, recent rains have resulted in some improvement.

6) Hot, dry conditions during August and late September have resulted in moisture deficits and vegetation degradation over parts of Sudan's Darfur and Kurdufan regions.

7) Flooding is occuring along the Jubba and Shebelle Rivers, and their tributaries. Additional rains will worsen the flooding problems.

8) The potential exists for heavy rains and flooding during the period along the coastal sections of northern and central Somalia, as well as southeastern Djibouti.

9) A spring storm system may produce heavy rains and possible flooding during the weekend over parts of southeastern South Africa and eastern Lesotho.

10) Dry conditions during October into November have resulted in crop planting delays across Rwanda and the surrounding area. Recent rains have been beneficial.

Valid: November 18 - 24, 2004

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Poor performance of seasonal rains for several years leading up to and including 2003 has resulted in a devastating multi-year drought across the Sanaag, Sool, Togdheer, Bari and Nugal Provinces of northern Somalia. Calendar year 2004, however, saw abundant rains that were well distributed. These recent trends have benefited pastures and have helped to boost water supplies. Additional rains are expected during the period. Some of these rains may be locally heavy across the extreme northern and eastern parts of the area and could result in localized flooding. Livestock losses are possible in areas where herds are already stressed. Despite the abundance of rainfall during 2004, the severity of the multi-year drought during the first years of the 21st Century has caused the region to remain in long term drought.

2. The long rains this year were much below normal across central and eastern Kenya, the Somali region of Ethiopia, southern portions of Ethiopia's SNNPR and Oromiya regions as well as the Galguduud and Mudug regions of central Somalia. The short season rains have begun in many areas, with normal to above normal rainfall being observed. These rains have helped to ease moisture deficits and have raised prospects for the October-December season. Additional rains are expected across the Somali region of Ethiopia, central Somalia and eastern Kenya. This will continue the trend of improvement across the pastoral areas of Africa's Greater Horn. Further south, conditions have been dry so far during the October-December season across northeastern Tanzania and adjacent parts of southeastern Kenya. Conditions are expected to remain mostly dry across this area during the period, raising concerns over second season crops. Moisture deficits have also been observed across Turkana in northwestern Kenya as well as adjacent parts of Sudan and Ethiopia, despite recent beneficial rains. Dry conditions are expected during the period in this area.

3. Multi-year drought has resulted in large long term moisture deficits across interior southeastern Kenya. The long term drought has reduced water supplies and reservoir levels, degraded pastures and resulted in reduced sub-soil moisture availability for the second cropping season. Rainfall is expected to be light and scattered during the period. Therefore, no improvement is expected.

4. The Kiremt rains have been erratic and lighter than normal across eastern Ahmara region and eastern Tigray region in Ethiopia, as well as adjacent portions of the Afar region and central Eritrea. This has resulted in poor crop conditions and reduced moisture levels in and around these areas.

5. Rainfall during the 2003-04 season was about 70 percent of normal across west-central portions of Tanzania south of Lake Victoria. Recent showers have resulted in some improvement, however major improvement is not expected until the rainy season sets in. As seasonal rains spread north and eastward by December, improvement is expected.

6. The 2004 rainy season was characterized by erratic seasonal rains, lighter than normal rainfall totals and periodic interruptions of seasonal rains by hot, dry Sahara winds over portions of Sudan's Darfur and Kurdufan regions. This has resulted in degraded pastures, reduced water supplies and crop losses across these areas. Similar conditions have been observed across Kassala and adjacent portions of western Eritrea. As the dry season has set in, no improvement is expected across these areas.

7. Recent heavy rains have resulted in flooding along the Jubba and Shebelle rivers in Somalia and their tributaries. According to IRIN, thousands of hectares of farmland have been inundated by flood waters in the Jubba valley resulting in crop losses. Additional heavy rains will worsen the flooding problems in these areas, including flood-prone parts of Mogadishu.

8. The possibility exists for heavy rainfall from November 18th through the 21st across coastal sections of northern and central Somalia, southeastern Djibouti, as well as Shinile and Jijiga zones in Ethiopia's Somali region. These heavy rains could result in flooding, landslides in hilly areas, localized crop and livestock losses. Drier weather is expected after the 21st.

9. A strong spring storm system may produce heavy rains and strong thunderstorms across Eastern Cape and southern KwaZulu-Natal provinces in South Africa, as well as eastern parts of Lesotho during the weekend. As a result, the potential for flooding and landslides exists.

10. Dry conditions during October and early November have resulted in delayed planting of second season crops across Rwanda and northern Burundi. However, recent rains have resulted in conditions that are more favorable for agricultural activities and have favored recently sown grains. Additional showers are expected during the period which should raise prospects for the late planted second season crops.

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