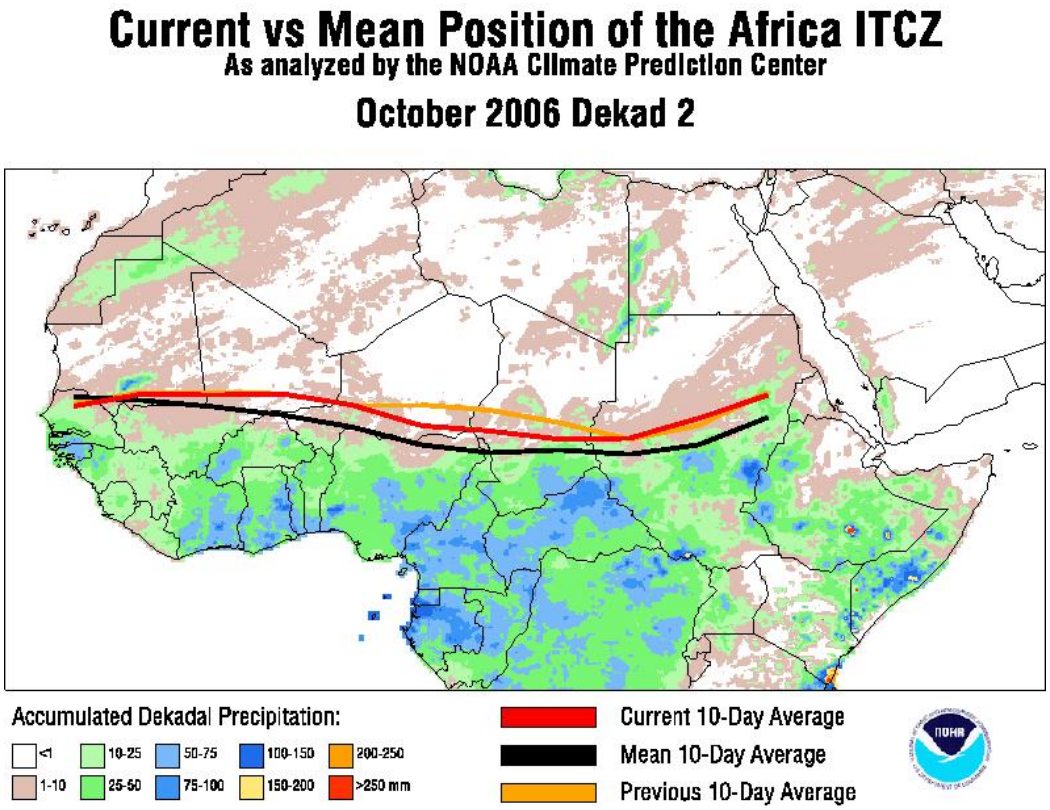
The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment

For

October 25 - 31, 2006

Weekly Introduction:



ITCZ Update:
During the period from October 11 - 20, 2006, the African portion of the Intertropical Convergence Zone was located near 14.9 degrees north latitude, when averaged from 15 degrees west to 35 degrees east. This compares to the climatological mean of around 13.8N and the position during the previous dekad of ~15.3N. Therefore, the ITCZ is moving slightly more slowly to the south than normal. As the ITCZ slips south during the next few weeks, the seasonal raisn will come to an end across the Sahel region, and the dry season will begin. Note that the final 2006 ITCZ product will be disseminated after the next dekad (Oct 21-31).

