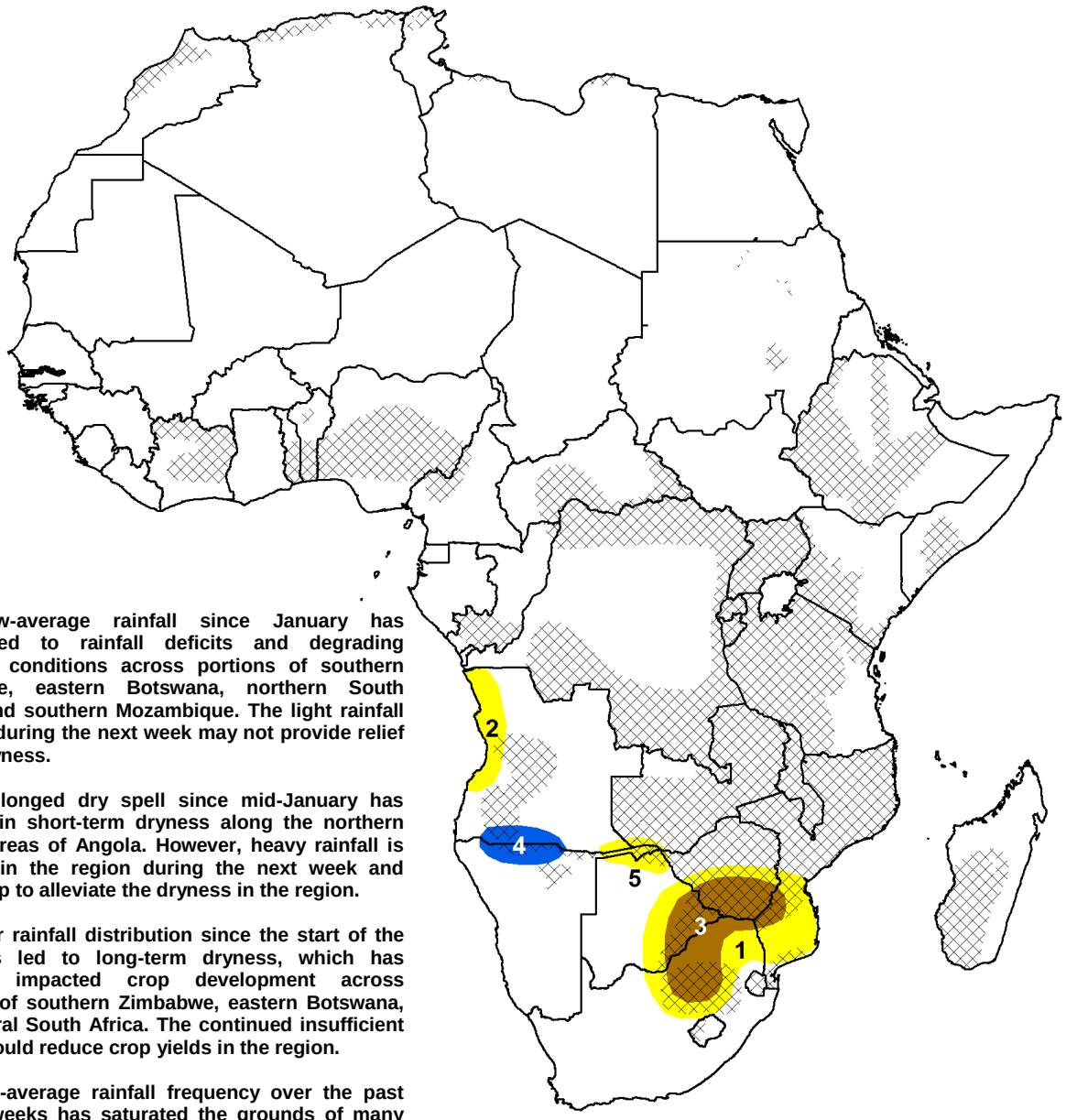
Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook
For USAID / FEWS-NET
March 22 – March 28, 2012

- **An increase in rainfall was observed across the dry portions of southern Africa.**
- **A slow start of the rainfall season was observed in the Greater Horn of Africa.**



1) Below-average rainfall since January has contributed to rainfall deficits and degrading cropping conditions across portions of southern Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, northern South Africa, and southern Mozambique. The light rainfall forecast during the next week may not provide relief to the dryness.

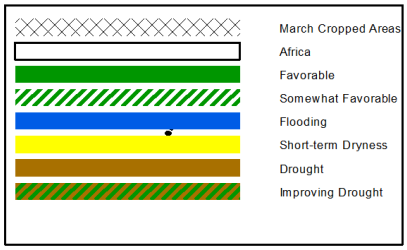
2) A prolonged dry spell since mid-January has resulted in short-term dryness along the northern coastal areas of Angola. However, heavy rainfall is forecast in the region during the next week and could help to alleviate the dryness in the region.

3) A poor rainfall distribution since the start of the year has led to long-term dryness, which has severely impacted crop development across portions of southern Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, and central South Africa. The continued insufficient rainfall could reduce crop yields in the region.

4) Above-average rainfall frequency over the past several weeks has saturated the grounds of many local areas along the Angola-Namibia border. The heavy rainfall forecast over Angola during the next week increases the risks for flooding in the region.

5) Frequent but insufficient rainfall over the past four weeks has led to developing dryness across northern Botswana and the Caprivi Strip region of Namibia. The light rainfall forecast during the next week could enhance rainfall deficits in the region.

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



A widespread increase in rainfall observed in central southern Africa.

