The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

June 15 - 21, 2006

Weekly Introduction:

Update of El Niño:

Synopsis: ENSO-neutral conditions are expected to prevail during the next 3 months.

The current patterns of anomalous ocean temperatures are consistent with ENSO-neutral conditions in the tropical Pacific. During May 2006 SSTs were near average at most locations between the date line (180º) and 90ºW. During the month above-average precipitation was observed over portions of Indonesia and extreme northeastern Australia, while below-average precipitation was observed over most of the equatorial Pacific. Collectively, the observed atmospheric and oceanic features indicate ENSO-neutral conditions.

Most of the statistical and coupled models predict ENSO-neutral conditions in the tropical Pacific through the end of 2006. However, the spread of these forecasts (weak La Niña to weak El Niño) indicates considerable uncertainty in the outlook for the last half of the year.

This discussion is a consolidated effort of NOAA and its funded institutions

The seasonal precipitation outlooks for Africa will be presented during the forthcoming weeks.

Locust Update:

The FAO site (http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html) was last updated on June 5. Their report indicates that the overall situation continues to remain calm.

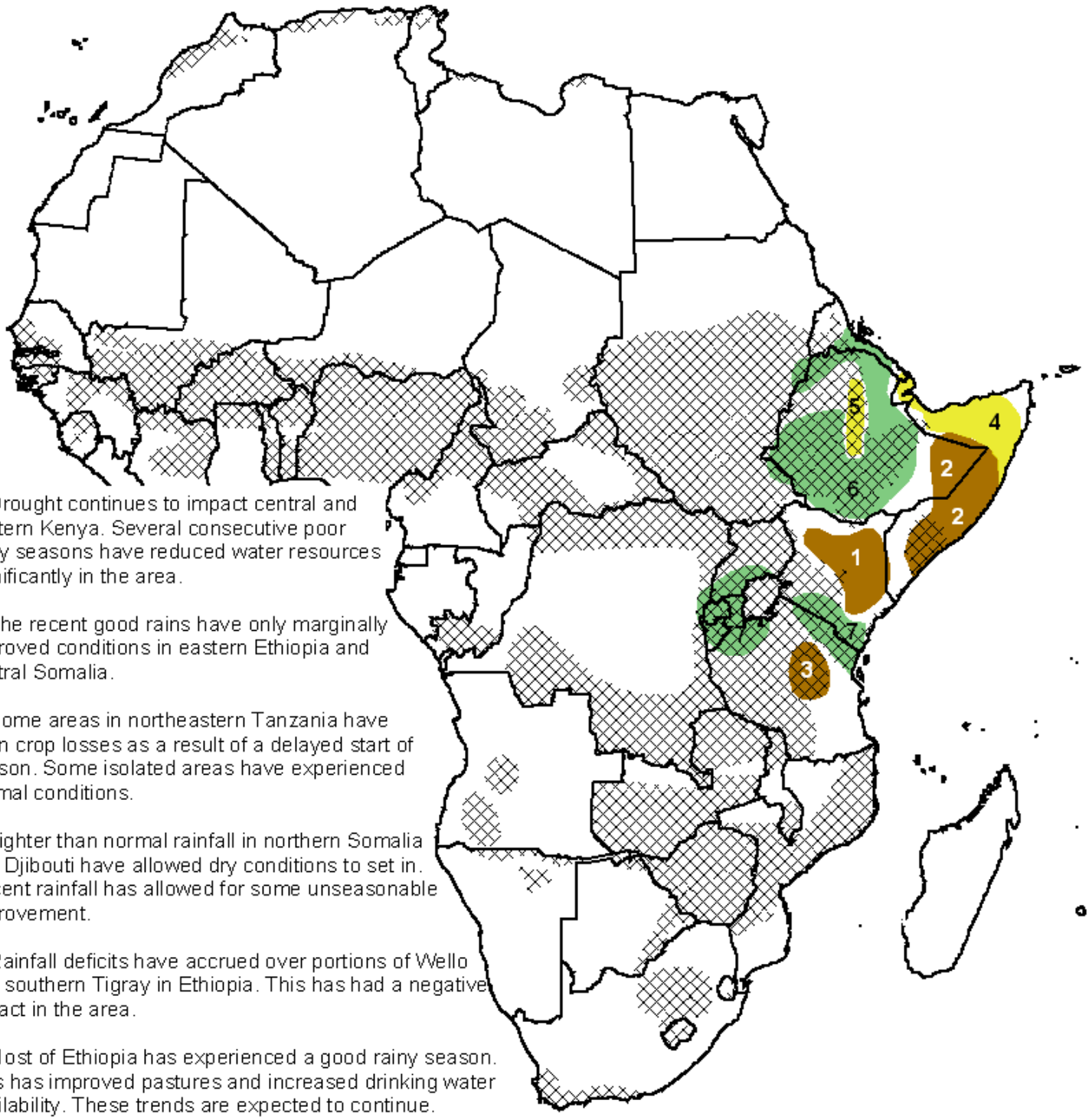
New Location for Shapefiles:

