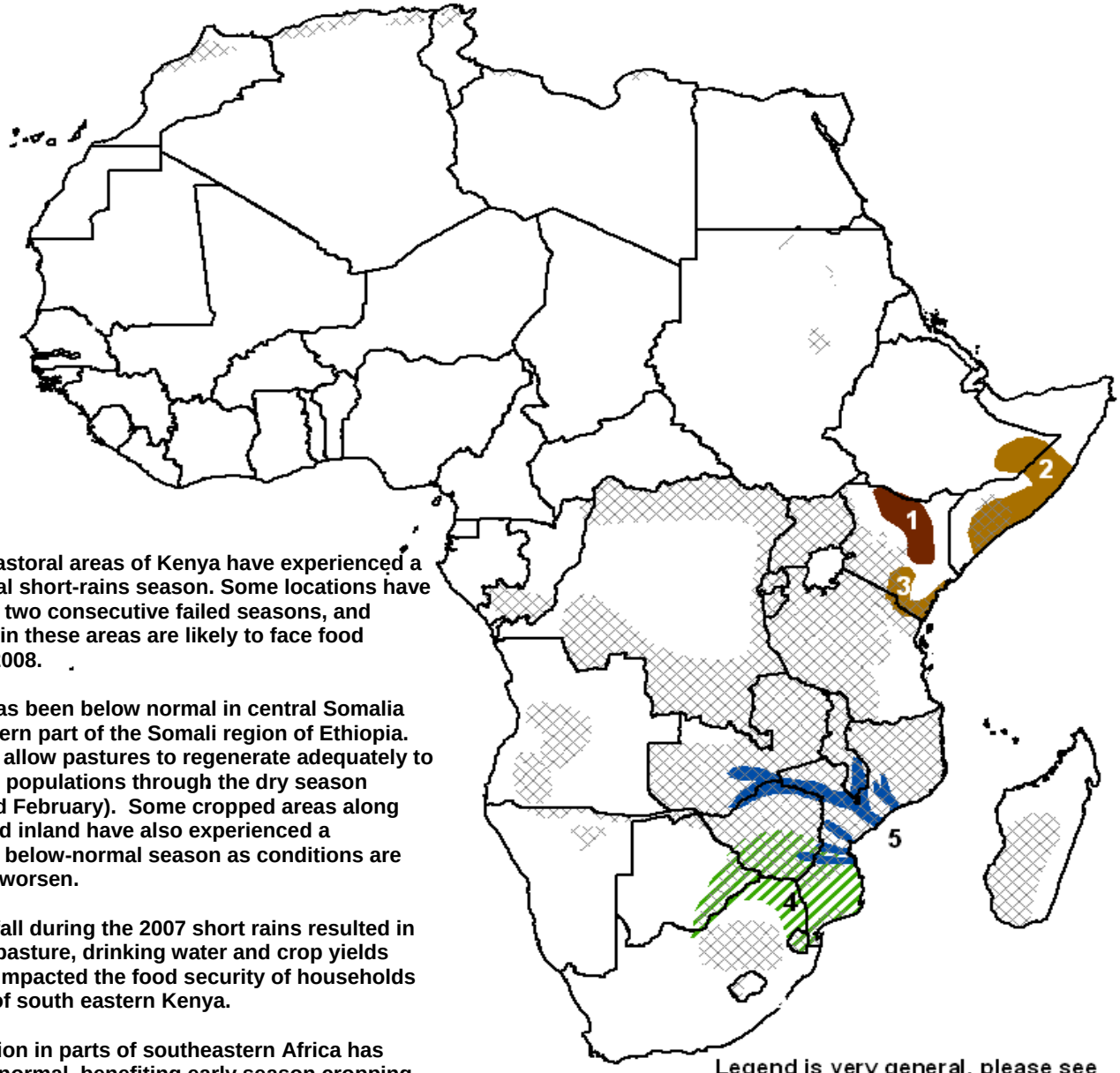
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
January 17 – 23, 2008

- **The failed short-rains season (October to December) in parts of the Greater Horn of Africa has resulted in poor crop harvests, limited pasture regeneration and reduced drinking water availability. This has impacted localized areas of northern and south-central Kenya, as well as southern Somalia and Ethiopia. There is a growing concern for additional population displacement and increased food security in many parts of Somalia.**

- **Persistent rainfall during the last week has aggravated flooding conditions in many river basins in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Regions of greatest concern include those bordering the Save, Buzi, Pungue and Zambezi rivers. Evacuation and emergency response efforts continue, and at least three deaths have been reported as the result of these floods.**



1) Several pastoral areas of Kenya have experienced a below-normal short-rains season. Some locations have experienced two consecutive failed seasons, and households in these areas are likely to face food deficits for 2008.

2) 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 (January and February). Some cropped areas along the coast and inland have also experienced a significantly below-normal season as conditions are expected to worsen.

3) Poor rainfall during the 2007 short rains resulted in insufficient pasture, drinking water and crop yields which have impacted the food security of households in portions of south eastern Kenya.

4) Precipitation in parts of southeastern Africa has been above normal, benefiting early season cropping activities, regenerating pastures and increasing water supplies.

5) Above-normal rainfall this season caused flooding in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique since mid-December. This rainfall is expected to continue through next week and has the potential to increase flooding along the Pungue, Zambezi, Save and Buzi Rivers. There remains a high risk for severe flooding along the Zambezi basin and a potential for flooding in the Licungo basin in northern Mozambique in the next week.

No sign of flooding relief for river basins in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia, normal cropping activities to the south.

