The USAID FEWS-NET

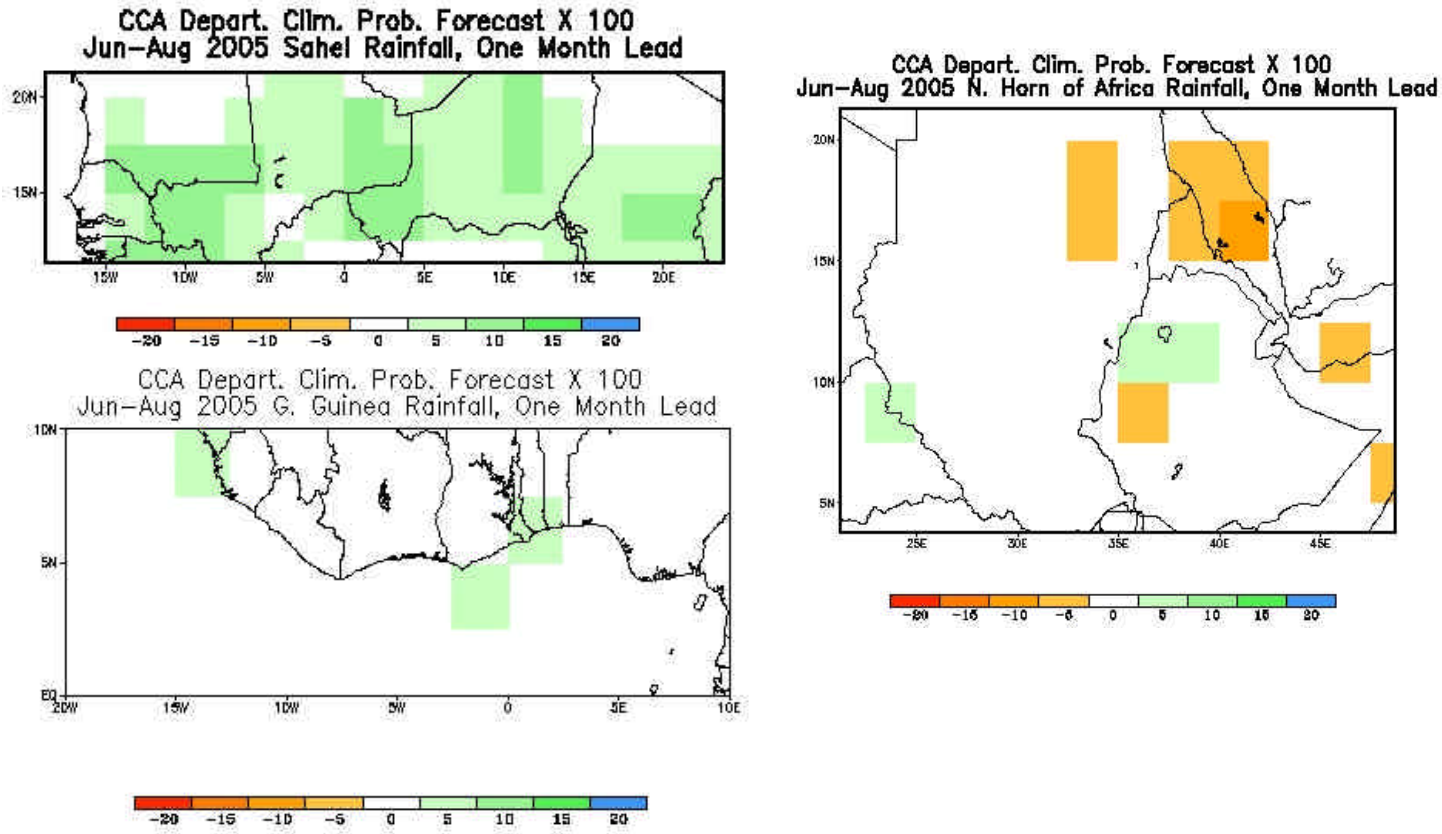
Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

May 19 - 25, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

Update of Seasonal Outlooks at One-Month Lead: Jun-Aug 2005 Forecasts



Gulf of Guinea Region

Climatology is expected, except locally over southeastern Ghana and the southern areas of Togo and Benin, where there is a slight tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall.

Northern Horn of Africa

Climatology is expected across most of the region, except locally over west central Ethiopia, northeastern Eritrea, and portions of northern Somalia, where there is a slight tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall. There is a slight tilt in the odds favoring above normal rainfall over portions of northwestern Ethiopia.

