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EAST AFRICA Seasonal Monitor

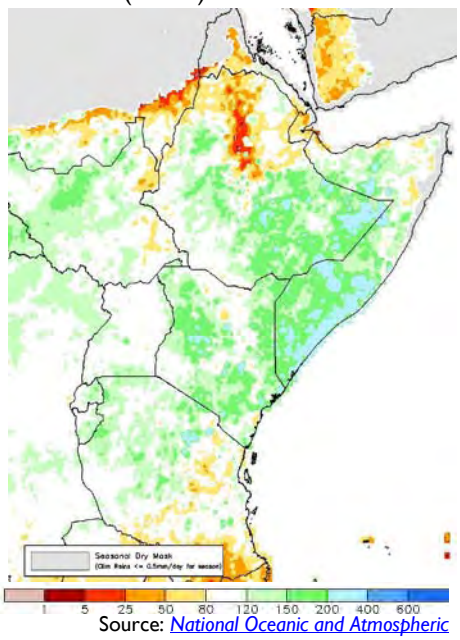
June 13, 2013

The March to May rains ended with generally favorable crop and livestock production prospects

KEY MESSAGES

- Cumulative March to May rainfall amounts were normal to above normal in most of East Africa. In particular, the rains were 200 to 400 percent above average in parts of southern and central Somalia, southeastern Ethiopia, localized areas of central Kenya, and northeastern Tanzania.
- However, the rains tapered off in mid-May in many parts of the eastern Horn. The early cessation is likely to reduce crop output, especially in the areas where crops were at critical tasselling, silking, or grain formation stages, including in southeastern and coastal areas of Kenya, parts of Hiran Region in Somalia, eastern Amhara, southern Tigray, and the bimodal cropping areas in the greater Equatoria states in South Sudan.
- Favorable regeneration of pasture and browse coupled with extensive recharging of water points is likely to enhance livestock productivity and delay migration to dry-season grazing areas in many parts of the Horn's pastoral livelihood zones, including in southern and central Somalia, northwestern, southern, and northeastern Kenya, eastern and southern Ethiopia, and northwestern Tanzania.

Figure 1. March 1- May 31, 2013 rainfall total (RFE2 estimates) as percent of 1983-2012 mean (ARC2)

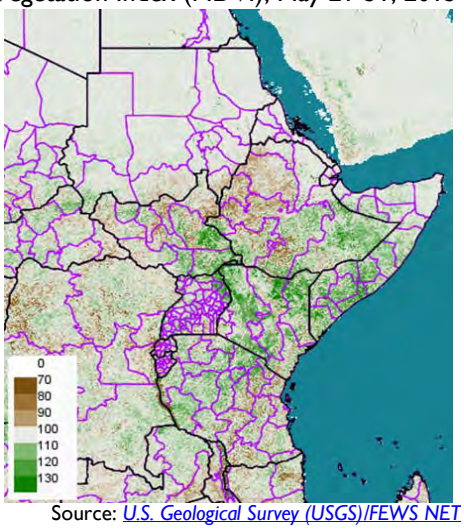


Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/National Weather Service (NWS)/Climate Prediction Center (CPC)

SEASONAL PROGRESS

A two-week earlier-than-normal rainfall cessation in mid-May signaled the end of the March to May rainy season in many parts of the greater Horn of Africa. However, overall cumulative March to May rains were normal to above normal in most areas, attributed to heavier-than-average rains in March and April (Figure 1). Rains tapered off in mid-May in several areas, resulting in significant dryness during the latter part of May. However, flooding caused damage to infrastructure, assets, crops, and livestock in Somalia and Ethiopia along the Shabelle and Juba Rivers, in Uganda along the Nyamwamba River, in Kenya along the Tana River, andin the Lake Victoria basin in both Kenya and Uganda during March and April. Pasture and browse regeneration improved markedly in many areas of the eastern Horn, resulting in above normal vegetation levels (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percent of 2001 to 2012 average eMODIS Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), May 21-31, 2013



Source: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)/FEWS NET

The March to May rains account for up to 80 percent of total annual rainfall required for agricultural production in most livelihood zones in Rwanda and Burundi, northern and central Uganda, northern bimodal areas of Tanzania, the highlands of the areas that were in Rift Valley, Western, Nyanza, Central, and Eastern Provinces in Kenya, the *Belg*-cropping areas in Ethiopia, and southern and central Somalia (See Figure 1 in the East Africa Seasonal Monitor from March 8, 2013). Pastoralists and agropastoralists in the eastern Horn including in northeastern and northwestern Kenya, Somali Region, the lowlands of Oromia Region, and South Omo Zone in Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) in Ethiopia, the northern Hawd, and central Somalia

Please see http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/african_desk/cpc_intl/ and http://earlywarning.usgs.gov/?l=en for more information on remote sensing.

