The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

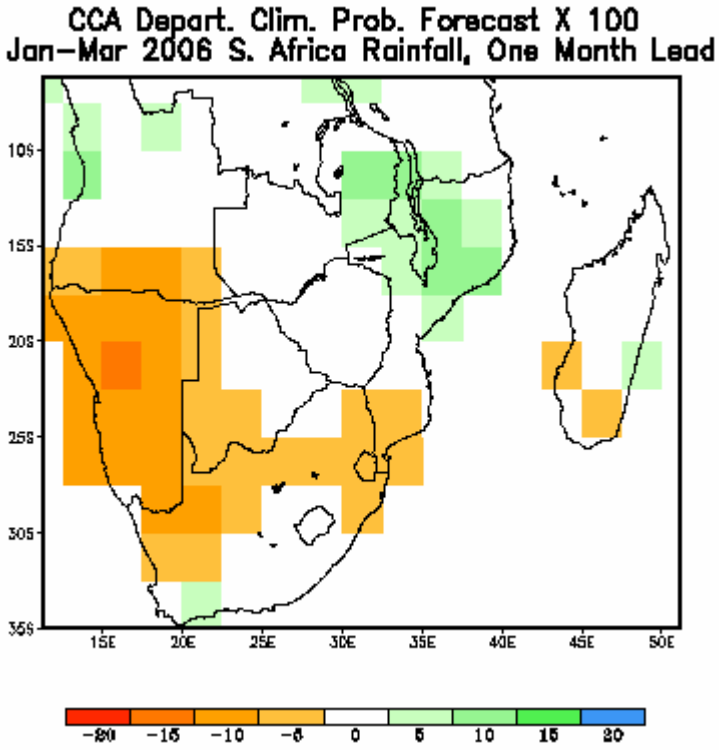
December 22 – 28, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

Update of Seasonal Outlooks at One-Month Lead

January – March 2006
Southern Africa

The outlook for Jan-Mar 2006 southern Africa rainfall at one month lead shows a low to moderate tilt in the odds favoring below average rainfall over Namibia, portions of southern Angola, southern Botswana, Swaziland, portions of southern Mozambique, the Maize Triangle and the Western Cape Province of South Africa, and locally over southern Madagascar. There is a tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall locally over northern Angola, portions of eastern Zambia, northern Mozambique, Malawi, southern Tanzania, and locally along the east coast of Madagascar.



Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

1. An extremely poor season across eastern Kenya and southern Somalia has left the region with low water levels. Much of this region is experiencing a multiyear hydrological and agricultural drought. The season has effectively been ruined.

2. Poor rainfall has placed significant stress on crops and pastures in western Kenya, northern Tanzania, northern Uganda, southern Ethiopia, and central Somalia. Conditions are not expected to improve.

3. Along the Udzungwa Range in southern Tanzania, the season started 4 dekads late. Some areas still have not seen significant moisture increases, and water deficits continue to rise.

4. Short term dryness has reduce available water resources for southern and central Tanzania. Rainfall across much of the area was between 1 and 3 dekads late to start.

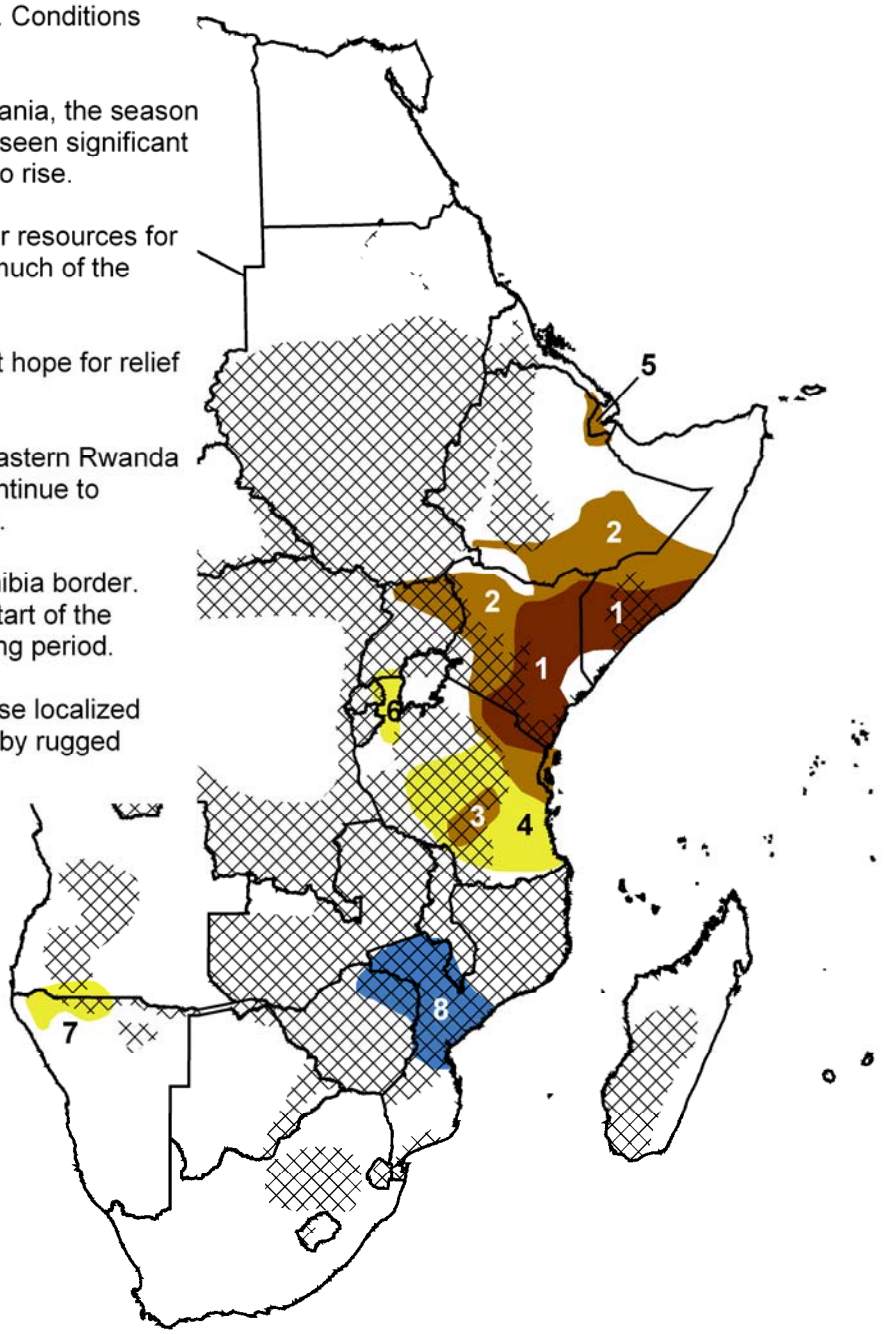
5. The 2006 long rains in Djibouti will be the next hope for relief for the country's degraded pastures.

