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DESERT LOCUST CONTROL COMMITTEE

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Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO)
(Agenda item 7)

I. Introduction

The purpose of this working paper of the 40th Session of the FAO Desert Locust Control Committee is to inform participants of the historical background of the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO), its function and its role in coordinating locust control activities in its member countries. The paper will also report the activities undertaken in the framework of the EMPRES¹ Programme in the Western Region (EMPRES-WR) and their impact on building the capacity of member countries to engage in preventive control of the Desert Locust and to be sufficiently prepared to deal with any future invasion of this pest.

II. History and evolution

A. Establishment of the Commission

The CLCPRO was established under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution. Its Establishing Agreement was endorsed by the 119th session of the FAO Council (November 2000) and entered into effect on 25 February 2002 after the Director-General had received five instruments of acceptance. The Agreement defines the mandate and role of the Commission, its functioning, the obligations of its Members, its

¹ Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases/Desert Locust Component.

Secretariat, etc. The CLCPRO succeeds the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in Northwest Africa (CLCPANO)² created in 1970, and OCLALAV³ created in 1965.

B. Member countries and contributions

The CLCPRO comprises ten member countries from West and Northwest Africa: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal and Tunisia. It is based in Algiers. A headquarters agreement was signed in June 2003 by the Director-General of FAO and the Algerian Government, granting the CLCPRO diplomatic mission status. On its establishment, the CLCPRO took over the expertise, property and assets of the CLCPANO.

The CLCPRO has a trust fund at FAO Headquarters made up of contributions of its Member States whose scale, determined on the basis of criteria drawn up by the United Nations, is adopted by the Commission. The trust fund serves to finance part of the CLCPRO activities.

Annual contributions amounted to 227 000 USD on 31 December 2010. A new scale of contributions has been applied since January 2011, with a total annual amount of 639 000 USD (some three times more than the previous level). This was approved by the 5th Session of the CLCPRO held in Agadir (Morocco) in June 2009, in follow-up to one of the recommendations from the meeting of ministers responsible for locust control held in March 2009 in Bamako, Mali. During the first year of application of this new scale, seven Member States out of ten had paid their new contribution.

C. Secretariat and headquarters

The CLCPRO Secretariat is tasked with implementing the policies of the Commission, undertaking the actions it has prescribed and implementing any other decisions it has taken. The CLCPRO Secretariat also ensures the regional coordination of the EMPRES Programme in the Western Region (WR). FAO provides the Executive Secretary and the staff of the Commission, the expenses of the Secretariat and those relating to staff and to facilities and services.

The CLCPRO Secretariat has three international officers (two financed by a project and therefore for a limited period), two national technical officers, two secretaries and two drivers. The salaries of this staff are covered by FAO, the African Development Bank, France and the Algerian Government, which also covers part of the operating expenses of the Commission's headquarters.

D. Role of the Commission

In accordance with its Establishing Agreement the purpose of the CLCPRO is "*to promote, at national, regional and international level, action, research and training to ensure the preventive control of and appropriate response to the invasions of the Desert Locust in the Western Region of its distribution area, encompassing West Africa and Northwest Africa*".

By strengthening cooperation between its ten member countries, the CLCPRO contributes to regional integration in West and Northwest Africa and to the development of South-South cooperation. With its global objective of preventing the terrible damage that the locust scourge can inflict on agro-silvo-

² CLCPANO: Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in Northwest Africa (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia).

³ OCLALAV: Organisation commune de lutte antiacridienne et de lutte antiaviaire (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal).

pastoral production in the countries concerned, the Commission therefore contributes significantly to food security and the fight against hunger and poverty in Africa.

The Commission is expected to promote any national, regional and international measure relating to the survey and control of the Desert Locust; to help the States implement contingency action plans; to support any Member whose locust control services are in difficulty; to regularly transmit updated locust information to all Member States, the CLCPRO and the DLIS; to coordinate locust control activities at regional level; and to encourage research, training programmes and joint surveys.

