

*Above-average rainfall received in the north, with increasing risk of early season floods*

**KEY MESSAGES**

- Since the beginning of June, there has been above-average rainfall over the northern areas of the region, which is attributed to a faster-than-normal northward progression of the tropical rainfall system (ITCZ). Despite the enhanced rainfall in some areas, localized areas of cumulative rainfall deficits remained in border areas of western Ethiopia and southern Sudan, southwestern South Sudan, eastern DRC, and along East Africa’s coastal strip.
- Significantly greener-than-normal vegetation conditions continued in June across Kenya, southern Ethiopia, and southern and central Somalia, following the above-average March to May rainy season. This season also has led to favorable crop production prospects across most marginal agricultural areas of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi.
- Short-term forecasts indicate that heavy rainfall is likely over the next week across much of Ethiopia, South Sudan, southern Sudan, Uganda, and parts of Yemen, with an increased risk of earlier-than-normal flooding in flood-prone areas of the Awash, Blue Nile, and Nile.

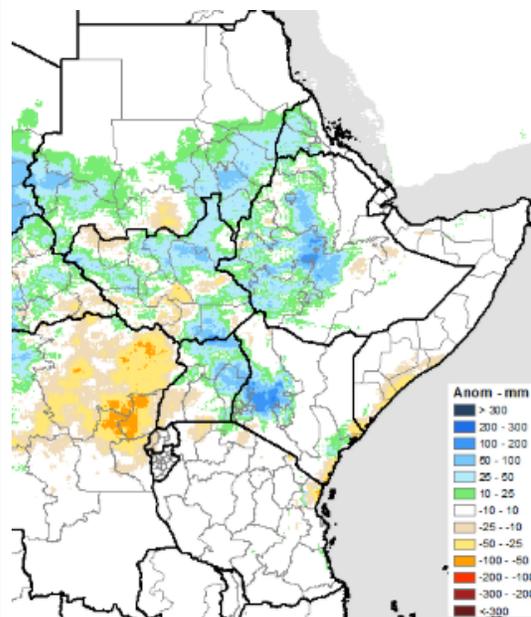
**SEASONAL PROGRESS**

In the past month, parts of west-central Ethiopia, eastern South Sudan and Uganda, southern Sudan, and western Kenya, received well above-average rainfall amounts (+25 to +200 mm) (Figure 1), owing to an earlier-than-normal northward shift of the seasonal rainfall system (ITCZ). Meanwhile, the rest of Sudan and northern Somalia received near-average rainfall in June, but there were some localized areas of early season rainfall deficits.

Despite the enhanced rainfall, cumulative rainfall deficits still persisted during June over northwestern (west Gondar and Metekel) Ethiopia, south-central Sudan, northeastern DRC, and parts of southwestern Uganda. East Africa’s coastal areas of northeastern Tanzania, Kenya, and southern Somalia also experienced marginal rainfall deficits (-10 to -50 mm) in June.

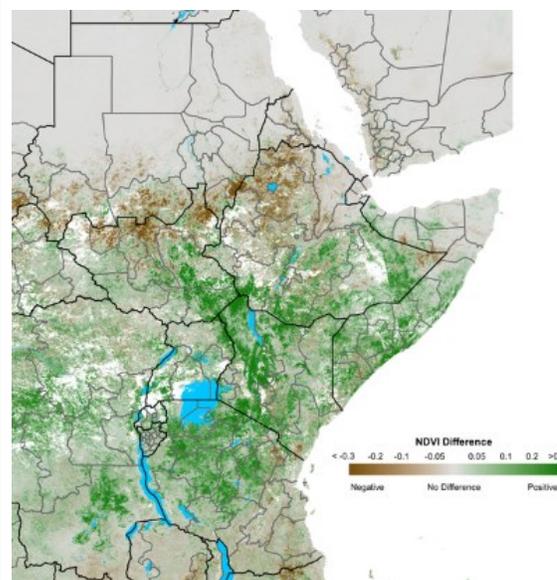
Late June remote sensing products, including the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), show the extensiveness of the significantly “greener-than-normal” vegetation conditions that prevail across much of East Africa (Figure 2). These positive anomalies are largely attributable to the exceptionally wet March

**Figure 1.** CHIRPS seasonal rainfall accumulation anomalies in comparison to average (1981-2010), June 1 - 30, 2018



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

**Figure 2.** eMODIS/NDVI anomalies (2007-2016), June 21 - 30, 2018



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

to May rainy season, which markedly improved rangeland resources that generally continue. However, there are still fairly expansive areas of abnormally drier-than-normal vegetation conditions over parts of northern Ethiopia, central and western parts of Darfur in Sudan, and northeastern Somalia.

Overall, cropping conditions remained favorable in key agricultural areas of East Africa, where harvesting has begun, including marginal agricultural areas of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. However, the excessive rainfall and flooding experienced during the March to May rainy season in parts of Rwanda and Burundi, Uganda's Karamoja Region, and western Kenya led to significant beans crop production losses, with worst-affected areas reported in Rwanda and Burundi. The riverine cropping areas of southern Somalia were also negatively impacted by flooding, which is likely to result in localized below-average maize production. However, with recent late planting in parts of southern Somalia, there is an increased likelihood for delayed harvesting by a month, but, average to above-average sorghum production is expected for the season.

Production prospects are below normal in Ethiopia's eastern Amhara and parts of northern *Belg* cropping zones, particularly southern Tigray. A delayed harvest is likely in many northern areas after a late start of season. However, across much of southwestern Ethiopia, there are relatively better *Belg* agricultural production prospects, following the above-average seasonal rainfall performance during February to June.

