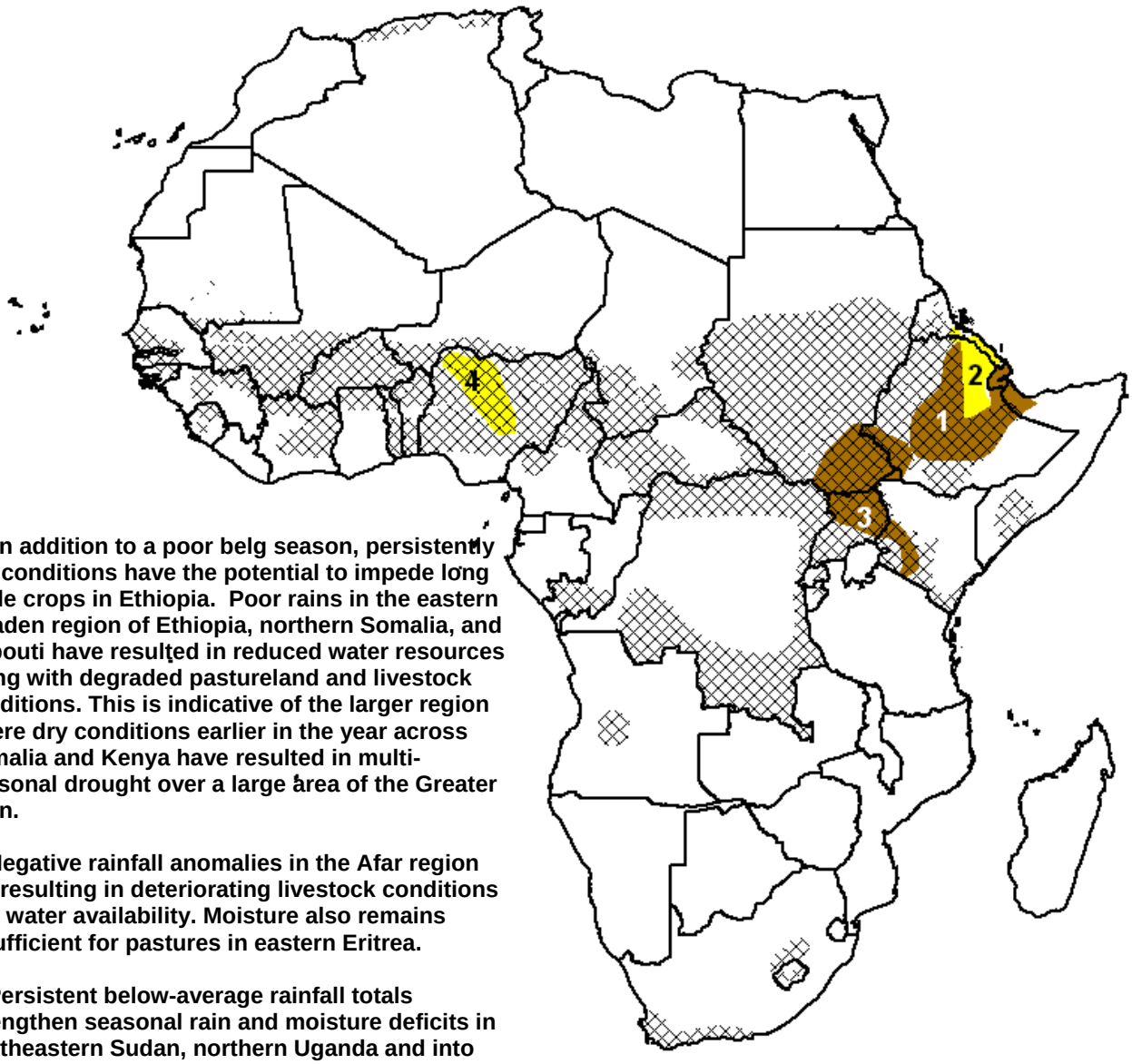
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa August 20 – 26, 2009

- **A favorable round of rains during the last observation period coupled with increased rains over the last 30 days has brought improvement to rainfall deficits in West Africa.**
- **Below-average rainfall totals strengthen moisture deficits in Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya.**



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) Above average precipitation totals for the August 13th – 19th observation period, as well as, increased rainfall over the past month brought some improvement to season-long rainfall deficits. However, the last several weeks of poor rains have led to dryness and deteriorating crop and pasture conditions in Nigeria.

