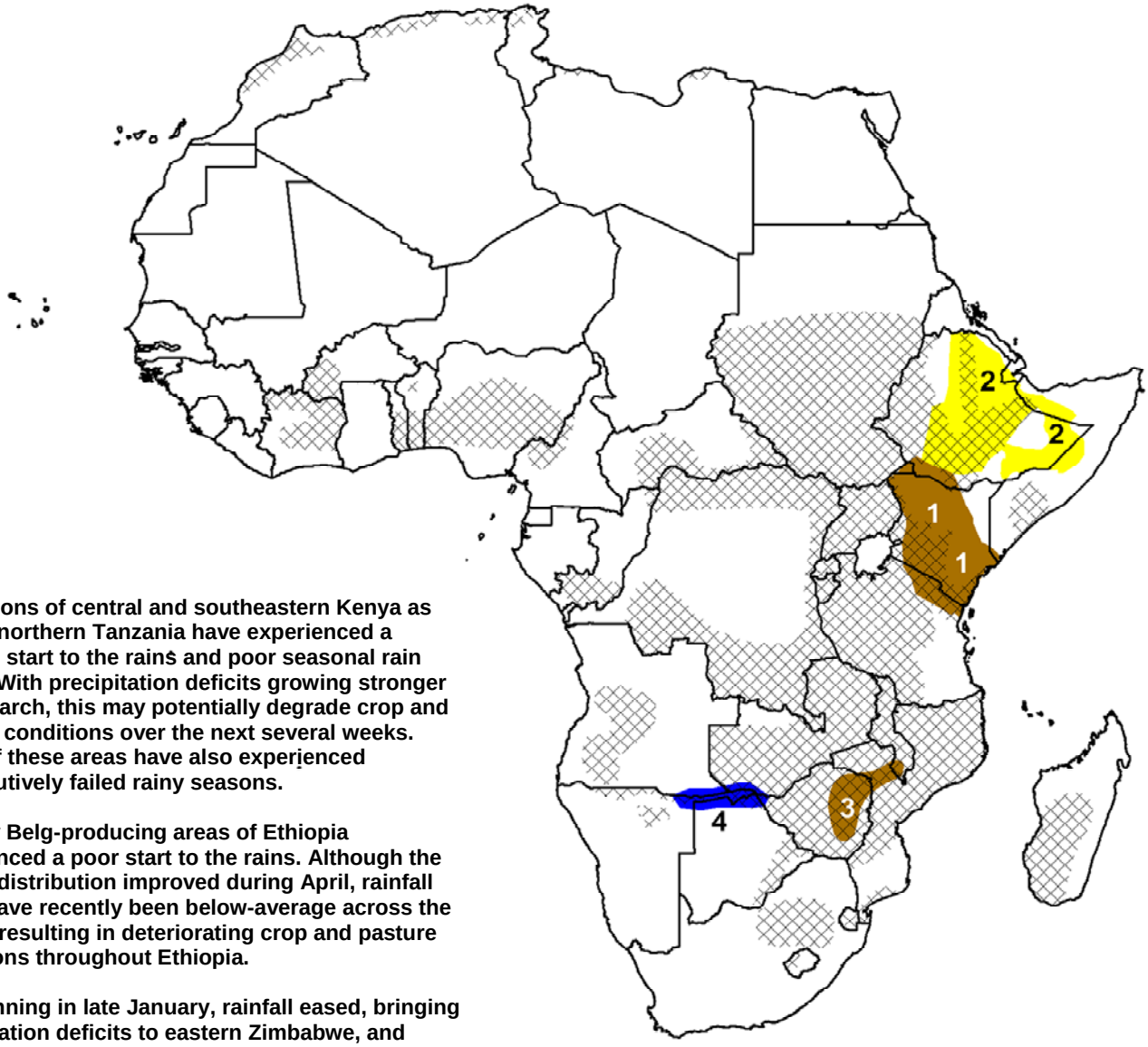
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
April 30 – May 6, 2009

- **A recent decrease in precipitation across portions of central and northern Ethiopia over the last two weeks has strengthened rainfall deficits observed since the start of the *Belg* season. Compounded by a delayed start of season, a reduction of *Belg* harvests is still expected across parts of Ethiopia.**
- **Heavy and favorable rains have been received across many parts of Gulf of Guinea countries during April. This moisture has saturated ground conditions, which is likely to help promote seasonal cropping activities.**



1) Portions of central and southeastern Kenya as well as northern Tanzania have experienced a delayed start to the rains and poor seasonal rain totals. With precipitation deficits growing stronger since March, this may potentially degrade crop and pasture conditions over the next several weeks. Many of these areas have also experienced consecutively failed rainy seasons.

2) Many Belg-producing areas of Ethiopia experienced a poor start to the rains. Although the rainfall distribution improved during April, rainfall totals have recently been below-average across the region, resulting in deteriorating crop and pasture conditions throughout Ethiopia.

3) Beginning in late January, rainfall eased, bringing precipitation deficits to eastern Zimbabwe, and extending eastward into Mozambique and far southern Malawi. The dryness has impacted some cropping activities, especially late-planted crops. Rainfall did pick up near the end of the wet season, but this was not enough to revive crops that had already wilted.

4) Although flood levels have begun to subside in parts of the Caprivi Strip, many areas still remain above alert level.

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

- April Cropped Areas
- Favorable
- Somewhat Favorable
- Flooding
- Short-term Dryness
- Drought
- Severe Drought

A break in Belg rains observed throughout northern Ethiopia.

