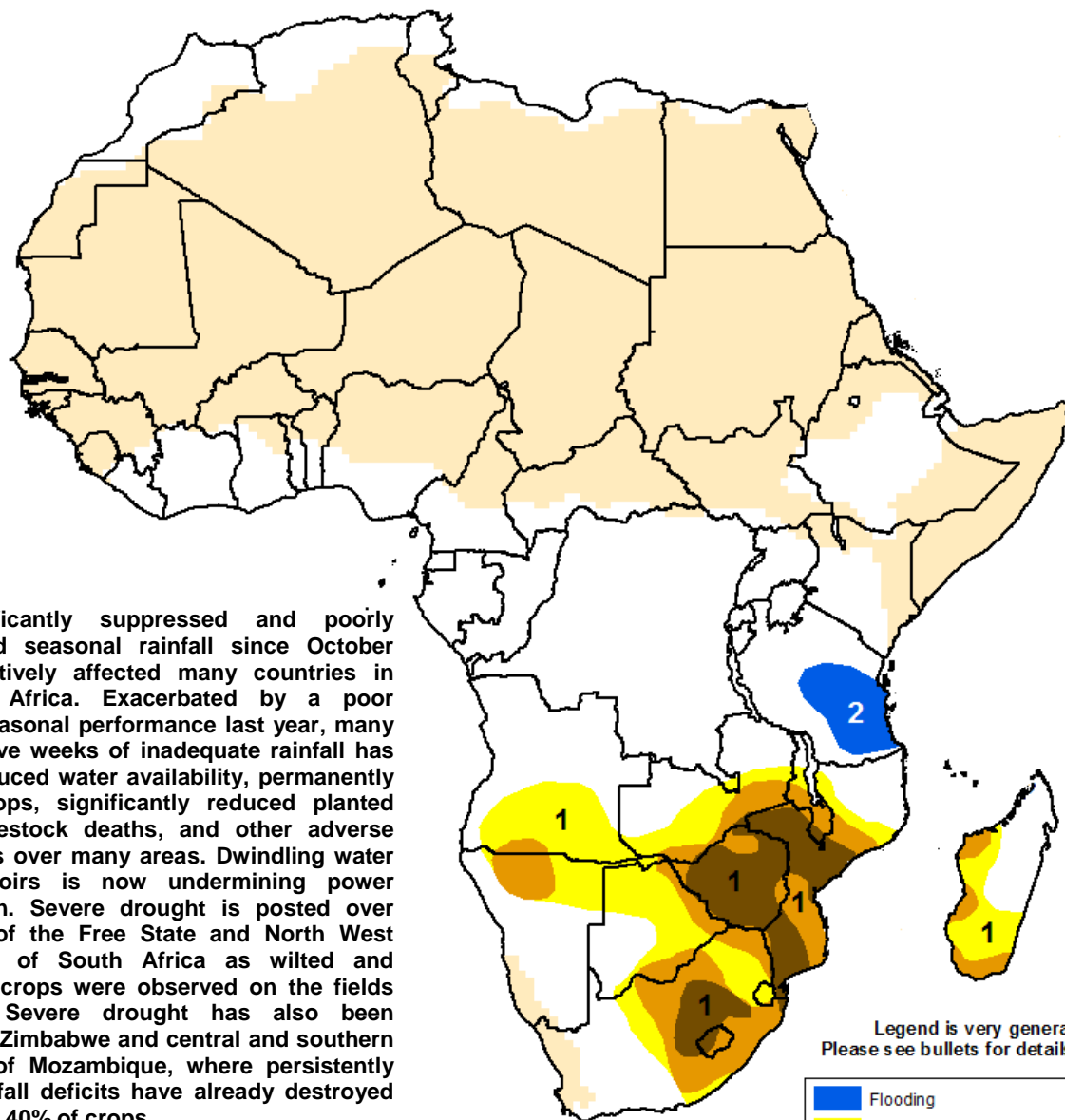




Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook February 18 – February 24, 2016

- An erratic rainfall distribution and extremely poor rain totals since the start of the season has led to widespread loss of crops and other adverse conditions affecting millions of people.
- Rains were not as heavy this past week in Tanzania and Northern Madagascar. Even so, continued above-normal rainfall in Tanzania keeps the risk for flooding in place.



