# The USAID FEWS-NET

# Africa Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment

for

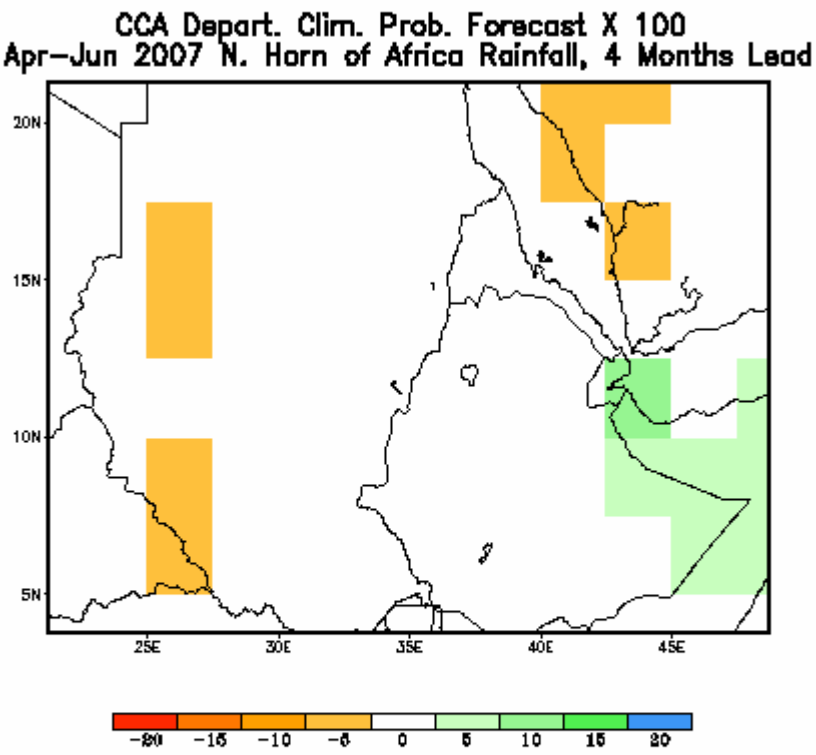
## December 21 – 27, 2006

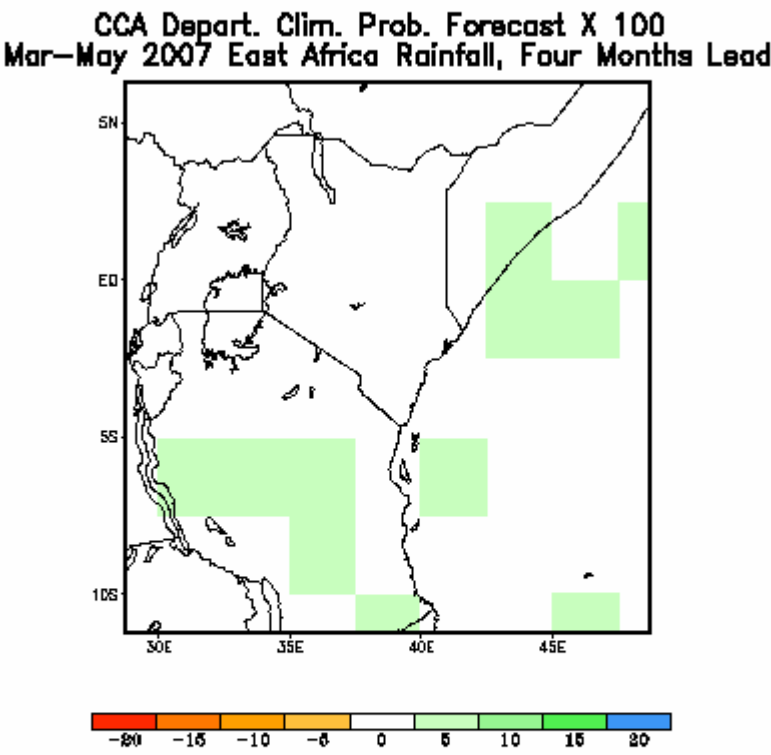
***Weekly Introduction:***

## Greater Horn of Africa Outlook

The four month lead in the Greater Horn shows a slight tilt in the odds towards above normal precipitation in northern Somalia and nearby portions of Djibouti and Ethiopia. Certain parts of western Sudan have a slight tilt in the odds towards below normal precipitation. This area is near, although not part of, West Darfur.

