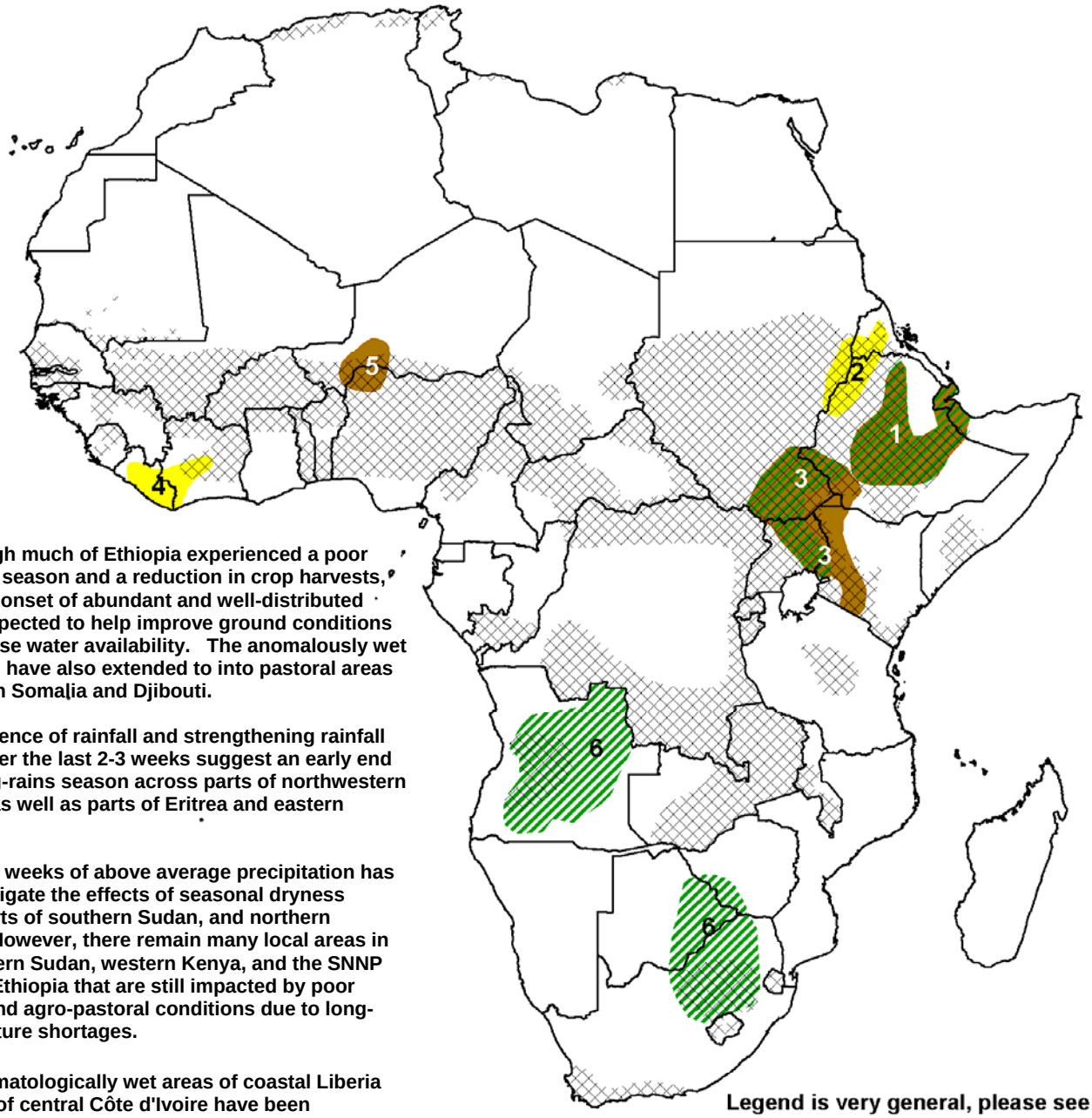
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
October 15 - 21, 2009

- **In the last several weeks, favorable amounts of precipitation in northern Somalia are expected to improve pasture conditions and increase water availability for many local areas across the Somaliland and Puntland regions.**
- **Decreased precipitation across parts of Amhara and Tigray regions of Ethiopia suggest an early end of the long rains season, while many parts of southern Ethiopia received another week of beneficial rainfall in the Oromia, SNNP, and Ogaden regions.**



1) Although much of Ethiopia experienced a poor long-rains season and a reduction in crop harvests, the recent onset of abundant and well-distributed rains is expected to help improve ground conditions and increase water availability. The anomalously wet conditions have also extended to into pastoral areas of northern Somalia and Djibouti.

2) The absence of rainfall and strengthening rainfall deficits over the last 2-3 weeks suggest an early end of the long-rains season across parts of northwestern Ethiopia, as well as parts of Eritrea and eastern Sudan.

3) Several weeks of above average precipitation has helped mitigate the effects of seasonal dryness across parts of southern Sudan, and northern Uganda. However, there remain many local areas in southeastern Sudan, western Kenya, and the SNNP region of Ethiopia that are still impacted by poor pastoral and agro-pastoral conditions due to long-term moisture shortages.

4) The climatologically wet areas of coastal Liberia and parts of central Côte d'Ivoire have been unseasonably dry.

5) Since May, inconsistent rains have resulted in reduced crop harvests, possibly reducing cropped area in the region by as much as 50%.

