



## FAO COMMISSION FOR CONTROLLING THE DESERT LOCUST IN THE CENTRAL REGION (CRC) FIFTY YEARS FIGHTING DESERT LOCUST



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In July 1965, the 44th session of the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) approved the establishment of the **COMMISSION FOR CONTROLLING THE DESERT LOCUST IN THE CENTRAL REGION** (CRC) based on recommendations by the 11th FAO Conference session (1961) and a Special Conference held in Beirut (1965). The agreement came into force on 21 February 1967.

The CRC covers Northeast Africa and the Near East and comprises 16 member countries: Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

### CRC key facts

**CRC CELEBRATES FIFTY  
YEARS OF LOCUST  
MANAGEMENT**

**BIGGEST COMMISSION  
FOR CONTROLLING  
DESERT LOCUST WITHIN  
16 MEMBER COUNTRIES  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST,  
ARAB PENINSULA AND  
HORN OF AFRICA**

**CRC COVERS 30 PERCENT  
OF THE DESERT LOCUST  
DISTRIBUTION AREA**

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND  
HEALTH STANDARDS  
OF THE DESERT  
LOCUST OPERATIONS  
PROGRAMME IN THE  
CENTRAL REGION WERE  
ADOPTED BY MEMBER  
COUNTRIES IN 2012**

### MISSION

The role of the Commission is to assist member countries to manage and prevent Desert Locust, and to prepare for and respond to emergencies caused by it. The CRC concentrates on integrated approaches that:

- › support the development, sharing and adaptation of preventive control strategies, explore approaches for assessing impact, vulnerability, adaptation and planning, and focus on economic, institutional and financing issues;
- › create enabling frameworks for economically and environmentally sound control products that embody resource-use efficiency, diversification, accessibility and mitigation of the negative impacts of conventional insecticides.

### ACTIVITIES

Since its establishment 50 years ago, the Commission has strengthened the national capacities of member countries and assisted in their battle against the Desert Locust through a variety of activities that:

- › promote enhanced regional interaction and cooperation between the affected countries through Commission sessions,

- executive and ad-hoc meetings;
- › adopt improved early detection tools and early warning systems;
- › build capacity through provision of equipment;
- › strengthen expertise through national, regional, inter-regional and international short-term and long-term courses and workshops, including graduate-level fellowships;
- › support the introduction of economic and environmentally safer control technologies as well as demand-driven research;
- › develop contingency planning tools and rapid deployment plans;
- › provide bilateral and multilateral assistance during emergencies.

CRC activities focus on the needs of the National Locust Control Units (NLCUs). In 2012, the *Environmental and Health Standards of the Desert Locust Operations Programme in the Central Region (EHS-CR)* was adopted by member countries.

The standards define the requirements that a Desert Locust control campaign should meet in order to minimize environmental and human health effects of insecticide use.



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### » **CRC** key facts

**PREVENTIVE CONTROL  
HAS SUCCESSFULLY  
REDUCED LOCUST  
PLAGUES**

**THANKS TO QUICK  
MOBILIZATION OF FUNDS  
BY THE COMMISSION  
DURING 2013-2014,  
FOUR OUTBREAKS  
WERE CONTAINED AND  
SWARMS PREVENTED  
FROM INVADING OTHER  
COUNTRIES**

**ENHANCED  
COLLABORATION  
INCREASES RESILIENCE  
AND REDUCES  
DISASTER THREATS TO  
LIVELIHOODS**

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One important aspect of EHS-CR is monitoring exposure to pesticides by routinely measuring blood cholinesterase levels of workers involved in locust control operations and pesticide handling. By 2016, most of the CRC member countries have undertaken the initial steps to implement EHS-CR at the national level.

In 2014, CRC continued its efforts in improving contingency planning for Desert Locust emergencies by updating the *Desert Locust Contingency Planning Assistant (DeLCoPA)* that was developed by FAO. This tool helps NLCUs to prepare their national contingency plans by identifying strengths and weaknesses in the national locust programme that should be addressed in order to effectively manage a locust crisis in its early, critical stages. CRC also contributes to updating the *Locust Emergency Preparedness Toolkit (eLERT)* used to provide timely emergency response.

In 2015, the Commission introduced in its Region the *Pesticide Stock Management System (PSMS)* developed by FAO. This system records pesticide stocks, tracks their movement inside and outside the country, whether for control operations, internal redistribution, or triangulation between countries, and manages the disposal of empty pesticide containers.

## PREVENTIVE CONTROL

CRC member countries have adopted the preventive control strategy that relies on early warning and detection, rapid response and contingency planning. It is far less costly and safer to prevent Desert Locust upsurges and plagues than to undertake emergency control operations. Preventive control relies on established national locust units that are well equipped, have sufficiently trained staff and are funded by the government. The Commission works closely with each member country to achieve and maintain this requirement. Since the 1960s, preventive control has had a major impact in reducing the frequency, duration and intensity of Desert Locust plagues, which used to last up to 14 years but now are rarely more than two years in length.

## ENHANCED COLLABORATION – A SUCCESS STORY

In 2013-2014, four outbreaks developed along both sides of the Red Sea in Sudan, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The Commission was able to quickly mobilize US\$ 3.6 million from its Trust Fund, FAO emergency funds, Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Development Bank, and USAID. This and a strong collaborative effort between FAO, donors and affected countries contained the outbreaks and prevented swarms from invading other countries and the development of an upsurge.

CRC continues to work closely with its member countries, the Desert Locust Information Service (DLIS) at FAO Headquarters, the other two FAO regional Desert Locust commissions (Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO) and the South-West Asia Commission (SWAC)), FAO Representations in each country, the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) and the international donor community in order to mitigate the Desert Locust threat and contribute to food security and the fight against hunger and poverty.