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# PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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**Update on FAO's Response to the Desert Locust Upsurge and Fall  
Armyworm Outbreak**

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

Dominique Burgeon  
Director, Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER)  
Tel: +39 06570 53803  
Email: [Dominique.Burgeon@fao.org](mailto:Dominique.Burgeon@fao.org)

Jingyuan Xia  
Director, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)  
Tel: +39 06570 56988  
Email: [Jingyuan.Xia@fao.org](mailto:Jingyuan.Xia@fao.org)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Among the major transboundary plant pests and diseases, desert locust (DL) and fall armyworm (FAW) are the most devastating, causing the greatest yield and socio-economic damage across multiple regions in the current year.
- At the 128<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee, an Update on FAO's response to the Desert Locust upsurge was reported to the Members.<sup>1</sup> The Programme Committee requested to receive an update at its 129<sup>th</sup> Session. This document reports the update since March 2020.
- FAO advocates for an urgent and at-scale response to this crisis at the highest levels, with the Director-General leading these efforts and personally engaging with other UN agencies such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Food Programme, as well as with resource partners and ministers in the affected countries, including through the African Union Commission ministerial meeting.
- Ongoing actions include aerial and ground control operations managed by relevant governments with FAO providing support in the form of pesticides and biopesticides, equipment, training, technical expertise, aircraft, flying hours, etc., thanks to in-kind and financial contributions from a range of partners. In addition, livelihood-safeguarding interventions are focusing on the most vulnerable farmers and livestock herders to support rapid food production. It is important to note that scaled-up and sustained action in Eastern Africa so far has contributed to prevent a major humanitarian crisis and averted massive infestation in Western Africa.
- The FAO Desert Locust response will continue through December 2020, and most likely beyond, including control operations as well as livelihood safeguarding and recovery efforts and with continued emphasis on support to national surveillance and control, including Somalia, Ethiopia and both sides of the Red Sea, as well as to address the issue of access to breeding areas in Yemen.
- FAO has been leading the response for the sustainable management of FAW (outside the Americas) since 2016. The Organization has helped implement 66 technical assistance projects worth over USD 28 million across Africa and Asia.
- A Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control (GA) was launched by the FAO Director-General in December 2019 with three objectives: reduce crop losses due to FAW by 5 percent in all demonstration countries and 10 percent in the pilot countries in three years; decrease the risk of further spread and infestation in countries with limited presence of the pest; and, establish a coordination mechanism at global, regional and national levels.
- The Global Action focuses on three regions – Africa, the Near East and North Africa (NENA) and Asia – to promote FAW monitoring and management activities in areas in which FAW is well established, and to promote prevention through phytosanitary measures and preparedness in areas in which FAW is not yet detected or of limited distribution.
- To facilitate the implementation of the GA at country level, eight demonstration countries have been identified, covering eight demonstration zones that together represent over 50 percent of maize production in the three target regions.

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<sup>1</sup> PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf>

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

The Programme Committee is invited to:

- **note** with concern the threat posed by the desert locust upsurge and fall armyworm infestation for food security and livelihoods;
- **encourage** FAO to continue providing support to countries to prevent, manage, control reverse trends of spread and invasion and safeguard livelihoods of affected communities; and
- **recommend** that FAO adequately reflect priority actions needed for the sustainable management and control of desert locust and fall armyworm.

