The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment

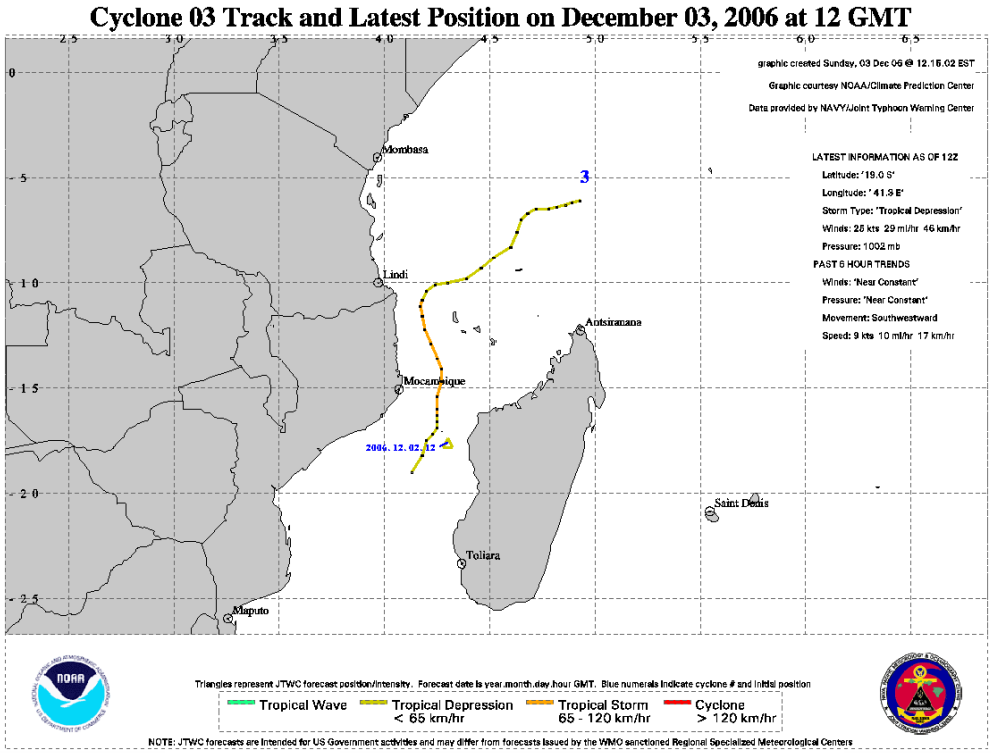
for

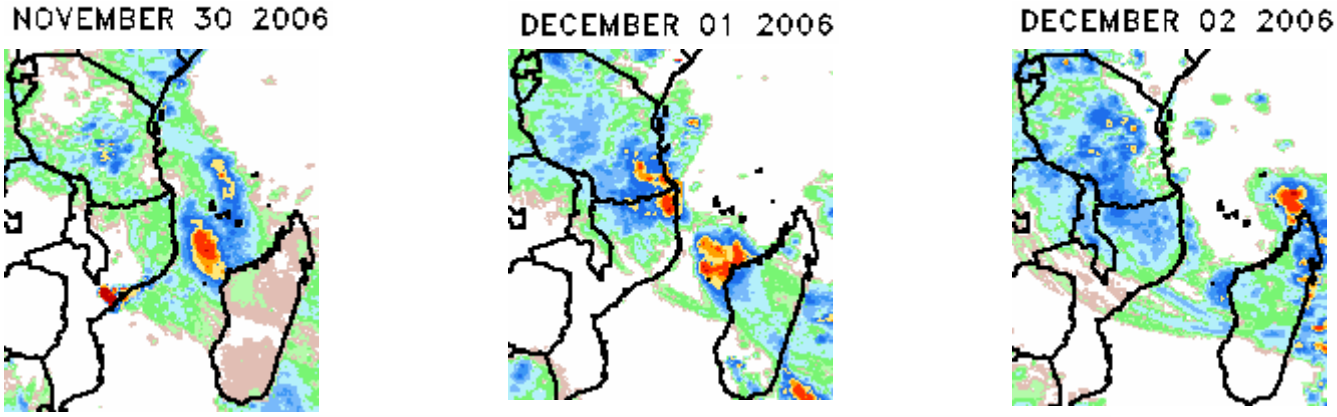
December 7 – 13, 2006

Weekly Introduction:

Anita makes its way through the Mozambique Channel

The first Tropical Storm of the South Indian Ocean season developed on November 30th and dissipated on December 2nd. With winds peaking at 45 knots, Anita was mostly a rain producer. Heavy rainfall fell over much of Tanzania, northern Mozambique and northern Madagascar. Anita never made landfall and was sheared apart in the middle of the Mozambique Channel.