6. Light rains over northwestern Tanzania and eastern Rwanda have impeded crop growth. Moisture deficits continue to increase as rains are expected to remain sparse.

7. Moisture has improved along the Angola-Namibia border. Concerns remain, however, about the delayed start of the season and expected light rainfall over the coming period.

8. A front moving through Mozambique may cause localized flash flooding along the Zambezi and in the nearby rugged terrain of Zimbabwe.

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)



Valid: December 22 - 28, 2005

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Extreme northern Tanzania, most of eastern Kenya and portions of southern Somalia have all been experiencing a rainy season that never materialized. Rainfall has been so erratic and light that some locations have received less than 5 percent of normal precipitation since the beginning of October. More prevalent is 20 to 50 percent of normal rainfall. Much of this area has suffered through several seasons of both agricultural and hydrological drought. The current season has failed, any relief will be minimal and is more likely to aid the southern areas. No rain fell in the area during the past week, and only light rain is possible in Tanzania during the coming week.

2. Conditions are only moderately better around hazard (1). In an area the stretches from coastal Tanzania to western Kenya and northern Uganda and southern portions of Ethiopia and Somalia precipitation totals have been dismal. The region has seen less than 80 percent of its normal rainfall, with some areas received less than half of their normal precipitation. Water resources are strained, crops are stressed, and pastures are being degraded due to lack of moisture. During the past week only light showers in Tanzania. Similar conditions are expected during the coming period.

3. A delayed start of season in the Udzungwa Range in southern Tanzania has reduced moisture available for crops. Erratic rainfall has denied the area sufficient moisture bringing seasonal totals 50 to 100 mm below normal. The past week did bring up to and exceeding 20 mm of rain to the area, but this has been the first week of steady rains that the area has seen. Several weeks of steady rainfall will be necessary to improve conditions.

4. A delayed start of the season in central and southern Tanzania has resulted in short term dryness. During the pervious period totals of up to 20 mm fell along the western edge of the hazard area. In some isolated locations totals exceeded 50 mm. This contrasts sharply with the lack of rainfall in the coastal portions of Tanzania. Similar conditions are expected during the coming period.

5. Djibouti will have to wait until late March or early April before its pastures can begin to recover. Poor rainfall during the 2005 long rains stressed the country's pastures. This is of particular concern because Djibouti only recently entered the dry season and pasturelands will continue to degrade until the return of the rains.

6. Continued light rainfall in eastern Rwanda and northwestern Tanzania has placed some strain on water resources. Rainfall totals of less than 5 mm continues to hamper any recovery effort. Additional rainfall is needed in this area to relieve slowly growing deficits, which are now approaching 50 mm.

7. Some relief has reached the Angola- Namibia border region. During the past week rainfall, largely in Angola, has begun reducing deficits. Precipitation totals of up to and exceeding 50 mm contrast with moisture deficits that are only slightly higher. With continued rainfall, moisture deficits will be quickly eased. Unfortunately the coming week will not offer significant precipitation for the Angola- Namibia border.

8. Along the Zambezi in Mozambique, and in the rugged terrain of northern Zimbabwe heavy rains during the coming period could cause localized flash flooding. Excessive rainfall during the past two weeks has saturated soils in the area and additional rainfall could pose problems locally throughout the region.

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