The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

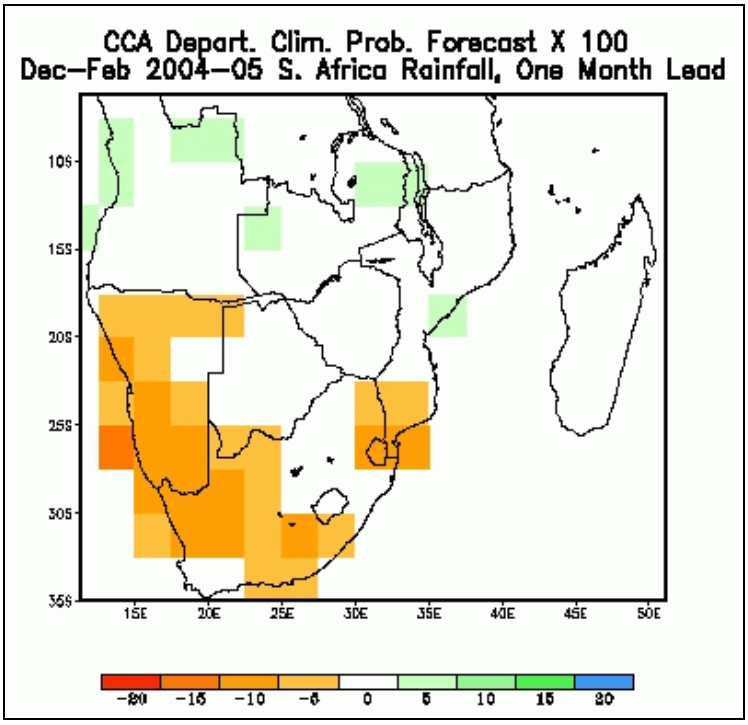
for

November 25 – December 1, 2004

Weekly Introduction:

December-February 2004-2005 Forecasts for Southern Africa:

The outlook for Dec-Feb 2004-2005 southern Africa rainfall at one month lead shows a tilt in the odds favoring slightly below average rainfall over most of Namibia, the Northern and Eastern Cape provinces of South Africa, portions of the Mpumalanga and Gauteng provinces, Swaziland, and southern Mozambique. There is a tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall locally over northern Angola, portions of eastern and western Zambia, and central Mozambique. Climatology is expected elsewhere.



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 22. The situation continues to be serious in the area. In addition, winds have carried several immature swarms across the Sinai Peninsula into the northern Red Sea Trench. On 19-21 November, swarms arrived in southern Israel, and adjacent areas in Jordan.

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.

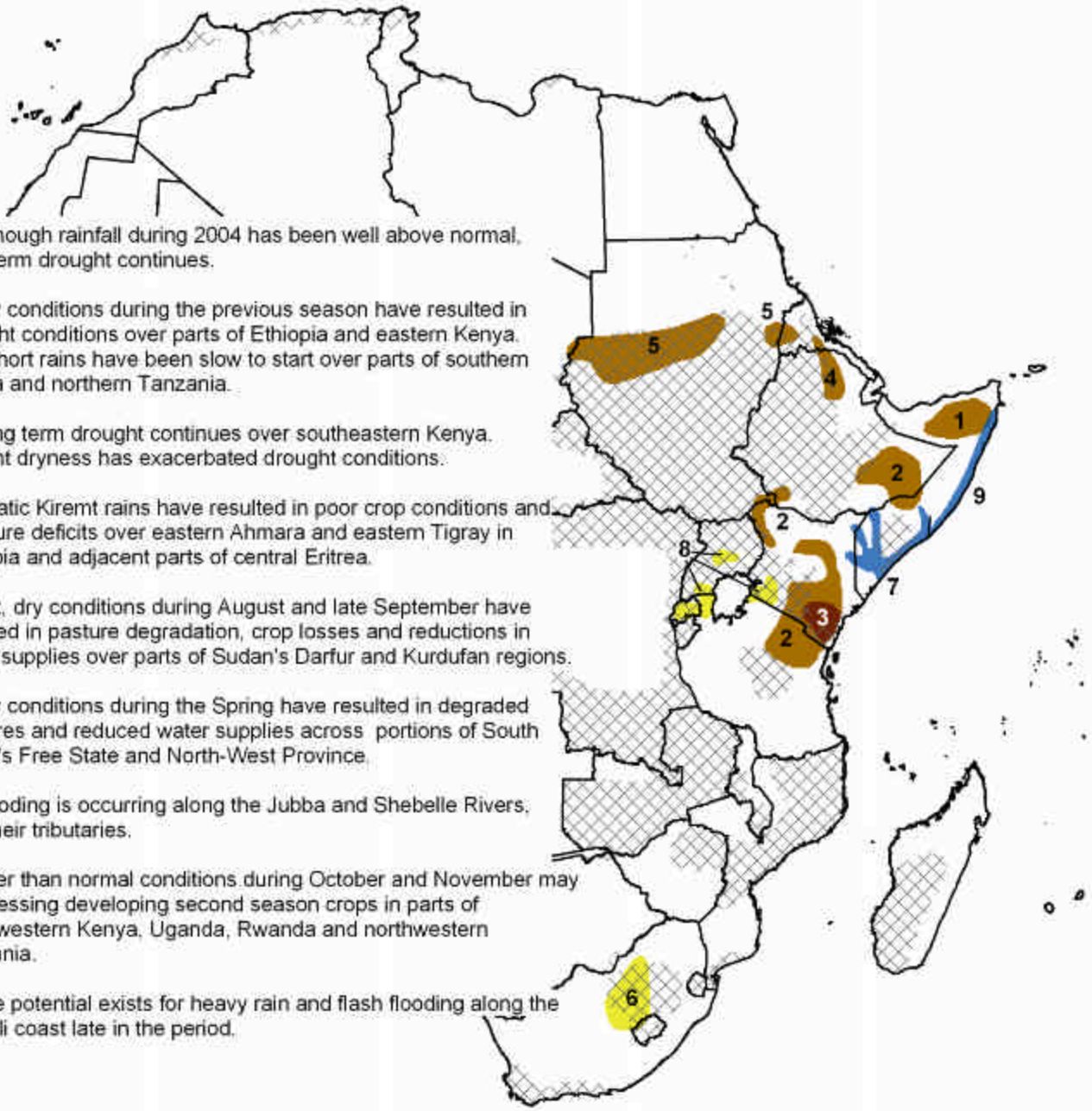
Lake Victoria Situation:

