E

联合国粮食及农业组织
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture
Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций
Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة

PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Hundred and Twenty-eighth Session

Rome, 18-22 May 2020

Update on FAO's response to the Desert Locust upsurge

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

Mr Dominique Burgeon
Director, Emergency and Resilience Division
Strategic Programme Leader - Resilience
Tel: +39 06570 53803

NC807/e

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The current desert locust upsurge has developed as a result of weather and other conditions beginning in uninhabited areas with no surveillance or control activities, in areas affected by conflict or remote and difficult to access, and with various cyclones bringing rainfall and moisture since mid-2018 that was conducive to locust breeding.
- Since 2018, FAO has monitored the situation and, in mid-2019, mobilized internal resources (Technical Cooperation Programme and Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities) to support affected governments, who had scaled up their control and survey operations to contain the pest.
- However, in early December 2019, Cyclone Pawan created ideal conditions for desert locust breeding and the situation quickly deteriorated to an "upsurge", one step before a plague, in the Horn of Africa.
- Recognizing that the spread of the locusts could have major food security impacts in the region, in January 2020 FAO declared a corporate scale up and issued an immediate appeal for USD 76 million to contain the pest and avert a food crisis. In particular, FAO was concerned that the start of rainy seasons in the region (from March onwards) would facilitate a new wave of breeding and further spread of the pest to areas with optimal climatic conditions. The infestation could affect the main staple crop production season without prompt anticipatory action.
- FAO's Response and Anticipatory Action Appeal was therefore based on a two-pronged strategy: (i) to urgently support control operations; and (ii) begin livelihood-safeguarding and recovery interventions, based on the recommendations of the Multilateral Evaluation of the 2003-05 Desert Locust Campaign, which was presented to the Programme Committee in September 2006.
- With the Greater Horn of Africa on the frontlines of the desert locust threat, technical experts and other critical human resources were quickly surged to the region, and the response coordinated through the Resilience Team for East Africa in Nairobi, under the Subregional Office for East Africa.
- As of late February, the FAO Appeal was revised to USD 138 million to cover rapid response and anticipatory action in eight countries in the Greater Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania) from January to December 2020, where over 20 million people faced crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity. In early March, an addendum was issued, recognizing the massive potential threat posed by the pest in the Near East and North Africa, and calling for USD 15.2 million to take action in the Sudan and Yemen, where almost 22 million people faced crisis and worse levels of acute food insecurity.
- FAO advocated 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.
- Within the first 40 days of the Appeal's launch, over USD 90 million had been mobilized.
- 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 have started, focusing on the most vulnerable farmers and livestock herders in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, where the start of the long rains in late March provided an ideal opportunity to support rapid food production. The purpose of these livelihood-based

anticipatory actions is to mitigate the impact of the upsurge on agricultural production and livelihood assets, thereby preventing a potential food crisis.

- The FAO Desert Locust response will continue through December 2020, moving from control operations to livelihood safeguarding and recovery efforts and with continued emphasis on support to national surveillance and control.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

- The Programme Committee is requested to note the update on FAO's response to the Desert Locust upsurge.

I. Background on the current Desert Locust upsurge

1. The Desert Locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*) 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.

2. The current desert locust outbreak is the worst experienced in 25 years, with three primary areas of concern, in order of importance: (i) the Horn of Africa; (ii) southwest Asia; and (iii) the Red Sea area.

3. Desert Locusts can be difficult to combat owing to (i) extremely large area (16-30 million km^2) 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.

A. Evolution of the situation

4. Locust upsurges take time to develop and are closely linked to weather conditions, particularly cyclones, which have historically driven desert locust plagues. The current upsurge began to develop in the Arabian Peninsula in mid-2018, when two major cyclones brought heavy rains to the "empty quarter", a very remote, uninhabited area – where locusts bred for nine consecutive months. There is an exponential increase in locust numbers with every new generation of breeding, a two-fold increase after three months and 8 000 times after nine months. There are no survey or control operations in these areas because they are too remote and inaccessible.

