The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

September 8 – 14, 2005

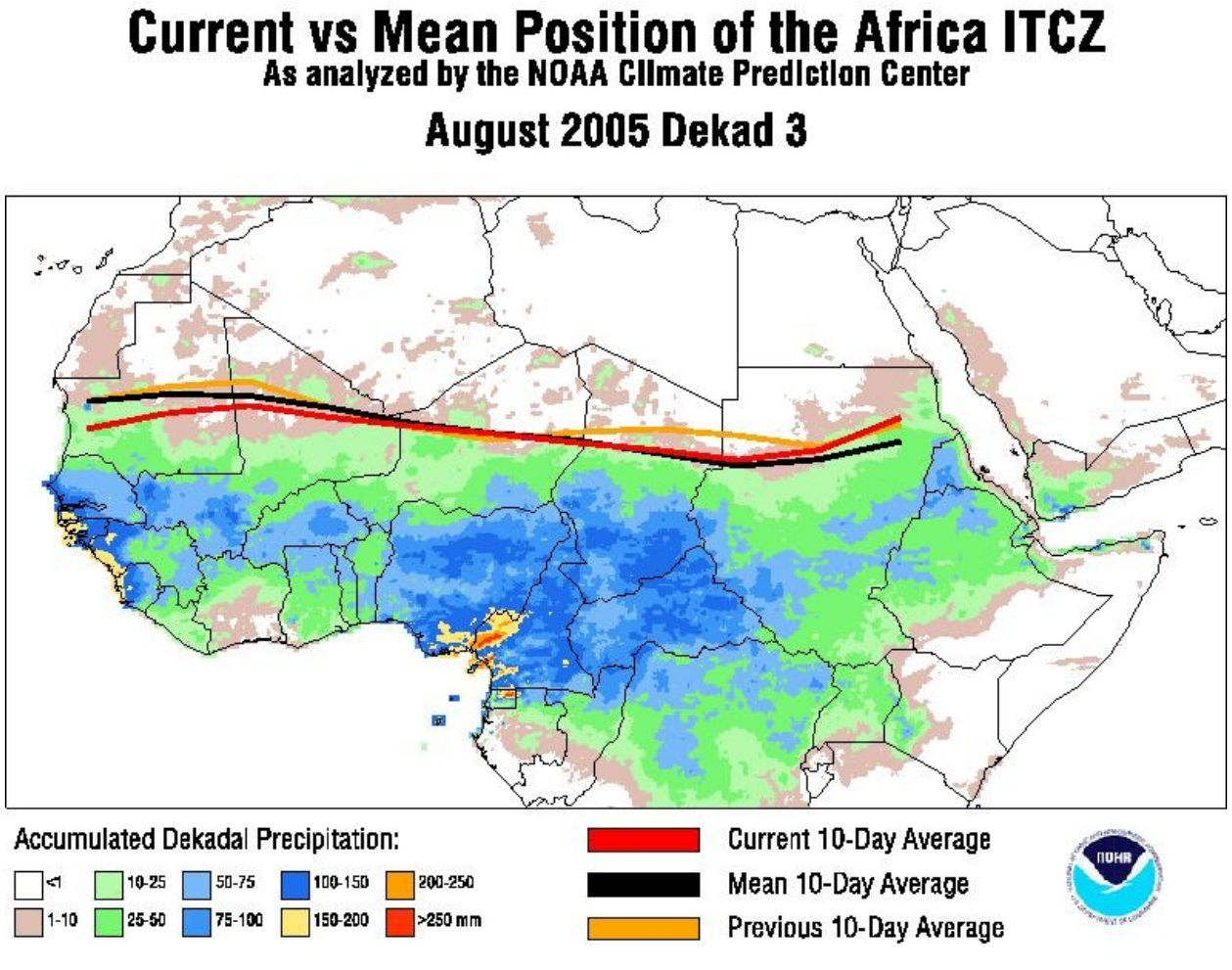
Weekly Introduction:

Update of Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) Position:

Based on the past three periods of data, it appears that the African portion of the Intertropical Convergence Zone peaked around a dekad earlier (during August 1-10) than normal (August 11-20) and has begun its retreat southward in, virtually, all regions.

