

## Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

December 15 – 21, 2005

### *Weekly Introduction:*

#### **Update of El Niño:**

**Synopsis:** ENSO-neutral or weak La Niña conditions are likely during the next 6-9 months.

By the end of November, equatorial SST anomalies greater than  $+0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  were restricted to the region between Indonesia and  $170^{\circ}\text{E}$ , while negative anomalies less than  $-0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  were observed at most locations between  $145^{\circ}\text{W}$  and the South American coast. The SST departures in the Niño 3, Niño 3.4, and Niño 1+2 regions were negative, while weak positive departures were observed in the Niño 4 region. Collectively, the present oceanic and atmospheric anomalies are consistent with a trend toward La Niña conditions in the tropical Pacific.

The spread of the most recent statistical and coupled model forecasts (weak La Niña to weak El Niño) indicates some uncertainty in the outlooks. However, current conditions and recent observed trends do not support the development of El Niño. Rather, they support either a continuation of ENSO-neutral conditions or the development of weak La Niña conditions.

This discussion is a consolidated effort of NOAA and its funded institutions.

#### **Locust Update:**

The FAO desert locust situation (<http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html>) was last updated on November 29 indicating that the situation remains calm in the summer breeding areas in the Sahel in West Africa. Small-scale breeding is occurring in Mauritania and Algeria.

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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. The lack of any significant rainfall across the eastern half of Kenya and southern Somalia has left the region in both a hydrological and an agricultural drought. The current conditions are the latest in a multiyear drought that has impacted much of the area.

2. Most of western Kenya, northern Uganda, southern Ethiopia, central Somalia and extreme northern Tanzania are facing dry conditions of a poor wet season. Rainfall during most of the season has not been significant.

3. Within area (4) in south central Tanzania is an area where the rains are now four dekads late to start. Dry conditions are reducing water availability in the area. Minor improvement is possible during the coming week.

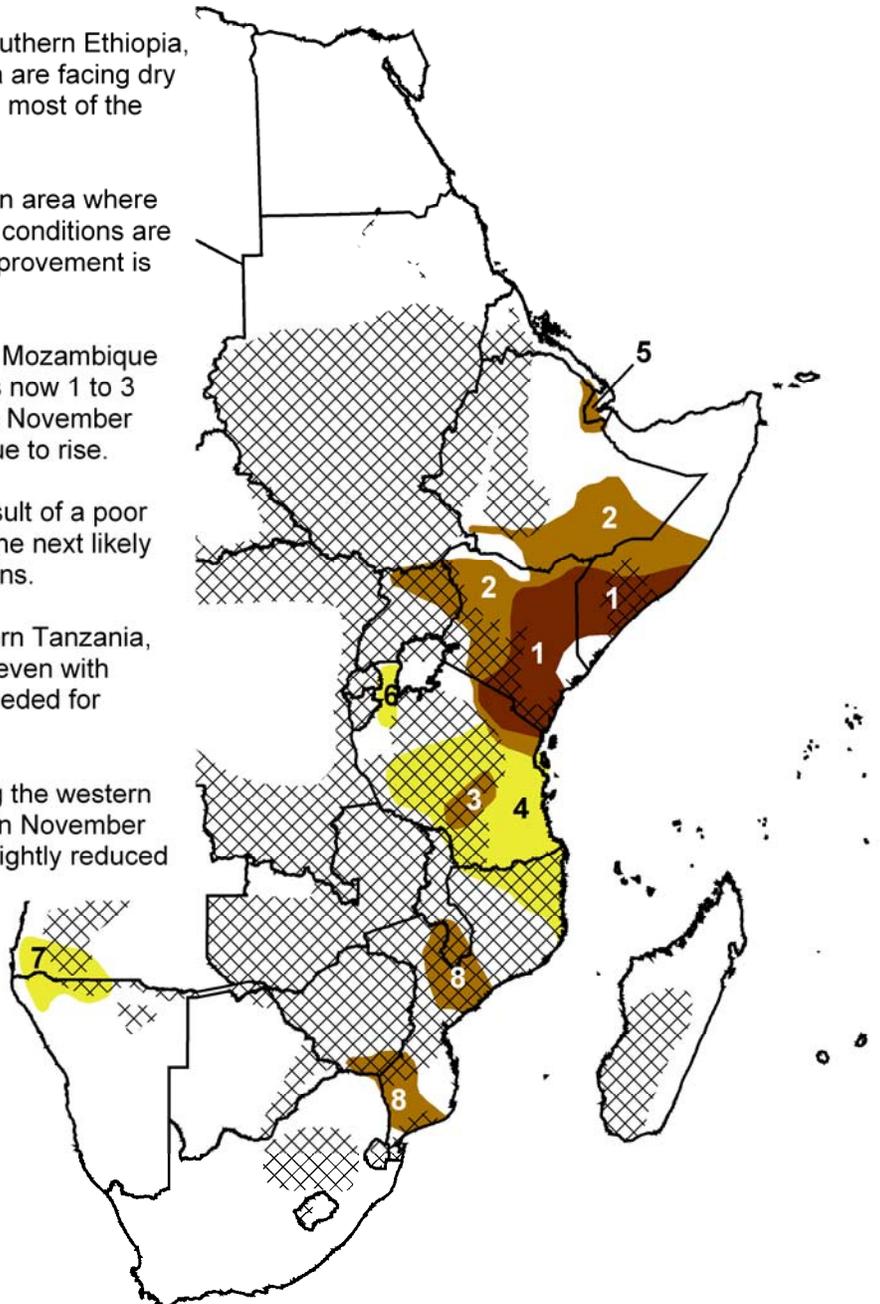
4. Central and southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique are experiencing a late start of season, which is now 1 to 3 dekads late. Rainfall should have begun by late November or early December and moisture deficits continue to rise.

