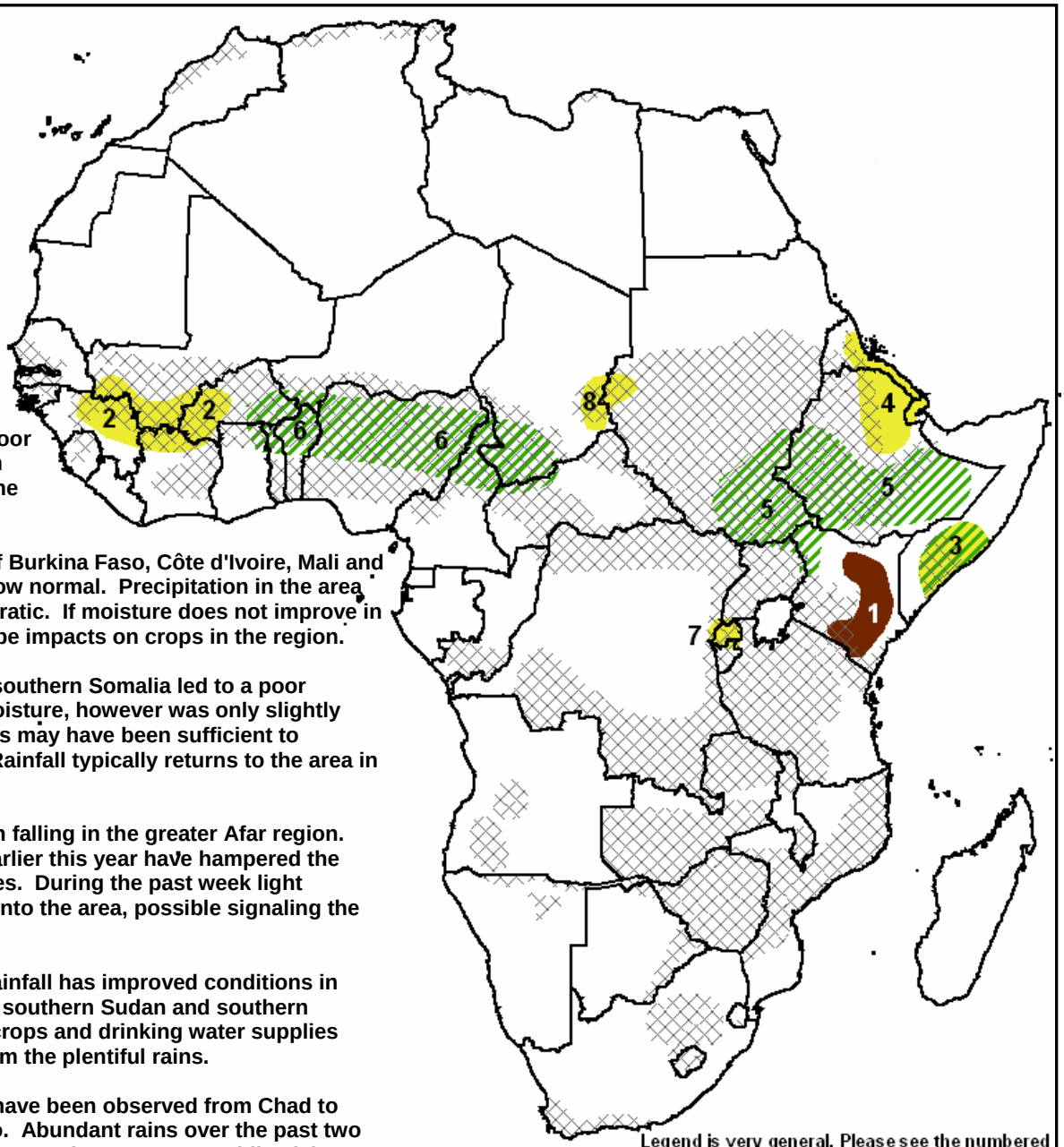
The USAID FEWS-NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
June 28 – July 4, 2007

- **Dry conditions continue to impact the greater Afar region of Ethiopia, and eastern Kenya. Meanwhile dryness is spreading in sections of the Sahel.**

- **Good growing conditions benefit southern Ethiopia and Sudan. Soil moisture is also above normal in portions of the eastern Sahel, however the past two weeks have been dry, possibly reversing that trend.**



1) The failure of the Long Rains in Eastern Kenya has resulted in a severe drought. Crops and pastures have both suffered due to the poor rainfall. Precipitation normally returns to the region in October.

2) Rainfall in parts of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Guinea has been below normal. Precipitation in the area has been light and erratic. If moisture does not improve in the area there could be impacts on crops in the region.

3) Erratic rainfall in southern Somalia led to a poor cropping season. Moisture, however was only slightly below normal and this may have been sufficient to recharge pastures. Rainfall typically returns to the area in October.

4) Rainfall has begun falling in the greater Afar region. Poor rainfall totals earlier this year have hampered the recharging of pastures. During the past week light precipitation moved into the area, possible signaling the return of the rains.

5) Well distributed rainfall has improved conditions in northwestern Kenya, southern Sudan and southern Ethiopia. Pastures, crops and drinking water supplies have all benefited from the plentiful rains.

6) Good conditions have been observed from Chad to eastern Burkina Faso. Abundant rains over the past two months have favored recently sown crops while giving moisture supplies an early boost. There are concerns, however, that recent dryness in the area may be reversing the regions good start to the season.

7) In much of Rwanda farmers that planted crops late are likely to see a reduced harvest. Rainfall ended on time in the area, before the crops were ready to be harvested.

