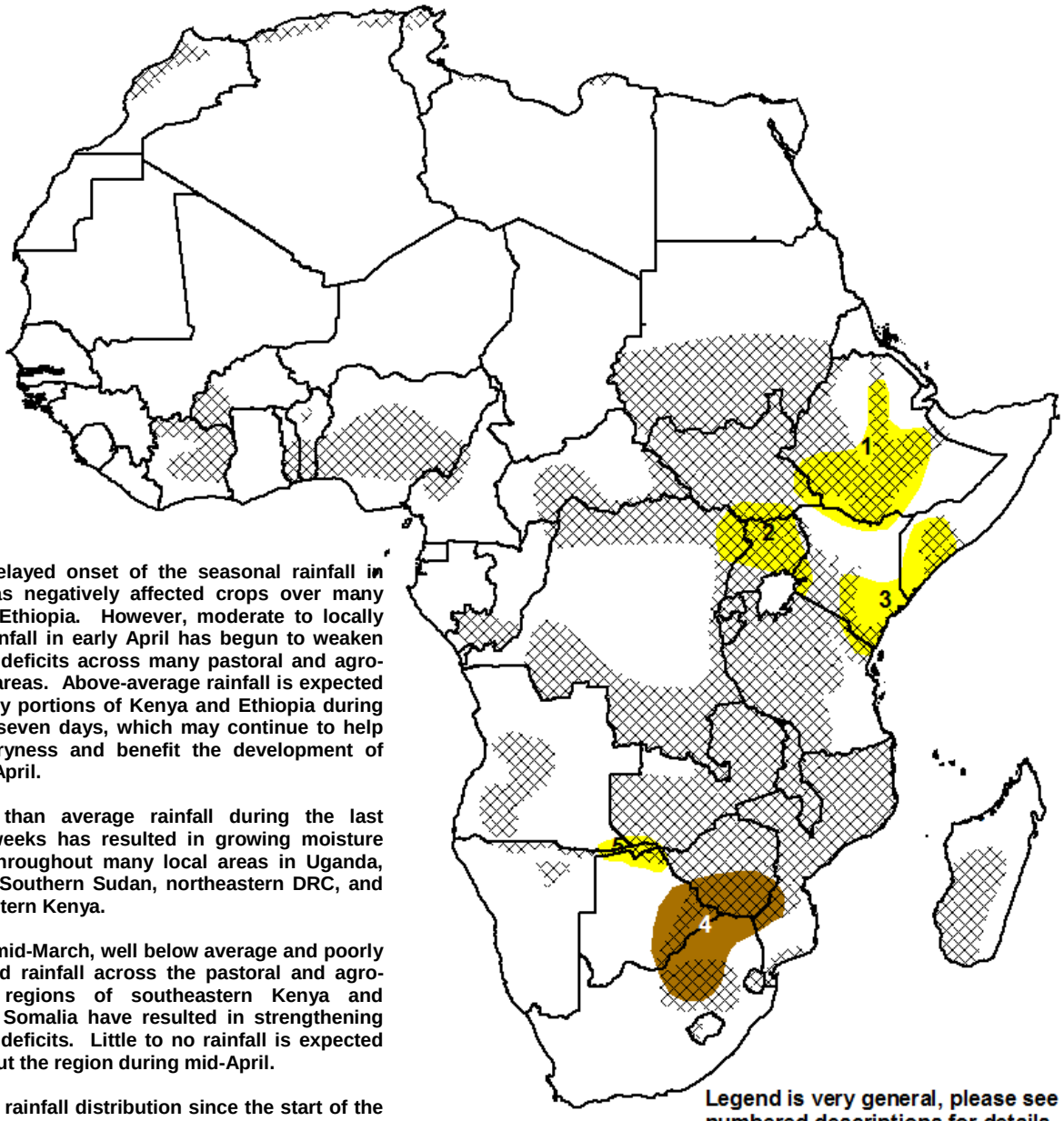
Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook
For USAID / FEWS-NET
April 12 – April 18, 2012

- **Despite an increase in precipitation in early April, moisture deficits continue to strengthen and expand throughout much of Eastern Africa.**



1) The delayed onset of the seasonal rainfall in March has negatively affected crops over many areas in Ethiopia. However, moderate to locally heavy rainfall in early April has begun to weaken moisture deficits across many pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. Above-average rainfall is expected over many portions of Kenya and Ethiopia during the next seven days, which may continue to help relieve dryness and benefit the development of crops in April.

2) Drier than average rainfall during the last several weeks has resulted in growing moisture deficits throughout many local areas in Uganda, northern Southern Sudan, northeastern DRC, and southwestern Kenya.

3) Since mid-March, well below average and poorly distributed rainfall across the pastoral and agro-pastoral regions of southeastern Kenya and southern Somalia have resulted in strengthening moisture deficits. Little to no rainfall is expected throughout the region during mid-April.

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

5) Frequent but insufficient rainfall over the past six weeks has led to developing dryness across northern Botswana and the Caprivi Strip region of Namibia. Little to no rainfall is expected in April for the region.