5. By early 2019, swarms began to leave the area and moved north towards Saudi Arabia and Iran and south towards Yemen, where they found a habitat where they were relatively undisturbed and where conflict has hampered survey and control operations, and more swarms formed.

6. In summer 2019, these swarms began to cross out into northeastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia. Both Ethiopia and Somalia mobilized survey and control teams to respond. Despite this, by the end of the summer, swarms started to move east in the Horn of Africa into eastern Ethiopia, northeastern and central Somalia. By the end of December 2019, swarms had reached Kenya.

7. The countries involved scaled up their operations and treated nearly 2 million hectares and the situation appeared to be under control until early December 2019, 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.

8. The desert locusts then moved with the winds across Kenya and Ethiopia, into South Sudan and Uganda, as well as the United Republic of Tanzania, Eritrea and Djibouti by the end of February 2020.

B. Forecasts for March to June 2020

9. Forecasts for the likely evolution of the situation reflect the unpredictability of the swarms and are highly dependent on the weather and the success of ongoing control operations and therefore could change significantly in the coming months.

10. In the Horn of Africa, according to the Desert Locust Information System, new swarms will form initially in northeast Somalia from early March onwards, followed by Ethiopia, Kenya and central Somalia. Some of the swarms are likely to move north to reinvade Ethiopia and Somalia, and could spread throughout the northern highlands as far as the Eritrean border, while other swarms will remain in those areas that remain

favourable in Kenya and southern Ethiopia, where they will mature and breed, causing another generation of hopper bands to form in May and eventually a new generation of swarms from late June onwards. Any swarms that are present in north-eastern Somalia from late May onwards, and conditions are unfavourable, are likely to migrate to southwest Asia to summer breeding areas alongside both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border and meet monsoon rains there, starting about July – posing a major threat to agricultural production in both countries.

11. A second hotspot for the desert locust is along both sides of the Red Sea, where once conditions dry out and depending on the success of current control operations, swarms could move into the interior of Saudi Arabia and Yemen for one generation of breeding during the spring (a 20-fold increase). In the early summer, swarms would likely move west to the interior of the Sudan, where they would likely meet swarms emerging from Kenya.

12. In addition, in southwest Asia, a number of countries are preparing for desert locust outbreaks. Breeding commenced in Baluchistan, southwest Pakistan that caused hopper bands to form in April and new swarms are expected to form in May that could eventually move to the summer breeding areas along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border. This will be supplemented by a second generation of breeding in adjacent areas of southern Iran where early breeding commenced in December due to unusually favourable weather conditions. Consequently, numerous swarms could potentially form from May onwards that would move towards the summer breeding areas along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border.

C. A major threat to food security and livelihoods

13. In the Greater Horn of Africa, the desert locust situation threatens pastures and crops, particularly in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. This represents an unprecedented threat to food security and livelihoods, with more than 20 million people in the region facing crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity as of March 2020, and which could lead to further suffering, displacement and potential conflict. As of March, the primary countries of concern remained Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, although desert locust swarms had also been reported in Uganda, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this area, planting begins from around end-March/early-April, coinciding with the generation of new swarms.

14. In the Near East and North Africa, the pest also poses a serious threat to crop and livestock production in countries that are already highly food insecure and facing economic crises, in Yemen and the Sudan alone almost 22 million people were facing acute food insecurity. Present in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Yemen, desert locusts were at various stages of development (hoppers, immature adults) and forming groups and bands by early March, with a high likelihood of the formation of swarms.

15. If the current upsurge is not controlled, the desert locust could cause below-average 2020 national harvests and major pasture losses in arid and semi-arid regions, where most of the populations depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. This would lead to below-average food stocks and pasture conditions, atypical livestock movements, reduced incomes, rising food prices and subsequently driving widespread food insecurity by mid-2020.