Flooding remains a concern in the Save, Buzi, Pungue, Zambezi, Shire and Licungo river basins. While the river levels in the Save and Buzi basins fell below the alert level in Mozambique last week, rains increased again this past week, returning these river basins to alert status. **Figures 1 and 2** illustrate the river level trend reported at *Vila Franca do Save* and precipitation totals in Southern Africa over the last week, respectively.

Precipitation forecasts for the next 72 hours do not show any significant shifts of the precipitation distribution to suggest flooding relief for areas of concern (**Figure 3**). High rainfall totals remain concentrated over the Zambia and Zimbabwe border and in western Mozambique, and increased precipitation is also expected farther north in Mozambique, where the Licungo River levels near Mocuba are already on the rise.

The Direccao Nacional de Aguas (DNA) reported that the Cahora Bassa Dam has maintained a high discharge rate of 6,600 m^3s^{-1}, with increasing inflows upstream at Zumbo and Aruangua. This will further increase inundated river levels in the Zambezi basin downstream in Mozambique. As of January 10, at least three deaths have been reported as consequence of the floods in the Nhamatanda District of the Pungue Basin. According the National Center of Emergency Operations (CENOE), over 7,600 households have been directly impacted by the floods, and more than 37,000 people have reached resettlement sites.

The Disaster Management Coordinating Council (CCGC) is working to increase the level of emergency response, and the UNAPROC (the National Civil Protection Unit) has been activated to accelerate evacuation efforts for high-risk areas. Other efforts to avoid further flood-related damages include continued improvements of sanitation conditions at accommodation sites, as well as increased prevention measures against potential malaria and cholera outbreaks.

Elsewhere in southern Africa, precipitation totals continue to benefit cropping conditions and pasture activities. While above normal rainfall totals have diminished over parts of Free State, South Africa, fairly distributed rains have permitted suitable conditions for crop growth in northern areas of the Maize Triangle. There has also been no observed tropical activity offshore.

Failed short-rains season in the Horn, rising humanitarian concerns in localized areas of Kenya and Somalia.

Major drought areas remain in portions northern and southeastern Kenya, as well as in southern Somalia. The prolonged absence of precipitation and the associated poor crop harvests during the short season will likely lead to food deficits in 2008 for households in southeastern Kenya. The failed short-rains season has also lead to increasing levels of instability and population displacement in the Shabelle, and central regions of Somalia. Maize, sorghum rice and cereal prices have reached an all-time high for parts of southern Somalia, as this will remain a prominent threat for food security in 2008. Sparse areas of surviving crops in southern Somalia have also begun to deteriorate throughout January.

Successful efforts have been made to diminish locust infestation and migration in the Gode region of Ethiopia and northern Kenya. There have been no recent reports to suggest a continued threat. As of January 16, unseasonal rainfall totals are expected over the next 72 hours for parts of Kenya and southern Somalia. This seasonably late precipitation should alleviate the drier than normal conditions.

Save River Height (m):
Vila Franca de Save, Mozambique
Jan 9, 2008 – Jan 11, 2008

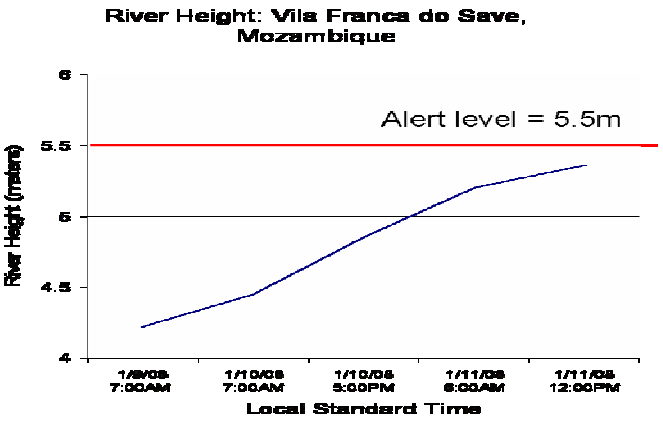


Figure 1
Source: NOAA/USGS

7-Day Precipitation Total (mm)
January 7 – 13, 2008

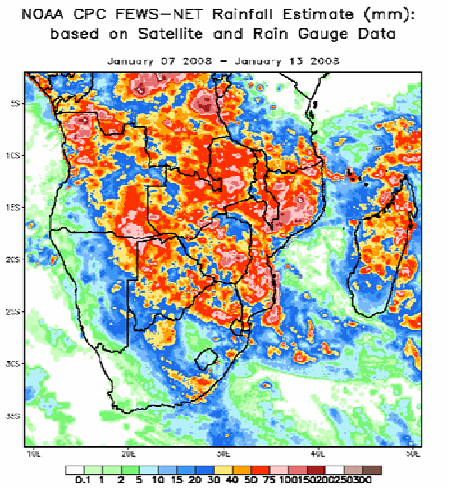


Figure 2
Source: NOAA

3-Day Total Precipitation Forecast (ETA)
As of January 14, 2008

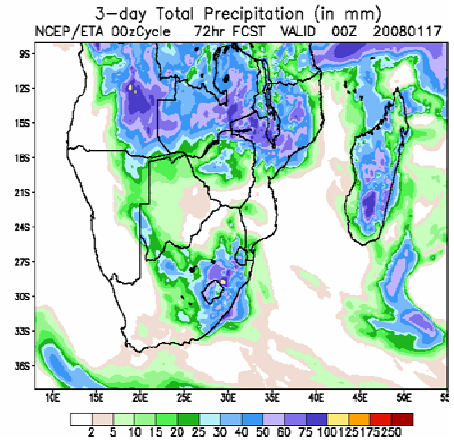


Figure 3
Source: NOAA