During the past week, an increase in both spatial distribution and accumulated rainfall amounts was observed across southern Africa. While heavy (> 50 mm) rainfall has continued throughout northern Zambia, northern Malawi, southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique, moderate to locally heavy (30 – 50 mm) was recorded throughout Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, and northern South Africa (**Figure 1**). This marked an increase in the seven-day cumulative rainfall relative to that of the previous week. The higher rainfall amounts during the past week have helped to partially relieve moisture deficits in many local areas of the dryness-stricken portions of southern Africa. However, it might have been too late for crop recovery as the erratic rainfall distribution has already made significant damages across many local areas. Farther west, moderate (< 20 mm) rainfall that fell along the western coasts of Angola has helped to alleviate slightly the dryness in the region.

Since the beginning of the year, the season has been characterized by an erratic distribution of rainfall over much of southern Africa. Central southern Africa region, including the southern half of Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, and northern South Africa have experienced above-average maximum consecutive dry days, with positive anomalies ranging between 5 and 10 dry days over the past thirty days (**Figure 2**). Reports have already indicated moisture-stressed and damaged crops in some areas, which could result in overall reduced crop yields in the region.

As for the next seven days, reduced rainfall is expected to return as light (< 20 mm) rainfall is forecast across central southern Africa. Meanwhile, heavy rainfall is forecast throughout Angola, southern DRC, northern Zambia, northern and coastal Mozambique. Along the Angola-Namibia border, the forecast heavy rains over Angola could elevate river water levels downstream and trigger flooding in local areas of the region during the next week.

A slow start of the rainfall season was observed in eastern Africa.

Since the beginning of February, suppressed rainfall has resulted in growing seasonal deficits across South Sudan, much of Ethiopia and Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, and portions of Somalia (**Figure 3**). In Ethiopia, the delay in the onset of the season has already affected sweet potato crops in the SNNPR and limited land preparation and planting in the *Belg* cropping areas of the northeast. A further delay in rainfall could significantly reduce crop yields. For the next week, however, heavy rainfall is forecast to arrive across central Ethiopia, while light rainfall is expected over South Sudan, southern Uganda, southern and central Kenya, and northern Tanzania. In Ethiopia, the forecast heavy rainfall should help to reduce moisture deficits and aid cropping activities in the region.

Satellite Estimated Rainfall (mm)
Valid: March 13th – March 19th, 2012

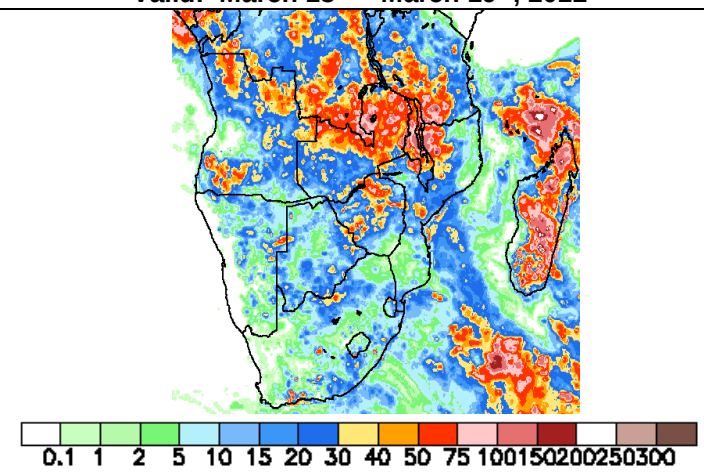


Figure 1: NOAA/CPC

30-Day Maximum Consecutive Dry Days Anomaly
Valid: As of March 19th, 2012

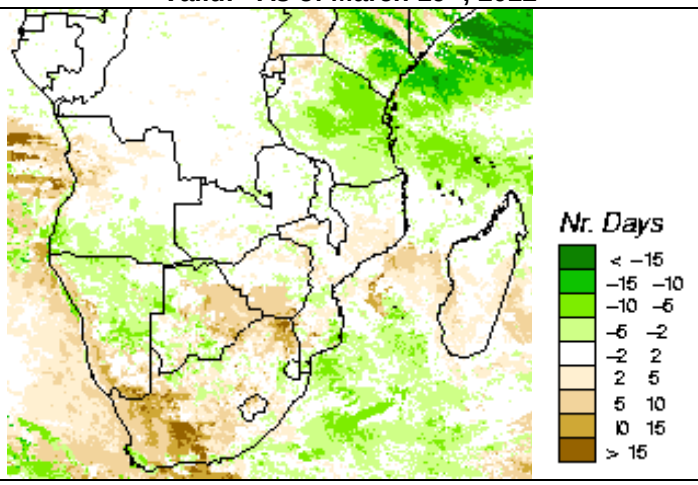


Figure 2: USGS/EROS

Satellite Estimated Rainfall Anomaly (mm)
Valid: February 1st – March 19th, 2012

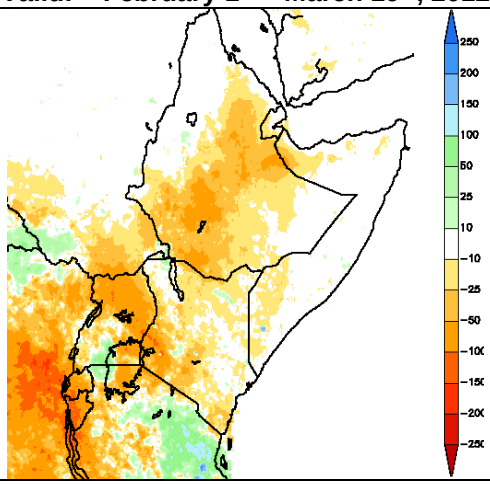


Figure 3: NOAA/CPC

Note: The hazards outlook map on page 1 is based on current weather/climate information and short and medium range weather forecasts (up to 1 week). It 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.