

Overview

All of the countries in the East Africa region continue to grapple with the effects of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, during April and May, flooding and desert locusts adversely affected seasonal crop in several areas dependent on the March to May rains. The floods also caused loss of household assets, disrupted livelihoods activities, and constrained household access to markets or food assistance.

Several thousands of acres of crops have been destroyed, while water- and vector-borne disease incidence is rising in flood-prone and riverine areas. While pasture and crop damage from the desert locust infestation has been limited by on-going control measures and the heavy rains, current and projected climatic and vegetation conditions remain conducive for breeding and development in Ethiopia, Somalia, and central and north-western Kenya, while swarms are likely to migrate through northern and eastern South Sudan to Sudan.

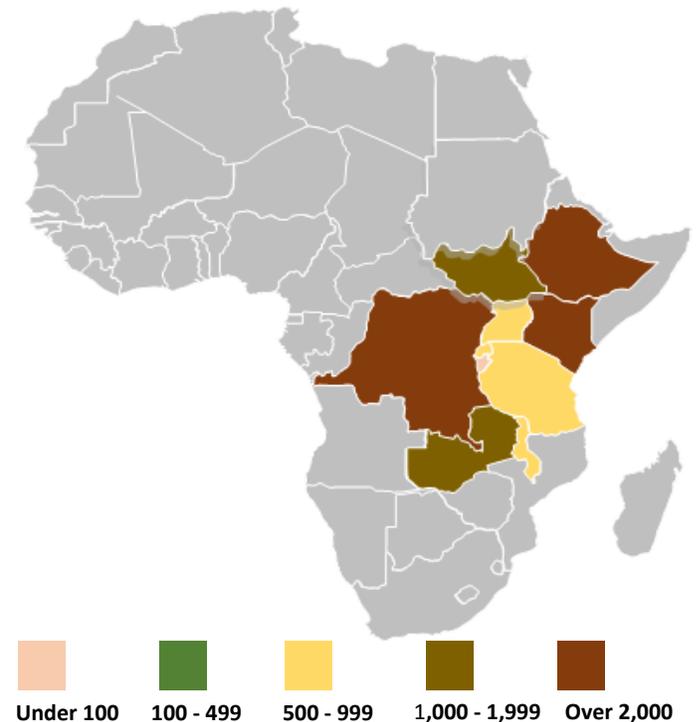
Overall, the March to May rainy season has brought heavy rainfall across East Africa, with many areas receiving twice their average rainfall during the period. This persistent pattern has saturated many of the region’s basins and will keep flood risks high in the coming weeks.

Introduction

Like the rest of the world, Eastern Africa is currently battling the Novel Coronavirus (SARS-COV-2, or commonly referred to as COVID-19) pandemic. Cases of the virus were reported almost simultaneously across region in mid-March 2020. Over the past two-and-a-half months, the disease has steadily spread within the region, albeit at a somewhat slower pace than in other parts of Africa and the world. At the time of writing, EAGC’s 10 mandate countries had reported a combined of over 10,000 confirmed cases with Kenya, Tanzania, DR Congo, Ethiopia and Rwanda being the most affected countries.

Grain prices have slightly been higher than last year’s levels. However, prices of major grains have remained stable during this period owing to ample stocks from harvest from the previous season. This is however forecasted to change as the