As seen in the accompanying figure, although the western region of the ITCZ (10W-10E) did peak a dekad or so early, the maximum northward position was near normal and the current position is very close to the long term mean of 19.3N. In the east (from 20E-35E) the ITCZ also peaked a dekad early, though its maximum northward position this year was almost a degree and a half farther north than normal. Thus, the current location remains almost a degree north of normal for the period.

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



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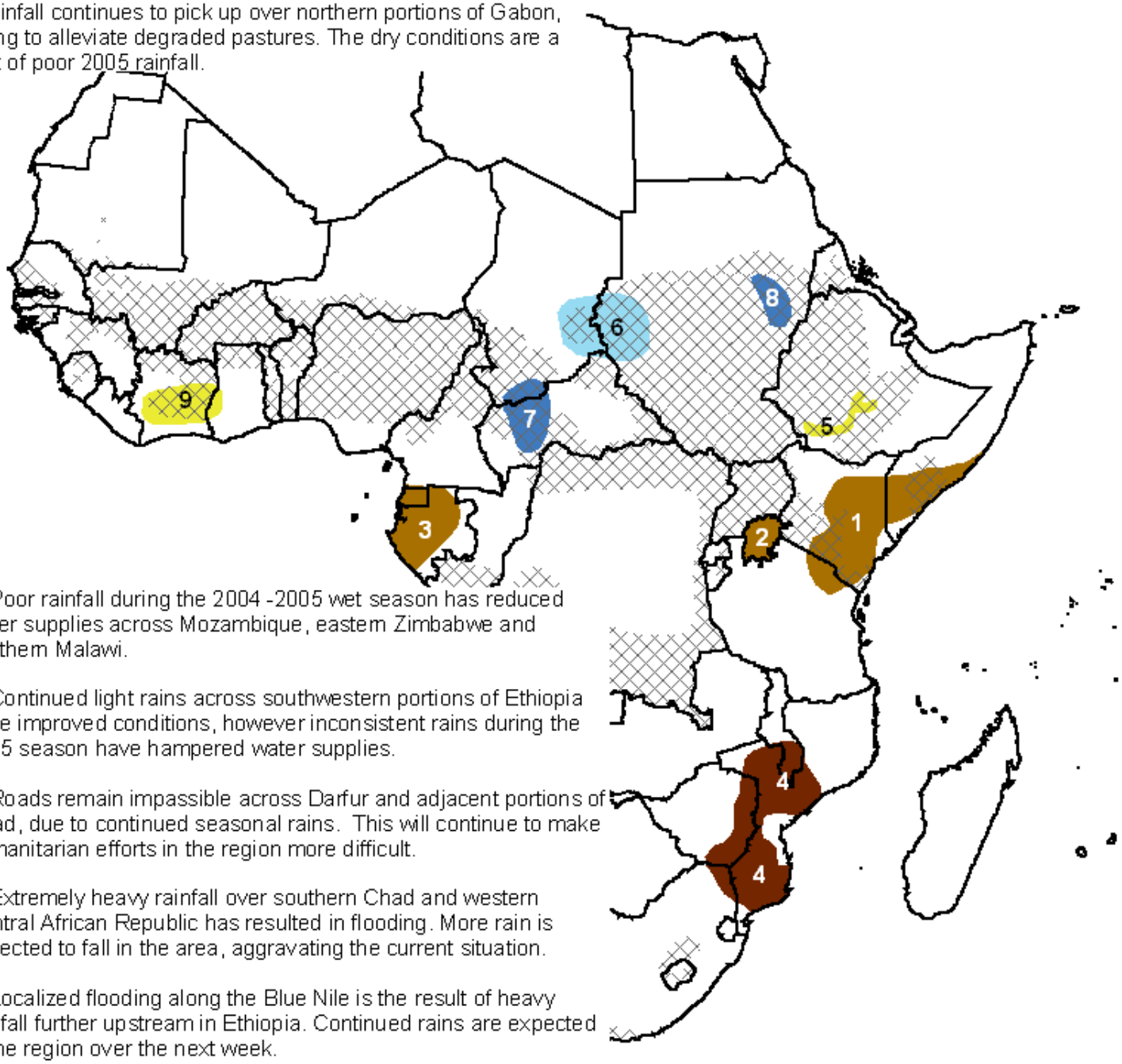
NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)

1. Dry conditions and localized drought persist in Kenya and southern Somalia after poor 2005 rains.

2. Light rainfall for more than a year has allowed Lake Victoria's lake levels to drop 85 cm below normal.

3. Rainfall continues to pick up over northern portions of Gabon, helping to alleviate degraded pastures. The dry conditions are a result of poor 2005 rainfall.



