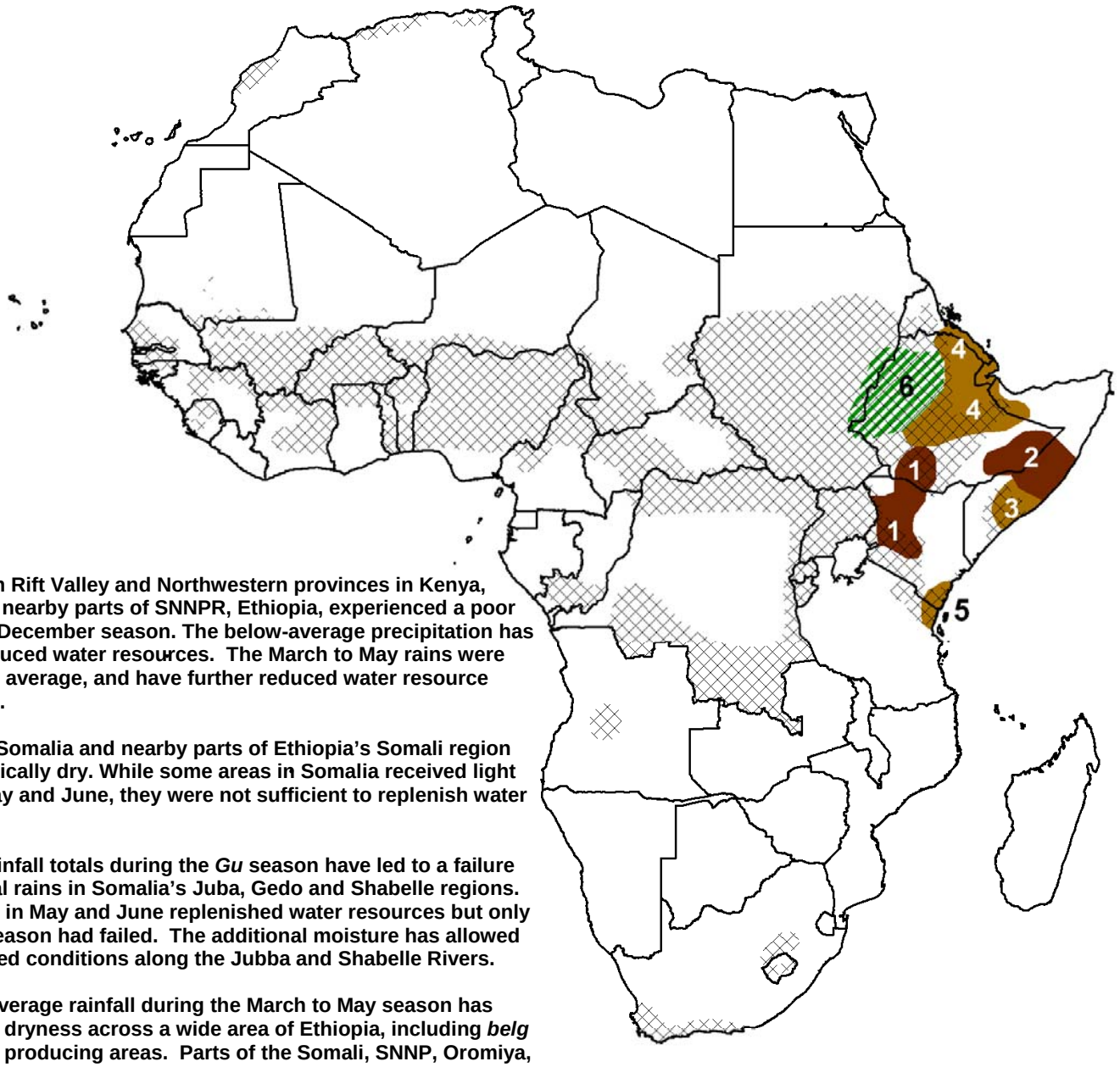
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa July 3 – 9, 2008

- **Rainfall totals during the last week have increased significantly in West Africa. The heavy rain reduced moisture deficits in Burkina Faso and southern Mali and much of West Africa has now received average to above average rainfall**

- **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. Significant relief is not expected in the Horn until October.**



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. The additional moisture has allowed for improved conditions along the Jubba and Shabelle Rivers.

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 being the most severely affected. Dry conditions extend into Eritrea and Djibouti as well.

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

A week of heavy rainfall eliminated moisture deficits across much of West Africa, according to satellite rainfall estimates

Rainfall trends can change rapidly in West Africa, and during the last week, one of those rapid changes took place. Burkina Faso and southern Mali had begun to show significant precipitation deficits. However, from the 24th to the 27th of June rainfall increased significantly and both areas are now showing near average precipitation totals. Nearby portions of Ghana, Togo and Benin also received heavy rainfall, and reduced their moisture deficits. Patchy dryness in southern Chad has also been reduced. (See Figure 1)

Since this was not a one day event, but instead moderate rainfall over a several day period, flooding was likely isolated and constrained to low lying areas, and areas that typically experience seasonal flooding..

