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**Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES)
for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases
(Desert Locust Component)**

**Report of the 1st Meeting of
EMPRES Liaison Officers**

DLCO-EA Headquarters, Addis Ababa, 22-24 May 1995

INTRODUCTION

The first meeting of the EMPRES liaison officers was hosted by the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa at its Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The following persons participated:

Mr. A. A. Abdalla (liaison officer - Sudan)
Mr. M. S. El-Semary (liaison officer - Egypt)
Mr. A. Abdulahi (liaison officer - Ethiopia)
Mr. A. S. Al-Abry (liaison officer - Oman)
Mr. A. A. A. Mughni (alternate liaison-officer - Yemen)
Mr. A.H. Karrar (Director, DLCO)
Mr. P. Odiyo (Reporting & Forecasting Officer, DLCO)
Mr. J. Kasumba (Chief, Internal Auditor, DLCO)

FAO Staff

Mr. N.A. van der Graaff (Chief, Plant Protection Service, AGPP)
Mr. A. Hafraoui (Senior Officer, Migratory Pest Group, AGPP)
Mr. M. Taher (Secretary, Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust
in the Near East, RNEA)
Mr. B. Zelazny (Senior Planning Officer, AGPP)
Mr. C. Mushi (UN Volunteer, FAO Somalia)

FAO Consultant

Mr. S. El-Bashir

The Meeting reviewed the current status of the EMPRES programme. It was noted, that the concept and outline of the programme had been endorsed by several preceding meetings, including the 33rd session of the Desert Locust Control Committee, held in January 1995 in Rome. While a full donor-assisted programme is still under preparation, the objective of the current meeting was to discuss the implementation of priority activities which would be supported through FAO Regular Programme funds. This included, in particular, the implementation of two FAO pilot projects to be started under EMPRES which focus on Early Warning and Early Reaction activities. The adopted agenda of the Meeting is attached as Annex I.

It was clarified that EMPRES has been designed to address deficiencies in Desert Locust management in the region, but would not include the execution of emergency campaigns. EMPRES would in particular aim at developing improved and more effective survey and early control operations but would also promote research in priority areas. EMPRES would collaborate with regional locust control organizations in strengthening national capacities in these fields. It was not designed as a substitute for the regional organizations. The Meeting expressed general agreement with the objectives of the Early Warning and Early Reaction Pilot projects as proposed by FAO.

The mandate of EMPRES to improve regional collaboration between affected countries was welcomed by the participants who saw a need to revive the joint survey and control operations of the past.

The liaison officers of Oman and Egypt offered the facilities of their Governments for joint EMPRES activities, like for example meetings, workshops and training activities.

Proposed terms of reference for the liaison officers were drafted and adopted by the Meeting. They are attached as Annex II. It was recommended that FAO would submit them to the participating Governments for consideration and comments.

The Meeting recommended:

- that EMPRES should collaborate closely with the Commission for controlling the Desert Locust in the Near East, in particular in the areas of information exchange, training and research;
- to collaborate closely with the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa, in particular in the areas of information exchange, surveys, early control operations, research and training;
- for participating countries to coordinate activities of relevant projects (e.g. bilateral development projects) within the framework of EMPRES.

EARLY WARNING PILOT PROJECT

The Meeting reviewed the Desert Locust survey and early warning activities in the participating countries. It was noted that:

- In the **Sudan** plans for survey operations were prepared twice a year which included the resources required, the areas to be covered and the allocation for aircraft. Staff from 22 substations are involved. Usually 6 to 12 aircraft are assigned to survey and control operations of migratory pests on a contract basis. The needs in relation to the EMPRES programme include training and improvement of survey methods.
- In **Somalia** survey operations are presently only implemented by FAO and these are restricted due to the current security situation and political instability.
- In **Ethiopia** 200 scouts are employed on a casual basis to obtain preliminary information about the development of critical situations. Government surveys then follow-up on such leads.
- In **Yemen** surveys are conducted by Government employees during certain times of the year. Surveys are intensified when critical situations develop and when warnings are received from FAO Headquarters.
- In **Egypt** regular surveys are carried out which cover the critical breeding areas. Bedouins may be recruited in remote areas.
- In **Oman** regular surveys are conducted in collaboration with out-posted plant protection officers. For example, in 1994 three surveys were conducted, each lasting 2 weeks.

The Meeting noted the need for a minimum capacity in the participating countries to conduct regular survey operations. These surveys would have to be expanded once critical situations develop. In collaboration with the current FAO consultant, the participating countries would review survey plans and operations including the access of data on rainfall and vegetation to persons directing such surveys.

The Meeting recommended specifically:

- to initiate diplomatic efforts aimed at establishing regular joint locust surveys by neighbouring countries, particular in border areas;

- that a technical workshop on survey methodology and organization is held as soon as possible;¹
- to consider the system used by some participating countries to hire on a short time basis local scouts for locust surveys and to examine the possibility of extending this system to other countries;
- to pay particular attention to strengthening the links between plant protection services and other relevant Government structures, like, for example, meteorological services;
- to continue supporting the survey operations in Northern Somalia;
- to prepare or acquire and distribute a video-film explaining/demonstrating the use of Global Positioning Systems;
- that a consultant should visit the participating countries, DLCO and the NE Commission in order to design a communication network.

