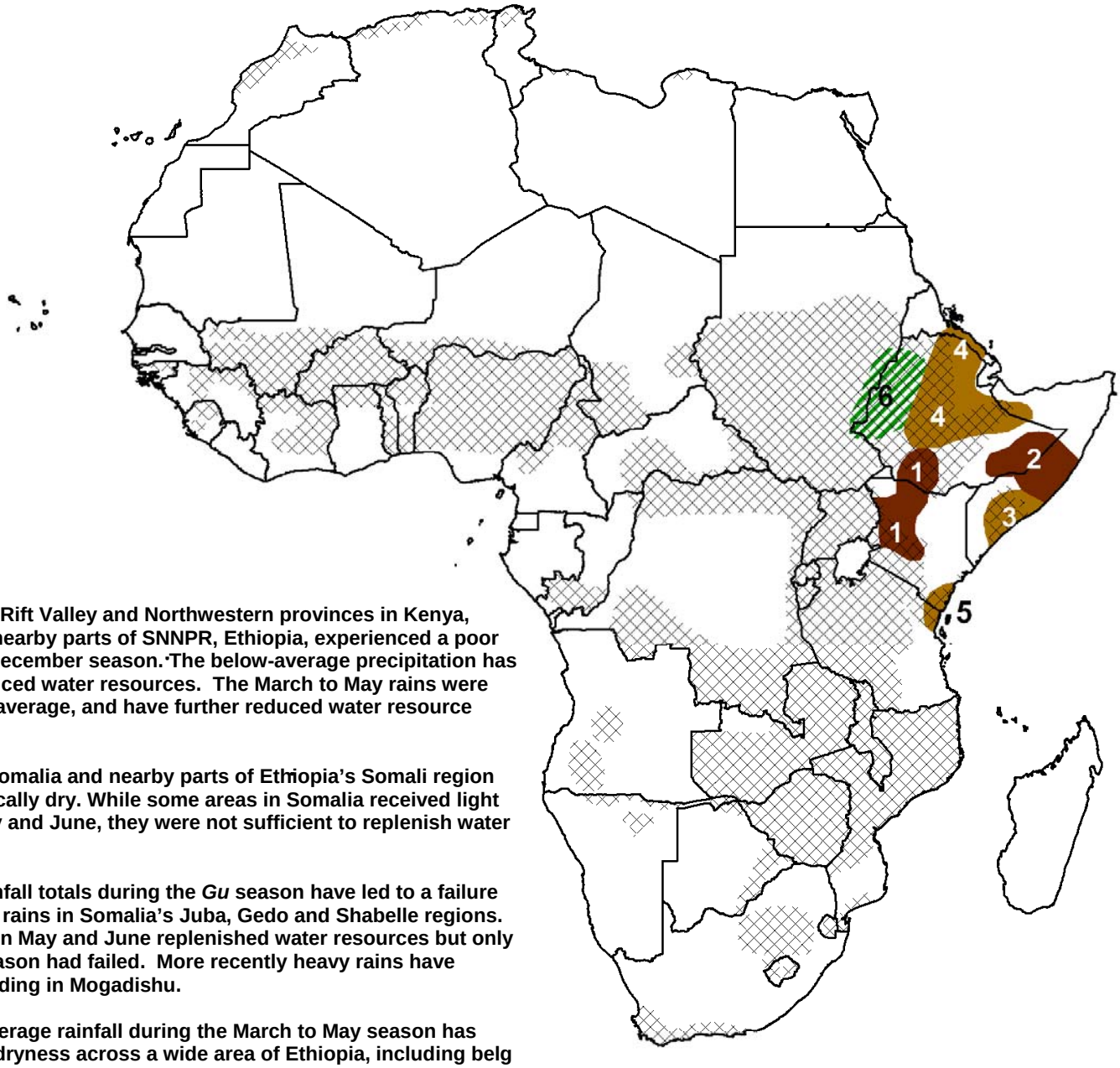
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
June 26 – July 2, 2008

- **Precipitation has been below normal in west Africa during the past week; however, the season-long rainfall totals remain near average.**
- **Unseasonable rainfall has continued along the Somalia-Kenya coast, benefiting water availability in the region, much of which was below average during the March to May season.**



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, 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 meher 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) 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.

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.

