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THE DESERT LOCUST SITUATION IN WEST AND NORTHWEST AFRICA

BACKGROUND

1. As a result of widespread, heavy rains in coastal areas around the Red Sea in the second half of 1992, an important Desert Locust upsurge developed. The initial focus of infestation was the northern Eritrean coast where swarms formed in late October and caused some damage to cultivations. By early November the swarms started to move out reaching the southern Red Sea coast of Sudan and the Tihama of western Saudi Arabia in early November. Aerial and ground control operations were launched quickly but as usual when ecological conditions are extremely favourable for breeding over a wide area larger numbers of adults survived to lay, and breeding spread to the southeastern Desert of Egypt and to the Yemen Tihama.

2. Good rains around the Red Sea continued into January 1993 which ensured that conditions favourable for breeding continued until March and it was recognized that major control efforts would be required to control the infestations and to stop numerous swarms leaving the Red Sea trench at the end of the winter-spring breeding season. In the event, although larger-scale control campaigns were mounted in many areas, particularly in Saudi Arabia where some 500 000 ha were treated, infestations in certain areas could not be treated because of difficulty of access and considerable numbers of adults including swarms started moving out of the Red Sea trench in March. Following further good rains, breeding started in the interior of the Arabian peninsula and despite further control operations by June swarms moved eastwards, eventually reaching Pakistan and India in early July and westwards across Chad, Niger and Mali, eventually reaching Mauritania also in July.

The Situation in West and Northwest Africa

3. Apart from two small-scale infestations near Adrar in central Algeria in early June 1993, the Desert Locust situation in West and northwest Africa in the first half of 1993 was calm. However, as indicated above, the situation changed radically in early July when a substantial number of swarms moved rapidly westwards across Chad, Niger and Mali reaching Mauritania from the second decade of the month. At first the swarms, which were maturing, were mainly concentrated

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in northern Assaba and western Tagant areas of central southern Mauritania which had earlier received moderate to good rains. The swarms matured rapidly and laid, and hatching commenced in late July. Laying swarms continued to be reported in the same areas during the first decade of August. The extent of the invasion cannot be quantified but probably did not involve more than 200 to 300 km² of thin-medium density swarms.

4. Ground control by the Maghreb Task Force mainly against hoppers commenced in late July and continued throughout August against increasingly older bands. By 30 August over 21 000 ha of hoppers had been treated but many bands had reached the fifth instar and fledging had commenced. In addition it was found that the infestation also extended into Hodh el Gharbi, Brakna and Gorgol.

5. During September ground and aerial control continued against the hopper infestations and young adults but new generation swarms started to form from the first week of September. Some of these started to move west in the second decade of September reaching Nouakchott by 27 September and the Senegal river on 2 October. The latter swarms continued to move west and started to lay in northern Senegal in the first decade of October, but others matured and laid in southern Mauritania. Control operations continued in both territories throughout October but in late October a number of swarms reached southern Morocco.

6. Elsewhere in West Africa there were scattered adults in Niger in July, August and September, scattered hoppers in Mali in August and scattered hoppers and adults in September, and scattered adults in Chad in August and scattered hoppers and adults in September.

7. In the Central Region, hopper bands and swarms were present in Northern Kordofan in Sudan in late August and September and received aerial treatment.

8. In the Eastern Region intensive aerial and ground control campaigns were mounted in Pakistan and India against swarms and hopper bands between July and October. Over 450 000 ha had been treated by mid-October.

OUTLOOK

9. The most important Desert Locust infestations currently in West and northwest Africa are those in southern Mauritania and northern Senegal. Second generation breeding is in progress and already some swarms have reached southern Morocco. These are likely to continue to move north-east and reach Oued Draa and the Tindouf area of western Algeria in early November, but the scale of this migration is unlikely to be large. By contrast, if any swarms or swarmlets are produced in Senegal they are most likely to move slowly south towards Guinea Bissau and Guinea during December and then slowly eastwards across the Sahelian zone, where they may cause some locally significant damage to fruit trees but no major damage to crops.