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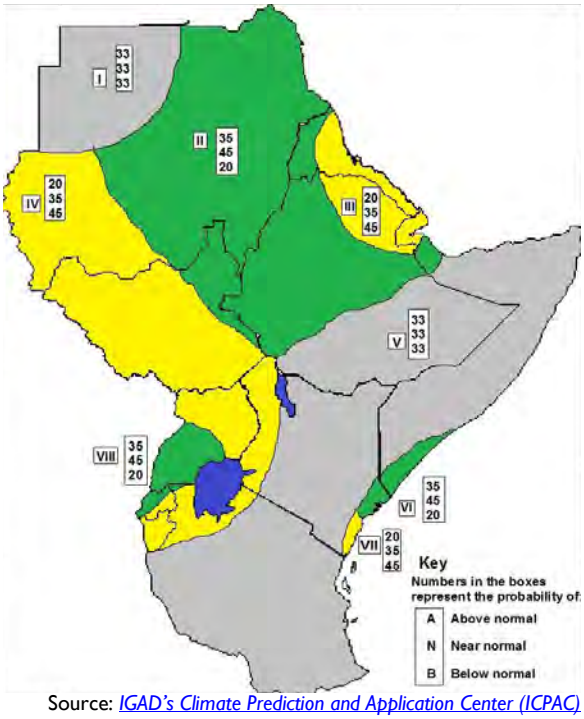
are also dependent on the March to May rainy season as their primary wet season.

In **Ethiopia**, cumulative February to May *Belg* rains were near normal in most receiving areas. There were exceptions with below average total rainfall in northern Somali, southern Afar, parts of eastern Amhara and Tigray, and western Amhara and Tigray. Rains continued into the first three weeks of May in most parts of SNNPR, eastern, central, and western Oromia, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, and the western halves of Amhara and Tigray Regions. While the *Belg* season began three weeks late, most *belg* crops in SNNPR and eastern Oromia are now in good condition, following heavy rains in April and early May. In addition to having lower than usual planted area, the *Belg* crops that did get planted in eastern Amhara and southern Tigray are performing poorly due to moisture stress. Pasture, browse, and water availability have significantly improved in most pastoral and agropastoral areas in Ethiopia except in northern Somali, southern Afar, and some lowland areas of southern Tigray and Amhara where poor conditions persist, resulting from the below normal February to May rains.

Figure 3. Rainfall forecast for June to September 2013



Source: *IGAD's Climate Prediction and Application Center (ICPAC)*

Dry weather persisted throughout most of **Somalia** from the middle to the end of May. However, cumulative March to May *Gu* rains were well above normal, particularly in southern and central Somalia in most agropastoral, pastoral, and riverine areas. However, the ongoing dry spell that started in mid-May is likely to continue through the end of the season, and it has resulted in moisture stressed crops, including in Hiran Region and in the cowpea belt. The *Gu* crop is generally in good condition in other cropping areas in southern Somalia, except in parts of Bay where there was pest damage. Flood recession crops in the Shabelles and Hiran have just germinated. Although favorable *Gu* rains have replenished pasture, browse, and water conditions in the southern and central agropastoral and pastoral areas, grazing resources are poor in the northern and central Coastal Deeh Pastoral livelihood zone, the Sool Plateau, and the Dharoor Valley due to persistently dry conditions.

