The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment

For

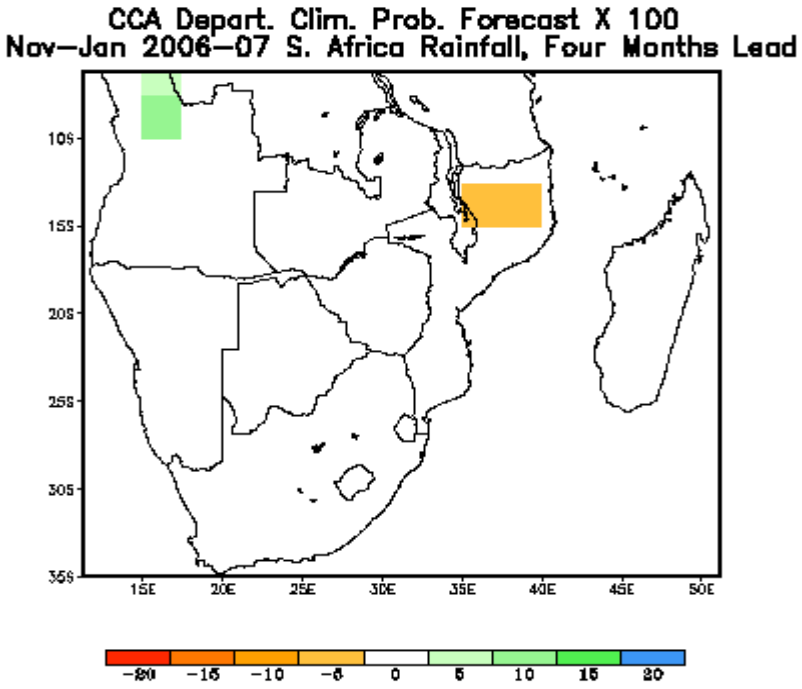
July 27 – August 2, 2006

Weekly Introduction:

Update of CPC Seasonal Outlooks at Four Months Lead: November 2006 – January 2007 Forecasts

Southern Africa

There is a small tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall over northern Mozambique and a tilt in the odds favoring above normal rainfall over local regions of northern Angola.



New Location for Shapefiles:
Hazard area shapefiles will no longer be distributed through e-mail. Instead, they will be placed on the CPC anonymous FTP server. The location for the Africa Hazards will be: ftp://ftp.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/fews/weather_hazards/africa/.

Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment Graphic:

