



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Somalia Water and Land Information Management



Common
Humanitarian
Fund

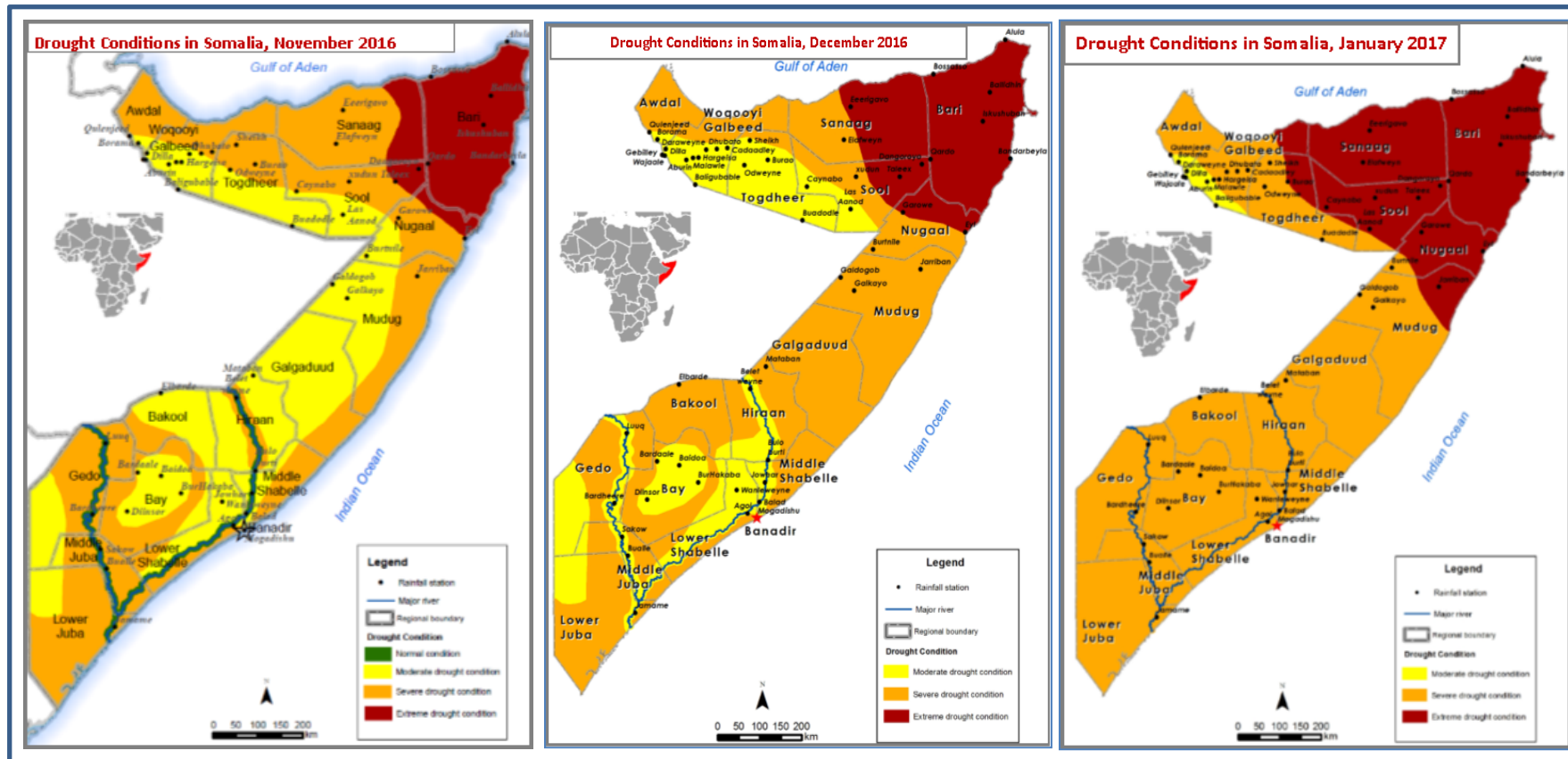


USAID
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*Update on drought
situation and river levels
along Shabelle River*

