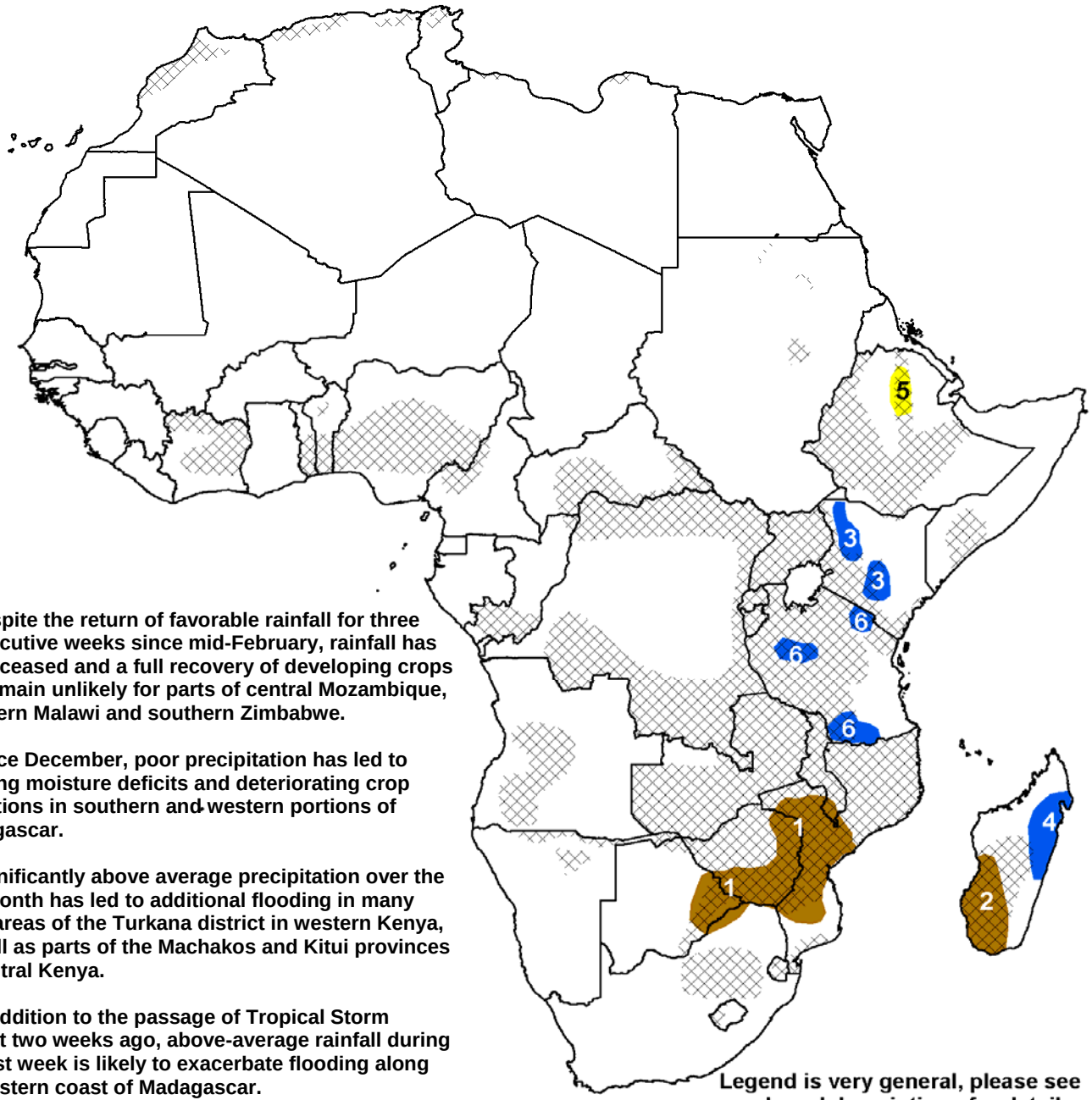
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa
March 25 – March 31, 2010

- **In southern Africa, the continued absence of rainfall has strengthened both seasonal and short-term moisture deficits across many portions of central Mozambique, Zimbabwe, southern Malawi, western Botswana and southwestern Madagascar.**



1) Despite the return of favorable rainfall for three consecutive weeks since mid-February, rainfall has again ceased and a full recovery of developing crops will remain unlikely for parts of central Mozambique, southern Malawi and southern Zimbabwe.