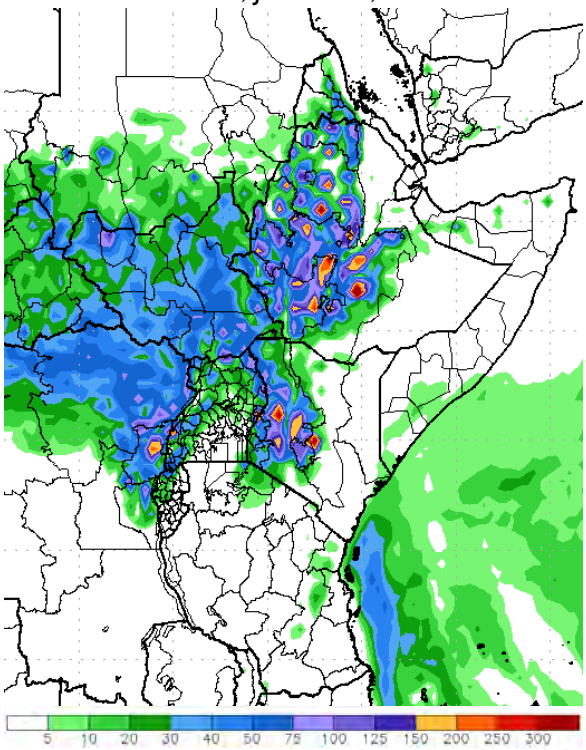
In **Kenya**, normal to above normal March to May long rains characterized most cropping and pastoral areas outside the southeastern and parts of the coastal marginal agricultural livelihood zones. Rains tapered off in the southern and coastal lowlands in early May at the critical tasselling stage for the maize, and this will likely to result in substantial yield reductions from usual. However, short-cycle crops including pulses have performed well. Favorable rains in the drought-prone northeastern and northwestern pastoral zones have resulted in substantial regeneration of pasture and browse and the recharging of water points, and this will likely delay dry-season livestock migration. Most parts of **Uganda** have received normal to above March to May rainfall, enhancing prospects for favorable crop and livestock production, particularly in the bimodal areas. Rains declined after mid-May while crop harvesting started in bimodal areas in early June and is expected to continue through August for the long-cycle crops. However, the crop is still in its early development stages in unimodal, Karamoja agropastoral livelihood zone and harvesting is expected to begin after July and continue through October.

Favorable performance of March to May Season B rains in **Rwanda** have enhanced prospects for a near average harvest, in spite of early rainfall cessation in mid-May in the eastern cropping areas of the country. Enhanced soil moisture retention has carried most of the crop to maturity, and harvesting has started. Grazing conditions are favorable, and they have translated to improved livestock productivity. Both unimodal and bimodal areas in northern **Tanzania** benefitted from the March to May rains. Favorable food production is anticipated in most areas except in central Tanzania where the total November to May *Msimu* rainy seaseon has been below normal. Improved pasture, browse, and water availability in pastoral and agropastoral areas in both unimodal and bimodal areas has resulted in improved livestock body conditions across the country.

The main June to September rainy season in **Sudan** is anticipated to be normal to above normal in most of the country (Figure 3). Initial rains have occurred in the southern areas of the country, enhancing the availability of pasture, browse, and water. Above normal rains would likely result in flooding that could adversely affectthe recently displaced people in Darfur.

The March to May rains were about average in the southern, bimodal part of **South Sudan,** where there is both long-cycle and short-cycle crops planted during the March to May period. Subsequently, up to 45 percent of the crop is now at the vegetative stage in the greater Equatoria States. However, the northern states of South Sudan are more dependent on June to September rainfall. Due to poor pasture, browse, and water availability in Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile States, livestock are likely to remain in the lowland, *toic* areas which are flood plains until June, the onset of the primary rains.

Figure 4. Global Forecast System (GFS) rainfall forecast in millimeters, June 14-19, 2013



Source: NOAA/NWS/CPC

FORECAST

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center's Global Forecast System's rainfall forecast for the next week suggests that the eastern sector of the region will remain seasonably dry, apart from the Eastern Africa coastal strip, while the western and northern sector, and also parts of the eastern highlands of Kenya are expected to be wet through June 20 (Figure 4). The onset of the June to September rains is anticipated to be timely, attributed to the normal northward progression of the inter-tropical convergence zone (ITCZ). There is an increased likelihood of average to above average rainfall in central and western Ethiopia, eastern Sudan, and the northern coastal plains in Kenya, and southern Somalia's Juba and Shabelle Regions. However, average to below average June to September rains are expected in Tigray Region of Ethiopia, most of South Sudan, Darfur, northwestern Uganda, western Kenya, and eastern Uganda (Figure 3).