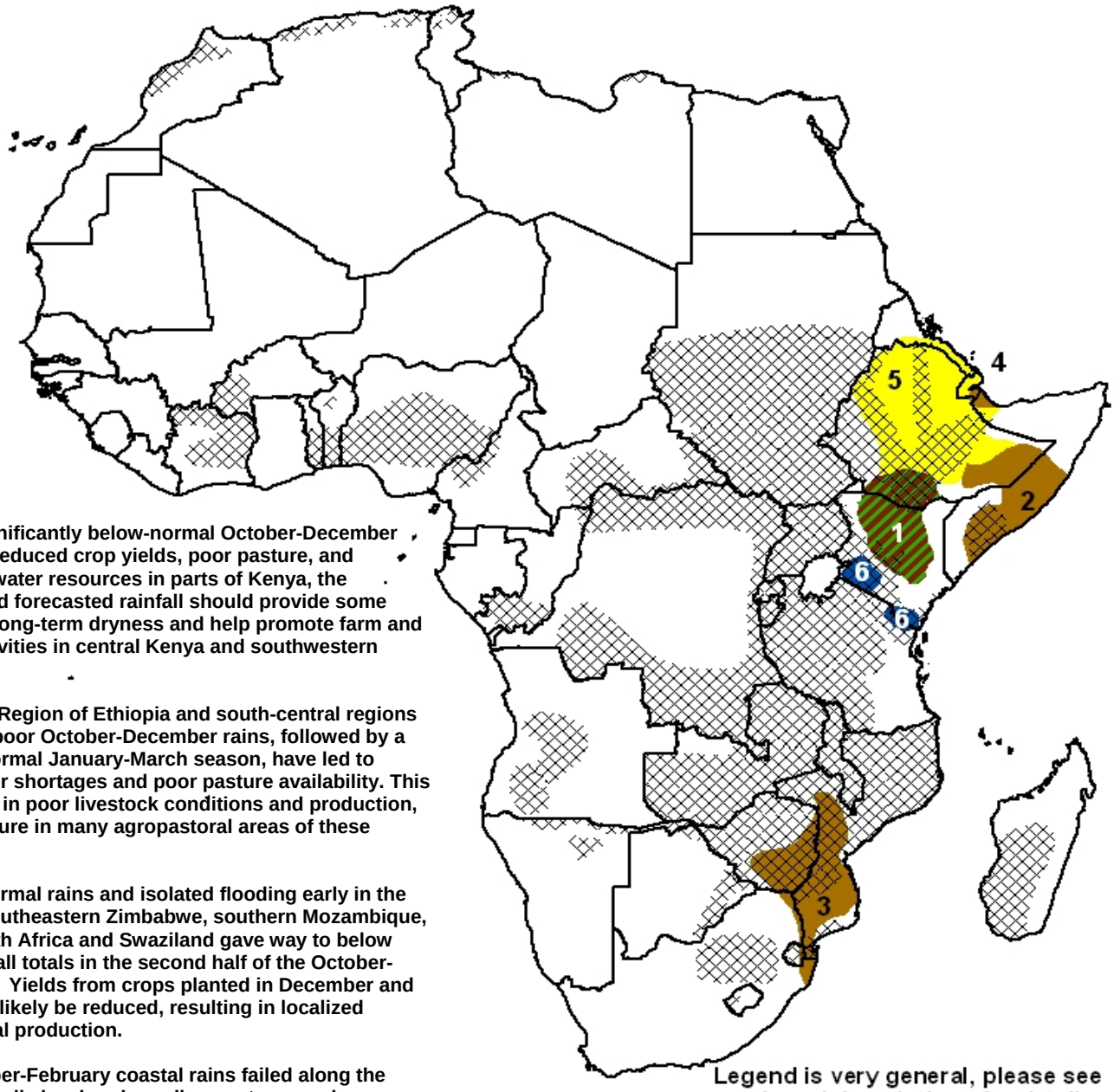
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
April 3 – April 9, 2008

