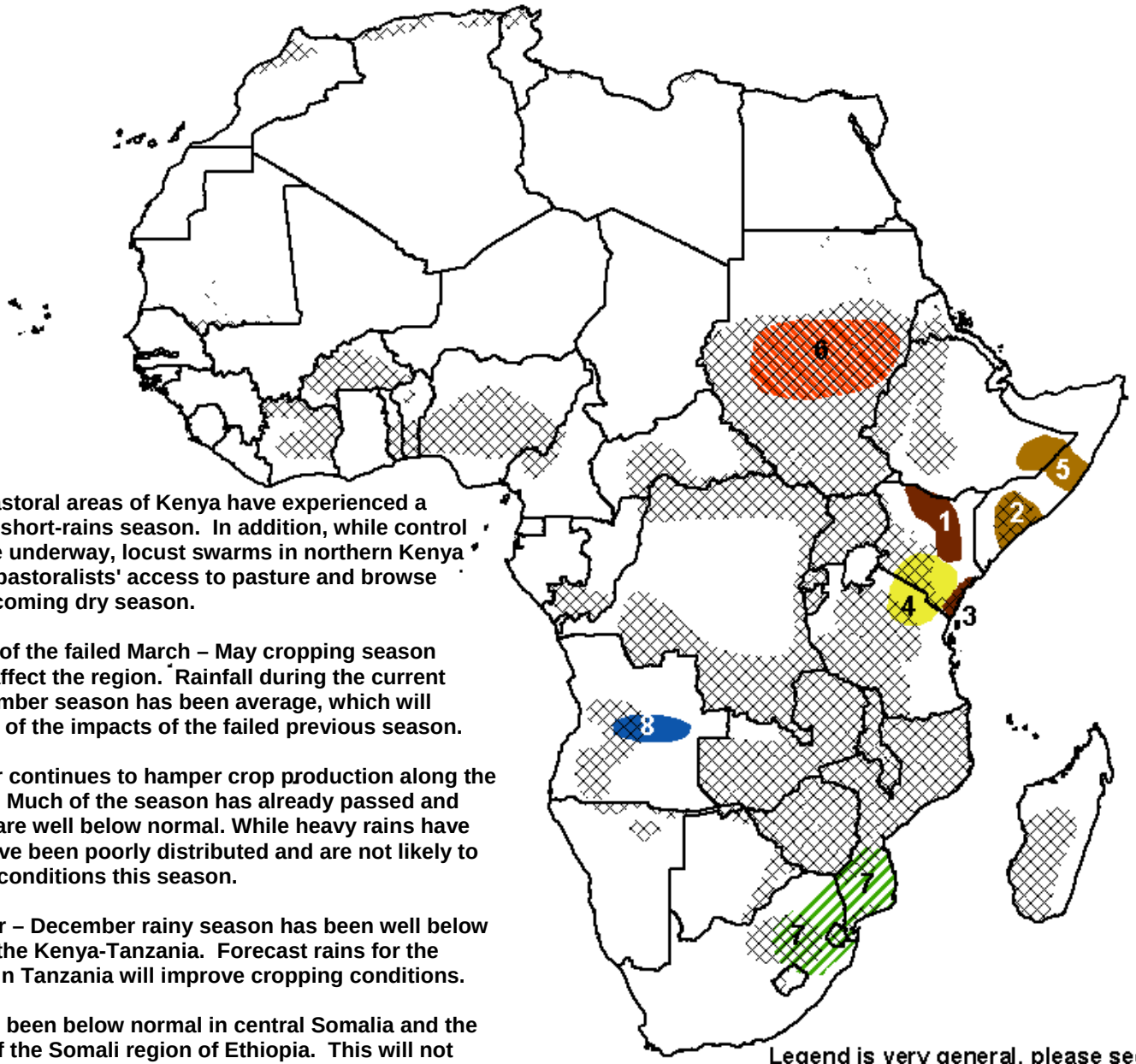
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
December 13 – 20, 2007