2) Since December, poor precipitation has led to growing moisture deficits and deteriorating crop conditions in southern and western portions of Madagascar.

3) Significantly above average precipitation over the last month has led to additional flooding in many local areas of the Turkana district in western Kenya, as well as parts of the Machakos and Kitui provinces of central Kenya.

4) In addition to the passage of Tropical Storm Hubert two weeks ago, above-average rainfall during the last week is likely to exacerbate flooding along the eastern coast of Madagascar.

5) Since the beginning of March, light precipitation has led to developing dryness for some local areas in the Afar, Wello, and Tigray regions of northern Ethiopia. Because this dryness has occurred early in the season, there remains ample opportunity for improvement in the next couple of months.

6) Heavy rainfall during the last week has resulted in localized flooding and damages to crops and infrastructure in the Arusha, Tabora and Ruvuma regions of Tanzania.

Legend is very general, please see numbered descriptions for details.

- March Cropped Areas
- Favorable
- Somewhat Favorable
- Flooding
- Short-term Dryness
- Drought
- Improving Drought

Below-average rainfall returns in southern Africa.

During the last observation period, fair to moderate amounts of rainfall were received throughout many parts of Mozambique, Zimbabwe. Further north, more distributed and higher rainfall amounts (> 30 mm) were received across much of Malawi, Angola, Zambia, with locally heavier totals observed in northern Mozambique during the last seven days. In parts of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland, more favorable amounts of rainfall were observed (**Figure 1**).

After a very poor December and January rains in southern Africa, the onset of above-average rainfall from mid-February to mid-March helped to eliminate both short term and long-term negative rainfall anomalies across much of central Mozambique and southern Zimbabwe. However, the return of below-average rainfall during the last two weeks has resulted in increasing moisture deficits across many parts of Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Both the recent dryness and the inconsistency of rainfall since December has already led to deteriorating crop conditions for a number of local areas in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, and will likely lead to reductions of crop production by the end of season (**Figure 2**).

Precipitation forecasts suggest another week of suppressed rainfall for much of Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Little to no rainfall is expected for southern Zimbabwe, with more moderate totals (15-30mm) expected for parts to the north, and into central Mozambique over the next seven days.

Enhanced rains observed for eastern Kenya and southern Somalia.

In the last week, enhanced precipitation was observed across much of the Juba and Shabelle regions of southern Ethiopia, as well as many pastoral regions in eastern Kenya. Weekly rainfall accumulations in excess of 50 mm were received along many coastal areas, with heavier totals ranging between 75-100 mm further inland along the Gedo, Juba, Bay, and Bakool divisions of southern Somalia.

Although the *Gu* rains typically begin in April, this past week's rainfall in southern Somalia suggests an early start to the season, which is likely to replenish water resources, saturate soils and benefit pastoral and agro-pastoral activities. However, the magnitude of precipitation during the second dekad of March was significantly above-average (**Figure 3**) for this time of the year, which may increase potential for localized flooding in many of these areas if heavy rains continue into April. A number of localized flooding events have already been reported in the pastoral regions of eastern Kenya due to the excessive rainfall since mid-March.

