

# Desert Locust threat in the Sahel



12 March 2013

## HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2012, the Sahel in West Africa faced the most serious Desert Locust threat since 2005. More than **50 million people** were potentially affected in **Chad, Mali, Mauritania** and **Niger**.
- The **Desert Locust situation has improved dramatically in the Sahel** due to successful control operations undertaken in the concerned countries that resulted in very few locusts migrating northwest Africa at the end of last year. Ground control operations are currently in progress in **Algeria, Mauritania** and **Morocco**.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) requested **USD 10 million** in June 2012 for urgent action to coordinate the emergency campaign and allow national locusts control units to undertake the required operations.
- With the **USD 7.2 million** received (from the Central Emergency Response Fund [CERF], Belgium, France, United Kingdom and USA), FAO continues to ensure **overall campaign coordination and technical support** through:
  - **A Regional Strategic Response Framework for the Desert Locust threat in the Sahel.**
  - **Regular update of the Regional Action Plan.**
  - **Strengthened the operational capacity of national survey and control teams in Chad, Mali and Mali.**
  - **Triangulation of pesticides** (airlifting pesticides from a country in the region with available stocks to a recipient country).
  - **Enhanced preparedness for potential upscale of interventions in Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.**
- Bilateral assistance of USD 1 million to Niger has allowed the country to further strengthen its survey and control capacity.
- **Current funding gap is USD 1.8 million.** Consequences of unmet requirements: reduction of field survey teams, less control, increased risk to crops, and more locusts will move to other countries.

## LATEST UPDATE

*The Desert Locust situation* has improved dramatically in the Sahel due to successful control operations undertaken in the concerned countries that resulted in very few locusts migrating northwest Africa at the end of last year. The situation is now calm since ecological conditions are dry in all locust breeding areas. Nevertheless, small residual infestations are probably present in parts of the Air Mountains in northern Niger and the Adrar des Iforas in northern Mali. Several adult groups and small swarms continued to form in the southern part of Western Sahara during February 2013 and moved to adjacent areas of northwest Mauritania. Control operations were undertaken in Morocco and Mauritania in February 2013. A fragment of a small swarm was seen in western Algeria in early March 2013. Small-scale breeding will occur south of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and Algeria during the spring but no significant developments are expected. In any case, strict vigilance should continue in Algeria, Libya, Mauritania and Morocco.

## RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN

**Survey and control operations** in Mauritania continued as needed in January and February 2013. Financial support was provided to Mauritania to purchase spare parts for survey and control vehicles. Satellite phones were delivered to the National Locust Control Units (NLCU) in Niger. HF radios were delivered to the NLCUs in Chad and Mali. Tenders have been successfully concluded for the procurement of camping gear and generators, and their delivery is underway to strengthen survey and control operations and preparedness further in Chad and Mali.

**11<sup>th</sup> Liaison Officers' Meeting of the Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES) Programme in the Western Region** was held in Dakar, Senegal from 21 to 25 January 2013. During the meeting, the Liaison Officers of the ten member countries of the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO) updated and endorsed the annual regional Plan of Action which includes their needs in terms of equipment, training and support to survey and control operations.

**Pesticide triangulation, agreed donations of pesticides.** Algeria: 20 000 litres for Chad and 40 000 litres for Mali. Morocco: 60 000 litres each for Mali and Niger. Senegal: 18 000 litres for Chad. **Airlifting.** In collaboration with the World Food Programme, the first pesticide airlifting was successfully carried out in October 2012 (32 000 litres to Mali and 18 000 litres to Chad); a second airlifting of 30 000 litres of pesticides to Niger was undertaken in November; a third one of 20 000 litres of pesticides to Chad was carried out in December.

**Data transmission system (eLocust3).** The current system (eLocust2) is being upgraded to improve field-data recording and its transmission by satellite in a faster, more reliable and cost-effective manner, to further enhance early warning. Field deployment of eLocust3 is expected in spring 2013.

Funding required (USD)	Pledges (USD)	Funding received by FAO (USD)	Funding received bilaterally (USD)	Funding gap (USD)
<b>10 million</b> FAO appeal (21 June 2012)		<b>7.2 million</b> Donors: Belgium, CERF, France, United Kingdom and USA	<b>1 million</b> Donated to Niger*	<b>1.8 million</b>

\* This amount reflects the needs identified for Niger within FAO's Appeal and covered by bilateral assistance; it does not reflect the total bilateral contributions received by Niger.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Addendum to Food and Nutrition Crisis in the Sahel: Urgent action to support the resilience of vulnerable populations – Desert Locust threat in the Sahel (June 2012): [English version](#) / [French version](#)
- Situation updates: [Locust Watch](#) / [Sahel Crises](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#)
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