- **Several swarms of desert locusts are now present in localized areas of Somalia, northern Kenya, and Ethiopia's Somali Region. The locusts have the potential to damage pastures and crops in these areas, reducing household food access, although initial control efforts in Ethiopia and Kenya have been successful. This event is expected to exacerbate the already complex food security situation in GHA.**

- **Rainfall continues to benefit many areas of southern Africa. This is increasing water available for drinking, softening the earth for sowing of seeds and regenerating pastures. There are a few isolated locations where rainfall has been slightly below normal in Malawi and Tanzania, and a few locations that have experienced minor flooding.**



1) Northern pastoral areas of Kenya have experienced a below-normal short-rains season. In addition, while control operations are underway, locust swarms in northern Kenya also threaten pastoralists' access to pasture and browse during the upcoming dry season.

2) The impact of the failed March – May cropping season continues to affect the region. Rainfall during the current October-December season has been average, which will mitigate some of the impacts of the failed previous season.

3) Dry weather continues to hamper crop production along the Kenyan coast. Much of the season has already passed and rainfall totals are well below normal. While heavy rains have fallen, they have been poorly distributed and are not likely to improve crop conditions this season.

4) The October – December rainy season has been well below normal along the Kenya-Tanzania. Forecast rains for the coming week in Tanzania will improve cropping conditions.

5) Rainfall has been below normal in central Somalia and the eastern part of the Somali region of Ethiopia. This will not allow pastures to regenerate adequately to last pastoral populations through the dry season.

6) Due to excessive rainfall earlier this year there are localized outbreaks of Rift Valley Fever in central Sudan.

7) Rains in parts of South Africa and Mozambique have been above normal, benefiting early season cropping activities. Much of the rest of southern Africa is off to a normal start to the season.

8) Flooding in central Angola has caused localized damage to crops.

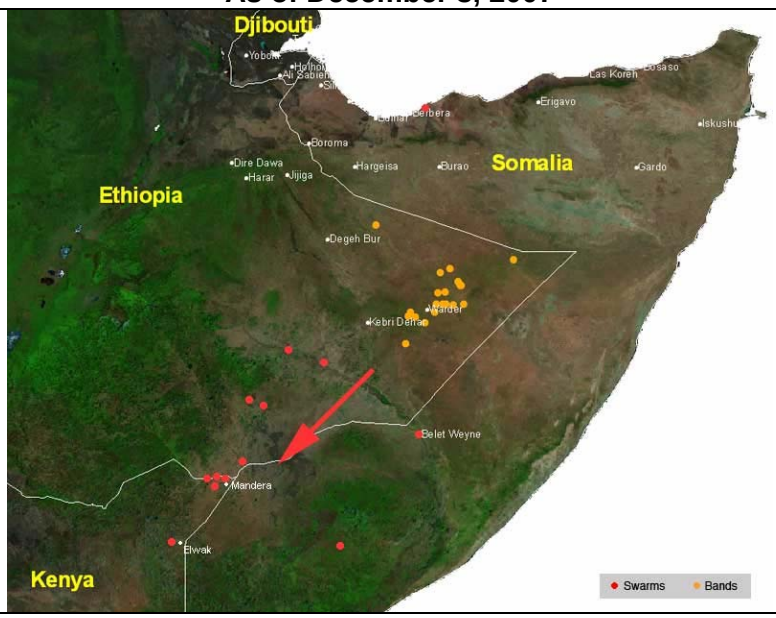
First locusts swarm in Kenya since 1960s

According to the FAO, northeastern Kenya has been impacted by desert locusts for the first time since the 1960s. Locusts are believed to have laid eggs between Mandera and Elwak. The eggs are expected to begin hatching and form hopper bands. Crop damage was reported along the Dawa River on the Ethiopian-Kenyan border. Additional damage to crops in affected parts of Kenya is likely. The Kenyan Government and the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) are organizing a control campaign.