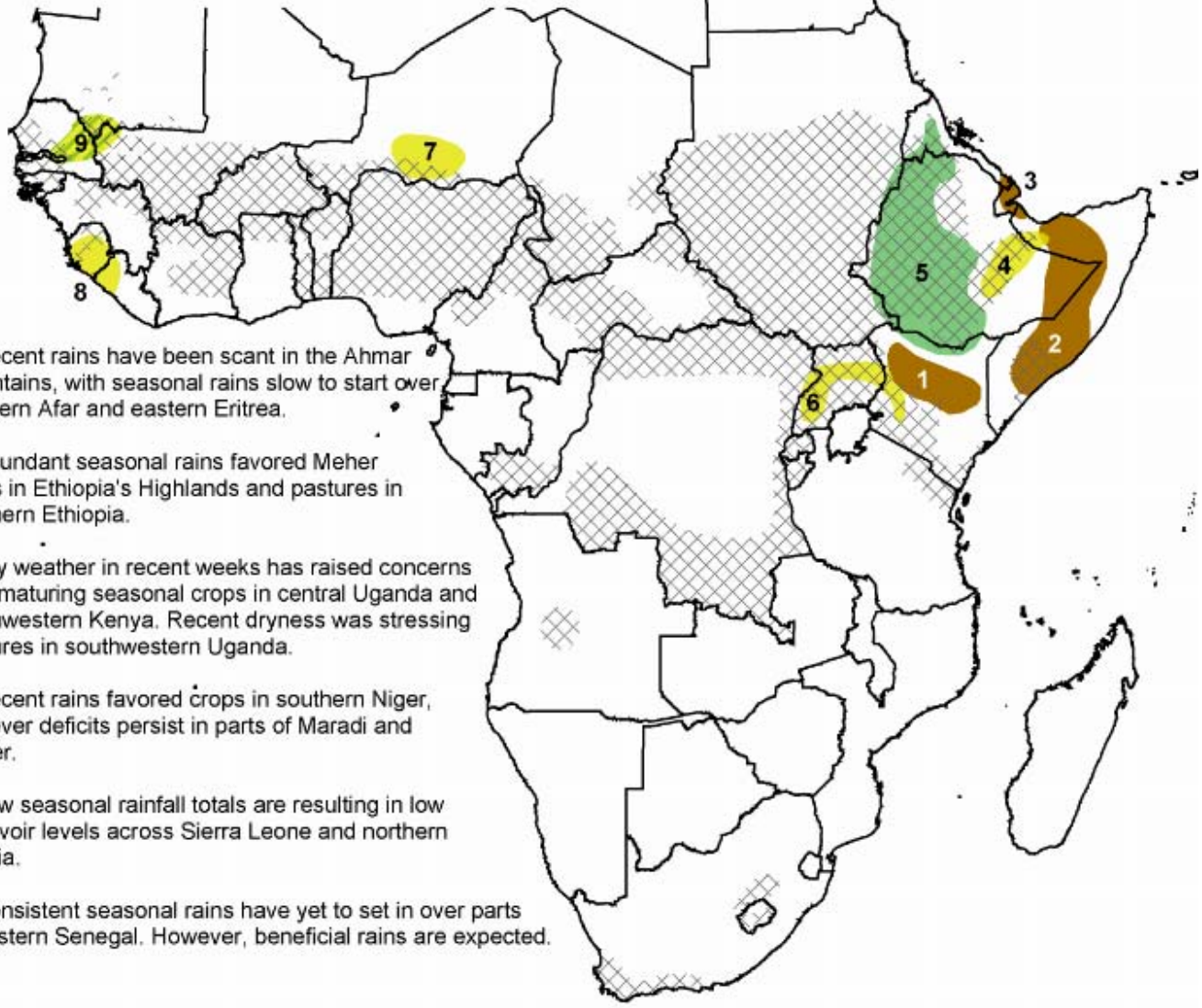
Africa Weather Hazards/Benefits Assessment

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. Multiple poor rainy seasons have resulted in drought across portions of northern and central Kenya. Agriculture, pastures and water supplies have suffered as a result.

2. Below normal rainfall during 2005 and 2006 have resulted in drought development across much of Somalia and adjacent portions of Ethiopia.

3. Erratic rains have reduced water supplies and stressed pastures in and around Djibouti.



4. Recent rains have been scant in the Ahmar Mountains, with seasonal rains slow to start over northern Afar and eastern Eritrea.

5. Abundant seasonal rains favored Meher crops in Ethiopia's Highlands and pastures in southern Ethiopia.

6. Dry weather in recent weeks has raised concerns over maturing seasonal crops in central Uganda and southwestern Kenya. Recent dryness was stressing pastures in southwestern Uganda.

7. Recent rains favored crops in southern Niger, however deficits persist in parts of Maradi and Zinder.

8. Low seasonal rainfall totals are resulting in low reservoir levels across Sierra Leone and northern Liberia.

9. Consistent seasonal rains have yet to set in over parts of eastern Senegal. However, beneficial rains are expected.

Valid: July 27 - August 2, 2006

Weather Hazards Benefits Text Explanation:

1) After the failure of the 2005 short rains across much of Africa's Greater Horn, the 2006 long rains were above average across many areas. However, across much of northern Kenya the March through May rains were lighter than average. Rainfall totals were only 50 to 75 percent of normal. These shortfalls, combined with the very poor 2005 rains, have resulted in the development of a severe drought. Rainfall deficits of 250 to 500+ mm since January 1, 2005 have resulted in a reduction of water supplies, crop failures, degradation of pastures and livestock losses across the region. The next chance for significant rains will not be until October with the arrival of the 2006 short rains.

2) The 2005 short rains failed across much of Somalia. The 2006 long rains were also lighter than normal in many areas. From March 1 through May 31, rainfall amounts were only 40 to 70 percent of normal, resulting in deficits of 50 to 150 mm. This has resulted in the development and continuation of a severe drought which has stressed pastures, reduced water supplies and resulted in livestock losses across the region. Some beneficial post-season rains, however, fell across central Somalia. However the duration of and moisture from the rains were insufficient to result in significant improvement, particularly in western areas. The next chance for substantial rainfall will not be until October with the arrival of the short rains.