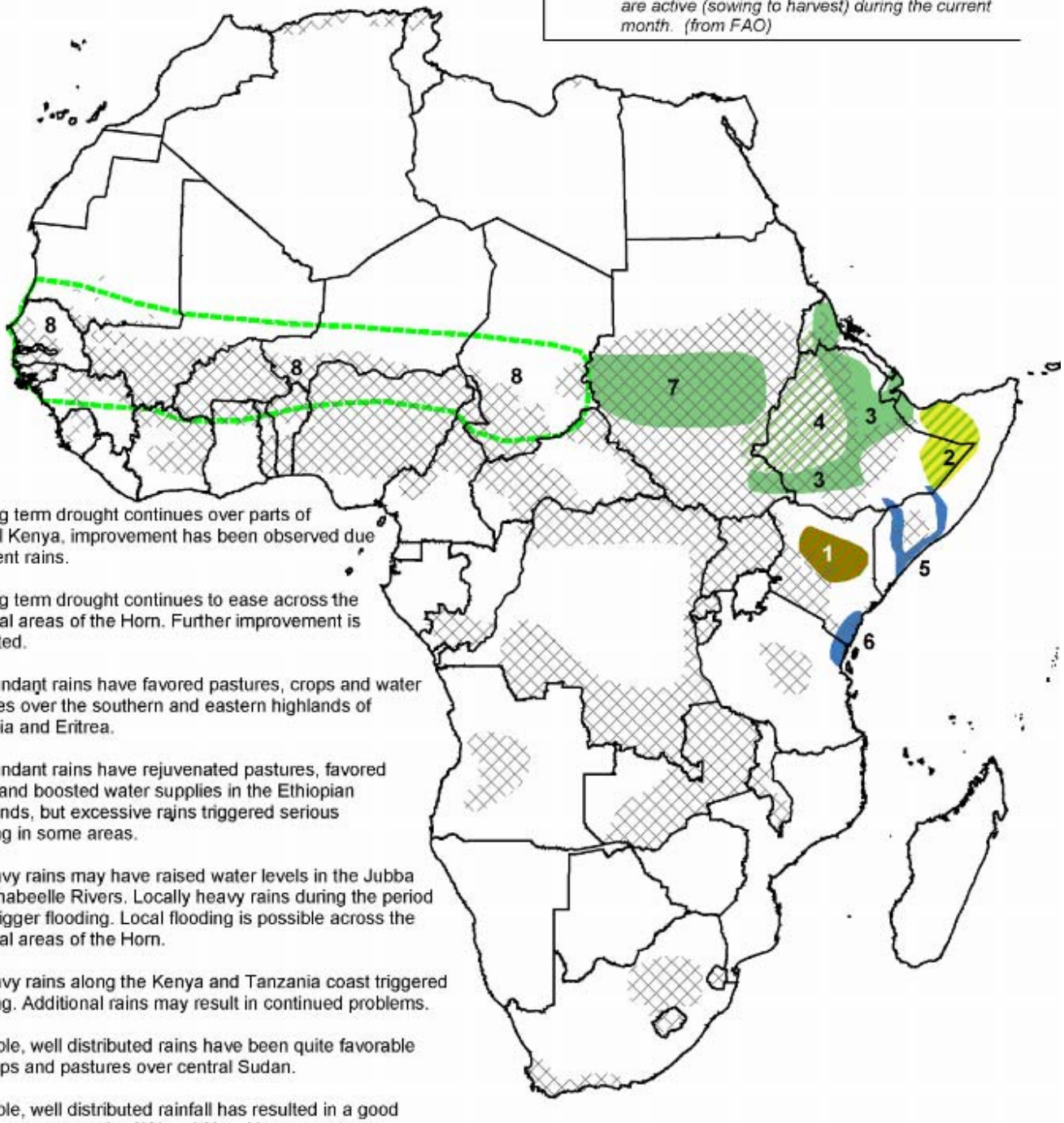
Additional information can be found at the web site: http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/fews/ITCZ/itcz.shtml.

Finally, as a reminder, Jim Miller will be retiring next week. Future correspondence should be addressed to Chester Schmitt at Chet.Schmitt@noaa.gov.

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. Long term drought continues over parts of central Kenya, improvement has been observed due to recent rains.

2. Long term drought continues to ease across the pastoral areas of the Horn. Further improvement is expected.

3. Abundant rains have favored pastures, crops and water supplies over the southern and eastern highlands of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

4. Abundant rains have rejuvenated pastures, favored crops and boosted water supplies in the Ethiopian Highlands, but excessive rains triggered serious flooding in some areas.

5. Heavy rains may have raised water levels in the Jubba and Shabeelle Rivers. Locally heavy rains during the period may trigger flooding. Local flooding is possible across the pastoral areas of the Horn.

6. Heavy rains along the Kenya and Tanzania coast triggered flooding. Additional rains may result in continued problems.

7. Ample, well distributed rains have been quite favorable for crops and pastures over central Sudan.

8. Ample, well distributed rainfall has resulted in a good season across much of West Africa. However, some areas have been affected local weather problems.