II. FAO's response

A. Learning from the past and adopting an anticipatory approach

16. A clear recommendation from the Multilateral Evaluation of the 2003-05 Desert Locust Campaign, which was presented to the Programme Committee in September 2006, was to "present a clear strategy to the donors at the time of launching the appeals that is part of the relief-rehabilitation-development continuum, by focusing not only on the immediate problem of eliminating desert locusts, but also on related humanitarian and livelihood protection issues." Taking this and other recommendations from that evaluation into account, 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, which outlined a two-pronged strategy of controlling the locust upsurge and undertaking livelihood-saving and recovery interventions as anticipatory action to avert a potential food crisis, especially given high levels of acute food insecurity, the type that requires humanitarian assistance in the hardest hit countries. 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 Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse food security conditions.
- Focused on fundraising from the immediate stages of the crisis, engaging closely with resource partners from the level of FAO's Director-General to country-level representatives, and working with other agencies such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to advocate for anticipatory action at the highest political levels. As a result, within 40 days of the crisis almost USD 100 million had been pledged or contributed.
    - Committed to transparency and information sharing with resource partners and affected and at-risk governments, through a publicly accessible dashboard, while balancing the difficulties of providing a steady stream of information at the early stages of the crisis (http://www.fao.org/locusts/response-overview-dashboard/en/).

B. Continued monitoring and reporting of desert locust and their impacts

17. 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. Therefore, FAO operates a centralized Desert Locust Information Service (DLIS) within the Locust Group at FAO headquarters. All locust-affected countries transmit data to FAO, where it is analysed in conjunction with weather and habitat data and satellite imagery in order to assess the current locust situation, provide forecasts up to six weeks in advance and issue warnings on an ad-hoc basis. Based on these, FAO prepares monthly bulletins and periodic updates summarizing the locust situation and forecasting migration and breeding on a country by country basis. Furthermore, FAO undertakes field assessment missions, strengthens national capacity, coordinates survey and control operations as well as emergency assistance during locust upsurges and plagues.

18. FAO has embarked on a comprehensive approach to assessing the impact of desert locusts on food security as well as planning for a cost-benefit analysis to determine the avoided cost of humanitarian assistance due to early control actions.

19. The impact assessment is under development and will likely consist of two parts – ex-ante and ex-post. The ex-ante part is essentially a forecast of the range of possible food security scenarios under different conditions – including swarm sizes, likely flight paths, rainfall scenarios, land and crop use patterns and underlying poverty and food security. Through such analysis it becomes possible to quantify the likelihood of desert locust spread and to correlate this with underlying factors such as crop and pasture types, pre-existing food security and poverty. Such analysis assists in prioritizing and targeting control and livelihood support planning. Methodological work has already begun on the forecasting model through collaboration between FAO and WFP geospatial teams, working closely with the global Food Security Cluster and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The ex-post part is in the form of a damage and loss assessment which will inform food and non-food-based response to the crisis. The assessment itself will take place immediately after the harvest and will draw on current best practice methodologies that FAO has been developing in the context of fall armyworm impact assessment and agricultural sector damage and loss assessment. The results of the assessment are expected by early autumn 2020.

20. The **cost-benefit study** will likely draw on current methodologies employed by FAO's Anticipatory Action team to examine the relationship between the costs of taking early action to control locust numbers and the benefits of such action in terms of saved harvests and consequent reduced need for expensive humanitarian assistance later in 2020. This study will begin before June 2020 and conclude in August/September.

C. Responding to the current upsurge

21. 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. National governments in affected countries responded and FAO released funds from its Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities as well as from its Technical Cooperation Programme to support these activities. Intensive ground control operations were mounted by national authorities in Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Sudan that reduced the locust populations but could not entirely prevent swarms from forming and moving towards the Sudan, the Horn of Africa and along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border.

