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DESERT LOCUST CONTROL COMMITTEE

Fortieth Session
Rome, 19-22 June 2012
Actions taken in the implementation of the 39th DLCC recommendations
(Agenda item 10)

Seventeen recommendations were made during the Thirty-Ninth Session of the DLCC in March 2009 (see Annex 1). Most of the recommendations were to be implemented by FAO but some depended on actions to be taken by locust-affected countries or the Regional Commissions. Some of the recommendations were relatively easy to follow, while others rely on the existence of an appropriate framework and require a more long-term approach. Progress made in their implementation is indicated below.

R1: It was recommended that for the next DLCC meeting, one locust-affected country from each region of the Desert Locust distribution area should be given the opportunity to present a summary of the status and capacity of its National Locust Control Unit.

FAO has followed this request in the agenda of the 40th Session of the DLCC where opportunities are given to countries to report on the progress made in developing national locust control capacities.

R2: The DLCC recommended that the Secretariat should establish a small representative committee to discuss by email the terminology used to describe population dynamics (particularly outbreak, upsurge and plague/invasion) and report its consensus back to the next session.

The matter was discussed intensively in an extraordinary expert consultation in October 2009 at FAO HQ on preventive Desert Locust control. A discussion forum under the umbrella of the FAO Desert Locust Information Service (DLIS) was established to freely discuss the terminology and definitions pertaining to locust dynamics. The issue has been discussed with the CLCPRO (Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region) team by email and during visits to FAO HQ. However, it remains complex due to technical difficulties in estimating the actual size of locust populations with currently available techniques. The issue needs to be pursued further but, in the meantime, the definitions as per *FAO Desert Locust Guidelines*, the *Desert Locust Glossary*, and the *FAO Technical Series No. 30 and No. 35* should be maintained.

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R3: The DLCC agreed to renew its support for the prevention of Desert Locust emergencies, based on targeted interventions carried out as early as possible; such interventions should be implemented by autonomous National Locust Control Units, with strong support from the Regional Commissions, and with sufficient flexibility in their contingency plans and their funding resources to be able to react to any unusual situation.

Since the 39th Session of the DLCC, the seven Desert Locust outbreaks that occurred between March 2009 and May 2012, including three in the Western Region, three in the Central Region and one in South-West Asia were brought under control by the national units with support from their respective Regional Commission. During the outbreak in 2009 in Mauritania, a special meeting of the FAO Food Chain Crisis (FCC) Management Framework was held in October 2009 under the chairmanship of the Assistant Director-General AGP, and was followed up, in late October-early November, by a regional *ad hoc* expert consultation, organized by the Executive Secretary of the CLCPRO, to assess the situation and prepare a short- and medium-term action plan. The comparatively better level of preparedness of the National Locust Control Centre in Mauritania, the proactive approach of all parties and available national and regional means, supplemented by bilateral support from Libya, served to rapidly overcome the outbreak. This experience demonstrated that investment in preventive locust control and regional solidarity had positive results on the mitigation of new locust crises.

With regard to the outbreak that began in February 2012 on the Libyan and Algerian border, the CLCPRO reacted quickly, at its 6th session held in March 2012 in Tunis, by requesting the establishment of an *ad hoc* working group and then by following up on its recommendations, with the granting of a financial allocation of 300 000 USD. At the same time, FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme approved an emergency project amounting to 380 000 USD.

The Regional Commissions promote the formulation of national and regional locust risk management plans to reinforce country preparedness to deal with any locust crisis (including external). In the Western Region, such national plans have been finalized and validated in four countries (Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal) and are about to become so in five others (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Morocco and Tunisia). A simulation exercise was conducted in Mali in October 2011. In addition, a regional locust risk management plan is being drawn up by the CLCPRO Secretariat. In the Central Region, the EMPRES Programme has begun the process of formulating locust risk management plans and has encouraged countries to prepare national plans, which will be tested through simulation exercises. In southwest Asia, risk management plans form part of the tools employed to strengthen national programmes.

R4: Following the efforts made by the CLCPRO and the Ad Hoc Group, which was created to elaborate Terms of Reference of the Emergency International Fund for Desert Locust, it was recommended to further explore the possibilities of creating this Fund.

The positive experience with the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in the context of other locust emergencies in recent years in Yemen, East Africa, Tajikistan, Timor Leste, Georgia and Madagascar has demonstrated that the reaction time to locust emergencies can be reduced considerably when compared to the time that elapsed in 2003 with the onset of the Desert Locust upsurge in the Western Region. The CERF Secretariat has also accepted the use of CERF funds in a regional context and the extension of their use for up to six months. This therefore raises the question of the relevance of creating an International Emergency Fund and other elements of response are provided by a study on the financing of locust control whose findings are presented in detail during this session and are summarized below.