## I. Background on transboundary plant pests

1. Transboundary and emerging plant pests and diseases continue to cause substantial yield losses, estimated at around 20-25 percent among five major food crops (i.e. rice, wheat, maize, potato and soybean), and significant socio-economic impacts. The highest losses are often associated with regions already experiencing food deficits, further exposing them to food insecurity. Climate change allows for a broader geographic range for plant pests' survival and life cycles and, in some cases, speeds up pest population growth rates. Greater and more rapid movement of people, animals, plants and their products may contribute to the increased introduction of emerging pests to a country. Furthermore, inappropriate plant and pest management may erode agroecosystem biodiversity and associated ecosystem services, increasing vulnerability toward emerging pests. As a result, transboundary plant pests spread farther and faster than ever.
2. The desert locust is considered the most destructive migratory pest in the world. In response to environmental stimuli, dense and highly mobile desert locust swarms can form. They are ravenous eaters who consume their own weight per day, targeting food crops and forage. Just a single square kilometre of swarm can contain up to 80 million adults, with the capacity to consume the same amount of food in one day as 35 000 people. Large swarms pose a major threat to food security and rural livelihoods, especially in areas already experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity. The current desert locust outbreak is the worst experienced in 25 years, with three primary areas of concern, in order of severity: (i) the Horn of Africa and Yemen; (ii) Southwest Asia; and (iii) the Red Sea area, with West Africa on watch.
3. Desert locusts can be difficult to combat owing to (i) the extremely large area (16-30 million km<sup>2</sup>) within which locusts can be found; (ii) remoteness and difficult access to such areas; (iii) insecurity in some areas; (iv) limited resources for locust monitoring and control in some affected countries; (v) undeveloped basic infrastructure (roads, communications) in some countries; (vi) difficulty in maintaining a sufficient number of trained staff and functioning resources during long periods of recession in which there is little or no locust activity; (vii) political relations among some affected countries; (viii) difficulty in organizing and implementing control operations in which the pesticide must be applied directly onto the locusts; and (ix) the difficulty in predicting outbreaks given the lack of periodicity of such incidents and the uncertainty of rainfall in locust areas.
4. Fall armyworm is a polyphagous pest which feeds on maize and on more than 80 other species of plants and crops, including sorghum, millet and sugarcane. The pest is fast and prolific: adult moths can fly over 100 km per day, and a female moth can deposit over 1 000 eggs during its life cycle.
5. Due to its voracious nature and broad host range, FAW was designated as one of the ten worst pests and diseases threatening global food security (Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International, 2018) and livelihoods. Once it is established, it cannot be eradicated and follows reproductive and seasonal migration patterns on a wide range of crops, though it prefers maize.
6. Fall armyworm is generally recognized as one of the most prominent noctuid pests in the Americas, causing most damage to maize and sorghum with sporadic outbreaks on cotton and soybeans.
7. In the Americas, the fall armyworm survives year-round in warmer temperatures such as those in the Caribbean islands and the southern states of the United States of America, and migrates northward seasonally and even arriving as far as Canada.

### A. *Evolution of the desert locust situation*

8. Locust upsurges take time to develop and are closely linked to weather conditions, particularly cyclones, which have historically driven desert locust plagues. By early 2019, swarms began to leave the area and moved north towards Saudi Arabia and Iran (Islamic Republic of) and south towards Yemen. More swarms formed in both areas during the spring. In Yemen, the swarms found a habitat where they were relatively undisturbed and where conflict has hampered survey and control operations.
9. In summer 2019, spring-bred swarms migrated from Yemen to northeast Ethiopia and northern Somalia. Both Ethiopia and Somalia mobilized survey and control teams to respond. Despite this, successful breeding occurred and the resulting swarms started to move east in the Horn of Africa into eastern Ethiopia,

as well as northeastern and central Somalia at the end of the summer where more breeding took place. By the end of December 2019, swarms started to invade Kenya.

10. The countries involved scaled up their operations and treated nearly 2 million hectares during 2019, and the situation appeared to be under control until early December when Cyclone Pawan hit the Horn of Africa in exactly the areas affected by locusts, and brought with it enough rainfall and moisture to create very favourable breeding conditions for the locusts. This provided an opportunity for a major increase in desert locust swarms for the next six months.

11. Numerous swarms continued to invade Kenya where they spread throughout most of the country, and some moved with the winds into South Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania by the end of February 2020. In March, important infestations developed in Eritrea and the Sudan, followed by Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan in May, which called for a further scale-up in the response as well as increased preparedness in West Africa and the Sahel.