Rainfall has also benefited areas that were already doing well including western Niger around Niamey and eastern Senegal.

Some localized areas that have not benefited from the rains remain, but there only is one area significant in terms of the area affected and the size of the deficit. Dryness in northeastern Nigeria, along the border with Niger, has continued be missed by precipitation. Deficits have not yet climbed high enough to indicate drought, and a rainfall event like the one that occurred in Burkina Faso and Mali, would have the same potential for improving water resource availability.

Unseasonable rainfall has ended in southern Africa

Much of the southern hemisphere has had unusually strong fronts during the past several months. This has resulted in unusually strong cold fronts moving across South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, and parts of Namibia, Botswana and Mozambique. (See Figure 2)

This has provided plenty of moisture in the winter wheat cropping areas, and increased the availability of drinking water across many areas that do not typically receive rainfall this time of year.

Rainfall has begun to ease during the last week.

Number of Days Since Rainfall
June 30, 2008

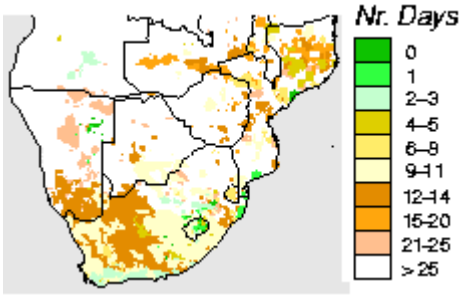


Figure 2: Rainfall has provided a wide area of southern Africa with rainfall during the past 30 days. Most of the region is dry this time of year. The unusual rains have now ended.

Source: USGS/FEWS NET

Satellite Rainfall Anomalies
May 1 – June 30, 2008

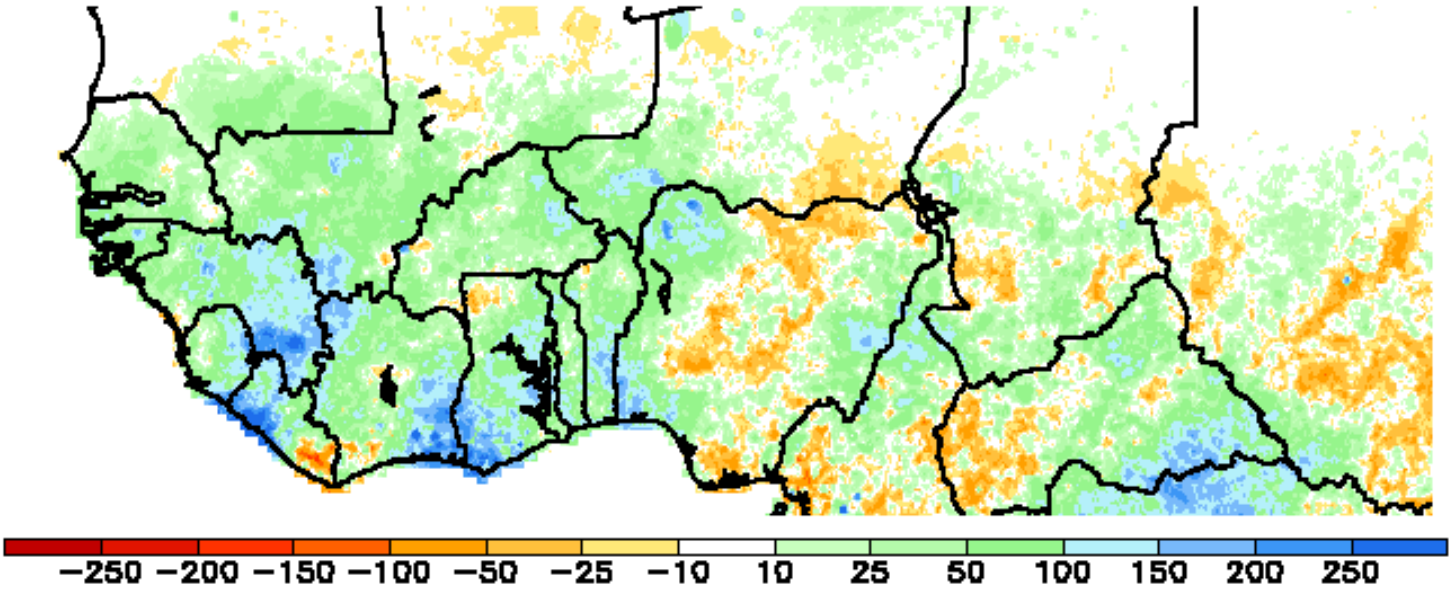


Figure 1: With last week's heavy rains, most of West Africa now has above average rainfall totals.

Source: NOAA/FEWS NET