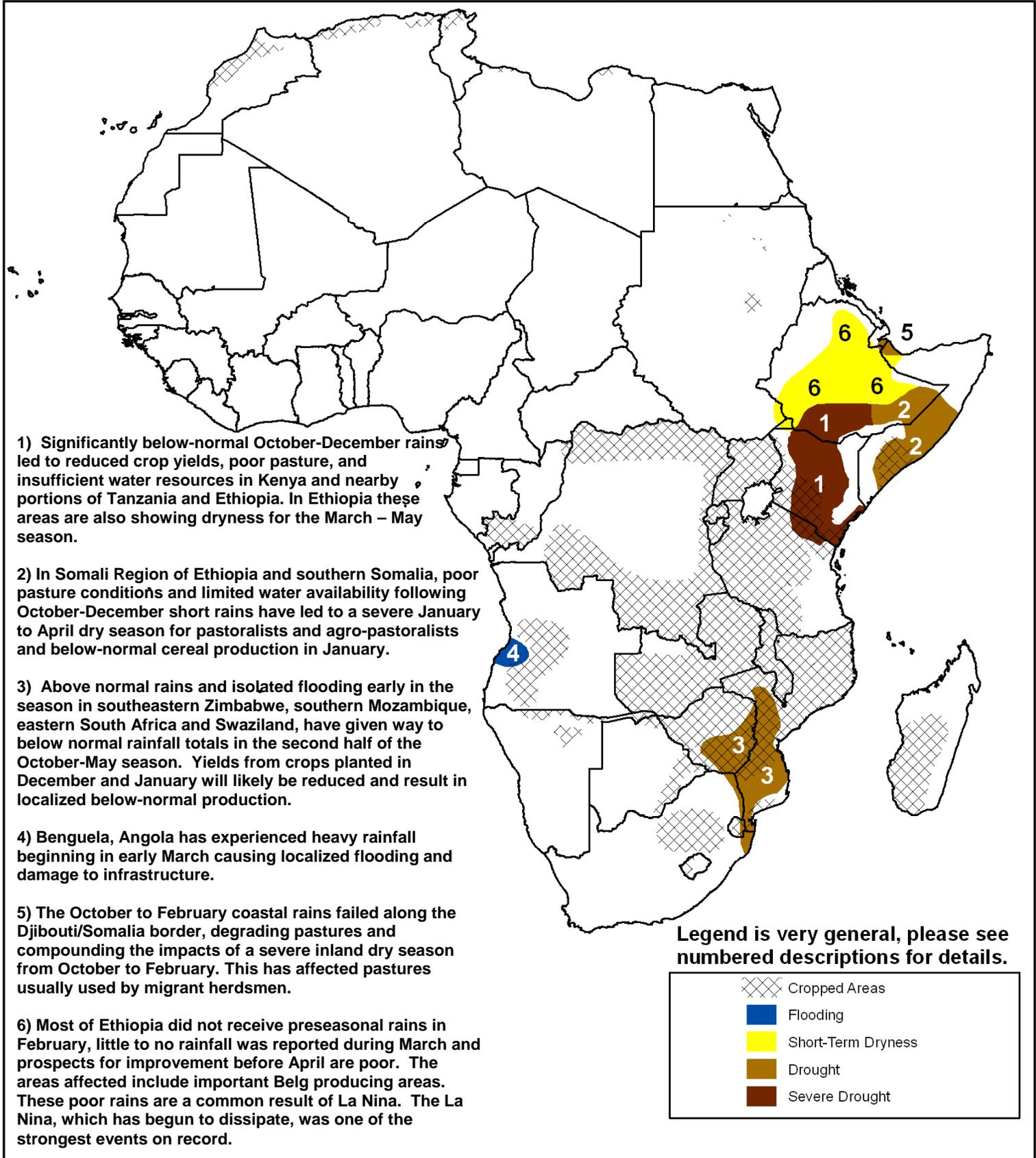


- With a third of the March – May season over, dry conditions remain firmly in place over Ethiopia. During the last week precipitation totals increased slightly over Kenya. The current La Nina is expected to keep precipitation totals below normal for the near term.
- With the approaching end of season across many areas of the south, it is unlikely that there will be significant improvement to the dry conditions in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Crops planted in December/January will face reduced yields and localized below-normal production is likely. The end of March is typically the end of the season in this region.



## Rainfall deficits grow in Ethiopia, little relief expected

The March to May season, in Ethiopia, has not been favorable thus far. The current season is now one third complete and the outlook remains unfavorable for improvement. Weather models are indicating continued dry conditions across Ethiopia for the next two weeks. During the last week there were moderate rain showers in Kenya, and soil conditions across much of the country are reasonably close to normal. (See **Figure 1**)

Some regions, such as near the Ethiopia-Kenya and Ethiopia-Somalia borders, desperately need rainfall to relieve the drought from last season's poor rains. In these areas the current dry conditions are building on previous failed seasons.

Rainfall is not expected to improve in the near-term. The longer term outlook is not very certain. This is due to a weak connection between rainfall during the March to May season and La Nina.

## Few changes expected in southern Africa season

Different areas of southern Africa have had a wide range of conditions during the October – May season. It is unlikely that there will be major changes in current soil conditions through the end of the season.

Pasture and crops have benefited from steady rains across most of the unimodel areas of Tanzania. Nearby in northern Mozambique, conditions have also been favorable. Although there were several isolated flooding events, mainly along the major rivers in these areas, precipitation has been well distributed. Tropical Cyclone Jokwe also impacted the immediate coastal region from Mozambique to Moma.

Flooding and soil leaching hampered crops mainly along the major rivers of Malawi, Zambia and northern Zimbabwe early in the season. In early February rainfall eased, however in some areas, precipitation may have eased up too much and damaged the few crops in this area that would have been at a vulnerable stage of development. Across South Africa's maize triangle and nearby areas of Botswana rainfall was never excessive but it did cut off in a similar manner to the areas mentioned above, with the same risk to crops and pasture. Any problems in these areas are likely to be very localized as a result of near sufficient rains in most areas.

Southern Zimbabwe and southern Mozambique were impacted by the dry spell as well. Here it has continued since it began in early February. Early-planted crops that had reached the maturation stage before dry conditions moved into the region were not as affected as later crops. These early-planted crops include a small proportion of crops in Zimbabwe, but a majority of the crops in Mozambique, where harvests are already taking place. Later-planted crops were more likely to be at the vulnerable reproductive stage when the dry spell arrived. These crops are mostly in southern Zimbabwe with some crops at the same vulnerable stage in southern Mozambique. (See **Figure 2**)

## Rainfall remains normal across the Gulf of Guinea

Precipitation across the Gulf of Guinea and the southern Sahel has been normal. Light rains and the occasional thunderstorm have begun to refill reservoirs. Rainfall has also softened the ground, which will help planting activities in the Gulf of Guinea countries. There have been reports of localized flooding in Nigeria.

Moisture has made its way as far north as Burkina Faso and Mali during the last week. This is the furthest north the rains have been observed this season. (See **Figure 3**)

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