



Desert Locust threat in the Sahel



13 June 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**.
- Successful control operations in the Sahel during the summer of 2012 reduced the scale of the autumn migration to Northwest Africa. Nevertheless, locust populations have increased in **Algeria, Libya and Morocco** as a result of winter/spring breeding. Despite control operations, adult groups and perhaps small swarms formed and are expected to move to the northern Sahel of **Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger** in June and breed with the onset of the summer rains, causing locust numbers to increase further.
- 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 Niger.**
 - **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

Winter/spring breeding is coming to an end in Northwest Africa where hopper bands and adult groups have formed in May. As survey and control operations could not be undertaken in all areas due to insecurity, additional adult groups and small swarms are expected to form from undetected populations and migrate to the summer breeding areas of the northern Sahel in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger in June. These populations will supplement early breeding that is currently underway in the Air Mountains in Niger. Locust numbers will increase further during the summer once the seasonal rains commence in the northern Sahel. Therefore, strict vigilance must continue in all countries in the Region and summer surveys should commence in mid-June in the Sahel.

RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN

Locust control operations in the Sahel were strengthened by the delivery of 28 vehicle-mounted and 47 backpack sprayers to the National Locust Control Units (NLCU) in Chad (5 vehicle-mounted and 42 backpack sprayers), Mali (13 vehicle-mounted and 5 backpack sprayers) and Niger (10 vehicle-mounted sprayers). Three vehicles (4x4 Toyota pick-up) were delivered to the NLCU in Mali to replace a few of the 33 vehicles (among other equipment) that were stolen or destroyed by armed rebel groups; these vehicles will ensure that survey, control and environmental monitoring teams can be fielded quickly in infested areas. A variety of camping gear (tents, sleeping bags, foldable chairs, tables etc.), generators and HF radios are also being delivered to further strengthen survey and control operations and preparedness in Chad, Mali and Niger.

A regional workshop was held in Agadir, Morocco on 10-11 June 2013, during which, 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 regional Plan of Action for the period from June to August 2013, which includes the countries' needs in terms of equipment, training and support to survey and control operations.

Pesticide triangulation, agreed donations of pesticides. Thanks to intraregional solidarity under the aegis of the CLCPRO and collaboration with the World Food Programme, pesticide triangulation was very efficient in 2012 within the western Region. A total of 90 000 litres of pesticides were airlifted, allowing quick availability of pesticides in countries which had to undertake control operations and reducing not only the cost of the operations but also the total quantity of pesticides present in the Region and consequently the potential environmental risk.

Data transmission system (eLocust3). The current system (eLocust2), which allows gathering, recording and transmitting field data, is being upgraded to improve transmission by satellite in a faster, more reliable and cost-effective manner, to further enhance early warning. The field deployment of eLocust3 is ongoing.

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

* 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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