12. By September 2020, successful control had been achieved in a number of countries, most notably in Kenya where infestations remained in only two counties, down from twenty-nine counties affected, and in Pakistan and India where the situation has returned to calm thanks to strong capacities coupled with financial contributions to support a coordinated effort. However, East Africa remains at significant risk. National governments continue to lead control and surveillance operations supported by FAO through the provision of pesticides, bio-pesticides, equipment, aircraft and training.

13. At present, the threat to West Africa has declined due to a combination of strong control efforts and favourable conditions. However, no-regrets anticipatory action is required to upscale monitoring efforts during this summer in the Sahel to respond quickly and effectively to any swarm developments. The strategy in place for the region is based on early warning and early action and no-regrets investment.

#### *B. Desert Locust Forecast for November 2020 to early 2021*

14. An expected increase in locust activity is developing across the greater **Horn of Africa and Red Sea** area due to anticipated seasonal weather changes. As prevailing winds from the north are established over the region from October onwards, there will be an increased threat of swarm migration from Yemen, northeast Ethiopia and northern Somalia southwards to eastern Ethiopia and central Somalia, which could extend to northern Kenya in November and December.

- a) **Ethiopia:** Swarms from substantial breeding in northeast Ethiopia will move north to Eritrea while others will move southeast to eastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia. The swarms are expected to breed in both areas.
- b) **Yemen:** Hopper bands and swarms continue to form in the interior. Summer-bred swarms will breed along the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden coasts, causing additional hopper bands and swarms to form. Limited breeding could continue in parts of the interior.
- c) **Somalia:** A further increase in locust populations is expected to occur on the plateau by swarm breeding that could extend to the northwest coast as well as south to central areas.
- d) **Eritrea:** Breeding will continue along the Red Sea coastal plains where it started several months earlier than normal as a result of good rains and invading swarms from the south. Consequently, more hopper bands and swarms will form, which could be supplemented by additional swarms from Ethiopia.
- e) **The Sudan:** Winter breeding will cause locust numbers to increase on the Red Sea coast where hopper bands and swarms may form.
- f) **Saudi Arabia:** Breeding will continue along the Red Sea coast where another generation could cause more hopper bands and swarms to form.

15. In **Southwest Asia**, the upsurge ended and no significant developments are expected until at least the spring of 2021.

16. In **West Africa**, locust numbers remained low in the northern Sahel from summer breeding that occurred on a small scale. Although remaining locusts may concentrate and breed in northwest Mauritania in the coming months, no significant developments are expected.

### C. *Evolution of fall armyworm situation*

17. Fall armyworm was first detected in sub-Saharan Africa in 2016. By 2018, the pest was reported in almost all of sub-Saharan Africa, Yemen, and some Asian countries such as Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand. By the end of 2019, it was confirmed in Cambodia, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, and Viet Nam. As of October 2020, FAW has been reported in Australia, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Timor-Leste, and the United Arab Emirates.

18. Invading fall armyworm populations seem to prefer maize as the main host plant and have caused the most damage to this crop. Various field studies in Africa estimated the median maize yield losses due to fall armyworm invasion at 18 percent (11-26 percent range). At this rate, FAW risks destroying up to 80 million tonnes of maize worth USD 18 billion per year, affecting about 600 million people in Africa, Asia and the Near East.

19. There is a tendency to rely on conventional pesticides for FAW management although farming households also try other methods such as mechanical control and biopesticides. Between 30-80 percent of farming households in different African countries rely on conventional pesticides, including some highly hazardous pesticides. This trend, combined with a generally low awareness, access and use of personal protective equipment, is a source of concern especially on the health of farm workers and their family members. Indeed, over 20 percent of sampled farming household members in Africa reported at least one pesticide-related negative health symptom.

20. Studies showed that fall armyworm populations from Asia and Africa carry genetic point mutations usually associated with resistance against organophosphate insecticides.