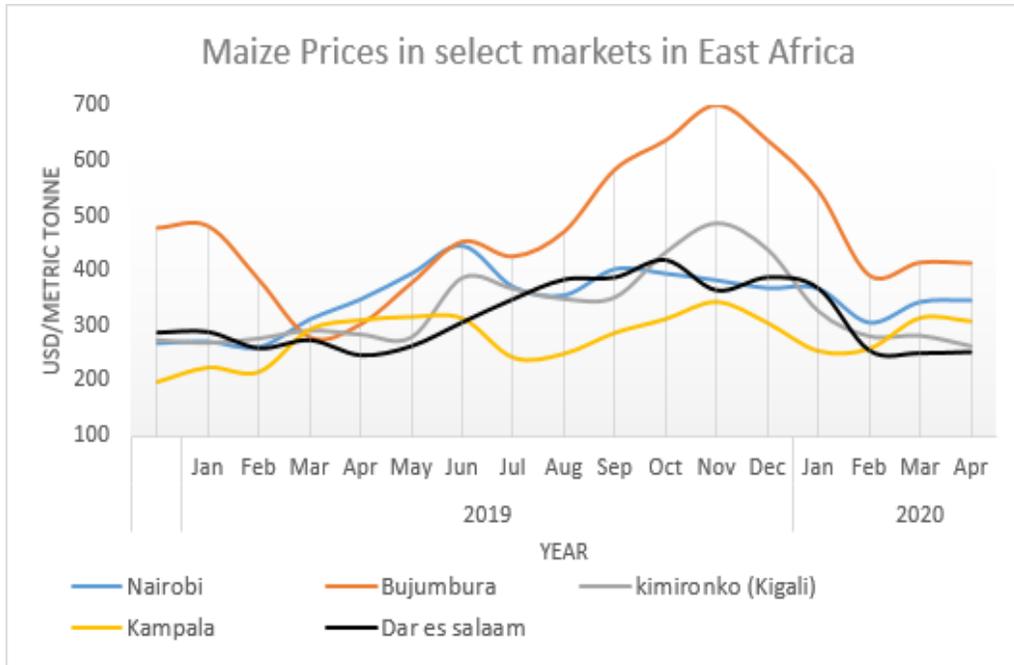
Figure 1: Distribution of COVID-19 cases in EAGC mandate countries as of 17th June 2020. Source: WHO database



stocks continue to go down without ample replenishment. Increased costs of agricultural inputs due to inaccessibility, which will in turn affect production, logistical challenges due to restrictions in movements and reduced cross border trade will be the main factors that will push prices up in the coming months.

Various export destinations of various grain commodities have been in lockdown and have halted imports from various countries in the East Africa Region. This has led to fears by various exporters that if certain economies do not open by July, the pulses exports from the East Africa region will be hurt and this will have a ripple effect on the involved economies.

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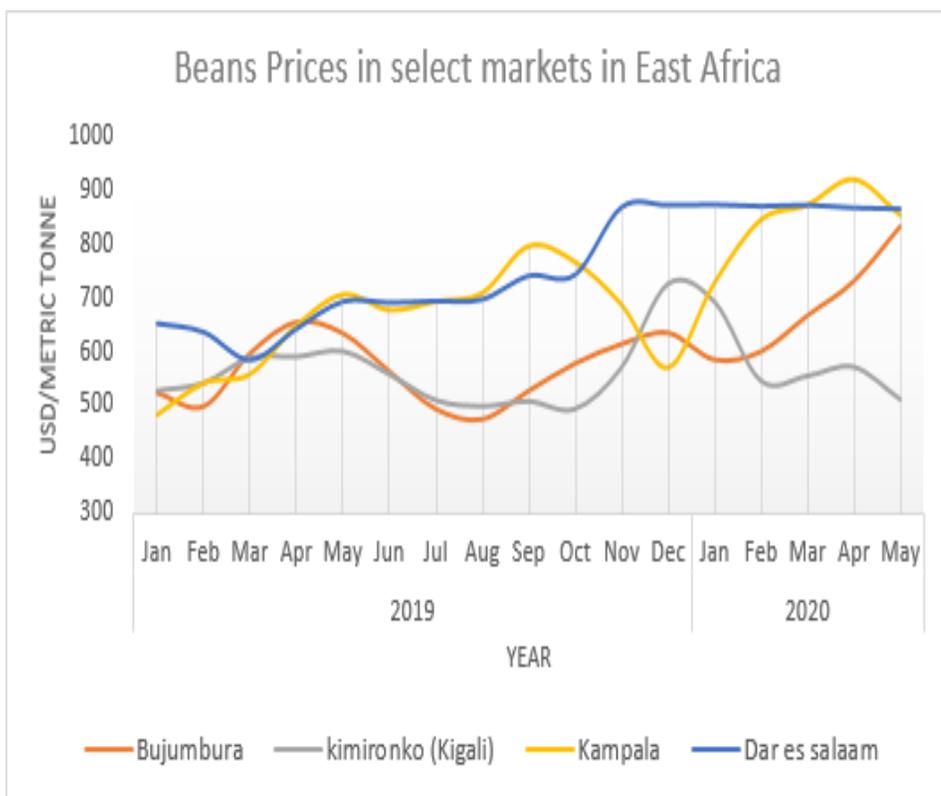


Maize prices continue to follow a seasonal trend with slight increases observed in the past two months.

