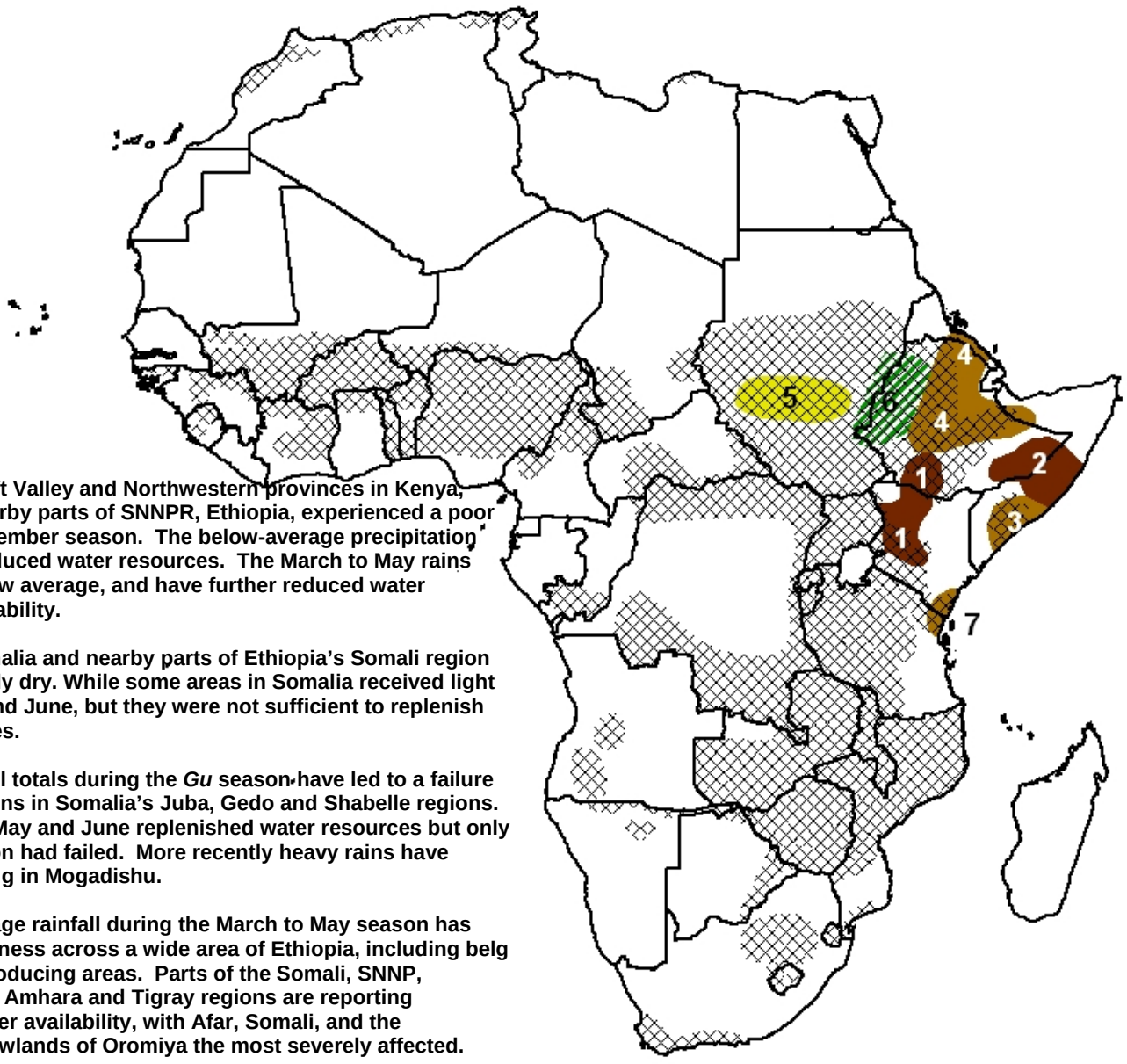
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa June 19 – 25, 2008

- The March to May rainfalls were below average in many parts of the Greater Horn. In some parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, this was the most recent in a series of poor seasons.
- Rains in western Ethiopia remain significantly above average for rainfall this year.
- Pre-seasonal rainfall is below average in isolated locations in west Africa, since the beginning of May. In these loacaized areas deficits small and could be mitigated in the coming weeks.



1) Northern Rift Valley and Northwestern provinces in Kenya, along with nearby parts of SNNPR, Ethiopia, 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 have further reduced water resource availability.

2) Central Somalia and nearby parts of Ethiopia's Somali region remain critically dry. While some areas in Somalia received light rains in May and June, but they were not sufficient to replenish water resources.

3) Poor rainfall totals during the *Gu* season have led to a failure of seasonal rains in Somalia's Juba, Gedo and Shabelle regions. Light rains in May and June replenished water resources but only after the season had failed. More recently heavy rains have caused flooding in Mogadishu.

4) Below-average rainfall during the March to May season has resulted in dryness across a wide area of Ethiopia, including belg and mehrer producing areas. Parts of the Somali, SNNP, Oromiya, Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions are reporting decreased water availability, with Afar, Somali, and the neighboring lowlands of Oromiya the most severely affected.

5) In central Sudan, May rainfall was approximately 50 percent below average during May. These rains are mostly pre-seasonal showers, however, and could be made up in the coming weeks. Seasonal precipitation usually begins in early July.

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.

7) Coastal sections of Kenya and Tanzania have experienced below-average precipitation since last October. A heavy rain event on June 15th in Kenya may have caused some localized flooding.

