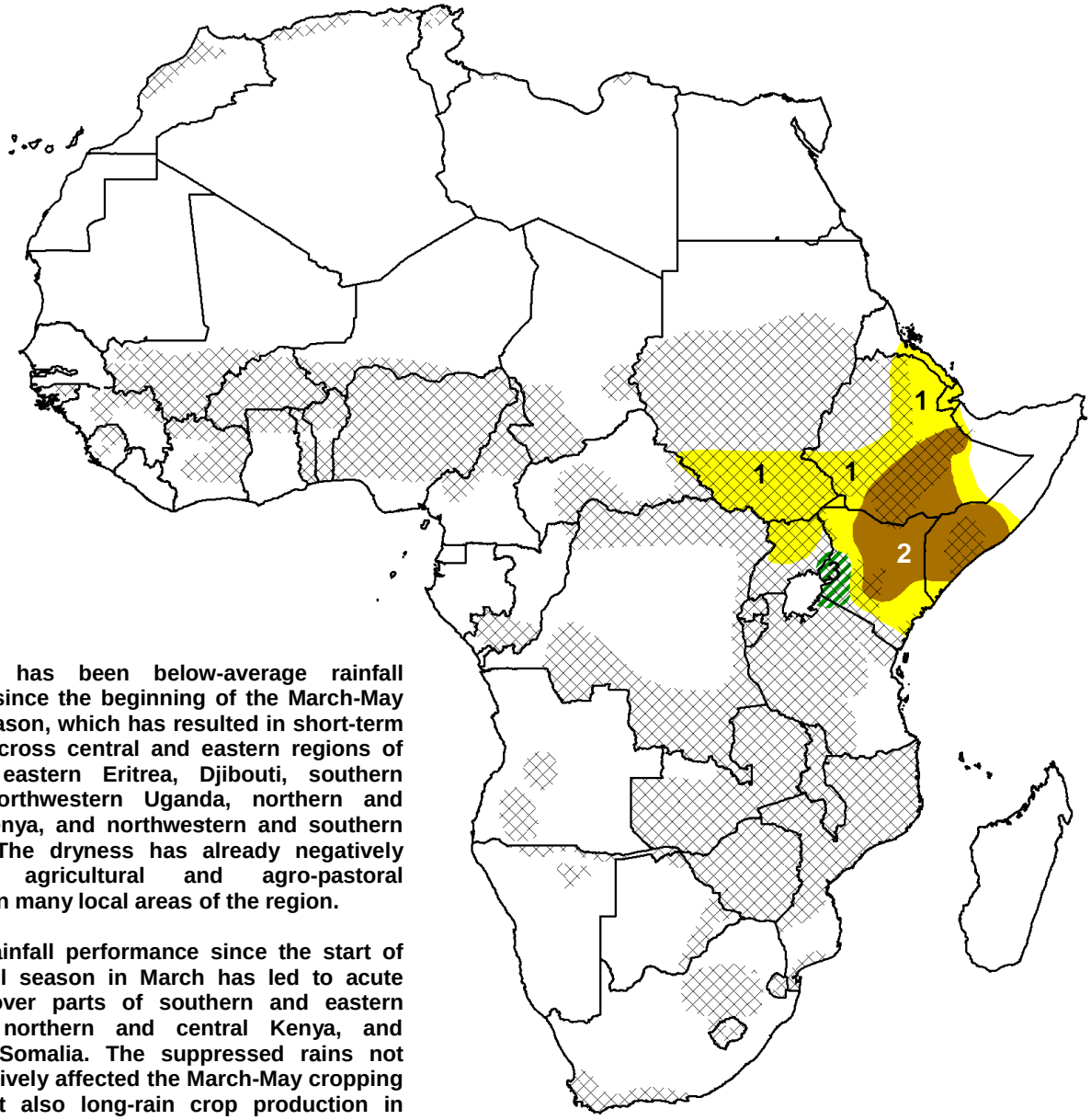
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa May 19 – May 25, 2011

