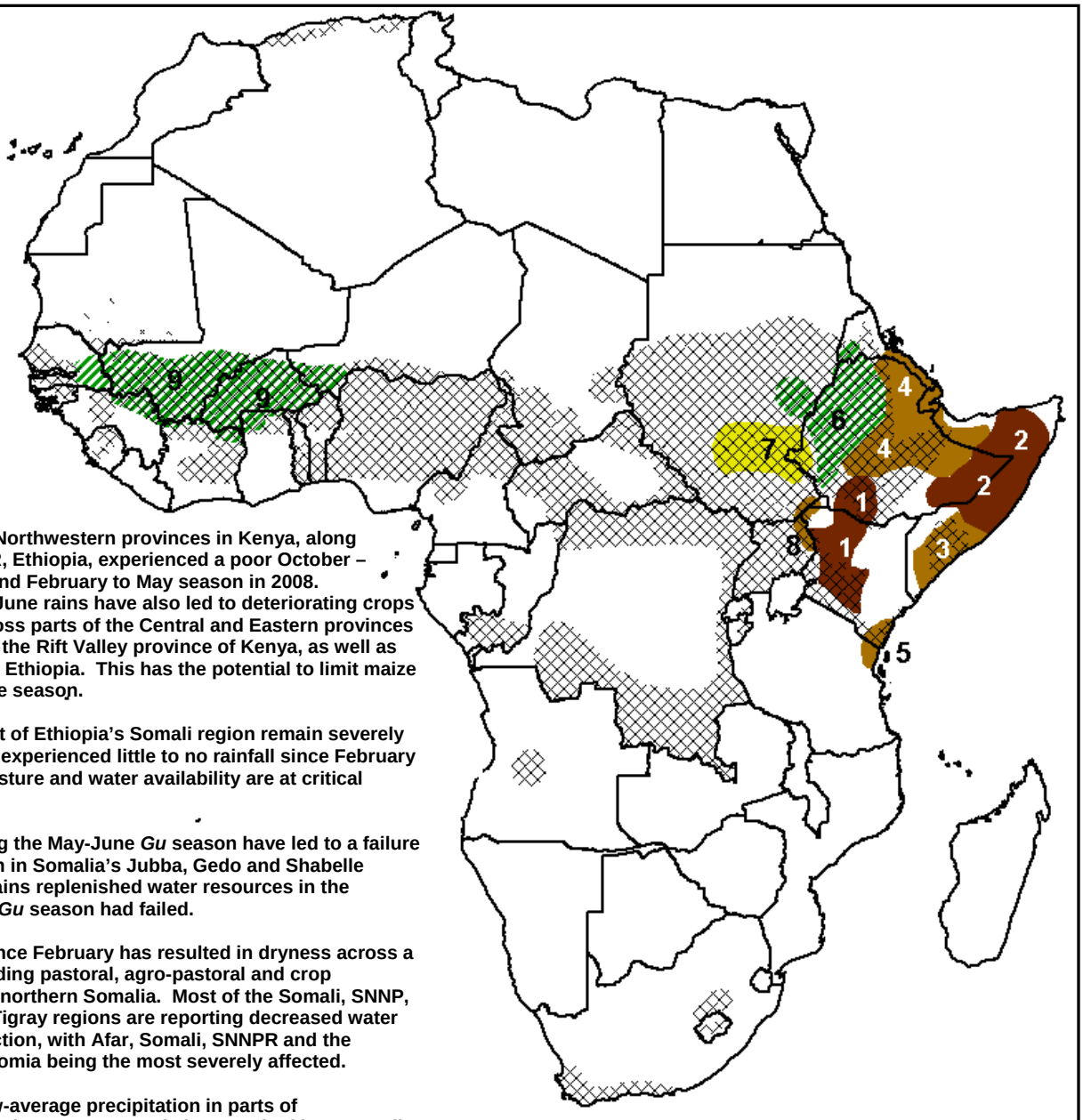
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa August 7 – 13, 2008

- **Above-normal May-September seasonal rainfall across the Sahel has resulted in increased water availability and favorable crop conditions.**
- **In Sudan, negative rainfall anomalies spread leaving some areas in the north increasingly vulnerable to insufficient water resources.**



1) Northern Rift Valley and Northwestern provinces in Kenya, along with nearby parts of SNNPR, Ethiopia, experienced a poor October – December season in 2007 and February to May season in 2008. Below-average March-May/June rains have also led to deteriorating crops and degraded pastures across parts of the Central and Eastern provinces and some northern parts of the Rift Valley province of Kenya, as well as southern parts of SNNPR in Ethiopia. This has the potential to limit maize crop yields by the end of the season.

2) Central Somalia and most of Ethiopia's Somali region remain severely dry. Many local areas have experienced little to no rainfall since February resulting in failed crops. Pasture and water availability are at critical levels.

3) Poor rainfall totals during the May-June *Gu* season have led to a failure of seasonal crop production in Somalia's Jubba, Gedo and Shabelle regions. June-July *Hagai* rains replenished water resources in the Shabelle, but only after the *Gu* season had failed.

4) Below-average rainfall since February has resulted in dryness across a wide area of Ethiopia, including pastoral, agro-pastoral and crop producing areas in parts of northern Somalia. Most of the Somali, SNNP, Oromia, Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions are reporting decreased water availability and crop production, with Afar, Somali, SNNPR and the neighboring lowlands of Oromia being the most severely affected.

5) Since last October, below-average precipitation in parts of southeastern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania has resulted in poor soil conditions and crop development along the coast.

