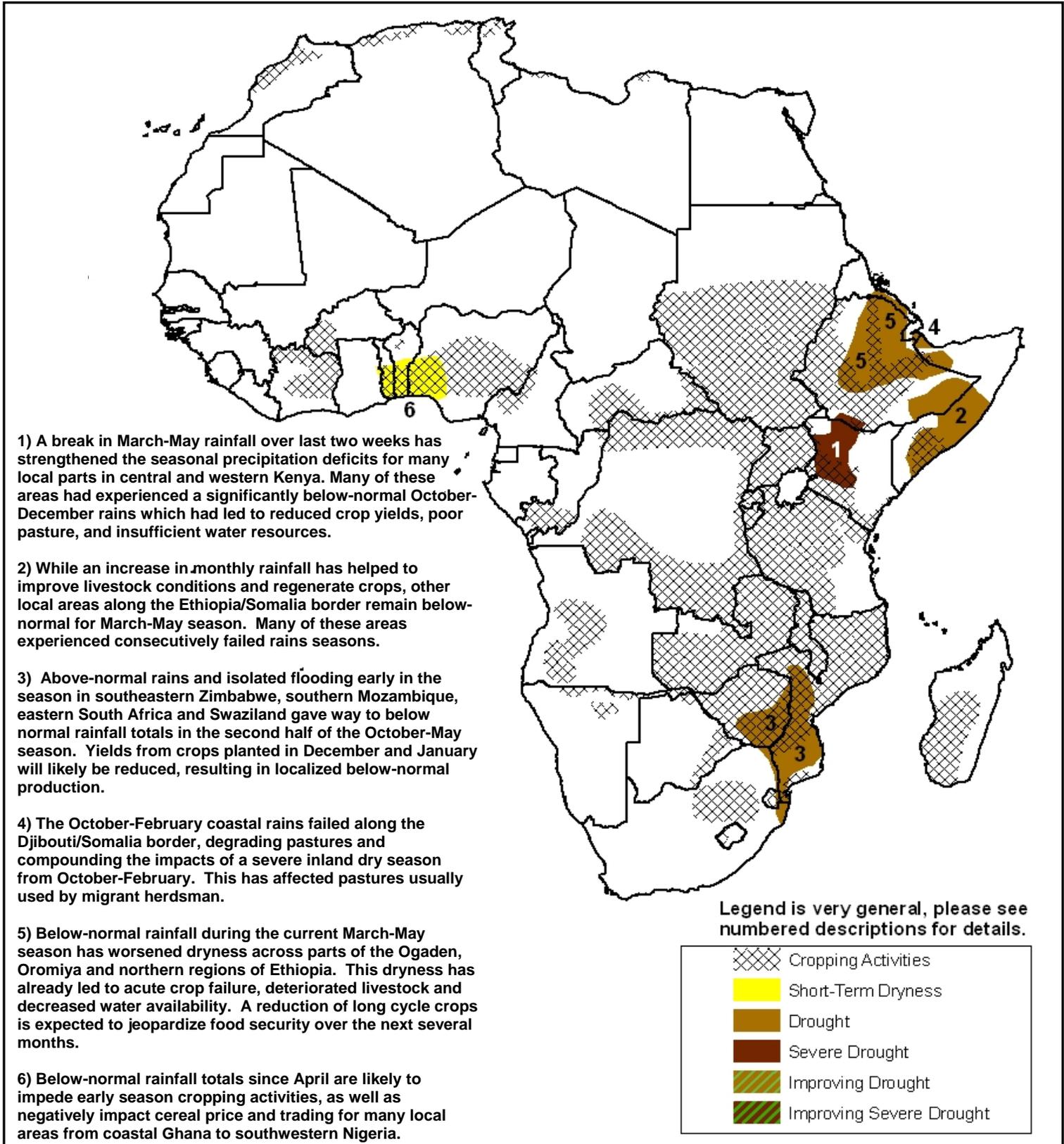


- Drought conditions continue to worsen across many parts of Ethiopia. Insufficient March-May rains has significantly affected many pastoral and agro-pastoral areas in the Oromiya and Ogaden regions, and has resulted in a failed “Belg” production for many local cropping areas along the Ethiopian Plateau.
- In coastal Gulf of Guinea, below normal rainfall amounts are beginning to affect early season cropping activities for parts of coastal Ghana, Togo, Benin and southwestern Nigeria.



Ethiopia faces Drought. Food security and ‘Long-Cycle’ crops severely impacted.

Despite an increase in rainfall across many local parts of Ethiopia in the last seven days, seasonal February-May rainfall totals remain well below-normal along the Rift valley and main “belg” producing regions of central Ethiopia (Figure 1). Precipitation deficits are becoming stronger (> 75 mm) along the Ahmar mountain range, as well as the Oromiya lowland regions and the northern provinces of Welo and Tigray.

This current March-May seasonal dryness has exacerbated long-term drought conditions that have been mainly seen throughout the Somali, Oromiya and northern regions of Ethiopia. Food security is expected to deteriorate primarily throughout the Oromiya and Somali region, as insufficient rainfall over that last two months has led to weakening livestock, decreased water availability and driven food prices in many local markets. Soil water anomaly values exceeding 75mm (Figure 2) reflects much of the current drought conditions for many local areas south of DireDawa in the Oromiya region. Due to severity and longevity of dryness for many of these areas, the Government of Ethiopia has recently appealed for food assistance and donation according to recent reports.

Further north, the extent of the March-May dryness has also impacted parts of the Welo and Tigray provinces of Ethiopia, and into parts Eritrea and Djibouti. From Addis-Ababa northward to Adigrat, many areas have not received any rainfall accumulation since early March, already resulting in an failed “Belg” crop production for the season. Even if above-normal precipitation occurs in May, long cycle crops such as sorghum, maize and wheat yields are still expected to be significantly reduced. For many of these areas, poor March-April rains will also lead to decreased availability of cereals during the June-September hunger period, as well as implicate lower “Meher” crop yields by October.

Precipitation forecasts show a more positive distribution of rainfall ranging from 10-30 mm over the majority of Ethiopia, and into northern Somalia. For local areas that receive higher totals, there is a potential for localized flooding along coastal areas. However, this increased rainfall will help to alleviate soil water conditions, regenerate pastures and promote “long-cycle” crops that have not yet failed.

Gulf of Guinea countries continue to experience short-term dryness.

In the last several weeks, some areas along coastal Ghana, Togo, Benin and southwestern Nigeria are beginning to experience below-normal rainfall totals for the season. Precipitation deficits >75 mm are becoming more prevalent from Lake Volta eastward to Lagos in southwestern Nigeria, as well as areas further north along the Ivory Coast / Burkina Faso border (Figure 3). Continued dryness in these regions have the potential to lead to below-normal maize and cereal production, as well as limit food access for local households in many Gulf of Guinea countries.

Forecasts show a moderate increase in total rainfall with precipitation amounts ranging from 20-40 mm in many coastal areas from Liberia to Cameroon. Isolated areas producing higher rainfall amounts are expected to significantly offset seasonal deficits.

