FEWS NET
FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK

EAST AFRICA Seasonal Monitor

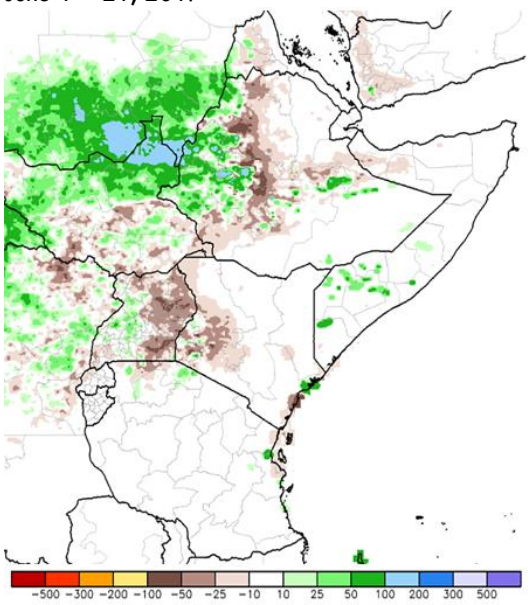
June 23, 2017

Main season rainfall begins slightly earlier than normal over northern areas of East Africa

KEY MESSAGES

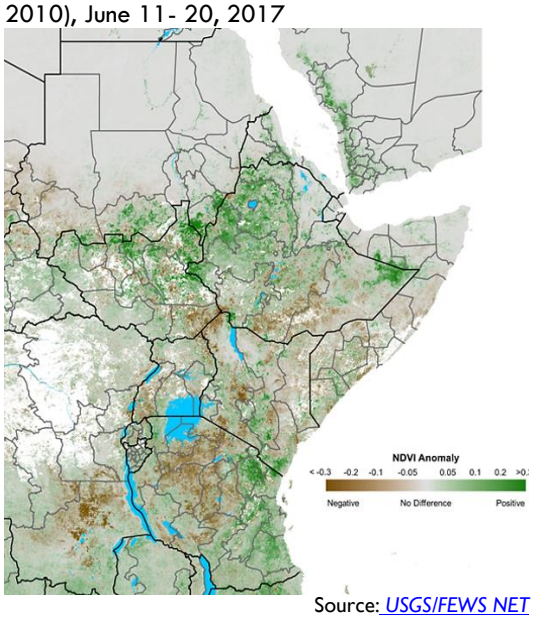
- Rainfall during June was above average over many areas of southern Sudan, northern South Sudan, and far western Ethiopia, the start of season was slightly earlier than normal. The forecast intensification of seasonal rains over these areas during the coming weeks could signal the full establishment of main season (June to September) rainfall.
- Moderate rainfall deficits have developed in parts of central and northern Ethiopia, eastern and northern Uganda, western Kenya, and parts of southern South Sudan over the past several weeks. However, increased rainfall forecast for the coming weeks is likely to reduce these deficits.
- Following generally very poor performance of the *Gu*/long rains in the Horn of Africa from March into June, most areas have remained seasonally dry in recent weeks. Light rainfall is forecast over southern Somalia for the coming weeks, although much of the Horn of Africa should remain dry, with pasture and water availability likely to begin deteriorating as the dry season continues.

Figure 1. ARC2 seasonal rainfall estimate anomalies, difference from normal (1983-2009), June 1 – 21, 2017



Source: NOAA/NWS/CPC

Figure 2. eMODIS/NDVI anomalies (2001-2010), June 11- 20, 2017



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

SEASONAL PROGRESS

The onset of seasonal (June to September) rainfall over northern areas of East Africa has been 10 to 20 days earlier than normal, and was generally well distributed in much of southern Sudan, South Sudan, and western Ethiopia. Since the start of June, rainfall has been largely above average by more than 25 mmm across northern South Sudan, southern Sudan, and far western areas of Oromia and Benishangul-Gumaz, and Gambella regions of Ethiopia (Figure 1). Meanwhile, moderate rainfall deficits have started to appear in parts of Oromia and Amhara regions of Ethiopia, southern South Sudan, much of eastern Uganda, and western Uganda. During the past several weeks, most of the eastern Horn of Africa remained seasonally dry, except for isolated areas of southern Somalia that received light rainfall.

Vegetation conditions are improving in many areas, particularly western Ethopia, southern Sudan, and northern South Sudan, according to the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (Figure 2). These improvements are largely due to the earlier-than-normal onset and above-average rainfall in these areas. However, vegetation conditions remain poorer than normal in southern Ethiopia, parts of far western Sudan, parts of northern Turkana County in Kenya, northeastern Uganda, and much of western Tanzania.

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.

FEWS NET EAST AFRICA
GHA@fews.net
www.fews.net/East

In northern and eastern Kenya, central Somalia, and southeastern Ethiopia, regeneration of pasture and water was poorer than normal due to poor progress of the Gu 2017 rains. Satellite based surface water monitoring indicators show declining water resources over the greater Mandera triangle (areas along the northeastern Kenya, southern Somalia and southeastern Ethiopia borders), signaling increased likelihood for worsening rangeland conditions, as the dry and abnormally hotter-than-normal season gradually intensifies in the coming months. Other areas also adversely affected by poor rangeland conditions include Isiolo, Laikipia, Turkana and Kajiado counties of Kenya. Meanwhile, infestations of Fall Armyworms (FAW) remain a threat for maize and other cereals under cultivation production in parts of Uganda, northern Tanzania, western Kenya, and southwestern Ethiopia, even as crops have benefitted from improvements in seasonal rains since mid-April.