In eastern Ethiopia, hopper bands are forming in the Ogaden region and a similar situation is likely in central and southern Somalia. Survey and control operations are not possible in these areas. The bands that were not controlled will are now forming new swarms. These swarms are expected to move south into Kenya towards the border with Tanzania. Hopper bands that are not controlled in Kenya could form new swarms in mid-January and move southwards. See image at right.

This is adding another level of complexity to the current situation in Horn as rainfall has been poor during the short rains in many areas of Kenya and Somalia.

Infestation of Desert Locusts in East Africa
As of December 3, 2007



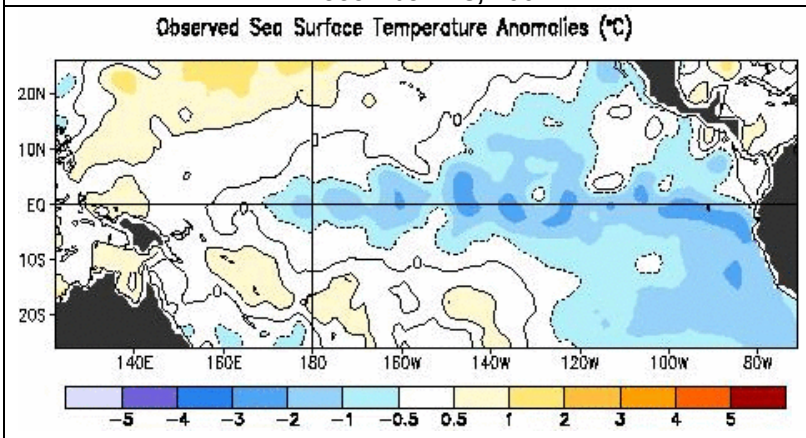
Locust swarms and bands are spreading in parts of East Africa.

Source: FAO

La Nina continues, impacts felt in Africa

La Nina conditions have reached Africa and the typical impacts are being felt in the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) and in southern Africa. The GHA usually has drier than normal short rains during a La Nina event, while southern Africa experiences an abnormally wet season. This pattern has developed, and is expected to remain over the southern Africa for the next several months. There have been no tropical cyclones so far this season; however it is still early for them to develop. During a La Nina event there is the potential for above normal tropical activity in the southwestern Indian Ocean. The image at right shows the large pool of cold water that is currently in the Pacific Ocean, which results in La Nina conditions.

Sea Surface Temperature
December 2-8, 2007



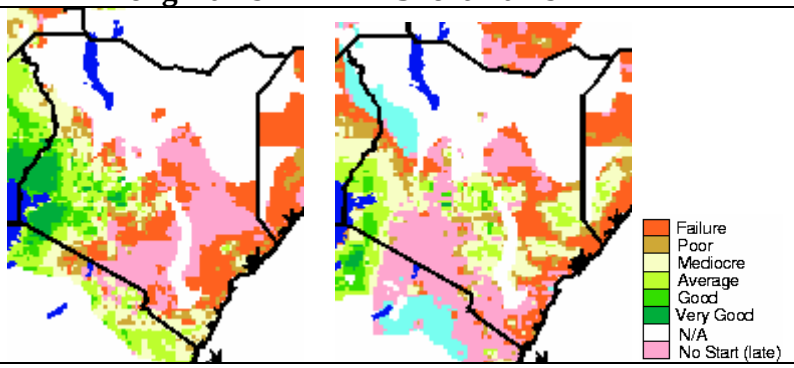
Source: NOAA

Two consecutive failed season possible in Kenya

The long rains (March – May), upon which most of Kenyan crops are reliant, failed across the eastern and southern portions of the country. The short rains, which run from October until December have been very poor in many areas. Not as much of the country is reliant on the short rains, but because of the failure of the first season there was more importance than usual on the short rains. See image at right.

Rainfall through both seasons has been sufficient close to Lake Victoria and near Mount Kenya; however, much of the rest of the country has the potential for a second consecutive failure of the rains. Adding to this scenario is the potential for issues with locust as described at the top of this page.

Water Satisfaction Requirements Index for Maize



Source: USGS