The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

February 10 - 16, 2005

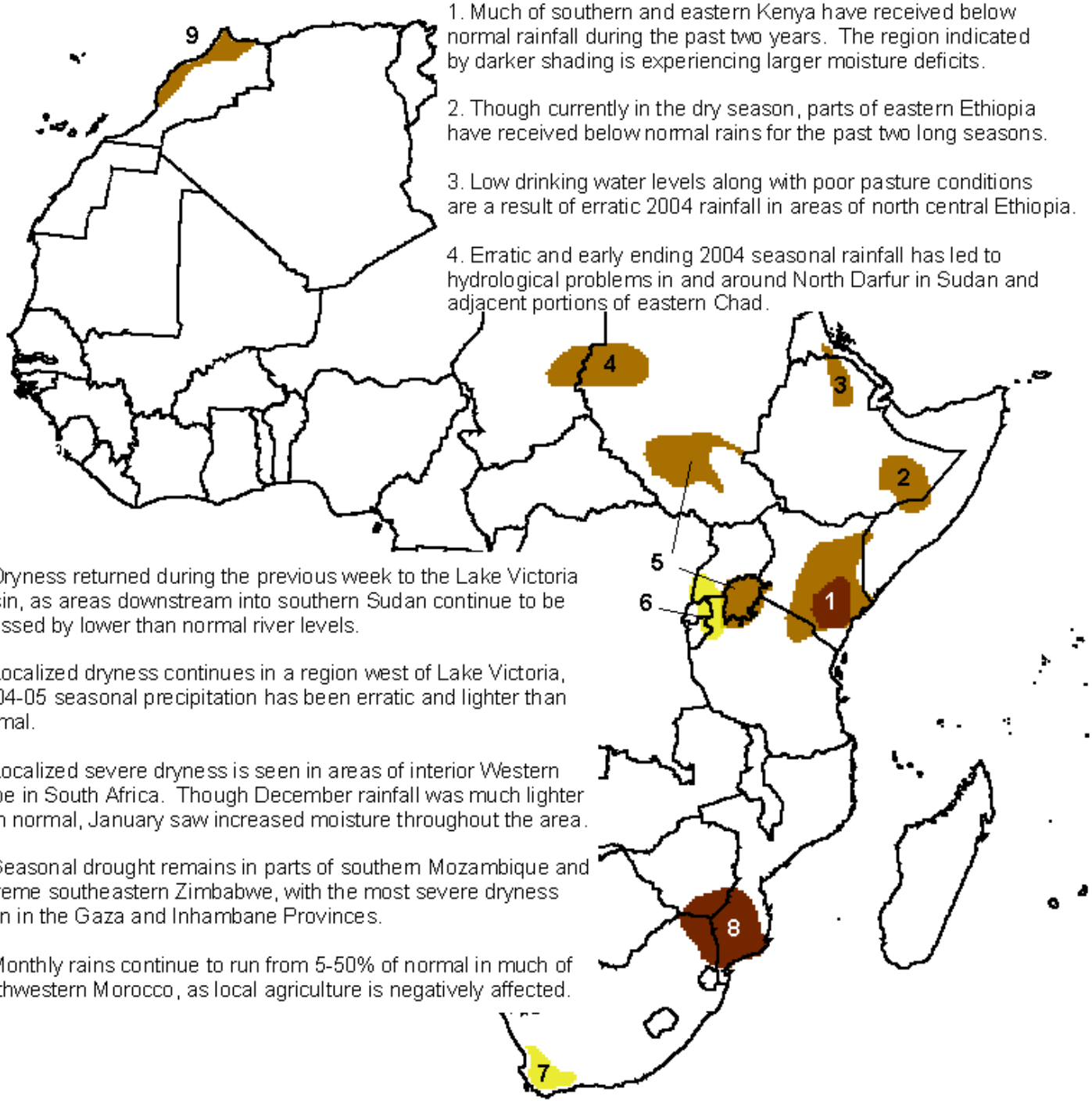
Weekly Introduction:

Tropical Cyclone Update:

As of this morning, there have been 17 numbered cyclones in the South Indian Ocean Basin. This is above average for this period as the normal number of cyclones through January is about 12. February, however, generally represents the peak of the season with about 7 numbered cyclones. On the other hand, as we examine the outlook for the general meteorological situation for the upcoming week, we note a generally unfavorable pattern for cyclone development in the west Indian Ocean area such that Africa would be impacted. The winds aloft do not appear favorable to sustain cyclone development at this time. This pattern tends to change dramatically, and we continue to monitor the situation at http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/fews/CYCLONES/cyclones.html.

