



The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

May 11 - 17, 2006

Weekly Introduction:

Tropical Cyclone Update:

As we approach the end of the tropical cyclone season, it is appropriate to review this past season. As of this date, we have had 23 numbered cyclones in the South Indian Ocean compared with the average number of 27. None of the tropical cyclones impacted mainland Africa and only one, Boloeste, impacted Madagascar.

Although La Niña and MJO played a role, the dominant factor was the sea surface temperature in the eastern Indian Ocean. The sea surface temperature for the season was cooler than normal, especially between 10 and 25 deg South over the eastern Indian Ocean. This limited the number of cyclones that would develop and move westward into the western portion of the basin and ultimately strike Madagascar and SE Africa. This La Niña was a little atypical, in that the waters in the eastern Indian Ocean are typically a bit warmer than normal, which contributes to the high incidence of cyclones hitting Madagascar and SE Africa during a typical La Niña year.

Africa Weather Hazards/Benefits 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) Drought conditions in portions of Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia are occurring as a result of a failed 2005 season. Improvement is observed recently in portions of Somalia, Kenya, and Tanzania. See #3.

2) Dryness continues in much of Somalia, eastern Ethiopia, and central Kenya, though recent rainfall has led to improved moisture conditions in much of the region. See #3.

3) Much of southern Somalia, eastern Kenya, and northeastern Tanzania have received much improved rains during the past few weeks. This has led to improved moisture conditions throughout much of the region.

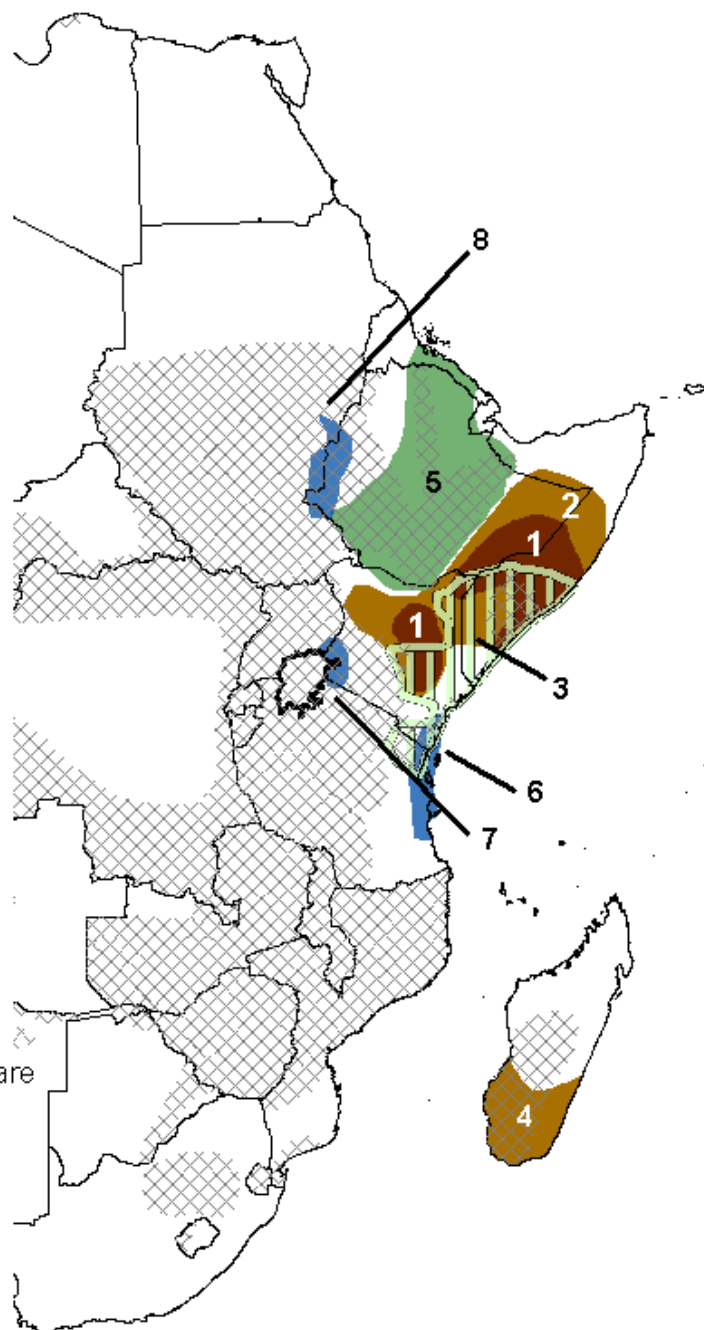
4) Dryness is observed in much of southern Madagascar, with seasonal rainfall deficits exceeding 200 mm in some locations. The rainy season has ended and little relief is expected until December.