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

- **In Somalia**, during June, mostly sunny and dry conditions seasonally prevailed, with light to moderate rains observed over some northern and central regions of the country. In parts of central Somalia, rangeland resources are gradually deteriorating following dry spells, which has also led to a decline in surface water pan levels. Overall, at the national level, cropping conditions are still favorable with average to above-average maize and sorghum production prospects, despite severe flooding that destroyed approximately 25 percent of cropped fields along the Shabelle River in central Somalia.
- **In Ethiopia**, central and western regions experienced average to well above-average early season rainfall amounts in June, but localized areas of cumulative rainfall deficits remained in parts of Afar, western Amhara, and southern Tigray. Overall, despite seasonally dry conditions, rangeland resources remained generally very good over Somali Region and southeastern pastoral areas. *Belg* crop production is expected to be favorable in southwestern areas but below average over central and northern regions, following the uneven and below-average seasonal rains and Fall Armyworm infestations experienced earlier in the season.
- **In Sudan**, the seasonal rains intensified across most of the country, except the north, over the past month. According to recent field information, the ongoing heavy rain is likely to lead to flash floods, particularly in low-lying flood prone regions of Kassala and Khartoum.
- **In Kenya**, much of eastern and northern Kenya remained normally sunny and dry, following the early cessation of the long rains in mid-May after the wettest season on record, which has led to exceptionally good rangeland resources in pastoral and agropastoral areas. Cropping conditions for maize are mixed across Kenya, with above-average prospects over the highland areas to below average in southeast lowlands due to uneven rainfall distribution and flooding. In marginal agricultural areas, where initial harvesting has begun, average to above-average maize production prospects are expected in Embu and Kwale but are expected to be below average in parts of Kilifi, Taita Taveta, and Meru due to flooding. In addition, outbreaks of Rift Valley Fever in areas affected by flooding continue to occur; there are already quarantines in place in Wajir and Marsabit counties to prevent the spread of this disease that affects livestock and humans.
- **In South Sudan**, the favorable March to May seasonal rains extended into June in bimodal southern areas of the country. In unimodal central and northern regions of South Sudan, the June to September rainy season had an earlier-than-normal onset in mid- to late-May. Since the beginning of June, many northern areas experienced above-average rainfall. Given the favorable rainfall to date, rangeland and cropping conditions have generally remained favorable.
- **In Burundi, Rwanda, and DRC**, harvesting for Season B is currently underway, with reported significant losses in beans and rice production due to excessive rainfall and flooding. However, other moisture-tolerant crops performed well, which is expected to compensate for the bean and rice losses, leading to slightly above-average Season B harvests at the national level in both Rwanda and Burundi. Seasonally dry conditions prevailed in Burundi through June. In Rwanda, the rainy season extended into June, and northeastern DRC experienced below-average rainfall.

- **In Uganda**, the first season harvest is underway in bimodal cropping regions of the country, with average to above-average crop production prospects. In unimodal regions of Karamoja, which have experienced significantly above-average rainfall, causing flooding and waterlogging, the harvest is likely to be delayed by one month. However, the rainfall has positively led to improved rangeland conditions.
- **In Yemen**, moderate to heavy rains continued during June, particularly over western areas.

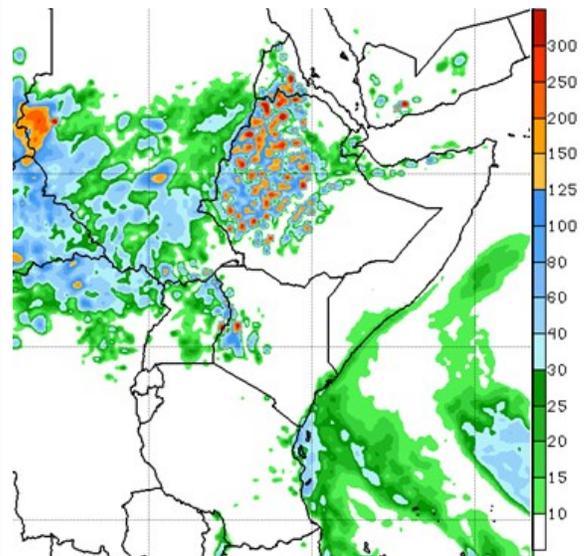
## FORECAST

As the June to September seasonal rains progress into July, the short-term forecast indicates an intensification of rainfall over central and western Ethiopia, and large portions of Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda (Figure 3). As a result, there is an increased likelihood for earlier-than-normal flood risks in flood-prone areas along the lower Blue Nile in western Ethiopia/eastern Sudan, including Kassala and Khartoum, given the above-average rainfall. Ethiopia's riverine and central and low-lying areas in the middle Awash catchment are also prone to flash floods. In South Sudan, eastern and central flood-prone areas along the Nile River are susceptible as well.

In addition, southwestern Kenya and northern DRC are forecast to receive moderate to heavy rainfall over the next week. Western and central areas of Yemen and the northern Somalia coast will require close monitoring in the coming weeks, as localized above-average rainfall amounts may result in flash floods.

Unseasonal rains are also forecast along East Africa's coastal strip in the coming weeks, owing to active rainfall systems over the Indian Ocean. In the meantime, the rest of the eastern Horn is expected to remain seasonally sunny and dry.

**Figure 3.** Week I GFS-Rainfall forecast (mm), valid through July 12, 2018



Source: *USGS/FEWS NET*