Further south there is a slight tilt in the odds favoring above normal precipitation in part of southern Somalia and across central and southern Tanzania.



# Africa Weather Hazards/Benefits Assessment

1) Increased moisture has improved conditions in central and southern Mozambique, however deficits remain. Below normal rainfall in this area continues to be of particular concern, because of ENSO conditions. (See #2)

*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)*

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

3) Overall, good rainfall has provided excellent growing conditions. Crop pests and damage from excessive rainfall is a continued concern.

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

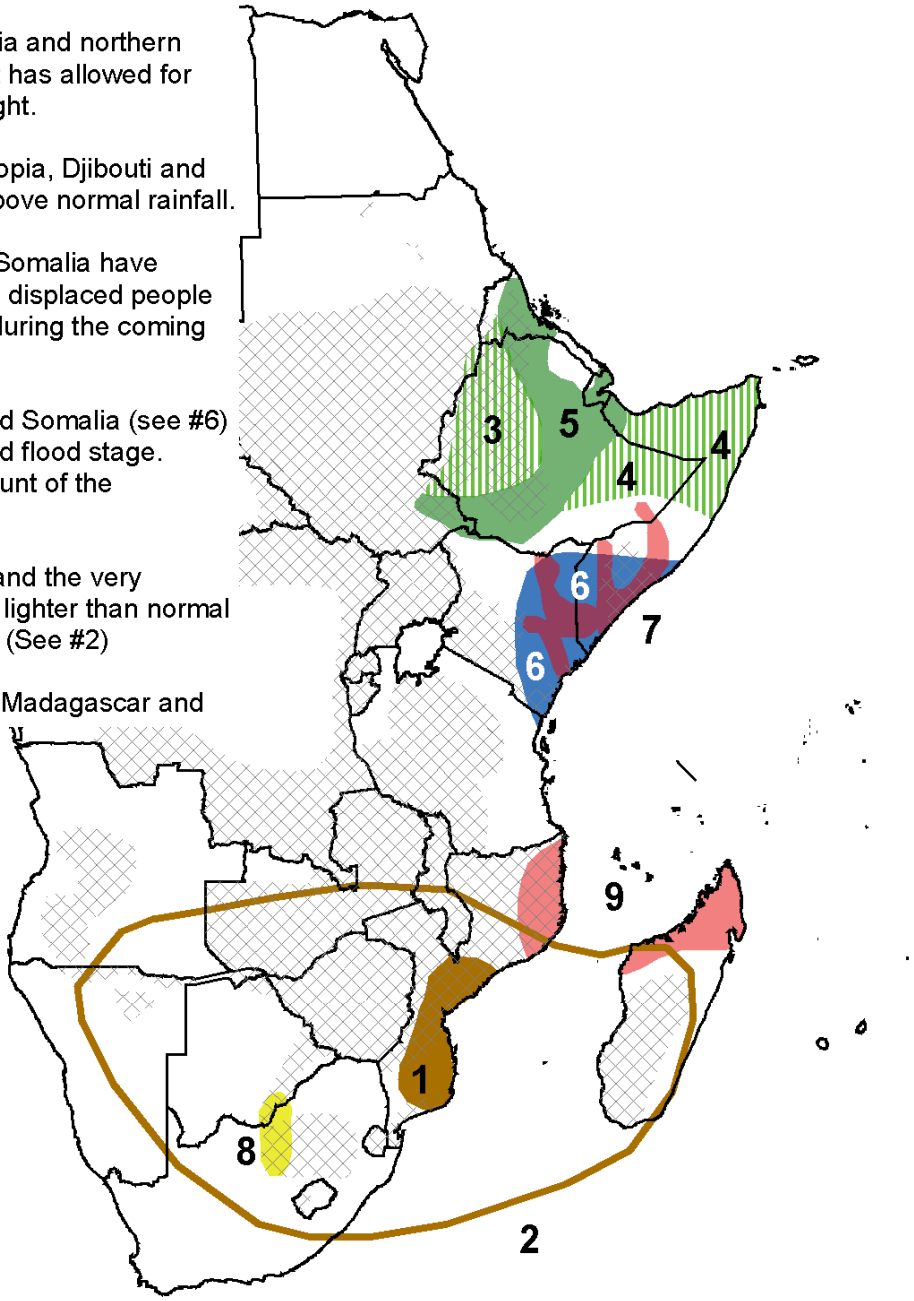
5) Crop conditions remain good in central Ethiopia, Djibouti and parts of Eritrea after several wet seasons of above normal rainfall.