In the last seven days, fair to moderate amounts of rainfall (10-30 mm) were received across the SNNPR, Oromia and Harar regions of Ethiopia. Heavier rainfall totals (> 50mm) were observed in the extreme western portions along the Ethiopia / Sudan border. However, lesser rainfall totals (2-15mm) were seen further north in the Amhara, Afar and Tigray regions of Ethiopia in the last seven days (**Figure 1**). For many local areas, this has been the second consecutive week of dryness, as a majority of Belg moisture and precipitation has been confined south of the Great Rift Valley since mid-April.

Seasonally, negative precipitation anomalies still remain fairly widespread across parts of the Oromia, SNNPR, Addis and along the high terrain regions of northern Ethiopia (**Figure 2**). Many local areas in extending from the Wollo and Shewa areas northward along the mountainous rim of the Great Rift Valley have experienced less than half of their average precipitation accumulation since March. Towards the northwest, rainfall deficits have strengthened to less than a quarter of their seasonal average across parts west of Lake Tana in the Gonder region.

Further south, precipitation anomalies across many Belg-producing regions in the Oromia and SNNPR have been less extreme due to an increase in moisture observed during the first and second dekads of April. Crop and vegetation analyses have continued to show satisfactory ground moisture indices across much of the Belg-producing regions; however poor crop conditions are evident towards the Kenya border in the south, and along the northern axis of the Ethiopia highlands.

Precipitation forecasts suggest some improvement over southern Ethiopia with of moderate to heavy round of rains in the next seven days. However, northern regions are expected to remain dry through the end of April.

Well-distributed rains and moisture observed across the Gulf of Guinea countries.

Since the start of April, widespread monthly rainfall totals in excess of 200-250 mm have been observed across many countries in the Gulf of Guinea region. This has resulted a widespread distribution anomalously positive rainfall, (50-100 mm above average over the last 30 days) and moisture extending from parts of eastern Guinea to Nigeria. Moisture index analyses indicate a robust range of saturated ground conditions to help promote seasonal cropping activities for many parts of Nigeria, Ghana, and Cote de Ivore (**Figure 3**).

Satellite Estimated Precipitation
From April 21st – April 27th, 2009

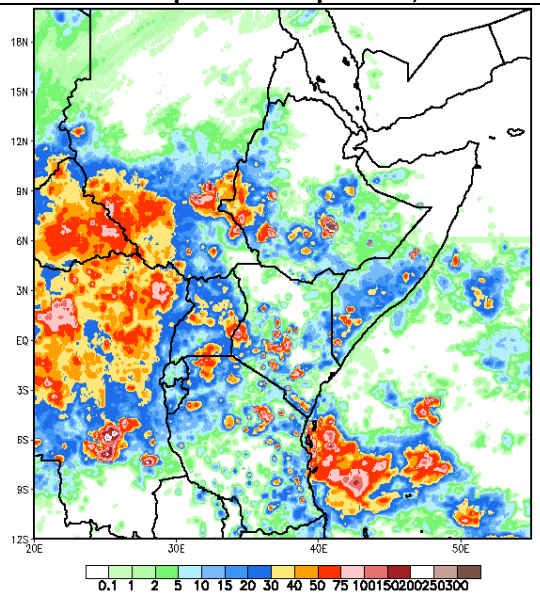


Figure 1: NOAA/FEWS-NET

Percent of Average Rainfall for Season
As of April 25th, 2009

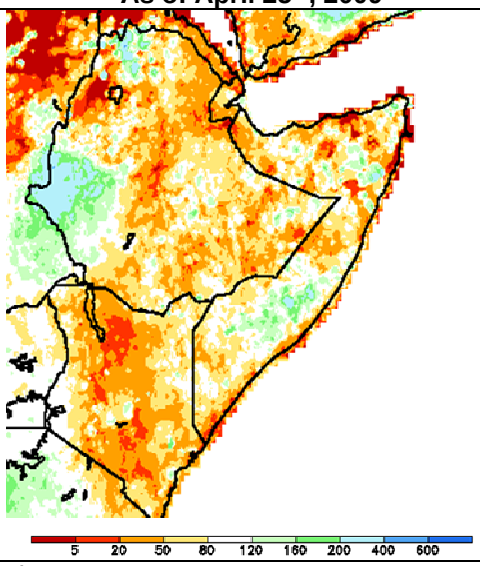


Figure 2: NOAA/FEWS-NET

Moisture Index
As of 2nd Dekad of April, 2009

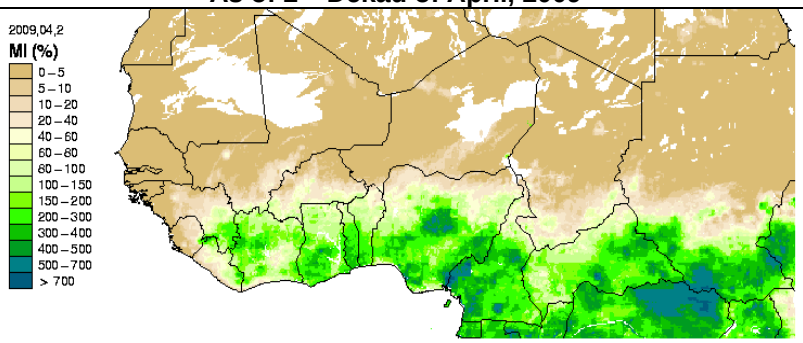


Figure 3: FEWS-NET/USGS