- During the last week, excessive rainfall has resulted in localized flooding over some areas in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. Moderate rainfall across parts of northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia is helping to relieve short-term dryness; however, the lack of total rainfall in the northern Greater Horn is expected to worsen soil conditions and impede crop and pastoral activities.
- While parts of Mozambique and Zimbabwe saw some improvement with isolated rains and increased soil moisture in the last week, other local areas north of Maputo, Mozambique have already experienced crop failure resulting in reduced maize yields and compromised food security.



1) While significantly below-normal October-December rains led to reduced crop yields, poor pasture, and insufficient water resources in parts of Kenya, the observed and forecasted rainfall should provide some relief to the long-term dryness and help promote farm and pastoral activities in central Kenya and southwestern Ethiopia.

2) In Somali Region of Ethiopia and south-central regions of Somalia, poor October-December rains, followed by a drier than normal January-March season, have led to serious water shortages and poor pasture availability. This has resulted in poor livestock conditions and production, and crop failure in many agropastoral areas of these regions.

3) Above-normal rains and isolated flooding early in the season in southeastern Zimbabwe, southern Mozambique, eastern South Africa and Swaziland gave way to below normal rainfall totals in the second half of the October-May season. Yields from crops planted in December and January will likely be reduced, resulting in localized below-normal production.

4) The October-February coastal rains failed along the Djibouti/Somalia border, degrading pastures and compounding the impacts of a severe inland dry season from October- February. This has affected pastures usually used by migrant herdsmen.

5) Continued absence of March-May rains across much of central and northern Ethiopia has worsened short-term dryness, as negative rainfall anomalies begin to strengthen and extend further north into Eritrea and western Ethiopia.

6) Very heavy rainfall along the Kenya/Tanzania border has led to localized flooding, fatalities and aggravated IDP conditions.

Rains bring flooding to southern Kenya, some drought relief to parts of northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia.

During the last week, precipitation exceeding 100 mm fell over parts of southern Kenya and northern Tanzania (**Figure 1**). These heavy rains resulted in severe floods and a small number of deaths in the Moshi/Arusha area in Tanzania. These floods have also negatively impacted the Taita and Taveta districts, and have aggravated IDP conditions in the western, central rift and central districts of Kenya.

Much of this excessive precipitation has occurred in areas of Kenya that experienced pronounced long-term dryness and consecutive failed rains. Rains should help saturate soils and improve crop conditions for much of southern Kenya. Moderate amounts of precipitation over the past week also fell across parts of northern Kenya east of Lake Turkana. These rains have allowed for localized relief from dryness and improvements in pastures in some areas.

While last week's rainfall should help alleviate some of the dry conditions since the start of the March-May rains, extreme dryness persists in areas north of Lake Abaya in Ethiopia. This primarily includes areas neighboring Nazret, Weldiya and Adigrat in Ethiopia, where continued dryness is beginning to impede the planting and growth of maize and sorghum. Areas in northern Somalia, Djibouti, and Eritrea are also beginning to suffer from lack of rainfall.

Precipitation forecasts show moderate amounts of continued rainfall moving into areas across northeastern Kenya, as well as central Ethiopia and into northern Somalia. However, little to no rainfall is expected in northern Ethiopia, Eritrea, or Djibouti in the next seven days.