The Commission can enter into understandings and agreements with States and with interested national, regional or international institutions for the purpose of collective action relating to locust research and control.

During the last major upsurge of the Desert Locust in 2003-2005, the CLCPRO played a decisive role in energizing and consolidating cooperation between the countries of Northwest Africa and those of West Africa. Several ministerial meetings were organized during that period of crisis which served to mobilize more than 30 million USD in the framework of intra-regional solidarity and cooperation.

E. Commission sessions and Executive Committee meetings

The Commission meets in regular session every two years. Its Executive Committee, made up of locust experts from five of the Member States (elected in turn by the Commission), meets at least twice during the interval between regular sessions of the Commission. These meetings serve to plan CLCPRO activities and to determine programmes of work and budget.

III. Activities and impact of the EMPRES-WR Programme on enhancing Desert Locust management at national and regional level

A. Background

In 1995, the 28th Session of the FAO Conference decided to expand the EMPRES Programme/Desert Locust Component to the Western Region (West and Northwest Africa). The ten current member countries are: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal and Tunisia. The Programme only became truly operational in early 2006 when the first finances were made available.

The aim of the EMPRES-WR Programme, like that of the CLCPRO, is to implement a Desert Locust preventive control strategy based on early warning, rapid response and operational research. Its objectives therefore converge perfectly with those of the CLCPRO which is the guarantor of continuity of preventive control in the Western Region.

Phase I (2006-2010) of EMPRES-WR Programme aimed to develop an effective system of preventive control of the Desert Locust based on:

- strong and autonomous National Locust Control Units (NLCUs);
- effective regional coordination;
- the gradual establishment, in each country and at regional level, of appropriate mechanisms to ensure the long-term sustainability of the preventive control strategy.

The donors that ensured the financing of Phase I include the African Development Bank (ADB), France (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, French Development Agency, French Global Environment Facility), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), FAO and

the CLCPRO, together with support from the World Bank's AELP⁴. Donor contributions were essentially used to build capacity in the Sahel countries, the so-called frontline countries (Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) and Senegal.

B. Reference situation

Before implementation of the EMPRES-WR Programme, with one or two exceptions, the member countries were poorly prepared or totally unprepared for preventive and remedial control. There was a major shortage, indeed absence, of human and material resources. With regard to the four frontline countries, which encompass most of the gregarization areas in the WR, the ADB project had identified, during its formulation in 2003, numerous human, material, infrastructure, budgetary and other inadequacies.

C. Impact of actions on the National Locust Control Units

In order to redress this situation and achieve the objectives of Phase I of the EMPRES-WR Programme, the CLCPRO Secretariat/EMPRES-WR Coordinator and its different partners designed a strategy to build national capacity in the region relating to various aspects of locust control.

An independent mid-term evaluation of the EMPRES-WR Programme noted, in late 2008, that the frontline countries had made huge progress in organizing and conducting preventive control and that the creation of the autonomous NLCUs would undoubtedly remain one of the major outputs of the programme.

Phase I (2010) produced key outcomes:

- **At the institutional level**

The four frontline countries now have autonomous, operational National Locust Control Units established by parliamentary legislation. This institutional component has been accompanied by a strengthening of infrastructure, recruitment of personnel and procurement of equipment. In 2010, national budgets allocated to these NLCUs covered 40% to 70% of their operating expenditures.

Such national efforts have been reinforced on the regional level by decisions taken at the meeting of ministers responsible for locust control held in March 2009 in Bamako and included in the "Declaration of Bamako". The decisions aim to ensure the continuity of preventive control.

- **At the operational level**

The WR countries prepare and execute (except in insecure areas) their annual plan of survey and control. This approach successfully controlled outbreaks in Mauritania in 2008, 2009 and 2010-2011, in Niger in 2009 and in Mali in 2011. In the insecure areas of northern Mali and of Niger, several awareness-raising and training actions have been undertaken with the nomads and the decentralized authorities to enhance the relaying of locust information.

Three joint surveys were organized in 2007 and 2008 (Mauritania-Mali) and 2009 (Chad-Niger).