3) Rainfall has been light and spotty across much of Djibouti and adjacent portions of Somalia and Ethiopia. Since January 1, rainfall totals are less than half of normal. This has resulted in rainfall deficits of 40 to 80 mm. Dry conditions have degraded pastures and reduced water supplies in the area. Showers are possible during the period, mainly inland. Therefore, improvement will be minimal.

4) More than twice the normal amount of rain fell in and around the Ahmar Mountains of Ethiopia and northwestern Somalia from February through May. These rains benefited pastures, crops and water supplies in the area. However, rainfall since early June has been light and scattered. Rainfall totals since June 1 are only 40 to 70 percent of normal, resulting in deficits of 50 to 100 mm. The dry spell has stressed crops and pastures in the area. This stress is evident in recent satellite imagery. Scattered showers are possible during the period, which may result in some improvement.

5) Seasonal rains have been abundant and well distributed across western Ethiopia, southern Ethiopia and the highlands of Eritrea. In the Meher production areas of Tigray, Ahmara, Beneshangul Gumuz, western Oromiya, SNNPR and Gambella, rainfall totals since June 1 are 100 to 150 percent of normal. These rains have resulted in generally good crop conditions across these areas. However, some local areas were affected by excessive amounts of rainfall and hail. Rainfall has been normal to above normal across the highlands of southwestern Eritrea as well. Over the pastoral areas of Guji, Borena, South Omo and adjacent parts of extreme northern Kenya, rainfall during the March – May season was 120 to 250 percent of normal. This resulted in rejuvenation of pasture and boosted water supplies. Seasonal rains are expected across the Meher areas of Ethiopia and Eritrea during the period. Some of these rains may be locally heavy, and could result in some flash flooding.

6) Good rains fell across much of Uganda and southwestern Kenya during the March through May season. However, rainfall has been light and spotty since early June in many areas. Rainfall totals since the beginning of June have been less than half of normal over central Uganda and 50 to 70 percent of normal across portions of southwestern Kenya. While the recent dryness has favored the dry-down and harvesting of mature crops, main season corn and sorghum that has yet to mature will still require moisture. The recent dryness may result in reductions to yield and crop quality. However, recent rains have boosted top soil moisture for maturing crops. In southwestern Uganda, rainfall totals since June 1 have been about half of normal. This has resulted in pasture stress and water shortages. There are media reports of pasture stress in the districts of Kabarole, Kyenjojo and Kamwenge. Occasional showers are expected across central Uganda and southwestern Kenya during the period, which should favor maturing crops, pastures and water supplies. However, mostly dry conditions are expected over southwestern Uganda. More substantial rains are anticipated, however, in early August.

7) After a late start to the season, abundant rains have fallen across much of southern Niger. This has eased concerns over the 2006 cropping season, while increasing top soil moisture for crop germination and development. However, in some of the pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of Maradi, Zinder and eastern Tahoua, rainfall totals so far this season are still 50+ mm below normal. At the Maradi Airport, 105 mm of rain has fallen so far this season, compared with the long term average of 191 mm. Additional rains are needed to replenish water supplies, rejuvenate pastures and boost sub-soil moisture levels. Seasonal rains are expected during the period, which will boost water supplies, benefit pastures and hopefully increase sub-soil moisture levels across the region.

8) Seasonal rains have been less intense than usual over southern Sierra Leone, northern Liberia and adjacent parts of Guinea. This has resulted in a reduction of runoff into the rivers and has caused low reservoir levels in some areas. These low water levels may result in water shortages in some locations. Although seasonal rains are expected during the period, rainfall deficits are expected to persist during the period.

9) After normal to above normal amounts of rainfall during early and mid June, precipitation has been light and scattered across portions of eastern Senegal since the last week of June. Rainfall totals so far this season are 25 to 100+ mm below normal, resulting in short term dryness and possible stress to emerging crops and pastures. Similar conditions exist in adjacent portions of western Mali and southern Mauritania. At the time of writing, a weather system was producing widespread showers and thunderstorms across the region, increasing moisture levels. Additional rains are expected during the period which will benefit crops and pastures while easing concerns about drought.

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