The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

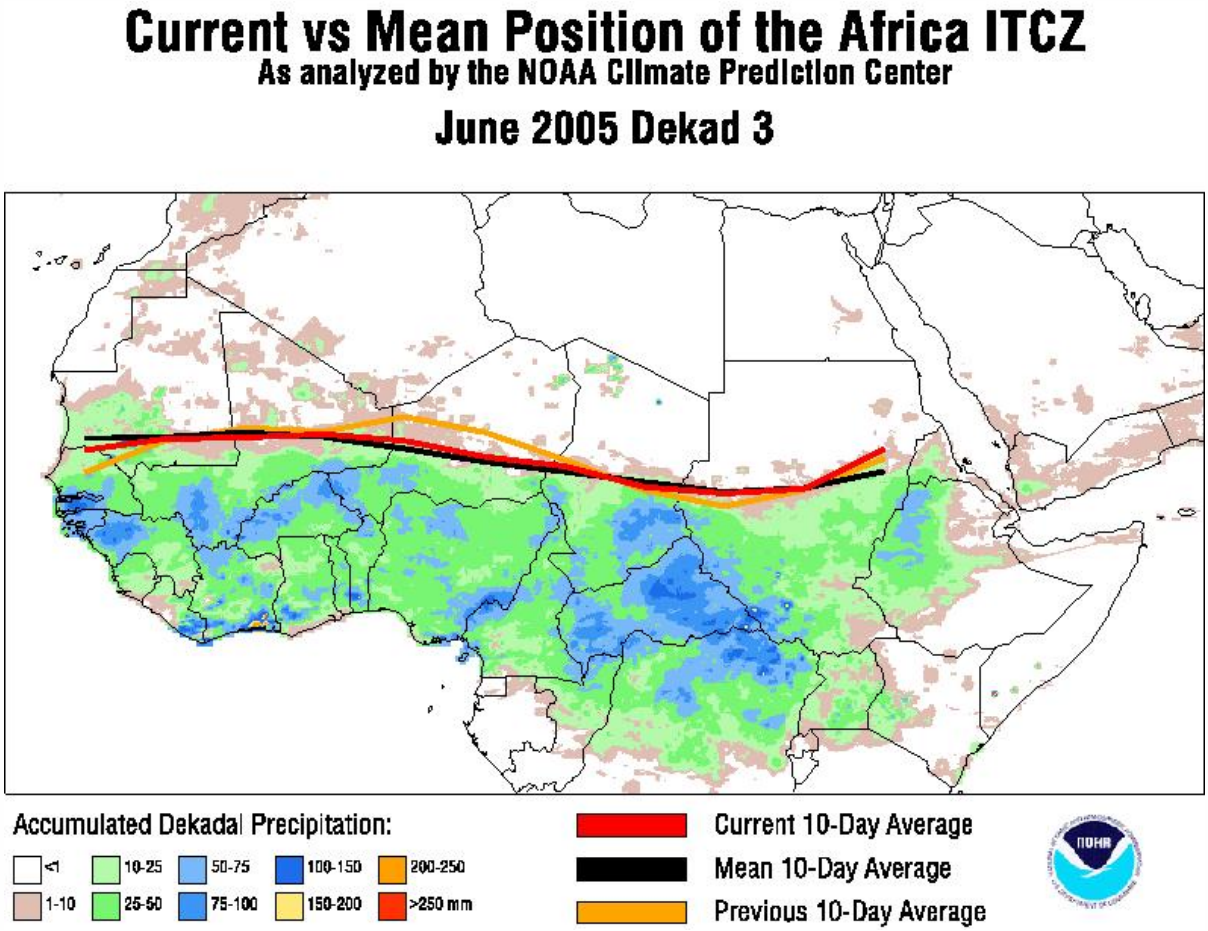
July 7 - 13, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

Update of Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) Position:

The Intertropical Convergence Zone was nearly stationary over much of Africa during the period from June 21 - 30, 2005. In the west, from 10 degrees west to 10 degrees east, the ITCZ was at an average of 16.9 degrees north latitude or 0.1 degree latitude north of normal. In the east, from 20 degrees east to 35 degrees east, the average position of the ITD remained nearly the same at 14.7 degrees north latitude or 0.2 degrees north of normal. A cold front that had brought the ITD northward over Niger and eastern Mali has moved away, allowing nearly normal conditions to return to the area.

