

The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa March 31 – April 6, 2011



- Flooding and heavy rains continue over saturated areas of southern Angola and northern Namibia.
- Light precipitation across March-May cropping areas in Ethiopia has led to strengthening moisture deficits.



Flooding and heavy rains continue over western southern Africa.

During the past seven days, abundant amounts of rain (> 50mm) continued over western portions of southern Africa, including already-saturated areas in southern Angola and northern Namibia. The heaviest rain (> 75mm) fell over areas that had recently experienced widespread flooding along the border of Angola and Namibia (**Figure 1**). Elsewhere, ample rain (> 50mm) fell over much of Zambia and Tanzania and locally over Botswana and northern Zimbabwe. Further south, localized areas in South Africa also received a second week of moderate rainfall (10-30mm). In contrast, southeastern Africa, including central/southern Mozambique, and regions along the borders of Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa continued to receive little to no rainfall during the past seven days.

The standardized precipitation index (SPI) during the past thirty days shows substantially wet (> 3.0 standard deviations above normal) conditions over western continental southern Africa along the border between Namibia and Angola. Heavy rains in the region have caused elevated river levels along the Okavango River and flooding of the Cuvelai River. In contrast, southeastern southern Africa, including central/southern Mozambique and localized areas in northern South Africa and southeastern Zimbabwe experienced significantly dry (< 2.0 standard deviations below normal) conditions (Figure 2). Since February, the onset of the 6-week dryness has worsened season-long (October-present) anomalies, with rainfall deficits ranging between 100 and 150mm. Although a slight improvement in rainfall has been observed recently, these long-term deficits have likely reduced maize yields in South Africa and caused the permanent wilting of late-planted crops in southern Zimbabwe.

For the upcoming seven days, heavy rains (> 50mm), though not as widespread as during the past several weeks, are expected across northwestern Namibia and western/central Angola. Moderate to heavy rains are also expected over eastern South Africa.

Slow and erratic start to rains in Ethiopia

After a suppression of rains during the past week, many cropping areas in Ethiopia have experienced early-season dryness, with observed rainfall deficits already ranging between 25 and 50mm since the beginning of March (**Figure 3**). While it is still early in March-May rains season, an increase in the amount and extent of rains in April would help to improve these early-season moisture deficits. However, the lack of rainfall to date has already negatively affected early-planted crops in Ethiopia.

For the next observation period, light to moderate rains are forecast over western and eastern Ethiopia.



1.0 1.5

0.5 1.0

-0.5 0.5

-1.0 -0.5

-1.5 -1.0 -2.0 -1.5 -2.5 -2.0

-3.0 -2.5

<-3.0

Figure 2: USGS/EROS



Note: The hazards assessment map on page 1 is based on current weather/climate information and short and medium range weather forecasts (up to 1 week). It assesses their potential impact on crop and pasture conditions. Shaded polygons are added in areas where anomalous conditions have been observed. The boundaries of these polygons are only approximate at this continental scale. This product does not reflect long range seasonal climate forecasts or indicate current or projected food security conditions.

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