1) Significantly suppressed and poorly distributed seasonal rainfall since October has negatively affected many countries in southern Africa. Exacerbated by a poor rainfall seasonal performance last year, many consecutive weeks of inadequate rainfall has led to reduced water availability, permanently wilted crops, significantly reduced planted areas, livestock deaths, and other adverse conditions over many areas. Dwindling water in reservoirs is now undermining power production. Severe drought is posted over portions of the Free State and North West Provinces of South Africa as wilted and damaged crops were observed on the fields recently. Severe drought has also been posted in Zimbabwe and central and southern portions of Mozambique, where persistently large rainfall deficits have already destroyed more than 40% of crops.

2) Heavy rainfall during the past several weeks has affected many people, resulting in numerous fatalities, as well as destroyed homes and infrastructure. Continuing heavy rainfall on already saturated ground is likely to cause inundation and swelling of streams and rivers in southern and central Tanzania. The flooding is likely to exacerbate the cholera epidemic in Tanzania.

Legend is very general.
Please see bullets for details.

Blue	Flooding
Yellow	Abnormal Dryness
Orange	Drought
Brown	Severe Drought
Red	Tropical Cyclone
Pink	Potential Locust Outbreak
Light Blue	Heavy Snow
Purple	Abnormal Cold
Dark Red	Abnormal Heat
Light Orange	Seasonally Dry

The driest conditions in decades continue to impact large portions of the region, while heavy rains impact Tanzania.

During the last observation period, the wettest conditions persisted over many of the same areas. Below-average rains remained in many parts of Zimbabwe, Malawi, central Mozambique, and Zambia. Significant portions of Mozambique and southern Zimbabwe did not record any rain once again according to satellite estimates (**Figure 1**). Southern Angola and Namibia also were very dry. According to satellite estimates, the largest weekly rainfall accumulations (>75mm) were registered in localized areas of central Tanzania and Zambia. Moderate rainfall was received across western Zimbabwe, Botswana, the Caprivi Strip region, and central/northern Angola. Deviating from the recent pattern, the entirety of Madagascar observed below-normal rainfall. Northeastern South Africa received moderate rains, primarily between 10-50mm.

A wetter pattern in January helped to relieve seasonal moisture deficits for parts of Angola and Namibia which had experienced a poor start to the rainy season. A recent return to drier than normal conditions has proven the period was just a temporary wet spell. Moisture deficits continue to increase in these areas. Vegetation indices are now starting to reflect this return to dry conditions.

The largest precipitation deficits remain concentrated over southern Zambia, central and western Mozambique, southern Malawi, and large portions of Zimbabwe. Many local areas in eastern Zimbabwe and Mozambique are still experiencing well less than half of their normal rainfall since the beginning of January. As a result this season ranks among the worst over the past 30 years for many areas. **Figure 2** shows the large areas where this season currently ranks among the bottom 10% or even 3% of driest seasons over the climatology. The harshness of these dry conditions has already severely affected cropping activities across the region. Similarly rapidly increasing moisture deficits in southern Madagascar have already affected many hundreds of thousands of people with drought conditions. Many portions of southern Madagascar are now observed to be among the driest 10% of seasons, as well.

Furthermore, the erratic distribution in rainfall since the beginning of the season has resulted in wilted and damaged maize crops over large portions of South Africa, in particular Free State and North West Provinces. Continuing infrequent and low rainfall accumulations is exacerbating the situation.

During the next outlook period, models suggest that the monsoonal convergence over southeastern Africa will stay in place over much the same area. Above-average rainfall should remain over portions Tanzania, northern Malawi and Zambia (**Figure 3**). This may lead to continued flooding in those areas. Many areas farther to the south throughout the southern African region, including Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, southern Angola and Zambia are expected to receive suppressed rainfall. Lesotho and the surrounding South African province may receive some heavier precipitation next week.

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.

