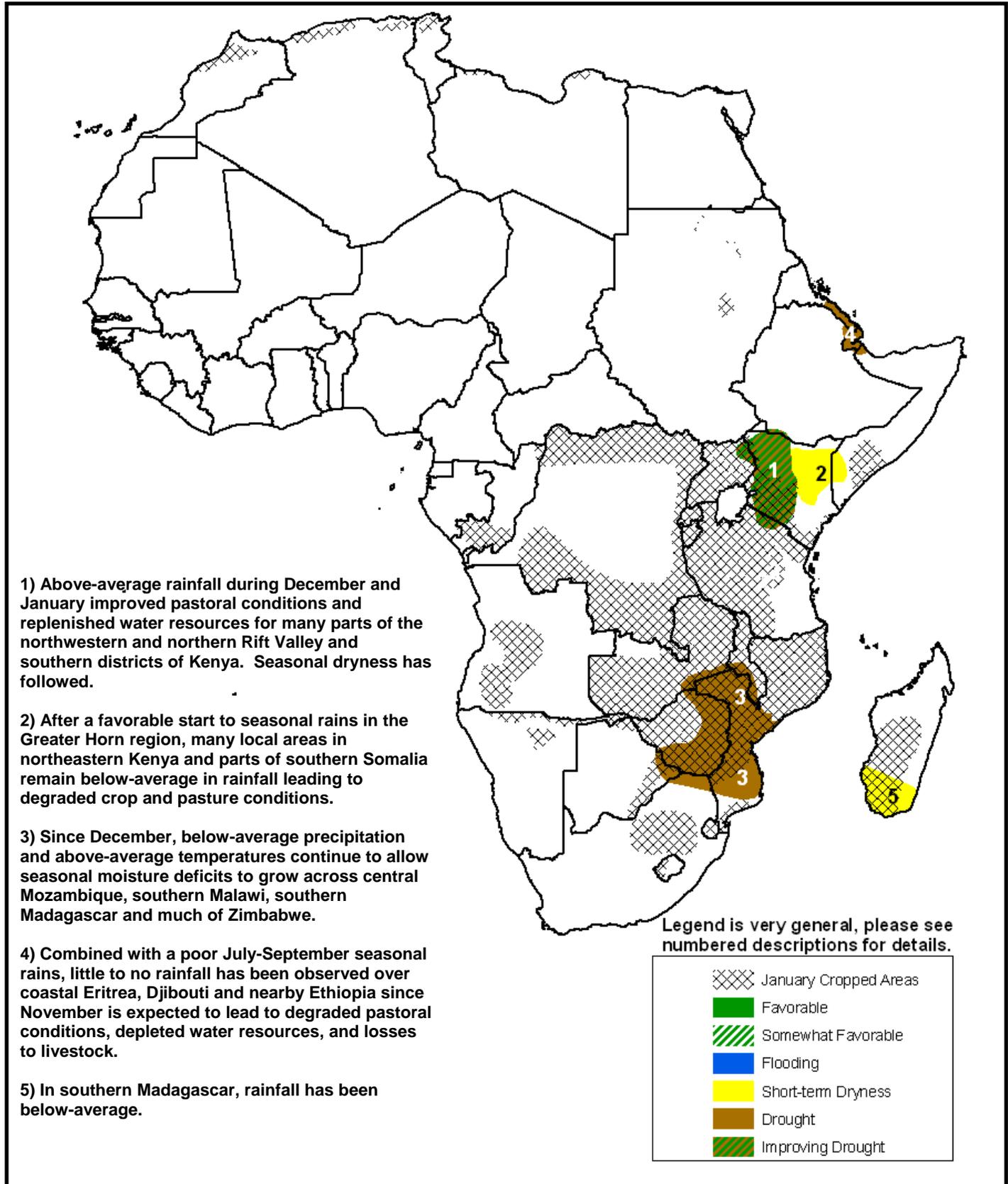


- Poorly distributed rains and above average temperatures across portions of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia and southern Malawi are expected to degrade ground moisture and impede germinating crops in southern Africa.



Rainfall shortage may have long-term implications for crops in southeastern Africa.

During the last observation period, little to moderate amounts of precipitation was observed in southeastern Africa. Poor rainfall totals continued to be observed in central and southern Mozambique, as well as eastern parts of Zimbabwe. Recent trends across much of Tanzania show a drying trend, with below normal precipitation observed for the last two weeks.

Further west, moderate to high precipitation amounts over the last seven days continue to provide ample ground moisture in portions of northwestern Zimbabwe and the Caprivi Strip region, as well as many local parts of southern Angola and northern Namibia (**Figure 1**). Seasonally wet rainfall totals were also observed in portions of northern Mozambique, and in northern Malawi and Zambia.

The recent decrease of rainfall over Mozambique and Zimbabwe is part of a longer trend of dryness in southern Africa (**Figure 2**). Seasonal rainfall deficits have strengthened considerably in the last 30 days, leaving many local areas in central and western Mozambique with 25-50 percent of average rainfall accumulation since October. In addition to the below-average totals for the season, many of these areas have also experienced a significantly low occurrence of precipitation, with many local areas in central and southern Mozambique having received only 2-5 days of measurable rain in the last 30 days with less than 25% of normal rainfall over that same period.

Temperatures have regularly exceeded 40 degrees Celsius in Mozambique and Zimbabwe during the last month; this has negatively impacted available ground moisture for the development of crops in many local areas. Latest soil water analyses suggest the greatest deficits are centered in southern portions of central and southern Mozambique, as well as southern Zimbabwe and eastern portions of Botswana (**Figure 3**). High rates of decreasing soil moisture have also been observed over parts of southern Malawi and western Mozambique in the last two weeks.

Although some farmers have either delayed planting or replanted crops in Mozambique, the present shortage of ground moisture and poor rains is creating an unfavorable outlook for crop development. Late January is the time of the year where rains typically reach their maximum intensity and are most distributed. It is anticipated that if rains do not regularly return by the end of the month, many local areas may face permanent wilting and possible reductions in crop production by the end of the season

In sharp contrast to current trends, some meteorological models are forecasting heavy rainfall over the next seven days. Typically this would be beneficial; however with the ground having become so dry, there is the potential for flooding in many of the same areas that have been experiencing unseasonable dryness.

Note: This product is intended for use in food security assessments and outlooks. It is based on current seasonal weather/climate information and short term outlooks up to week-1. The objective is to assess high impact weather such as drought or flooding that might result in food insecurity in the regions of interest. For each region, active polygons are removed approximately 4 weeks after the rainy season has ended.

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