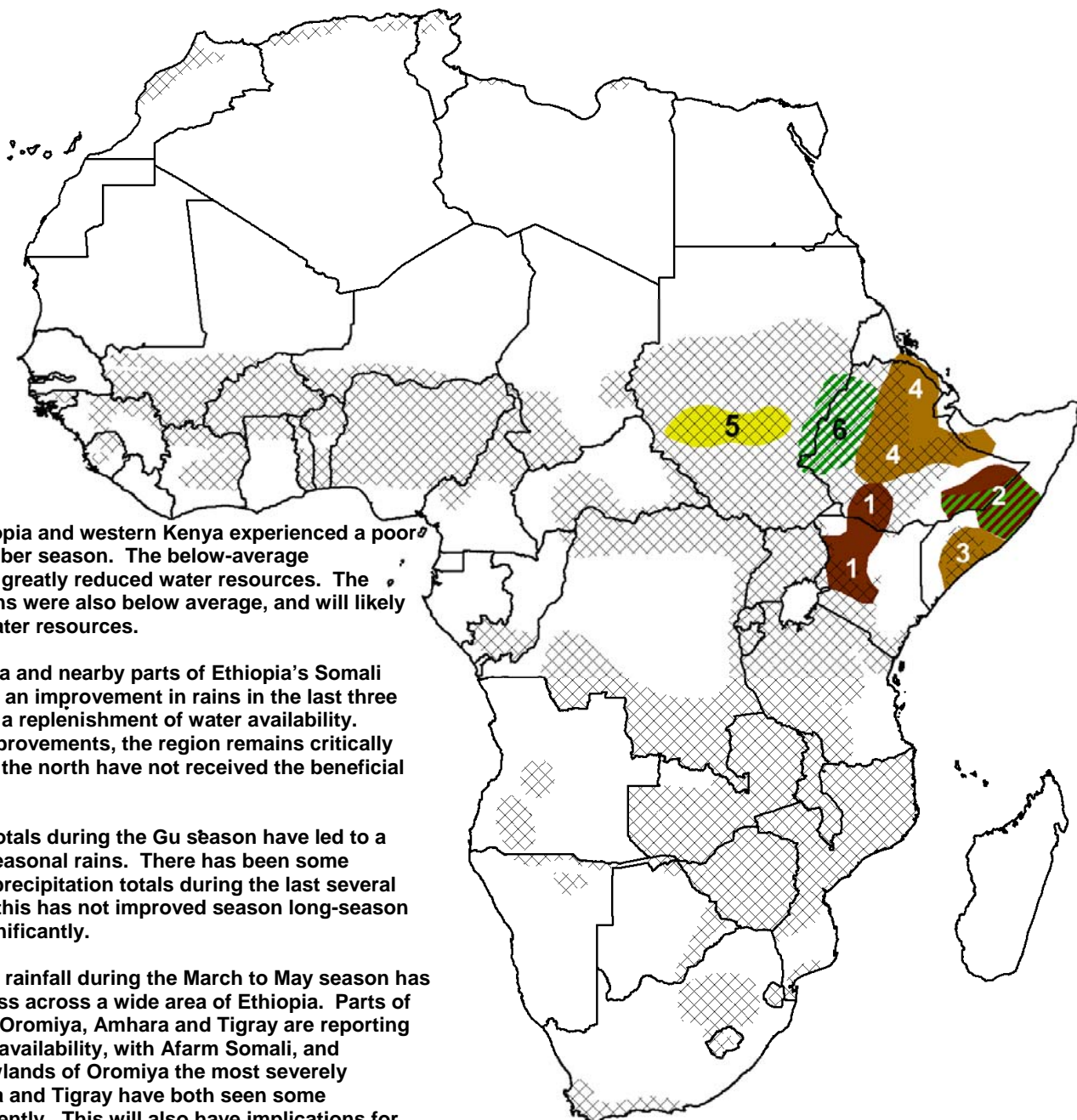


The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa June 5 – 11, 2008

- The late start to Ethiopia's Belg rains was followed by inconsistent precipitation and below average rainfall totals across much of the country. This has followed the general pattern of suppressed rainfall in the region that has led to below average rainfall totals in parts of Somalia, Kenya and Sudan.
- In contrast to the rest of the region, western Ethiopia has experienced above average and well distributed precipitation.
- Water levels along the Niger River, in Niger, are very low and some tributaries have dried up. As the wet season begins, water levels are expected to rise.