- **Western southern Sudan observed an increase in rainfall over the past week while below-average rain returned to Somalia.**
- **Continued moderate to heavy rain has created favorable cropping conditions in southwestern Kenya.**
- **Above-average early season rains continue over the western Gulf of Guinea.**



1) There has been below-average rainfall recorded since the beginning of the March-May rainfall season, which has resulted in short-term dryness across central and eastern regions of Ethiopia, eastern Eritrea, Djibouti, southern Sudan, northwestern Uganda, northern and central Kenya, and northwestern and southern Somalia. The dryness has already negatively impacted agricultural and agro-pastoral activities in many local areas of the region.

2) Poor rainfall performance since the start of the rainfall season in March has led to acute dryness over parts of southern and eastern Ethiopia, northern and central Kenya, and southern Somalia. The suppressed rains not only negatively affected the March-May cropping period but also long-rain crop production in Ethiopia and pastoral conditions in Somalia during the dry summer months.

3) Three consecutive weeks of moderate to heavy rain have created good ground moisture and somewhat favorable cropping conditions across southwestern Kenya around Lake Victoria. With outlooks indicating moderate to heavy rain for the next week, cropping conditions are expected to continue to be favorable.

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

- May Cropped Areas
- Favorable
- Somewhat Favorable
- Flooding
- Short-term Dryness
- Drought
- Improving Drought

Western Ethiopia and southern Sudan receive heavy rain.

During the past week, an increase in precipitation was observed across portions of southern Sudan and western Ethiopia where heavy rain (> 50 mm) was recorded. The heaviest rain (> 75 mm) fell across western portions of southern Sudan and localized areas in the western Oromiya region of Ethiopia. The high precipitation totals in southern Sudan come after several weeks of lower-than-average totals where thirty-day rainfall deficits had grown to over 50 mm. The latest field reports indicate that the Western and Eastern Equatoria provinces of southern Sudan are receiving increased rains. However, moderate to strong thirty-day rainfall deficits (> 50 mm) still exist in provinces across southern Sudan. Elsewhere, moderate to heavy rain (> 20 mm) was recorded across localized areas in northern Somalia, northwestern Ethiopia, Uganda, and southwestern Kenya. In southwestern Kenya, this was the third consecutive week of moderate to heavy rain which has created somewhat favorable cropping conditions. In contrast, little to no rain (< 5 mm) fell across northern and eastern Kenya with locations in central and southern Somalia observing a reduction in rainfall compared to previous weeks as light rain (< 10 mm) was observed (**Figure 1**).

An analysis of moisture during the first dekad of May indicates that the increase in precipitation recorded during the beginning of May had helped improve moisture conditions over dry portions of southern Ethiopia and southern Somalia. However, the extended dry period over the Greater Horn of Africa has already negatively affected crops and livestock. The late season rains, though, provided some relief to pastoral and cropping conditions helping to replenish water catchments and improve grazing conditions across southern Somalia. Further south, moisture conditions are very good for cropping around Lake Victoria due to a good spatial and temporal distribution of rainfall. Conversely, moisture has continued to be limited across much of northern and eastern Kenya during the first dekad of May as below-average rains continued over the region (**Figure 3**).

Forecasts for the next week indicate an increase in rain across much of Ethiopia, and central/northern Somalia as moderate to heavy rain (> 20 mm) is expected. Moderate rain is also forecast over southwestern Kenya and northern Uganda. In contrast, light rainfall is expected over much of southern Sudan.

Above-average rains continue across the Gulf of Guinea.