21. Integrated pest management (IPM) techniques and technologies that are efficacious while being relatively safe for human and environmental health are available, ranging from the use of resistant or tolerant plant varieties, good agronomic practices promoting soil and plant health as well as conserving natural enemy communities, use of augmentative biological control, biopesticides and reduced-risk conventional pesticides. These options are well-tested in South America and North America with some validation data starting to emerge from the regions invaded since 2016.

22. Fall armyworm is likely to continue spreading to other northern African and Near Eastern countries, southern Pacific (a specimen was collected from Papua New Guinea, further molecular identification confirmation is awaited) and southern Europe (in particular, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain).

## II. **FAO's desert locust response**

### D. *Learning from the past and adopting an anticipatory approach*

23. FAO immediately developed a comprehensive response and anticipatory action programme, starting with the Horn of Africa and expanding to the Near East and North Africa.<sup>2</sup> This approach has been applied to Southwest Asia and the Sahel.

- a) As of 22 October, in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, the Desert Locust Information Service continues to play a crucial role in providing early warning against the ongoing locust outbreak. To date, 1 006 517 ha has been treated. Control and surveillance operations have been estimated to protect more than 1.9 million tonnes of cereal across ten countries – enough

<sup>2</sup> PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf> para 16

to feed 13 million people for one year, prevented more than USD 584 million in damages; and spared over 904 000 pastoral households from livelihood loss and distress. In Southwest Asia, 650 000 ha of land have been treated.

- b) By anticipating and mitigating the impact of the desert locust upsurge on agricultural livelihoods, FAO seeks to prevent vulnerable households from adopting negative coping strategies which would further erode their livelihoods eventually causing additional people to fall into Acute Food Insecurity at Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse level. In West Africa, anticipatory actions have been initiated since March 2020 under the technical guidance of the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO) and coordination of FAO's Regional Resilience, Emergency and Rehabilitation Office for West Africa/Sahel (REOWA). The CLCPRO action plan foresees the deployment of 53 ground teams, as well as two helicopters. During the months of June and July, the CLCPRO financed from its locust risk management fund (Fonds Régional de Gestion du Risque Acridien [FRGRA]) and mobilized resources 32 survey teams in the four frontline countries (Chad, the Niger, Mali and Mauritania). Training was provided to 148 technicians from the National Locust Control Units and the Plant Protection Officers for these four countries as well as Burkina Faso and Senegal. The training covered survey and spraying techniques; health and environmental monitoring; and management of an air base and aerial treatment for locust control. Furthermore, the training and equipping of national field technicians on innovative digital monitoring and control are ongoing (eLocust3m, eLocust3w and eLocust3g), as well as the pre-positioning of resources, including surveillance helicopters in Chad and Mauritania.
- c) FAO has supported the scale up of government-led controls and surveillance in Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan through procurement and distribution of equipment and supplies. To date, 650 000 ha has been treated. Iran (Islamic Republic of) has 700 people on the ground, with 100 active surveillance and control teams, plus seven active aircraft. Through its Plant Protection Organization, Iran (Islamic Republic of) is now preparing to cover 70 000 ha of land with control operations in 2021. In Pakistan, 1 100 teams were deployed across the country for control and surveillance operations.

#### *E. Continued monitoring and reporting of desert locust and their impacts*

24. One of the mandates of FAO is to provide information on the general locust situation to all interested countries and to give timely warnings and forecasts to those countries in danger of invasion.<sup>3</sup> FAO is committed to transparency and information sharing through a publicly accessible dashboard, while balancing the difficulties of providing a steady stream of information on the desert locust situation (<http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts>) and the response to the crises (<http://www.fao.org/locusts/response-overview-dashboard/en/>).