8) Preseasonal rains have failed to materialize over parts of Darfur, Sudan and nearby Chad. If these conditions continue into the wet season, the impacts could complicate the humanitarian crisis in the area.

Rainfall suppressed across Sahelian Africa.

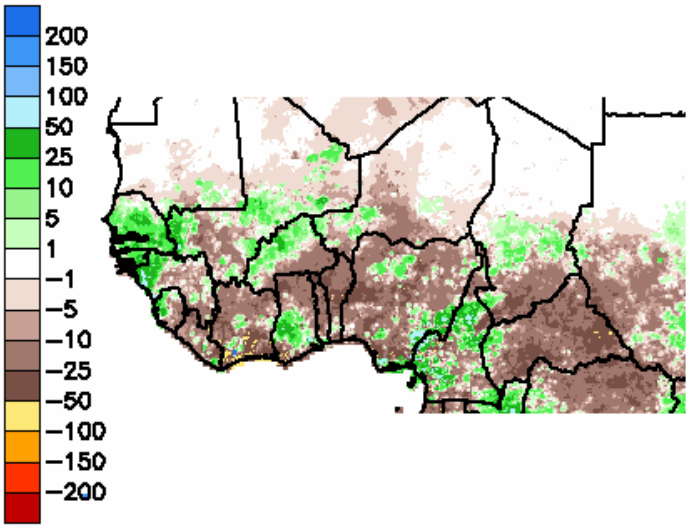
Rainfall has been suppressed across much of the Sahel over the last few weeks. This is in sharp contrast to the eastern Sahel which began the season with a strong early shot of moisture.

Since the beginning of the season rainfall from Burkina Faso to Guinea has been light and erratic. Although impacts are not yet permanent more precipitation is needed to improve soil moisture. During the last week rainfall improved across most areas. This was not enough moisture to reduce the deficits in the area. Relief is not expected to fall during the next week either, as the area will dry out.

The eastern areas of the Sahel got an early shot of moisture as the ITCZ surged unusually far north the early in the season, before retreating to more normal levels. Now rainfall has become erratic from eastern Burkina Faso to Chad prompting concerns that the early rains are only sustaining normal conditions through the more recent dry period. If dryness continues only for a few more weeks then a more normal season is likely. If dry weather continues through July crops and pastures may be put at risk in the area.

The preseasonal rainfall that normal falls in Darfur has been below normal this year. Although in most areas this would not be a concern, because of the ongoing conflict in the region it may be an early sign that moisture will be reduced in the area this season. If the heavier rains arrive on time, which they appear to be doing now, then there will be no negative impacts from the lack of preseasonal rain. Last week brought precipitation to most areas, similar conditions are expected this week.

Satellite rainfall anomaly for June 11 – 20, 2007



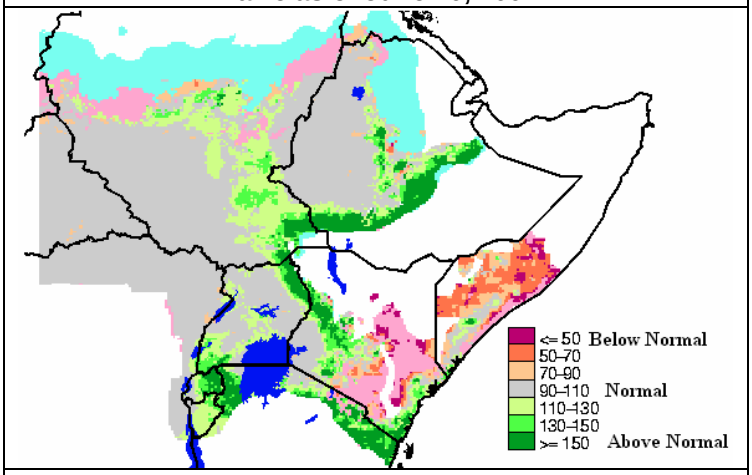
Conditions are good in southern Ethiopia and are set to improve in the north.

Rainfall has been timely, well distributed and abundant throughout southern and western Ethiopia. Meanwhile in the north after a slightly drier than normal first season, conditions are ripe for a better main season in Afar.

Moisture has been plentiful across southern and western Ethiopia. The Somalia region received good Gu rains, and the season has lingered well beyond the normal end of the rains. Similar conditions are found in northern Somalia. In the west there has been an area of dryness that has developed, but this seems more beneficial than anything else, preventing the normal flooding that usually inundates the area during the July- August period.

In the greater Afar region, the first season rains were below normal. However during the past week light rainfall moved into the area spreading up to 10 mm of rainfall in parts of Afar, eastern Tigray and eastern Amhara. Some rain also fell in Djibouti and Eritrea. These rains are a couple of weeks early and look like they will continue into next week. The early start to the main season rains will significantly mitigate the impacts from the poor first season in the area.

Water Requirement Satisfaction Index Anomaly for Maize as of June 20, 2007



Source: USGS/FEWS-NET

ENSO Update.

Weak response from the atmosphere over the Pacific has mitigated chances of impacts over Africa from La Nina. Sea Surface Temperatures are coldest closer to South America, away from the sensitive 'Nino 3.4' region. The atmospheric response also appears to be local to the eastern Pacific. At the current time it does not appear that there will be impacts in Africa.

The 'Nino 3.4' region is centered at the equator and 140W. Looking at the image to the right, most of the cold water in the Pacific is further to the east. Current forecasts show a 50/50 chance of the cold water making it into this sensitive area of the Pacific in the next 1-3 months.

Pacific Sea Surface Temperature Anomalies June 17 – 23, 2007