Reduced market supply due to diminishing stocks and disrupted trade movement of commodities from partner states in the region will push prices slightly up in the coming months.

The Covid - 19 pandemic will likely affect production levels of the coming seasons in the various countries and farming activities have been disrupted due to reduced movement and limited supply of agricultural inputs due to restricted movements.

Figure 2: Maize prices in select markets in East Africa. Source: Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network.



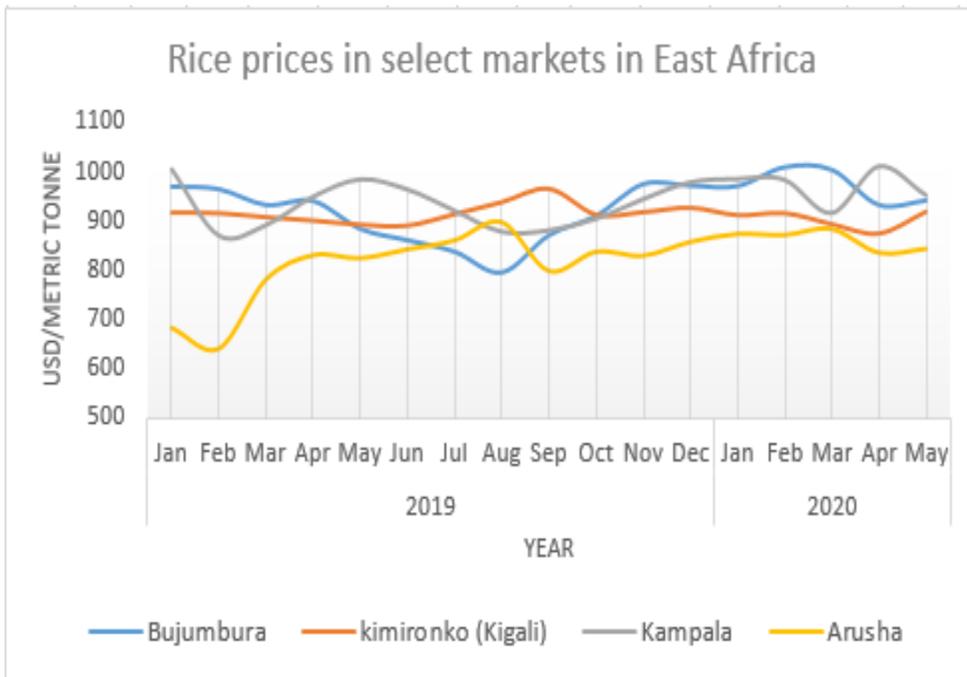
Beans prices remained higher than last years levels. This was mainly caused by the above average rainfall which has been experienced across the region, which affected production levels.

Beans prices in Rwanda remained relatively low owing to ample stocks from season A harvest and ongoing season B harvest. This is further exacerbated with the fact that trade, particularly with DRC has reduced thus leading to larger than usual volumes, which will further push prices down. Prices can be stabilized through opening of borders for export and public institutions to come up with a program to purchase beans for their use, and for distributing as relief foods to vulnerable houses.

Prices will continue to follow seasonal trends but will be higher than last years levels due to disruption caused by above average rainfall which has led to floods and landslides in various production areas in the region.

Figure 3: Beans prices in select markets in East Africa. Source: Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network.

EAST AFRICA PRICE AND TRADE UPDATES



Outlook

Maize prices are expected to follow season trends, remain lower than last year and recent five-year average levels due to interventions by governments across the region to increase production and allow importation from international markets to combat the underlying effects of the ongoing pandemic.