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

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

30-Day precipitation anomalies trending towards improvement in the West

During the August 13th – August 19th observation period anomalously wet conditions characterized most of West Africa. This is only a sample of what appears to have taken place over the past month in the west where above average rainfall totals in mostly cropped areas for the July 19th – August 17th period have occurred **(Figure 1).** Despite the recent trend towards favorable rains, 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 dekads and appears to remain below average for the second dekad of August. The ITF begins its annual retreat in September.

Since early July, many local areas in Niger have been suffering significant seasonal rainfall deficits. 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 shorter-cycle crops in mid-July. A field assessment confirmed that the resurgence of rain has produced moderate conditions for millet in Niger, but concerns remain for pastures which are located north of the current ITF position. To end the season with a better than mediocre harvest, consistent rains are needed through September. More precipitation and ground moisture are needed over the region as a whole to compensate for seasonal rainfall deficits and to revive pastures.

RFE 30-Day Precipitation Anomalies
Valid: August 11 – 17, 2009

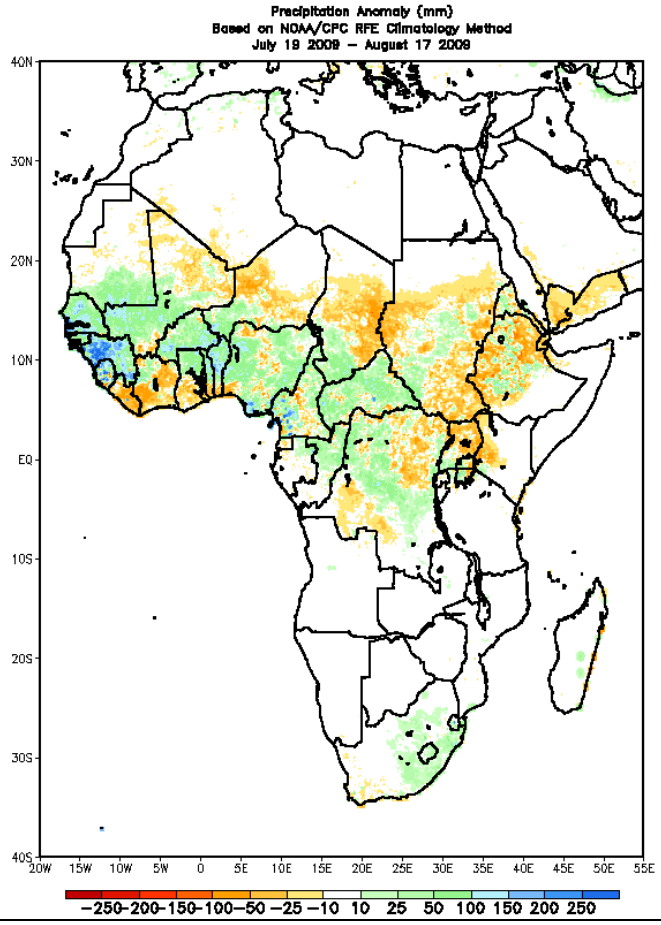


Figure 1:
Source: NOAA/CPC

Dry conditions persist 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.

The Afar region of Ethiopia continues to experience low rainfall totals. This is a pastoral area that normally does not receive significant rains during this time of year, however, according to water requirement models rangeland conditions are below-average **(Figure 2)**.

The dryness in the east is indicative of the larger region where dry conditions earlier in the year across Somalia and areas throughout central and eastern Kenya, as well as northern Tanzania ended their respective seasons with substantial moisture deficits, resulting in multi-seasonal drought over a large area of the Greater Horn.

Water Requirement Satisfaction Index
Rangelands
Valid: July Dekad 3, 2009

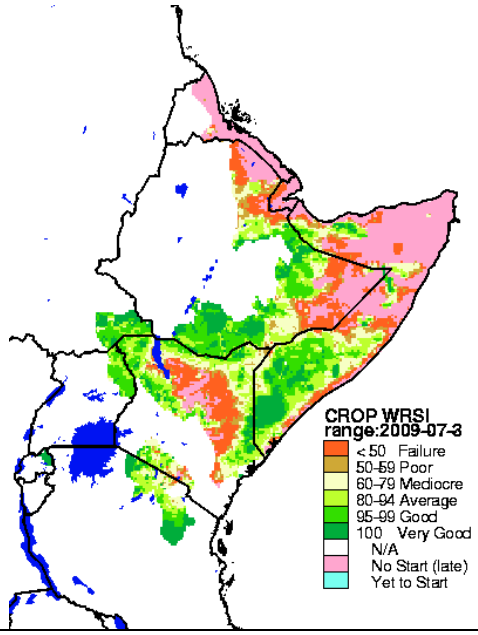


Figure 2:
Source: USGS