25. The impact assessment is under development.<sup>4</sup> The regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG), co-led by FAO and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), continues to play a critical role in providing a framework and technical means for harmonized impact assessments across four countries of the region. The recent FAO–IGAD impact assessment was conducted in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, and interviewed 10 831 agricultural respondents in desert locust-affected areas of the region in June/July 2020. Following an analysis of the assessment results and the findings of ad hoc country assessments, FAO adjusted its livelihoods assistance packages to reflect re-assessed needs, enabling the number of targeted beneficiaries to increase from 153 000 to 298 000 households with mobilized resources.

26. Furthermore, an environmental and human health impact study was concluded in Kenya, from 13 July to 15 August, which assessed 13 spraying sites, with no significant effect on the environment, and no health issues were reported, except in one location where full adherence to FAO guidelines was required.

<sup>3</sup> PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf> para 17

<sup>4</sup> PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf> para 19

A similar environmental impact study is currently ongoing in Ethiopia, with preliminary results expected by November 2020.

### *F. Responding to the current upsurge*

27. In mid-2019, FAO highlighted the need for all countries to monitor the desert locust situation through regular ground surveys and control measures as needed.<sup>5</sup>

28. By early 2020, it was clear that the desert locust situation was now an upsurge, one step before a plague, and FAO quickly stepped up its efforts to control the pest and take anticipatory action to avert a widespread food crisis in areas already experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity.

### *G. Internal organizational processes*

29. FAO adopted a strategic approach to manage the desert locust crisis:

- i. **Making the crisis a corporate priority.** In view of the demonstrated scale, complexity and urgency of the crisis, in line with Director-General's Bulletin No. 2013/32, FAO declared a corporate thematic scale-up for desert locust, activating fast-track procedures.<sup>6</sup> Two missions consisting of the Director of the Office of Emergencies and Resilience and the Senior Locust Forecasting Officer were rapidly dispatched from FAO headquarters to Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Geneva and New York to visit the breeding areas and brief the affected countries and international partners. At the same time, desert locust experts were quickly surged to the affected areas, focusing particularly on the Horn of Africa, which is so far hardest hit, with operations being managed from the Resilience Team for Eastern Africa (RTEA) of Subregional Office for Eastern Africa (SFE) in Nairobi, Kenya. The Resilience Team liaised with the affected and at-risk countries and developed the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen Appeal, as well as coordinating the ongoing operations, monitoring activities and funding and liaising with national and regional authorities. Specialists have also been surged to support the relevant line ministries and national and local authorities in affected countries. This approach has been replicated by REOWA of Subregional Office for West Africa (SFW) in Dakar, Senegal for the Sahel and West Africa Appeal and directly by Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan for the Southwest Asia appeal.
- ii. **Applying the right range of control options at the right time:** applying control methods that are technically sound and adapted to the life cycle of desert locusts, and drawing from FAO's extensive expertise in the area.<sup>7</sup>

The first priority is to sustain, scale up and prepare survey and control operations, with governments driving the operation and FAO providing support as needed, in the form of pesticides, aircraft, flying hours, ultra low volume (ULV) sprayers and other equipment, personal protective equipment and training for national workers.. As of 11 October, over 2 million hectares of land have been surveyed in the ten countries covered by FAO's initial appeal, plus 865 000 ha have been controlled. In Pakistan and Iran (Islamic Republic of), control operations have treated 650 000 ha with the support of FAO.

Control operations are carried out only by technical teams from the Ministries of Agriculture of beneficiary countries, with the support of FAO experts. Specific trainings have been conducted for the teams, based on FAO's desert locust guidelines for survey, ground and aerial control operations. Staff involved also receive a pocket Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) booklet for desert locust survey and control. The main actions identified include continuous monitoring of the environmental impact of locust control, ensuring that feedback with national locust units is maintained to adjust operations and mitigate the risks of chemical