6) Excessive rainfall in portions of Kenya and Somalia have destroyed property, and crops, killed livestock, displaced people and caused fatalities. Additional rain is likely during the coming week.

7) As a result of the unusual rains in Kenya and Somalia (see #6) many of the rivers in the region are well beyond flood stage. The area along the rivers have received the brunt of the flooding

8) The western portion of the Maize Triangle, and the very southern edge of Botswana have experienced lighter than normal rains. This is not of major concern at this time. (See #2)

9) Tropical Cyclone Bondo threatens northern Madagascar and Mozambique




**Valid: December 21 - 27, 2006**

## Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1) Poor rainfall totals across central and southern Mozambique has led to a delayed start of the season. Although there has been some improvement in the south, with the season already facing deficits has high as 50 percent of normal additional rainfall is needed. Central Mozambique meanwhile still has not seen a start to its season, which is already four dekads late and it is unlikely that a start to the season will occur during the coming period.

2) 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.

3) Portions of western Ethiopia experienced a series of wet seasons with abundant rainfall during 2006. The well distributed rainfall benefited crops, pastures and drinking water supplies. The beneficial rains came at a cost. The precipitation at times was heavy, causing localized flooding and crop damage. The abundant rainfall has also opened the possibility of waterborne disease and crop pests.

4) The pastures in northern Somalia and much of Ethiopia's Somali region have experienced their second consecutive season of improvement. Rainfall in most areas was plentiful and has allowed pastures to recharge. This improvement is a recent development, as the region was in a multi year drought until earlier this year that will require several more seasons of steady rains to completely recover. There are some concerns that the rainfall may cause localized problems in locations where precipitation was excessive.

5) Abundant rainfall over much of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti has greatly benefited pasture lands, crops, and drinking water. Normal to twice normal rainfall totals were reported throughout the region, with the highest totals in the south. It is in this part of Ethiopia that there are some concerns that the overly abundant rainfall could cause some problems locally with harvesting as well as crop damage and pests.

6) The heavy rainfall that fell over southern Somalia and eastern Kenya has caused extensive damage to infrastructure, crops and generally hampering relief efforts throughout the area. In many locations roads have been washed away and travel has become difficult and dangerous. These heavy rains come on the heels of a multi season, and in some cases multiyear drought. The excessive rainfall has caused a significant amount of damage, fatalities throughout the region and is encouraging waterborne diseases as it washes away crop seeds. Rainfall has started easing up during the past week, and conditions are likely to continue improving during the coming period. Once the over abundant rainfall ends, conditions will be better as soil moisture will be plentiful enough for cropping in the early part of 2007. Certain locations may not get this benefit as damage to infrastructure may be too extensive. This will most likely be a problem along flooded rivers.

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. Although rainfall has shown signs that it is ending, any additional precipitation will only aggravate the situation.

8) Conditions have been slightly drier than normal across portions of the Maize Triangle in South Africa. This is not yet critical as farmers in this area plant as late as early January, and rainfall during the coming period is expected to greatly improve soil moisture.

9) Tropical Cyclone Bondo has developed in the Indian Ocean. The storm will make its way towards the northern tip of Madagascar bring with it heavy rain and strong winds. Similar conditions should be expected in northern Mozambique, where the storm will make landfall. The storm is expected to move through an area of unfavorable conditions in the northern Mozambique Channel, likely weakening it as it approaches Mozambique. As of December 20th, Bondo has maximum sustained winds of 135 knots, with gusts up to 165 knots. This is a very powerful storm and will cause extensive damage even after it has weakened.

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