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

7) Despite receiving regular rainfall throughout July, many parts of southern Sudan are 50 percent or more below average for their June-October seasonal rain totals.

8) Poor March-September rainfall has led to deteriorated soil conditions and a failed crop season for localized areas of northeastern Uganda, and into parts of Kenya and Sudan.

9) Above-average rainfall since the beginning of July has resulted in increased water resources and favorable crop conditions across parts of Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali.

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

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

Decline in seasonal rainfall accumulation has led to concerns of crop water resources in northern Sudan.

In recent weeks negative rainfall totals have been gradually deepening across Sudan. Though some areas continue to see flourishing cropping conditions, others are beginning to show signs of stress. In northern Sudan rainfall totals have been below normal, causing the start of seasonal rains in areas located southwest and east of Khartoum to be two dekads or more late. In the past month, rainfall totals have dropped 20 – 50% of normal for that area and with the end of the seasonal rains in September, there is little time for recovery. Seasonal rainfall totals are approximately 50 mm below average (**Figure 1**).

According to the water requirement models for crops (**Figure 2**), there are localized areas that are now experiencing mediocre, poor, or even failing maize and grain crops, though this has yet to be verified in the field. If the models are proven to be correct, then there may be little hope of improvement of rainfall totals –and crop prospects- because of the normal habits of the Intertropical Front (ITF). It typically reaches its northward peak in Africa during the second dekad of August. Once it peaks it makes a quick retreat southward, pulling all possible rains for that region out along with it.

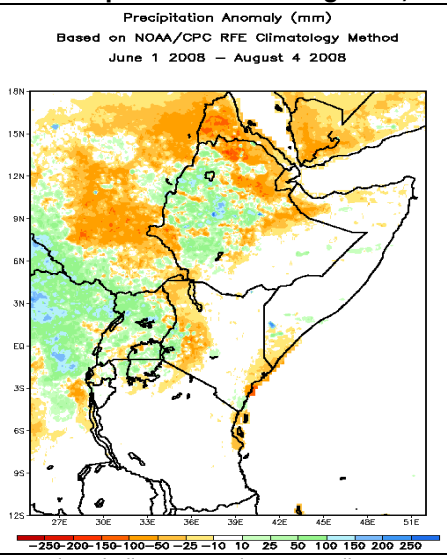
Increased rains in West Africa continue to favor healthy cropping conditions.

In many areas across the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea countries, excessive and frequent rains during July have led to an above-normal May-September season. Though the Sahel observed a slight decrease in rainfall over the last two weeks, seasonal rainfall accumulations still remain between 150 and 200 percent above average in many countries. These positive precipitation anomalies are expected to provide favorable conditions for the development of maize, sorghum and millet, as most of these crops are in the peak phase of vegetation and production for the season. For parts of Nigeria, July rainfall may also lead to increased water availability and regeneration of soils for areas that were anomalously dry in June.

For areas in southern Burkina Faso and northern parts of Ivory Coast and Ghana that experienced a two to three dekad late start to the May-September season, satellite-derived crop analyses show healthy conditions in many of these areas due to the abundant rainfall in July. In Niger, significantly high river levels are reported along the Niger River, as well as cases of isolated flooding in some cropping fields.

Precipitation forecasts over the next seven days suggest a continued decrease in rainfall across the Sahel; however seasonal totals will remain normal.

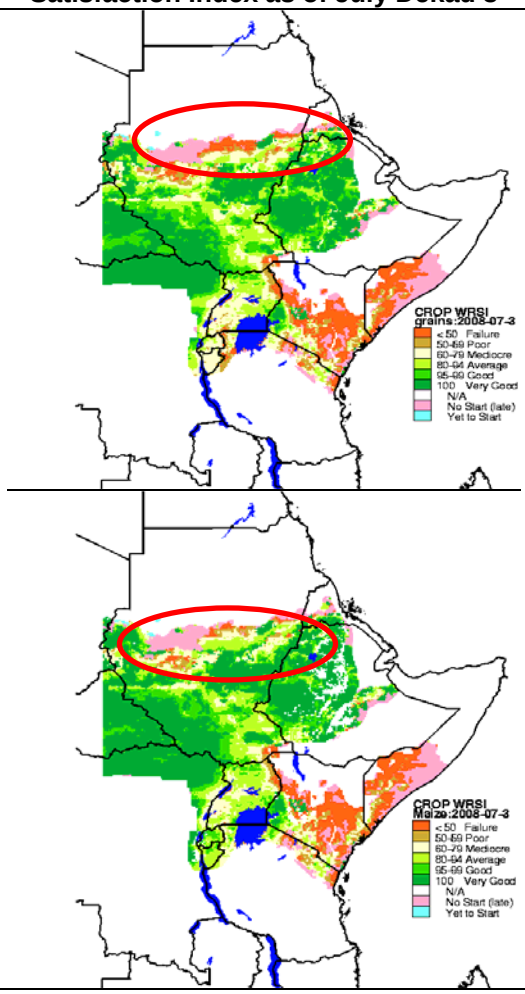
Figure 1. Seasonal Rainfall Anomalies for June – September as of August 4, 2008



Note: Orange colors indicate negative anomalies, greens and blues indicate positive, and the white indicates areas that are near normal.

Source: USGS

Figure 2. Grains and Maize Water Requirement Satisfaction Index as of July Dekad 3



Note: Pink indicates a late or no start to seasonal rains, while orange indicates an area of failed crops.

Source: NOAA/CPC