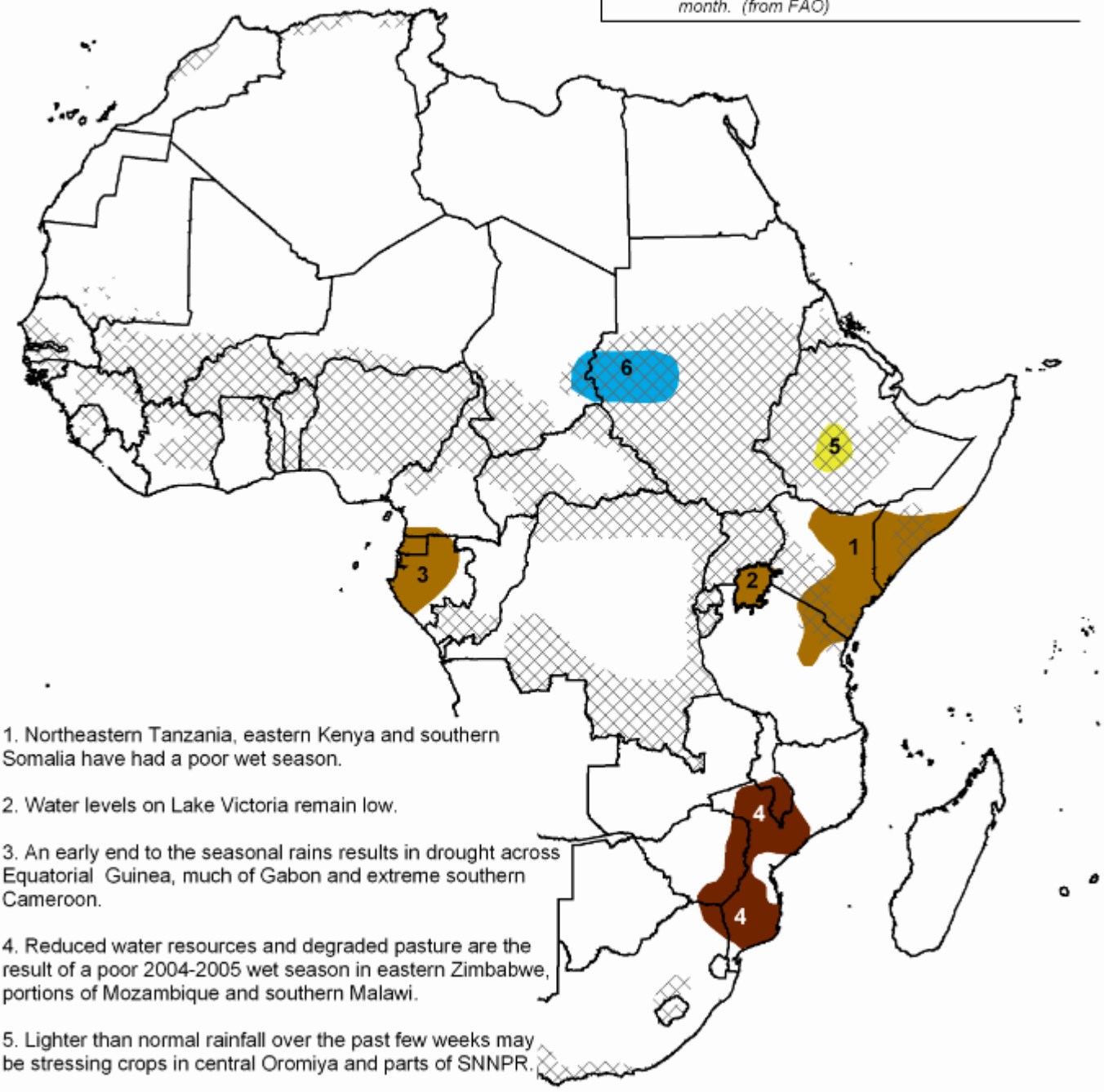
The updated information is available at: (http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/fews/ITCZ/itcz.html).