Some relief to dryness experienced across the Greater Horn.

During the first week in April, moderate to locally heavy rainfall was received across the Greater Horn. In Ethiopia, seven day rainfall amounts ranging between 25-50mm were observed throughout much of the highlands, with locally heavier amounts observed throughout the south and central portions of the country (**Figure 1**). In Kenya, the highest weekly rainfall accumulations (>50mm) were received around the Lake Victoria region, with substantial precipitation amounts observed across the drier central and eastern provinces of the country. Throughout many parts of Somalia and Sudan, rainfall was generally light and isolated over the past seven days.

The precipitation distribution across East Africa during the first week in April marks the first time where rains were favorably above-average following several consecutive weeks of anomalous early season dryness. The onset of average to above-average precipitation in April has helped to alleviate dryness from the previous month, however many local areas are still experiencing considerable moisture deficits for the season. Despite the enhanced rainfall during the past week, negative rainfall anomalies still range between 50-150mm throughout much of Ethiopia and Uganda since February 1st and have also spread into portions of eastern Kenya and southern Somalia (**Figure 2**). In southwestern Kenya, moisture deficits are less severe due to a higher amount of rainfall observed during March. Overall, the seasonal dryness is still expected to negatively affect ground conditions and seasonal cropping activities.

For the upcoming outlook period, model forecasts suggest a continuation of average to above-average rainfall into mid-April. Weekly precipitation amounts ranging between 20-50mm, with locally heavier amounts (>50mm) expected for much of Ethiopia, southwestern Kenya and Uganda. In eastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia, an increase in rainfall is also expected during the next week. Little to no rainfall is expected for southeastern Kenya and southern Somalia.

Satellite Estimated Rainfall (mm)
Valid: April 1st – April 7th, 2012

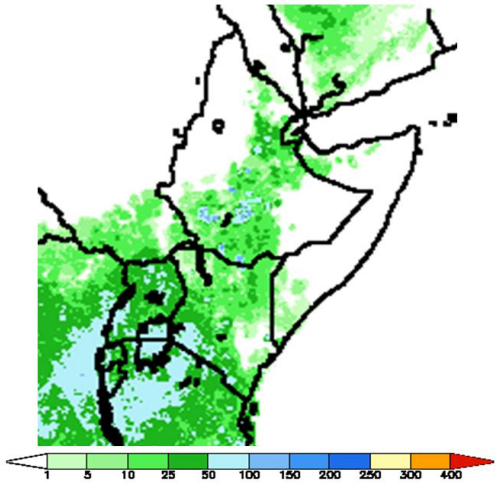


Figure 1: NOAA/CPC

Satellite Estimated Rainfall Anomaly (mm)
Valid: February 1st – April 7th, 2012

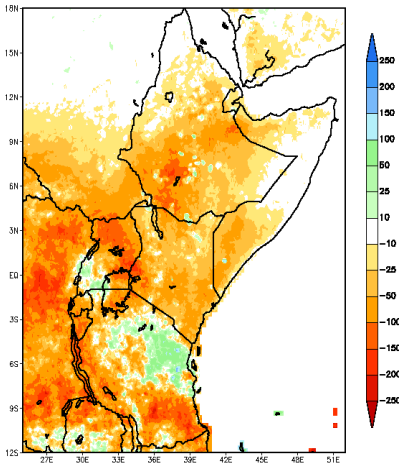


Figure 2: NOAA/CPC

Poor early season rainfall observed in West Africa

Over the last 30 days, poorly distributed rainfall has been observed throughout many local areas in the Gulf of Guinea region of West Africa. Since early March, the strongest negative rainfall anomalies ranging between 50-100mm have been observed in throughout Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and western Nigeria. In addition, the frequency of rainfall has also been below average for these areas (**Figure 3**) which has likely resulted from poor southerly moisture transport and atmospheric convergence which normally develops in the Gulf of Guinea during this time of the year. Rainfall forecasts suggest the return of more seasonable rainfall totals across the region, which would result in some improvement to dry conditions across West Africa during the next week.

Number of Rain Days Anomaly in the last 30 days
Valid: As of April 7th, 2012

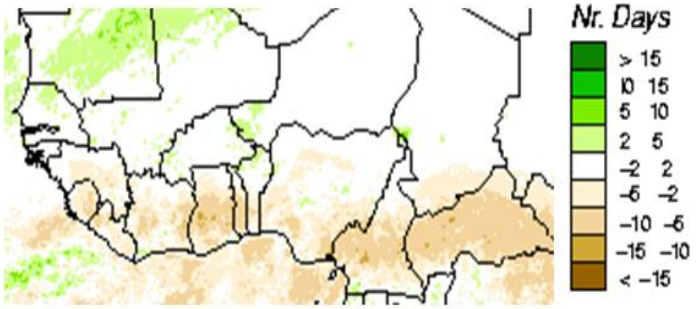


Figure 3: USGS/EROS

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.