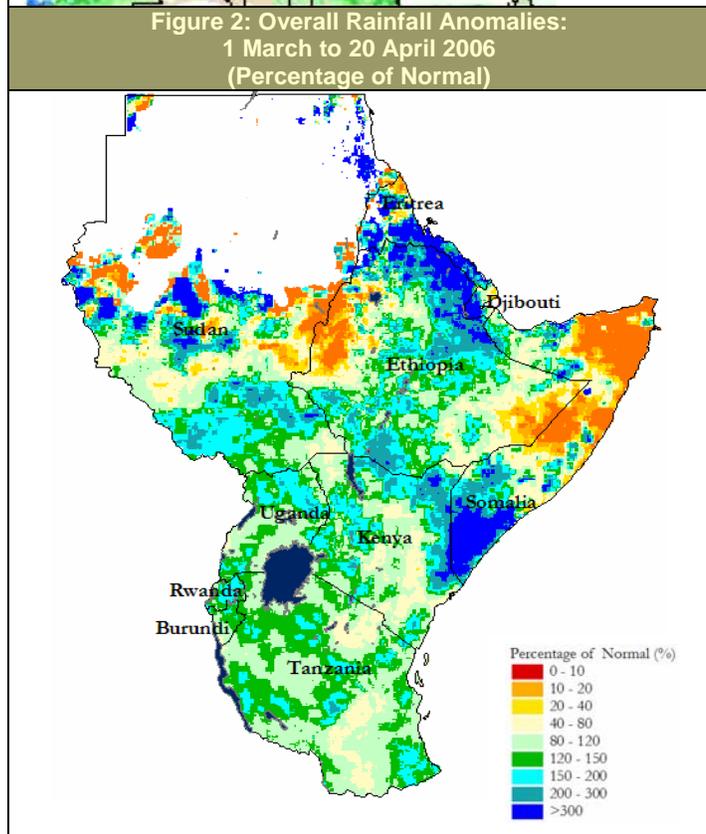
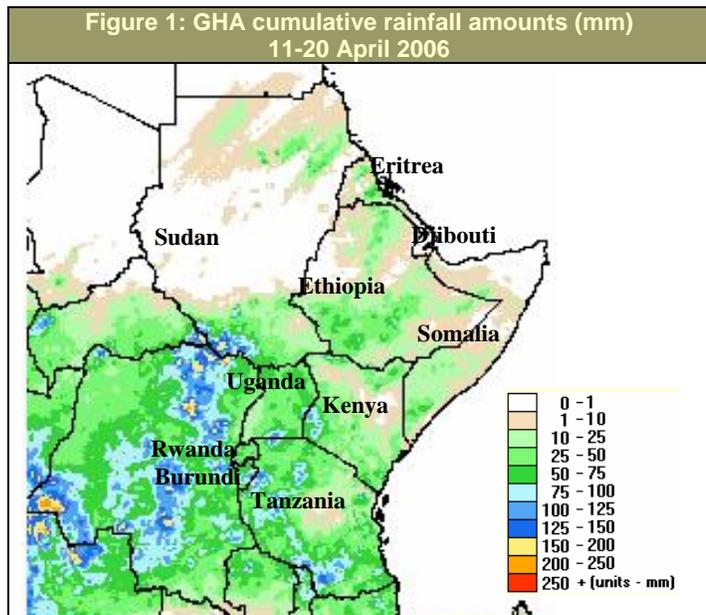


**Executive Summary**

The widespread heavy rains experienced in the region during the first ten days, or dekad, of April subsided in the second dekad, as forecast. During the second dekad of April, most parts of Somalia and Djibouti, northern and eastern Kenya and the eastern half of Ethiopia, where most of the drought-affected populations are found, received only light showers (5 to 25mm) or remained dry (Figure 1). Most of these areas had received heavy rains and experienced flash floods in the first dekad of the month, but now seem to be experiencing a dry spell. The potential consequences of this dry spell are most serious in the eastern drought-affected parts of the region, where it could have serious negative consequences for the development of pastures.

Heavy rains during the second dekad of April were confined mainly to areas south of the equator - along the East African coast, southern and western Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, around the Lake Victoria basin and southwestern Sudan, where precipitation of between 50 and 150 mm was received. Parts of SNNPR in Ethiopia, northwestern Kenya and southern parts of the Juba Valley in Somalia also continued to experience medium to heavy rains of about 30 to 75 mm (Figure 1). Heavy rains in these areas caused some flood damage and displacement of people. The Sabaki River, in Malindi, Kenya, burst its banks due to sustained downpours upstream. Heavy rains in the Ethiopian highlands also resulted in River Shabelle briefly breaking its banks and causing localized floods around Jowhar in Somalia.

Little improvement to the food security situation is expected over the short term as a result of these rains in pastoral areas affected by the drought. Although some improvements in water availability will ease the situation, it is still too early for the rains to have had a significant impact on pastures and for animals to have had chance to start to recover. In central and



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

northeastern Somalia and eastern Somali Region of Ethiopia, the rains have been poor to date and the food security situation in these areas is expected to deteriorate further along with critical water shortages. However, rains are forecast in the coming dekad for these areas and are expected to bring some relief, if they arrive (see below).

#### Overall Rainfall Performance: 1 March to 20 April, 2006

Cumulative rainfall so far has been average to above average in most of the worst drought affected areas including southwestern Somali Region, northern and eastern Kenya and southern Somalia. However all other parts of Somali Region in Ethiopia and central and northeastern Somalia are facing significant rainfall deficits of up to 50 percent normal (See shaded in orange to red in Figure 2).

In all other areas, seasonal rains have so far performed well, raising hopes for good pasture and crop conditions in the region. Figure 2, summarizes the current rainfall performance in the region, with normal to above normal rainfall performance in key agricultural zones. These include Ethiopia's *belg* crop producing highlands, Kenya's western grain-basket areas and all of Uganda, where crop conditions are reportedly good. Rains have also been average to above average in southern Sudan, most of Djibouti, Eritrea and Tanzania during this period (areas shaded in white, green and blue).

Satellite images of vegetation cover (NDVI) in mid-April indicate some improvement in the vegetation cover in most areas that have received good rains, but vegetation improvements in northern Kenya, most of Somalia and southeastern Ethiopia is still light. Significant vegetation improvements are expected to begin over the next dekad in areas that have experienced good rains. For full development of pastures and crops in all areas, more well distributed rains during the season will be needed.

#### Rainfall Forecast – Valid to April 26, 2006

Rainfall in the coming dekad is expected to be generally lighter than in the last two dekads (see Figure 3) and appears to be shifting northeast - to eastern Ethiopia and central and northern Somalia. Most significantly, between 25 and 50 mm of rain are forecast for most parts of Somali Region in **Ethiopia** and central and northeastern **Somalia**, which have hitherto remained largely dry. Heavy rains are forecast for the East African coast. Most parts of **Kenya**, **Tanzania** and **Uganda** are expected to experience dry conditions during the dekad, except for localized showers. Dry conditions are also forecast for **Djibouti**, **Eritrea**, **Sudan**, **Burundi** and **Rwanda**. In general most farming areas are expected to experience either light rains or a dry spell, which will be good for crop performance.

There is decreased likelihood of flooding in the region; however areas along the East Africa coast will require close monitoring due to persistent heavy rains. Malaria risk will also continue to increase across the GHA especially in malaria endemic areas that have experienced above normal rainfall.