10. It now seems unlikely that there will be any movement of adults in Sudan westward into West or northwest Africa during the remainder of the year. Any escapes from summer breeding in India and Pakistan are likely to move next into Baluchistan of Pakistan and possibly into Baluchistan-Seistan of southeastern Iran and Oman and the United Arab Emirates in eastern Arabia.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN TO COMBAT THE UPSURGE

11. The actions taken by FAO to combat the current upsurge have been modelled on those evolved during the 1988-89 plague and are summarized below:

Reinstatement of the Emergency Centre for Locust Operations (ECLO)

12. The Director-General of FAO reopened the Emergency Centre for Locust Operations (ECLO) in January 1993, with the Director of the FAO Plant Production & Protection Division, Mr A. Papasolomontos, as its Director in January 1993. This arrangement has again facilitated contacts between ECLO and the international donor community and follow-up actions. Three additional emergency staff have been assigned to assist ECLO during the current emergency.

Information Gatherings and Exchange and Warnings

13. The collection of up-to-date information on the locust situation and current environmental data and its rapid transmission are the cornerstones of successful locust control. To this end ECLO has provided experienced personnel to assist national anti-locust services in surveying and reporting in Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Oman, Senegal, Sudan and Yemen.

Meetings and Appeals

14. In order to ensure the fullest exchange of information about the locust situation, about plans to combat those infestations and to fully involve the international donor community in these activities FAO held a number of briefing meetings with donors and currently affected countries. Meetings were held in Cairo and Rome in January 1993 and again in Rome in March and July 1993. At the recent donor meeting held in Rome on 23 July 1993 it was decided to initiate an appeal by the Director-General for additional emergency assistance for Desert Locust control. The appeal was issued on 2 August 1993 and a background paper containing estimates of immediate assistance, particularly for the Sahel, the Maghreb Task Force and Southwest Asia, was distributed shortly afterwards. The appeal focused on measures required to ascertain the scale of infestation in the Sahel through ground and aerial survey/control operations and the re-establishment of the pesticide bank mechanism. A joint *ad hoc* technical meeting of Sahel/Maghreb countries to review the locust situation in West and northwest Africa was held in Tunis on 2-3 September. On 27 September a meeting of Ministers responsible for locust control in the Maghreb, Mali, Niger and Chad was convened in Algiers. The minutes of the meeting are shown in Appendix A.

15. In addition, national coordinating or steering committees have been established in Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Yemen, India and Pakistan.

16. Details of assistance provided for the Desert Locust emergency campaigns is listed in Appendix B.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE MAGHREB
AND THE SAHEL
RESPONSIBLE FOR LOCUST CONTROL**

ALGIERS - RESIDENCE DJENANE EL MITHAK - 27 SEPTEMBER 1993

The Ministers responsible for locust control of the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union, Mali, Niger and Chad or their Deputy, together with the Representative of FAO attending the meeting on Locust Control, held in Algiers on 27 September 1993 at the kind invitation of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria:

- examined the current locust situation in the west and northwest of Africa and its possible development;
- adopted the recommendations of the *ad hoc* meeting of experts from the region held in Tunis on 1 and 2 September 1993;
- agreed on the need to use the agricultural aviation of the countries of the Maghreb and Sahel and, where necessary, provide facilities for them to fly over the locust-infested areas;
- expressed their concern in relation to:
 - * the present serious locust situation in Mauritania where more than 78 swarms were observed between the 10 and 20 September 1993;
 - * the potential risk that the situation may worsen in the western region, particularly in Chad, Niger and Mali by arrivals from Sudan where intense locust activity has been reported;
 - * the locust situation, deemed to be serious, in the eastern region of the infested area (India and Pakistan) and which is a major indicator of the possible onset of a long-term cycle of infestation;
 - * the inadequate degree of control over the locust plague which necessarily requires closer cooperation between all the countries in the infested area, and a common and complementary prevention and control strategy which takes account of the conservation of the already fragile local ecosystems;