1) Southern Ethiopia and western Kenya experienced a poor October – December season. The below-average precipitation has greatly reduced water resources. The March to May rains were also below average, and will likely further reduce water resources.

2) Central Somalia and nearby parts of Ethiopia's Somali region have seen an improvement in rains in the last three weeks leading to a replenishment of water availability. Despite these improvements, the region remains critically dry, and areas to the north have not received the beneficial moisture.

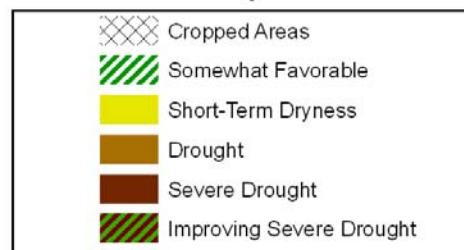
3) Poor rainfall totals during the Gu season have led to a likely failure of seasonal rains. There has been some improvement to precipitation totals during the last several weeks; however this has not improved season long-season rainfall totals significantly.

4) Below average rainfall during the March to May season has resulted in dryness across a wide area of Ethiopia. Parts of the Somali, Afar, Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray are reporting decreased water availability, with Afar Somali, and neighbouring lowlands of Oromiya the most severely affected. Amhara and Tigray have both seen some improvement recently. This will also have implications for moisture availability during the February to September season.

5) In central Sudan, rainfall was approximately half of the average during May. These rains are mostly pre-seasonal showers and could be made up in the coming weeks.

6) Western Ethiopia, in contrast to much of the Horn of Africa, has experienced abundant and well distributed rainfall since the season began, in late March.

Legend is very general, please see numbered descriptions for details.



Dry conditions in the Greater Horn spread into Sudan

Portions of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and now Sudan have experienced below-average precipitation during the recent past. Some of these areas have experienced several seasons of failed or poor rainfall.

Ethiopia has the largest area impacted with nearly 50% of its territory experiencing below-average precipitation, especially in the Belg-producing areas. Some isolated areas have received less than 20% of average March to May rainfall, and many other regions are experiencing less than half of the average precipitation for the same period. Additionally southern Ethiopia, near the Kenya border received very poor October to December rains, and current below average rainfall is exacerbating the situation. In the Somali region, most of the March to May period was unusually dry, however during the last three weeks thunderstorms have greatly improved soil moisture near the Somalia border. Other parts of the Somali Region remain very dry.

Western Kenya has now experienced two consecutive poor wet seasons, and in some areas three consecutive poor seasons. Last year's short rains, from October to December were below average, and many areas did not receive any rainfall. Areas closer to the central portion of the country saw poor precipitation totals, although not as severe, during the June to September rains.

Southern Somalia received poorly distributed rainfall during the March to May season. Although totals for the season are above average in some areas, the rainfall came in a very short period of time, resulting in flooding in some locations. Rainfall has improved in recent weeks, and although it will not improve long-season conditions, it will help replenish water resources. Similarly improving conditions have been occurred in central Somalia, where the October to December season was poor, and the recent rains have increased water availability.

In Sudan pre-seasonal rainfall has been inconsistent across the central portion of the country. These deficits could be eliminated during the coming weeks as the main season gets underway. (Figures 1 and 2)

Western Ethiopia Experiences Favorable Rains

In contrast to much of the rest of the Greater Horn region, western Ethiopia has experienced an average start to the rains and has continuously received well distributed precipitation. This has provided a solid start to the wet season, which lasts through October. (Figures 1 and 2)

Slow Start to the West Africa Season, Models Offer Hope for Improvement

Although there are some areas showing dry conditions in west Africa, long and short term models both suggest improvement. Dryness, thus far, could easily be made up.