Lake Victoria water levels this year have reached their lowest point in ten years. As the source of the Nile, Lake Victoria plays an important role in ensuring household food security in southern Sudan by promoting seasonal flooding along the Nile, which is crucial for fish and wild plants (water lily) production and pasture replenishment during the dry season (November to May). This flooding has been well below normal this year. For more information on the food security effects of this anomaly, please visit the southern Sudan country site at www.fews.net/sudan.

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.

2) Dry conditions during the previous season have resulted in drought conditions over parts of Ethiopia and eastern Kenya. The short rains have been slow to start over parts of southern Kenya and northern Tanzania.

3) Long term drought continues over southeastern Kenya. Recent dryness has exacerbated drought conditions.

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) Hot, dry conditions during August and late September have resulted in pasture degradation, crop losses and reductions in water supplies over parts of Sudan's Darfur and Kurdufan regions.

6) Dry conditions during the Spring have resulted in degraded pastures and reduced water supplies across portions of South Africa's Free State and North-West Province.

7) Flooding is occurring along the Jubba and Shebelle Rivers, and their tributaries.

8) Drier than normal conditions during October and November may be stressing developing second season crops in parts of southwestern Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and northwestern Tanzania.

9) The potential exists for heavy rain and flash flooding along the Somali coast late in the period.

Valid: November 25 - December 1, 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. The abundant rains have benefited pastures and have helped to boost water supplies. Last week, an estimated 30 to 80+ mm of rain fell across the area. 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 as well as southern portions of Ethiopia's SNNPR and Oromiya regions. Further south, conditions have been dry so far during the October-December season across northeastern Tanzania and adjacent parts of southeastern Kenya. Moisture deficits have also been observed across Turkana in northwestern Kenya as well as adjacent parts of Sudan and Ethiopia, despite recent beneficial rains. Additional beneficial rains are expected during the period across eastern Kenya, northeastern Tanzania, as well as the region where the boarders of Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya meet. By contrast, drier conditions are expected across eastern Ethiopia.

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. Moderate rains are expected across southeastern Kenya during the period, which would result in some improvement.

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. Showers are possible during the period, which may be beneficial to those long cycle crops which are still in the flowering stage and will help to boost soil moisture and water supplies.

5. 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, dry wells 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.

6. Dry conditions have developed across South Africa's North-West Province and Free State due to a lack of precursory seasonal rains and warm temperatures. The dryness has resulted in poor forage conditions for local herds, as well as a reduction in drinking water supplies. Scattered showers are possible, however no substantial improvement is expected.

7. Recent heavy rains have resulted in flooding along the Jubba and Shebelle rivers in Somalia and their tributaries. Additional rains are expected, which will continue the flooding problems across the region. However, the rains for the most part should be less intense than in recent weeks, which should allow a gradual recession of flood waters during the period.

8. Rainfall during October and November has been about 35 to 65 percent of normal across much of Rwanda, extreme northwestern Tanzania, parts of southwestern Kenya and central Uganda. This has resulted in deficits of about 100 mm and may have stressed developing second season crops. Beneficial seasonal rains are expected during the period, which should ease the stress on crops and increase water supplies in the region.

9. The potential exists for heavy rains and flooding along the Somalia coast late in the period. Thunderstorms in the eastern Arabian Sea may move westward to produce these heavy rains. However, at the time of writing there exists a large amount of uncertainty about if and how this situation will unfold. Therefore, the threat for heavy rain and flooding is not imminent. However, the situation should be monitored.

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