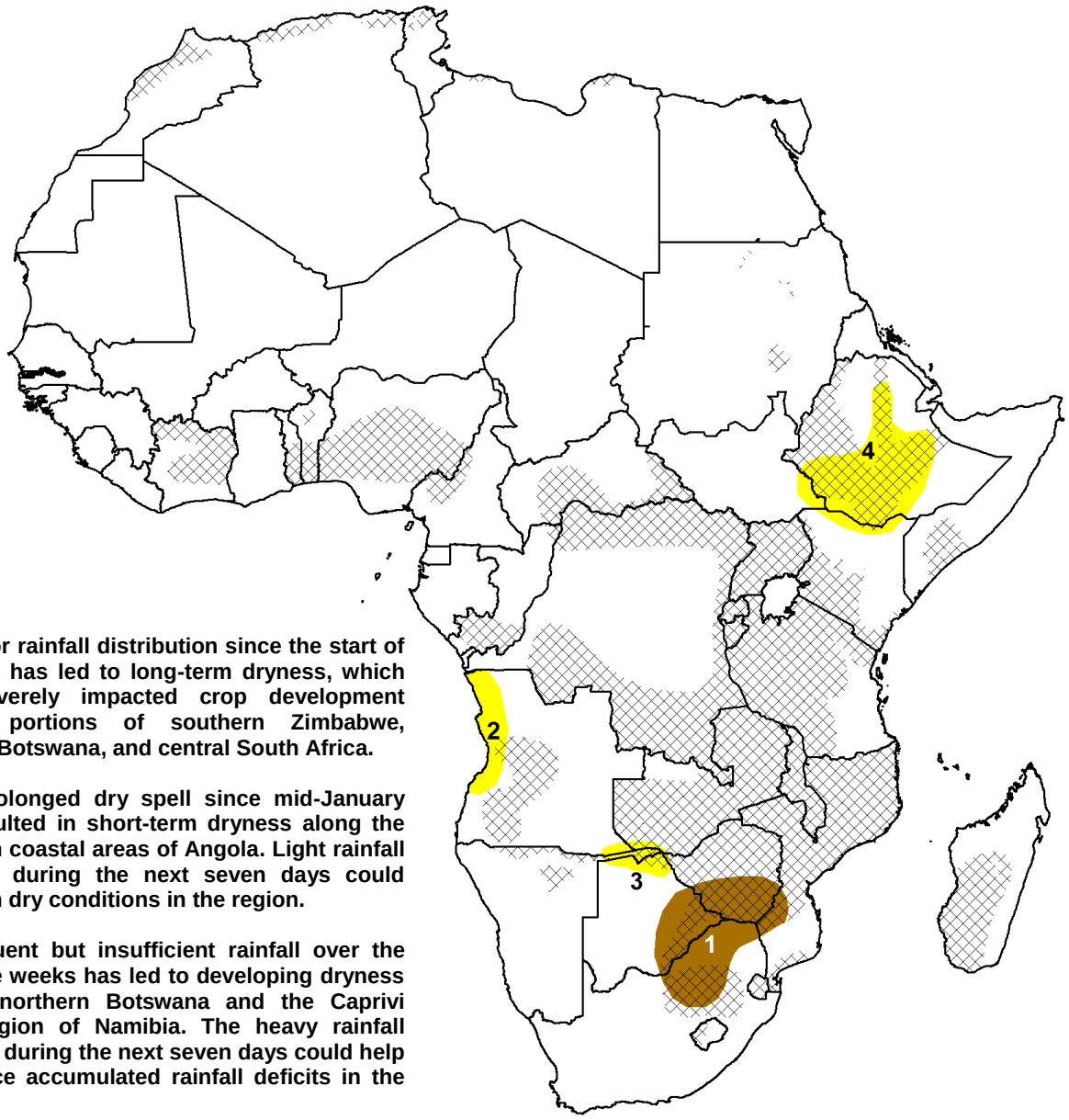
Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook
For USAID / FEWS-NET
March 29 – Apr 4, 2012

- **Reduced rainfall amounts have been observed in central southern Africa during the past week.**
- **A short-term dryness has settled in eastern Africa due to a delay in the onset of seasonal rainfall.**



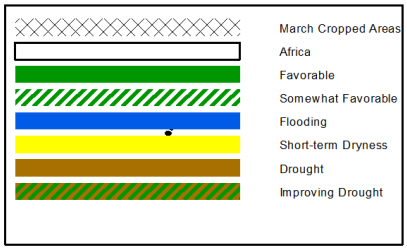
1) A poor rainfall distribution since the start of the year has led to long-term dryness, which has severely impacted crop development across portions of southern Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, and central South Africa.

2) A prolonged dry spell since mid-January has resulted in short-term dryness along the northern coastal areas of Angola. Light rainfall forecast during the next seven days could maintain dry conditions in the region.

3) Frequent but insufficient rainfall over the past five weeks has led to developing dryness across northern Botswana and the Caprivi Strip region of Namibia. The heavy rainfall forecast during the next seven days could help to reduce accumulated rainfall deficits in the region.

4) The delayed onset of the seasonal rainfall by several weeks has negatively affected crops over the southern and northeastern cropping areas of Ethiopia. Moderate to locally heavy rainfall expected during the next week could enhance soil moisture and benefit cropping activities, though timely planting has already been affected.

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



Decreased rainfall observed in southern Africa.

