The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

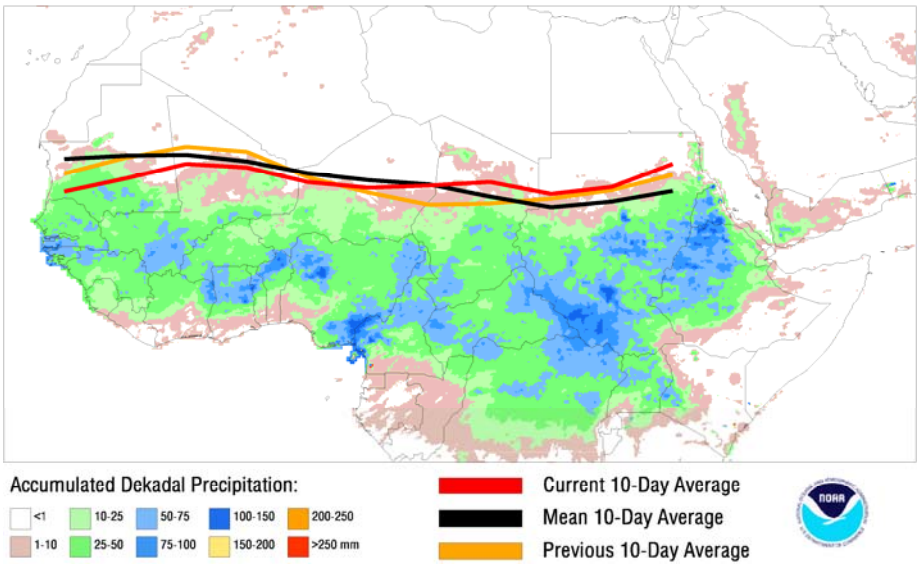
August 3 - 9, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

Update of the Africa Intertropical Convergence Zone Position:

During the period from July 21-31, 2005, the African portion of the ITCZ was located near 18.1 degrees north latitude, compared with the 1988-2004 mean position of 18.3N, a previous dekadal position of 18.2N, and a position during the same dekad 2004 of 18.5N. While the ITCZ continued its northward movement roughly in the area east of 10 degrees E longitude, it moved south from its position during the previous period in areas to the west. Strong winds from the north after the passage of an Easterly Wave on July 24th forced the convergence zone to the south over Mauritania and Mali, leading to the displacement from last period. In fact, examining the west region of the ITCZ (10W-10E), the current position of 18.5 degrees north is almost a full degree south of both the climatological normal and its position from July 11-20. The eastern (20-35E) region did continue to move north, and its current location of 18.0N is around 1.4 degrees north from the long term mean.

Current vs Mean Position of the Africa ITCZ
As analyzed by the NOAA Climate Prediction Center
July 2005 Dekad 3



Update of Locust Activity:

Please refer to http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html for the latest locust situation in Africa from the FAO.

Weather Hazards Assessment Graphic:

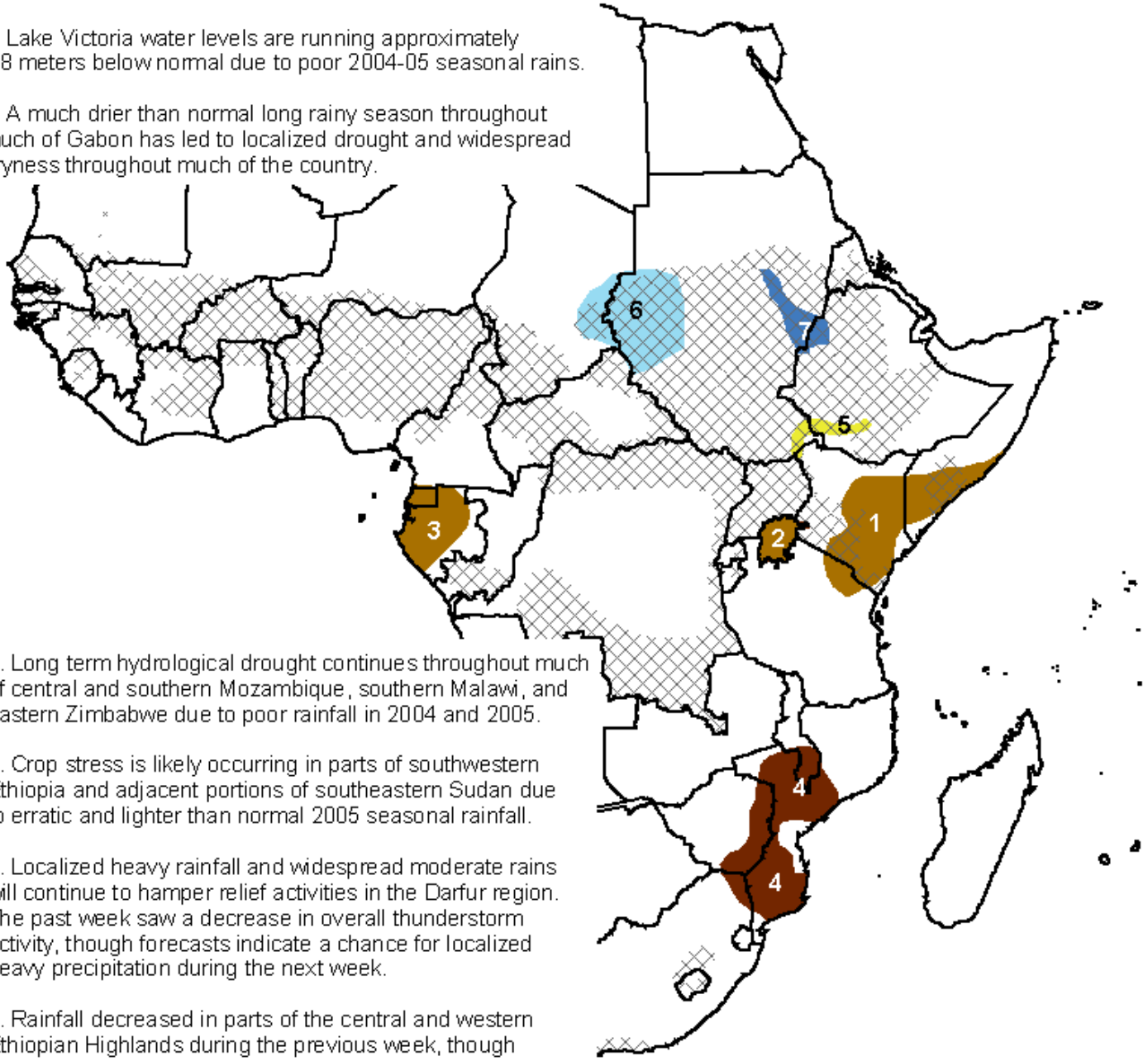
Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