Beans prices are expected to decrease slightly due to improved supplies from the coming harvest in the surplus growing countries of Uganda and Rwanda due to favourable. Rwanda is expecting an above average harvest, which will push prices further down due to existing stocks from the previous season.

Rice prices are expected to maintain seasonal trends with no major spikes expected in the near future.

Figure 4: Rice prices in select markets in East Africa. Source: Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network.

INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE UPDATE

Informal cross border trade reduce by 75% compared to the first two months of the first quarter of the year. This was expected due to the underlying effects and challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. The rising cases of Covid - 19 in region has restricted movement as some of the cases are truck drivers who facilitate cross border trade. Lack of uniformity in Lock down protocols and measures by different governments has curtailed and slowed down trade between the East Africa member states.



Trucks stuck in traffic at Malaba border on May 27, 2020. Source: Daily Nation

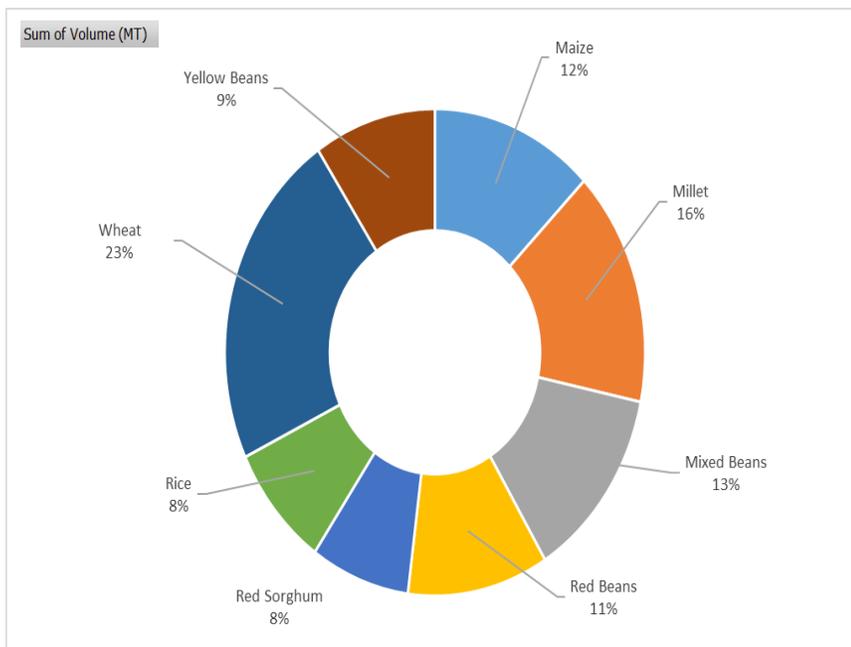


Figure 5: Informal Cross border trade in the East Africa region. Source: RATIN

Commodity	April	May	Total (MT)
Maize	2,108	1,681	3,789
Millet	2,704	2,037	4,741
Mixed Beans	2,215	1,695	3,910
Red Beans	1,773	1,497	3,270
Red Sorghum	1,089	1,212	2,301
Rice	1,357	1,128	2,485
Wheat	3,740	3,103	6,844
Yellow Beans	1,446	1,387	2,832
Grand Total	16,432	13,740	30,172