During the past week, a wide portion of central southern Africa received little to no (< 5 mm) rainfall, while heavy (> 50 mm) rainfall continued across Angola, southern DRC, eastern Zambia, Malawi, northern Mozambique, and Madagascar (**Figure 1**). In Angola, the observed heavy rainfall has helped to provide relief to the dryness that has persisted along the northern coastal areas during the past two months. In contrast, the little to no rainfall received across northern Botswana and the Caprivi Strip region, southern Zimbabwe, and northern South Africa has contributed to persistent thirty-day rainfall deficits across the dry portions of southern Africa. Since the start of the season, the dry portions of southern Africa have experienced below-average rainfall, with seasonal deficits exceeding 150 mm or less than 70 percent of their averages in many local areas. The continuation of reduced rainfall could impact the development of late-planted crops and likely reduce crop yields in southern Africa.

The observed below-average rainfall over the past thirty days has sustained moisture deficits and impacted vegetation conditions in southern Africa. During the past ten days, worsening crop conditions were observed, with moderate to strong negative Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) anomalies throughout eastern Botswana, southern Zimbabwe, and northern South Africa (**Figure 2**).

For next week, model forecasts, however, suggest the return of increased rainfall amounts across southern Africa, with the heaviest (> 75 mm) rainfall forecast across Zambia, Zimbabwe, and central Mozambique. Moderate rainfall is expected in southern Botswana, central and southeastern South Africa, while light to moderate (20 – 30 mm) is expected elsewhere.

Moderate to locally heavy rainfall observed in Ethiopia during the past week.

After a delay of several weeks, seasonal rainfall has begun in eastern Africa, with moderate to locally heavy (20 – 50 mm) rainfall across the western and central portions of Ethiopia (**Figure 3**). Little rainfall was, however, observed elsewhere. Despite the onset of rainfall during the past week, moderate to strong (< -50 mm) seasonal deficits have remained across much of Ethiopia due to the prolonged lack of rainfall since the beginning of the season. Reports have already indicated damaged crops and reduced planting in the south and northeast cropping areas of Ethiopia. As for the upcoming week, rainfall forecasts indicate a continuation of heavy rainfall across central Ethiopia. Moderate to locally heavy rainfall is also expected across western and the Lake Victoria region of Kenya. The forecast increase in spatial distribution of rainfall should help to improve moisture conditions and aid cropping activities over local areas of eastern Africa during the next week.

Satellite Estimated Rainfall (mm)
Valid: March 21st – March 27th, 2012

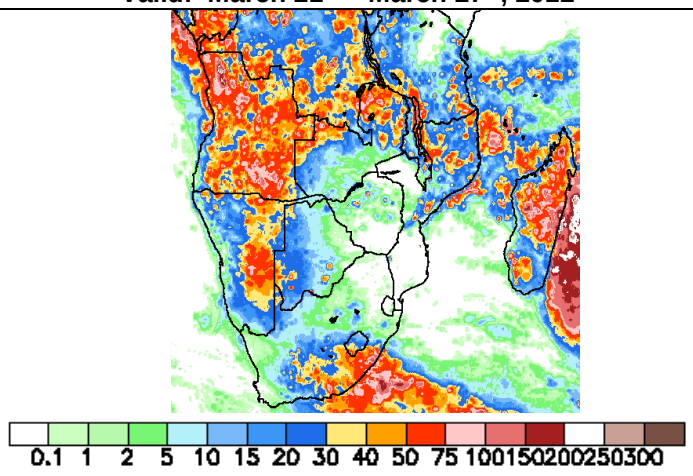


Figure 1: NOAA/CPC

Normalized Difference Vegetation Index Anomaly
Valid: As of March 16th – March 25th, 2012

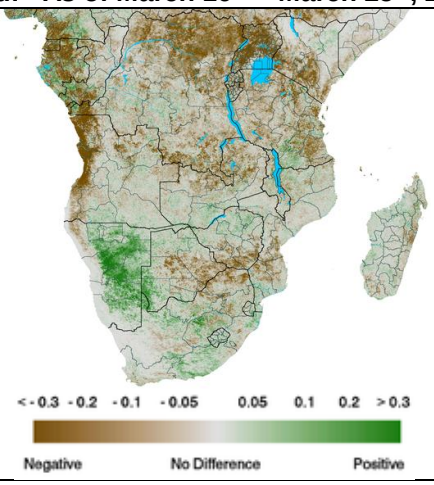


Figure 2: USGS/EROS

Satellite Estimated Rainfall (mm)
Valid: March 21st – March 27th, 2012

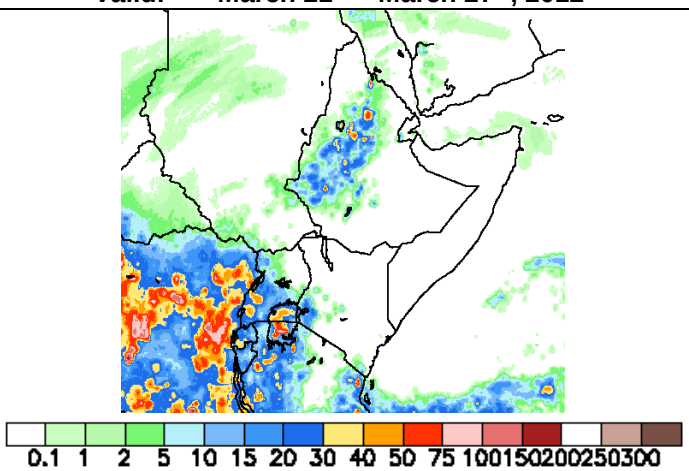


Figure 3: NOAA/CPC

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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