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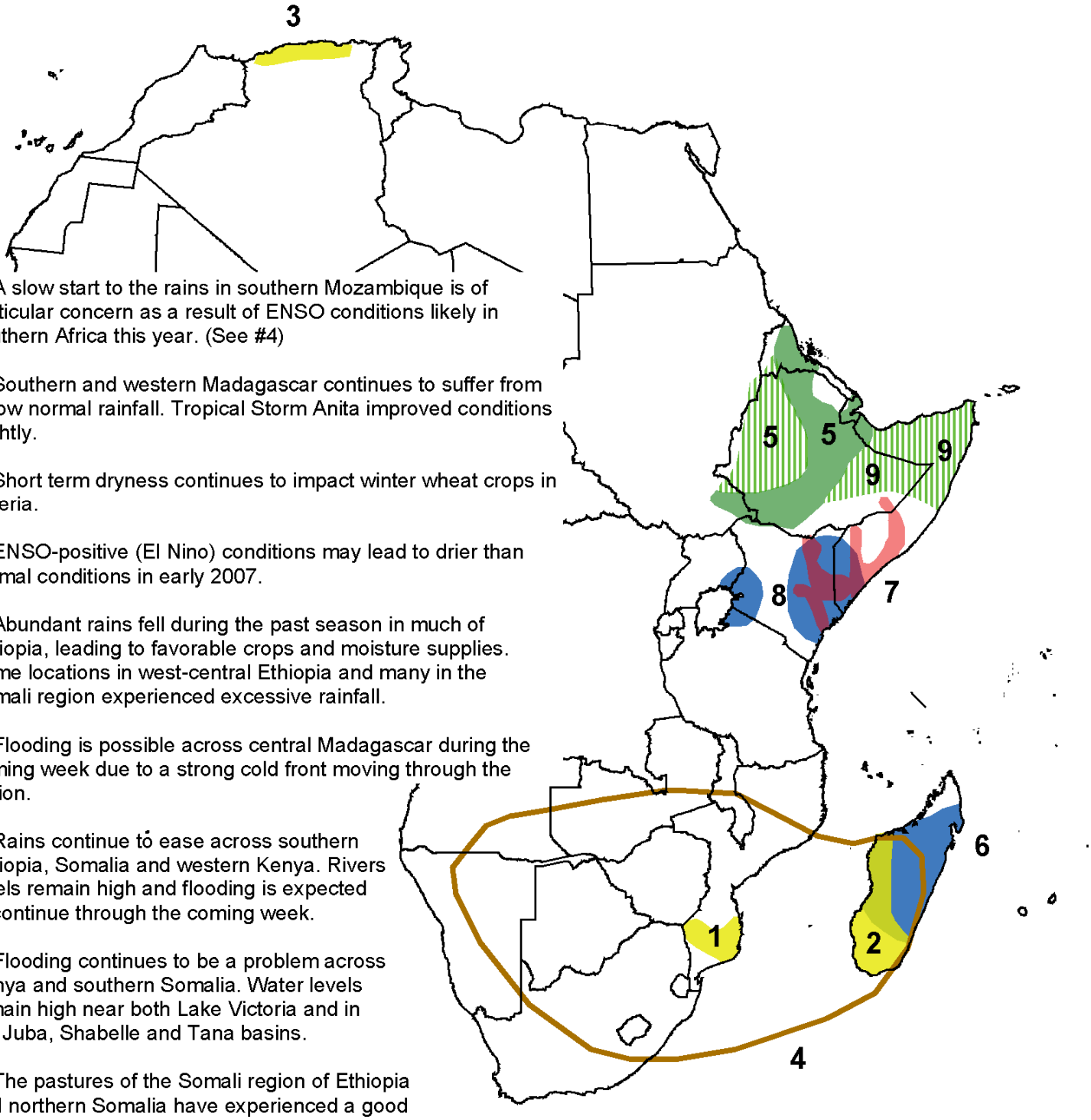
NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)



1) A slow start to the rains in southern Mozambique is of particular concern as a result of ENSO conditions likely in southern Africa this year. (See #4)

2) Southern and western Madagascar continues to suffer from below normal rainfall. Tropical Storm Anita improved conditions slightly.

