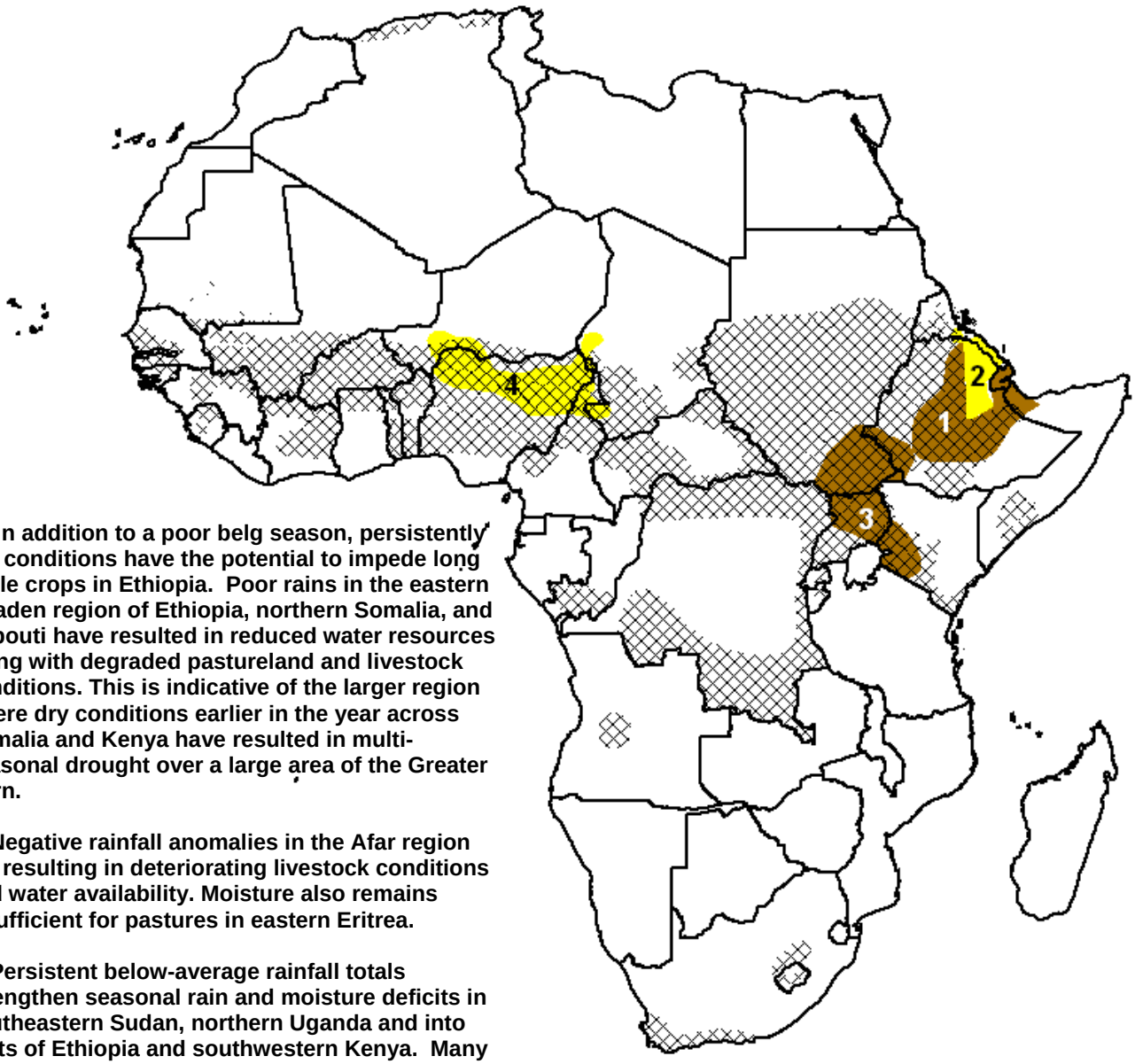
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
August 13 – 19, 2009

- **Below-average rainfall totals strengthen moisture deficits in Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya.**
- **Rains tapered off during the last seven days over Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad, many local areas need additional precipitation and moisture to mitigate the effects of short-term dryness**



1) In addition to a poor belg season, persistently dry conditions have the potential to impede long cycle crops in Ethiopia. Poor rains in the eastern Ogaden region of Ethiopia, northern Somalia, and Djibouti have resulted in reduced water resources along with degraded pastureland and livestock conditions. This is indicative of the larger region where dry conditions earlier in the year across Somalia and Kenya have resulted in multi-seasonal drought over a large area of the Greater Horn.

2) Negative rainfall anomalies in the Afar region are resulting in deteriorating livestock conditions and water availability. Moisture also remains insufficient for pastures in eastern Eritrea.

3) Persistent below-average rainfall totals strengthen seasonal rain and moisture deficits in southeastern Sudan, northern Uganda and into parts of Ethiopia and southwestern Kenya. Many areas throughout central and eastern Kenya, as well as northern Tanzania ended their respective seasons with substantial moisture deficits, resulting in degraded crop and pasture conditions.

4) A return of unseasonably low rainfall totals occurred during the last observation period. The last several weeks of poor rains have led to dryness and deteriorating crop conditions extending from western Niger, across northern Nigeria, and into parts of Cameroon and Chad.