Valid: October 25 - 31, 2006

Weather Hazards Benefits Text Explanation:

1) After very poor rains during the 2005 short season, the 2006 long rains were abundant across much of Africa's Greater Horn. However, over much of northern and central Kenya, the March through May rains were lighter than average. This, in addition to the 2005 moisture deficits, resulted in the development of severe drought. The drought has resulted in a reduction of water supplies, crop failures, degradation of pastures and livestock losses across the region. Moderate to heavy rainfall was observed across much of the region. With the apparent onset of the short rains, additional rainfall is expected during the period. These rains should gradually ease drought conditions in the region.

2) The 2005 short rains failed across much of Somalia. The 2006 long rains were also lighter than normal in many areas. This resulted in the development of a severe drought which has stressed pastures, reduced water supplies and resulted in livestock losses across the region. Some beneficial post-season rains fell across central Somalia, resulting in some improvement. On September 19, rain begun to fall across northern Somalia and adjacent parts of southeastern Ethiopia. So far for the month of October, seasonal rains have been heavier than normal across much of southeastern Ethiopia, central and southern Somalia. This has helped to ease drought conditions. However, deficits persist in some areas. Additional rainfall is expected across the region, which should result in further improvement

3) Seasonal rains have been abundant and well distributed across the highlands of Eritrea, eastern portions of Ahmara and Tigray. Abundant rains have also fallen across much of Afar, Djibouti and the Rift Valley, as well as SNNPR. This has favored Meher crops and pastures across the area while boosting water supplies. In some areas, such as parts of Borena zone in southern Oromiya, areas of dryness were observed as the long season rains were erratic.

4) Rainfall has been quite abundant this season across the Ethiopian Highlands. This has generally resulted in good crop conditions, favorable conditions for pulse crop seedbed preparations, good pasture conditions and abundant water supplies. However, periodic torrential rains have resulted in serious flooding problems in flood-prone areas, such as along riverbanks and low-lying locations. Heavy rains have resulted in some crop damage and water logging of some fields while raising concerns about crop pests. Abundant cloud cover and low sunshine hours has slowed the development of some crops as well. Seasonal rains have tapered off in most areas, easing the risk for flooding.

5) The seasonal rains that increased moisture across southeastern Ethiopia and Somalia were quite heavy in some areas. These heavy rains may have swollen the Jubba and Shabeelle rivers and their tributaries. Additional rainfall is expected during the period, some of which will be heavy. As a result, the potential for flooding exists. Heavy rains have fallen, and are expected to continue to fall, across the pastoral areas of the Horn. Although these rains are beneficial to rangeland and water supplies, flooding problems are possible. One area at risk for flooding is along the Kenya-Ethiopia boarder, where very heavy rains have fallen.

6) Torrential rains pelted parts of southeastern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania, triggering floods. Flooding was reported last week in the vicinity of Mombasa. The potential exists for additional heavy rains and possible flooding.

7) Ample, well distributed rains have fallen across much of central Sudan during July, August and September. This has favored crops, pastures and water supplies in and around the region, while resulting in a seasonal rainfall surplus of 50 to 150 mm across Darfur and Kurdufan. Rainfall has decreased recently as the 2006 wet season comes to a close. The drying trend will continue this week, with low rain chances until May and June of next year.

8) Ample, well distributed rains have fallen across most of the Sahel and adjacent areas this season, resulting in favorable conditions for crops and pastures while boosting water supplies. Rainfall has been particularly abundant in Burkina Faso, southern Mauritania and southern Chad. Seasonal rains started 2 to 4 weeks late across Niger, but were abundant after the onset. Some localized flooding problems have been observed, raising concerns about disease. Some flooding problems have been reported in northern Nigeria as well. In central Chad, many areas saw a slow start to the season in June. A delay in crop growing and pasture was observed in some locations. However, rains were abundant during late July, August and September. A few pockets of dryness have been observed in the Sahel, such as in southeastern Senegal and in Niger's Tillaberi Department west of Niamey. Despite these localized problems, much of West Africa is on track for a good 2006 season. Seasonal rains are expected to end over southern parts of the Sahel as the ITCZ shifts south into the Gulf of Guinea region.

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Questions or comments about this product may be directed to Chet.Schmitt@noaa.gov or 1-301-763-8000 x7519