EARLY REACTION PILOT PROJECT

The Meeting reviewed the early control capacities in the participating countries. It was noted that:

- In **Sudan** a core control capacity exists including the assignment of 6-12 spraying aircrafts through contracts when needed. Additional allocations are made by the Government in the case of emergencies. This capacity will now be reviewed in collaboration with EMPRES consultants.
- Locust control bases no longer exist in **Somalia**. Although no control operations against Desert Locusts were required in recent years, it is not clear how they could be implemented in case they would be needed in the future. Swarms of African Migratory locusts have recently invaded Djibouti and Ethiopia from Somalia.
- In **Ethiopia** an emergency system is activated once locust control operations are needed which involves the provincial Governments. Early locust control activities are restricted by deficiencies in equipment. The Government collaborates closely with DLCO in these activities.

¹ Oman and Egypt were proposed as possible venues for the workshop.

- The control capacity in Yemen has been recently reduced due to the loss of equipment during the civil war in the South.
- The control capacity in Egypt is considered adequate. However, the presence of outdated stocks of pesticides poses problems.
- In Oman the capacity to control locusts is also considered adequate. New equipment for survey and control operations have been received recently.

The Meeting also noted that different systems exist in the participating countries to monitor the efficacy of control, and to ensure the safe use of pesticides. Deficiencies in these areas were discussed, for example the difficulty of adequately protecting workers against pesticides during hot weather.

The need for an efficient minimum control capacity was acknowledged which should be designed to enable fast and effective control of small and medium scale infestations. Various systems exist in the participating countries to activate and implement emergency operations some of which might require improvements. The participating Governments would review, in collaboration with the current FAO consultant, the presently used methods of campaign organization and execution, contingency arrangements for emergencies, provisions ensuring the safe use of pesticides and methods for monitoring the efficacy of control operations.

The Meeting recommended specifically:

- to review previous campaigns in the participating countries in order to identify possible areas of improvement and to establish detailed records on locust infestations and control efforts;
- to organize national workshops/seminars to review the organization and systems which are activated once emergency campaigns have to be initiated;
- to consider the need for strategic stocks of essential equipment and supplies in the light of the findings of the current FAO EMPRES consultant;
- that FAO should pursue efforts to establish an international contingency fund which would assist affected countries in controlling dangerous locust infestations.

DESERT LOCUST RESEARCH

The Meeting noted the need to improve current methods of rainfall and vegetation monitoring in traditional Desert Locust breeding areas. Interest was expressed from the liaison officers of Ethiopia, Sudan and Oman to participate in the activities of the EMPRES sub-project "Improving Monitoring Desert Locust Habitats by Remote Sensing".

The liaison officer from Oman conveyed to the Meeting the desire of its Government to contribute to international research efforts on improving locust survey and control methods. Suitable facilities for such research were recently completed in Muscat. However, there is a shortage of trained scientists in Oman.

The present status of knowledge on the economic significance of the Desert Locust was reviewed by the Meeting. The Meeting recommended:

- that countries would be asked to provide information on what type of data are available to their Governments which could be used for economic studies; data of relevance include:
 - records/reports on crop losses by the Desert Locust;
 - detailed records on infestations;
 - detailed records on control operations;
 - current costs of locust survey and control operations;
 - agricultural statistics of crops threatened by the Desert Locust.
- to initiate, within available means, retrieval and analysis of the above data;
- to follow-up on a previous recommendation of the Near East Commission that member Governments would report crop losses by the Desert Locust.

CONCLUSION

It was recommended that the next meeting of EMPRES liaison officers would, in particular, consider and discuss the findings and recommendations of the current FAO EMPRES consultant. Tentatively, the first week of September 1995 was proposed as a date and Cairo as a location for this meeting.

The meeting participants expressed their appreciation to the DLCO-EA for hosting the meeting and for providing support services.

**Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES) for Transboundary Animal and
Plant Pests and Diseases (Desert Locust component)**

Meeting of liaison officers, 22-24 May 1995 in Addis Ababa

Proposed Agenda

Opening

Background Information on EMPRES

Comments from liaison officers on EMPRES

Roles of participating countries/organizations

- Countries
- Collaboration with DLCO-EA
- Collaboration with Near East Locust Commission
- EMPRES sub-projects (remote sensing project)
- Collaboration with other institutions/projects

Implementation of Pilot Projects

- Objectives/activities
- Organizational structures
- Workplan for Early Warning Pilot Project
- Workplan for Early Reaction Pilot Project
- Other aspects

Economic studies

- Present status
- Collaboration with affected countries

Other matters

Next meeting

**Proposed Terms of Reference for
EMPRES Liaison Officers**

1. Serve as a focal point for the EMPRES Programme in his/her country.
2. Review, in collaboration with the relevant national authorities and EMPRES, annual survey plans in traditional breeding areas and areas of rainfall/vegetation.
3. Develop/review and update in collaboration with concerned national authorities and EMPRES a plan for campaign organization and execution.
4. Implement survey and, where justified, control activities.
5. Request Government funds for the execution of appropriate locust activities in the country.
6. Follow-up on day to day activities of the EMPRES programme.
7. Ensure regular flow of information to all relevant parties on the Desert Locust situation and on the environmental conditions in the country.
8. Represent the country in the EMPRES Liaison Officers Meetings.
9. Undertake national activities of the EMPRES Programme such as training etc.
10. Work closely with the EMPRES coordinator in all issues concerning the EMPRES Programme in the Central region.
11. Liaise closely with the NE Commission and DLCO on all issues concerning the EMPRES programme.