25 January 2017

Drought Conditions Update



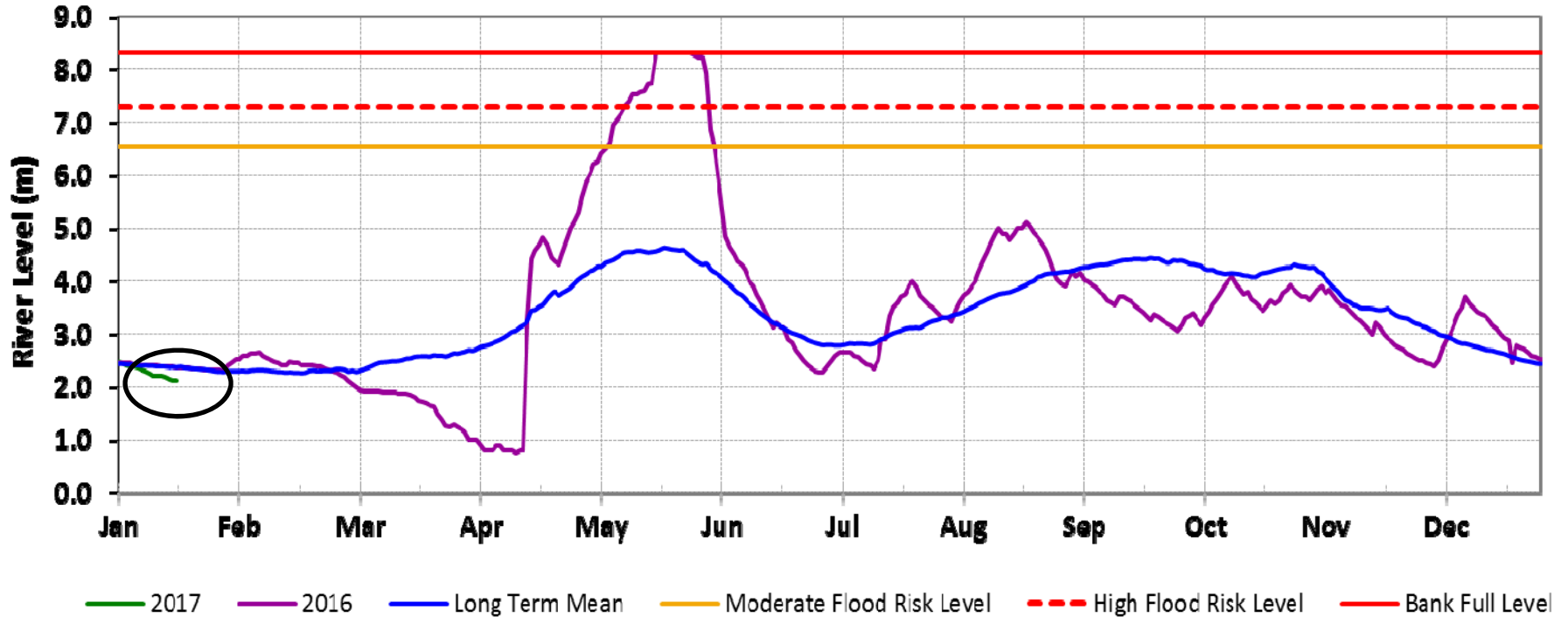
- Most parts of Somalia are facing serious drought conditions with the larger part of the population facing severe to extreme drought conditions.
- Since the last half of 2016, the severity has been spreading spatially and the impacts getting worse with time

- Some climate models are already predicting a poor rainy season in the coming season which may further aggravate the existing drought conditions.
- However, this forecast will be confirmed in the coming month during a regional Climate Outlook Forum.