Dating back to March, early season rainfall over bi-modal areas around the Gulf of Guinea, including coastal Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Liberia, has been above-average. Over the past thirty days, rainfall greater than 110% of normal has been widespread across both bi-modal and uni-modal areas along the Gulf of Guinea including Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, and Ghana. The largest, thirty-day, positive anomalies (> 180% of normal) exist in bi-modal areas of Liberia and Cote D'Ivoire. The ample early-season rainfall should provide good cropping conditions during the start of the long rains season. Further east, rain has been more sluggish to begin across uni-modal areas in central and northern Nigeria as rainfall has been generally 50-90% of normal. Forecasts indicate another week of moderate to heavy rain across much of West Africa.

Satellite Estimated Rainfall (mm)
Valid: May 10th – May 16th, 2011

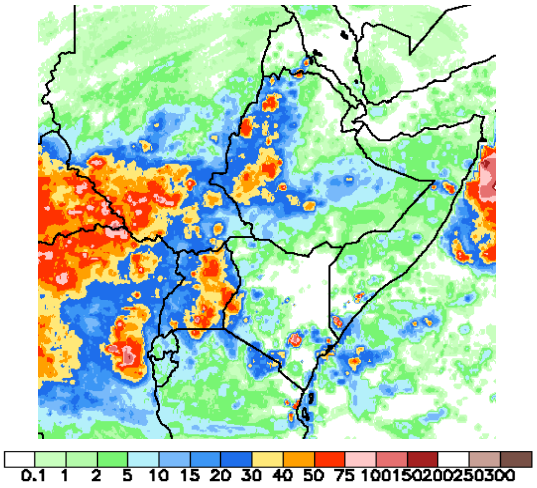


Figure 1: NOAA/CPC

Moisture Index
Valid: As of the 1st Dekad of May, 2011

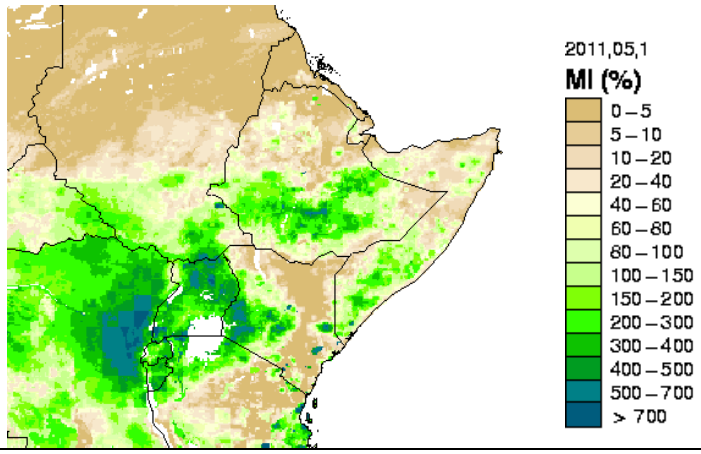


Figure 2: USGS/EROS

Satellite Estimated Rainfall Anomaly (%)
Valid: April 17th – May 16th, 2011

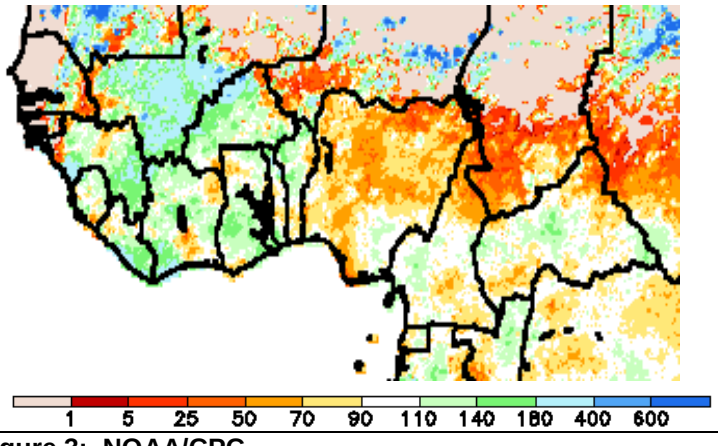


Figure 3: NOAA/CPC

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.