HAVE DECIDED

AS IMMEDIATE MEASURES:

- * to urge FAO to rapidly implement the emergency plan drawn up by the experts from the region at the meeting in Tunis (1 and 2 September 1993) and to undertake complementary actions to help control the situation in the front-line countries, particularly Mauritania;
- * to mobilize all the facilities and channels for disseminating locust and meteorological information on the countries in order to guarantee a better circulation of information, which is essential to the success of any control strategy. They urge FAO to pursue its efforts to improve the circulation of information in order to acquaint the countries, in real time, with the locust situation and likely trends;
- * to urge FAO to organize more frequent meetings of the countries in the locust-infested area during this period of crisis, so that they can exchange information and experiences and adapt control strategies;

- * to request FAO to place this issue on the agenda of the 27th Session of the FAO Conference in view of the gravity of the locust situation. These minutes could be used as a working paper for the discussions;

- * to strengthen the capacity of the Force maghrébine and to provide it with more facilities and the necessary financial resources to act rapidly in the Sahelian countries wherever the situation so demands;

- * to request the Minister of Agriculture of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to acquaint international organizations and the international community with the great concern felt by the countries in the region regarding the locust threat which is at present weighing heavily on the agricultural economy, and to sensitize them to increase their aid which is indispensable if this scourge is to be better controlled;

AS SHORT-TERM MEASURES:

- * to conduct continual monitoring in order to be able to cope with any developments in locust activity during the forthcoming control campaigns;

- * to urge FAO to implement the INTERREGIONAL PREVENTIVE CONTROL PROJECT as soon as possible, whose objectives will make it possible to prevent fresh locust outbreaks, beginning in the western region;

- * to cooperate with FAO in order to seek sources of funding for the REGIONAL PROJECT to equip the western region's swarming areas (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad) with automatic meteorological stations, as an indispensable complement to the present regional network;

- * in conjunction with FAO, to initiate a project designed to set up a computerized network to give countries real-time access to the FAO data base on the desert locust and its environment;

- * to invite FAO when procuring new facilities to give priority to using the pesticides in good condition that are available in the region;

- * to mobilize and develop at the regional level every facility which is able to protect people and human health during the control campaigns, and to conserve man's environment;

AS MEDIUM-TERM MEASURES:

- * to urge FAO to hold a consultation to draft a preventive control programme for the whole of the desert locust-infested area (the western, central and eastern regions) comprising specific regional projects (strengthening national units or creating/strengthening regional forces...) in terms of priorities and financial availability. This consultation should also study the possibility of reorganizing the coordination system to make it more effective;

- * to develop training and research in scientific and technical fields linked to locust control using national and regional capacities to the full.

For the western region, a regional training/research centre should be established. The procedures for this will be examined jointly by CLCPANO and OCLALAV.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ministers and Representatives of the countries concerned and the Representative of FAO attending this meeting expressed their sincere thanks to the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria for having taken the initiative to convene this meeting at which every facility had been provided to ensure its success.

They also thanked the Algerian officials for their warm and friendly welcome throughout their stay here.

They expressed their pleasure with the outcome of the meeting.

Furthermore, they reiterated their thanks to FAO, the institutions and donors for the support given to the work being performed by the countries in the region to tackle the locust plague.