Within the framework of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) adopted at the 35th Session of the FAO Conference held in November 2008 and, more specifically, within that of the Organization's decentralization strategy, FAO and the CLCPRO commissioned an 'institutional' study from October 2010 'to review the institutional roles and responsibilities of Desert Locust Commissions established

under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution and prepare a comprehensive framework of governance and sustainable financing of locust control'. This study, funded by the EMPRES-WR Programme and FAO's Legal Office, thus includes a component on financing aimed specifically at responding to recommendation R4 of the 39th Session of the DLCC. The conclusions of this component include a proposal to create emergency funds specific to the Desert Locust at national and regional levels, to supplement the instruments already existing at international level (albeit non-specific to the Desert Locust): (i) the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and; (ii) the FAO Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA). The study presents various options for the utilization of the proposed emergency funds at national and regional levels. Particularly noteworthy is that the study highlights the fact that the creation of one or more emergency funds specific to the Desert Locust only makes sense if occurring within the framework of implementation of a comprehensive funding system combining different financing instruments and based on Desert Locust population dynamics. The proposed financing instruments must permit the monitoring of such dynamics in an organized and progressive sequence of locust alerts and mobilization of resources.

A firm decision concerning the strengthening of regional emergency funds was taken in 2010 at the 27th Session of the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC) held in Beirut, Lebanon, during which the Regional Emergency Fund was increased from 100 000 USD to 300 000 USD.

R5: The DLCC recommended that the affected countries also put in place National Emergency Funds for the Desert Locust in order to be able to deal with any critical eventuality in their countries.

In the Western Region, Morocco established a special locust emergency fund in 1988 as a result of the 1987-1989 invasion. Niger established a National Committee of Prevention and Management of Food Crises supported by the United Nations and eleven donors in 2010. The Food Crisis Unit (CCA) of the Committee decided to allocate 100 000 USD to the National Locust Control Centre (CNLA) for escorted surveys.

In the Central Region, none of the member countries has established a special national emergency fund for locusts.

In the South-West Asia Region, Iran has allocated equipment, resources and funds that are for use only in Desert Locust emergencies. Pakistan and India do not have emergency funds dedicated to Desert Locust but do have access to general emergency funds at the national level.

R6: The DLCC recommended that FAO look into the establishment of contingency stocks of field equipment to be stored at WFP's Humanitarian Response Depots, solicit donor support for this purpose, and report on progress to the next DLCC Session.

Negotiations with donors to support the establishment of contingency stocks of field equipment to be stored at WFP's Humanitarian Response Depots did not show any concrete results. Donor priorities, other emergencies and the current global financial crisis do not favour the idea at this stage. In order to use WFP's facilities in future major Desert Locust plagues, the DLCC should allow FAO to pre-position strategic equipment and supplies in WFP's Humanitarian Response Depots for further distribution to countries in need.

R7: The DLCC recommended that its Trust Fund assist in developing suitable open-source software for supporting RAMSES.

FAO has started the development of an open-source RAMSES GIS software in close cooperation with national locust information officers of countries affected by the Desert Locust. A team of programmers and 'beta testers' of the three regions will develop this new version. In January 2012, a technical meeting was held in Rome, with funding from the three Regional Commissions, to discuss

the system and its functionality. The new version will be able to function with all types of computer and operating system, and will be more powerful and user-friendly than the present version. Users' reactions to the prototype will be gathered in April (for English speakers), July (for French speakers) and in September (Sudan) so that the final version can be made available at the end of 2012. The development costs are covered by FAO's Regular Programme.

R8: Following the recommendation of the workshop on biopesticides, which was held in Rome in February 2009, the DLCC recommended that Green Muscle® should be used operationally for preventive control as much as the temperature range allowed but always by professional teams that had been properly trained.

FAO pays high attention to ecologically safer locust control. In recent years, it has supported the use of biopesticides on an operational scale with promising results in Timor Leste and Tanzania. Training was provided in Madagascar in 2010 and 2011 to allow large-scale aerial spraying. Barrier treatment was experimented in 2011 in Mauritania. Based on these promising experiences, Desert Locust-affected countries and the Regional Commissions are encouraged to promote the registration and use of biopesticides whenever and wherever appropriate, specifically in ecologically vulnerable areas and in zones where unwanted side effects of conventional pesticides are not tolerated by local communities.

R9: The DLCC recommended that all the outbreak-area (front-line) countries in the whole Desert Locust distribution area should have autonomous National Locust Control Units.

FAO supports efforts to establish autonomous National Locust Control Units in the Desert Locust front-line countries as an essential element for sustainably maintaining an effective preventive control strategy and underpinning better preparedness for crisis situations. Since 2018, all front-line countries in the Western Region (Mauritania in 2006, Mali in 2007, Niger in 2008 and Chad in 2008) have established such units through parliamentary legislation. The issue of providing full autonomy to the National Locust Control Units of Sudan and Yemen should be further pursued by the Central Region Commission once the situation in these countries allows. Autonomous locust units exist in Pakistan and India.

R10: The DLCC recommended that there should be a Phase II of the EMPRES-WR in order to consolidate the achievements made so far.