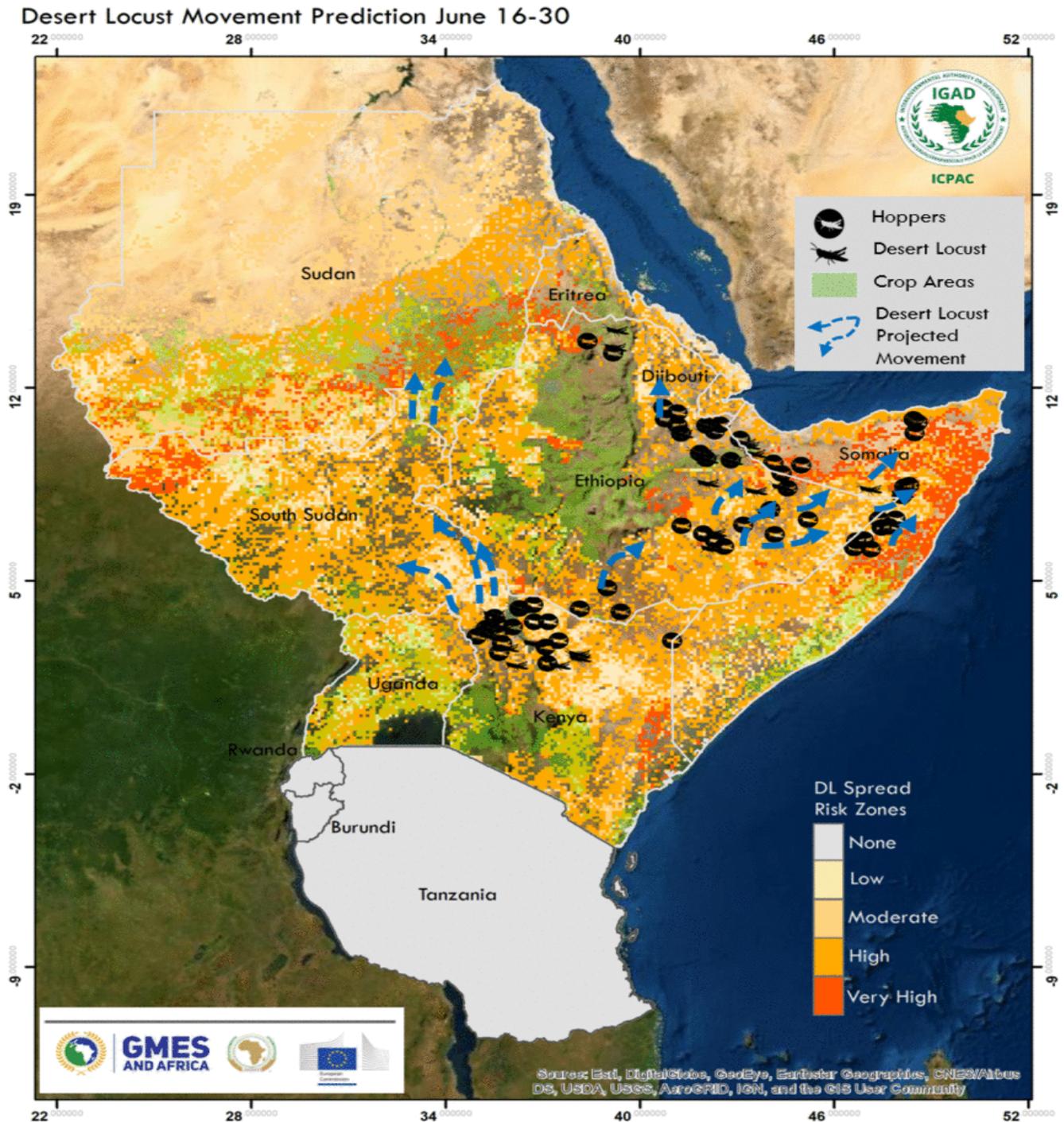
Desert Locust Movement Prediction by ICPAC (Climate Predictions and Applications Centre)

