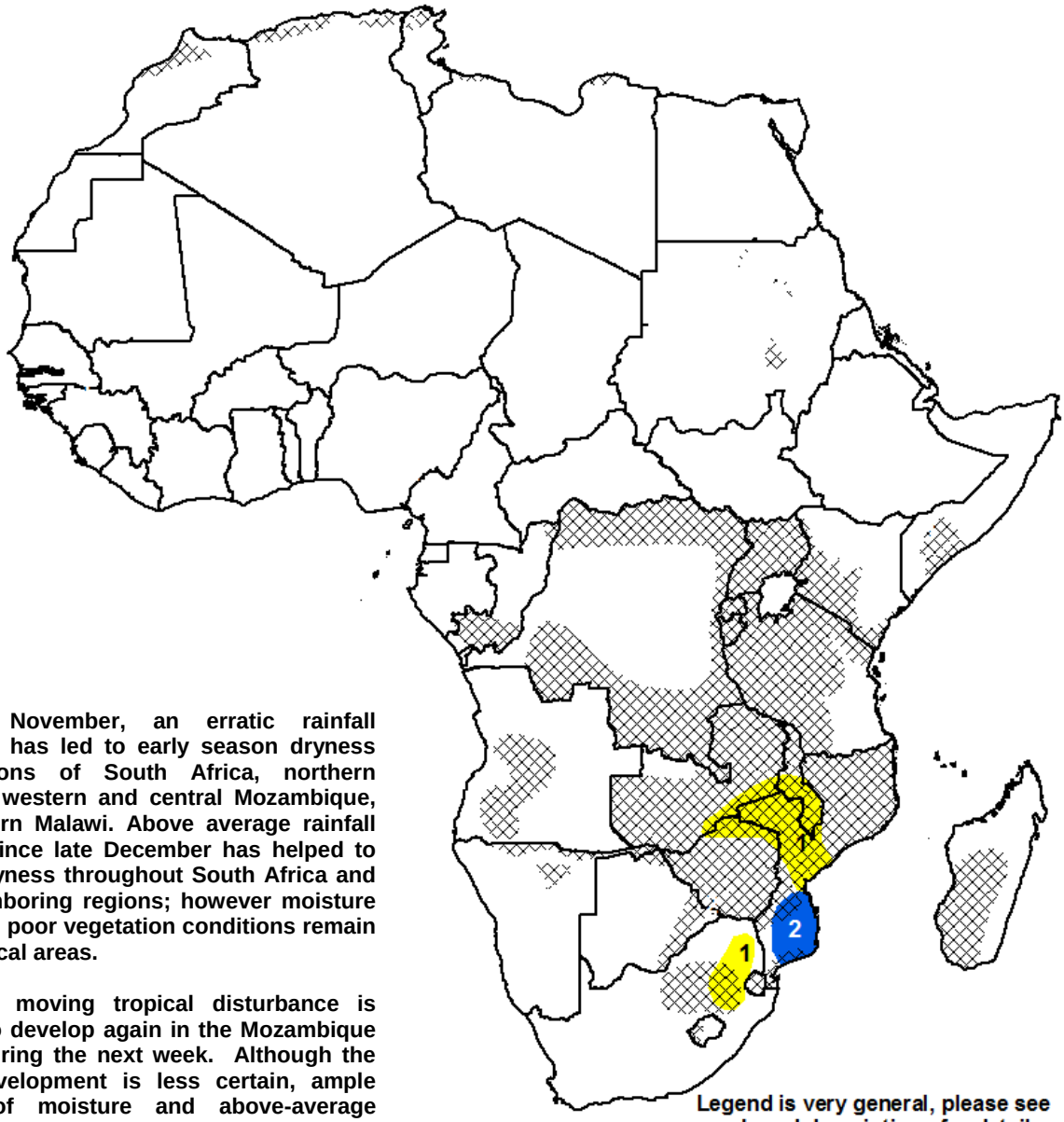
Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook
For USAID / FEWS-NET
January 19, 2012 – January 25, 2012

- **Since the beginning of January, well-distributed and above average rainfall over South Africa has helped reduce seasonal and short-term moisture deficits across the Maize Triangle region.**



1) Since November, an erratic rainfall distribution has led to early season dryness over portions of South Africa, northern Zimbabwe, western and central Mozambique, and southern Malawi. Above average rainfall observed since late December has helped to mitigate dryness throughout South Africa and many neighboring regions; however moisture deficits and poor vegetation conditions remain for many local areas.

2) A slow moving tropical disturbance is expected to develop again in the Mozambique Channel during the next week. Although the rate of development is less certain, ample amounts of moisture and above-average precipitation are expected for the eastern coast of Mozambique and western Madagascar. The potential for the heaviest rains and localized flooding remains high over southern Mozambique, as this is where the tropical disturbance may make landfall by the end of observation period.