FAO supports a Phase II of the EMPRES-WR Programme. In this regard, a workshop to plan a second phase of the EMPRES-WR Programme was organized in Dakar, Senegal (March 2010), to jointly define in detail, with the member countries of this programme and donors, the framework for such a second phase. The overall aim of Phase II of the EMPRES-WR Programme is to “sustainably reduce the risks of Desert Locust plagues in the Western Region and contribute to poverty reduction, food security and the protection of human and animal health, and the environment”, and more specifically to “ensure sustainability of the preventive Desert Locust control strategy in the Western Region through fully operational National Locust Control Units, a strengthened Regional Commission and adequate sustainable management mechanisms”. Based on the workshop's findings, a Phase II project document was prepared in French and English and distributed in November 2010 to development partners with a request for funding. The overall cost of this four-year Phase II (2011-2014) has been estimated at 28.8 million USD, including 21 million covered by the Member States and 7.8 million to come from external support to be identified. Since then, several meetings have been held with donors, leading USAID to grant a contribution of 470 000 USD as part of a comprehensive project with FAO. For its part, the ADB would appear to be willing to help finance the majority of activities of this phase. Finally, FAO has formally requested that France continue to provide its technical assistance.

R11: In connection with pesticide management, and in order to prevent new obsolete stocks, to ensure early responses to future locust outbreaks, and to protect human health and the environment, the DLCC recommended:

- *that the Pesticide Stock Management System (PSMS) recently developed by FAO should be installed and operational in all Western Region countries covered by CLCPRO and extended to the countries of the Central and South-West Asia Regions;*
- *that FAO invite countries to provide a list of pesticides registered for locust control.*

In the Western Region, the Pesticide Stock Management System has been established in the ten member countries of the CLCPRO. In the Central Region, it has been introduced in five of the 16 member countries of the CRC (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen). In South-West Asia, it has been introduced in Pakistan among the four member countries of the SWAC.

A lack of resources has prevented the installation and implementation of the PSMS in other member countries of the CRC and SWAC, especially as introduction of the PSMS calls for prior training of the staff concerned. Nevertheless, preliminary training on the utilization of the PSMS was organized in November 2011 in Turkey for all the countries of the Near East.

FAO invited countries to provide a list of pesticides registered for locust control. Registered pesticides in locust-affected countries are now listed under FAO's Locust Emergency Response Tool Kit (eLERT) and can be accessed at: <http://sites.google.com/site/elertsite>.

R12: Following discussions, it was recommended that all DLCC members pay their annual contribution on a regular basis and that an official letter be sent by the Director-General inviting countries to settle their arrears, if any. Delegates were also invited to sensitize their national authorities on the importance of settling arrears as soon as possible.

The DLCC member countries are 'reminded' every year to settle their dues to the Committee, as per standing policy, by official letter from the Director-General of FAO. The member countries were reminded on 27 August 2009, 23 July and 18 August 2010, 9 and 30 June 2011 and 19 April 2012 to settle their annual contributions and their arrears.

R13: It was recommended that Burkina Faso and Eritrea, both recent new members of the DLCC, pay an annual contribution of 3 000 USD. For Kuwait, which has been invited to the DLCC for a number of years, a letter should be sent requesting a financial contribution suggested to be 20 000 USD.

Burkina and Eritrea, which became DLCC members in 2009, have received the official letters requesting funds since 2010, for an annual contribution of 3 000 USD. A first letter was addressed to Kuwait on 30 November 2009 regarding an annual contribution of 20 000 USD and the country has been sent the annual contribution reminders since then.

R14: The DLCC once more invited Nigeria, which had withdrawn from the DLCC in 1995, to settle its arrears to the Trust Fund.

Nigeria continues to be invited to settle its arrears.

R15: It was recommended that the Secretariat carry out an assessment of the annual contribution paid by each country and propose to the DLCC any necessary modification in this respect.

No formal assessment of the annual contributions to the DLCC has been conducted so far because of the complexity of the matter (and the probable need to discuss and update the Committee's mandate). FAO attaches great importance to this issue, also in relation to the contribution of member countries to the regional locust commissions and organizations. Regular and full payment of contributions to the

regional and international locust entities determines the ability of these bodies to provide the expected support and services, specifically with regard to preventive locust control, the development and introduction of new technologies and their capacity to assist in locust emergencies.

R16: It was recommended that the Secretariat explore all possible ways to reduce the costs of DLCC meetings and to proceed with the necessary arrangements in time for the next meeting.

FAO welcomed this recommendation and, for the first time, envisaged holding a DLCC session, the 40th, outside FAO headquarters in order to reduce costs and also to allow the participation of as many countries as possible at DLCC sessions. However, this was not possible and, in order to prevent further delay in holding this 40th session, the decision was taken to proceed with the meeting in the usual manner.

R17: The DLCC recommended that the budget proposed for 2009-2011 be adopted. It should include the publishing of the PhD Thesis of Mr M.A. Babah Ebbe in the FAO Technical Series.

DLCC funds were used in printing the PhD Thesis of Mr M.A. Babah Ebbe, amounting to 12 548 USD. As a slight deviation from the recommendation, the PhD Thesis was not published in the FAO Technical Series because of the required peer-review process by independent reviewers, which would have delayed the publishing of the PhD Thesis and made it considerably more expensive.