Projected impact on food and fodder production

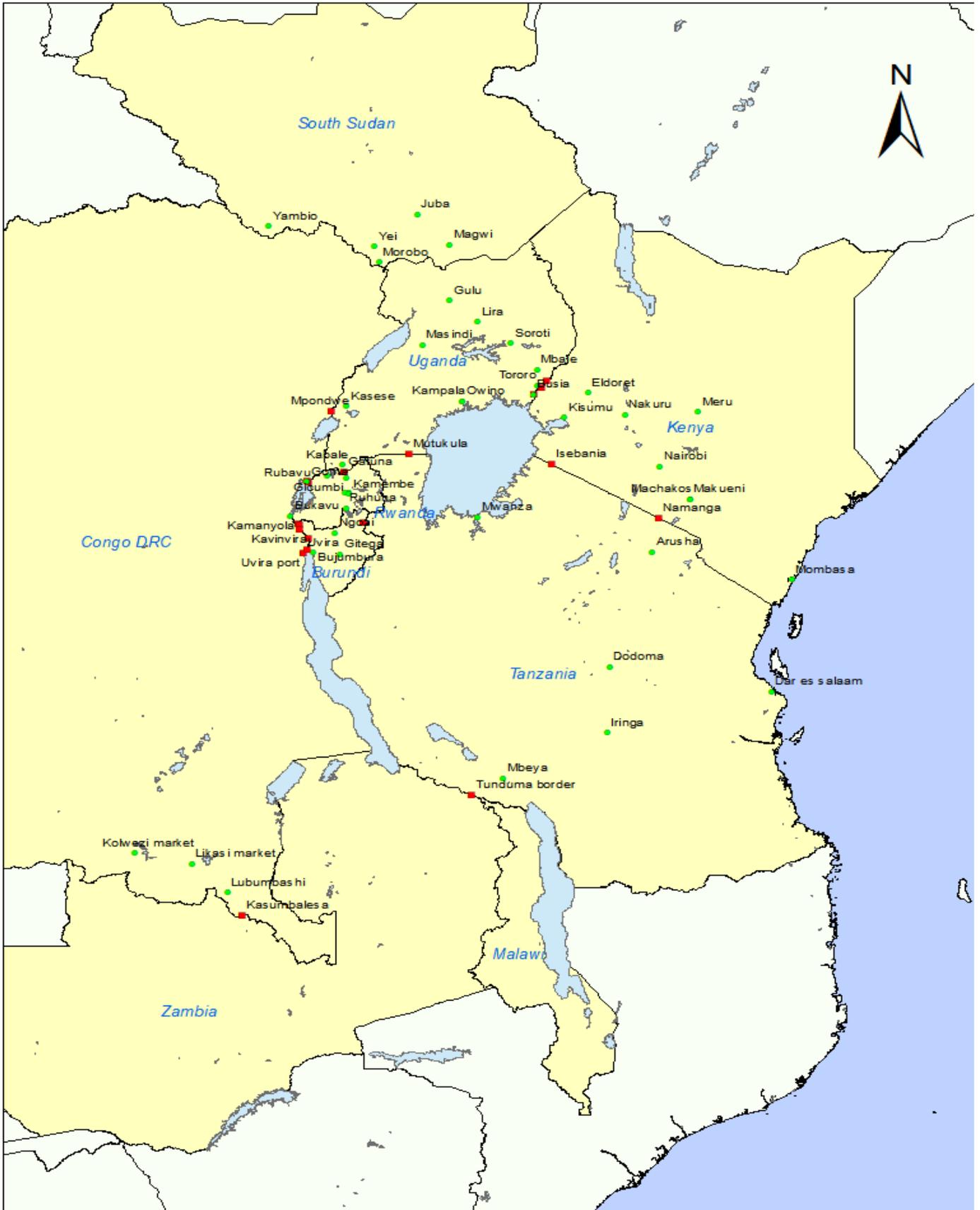
Adult swarms are being reported in the areas where hoppers have not been effectively controlled.

More hopper hatching has been reported in northern Kenya, eastern Ethiopia, central and western Somalia.

The risk of significant impact to both crops and rangelands is very high due to the increased likelihood of swarms migrating. Agro-pastoral areas of Turkana in Kenya already have reported an impact on crops in areas where the hopper bands have hatched. Most agro-pastoral areas in vegetative stages of crop development are at a high risk of potential damage to seasonal crops and regenerating pastures.



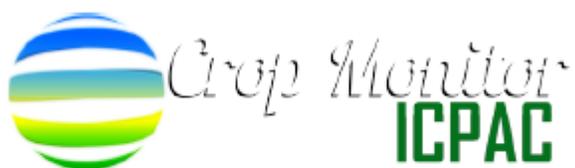
APPENDIX: RATIN Monitored Borders and Markets



Partnerships



ICPAC
IGAD Climate Prediction
& Applications Centre



Prepared by members of the **GEOGLAM Community of Practice**, Coordinated by the **IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Center**



**EARTH DATA FOR INFORMED
AGRICULTURAL DECISIONS**

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