<sup>5</sup> PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf> para 21

<sup>6</sup> PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf> para 23i

<sup>7</sup> PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf> para 23ii

- pesticides on the environment and human health; and establish a platform for dialogue between national environmental management authorities in Ethiopia and Kenya and the Locust Control Unit (base operators), in order to ensure monitoring of pesticide stocks and safe disposal of empty drums, complemented by the provision of drum crushers. Personal protective equipment (PPE) and acetylcholinesterase (AChE) kits are also being provided.
- iii. **Harnessing innovation:** FAO fast-tracked the expansion of the eLocust3 tools that are used to collect and transmit survey and control data from the field to national locust centres and FAO DLIS in real or near real time. Accordingly, a mobile version (eLocust3m), Global Positioning System (GPS) version (eLocust3g), and web version (eLocust3w) were developed and deployed along with required training, including crowd-sourcing. FAO worked with a wide range of international partners to enhance remote sensing imagery and trajectory models for monitoring and predicting locust breeding and migration, and developed platforms and dashboards to make the latest field and operations data available to the public.
  - iv. **Anticipating impacts:** While conducting forecasting, surveillance, monitoring and control operations, FAO began activities to safeguard livelihoods, including cash programming and distribution of livelihoods re-engagement packages for farmers and livestock keepers affected and at risk during the next season.<sup>8</sup>
  - v. **Partnering with national governments and key stakeholders:** To support country capacities that risk being overwhelmed by the scale of the crisis, FAO is providing technical and operational assistance for control operations and livelihoods support for the most vulnerable. Furthermore, the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) is a key partner that maintains its own fleet of fixed-wing aircraft to spray crops. In addition, CLCPRO has supported FAO's efforts to source equipment from countries not affected by the desert locust upsurge. Furthermore, through a process of triangulation, FAO was able to quickly receive (February 2020) 20 mounted sprayers from Morocco, ten of which were distributed to Kenya, six to Somalia and four to Uganda, which also included logistical support from the World Food Programme. This helped to kick-start ground control operations while waiting for further deliveries through commercial procurement. Now, 50 000 litres of pesticide is being moved from Kenya to Yemen to scale up operations and prepare for increased access, plus DLCO-EA in Kenya has loaned a plane to support control operations in Ethiopia.
  - vi. The RTEA of SFE has been liaising closely with regional authorities to promote dialogue on desert locust, and harmonized advocacy and methodologies for damage and impact assessments.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, a communication sensitization team has also been established and includes 27 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies and government authorities providing messaging in 11 local languages, for example.

#### *H. Resource mobilization and advocacy*

30. As the scale of the desert locust upsurge and potential impact on food security became clear, FAO began alerting resource partners and Members in January to raise resources for the response, advocate for comprehensive and immediate action to avert a full-blown humanitarian crisis and ensure transparent sharing of information on the forecasts and response. A number of Member briefings were held in various locations, since the last update to the Programme Committee, including:<sup>10</sup>

- a) a virtual meeting on 21 May 2020 to launch the revised Appeal, with participation of the Director-General and Mr Mark Lowcock, USG for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator;

<sup>8</sup> PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf> para 23iii

<sup>9</sup> PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf> para 23vi

<sup>10</sup> For the previous briefings, please refer to PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf> para 24

- b) a virtual briefing of the European Union Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) on 7 September 2020; and
- c) frequent bilateral meetings.

31. From day one, FAO initiated a vigorous communication and advocacy campaign to highlight the scale of the upsurge, the threat to food security, and the need to fund rapid anticipatory action. This campaign has been sustained since and remains active. The campaign has consisted of numerous global, regional and national press releases; multiple field missions to gather video and photo assets; video news releases shared with broadcasters; an unprecedented number of interviews with news outlets and FAO experts; a social media campaign deploying graphics, photos, video and animations; several podcast episodes as well as audiograms for social media, and the creation of a corporate-level desert locust website. An FAO field level responder was featured by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as one of six “humanitarian heroes” that were highlighted in the 2020 global World Humanitarian Day visibility campaign. All of this work is being supported by a team of communicators spanning FAO headquarters and affected countries, which meets on a weekly basis to coordinate activities. Thanks to this effort, the 2020 upsurge and FAO’s response has been one of the highest profile FAO stories in recent history. FAO expert staff and operations have been featured in hundreds of interviews, with stories appearing in major, minor and local news outlets (print, online, television and radio formats). FAO’s media monitoring system has detected upward of 80 000 news stories reporting on the locust response since January.