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

Rainfall continues to be slightly inconsistent in West Africa and Sudan

Rainfall across west Africa has been sufficient, but it is arriving in a start-stop pattern. The season started dry along the Gulf of Guinea, but soon became unseasonably wet, and has since turned dry again. In Sudan, rainfall normally associated with the Intertropical Front, skipped over central Sudan and only made up the resulting deficits during the last week. Excess rain has turned over to dryness in Burkina Faso. Rains have made similar shifts in Mali, Niger and Nigeria.

Although this pattern has been somewhat erratic, because the shifts in precipitation (e.g. going from wet to dry and then back to wet) have been occurring so quickly, it has resulted in no significant moisture deficits or major flooding events. Additionally, the distribution of rainfall has not been particularly poor because of how rapidly the locations receiving rainfall have changed. (See Figure 1)

Overall, models show a tilt in the odds favoring sufficient moisture across west Africa.

Maximum Consecutive Dry Days
May 23 – June 21, 2008

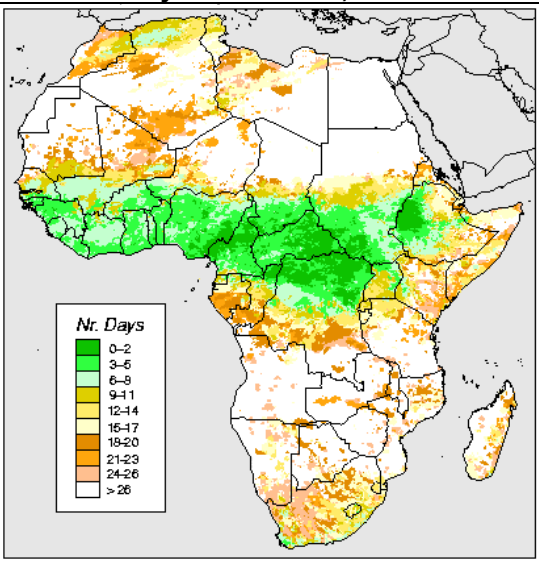


Figure 1: Rainfall distribution in west Africa has been sufficient despite wetter and drier periods.

Source: USGS/FEWS NET

Un-seasonable rainfall along the Kenya-Somalia coast brings unexpected relief

It has now been nearly a month since light, unseasonable rainfall began to fall along the Kenya-Somalia coast. These rains climatologically fall this time of year, but the rains are heavier than they usually are. Since the beginning of June rainfall has been twice average in coastal central and southern Somalia, with anomalies slightly smaller in coastal Kenya.

The rains may be benefiting crops planted late in these regions, but have certainly improved water availability. Light precipitation is expected to remain in the area during the coming weeks.

Satellite Rainfall Estimates
June 15 - 21, 2008

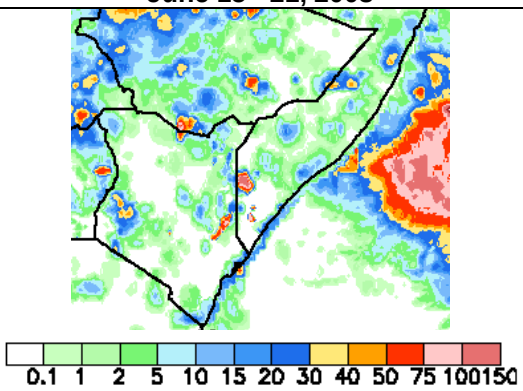


Figure 2: Showers and thunderstorms continue to bring relief to Kenya and Somalia's coasts. Rainfall further inland has been less common, although during the last week there were scattered showers.

Source: NOAA/FEWS NET

Less rain expected in parts of southern Africa

Although much of southern Africa is normally in its dry season, moisture normally flows into parts of South Africa this time of year. The atmospheric pattern, however, has been highly amplified during the past two to three months. This has resulted in rainfall across South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, southern Namibia, southwestern Botswana and the Maputo area. There are only a few areas with active cropping season this time of year in and near Lesotho and in Western Cape Province, South Africa. The atmospheric pattern began to break down during the last week and the coming week will likely be drier.

Satellite Rainfall Anomalies
May 23 – June 21, 2008

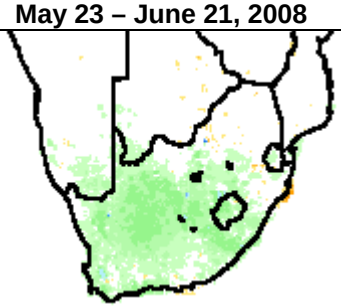


Figure 3: An amplified pattern has brought an unusual amount of rainfall to parts of southern Africa.

Source: NOAA/FEWS NET