22. At this point, FAO was carefully monitoring the situation. However, favourable climatic conditions in late December 2019 allowed widespread breeding of the pest in East Africa, Southwest Asia and the area around the Red Sea. 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.

D. Internal organizational processes

23. 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. In line with Director-General's bulletin No. 2010/24 Revision 1, the Organization's response to Food Chain Emergencies such as animal diseases and plant pest and diseases are managed within the context of the Food Chain Crisis Management Framework. The current locust response is thus being handled by the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Plant Pests, which integrates technical and operational capacities under the overall management of the Director, Plant Production and Protection Division and with the Food Chain Crisis, Emergency Management Unit of the Emergency and Resilience Division operationally managing the response.

FAO staff, consultants and 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 East Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, which sits within the FAO Subregional Office for East Africa. The Resilience Team liaised with the affected and at-risk countries and developed the regional 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.

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, drawing from FAO's extensive expertise in the area. The control of large swarms is a coordinated effort to avert a major food security and livelihoods crisis as well as to mitigate further spread of the pest to other countries. This means supporting national efforts to undertake urgent, large-scale aerial and ground pest control operations as well as surveillance, trajectory forecasting and data collection.

The first priority has been to scale up survey and control operations, with governments driving the operation and FAO providing support as needed, in the form of pesticides, aircraft, flying hours, ULV sprayers and other equipment, personal protective equipment and training for national workers. In addition, FAO has been sourcing equipment from other countries not affected by the current upsurge, including vehicle-mounted spraying equipment from West African countries as well as parts of North Africa, to be deployed in the affected countries with the support of the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO).

FAO applies an integrated approach to control the desert locust through safer alternatives combined with conventional pesticides. With regard to risks to human health, none of the

pesticides used belong to Class Ia (Extremely hazardous) or Class Ib (Highly hazardous) of the World Health Organization. In addition, at least two alternative control options (bio-pesticide and Insect Growth Regulator) are used. In order to minimize the risk from pesticides, FAO takes special precautions at all stages of the anti-locust campaign, i.e. before, during and after the control operations.

iii. **Anticipating impacts:** the window of time to the onset of the long rains was identified as a critical opportunity to contain the spread of desert locust and safeguard the livelihoods and food security of vulnerable populations already affected by recurrent droughts, conflict and high food prices. 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. For instance, FAO distributed farming input packages to ensure that farmers can plant (and replant if necessary). Livestock supplementary feed is also being distributed to mitigate impacts of locusts on pasture availability and thus on animal conditions and pastoralist livelihoods.

In addition, rapid impact assessments have been conducted in the affected countries together with the national authorities, WFP and other partners, and the outcomes of these are informing life- and livelihood-safeguarding interventions in these areas.

iv. **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 is a key partner that maintains its own fleet of fixed-wing aircraft to spray crops. Discussions are also ongoing with WFP regarding the use of their logistics capacity and opportunities for triangulation of various equipment (for example, safety gear has already been advanced which FAO will replenish). In addition, CLCPRO has supported FAO's efforts to source equipment from countries not affected by the desert locust upsurge.

The FAO Resilience Team for East Africa has been liaising closely with regional authorities, such as IGAD, including through the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) co-led with FAO, to promote dialogue on desert locust, and harmonized advocacy and methodologies for damage and impact assessments. In addition, the Resilience Team has further reinforced the close collaboration with OCHA and WFP to mobilize resources, advocate for livelihoods-safeguarding support in addition to control and containment measures as anticipatory action to avert a food crisis and coordinate humanitarian assistance to affected areas. The Resilience Team has also played a key role in coordinating needs assessments to determine the impact of the locusts on rural communities and food production in affected countries, strengthening its partnership with WFP on geospatial analysis.

FAO Representatives in all affected and at-risk countries have continued a close dialogue with national authorities to ensure a clear two-way flow of information on risks and latest situation and support preparedness for any required response.