Satellite Estimate Rainfall Anomaly
February 1- March 31, 2008

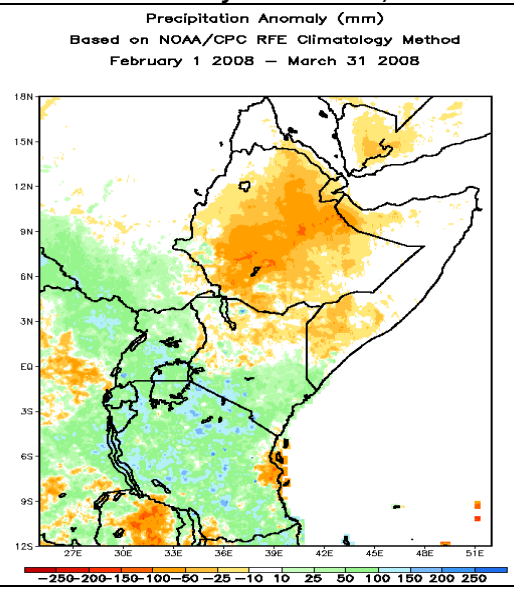


Figure 1:
Source: NOAA

Crop failure anticipated in parts of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, as season winds down.

While isolated precipitation in parts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique this week allowed for a slight improvement in soil water conditions, areas of southern Mozambique and southeastern Zimbabwe are likely to experience acute crop failure as a result of below-normal rains since February (**Figure 2**). Though some areas of eastern Zimbabwe have benefited from early season planting and harvests, the lack of rains over the past two months will negatively impact maize, millet and sorghum yields, mainly from Maputo to Beira, Mozambique.

Elsewhere in southern Africa, moderate amounts of precipitation continue in the Maize Triangle and western Namibia. Pasture and croplands in Tanzania also continue to benefit from steady, widespread rains across most of the country. Forecasts do not show any major changes in the precipitation pattern over the next seven days.

Soil Water Index for Maize
3rd Dekad of March, 2008

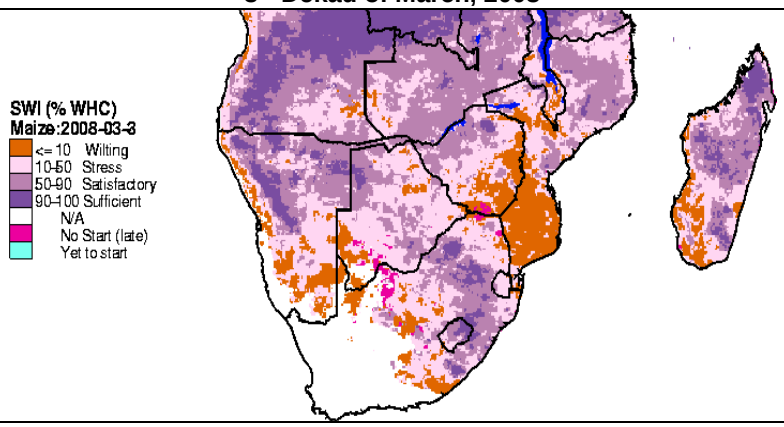


Figure 2:
Source: USGS

Early rains allow for good agricultural conditions in southern Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Nigeria.

Current weather patterns in the Gulf of Guinea continue to promote early season planting activities, replenish reservoirs and saturate soils near coastal Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria (**Figure 3**). There have been no recent reports of excess river runoff or flooding to date.

Satellite Estimate Rainfall Totals
March 23 - 29, 2008

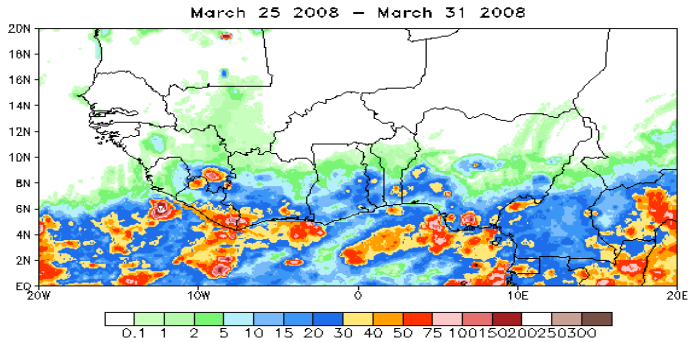


Figure 3.
Source: NOAA