



THE GAMBIA

9 November 2005

NOTE ON OPERATIONS AGAINST THE DESERT LOCUST

1. Funding and state of execution of the ECLO programme

- There are two national and six regional Desert Locust control projects that are providing assistance to The Gambia. These projects are funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Spain and FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). One national project, funded by Greece, ended on 31 March 2005, and a national TCP project ended on 31 May 2005.
- The total budget allocation for these projects is US\$568 388. As of 9 November 2005, an assistance worth US\$407 417 has been received by The Gambia and further assistance up to US\$109 255 is planned.
- The remaining funds, US\$51 716, are envisaged to be used for strengthening national capacities for Desert Locust control and for environment-related issues, as recommended during the Contingency Planning and Donor Meetings held in April/May in Bamako, Mali. These funds can only be used if donors approve budget revisions proposed by FAO.

2. Assistance provided by FAO in 2004 and 2005

- **Technical assistance:** An FAO international locust consultant, based at the former Emergency Coordination Unit in Dakar, visited The Gambia from 13 to 27 December 2004 to help plan possible locust control operations. Another international consultant undertook a mission from 26 January to 9 February 2005 to assess the locust situation and assist in the management of locust operations. Both international consultants were assisted by a national consultant (the national coordinator), recruited by FAO from September 2004 to February 2005, and by three other national consultants, hired one month each as counterpart logisticians during the time of aerial spraying. Lastly, to follow up on the national training session on Desert Locust management, another international consultant visited the country from 21 to 27 May 2005. The funds spent and committed for human resources in The Gambia are US\$43 583.

FAO continued to strengthen national capacities in The Gambia to monitor the Desert Locust situation during the summer of 2005, as recommended at the Desert Locust Contingency Planning and Donor Meetings.

The Gambia will need technical assistance to develop an inventory system for the locust equipment and material received, to assist in the repair of spray equipment, and to train warehouse managers and others in the calibration of spray equipment.

- **Aircraft:** A Turbo Thrush aircraft carried out spraying operations from 17 December 2004 until mid-February 2005. A total amount of US\$189 172 was spent on flying hours in The Gambia.
- **Equipment:** Five vehicles and ten motorcycles were provided to The Gambia, for a value of US\$126 500. Communication and positioning equipment costing US\$65 680 has been provided, as well as protective clothing valued at US\$5 615.

In accordance with the action plan for the 2005 campaign, reviewed at the Contingency Planning Meeting in Mali, FAO started purchasing equipment most urgently needed. Needs that cannot be covered by FAO should be partly covered by World Bank funds.

- **Training:** In accordance with one of the recommendations of the Extraordinary Session of FAO's Desert Locust Control Committee (DLCC), held in Rome on 29 November–2 December 2004, FAO initiated in early 2005 an important two-stage (regional and national) training-of-trainers programme for ten Sahelian countries and Djibouti. The first regional session on the main themes related to Desert Locust management took place at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) Centre in Niamey, Niger, from 14 March to 5 April 2005. This training gathered 21 participants, of which one was from The Gambia. The training course was conducted in French and led by international and regional experts. Despite a heavy agenda, the participants were satisfied with the themes, the quality of the presentations and the organization. As part of the training, each participant presented a programme to be implemented in his/her own country, which included three sessions on the Desert Locust of five days each.

The trainee from The Gambia subsequently organized three national training workshops for a total of 30 participants, conducted from 23 May to 10 June 2005. An international consultant, with expertise in the thematic areas covered during the regional training, assisted the trainer during the first workshop (23–27 May 2005). In conclusion, the training-of-trainers programme, which resulted in a total of 600

national staff in the Sahelian countries being trained, made a significant contribution to the strengthening of national capacities.

A regional workshop on the management of empty pesticide containers and remaining pesticide stocks from the Desert Locust campaign of 2004–2005 was also organized by FAO in Mauritania, 2–5 August, with funding from Austria, EC, IFAD, Italy, the Netherlands and FAO. Participants from The Gambia as well as from 13 other countries affected by the Desert Locust (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal and Tunisia) and local NGOs attended the workshop. Domestic use of empty pesticide containers is a serious health risk in the region and FAO promotes the collection and elimination of empty drums as they can endanger human health and the environment. Participants were informed of how to raise the awareness of rural and urban populations of this danger. The national programme on the management of empty pesticide containers and pesticide stocks in the Sahelian countries, is planned to be extended, with FAO assistance, to other countries affected by the Desert Locust emergency in the region, such as Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

During the workshop, information was exchanged on the impact of pesticides on human health and the environment and the dangers of domestic use of empty pesticide containers. A drum crusher was demonstrated for washing and crushing empty pesticide containers to allow recycling of drums. Participants established a regional strategy for better management of pesticide stocks and empty pesticide containers.

- **Protection of human health and the environment:** In accordance with the environmental and health monitoring programme set up by FAO, it is envisaged to form, during the first quarter of 2006, a Gambian Quality and Environment Survey Team (QUEST) in charge of the quality control of treatments.

3. Planning for the winter-spring campaign 2005-2006:

Two senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture participated in the Contingency Planning Workshop in Bamako, Mali, on 25–29 April 2005 and developed detailed plans to meet projected needs. Unlike other Sahelian countries, the projected needs for The Gambia exceeded available funds by over US\$1 million. Rather than being directly required for Desert Locust management, most of the needs targeted the strengthening of the national plant protection service and providing equipment and vehicles suitable for Gambian conditions, although some funds were earmarked for

applied research and training of pilots for the two aircraft recently purchased by the Government.

The National Desert Locust Coordinator also participated in the scientific meeting convened by the President of Senegal on 15 to 17 May 2005 and the third session of FAO's Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO) in Tripoli, Libya, on 12 to 16 June 2005.