



# Locust Crisis in Madagascar

17 June 2014

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Since April 2012, Madagascar has been facing a **plague** of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, that threatens the livelihoods of **13 million people** in the country, 9 million of whom earn a living from agriculture.
- It is estimated that at least **three successive locust control campaigns costing USD 43.9 million are required** to return to a recession of the locust populations by treating over 2 million hectares between September 2013 and September 2016. **One or two campaigns alone will not be enough to reach this objective.**
- Since the start of the first campaign, in September 2013, **more than 30 million hectares have been surveyed and locust populations have been controlled on nearly 1.2 million hectares.**
- The **three-year programme**, jointly prepared by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, in response to the plague focuses on:
  - **Improving the monitoring and analysis of the locust situation**
  - **Large-scale aerial control operations**
  - **Monitoring and mitigating the impact of locust control operations on human health and the environment**
  - **Assessing the effectiveness of each locust campaign and the impact of locusts on crops and pastures**
- **Funds urgently needed** to ensure the timely start of the second campaign in September 2014. The **current funding gap exceeds USD 15 million.** All funds are required to fully implement the programme, else the plague could severely affect a family's ability to provide for itself.

## LATEST UPDATE

The rainy season is now coming to an end and weather and ecological conditions are becoming unsuitable for locust breeding. Therefore, no further massive breeding will occur before the next rainy season, in October 2014. A recent extensive aerial survey, carried out from 3 to 9 June along a 5 000 km itinerary, concluded that the current total number of swarms should not exceed 30; these highly mobile swarms are small to medium in size (200 hectares on average). Indeed, the number and size of the locust swarms issued from the second generation of breeding decreased significantly throughout the country, both in the Invasion and Outbreak areas as a result of intensive and large-scale aerial control operations carried out in April and May. Nevertheless, in the Outbreak Area, some scattered locust populations were still present, mainly in the still humid biotopes, as well as hopper groups from a late breeding. Monitoring of all these locust populations, as well as limited control operations will continue over the winter period, as required.

## RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN

**Locust Watch Unit** produces ten-day and monthly bulletins analysing the locust situations and documenting the results of the survey and control operations which are distributed to all stakeholders in Madagascar and published on the [FAO Web site](#). An international consultant has been fielded to Madagascar to supervise and support the work of the Locust Watch Unit.

**The first locust campaign (September 2013 – August 2014):** As of 10 June, the three mobile aerial bases were located in Ranohira and Ihosy, in the Outbreak Area, and in Ankazobe, northwest of Antananarivo, in the Invasion Area. The deployment of a fixed-wing spraying aircraft for a three-month period, in addition to the three helicopters, was critical in boosting aerial control operations, thanks to its longer range of action: from 03 March to 03 June 2014, this aircraft alone treated more than 754 000 hectares, i.e. about 63 percent of the area treated since the beginning of the campaign. After having benefitted from training/refreshing course in March 2014, ground control teams are now treating, when needed, environmentally sensitive areas infested by locusts with biopesticide. International and national technical expertise as well as logistical supervision is ensured on each aerial base. A four-week evaluation mission of the first locust campaign to assess its quality and effectiveness as well as the possible impact of control operations on human health and the environment is currently ongoing. A FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) will take place in July.

**Preparedness for the second campaign (September 2014 – August 2015):** In order to ensure timely pre-positioning of all inputs and services and supervision of field activities, actions for the second campaign are being launched. These include: a tender for helicopter services; analysis of stored pesticides in view of triangulation process; procurement of additional inputs such as vehicles and equipment for survey and control operations; and the identification and planning of the required technical expertise.

**Human health preserved and environment protected:** In close collaboration with the National Anti-Locust Centre, the Plant Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Coordination Unit, the [Human Health and Environmental Management Plan](#) is being implemented.

Funding required (USD)	Funding received by FAO (USD)	Funding gap (USD)
<b>43.9 million</b> FAO Appeal, 18 December 2012	<b>28.2 million</b> (Austria, Belgium, CERF-OCHA, European Union, France, Italy, Japan, Madagascar through a World Bank loan, Norway, and USA)	<b>15.7 million</b>

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- All up-to-date information is available on our Web site: [www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/madagascar-locust/en/](http://www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/madagascar-locust/en/)
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