32. On 28 January, FAO issued a Desert Locust Crisis Appeal for Rapid Response and Anticipatory Action in the Horn of Africa, seeking USD 76 million for Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.<sup>11</sup> On 21 May 2020, during an Informal Briefing to the Members on the desert locust upsurge, FAO issued a revised appeal for USD 311 million that included support to additional countries that are affected or at risk of the locusts: Southwest Asia – Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan – and West Africa and the Sahel.

33. While FAO’s internal resources were immediately released to support control and livelihood safeguarding interventions (USD 5 million through Technical Cooperation Programmes as of 27 May 2020), a further USD 3 million has been channelled through the Special Fund for Emergency Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA). In order to place purchase orders as early as possible, through SFERA FAO pre-financed a number of projects on the basis of funding commitments (hard pipeline). In total, FAO advanced USD 29 million from 28 February to 6 April 2020 while waiting for grant agreements to be signed, an approach that allowed FAO to supply a number of assets before lockdowns were imposed due to COVID-19. In addition, a loan of USD 10 million was approved by the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to ensure control operations were fully funded and operational.

34. As of 22 October, over USD 201 million had been pledged or committed by resource partners including, but not limited to, the United States Agency for International Development (USD 22.5 million), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (USD 10 million), the Mastercard Foundation (USD 10 million) and the United Kingdom’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (USD 29.6 million). In addition, within the framework of the Global Network Against Food Crises, several resource partners made large contributions to FAO’s response, including the German Federal Foreign Office (EUR 21 million) and the European Union Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (EUR 25 million). FAO is also facilitating discussions with the World Bank for a contribution of up to USD 500 million to support the desert locust response in Southwest Asia and West Africa.

35. The continued high-level advocacy from the FAO Director-General has brought in new resource partners, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Mastercard Foundation and the Louis Dreyfus Foundation, as well as strengthened relationships with existing partners who also contributed fast and at scale, and facilitated fast-track procedures and support from across the Organization to respond to this crisis. As of October 2020, resource partners are: Belgium, Canada,

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<sup>11</sup> PC 128/INF/2 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc807en/nc807en.pdf> para 28

China, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, United Arab Emirates, European Union, OCHA, the World Bank Group, African Development Bank, Africa Solidarity Trust Fund, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, CERF, Louis Dreyfus Foundation and Mastercard Foundation. FAO has also deployed three experts through its standby partnership (SBP) mechanism. Two experts were funded by Canada and one by the United Kingdom. All were deployed through SBP CANADEM.

36. Following discussions between the FAO Director-General and USG Lowcock, OCHA have provided considerable support in terms of advocating for urgent funding to FAO's anticipatory action efforts. On 21 May, together with the FAO Director-General, USG Lowcock opened an FAO Informal Briefing to the Members on the locust upsurge, emphasizing the critical importance of continued funding.

### **III. FAO's Fall armyworm response**

37. FAO has been leading the response against FAW introduction outside the Americas since 2016. The Organization has helped implement 66 technical assistance projects worth over USD 28 million across Africa and Asia.

38. In December 2019, a Global Action (GA) was launched by the FAO Director-General QU Dongyu. The GA has three major objectives: reduce crop losses due to FAW by 5 percent in all demonstration countries and 10 percent in the pilot countries in three years; decrease the risk of further spread and infestation in countries with limited presence of the pest; and establish a coordination mechanism at global, regional and national levels.

39. The Global Action focuses on three regions – Africa, Near East and North Africa (NENA) and Asia – to promote FAW monitoring and management activities in areas in which FAW is well established, and to promote prevention through phytosanitary measures and preparedness in areas in which FAW is not yet detected or of limited distribution. Through these activities, the GA aims to achieve three outcomes in the target regions: support positive economic outcomes by reducing crop loss and increasing farming profit, improve environmental outcomes by reducing pesticide use and preserving natural enemies through FAW sustainable management, spur positive social outcomes by enhancing farmers' IPM capacity and countries' institutional capacities to respond to emerging plant pests.