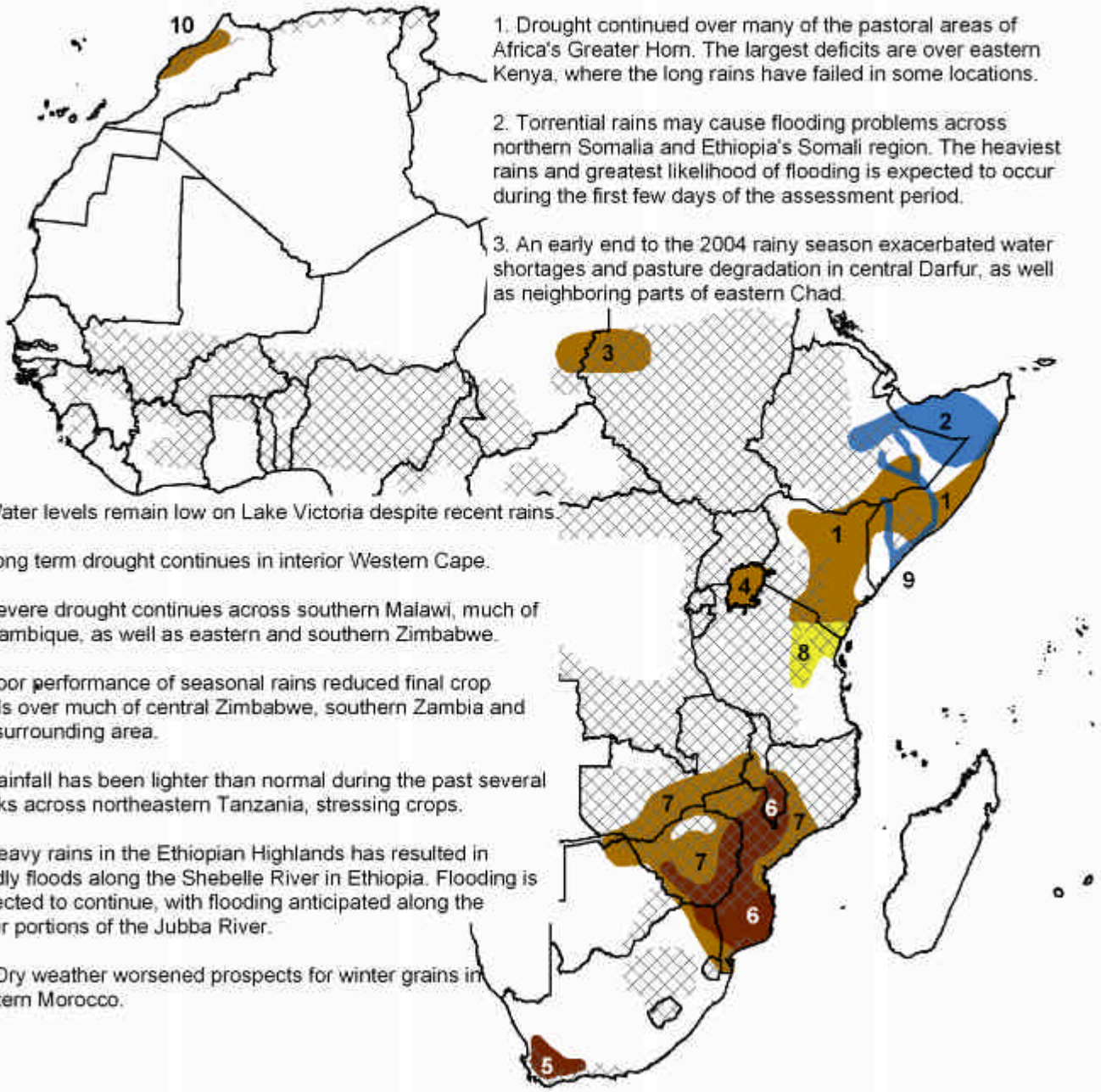
Sahel

There is a low to moderate tilt in the odds favoring above normal rainfall across most of the Sahel. Climatology is expected locally over portions of southern Mali, and southern and northern Burkina Faso.

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. Drought continued over many of the pastoral areas of Africa's Greater Horn. The largest deficits are over eastern Kenya, where the long rains have failed in some locations.

2. Torrential rains may cause flooding problems across northern Somalia and Ethiopia's Somali region. The heaviest rains and greatest likelihood of flooding is expected to occur during the first few days of the assessment period.

3. An early end to the 2004 rainy season exacerbated water shortages and pasture degradation in central Darfur, as well as neighboring parts of eastern Chad.

4. Water levels remain low on Lake Victoria despite recent rains.

5. Long term drought continues in interior Western Cape.

6. Severe drought continues across southern Malawi, much of Mozambique, as well as eastern and southern Zimbabwe.

7. Poor performance of seasonal rains reduced final crop yields over much of central Zimbabwe, southern Zambia and the surrounding area.