3) Short term dryness continues to impact winter wheat crops in Algeria.

4) ENSO-positive (El Nino) conditions may lead to drier than normal conditions in early 2007.

5) Abundant rains fell during the past season in much of Ethiopia, leading to favorable crops and moisture supplies. Some locations in west-central Ethiopia and many in the Somali region experienced excessive rainfall.

6) Flooding is possible across central Madagascar during the coming week due to a strong cold front moving through the region.

7) Rains continue to ease across southern Ethiopia, Somalia and western Kenya. Rivers levels remain high and flooding is expected to continue through the coming week.

8) Flooding continues to be a problem across Kenya and southern Somalia. Water levels remain high near both Lake Victoria and in the Juba, Shabelle and Tana basins.

9) The pastures of the Somali region of Ethiopia and northern Somalia have experienced a good rainy season that has allowed for the beginning of recovery from a multi-year drought.

Valid: December 7 - 13, 2006

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1) Southern Mozambique continues to experience short term dryness. Soil moisture did increase slightly during the past week, and further improvement is expected during the coming week. It should be noted that this is among there areas that could experience season long dryness as a result of ENSO conditions (see #4).

2) Despite Tropical Storm Anita's close proximity to Madagascar, it did little to improve the dry conditions in the western and southern portions of the island. Many of these areas have received less than 50 percent of normal precipitation. Heavy rainfall is expected in the region during the coming week, which could bring flooding to portions of the island (see #6). ENSO may also have an impact on this area (See #4)

3) Coastal portions of Algeria have seen poor rainfall this season along with above average temperatures. This may impact the winter wheat crop if conditions do not improve. Wetter conditions are likely during the coming week, but will not reduce deficits significantly.

4) Positive ENSO conditions are occurring and are expected to continue through early 2007. Sea surface temperatures in the main index area of the Pacific Ocean are running 1.5 degrees Celsius above normal. Other areas are seeing anomalies as high as 2 degrees Celsius above normal. Therefore moderate El Nino conditions are currently being experienced. Based on climatological patterns in southern Africa during El Nino seasons, there is a link between positive ENSO conditions and dryness in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique and Madagascar during the January to March portion of the wet season. Additionally positive rainfall anomalies during October to December are common during ENSO events. Usually the entire region is not impacted. There is no guarantee that dry conditions will materialize anywhere as it is not known what impacts the sea surface temperatures in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans will have in Southern Africa.

5) Abundant rainfall across much of Ethiopia has been an overall benefit. Well distributed rainfall has provided crops with sufficient moisture and has provided for plenty of drinking water. The rains however have stayed in the region unusually long and have the potential to allow mold and other pests to reduce yields. Additionally crop quality may suffer from excessive rainfall. Some crops, such as sesame may benefit from the extra rainfall, and farmers using fire to clear fields will have an easier time controlling the fire.

6) Two separate fronts moving through Madagascar during the coming week have the potential to dump unprecedented amounts of rainfall over most of the island during the coming week. Heavy sustained rainfall is likely to cause flooding, crop damage and possibly landslides in isolated locations around the island. This comes after a slow start to the season in the western and southern areas, where topsoil erosion is also a possibility.

7) The Juba, Shabelle, Tana and Nyando river basins continue to receive additional precipitation despite the rivers already being above flood stage along various portions of their course. More rainfall over Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia during the past week will cause additional flooding as the precipitation makes its way downriver. More rainfall is expected during the coming period (See #8).

8) Additional rain falling on already saturated soils will likely cause local flooding along the Kenya- Somalia border. This includes the area where Somali refugee camps are located in Kenya. This rainfall promises also to cause problems as it makes its way to already flooded rivers in the region.

9) The pastures in northern Somalia and much of Ethiopia's Somali region have experienced their second consecutive good season. This is a marked improvement over many failed seasons in a row. This will allow for continued recovery in the area although a complete recovery is still years away.

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