In addition, the Global Network Against Food Crises, a partnership created to identify and jointly implement durable solutions to food crises, has been engaged to support coordination, consensus building, and serve as a platform to discuss the most effective programmatic approaches. The Global Network has a key role to play in supporting the uptake and mainstreaming of anticipatory action, as well as ensuring lessons learned are used, documented and disseminated. Anticipatory action is crucial to protect long-term development and resilience gains. The combination of short-term anticipatory actions and long-term resilience investments is at the core of the Global Network's work on preventing food crises and building resilient livelihoods.

E. Resource mobilization and advocacy

24. As the scale of the desert locust upsurge and potential impact on food security became clear, FAO began alerting resource partners and member countries 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, including in:

- Nairobi, Kenya – monthly meetings beginning in mid-January jointly organized by FAO and OCHA, as well as a press conference for the FSNWG.
- FAO headquarters on 30 January 2020 with participation of the Director-General.
- Geneva, Switzerland on 3 February, jointly organized by FAO, OCHA and WFP.
- Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 7 February, special development partners meeting on the control of the desert locust.
- New York on 10 February, co-led by FAO and OCHA, with the participation of Mr Mark Lowcock, Under Secretary General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and a follow-up breakfast meeting with resource partners on 12 February that was jointly led by the FAO Director-General and USG Lowcock.

25. 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. A series of global press releases were issued to media in all markets; and regional and country offices prepared local news packages. An urgent mission was fielded to capture video footage and photos for distribution to broadcast media; ten video news releases were shared with broadcasters via UN headquarters. A dedicated desert locust website was created, and a range of multimedia material was shared via various social media platforms.

26. Thanks to these materials, there was massive interest from news organizations across the globe. FAO experts in headquarters and the field engaged in almost 200 separate media interviews, helping fuel that interest. Between mid-January and early March, FAO's media monitoring service detected nearly 12 000 articles mentioning FAO's locust response. These included over 700 articles in "top tier outlets" such as: Al Jazeera (United Arab Emirates, international), Asaji Shimbun (Japan), BBC (United Kingdom, international), CCTV (China), China Daily (China), CNN (USA, international), Dawn (Pakistan), Die Welt (Germany), El Pais (Spain), Folha (Brazil), France24, Gazeta (Russia), La Repubblica (Italy), Le Figaro (France), Le Monde (France), RAI1 (Italy), Reuters (UK, international), Sky, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, The East African (Kenya), The New York Times (USA), The Times (UK), The Times of India, and The Washington Post (USA). UN headquarters reports FAO video news releases were used by nearly 500 broadcasters in almost 4 000 stories.

27. The level of earned coverage is among the highest the Organization has seen in recent decades; moreover, FAO "share-of-voice" in the coverage (pick up of messages, inclusion of our appeal for contributions) was extremely high.

28. 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, Somalia, and Eritrea. As of 26 February, this was revised upward to USD 138 million to cover those countries as well as Uganda, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. An addendum was issued on 2 March to request USD 15.2 million to support the response in the Near East and North Africa, focusing specifically on the Sudan and Yemen, where acute food insecurity was already high.

29. While FAO's internal resources were immediately released to support control and livelihood safeguarding interventions (USD 3.5 million through TCPs as of 4 March), a further USD 1.5 million was rapidly channelled through Special Fund for Emergency Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund also allocated USD 10 million to FAO's desert locust response. As of 4 March, almost USD 90 million had been pledged or committed by resource partners including the United States Agency for International Development (USD 18 million), the Gates Foundation (USD 10 million), and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (USD 6.5 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 20 million) and the European Union Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (USD 11 million).

30. The continued high-level advocacy from the FAO Director-General has brought in new resource partners, such as the Gates 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.

31. 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. This has been invaluable in raising awareness of the crisis at the highest political levels. The FAO Director-General and USG Lowcock also issued a joint op-ed on the locust upsurge.