8. Rainfall has been lighter than normal during the past several weeks across northeastern Tanzania, stressing crops.

9. Heavy rains in the Ethiopian Highlands has resulted in deadly floods along the Shebelle River in Ethiopia. Flooding is expected to continue, with flooding anticipated along the lower portions of the Jubba River.

10. Dry weather worsened prospects for winter grains in western Morocco.

Valid: May 19 - 25, 2005

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. The March through May rains during 2005 have been lighter than normal across large portions of southeastern Ethiopia, central Somalia and eastern Kenya despite the recent torrential rains which fell in nearby areas. Rainfall totals since March 1 range from 30 to 70 percent of normal. During April 2005, rainfall amounts were less than half of normal across southern and eastern portions of Ethiopia's Somali region while the Shebelle River burst its banks due to heavy rains in the nearby highlands. During the assessment period, showers are expected across southeastern Ethiopia and Somalia, while only scattered showers are expected across eastern Kenya.

2. Heavy rains are expected across northern Somalia and east-central portions of Ethiopia. This includes the Ahmar Mountains, Dire Dawa and the northern zones of Ethiopia's Somali Region. These heavy rains are expected to fall on areas which are already wet. As a result, flooding is possible, especially in the vicinity of dry stream beds. Despite the risk of flooding, these rains will benefit pastures and increase water supplies.

3. The 2004 wet season was drier than normal and ended early across much of central Darfur, as well as the Biltine and Ouaddai Prefectures in eastern Chad. This led to moisture shortfalls which in turn reduced viable pasture and water supplies in the area. Although the poor rains of 2004 were not unusual for this arid region, the dryness will exacerbate the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Seasonably dry conditions are expected across Biltine and Ouaddai in Chad, however showers are possible late in the period across eastern sections of central Darfur.

4. April and early May rains have helped to raise Lake Victoria's water levels. However, lake levels remain near their lowest levels in at least 10 years. The low water level has reduced flow into the Nile River and has resulted in reduced hydroelectric power generation and caused energy shortages in parts of Uganda.

5. In interior Western Cape, South Africa, only 25% to 60% of normal rainfall occurred from April to September of 2004. In many areas, the poor performance of the 2004 rains was in addition to lighter than normal rains in 2003. The extended drought has caused major drinking and irrigation water shortages, stressed pastures and has had a negative effect on dry land farming across interior parts of the province. Recent rains have resulted in some improvement.

6. Rainfall totals are well below normal for the 2004-05 season in central and southern Mozambique, eastern and southern Zimbabwe, southern Malawi and the northeastern-most corner of South Africa. Rainfall totals are between 30 and 60 percent of normal across the region, with deficits of 200 to 600 mm. The driest areas are in Gaza and Inhambane provinces in Mozambique, as well as Manicaland and Masvingo provinces in Zimbabwe. Across these areas, rainfall was much lighter than normal during February and early March. As a result, there is a likelihood of crop failures in these areas. In addition, the drought will likely result in a reduction of viable pasture, water shortages and low river levels. The dry season has begun, therefore the chance for any relief during the next several months is nil.

7. A lack of rainfall during February and March has resulted in an untimely dry spell across much of Zimbabwe, central Mozambique, southern Malawi, southern Zambia and northeastern Namibia. The dry spell, which resulted in 4 to 8 weeks of little to no rainfall, came during a critical stage of crop development. In many areas, the dryness was accompanied by hot temperatures. As a result, reductions in crop yield and crop quality are likely in these areas. Many parts of this area have received 60 to 75% of the normal January-March rainfall total. The effects of this dry spell may be enhanced by a late start of the rainy season in some locations. Portions of northern Zimbabwe are not experiencing moisture stress and problems with dryness. Timely rains during late February into March have resulted in good cropping conditions in orographically favored portions of Midlands and Mashonaland in Zimbabwe. Dry conditions are expected across the region, as the dry season has set in and ended the 2004-05 growing season.

8. Rainfall during the month of April and first weeks of May was much lighter than normal across northeastern Tanzania and extreme southeastern Kenya. Rainfall amounts are between 10 and 40 percent of normal. The dryness stressed main season crops across the region. Near the coast, rainfall is expected during the period which would favor main season crops and ease dryness. Further inland, however, prospects for rain are low and dry weather is expected to continue.

9. Deadly flooding along the Shebelle has claimed more lives that the 2003 floods in Ethiopia's Somali Region. Continued rainfall over the Ethiopian Highlands and across the Somali Region will continue flooding along the Shebelle during the period. Flooding is likely downstream in Somalia as well. Flooding is expected along the Jubba River in Somalia as well during the period.

10. Little rainfall across western Morocco over the past two months has reduced yield prospects for maturing winter grains. Dry weather is expected across the region, with mainly seasonable temperatures.

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