Southern Africa rains becoming more robust in January

During the middle of January, increased amounts of precipitation were received across southern Africa. After the passage of Tropical Cyclone Chanda during the first dekad of January, seasonal rains have become more favorable and better distributed for areas that did not received adequate moisture throughout December. In the past week, moderate to heavy rainfall accumulations ranging between 50-75mm were observed across much of southern Angola, northern Zambia, Malawi, and northern Mozambique (**Figure 1**). High amounts of precipitation (>50mm) were also observed throughout South Africa, providing a favorable increase in moisture particularly throughout the seasonally drier parts of the Maize Triangle region. However, lesser amounts of rainfall were received across southern Mozambique, southern Zimbabwe and throughout Botswana.

Despite the gradual improvement in January rainfall, many local areas are still experiencing localized moisture deficits in South Africa and Mozambique stemming from poor rainfall in November and December. On a seasonal timescale going back to the start of October, precipitation deficits greater than 100mm are still observed for many local areas along the Zambezi River basin in southeastern Zambia, central and western Mozambique, and Malawi (**Figure 2**). The reduction of early season moisture is expected to hinder the development of crops that were planted early in the season. However, crops that were planted later may benefit from increased rains throughout January.

Precipitation forecasts suggest a continuation of high, abundant rainfall during late January. For the upcoming week, moderate to heavy rainfall amounts (>50mm) are expected for many portions of southern Angola, Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi. Lesser, but seasonably favorable rains are also expected for South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Satellite Estimated Rainfall (mm)
Valid: January 8th – January 14th, 2011

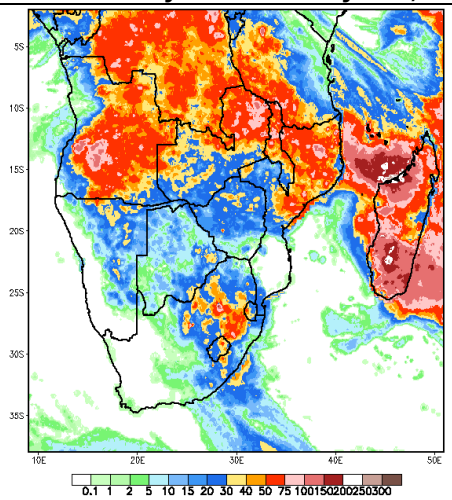


Figure 1: NOAA/CPC

Satellite Estimated Seasonal Rainfall Anomaly (mm)
Valid: October 1st, 2011 – January 14th, 2012

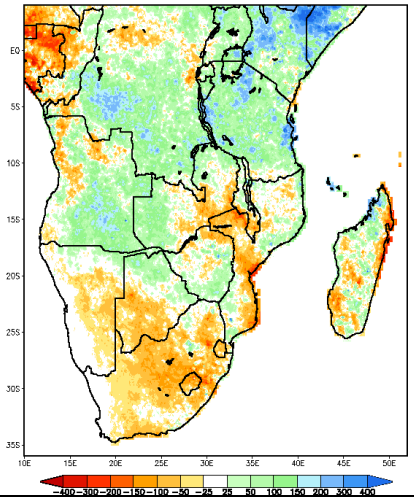


Figure 2: NOAA/CPC

Improvement in vegetation conditions across South Africa

After a delayed start of the seasonal rains in South Africa, the return of more frequent rainfall has helped to offset some early season precipitation deficits during November and December. The increase in rainfall and moisture are reflected in the latest satellite derived vegetation condition indices across South Africa. Many local areas in the Maize Triangle region of South Africa that had experienced persistently below-average conditions are now near-neutral as of early January (**Figure 3**). The improvement of pastoral and agro-pastoral conditions is expected to benefit ongoing cropping activities in the region.

For the upcoming observation period, forecasts indicate another week of average to above-average precipitation across South Africa. Seven-day rainfall amounts ranging between 30-50mm are expected for across much of the Maize Triangle, with possibly locally higher amounts over Swaziland, Lesotho, and in the Kwa-Zulu Natal region.

Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) Anomaly
Valid: As of 1st Dekad of January, 2012

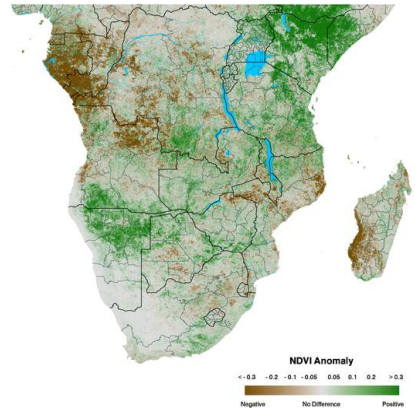


Figure 3: USGS/EROS

Note: The hazards outlook 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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