

## EAST AFRICA Regional Rain Watch

November 29, 2011

FEWS NET will publish a Rain Watch for the East Africa region every month through the end of the October to December rains in the eastern Horn, focused on the pastoral and agro pastoral areas of south and southeastern Ethiopia, northeastern Kenya, and southern Somalia.

### Good performance of seasonal rains in October – November in the eastern Horn

The October to December rains are important in most of the eastern Horn, providing 30 to 60 percent of total annual rainfall. In the bimodal cropping areas of western Kenya, northern Tanzania, and western Uganda, these rains contribute 30 to 40 percent of total annual rainfall (Figure 1).

Rainfall totals to date have been well above average across the short-rains dependent areas, especially the epicenter of 2010/2011 drought-hit areas, including northern and northeastern Kenya, southern and southeastern Ethiopia, and southern Somalia. Most of these areas received up to 400 percent of normal rains for this season (Figure 2).

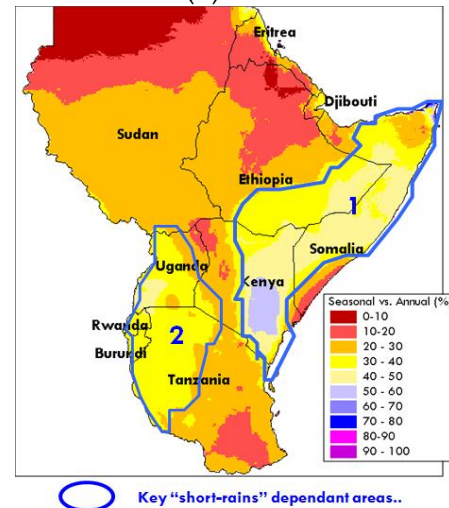
Well above-normal vegetation conditions are evident in the areas that received above-normal rainfall (Figure 3). Cropping conditions have also been generally favorable and good crop prospects are likely in the areas that crop this season, except in the southern coastal areas of Kenya, northern coastal areas of Tanzania, and the coastline of southern Somalia, where the season started late by up to three dekads (Figure 4).

With the current heavy to very heavy rainfall, there is an increased likelihood of flooding in the flood-prone Lake Victoria basin, as rains are forecast to continue this week (Figures 5 and 6). The heavy rains could also constrain humanitarian response and lead to increased disease incidences, especially in the Mandera Triangle areas of the eastern Horn.

The ECMWF's long-range forecast released in October for the December – January – February period calls for below-average rains for this period in parts of the GHA (Figure 7). This may mean an early withdrawal of the October to December rains in some of the short-rains dependant areas.

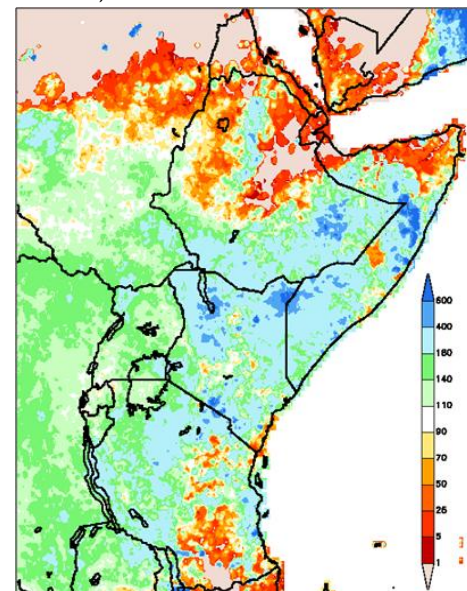
Weak La Niña conditions re-emerged in August 2011 and are likely to persist into early 2012. Overall, this La Nina event is expected to be relatively weaker than the 2010/2011 event, according to WMO's November 17 update. This event is unlikely to have any adverse rainfall impacts in the region, based on the preliminary long-range ECMWF and IRI seasonal rainfall forecasts (Figure 8). La Niña conditions should be continuously monitored, as well as the transient Indian Ocean sea surface temperatures (SST), which play a critical role in the region's rainfall variability.