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

- Cropped Areas
- Somewhat Favorable
- Short-Term Dryness
- Drought
- Severe Drought

Precipitation remains sparse in the eastern two thirds of Ethiopia

Rainfall has been below average this year across large areas of Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya. Above-average rainfall totals in western Ethiopia remain the exception.

Although the *Gu* rains in Somalia (April – June) typically end by mid-June some very light rainfall that has moved into the region during May and June, at the time when they usually taper off across southern and central Somalia. These rains, while not reviving the poor *Gu* rains, have slightly increased water resources.

Ethiopia meanwhile has had two very distinct rainfall patterns this year. In western parts of the country, including Gambela, Benishangul-Gumuz, and the western portions of SSNPR, Oromia, parts of Amhara and Tigray, have had robust precipitation throughout the season. However, to the east of these regions, rainfall has been poor; eastern Amhara and Tigray, and most of SNNPR and Oromia, have experienced below average rainfall totals. These dry conditions extend eastward into the Afar and Somali regions.

In Kenya, the northeast and northern Rift Valley have experienced multiple poor seasons, the most recent being the March to May rains, which was as much as 50 percent below normal. Meanwhile a poor season along the coast has also reduced water availability. At the same time near Lake Victoria and others in Northeast and Eastern provinces have experienced normal precipitation this year.

Overall, however, moisture deficits are widespread and even with continued light rains; the region will not recover until October. (Figure 1)

Satellite Rainfall Percent of Average
February 1 – June 14, 2008

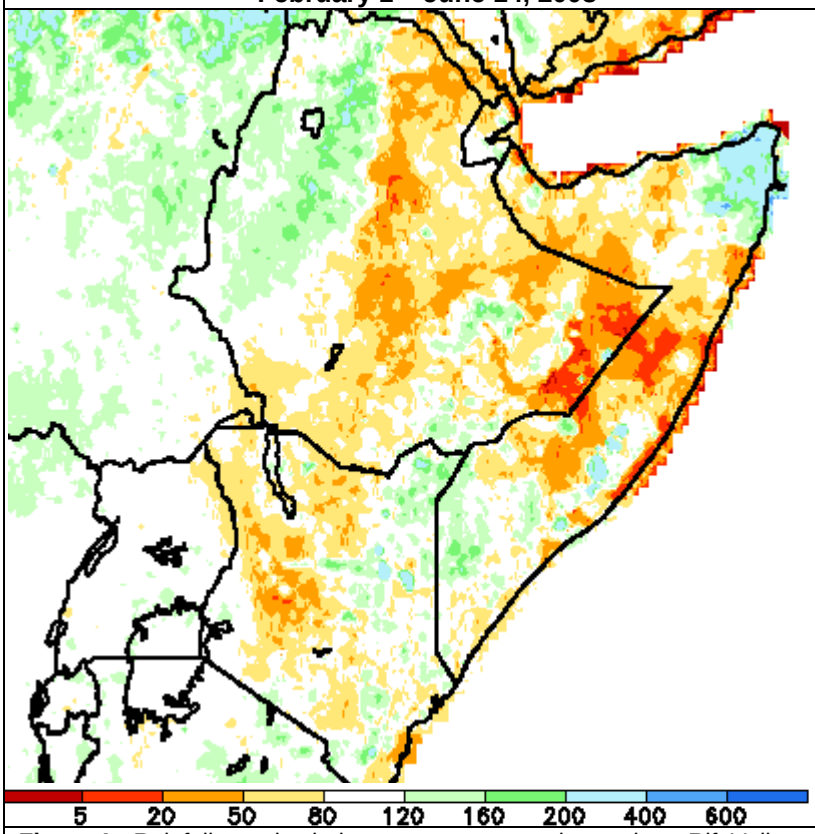


Figure 1:. Rainfall remains below average across the northern Rift Valley region of Kenya, central Somalia and much of Ethiopia. Note that western Ethiopia has remained above average throughout the season.

Source: NOAA/FEWS NET

Much of west Africa has had an average start to the season, save for a few pockets of dryness

The Gulf of Guinea and Sahel are receiving average rainfall for this time of the year. Central Sudan, with a slight rainfall deficit, remains the exception. In addition northeastern Nigeria and western Mali have experienced slightly below normal pre-seasonal rains. (Figure 2)

The areas with deficits have all received some moisture during the past several weeks, and the negative rainfall anomalies remina small in all three areas from 10 to 50 mm. However, recent rains have been insufficient to compensate for the deficit and soil moisture analyses are reflecting lower than average moisture.

At the same time, with ocean temperatures favoring a wetter-than-average season in the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea regions, these deficits could be easily recovered in a short period of time.

Soil Moisture
As of June 10, 2008

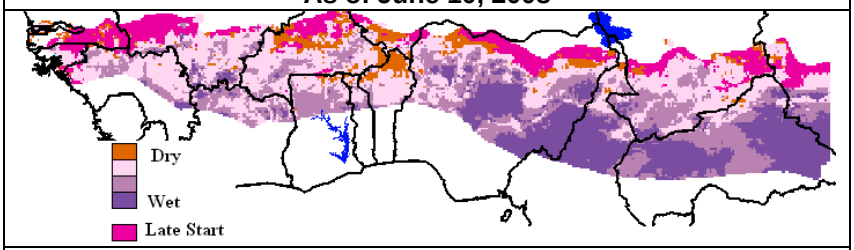


Figure 2: Although there are some areas of dryness, much of the Sahel has had an average start to the season. Rainfall has provided adequate soil moisture with the exception of Western Mali and northeastern Nigeria, whose conditions are not severe.

Source: USGS/FEWS NET