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)



1. Much of southern and eastern Kenya have received below normal rainfall during the past two years. The region indicated by darker shading is experiencing larger moisture deficits.

2. Though currently in the dry season, parts of eastern Ethiopia have received below normal rains for the past two long seasons.

3. Low drinking water levels along with poor pasture conditions are a result of erratic 2004 rainfall in areas of north central Ethiopia.

4. Erratic and early ending 2004 seasonal rainfall has led to hydrological problems in and around North Darfur in Sudan and adjacent portions of eastern Chad.

5. Dryness returned during the previous week to the Lake Victoria Basin, as areas downstream into southern Sudan continue to be stressed by lower than normal river levels.

6. Localized dryness continues in a region west of Lake Victoria, as 04-05 seasonal precipitation has been erratic and lighter than normal.

7. Localized severe dryness is seen in areas of interior Western Cape in South Africa. Though December rainfall was much lighter than normal, January saw increased moisture throughout the area.

8. Seasonal drought remains in parts of southern Mozambique and extreme southeastern Zimbabwe, with the most severe dryness seen in the Gaza and Inhambane Provinces.

9. Monthly rains continue to run from 5-50% of normal in much of northwestern Morocco, as local agriculture is negatively affected.

Valid: February 10 - 16, 2005

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Much of eastern Kenya received virtually no precipitation during the month of January, as rainfall deficits approached 100 mm in some locations. This, combined with two years of erratic and short rainfall seasons, has led to areas of intense dryness throughout much of southern and eastern Kenya. As indicated in the graphic, the most severe dryness is seen in the southeastern region, with smaller rainfall deficits elsewhere.

2. Pastoral dryness continues to be seen in parts of eastern Ethiopia and west central Somalia due to at least four seasons of below normal precipitation. Drinking water levels have likely been affected as well, and relief will not occur until the monsoon approaches later in the year.

3. Erratic seasonal rains in 2004 have led to poor pasture conditions and low aquifers in the Afar region of northern Ethiopia. Dryness will remain until the monsoon approaches in a few months.

4. 2004 rains in the Darfur region of western Sudan were late to start and early to recede, leaving behind stressed pastures, poor irrigation, and low aquifer levels. Coupled with the stress of the IDP / refugee situation throughout the area, the intensity of the hydrological problem has been enhanced. Reports of Chadian refugee camps' lack of drinking water have been noted, and the hazard area appears to be expanding.

5. After moderate to heavy rains fell over the Lake Victoria Basin two weeks previous, dryness returned to the area during the past seven days. The recent moderate rains have slightly raised the lake level, though it remains near the ten year low, and rivers downstream continue to feel the negative effects. Regions of southern Sudan, which rely on river flooding to enhance food production, have been stressed due to the low river levels. Rainfall should generally be light during the next week in the area.

6. Similar to area 5, dryness was seen during the previous week in the area west of Lake Victoria, though healthy rains that fell two weeks ago did increase moisture in the region. Second season crops are being stressed and have likely been already damaged by the erratic seasonal precipitation.

7. January rainfall in the Western Cape region of South Africa improved dramatically over the light showers that fell in December of last year. Though the region normally receives small rainfall totals during the month, positive anomalies of up to 50 mm translated to rainfall percent of normals near 1000% in some locations. On a negative note, temperatures throughout the region have been running higher than normal recently, which are increasing evaporation and stressing crops. A few light showers are possible during the next week.

8. Drought continues throughout much of southern Mozambique and adjacent portions of southeastern Zimbabwe and extreme northeast South Africa, though the Maize Triangle has not likely been severely affected by the lack of rains and indications show that the large agricultural region is in the midst of an acceptable season. Rains in parts of southern Mozambique have been running 25-100 mm less than normal for both December and January, which translates to around 10-50 percent of normal. Analyses indicate that the northeastern half of North Transvaal may not be able to recover from the existing seasonal rainfall deficits before the end of the season, regardless of the rainfall patterns during the next two months.

9. Negative rainfall anomalies of between 50-100 mm have occurred in both December and January in coastal crop producing regions of Morocco, with January receiving almost no rainfall near the Gibraltar region. Forecasts are dry once again for the next seven day period, as agriculture continues to be negatively affected.

AUTHOR: Timothy B Love

Questions or comments about this product may be directed to Alvin.Miller@noaa.gov or 1-301-763-8000 x7552

FEWS NET is a USAID-funded activity whose purpose is to provide objective information about food security conditions. Its views are not necessarily reflective of those of USAID. The FEWS NET weather hazards assessment process and products include participation by FEWS NET field and home offices, NOAA-CPC, USGS, NASA, and a number of other national and regional organizations in the countries concerned.