Hazard area shapefiles will no longer be distributed through email. Instead they will be placed on the CPC's anonymous FTP server. The location for the Africa hazards will be: ftp://ftp.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/fews/weather_hazards/africa/ .

Weather Hazards Assessment Graphic:

Africa Weather Hazards/Benefits 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 continues to impact central and eastern Kenya. Several consecutive poor rainy seasons have reduced water resources significantly in the area.

2. The recent good rains have only marginally improved conditions in eastern Ethiopia and central Somalia.

3. Some areas in northeastern Tanzania have seen crop losses as a result of a delayed start of season. Some isolated areas have experienced normal conditions.

4. Lighter than normal rainfall in northern Somalia and Djibouti have allowed dry conditions to set in. Recent rainfall has allowed for some unseasonable improvement.

5. Rainfall deficits have accrued over portions of Wello and southern Tigray in Ethiopia. This has had a negative impact in the area.

6. Most of Ethiopia has experienced a good rainy season. This has improved pastures and increased drinking water availability. These trends are expected to continue.

7. To the west and south of Lake Victoria, a good growing season's has recently ended. Additionally, good rainfall along the Tanzania-Kenya border has been a significant improvement from last seasons deficits.

Valid: June 15 - 21, 2006

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. The failure of the 2005 short rainy season, and the subsequent poor October 2005 – May 2006 rains has left central Kenya in a severe drought. The last season was poor with many areas receiving less than half normal rainfall. Water resources continue to be stretched thin, especially now that the dry season has begun. Pastures and crops have suffered, and crop yields have been significantly reduced. Seasonably dry conditions are expected during the coming period. The next hope for significant relief will be in October when the rains return to the area.

2. A terrible March – May wet season has reduced water resources in central Somalia and eastern Ethiopia. While much of the area did receive half its normal rainfall, most of this was concentrated in April, leaving March and May with less than 10 percent of normal rainfall in many areas. The dry conditions have reduced available pasture, devastated crops and reduced available drinking water. Conditions are less severe in the agriculture areas near the Juba and Shebeli, but crop pests have taken advantage of the erratic rains. Parts of Somalia and Ethiopia, however, have received some unusual showers during the past few weeks that have helped improve pastures and increased available drinking water. Seasonably dry conditions are expected during the coming week.

3. In northeastern Tanzania, the wet season had a late start. Some areas indicated in the polygon were able to recover during the course of the season, but the majority did not. The delayed start meant that even though the rains ended on time, the crops did not have enough time to fully develop. As a result there have been significant yield reductions in the area.

4. Rainfall has been lighter than normal from the Haded plain in Somalia to Djibouti. Although during the past week some unseasonable showers in Somalia have eased conditions, water remains scarce. There is a slight chance that the unseasonable rains will continue into this week, but even if those rains fall the ongoing moisture deficits will not be reversed.

5. Dryness is becoming an increasing problem in the northern Ethiopian highlands. The zones of South Tigray, North Wello and South Wello, all have minor, but growing, rainfall deficits. These deficits could have an impact on agriculture if they continue to rise. Heavier rainfall normally moves into this area by late June. The dry conditions observed last week are expected to continue into the coming period.

6. Precipitation remains abundant over most areas of Ethiopia and Eritrea so far this year. Many areas are running between 120 and 400 percent of normal rainfall. The Afar region of Ethiopia has benefited the most as unseasonable rains fell in the area during the month of April. Rainfall during the past week remains concentrated over the western and southern highlands, as is normal this time of year. In the coming weeks we should see rainfall shift into the northern highlands and the Afar region.

7. Portions of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, northern Tanzania and southern Kenya have had an overall good season, which has helped the area begin to recover after a poor short rainy season last year. Normal to above normal precipitation has had a positive impact on pastures, agriculture and drinking water availability.

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