The 2007-2009 training plan was fully implemented. Short-term regional training served to train 135 trainers in survey, control and environmental monitoring, using a results-based approach. Some 20 senior officers (at Master's or PhD level) from the region have been trained in acridology or related fields. Most have been incorporated into the NLCUs, which have therefore acquired stronger technical

⁴ Africa Emergency Locust Project

capacity. A second training plan 2011-2014 was formulated and validated by the countries in June 2011 and is currently under implementation.

Operational research has been undertaken in the framework of research-training (MSc and PhD theses) on various themes, and also in collaboration with the CIRAD⁵ for the ecological characterization of zones at risk and for the production of a florula of the Desert Locust distribution area.

In order for locust control in the WR to comply with environmental standards, environmental specifications have been drawn up by eight countries and are in such a process by Libya and Tunisia. Standard Operations Procedures to monitor the impact of Desert Locust control treatments on the environment have also been prepared and a training manual on all environmental aspects is being finalized. Maps of vulnerable areas in Desert Locust control have been drawn up in all the countries along the lines of the map finalized by Mali in February 2012.

An operational network of exchange and storage of information has been put in place and is managed by information officers who meet at least once every two years to exchange experiences and attend refresher training. The monthly Desert Locust Bulletins on country situations have consequently been improved.

A monitoring and evaluation system (MES) and a system of monitoring national Desert Locust control mechanisms are operational in all CLCPRO member countries. Assessment of the MES was carried out in early 2012 and a new, simpler and more efficient MES will gradually be rolled out in all the member countries.

In order to boost country preparedness to deal with any Desert Locust crisis that might occur (including an external crisis), Desert Locust risk management plans have been finalized or validated in four Sahel countries (Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal) and are about to become so in the two other Sahel countries (Burkina Faso and Chad) and in the countries of Northwest Africa (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) with the exception of Libya. In addition, the CLCPRO Secretariat is preparing a regional Desert Locust risk management plan. Simulated deployment of Mali's risk management plan was conducted in October 2011, in the presence of representatives of the CLCPRO member countries. This simulation produced several lessons that will enable Mali to update its risk management plan and each of the other countries to fine-tune the finalization of their plans.

The Secretariat has set up an Internet site www.clcpro-empres.org, which is continuously updated, to regularly inform countries, partners and the public of CLCPRO and EMPRES-WR Programme activities. In February 2012, it also presented the 'CLCPRO model' to directors and officers of FAO's Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department. A similar presentation was planned on 24 May 2012 as a side event to the meeting of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) taking place in Rome from 21 to 25 May 2012.

D. Impact on the CLCPRO Secretariat

Thanks to donor financing (ADB and France), the CLCPRO Secretariat has benefited from the support of two additional professional staff, which has facilitated implementation and enhanced coordination of the many activities planned since late 2006.

⁵ International Cooperation Centre in Agricultural Research for Development (Montpellier, France)

E. Guidelines for the continuity of preventive control in the Western Region

In order to consolidate the outputs of Phase I and to put in place mechanisms for the sustainable financing of preventive control in the WR, Phase II has been planned as proposed by the evaluation mission and the member countries of the EMPRES-WR Programme.

In March 2010, the countries and donors produced a workplan for Phase II during the period 2011-14 (four years). The Secretariat then drew up an estimate of the financial requirements and a project document with a budget of 28.8 million USD, including 21 million USD to be provided by the Member States and 7.8 million USD to be covered by external contributions to be identified. FAO submitted this project to donors in November 2010. Numerous contacts were made with selected donors. Thus, USAID has granted a contribution of 470 000 USD to this phase within the framework of a comprehensive project with FAO. For its part, the ADB would appear to be willing to help finance a majority of the activities of this phase.

Implementation of the operational research programme for 2010-2013, drawn up in October 2009, will be an important component of Phase II. Its financing is estimated at 1.2 million USD. At the same time, the use of biopesticides will be developed.

The Regional Training Plan II (2011-2014), part of whose financing needs to be sought under Phase II of the EMPRES-WR Programme, will serve to pursue long-term regional and individual training.