**Figure 1.** GHA Oct-Dec rainfall contribution to annual totals (%):1920-80



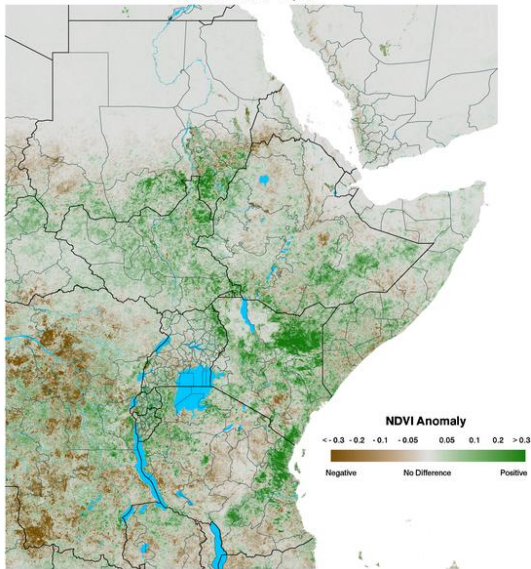
Source: USGS/FEWS NET

**Figure 2.** RFE Percent of Normal: Oct. 1 - Nov. 20, 2011



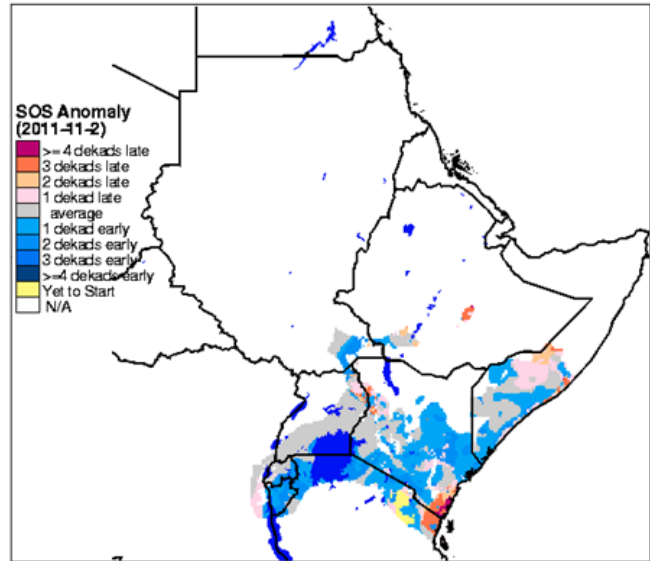
Source: USGS/FEWS NET

**Figure 3. East Africa NDVI Anomaly, November 6-15**



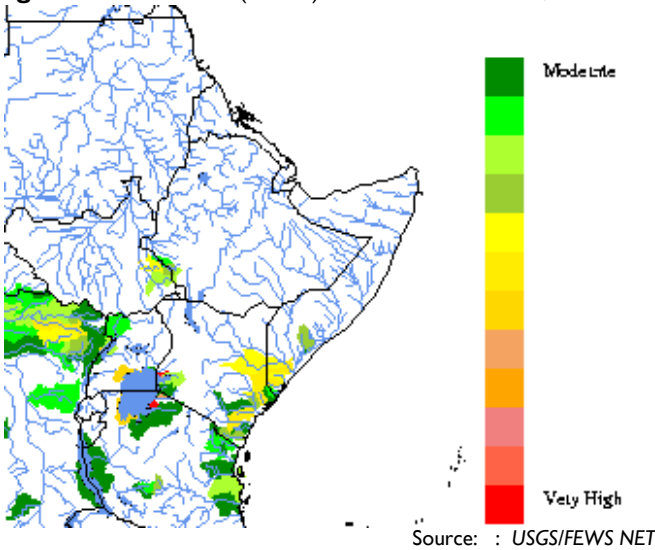
Source: : USGS/FEWS NET

**Figure 4. Start of Season Anomalies: 20 Nov. 2011**



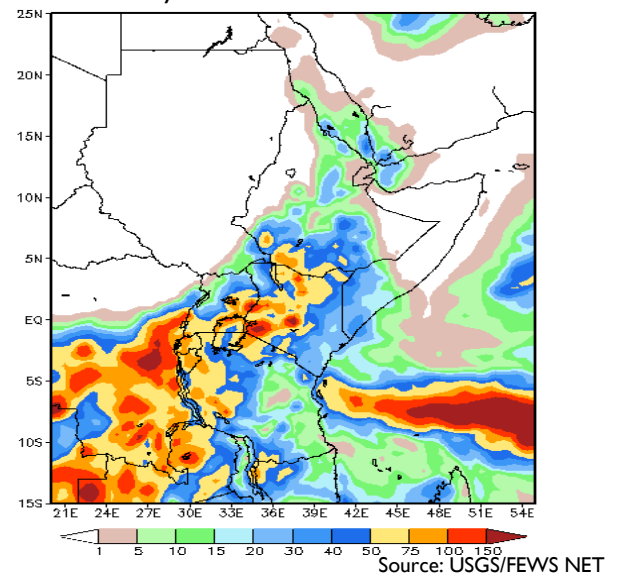
Source: : USGS/FEWS NET

**Figure 5. Flood Risk (BERM): November dekad 2, 2011**



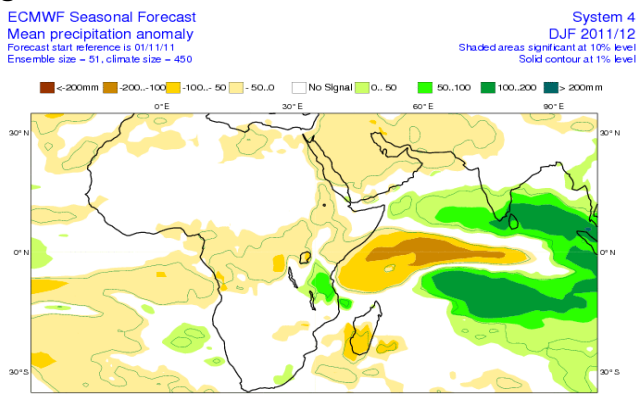
Source: : USGS/FEWS NET

**Figure 6. GFS 7-Days Forecast: 27 Nov. to 4 Dec. 2011**



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

**Figure 7. ECMWF rainfall forecast, Dec. 2011 to Feb. 2012**



**Figure 8. ECMWF rainfall forecast, March to May 2012**