5. Pasture conditions continue to suffer as a result of a poor rainfall totals during the long rains in Djibouti. The next likely chance for relief will be during the 2006 long rains.

6. Moisture deficits continue to reduce in northern Tanzania, between Lake Victoria and Rwanda. However, even with the improved conditions, additional rainfall is needed for conditions to return to normal.

7. Rainfall has been slightly below normal along the western Namibia- Angola border. Below normal rainfall in November and early December, across the region, have slightly reduced water availability.

8. Conditions continue to improve in southeastern Africa, where poor rains last year have been replaced by steady rains this year. If rainfall continues in this direction this hazard area will be removed next week.



## ***Weather Hazards Text Explanation:***

1. Most of eastern Kenya and portions of southern Somalia continue to experience both a hydrological and agricultural drought. The failure of Somalia's Gu rains and Kenya's March-May wet season has been made worse by the failure of the current season. Rainfall has varied between erratic and light to nonexistent. Most of the region received less than 15% of normal precipitation between September and November, and the trend has continued into December. With the majority of the wet season now past, it is unlikely that any significant improvement will occur. During the past week a few isolated areas picked up less than 5 mm of rainfall. Little change is expected for the coming period.
2. Similar, but somewhat less detrimental conditions are impacting most of the rest of Kenya, along with northern Uganda, southern Ethiopia, and central Somalia. Rainfall has been between 25% and 75% of normal across most of the region with a few isolated areas doing slightly worse. The below normal precipitation has reduced water resources and degraded pastures throughout the region. The past week brought some decent rainfall to the northern end of the hazard area in Ethiopia, with totals as high as 30 mm. The rest of the region received little to no rain. The coming period will not bring significant relief to the area.
3. The Udzungwa Range in southern Tanzania has seen a four dekad delay in the start of the rainy season. The area has received isolated heavy rains, but these have been erratic and have not benefited the entire region. The area as a whole has accumulated a moisture deficit of more than 50 mm since November. The coming week will likely bring a similar pattern, with precipitation only making an impact in isolated locations.
4. The season is late to start across central and southern Tanzania as well as northern Mozambique. Precipitation should have begun falling in most of the area between mid November and early December. Moisture deficits range from a few millimeters to 30 mm. Concern for this area is a result of the poor rainy season further north in Kenya is now shifting southward. Rainfall over the region during the previous period was light, with rainfall ranging from 0 mm to 20 mm. The coming period will bring similar conditions to most of the area, with heavier amounts in Mozambique.
5. Conditions remain poor for the pastures in Djibouti and small isolated pockets in Ethiopia's Afar region. These problems are of particular concern because the dry season has only recently begun and rainfall is not expected to arrive again until late March or early April. As a result pasture conditions are expected to continue to degrade during the next few months.
6. Some minor improvement has come to northern Tanzania between Lake Victoria and Rwanda. Rainfall had been erratic during much of November but the first few weeks have brought steady, but light precipitation. Deficits remain at around 25 mm. Dry conditions during the coming week will likely prevent any significant recovery for the area.
7. Deficits continue to climb along the Angola- Namibia border. Rainfall has been lackluster for the past few weeks and deficits have risen to about 30 mm. This is likely beginning to place stress on crops in the region. The past week brought little rainfall to the area and similar conditions are expected to continue into the coming period.
8. The season continues to do well across southeastern Africa. This is in sharp contrast to the devastating drought that destroyed much of the regions crops during the last growing season. This year rainfall, although delayed in some areas, has been heavy enough to remain near normal. With wet conditions expected to continue in this area, it is unlikely that this region will remain a hazard area next week. Rainfall, which has been steady, totaled between 20 mm and 75 mm during the past week. Healthy rains are expected to continue into the coming period, especially in the northern area.

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