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. Northeastern Tanzania, eastern Kenya and southern Somalia have had a poor wet season.

2. Water levels on Lake Victoria remain low.

3. An early end to the seasonal rains results in drought across Equatorial Guinea, much of Gabon and extreme southern Cameroon.

4. Reduced water resources and degraded pasture are the result of a poor 2004-2005 wet season in eastern Zimbabwe, portions of Mozambique and southern Malawi.

5. Lighter than normal rainfall over the past few weeks may be stressing crops in central Oromiya and parts of SNNPR.

6. Heavy rains may hamper humanitarian relief efforts in and around Darfur, Sudan.

Valid: July 7 - 13, 2005

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Rainfall during the March through May season of 2005 was much lighter than normal across eastern Kenya, southern Somalia and northeastern Tanzania. Rainfall amounts were only 40 to 70 percent of normal. This resulted in rainfall deficits ranging from 50 mm in the arid lowlands to over 400 mm in the mountains of southern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania. The dry weather likely resulted in reduced main season crop production, degraded pastures and reduced water supply. Showers may bring some beneficial moisture to coastal sections of the region as well as some of the higher terrain in northeastern Tanzania during the period. However, dry conditions are expected to persist across interior eastern Kenya and southern Somalia. The next chance for substantial rainfall across interior areas will come in October.

2. Below normal rainfall and warmer than normal temperatures in recent years has resulted in low water levels on Lake Victoria. Recent rain has helped to boost the water levels somewhat, however a recent satellite pass indicates that the water level is still about six tenths of a meter below the long term average. The low water levels will reduce inflow into the Nile River and may reduce hydroelectric power generation in Uganda.

3. Seasonal rains ended 4 to 6 weeks early this year across Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and far southern parts of Cameroon. The early end of the seasonal rains has resulted in moisture deficits of 150 to 400 mm and may have stressed crops that were not yet mature in May. Conditions are expected to remain dry across the region during the period. Seasonal rains typically begin in September, with the heaviest rainfall of the year usually occurring in October.

4. Poor rainfall during the 2004-05 wet season has resulted in long term drought across Mozambique, southern Malawi and eastern Zimbabwe. Rainfall amounts were 40 to 70 percent of normal, resulting in a deficit of 200 to 600 mm. The drought has likely resulted in degraded pastures and reduced water supplies in and around the region. Except for the possibility of rain showers over southern Mozambique, conditions are expected to remain seasonably dry across the region during the period.

5. After a wet May, rainfall was lighter than normal during June across central Oromiya and adjacent parts of SNNPR in Ethiopia. This short term dryness may be stressing crops in the area. The forecast for the period calls for increased rain chances in the area. As a result, increased moisture and reduced crop stress are expected.

6. Heavy rains are possible during the period across east-central parts of Chad and central portions of Sudan, including the troubled Darfur region. Rainfall amounts could exceed 100 mm during the period in some locations. This will hamper humanitarian relief efforts and overland transport in the area. These heavy rains will add to the difficulty of those in refugee and IDP camps, and raise concerns over sanitation in the camps. However, the rain will be beneficial to pastures and will increase local water supplies in the region.

AUTHOR: Chester V Schmitt

Questions or comments about this product may be directed to Alvin.Miller@noaa.gov or 1-301-763-8000 x7552