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

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

Anomalously dry conditions persist in significant areas

During the August 6th – August 12th observation period a return to anomalously dry conditions occurred in parts of west and east Africa **(Figure 1).** Many areas recorded seven-day rainfall anomalies surpassing 25 mm below average. This is an about-face compared to last period when West Africa recorded mostly positive anomalies in excess of 25 mm above average. Precipitation associated with the Inter-Tropical Front continues to be suppressed over Niger, Chad and Sudan. The ITF for the August 1 – 10 analysis period was located near 17.3N degrees, while the normal for this time of year is 18.5N degrees. This position has changed very little in the last two weeks.

Since early July, many local areas in the Tillaberi, Dosso and Tahoua regions of Niger have been suffering seasonal rainfall deficits ranging between -50 to -150 mm. Although much of western Niger experienced a normal start of season, this dryness has resulted in deteriorating crop conditions, and acute failure of millet crops in some local areas along the Nigeria / Niger border. After failure of the first sowing, farmers re-sowed in mid-July. A field assessment is taking place to gain more information on the progress of the second sowing. More precipitation and ground moisture are needed over the region as a whole to compensate seasonal rainfall deficits and the loss of crops.

RFE 7-Day Precipitation Anomalies
Valid: August 4 – 10, 2009

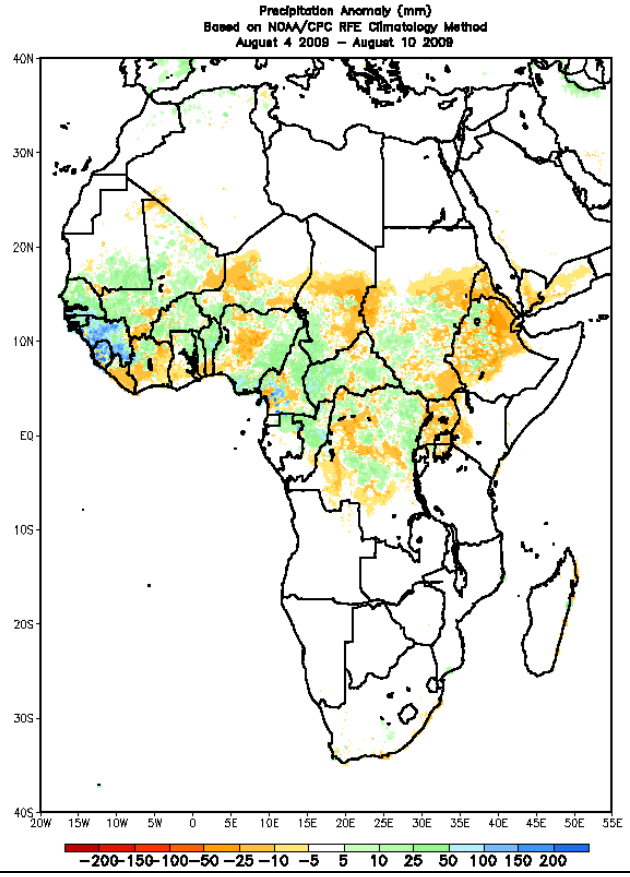


Figure 1:
Source: NOAA/CPC

Dry conditions worsen in the east

In Kotido, Uganda, approximately 10 mm of rain have been recorded since the end of May causing seasonal deficits to surpass 200 mm below average. Situations similar to this are repeated throughout East Africa, where low rainfall totals persist in southern Sudan, southwestern Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya.

Following two consecutive weeks of increased rainfall activity in the Afar region of Ethiopia, low rainfall totals returned to the region during the last two most recent observation periods. Seven-day anomalies were more than 25 mm below average. This is a pastoral area where water availability and rangeland conditions are more important at this time of year.

North of Ethiopia in Eritrea, rainfall totals have significantly improved eradicating short-term dryness concerns for crops in the western half of the country.

February – September Season Precipitation Anomalies
Valid as of February 1 – August 10, 2009

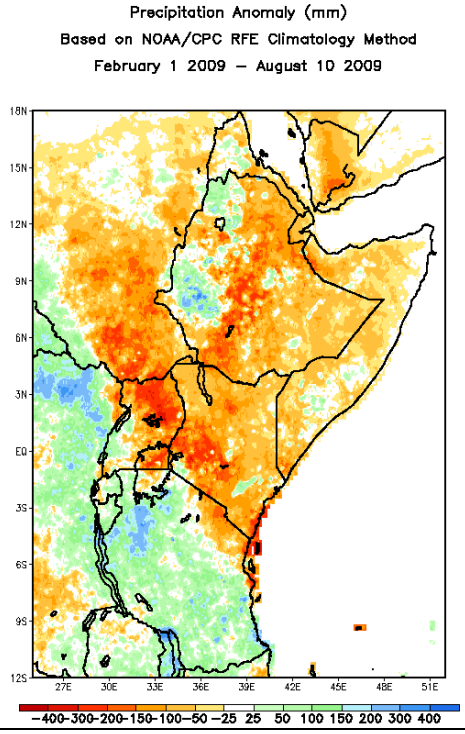


Figure 3:
Source: NOAA/CPC