In response to the need to raise CLCPRO visibility and to bolster the promotion of preventive control, the Secretariat initiated, in 2011, the implementation of the Regional Communication Plan that had been drawn up in 2009.

In order to enhance the roles and responsibilities of the FAO Commissions for Controlling the Desert Locust, the CLCPRO and FAO launched an institutional study, in autumn 2010, aimed at upgrading the status of the Commissions to give them better defined responsibilities and more autonomy of management on the one hand, and to determine a comprehensive framework of governance and sustainable financing of Desert Locust control on the other. A summary of the conclusions, recommendations and proposals resulting from this study will be presented to this session of the DLCC.

F. Cooperation with partners

Activities with the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region are strengthened each year through reciprocal attendance of meetings, exchange visits of experts and NLCU officers, training, and so forth. Cooperation with CIRAD continues and is being stepped up in the spheres of research and high-level training. CIRAD also provides its support to the CLCPRO Secretariat for implementation of selected activities of the Plans of Operation of the EMPRES-WR Programme. Cooperation is being developed with AGRHYMET, with a focus on training and coordination. It should be noted that the CLCPRO has signed Cooperation Framework Agreements with each of the above institutions. It also collaborates with research and training institutions in the region, especially those at university level: IAV Hassan II and Ibn Zohr University (Morocco) and INA El Harrach (Algeria).

IV. Current outbreaks of the Desert Locust in Libya and Algeria

Since January 2012 and following exceptional rains in early October along the Algerian-Libyan border, significant Desert Locust breeding has been observed in southwest Libya and southeast Algeria. The situation has been aggravated by the continuation of favourable ecological conditions

for breeding, following good rains in these same zones in mid February 2012. This has permitted a second generation of Desert Locust which, in April, led to the formation of small but dense hopper bands and, in May, to the formation of adult groups and small dense swarms.

Ground control operations began in January (Algeria) and early February 2012 (Libya). By 17 May more than 33 000 hectares had been treated in Algeria and almost 16 000 ha in Libya. In Algeria, there were seven survey teams and 17 control teams in the infested zones. Reinforcement of the surveillance and control mechanism was underway in Libya. However, the limited resources available in Libya on the one hand, and the insecurity that prevails in the infested regions on the other, restricted survey and control operations in the two countries.

This situation is potentially dangerous because swarms could eventually invade the northern Sahel of West Africa at the beginning of the rainy season. Every effort should therefore be made to monitor the situation and to undertake the necessary control operations to reduce current Desert Locust population levels.

To deal with this situation, and following a request from the Libyan Government to the CLCPRO and FAO for emergency assistance to supplement the additional resources deployed by the country (estimated at one million USD), the CLCPRO has made available to Libya 300 000 USD from its own funds, and is making triangulation arrangements to transfer 25 000 litres of pesticide from Mauritania to Libya. FAO has also provided support through an emergency TCP with a total budget of 380 000 USD and a duration of 5 months (May-September 2012), which was initiated in May.

FAO and CLCPRO support will serve to double the surveillance and control mechanism and will strengthen national capacity to deal with this crisis.

Together with Libya and FAO headquarters in Rome, the CLCPRO and its member countries will continue to monitor the evolution of the situation.

V. Difficulties encountered or anticipated

The following major constraints could hamper the sustainable implementation of a preventive control strategy against the Desert Locust in the Western Region:

- The inaccessibility of Desert Locust breeding and gregarization areas in certain countries;
- Uncontrolled Desert Locust upsurges in the Central Region;
- A lack of funds to implement Phase II of the EMPRES-WR Programme;
- The frontline country governments no longer cover the operational and investment costs of their National Locust Control Units or do not increase their coverage of such costs;
- The CLCPRO member countries do not regularly pay their contributions;
- The CLCPRO Secretariat/Coordination of the EMPRES-WR Programme no longer has sufficient human resources to ensure the coordination of CLCPRO and EMPRES-WR Programme activities.