6) This month, early season wetness across a broad portion of southern Africa has the potential to lead to favorable ground conditions and increased water availability for a number of local of areas, including parts of the Maize Triangle in South Africa. However, the observed early season wetness does not imply a beneficial season at present.

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

- October Cropped Areas
- Favorable
- Somewhat Favorable
- Flooding
- Short-term Dryness
- Drought
- Severe Drought
- Improving Drought

Increased moisture and rains for northern Somalia

In the last seven days, beneficial amounts of rainfall were received across a broad portion Somalia. Precipitation amounts ranging between 40-60mm were observed throughout many drier-than-average areas along the Ethiopia and Somalia border, with locally heavier amounts in excess of 50 mm in southern Ethiopia, as well as across Somaliland and Puntland regions of Northern Somalia (**Figure 1**).

Although northern Somalia is not a climatologically wet region, numerous weeks of intermittently heavy and isolated precipitation has led to anomalously wet conditions across many local parts of the Somaliland and Puntland regions since the beginning of August. In the last 30 days, precipitation anomalies greater than 25-50mm have been observed from coastal Gulf of Aden areas, extending southward towards Garoowe, and into the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Moisture index analyses reflect this anomalous rainfall, with favorable areas of moisture observed in the Puntland region (**Figure 2**). The spatial extent and magnitude of the observed rainfall and moisture are expected to provide increased water availability, and improve pastoral conditions for many local areas.

Precipitation forecasts suggest a continuation of moderate to heavy rains for many areas in northern and central Somalia. Heavy, isolated rainfall amounts in excess of 25 mm are expected for the Puntland region, as much of this rain and moisture is forecast to extend further south and west towards the Ogaden and Shabelle region in the next seven days.

Early withdraw to seasonal rains leaving parts of northern Ethiopia and Eritrea below-average.

During the last observation period, rainfall amounts less than 20mm rain fell across the western portions of the Tigray and Amara regions of Ethiopia, with a number of areas receiving higher isolated totals in the Afar and across the border into Eritrea. Towards the south, rainfall remained average to above-average across a large portion of the SNNP, Gambella and Oromia regions in the last seven days.

Combined with two consecutive weeks of below-average rainfall, this weeks distribution of rains suggests an early withdraw of seasonal rains in northwestern Ethiopia. In the last 30 days, strengthening precipitation deficits in excess of 100 mm have been observed in northwestern Ethiopia, extending from Eritrea southward to the Lake Tana region and westward across the Sudan border (**Figure 3**). Local time series analysis depicting the evolution daily rainfall since June suggest that these recent 30-day deficits have eliminated much of the positive rainfall anomalies that were observed during the peak of the long rains season. This has left many local areas ranging from near average to below-average for the total length of the rains season.

Satellite Estimated Rainfall Totals (mm) for East Africa
6th October – 12th October 2009

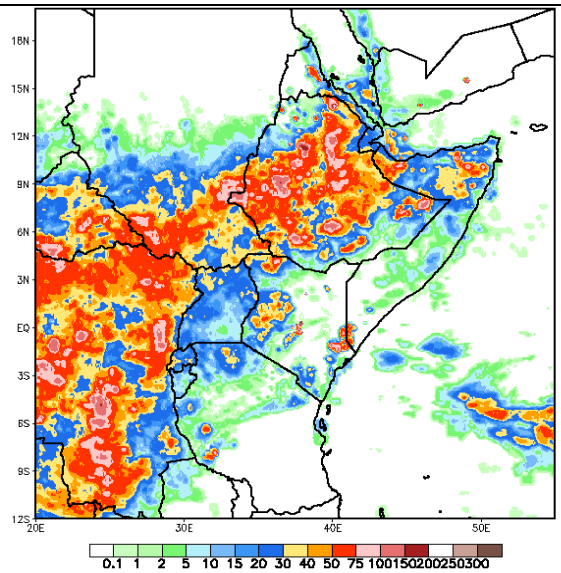


Figure 1
Source: NOAA/CPC

Moisture Index (%)
As of 10th October, 2009

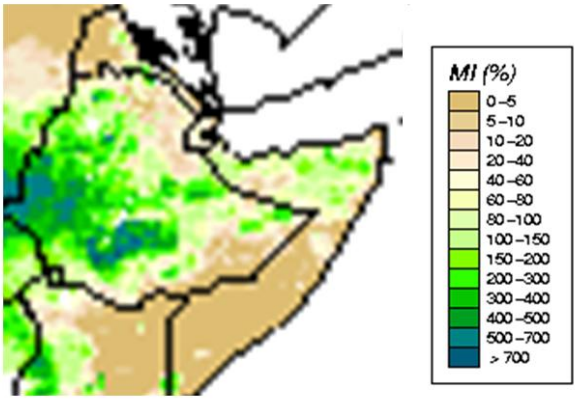


Figure 2:
Source: USGS/FEWS-NET

30-Day Precipitation Anomaly (mm)
11th September – 10th October, 2009

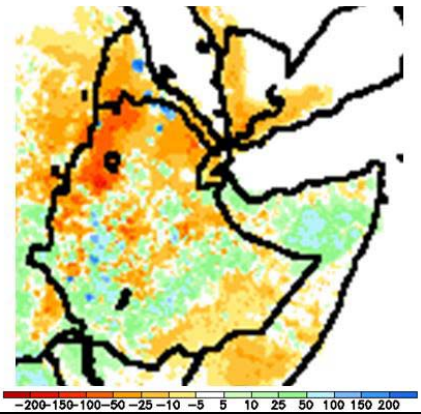


Figure 3:
Source: NOAA/CPC

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