The following is a country-by-country update on recent seasonal progress to date:

- In **Ethiopia**, the onset of *Kiremt* season (June to September) rainfall was slightly earlier than normal and rainfall amounts since the start of June has been above average in many western areas of Oromia and Benishangul-Gumaz, and Gambella regions. However, rainfall deficits have begun to develop over parts of western/central Oromia and Amhara regions. Harvests prospects for Belg crops planted and harvested in the *Belg* are below average, particularly in southern areas, although *Belg* crops harvested during the *Meher* are likely to benefit from recent increases in rainfall. During June, southeastern Ethiopia has remained seasonally dry, following generally poor performance of the *Gu/Genna* season.

- In **Somalia**, *Gu* (March to June) seasonal rainfall performance was below average, particularly in central Somalia, harvest prospects are very poor in southern Somalia. During June, rainfall has been seasonally light and mostly concentrated in southern Somalia. Particularly in central Somalia, regeneration of pasture and water resources as below average, and herd livestock herd sizes are expected to remain below average through at least the coming several months, following excessive sale and deaths of livestock this year.

- In **Kenya,** harvests prospects in bimodal areas following the long (March to May) rains are slightly below average, although yields are expected to be significantly reduced in localized areas of the southeastern lowlands. In June, southwestern parts of Kenya received near-average rainfall, but some central portions of the country received less than 25 percent of normal rainfall, which is likely to have an impact on long rains crop production that will begin to be harvested in October. During Meanwhile, northeastern, eastern, and southern pastoral areas remained seasonally dry in June, with availability of pasture and water expected to deteriorate more quickly than normal given generally poor performance of the Gu/long (March to May) rains.

- In **Uganda**, the northern regions (Teso and Karamoja) experienced significant delayed onset of 10-30 days in late-April/early-May and significant early season rainfall deficits, and cumulative rainfall over the past several weeks has been below average. However, seasonal rains are forecast to intensify in the coming weeks and are expected to help ease the current crop-water-moisture stress. Overall, the first season crop production is expected to be below average due to the presence of Fall Armyworm and very late planting in some areas of northern Uganda.

- In **Sudan**, an earlier-than-normal onset (10-20 days) and well above-average seasonal rains have been favorable for the start of planting season in parts of southern and eastern Sudan. However, in parts of South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Jebel Marra, continued displacement may reduce area planted among IDPs. An intensification of rainfall is forecast in the coming weeks, would could signal the widespread establishment the season in the country.

- In **South Sudan**, April to June first season rainy season in bimodal Greater Equatoria has remained average to above average in Western and Central Equatoria. In Eastern Equatoria, the rainfall has improved to near average, but deficits remain in localized southeastern areas. However, it is expected planting was below average due to conflict-related restrictions on planting and large-scale displacement. In unimodal areas, the seasonal began on time or slightly early in June, and rainfall to date has been average to above average.

- In western **Yemen**, seasonal rainfall in June was slightly below average, while dry weather prevailed over the rest of the country. Seasonal rainfall totals over most of western Yemen were near to above average, except over parts of Amran and Sa'dah governorates. On-going conflict is still the primary driver of acute food insecurity in the country, which is also likely contributing to reduced agricultural activity.

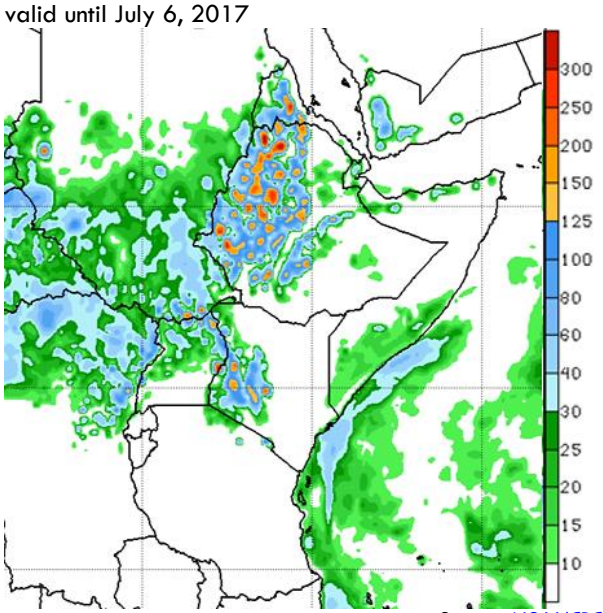
- In **eastern DRC**, June rainfall performance remained near average over eastern DRC, with localized areas of slightly below average amounts in areas bordering Rwanda, Burundi, and northwestern Uganda. These rains are forecast continue through the remainder of June.

FORECAST

During the next two weeks, continued moderate to heavy (25 to 100 mm) is forecast in southern Sudan, South Sudan, and central and northern Uganda. Meanwhile, seasonal is forecast to intensify with very heavy rainfall (100 to 200 mm) over the western and central Ethiopia highlands, western Kenya, and in Karamoja in northeastern Uganda. Light to moderate rainfall is also forecast along the East African coastal strip in Tanzania, Kenya, and southern Somalia (Figure 3). This additional rainfall is expected to be beneficial for areas facing moisture deficits, including areas of central districts of Kenya, northeastern Uganda, and southeastern South Sudan.

Areas forecast to receive very heavy rainfall (100 to 250mm) face an increased risk of flooding, especially the flood prone areas of western Ethiopia, eastern Sudan, Mt. Elgon areas of eastern Uganda, and western Kenya. The coastal strip of Kenya and northeastern Tanzania are also areas that will require close monitoring for flooding, should the forecast rains persist through the coming weeks. The rest of eastern Horn is expected to remain normally sunny and dry with no/little rains forecast in the coming weeks.

Figure 3. 2nd Week GFS-Rainfall forecast (mm), valid until July 6, 2017



Source: NOAA/CPC