4. Poor rainfall during the 2004 -2005 wet season has reduced water supplies across Mozambique, eastern Zimbabwe and southern Malawi.

5. Continued light rains across southwestern portions of Ethiopia have improved conditions, however inconsistent rains during the 2005 season have hampered water supplies.

6. Roads remain impassible across Darfur and adjacent portions of Chad, due to continued seasonal rains. This will continue to make humanitarian efforts in the region more difficult.

7. Extremely heavy rainfall over southern Chad and western Central African Republic has resulted in flooding. More rain is expected to fall in the area, aggravating the current situation.

8. Localized flooding along the Blue Nile is the result of heavy rainfall further upstream in Ethiopia. Continued rains are expected in the region over the next week.

9. Central Ivory Coast is experiencing an extended short dry season, which may negatively impact the cotton and cocoa crops.

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Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. The dry conditions across Kenya and southern Somalia are a result of a poor March - May wet season. The result has been degraded pastures and a reduction in water supplies. The dry conditions that prevailed last week will continue into the coming period. Rainfall typically begins increasing this time of the year as we move into the next rainy season. However, hope for relief from current deficits will have to wait until October.

2. As much as 30 mm of rain fell on Lake Victoria during the last week. This is a continuation of the rains that have been falling in the area for the past month. This, however, has not significantly raised lake levels and Lake Victoria remains 85 cm below normal. The coming period will likely see a continuation of the rains in the Lake Victoria area.

3. Light rainfall fell over much of Gabon during the past week, a sign of the ITCZ beginning to move towards the south. This rainfall, however, has not eased the ongoing dry conditions affecting the area. The dry conditions in the region have degraded pastures. The coming week will bring more rain, largely to the northern areas.

4. Little to no rain fell across drought stricken Mozambique, southern Malawi, eastern Zimbabwe and the extreme northeastern corner of South Africa. The area saw erratic precipitation during the 2004-2005 wet season. The poor rainfall reduced water available for crops, reduced drinking water, and degraded pastures. Relief will not arrive until late October or early November.

5. Some short term dryness in southwestern Ethiopia is in an area that has missed out on the good rains falling farther north. This part of the southern end of the Ethiopian Highlands has seen slightly below normal precipitation and has not suffered significantly from any impacts. The coming period will likely see steady showers in the area.

6. Seasonal rainfall in Darfur and adjacent portions of Chad has lead to the roads becoming impassable and has hampered the ongoing humanitarian effort in the area. Over the last few weeks the rainfall has been heavier in Chad, where totals for the previous period have exceeded 50 mm in some locations. In Darfur, totals during the past week have reached as high as 30 mm. With the ITCZ beginning to retrograde to the south, road conditions will begin to improve with the end of the rains.

7. More than a month of excessive rainfall over western portions of the Central African Republic and nearby parts of Chad has resulted in localized flooding that has displaced as many as 20,000 people. Some areas have seen over 300 mm of rainfall during the month of August. More heavy rain is expected in the area next week. This will likely aggravate the situation by not allowing the region a chance to dry out.

8. Excessive rainfall along the Blue Nile and further upstream in the Ethiopian highlands has caused localized flooding in Khartoum, Sennar, and Singa states in eastern Sudan. During the last week, rainfall totals topped 50 mm and similar totals are expected during the next week.

9. With the short dry season not coming to an end in central Ivory Coast there are concerns about the cotton and cocoa crops in the region. Rainfall totals in August were between 25 and 50 percent of normal. The past week saw rainfall totals of 20 to 30 mm across the effected region, and the coming week will also bring more steady rainfall to the region.

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