5) Belg rainfall in much of Ethiopia has been normal to above normal during the past months. This has led to widespread areas of favorable agricultural and water resource conditions.

6) Very heavy rain during the past few weeks along southern coastal Kenya and northeastern Tanzania have led to areas of flooding. Additional heavy rains are expected during the next week.

7) Rainfall during the past week has been extremely heavy in portions of western Kenya near Lake Victoria. Additional heavy rains are possible during the next week.

8) Heavy thunderstorms have produced intense rainfall in portions of west central Ethiopia and adjacent regions of the Blue Nile basin. Localized flooding is likely occurring.



Valid: May 11 - 17, 2006

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Long term drought continues in much of central Kenya due to a failed rainy season in 2005 and erratic rainfall thereafter. Though much of this has improved during the past few weeks, the precipitation continues to fall just outside of the area experiencing the most difficult conditions. Rains may be locally moderate during the next week in the region. In southern and central Somalia, similar conditions exist, though recent rainfall has been more widespread and has affected the area to a more positive degree during the past weeks. Favorable rainfall is expected in the region during the next week. In both areas, large areas of failed crops and very poor pasture conditions have negatively affected livelihoods in the region. Drinking water levels remain locally severe, though recent rains have led to improvement during the past month. See #3.

2. Poor rains during the 2005 short rainy season resulted in drought development across Kenya, Somalia, southeastern Ethiopia, and parts of Tanzania. In some areas, this was in addition to previous poor rainy seasons. The poor short rainy season resulted in crop losses, degradation of pastures and low water supplies. Much of the negatively affected region has received beneficial rains during the past few weeks, and this has led to much improved conditions in many areas (see #3). However, portions of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia continue to be dry, as rains have not yet begun in earnest. This is not a good sign, considering much of the normal rainfall in the area decreases in May into June. Lasting dry-season implications are likely, including poor pasture conditions and reduced water availability.

3. Seasonal rains have been widespread during the past few weeks in drought- to dryness-affected regions of southern Somalia, eastern Kenya, and northeastern Tanzania. This has led to areas of dramatic improvement in hydrological conditions throughout the region, and has helped to mitigate areas of even long term drought due to failed 2005 rains. In fact, much of this recent rainfall has been too intense, with flooding reported in coastal areas of southern Somalia, Kenya, and near Dar es Salaam. See #6.

4. Late season rains in much of southern Madagascar were erratic and much lighter than normal, with precipitation deficits ranging from 150-250 mm over the past two months. Crop losses have been reported, and conditions will not likely improve until rains begin again in late 2006. Hopes of rainfall from a low pressure system currently located in the southern Mozambique channel are decreasing, with little precipitation expected in this dryness affected region. This hazard region will likely be removed within the next weeks, since few hydrological implications should affect that area during the dry season.

5. Positive agricultural and hydrological conditions exist throughout much of Ethiopia due to a great start to the 2006 rainy season. Since the beginning of February, accumulated rainfall is running from 120-400 percent of normal, with only a couple pockets of slight dryness within the highlighted area. Rainfall during the past week has been moderate in much of the region, and additional rains are expected during the forecast week. Some areas of western Ethiopia continue to see negative rainfall anomalies and drier than normal conditions, though very heavy rains have fallen in southwestern regions during the past week, alleviating dryness in those locations (See #8).

6. Heavy rains fell once again during the past week in areas of coastal Kenya and Tanzania, with weekly totals exceeding 100-150 mm in some locations. Localized flooding has likely resulted, and additional precipitation is expected in the region during the next period.

7. Moderate rains fell in parts of western Kenya near lake Victoria during the past week, especially on May 7th, where weekly totals exceeded 250 mm in some locations. Localized flooding was reported, and should continue sporadically during the next week as precipitation in excess of 75mm is possible.

8. During the past week, heavy rains fell just south of the Blue Nile River in western Ethiopia, where daily totals exceeded 100 mm on May 3rd and May 7th. This has led to areas of local river flooding, though widespread problems are not anticipated during the next with moderate rain showers expected.

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