SITUATION UPDATE

Locust Crisis in Madagascar

10 December 2013

Highlights

- Since April 2012, Madagascar has been facing a **plague** of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, that threatens the livelihoods of **13 million people** in the country, 9 million of whom earn a living from agriculture.
- Almost two-thirds of the country are currently infested. Findings from a damage assessment conducted in May 2013 indicate that **rice crop losses due to locusts in 2012/13 vary from 10 to as much as 40 percent** in 17 of Madagascar's 22 regions**.**
- The Ministry of Agriculture of Madagascar declared **a national disaster on 27 November 2012** and requested assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to address the current locust plague.
- It is estimated that at least **three successive locust control campaigns costing USD 43.9 million* are required** to return to a recession period by treating over 2 million hectares between September 2013 and September 2016**. One or two campaigns alone, will not be enough to reach this objective.**
- The three-year programme jointly prepared by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture in response to the plague **focuses on:**
  - **Improving the monitoring and analysis of the locust situation**
  - **Large-scale aerial control operations**
  - **Monitoring and mitigating the impact of locust control operations on human health and the environment**
  - **Assessing the effectiveness of each locust campaign and the impact of locusts on crops and pastures**
- The **current funding gap is USD 17.7 million** required for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 campaigns. Should all the funds not be available on time to undertake the campaigns, the plague could severely affect a family's ability to provide for itself.

Latest Update

The adult locust populations (winged locusts) which had survived the dry and cool season matured and laid eggs during October. In the invasion area, hatching started in late October and continued until the first decade of November, giving rise to hopper groups and bands, which developed under good ecological conditions throughout the month. During the second decade of November, last instar hoppers prevailed at densities varying from 60 to 1 000 hoppers/m² and reaching up to 10 000 hoppers/m². Fledging started during the third decade and some groups of adults were observed. In the outbreak area, breeding started later and hopper development was still in progress during the third decade of November; densities up to 500 hoppers/m² were reported. In the invasion area, a total of almost 20 000 hectares was protected against hopper bands up to 3rd instar while 16 500 hectares were treated against later hopper instars and young adults of the new generation. In the outbreak area, more than 13 000 hectares were treated. In some areas, aerial operations were hampered by insecurity.

Recent Actions Taken

Locust Watch Unit, mandated with the collection, storage and analysis of locust, weather and socio-economic data produces regular ten-day and monthly bulletins illustrated by pertinent and updated maps, which are published on the FAO website dedicated to the locust emergency in Madagascar.

The first locust campaign (September 2013 – August 2014): The aerial extensive survey operations to assess the locust situation and localize the hotspots of the locust populations in order to forecast their likely movements and deploy aerial bases started on 26 September. As a result, two aerial bases, each equipped with one helicopter, have been established, one in the west (Tsiroanomandidy) and one in the southwest (Ihosy). Locust control operations started on 4 November and, as of 30 November, almost 50 000 hectares had been treated or protected with conventional pesticides and insect growth regulators. First batches of critical inputs such as conventional pesticides, insect growth regulators and biopesticides, personal protective equipment as well as vehicles and equipment for survey and control operations have been delivered. The Human Health and Environmental Management Plan has been finalized and published. Key technical specialists, including a Campaign Coordinator, a Locust Expert, a Logistician and a Pesticide Stock Management System Specialist are or were recently on site to organize field activities and train national staff. National specialized expertise has been mobilized in close collaboration with the National Anti-Locust Centre, the Plant Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Coordination Unit.

Pesticide triangulation (donation of pesticides from a country with available stocks to a recipient country): Half of the conventional pesticide required for the first locust control campaign has been donated by the Governments of Algeria (30 000 litres), Mauritania (30 000 litres) and Morocco (200 000 litres) from their pesticide stocks which, by reducing the quantity of pesticides stored in those countries, limits the environmental risks associated with their storage and disposal. It enabled also FAO to procure such pesticides quicker than through international tenders and therefore to start the control operations implementation in a timely manner.

Funding required (USD)	Funding received by FAO (USD)	Funding gap (USD)
43.9 million* FAO Appeal, 18 December 2012	**26.2 million** (Government of Madagascar through a Work Bank loan, Austria, Belgium, CERF-OCHA, European Union, France, Italy, Norway, and USA)	**17.7 million**

* The budget for the three-year programme required adjustment from the previous estimate of USD 41.5 million to USD 43.9 million based on current (actual) market prices of inputs and services required for the first campaign.

Further Information

- All up-to-date information is available on our Website: www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/madagascar-locust/en/
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