Shabelle River Levels Update

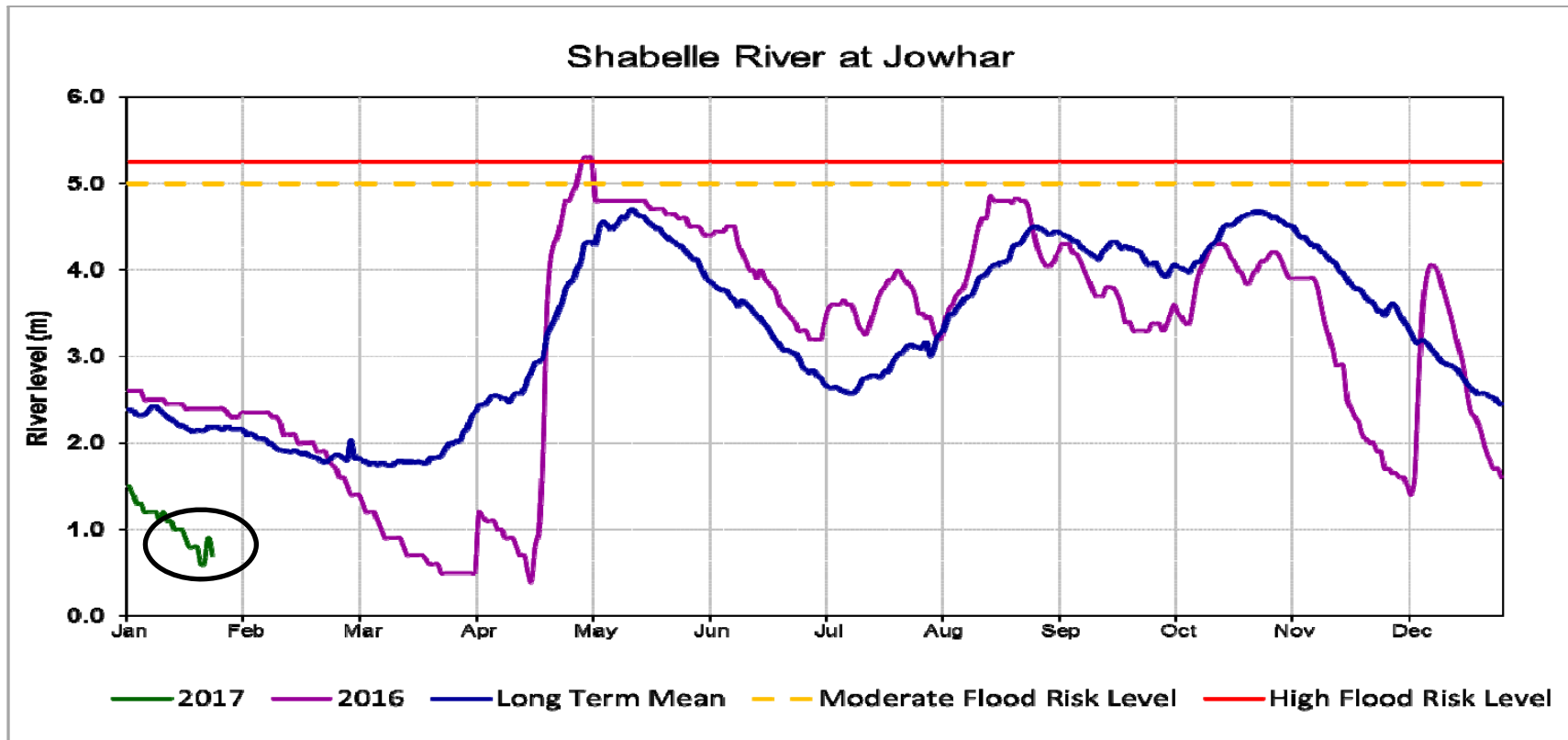
- The months of January and February usually experience the lowest amounts of river flow along the Shabelle River.
- **January 2017, has however seen significantly below normal levels along the river since the beginning of the month.**
- Some parts of the river in the middle and lower reaches have dried up. <http://frrmis.faoso.net/>
- This has been caused by below normal rains experienced in the upper parts of the Shabelle basin during the previous season which in turn has led to reduced river flow and over utilization of the river water for various uses both in Ethiopia and inside Somalia.
- Information from Ethiopian side of the basin indicate low river levels
- The decreasing trend is expected to continue in the next weeks as no rains are foreseen.

Shabelle River at Belet Weyne as of 25 January 2017



The decreasing levels are expected to continue in the coming month given the rainfall forecast

Shabelle River Level at Jowhar as of 25 January 2017



- River levels at Jowhar (Middle reach) has reached historical minimum which was also reached in March 2016. The dry river bed level is at 0.5m which has been significantly raised by sedimentation over the years.

Weir at Jowhar



- The weir was built in 1925 by Italians upstream of Jowhar to raise water level for irrigation purposes.
- Currently the observed river levels are at their historical minimum upstream of the weir.

Situation in Ethiopia

- River levels along the Shabelle River in Ethiopia are also currently below normal
- Water levels have decreased significantly in the Melka Wakena Hydroelectric Power Station in Ethiopia located in the upper part of the Shabelle river.
- There are reported cases of water diversion from the river for irrigation purposes in Gode and Khellafo areas (some 50 kilometers from the Somali border).
- With no rains expected in the coming week, the situation is likely to deteriorate further with reduction of the river flow inside Somalia

Conclusion

- The low flows along the Shabelle River both in Somalia and Ethiopia are due to a hydrological drought within the basin, specially in the upper part.
- Water availability for human and animal use will continue to deteriorate until the river levels increase.
- The reduced river flow currently cannot support irrigated agriculture especially in Middle and Lower Shabelle reaches
- This will affect the livestock, agriculture and all other water dependent sectors adversely
- It is advisable to take advantage of the current situation and close any open river breakages and weak river embankments along the river. De-siltation of the river bed is also highly recommended at this time.
- SWALIM and other technical partners will keep monitoring and updating the situation



Questions or comments please send to

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