40. To facilitate the implementation of the GA at country level, eight demonstration countries, covering eight demonstration zones, have been identified: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Egypt, India, Kenya, Malawi, and the Philippines. Together, these countries represent over 50 percent of maize production in the three target regions.

41. The FAO Director-General has communicated with the eight demonstration countries and requested each country to 1) strengthen the national task force (NTF) for FAW control; 2) develop a three-year work plan on the implementation of the GA in the country, including activities that benefit surrounding countries in the same demonstration zone; 3) designate a national focal point (NFP) for regular communication with the FAO FAW Secretariat and relevant FAO regional office; 4) continue resource mobilization for FAW control while receiving partial technical and financial support from FAO; and 5) agree on a collaborative framework with the FAW Secretariat to implement the three-year work plan.

42. The GA's work on prevention and preparedness will focus on Southern Europe, South Pacific and countries in the Near East and North Africa in which FAW has not yet been reported or is of limited distribution.

43. Regional steering groups for Asia, the Near East and North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa will be established with the primary membership coming from demonstration countries and other relevant partners. The FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for each region will nominate a FAW regional coordinator to serve as a critical coordinating and communication linkage between NTFs, NFPs and FAO headquarters. Regional technical networks on monitoring and

management will be established to facilitate exchange of knowledge and experiences. In countries where FAW has not been detected or is of limited distribution, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) will form three task forces consisting of Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs) for the Pacific, the Near East and Southern Europe with the membership coming from relevant countries in each region.

44. At the global level, a Steering Committee (SC) chaired by the FAO Director-General oversees the coordination and implementation of activities. The FAW SC comprises 23 high-level representatives from governments, private sector, research, development and donor communities. The FAW SC has met three times thus far. A Technical Committee (TC) chaired by the chief scientist of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), supported by seven technical working groups (TWGs), advises the global SC on technical matters in FAW monitoring, management, prevention and preparedness. The FAW TC comprises more than 50 scientists and practitioners from international and national research and education institutions as well as representatives of civil society and the private sector.

45. The FAW TC is currently developing general guidelines for regional IPM packages, providing information on management techniques and technologies against FAW, to be endorsed by the FAW SC before being further mainstreamed in the demonstration countries.

46. The FAW Secretariat, hosted by FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP), in close coordination with the IPPC Secretariat, is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Global Action. The Director and Deputy Director of NSP serve as the Executive and Deputy Executive Secretary of the FAW Secretariat, supported by the FAW Coordinator. Within the FAW Secretariat, four working groups led by experts from NSP have been established on: coordination and integration; technical integration and extension; partnership and resource mobilization; and communication and advocacy. To draw on the broader technical expertise and experience of all relevant colleagues at FAO headquarters and increase synergies within FAO, the FAW Secretariat will be further strengthened with focal points from relevant Divisions/Offices/Centres.

47. As of October 2020, the FAW Global Action has mobilized USD 7.2 million through the TCP; USD 1.5 million through South-South Cooperation (SSC); USD 5.4 million through resource partners (e.g. European Union and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation). Another FAO-SSC-China programme, worth USD 3 million addressing pesticide risk reduction by regulatory management, is being developed for five Asian and Central Asian countries. Previously, in 2019, USD 3.6 million was allocated through TCP emergency assistance to address FAW infestation in nine countries in Africa (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar and Mali), Asia and the Pacific (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Sri Lanka) and the Near East and North Africa (Egypt and Yemen).

48. A high-level global conference is planned, convening relevant government ministers from FAW-infested and demonstration countries, along with research and development partners and other relevant partners. The conference will encourage participants to make concrete commitments for the implementation of the Global Action.