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.Dryness continues in parts of southern Somalia and Eastern Kenya due to poor 2005 rainfall.

2. Lake Victoria water levels are running approximately 0.8 meters below normal due to poor 2004-05 seasonal rains.

3. A much drier than normal long rainy season throughout much of Gabon has led to localized drought and widespread dryness throughout much of the country.



4. Long term hydrological drought continues throughout much of central and southern Mozambique, southern Malawi, and eastern Zimbabwe due to poor rainfall in 2004 and 2005.

5. Crop stress is likely occurring in parts of southwestern Ethiopia and adjacent portions of southeastern Sudan due to erratic and lighter than normal 2005 seasonal rainfall.

6. Localized heavy rainfall and widespread moderate rains will continue to hamper relief activities in the Darfur region. The past week saw a decrease in overall thunderstorm activity, though forecasts indicate a chance for localized heavy precipitation during the next week.

7. Rainfall decreased in parts of the central and western Ethiopian Highlands during the previous week, though heavy rains during the next seven day period will continue to lead to downstream flooding problems.

Valid: August 3 - 9 , 2005

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. March through May 2005 rainfall totals were significantly less than normal in the region from southern Somalia, eastern Kenya, and into northeastern Tanzania, leading to localized drought and widespread dryness throughout the area. Although agricultural losses have already occurred, current problems include degraded pasture conditions and low drinking water levels, which will not be improved until at least October when short season rains normally begin to intensify. Coastal areas of northern Kenya continue to see beneficial rainfall, reducing dryness in the region.

2. As monthly rainfall continued to be lower than normal during July, Lake Victoria water levels continue to decline to near ten year lows. According to NASA telemetry methods, the current lake level is around 0.8 meters below the long term mean, and is declining. With little to no rainfall forecast during the next week, the situation is only likely to worsen, and implications such as poor water availability for irrigation purposes and low well levels will continue.

3. As the monsoonal season ended a month to a month and a half early in much of western Gabon, large precipitation deficits occurred and drought became evident. Light showers that were seen during the past week, along with the possibility for additional rains, especially in the northern areas, will help to increase moisture, though much of the damage has already occurred. Significant relief is not expected in the near future.

4. Long term drought continues in much of central and southern Mozambique, parts of extreme northeastern South Africa, and eastern regions of Zimbabwe due to poor rainfall during 2004 and 2005 to date. Current hydrological problems primarily include poor drinking water levels and sub-par pasture conditions.

5. Erratic rainfall has led to areas of short term dryness primarily in southwestern lowland Ethiopia and adjacent portions of extreme southeastern Sudan. Concerns at the moment are more toward agricultural stress due to the increased dryness, and little to no precipitation is expected during the next week in the region. During the past few weeks, rainfall has increased in areas to the northeast, thus dryness has been mitigated for the most part in those areas.

6. During the past ten days, rainfall was significantly lighter than during much of July in much of western Darfur and adjacent regions of Chad. However, during the past few days, precipitation has increased and heavy rains are again a possibility in the area for the current period. These rains, while increasing well water levels and enhancing pasture and agricultural conditions in the region, will hamper humanitarian transportation activities due to the degradation of overland road corridors.

7. Minor river flooding which has been occurring downstream of the Ethiopian Highlands in Sudan has mitigated somewhat during the past week, though latest meteorological precipitation forecasts indicate a chance for additional heavy rainfall within the next seven days. This will likely lead to localized, small-scale crop losses in areas of Ethiopia receiving particularly strong storms, but more significantly will lead to continued downstream flooding in the Blue Nile Basin.

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