APPENDIX B

Assistance for the Desert Locust Emergency Campaign

I. FAO executed projects:

Proj. Type	Donor	Proj. Symbol	Recipient	Budget appr. US\$
ECLO	SWE	ECLO/ETH/030/SWE	Ethiopia	177 582
	UK	ECLO/SUD/030/UK	Sudan	143 500
	USA	ECLO/SUD/031/USA	Sudan	760 000
	IFAD	ECLO/SUD/032/IFA	Sudan	284 495
	NET	ECLO/SUD/033/NET	Sudan	247 368
	EEC	ECLO/SUD/034/EEC	Sudan	130 120
	SWE	ECLO/SUD/035/SWE	Sudan	121 692
	USA	ECLO/YEM/030/USA	Yemen	275 000
	USA	ECLO/RAF/031/USA	ETH, ERI, DLCO-EA	1 000 000
	USA	ECLO/RAF/032/USA	East & West Africa	1 400 000
	CAN	ECLO/RAF/033/CAN	West Africa, MAU, SEN	377 118
	USA	ECLO/RAS/030/USA	PAK 2/3, IND, AFG	750 000
	SWE	ECLO/INT/030/SWE	Inter-Afric./Eritrea	914 913
	UK	ECLO/INT/031/UK	interregional	1 497 680
	USA	ECLO/INT/032/USA	strengthening ECLO	150 000
	FRA	ECLO/INT/006/FRA	interregional/Yemen	167 894
	JPN	GCP/RAF/189/JPN	Yemen	100 000
GCP				
FAO - TOTAL				8 497 362

Proj. Type	Donor	Proj. Symbol	Recipient	Budget US\$
TCP	FAO	TCP/CHD/2354	Chad	70 000
	FAO	TCP/IND/2359	India	100 000
	FAO	TCP/MLI/1358	Mali	100 000
	FAO	TCP/MAU/1354	Mauritania	300 000
	FAO	TCP/NER/7854	Niger	100 000
	FAO	TCP/PAK/2358	Pakistan	100 000
	FAO	TCP/SEN/2354	Senegal	100 000
	FAO	TCP/SOM/2359	Somalia	50 000
	FAO	TCP/SUD/1358	Sudan	170 000
	FAO	TCP/YEM/1355	Yemen	312 000
	FAO	TCP/RAF/2372	Eritrea	190 000
FAO - TOTAL				1 592 000

II. Bilateral Assistance for the Desert Locust Emergency Campaign

Region: Red Sea Area - North Africa - Horn of Africa

Donor	Recipient	Budget in US\$
IDB	Egypt	300 000
GER	Eritrea	360 000
SWE	Ethiopia	180 000
GER	Sudan	375 000
IDB	Sudan	300 000
MOR	Sudan	200 000
GER	Yemen	312 500
IDB	Yemen	300 000
UK	Yemen	150 000

Region: Southwest Asia

Donor	Recipient	Budget in US\$
EEC	Pakistan	230 000
IDB	Pakistan	300 000
NOR	Pakistan	100 000
UAE	Pakistan	60 000
UNICEF	Pakistan	45 000

Bilateral Assistance for the Desert Locust Emergency Campaign

Region: West Africa

Donor	Recipient	Budget in US\$
IDB	Algeria	300 000
GER	Algeria	280 000
GER	Burkina F.	280 000
FRA	Chad	367 000
GER	Chad	220 000
IDB	Chad	300 000
SWI	Chad	212 000
GER	Mali	100 000
IDB	Mali	300 000
USA	Mali	125 000
ALG	Mauritania	200 000
EEC	Mauritania	50 000
EEC	Mauritania	65 000
FRA	Mauritania	300 000
FRA	Mauritania	100 000
GER	Mauritania	180 000
IDB	Mauritania	300 000
LUX	Mauritania	166 000
MOR	Mauritania	500 000
TUN	Mauritania	200 000
USA	Niger	50 000
IDB	Niger	300 000
GER	Niger	30 000
CAN	Senegal	53 000
EEC	Senegal	71 000
FRA	Senegal	18 000
GER	Senegal	70 000
IDB	Senegal	250 000
FRA	West Africa	100 000
GER	West Africa	400 000
BILATERAL -TOTAL		9 099 500

Donor: IDB - Islamic Development Bank