Satellite Estimated Precipitation (mm)
Valid: March 15th, 2010 – March 21st, 2010

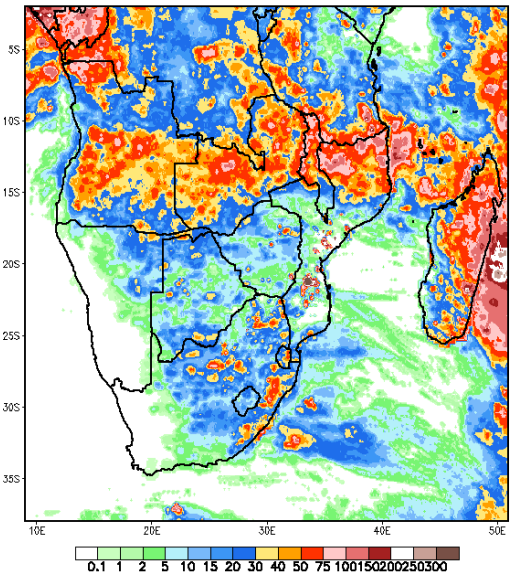


Figure 1: NOAA/CPC

Water Requirements Satisfaction Index (WRSI)
As of: 2nd Dekad of March, 2010

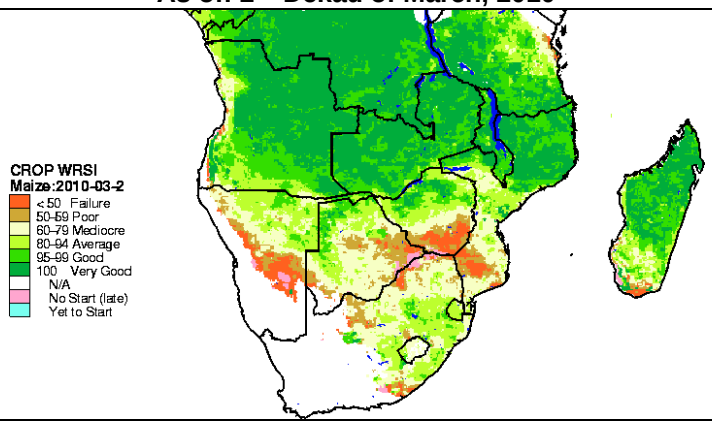


Figure 2: USGS / EROS

Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)
As of: 2nd Dekad of March, 2010

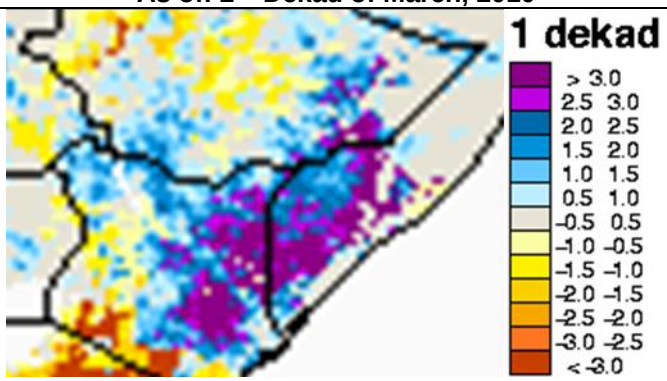


Figure 3: USGS / EROS

Note: The hazards assessment map on page 1 is based on current weather/climate information, short and medium range weather forecasts (up to 1 week), and assesses their potential impact on crop and pasture conditions. Shaded polygons are added in areas where anomalous conditions have been observed. The boundaries of these polygons are only approximate at this continental scale. This product does not reflect long range seasonal climate forecasts or indicate current or projected food security conditions.

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 or the U.S. Government. The FEWS NET weather hazards assessment process and products include participation by FEWS NET field and home offices, NOAA-CPC, USGS, USDA, NASA, and a number of other national and regional organizations in the countries concerned. Questions or comments about this product may be directed to Wassila.Thiaw@noaa.gov or 1-301-763-8000 x7566. Questions about the USAID FEWSNET activity may be directed to Gary Eilerts, USAID Program Manager for FEWSNET, 1-202-219-0500 or geilerts@usaid.gov.