



Main features, obligations and benefits under the *Agreement for the Establishment of a Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region*

OVERVIEW

The Desert Locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*) is considered the most dangerous of all migratory pest species in the world. Desert locusts can reproduce rapidly, migrate long distances and devastate crops and pasture. In their migratory phase, they can form swarms consisting of as many as 80 million adult locusts. These swarms, driven by prevailing winds, can travel up to 150 kilometres in a single day. In plague years, they strip areas in their path of nearly all vegetation, severely impacting agriculture and food security.

The Central Region – comprising certain territories in the Near East - is particularly vulnerable to desert locust invasions. Its semi-arid climate, marked by alternating periods of drought and sudden, intense rainfall, creates favourable breeding conditions for locusts. Many States in this region also face structural challenges, such as marginal agricultural zones, fragile food systems, and limited emergency response capacities — factors that amplify the impact of locust infestations and underscore the need for sustained regional coordination.

To address this ongoing threat, the [Agreement for the Establishment of a Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region](#) (the Agreement) was adopted by the FAO Council in 1965 and came into force in 1967, with amendments in 1994 and 2004. The Agreement established a formal platform for regional cooperation, joint action, and long-term planning to manage locust threats more effectively across Member States. Through the collaboration and coordination established under the Agreement, regional food security and economic stability are promoted.

OBJECTIVES

The Agreement provides a framework for coordinated surveillance, monitoring, and control, enhancing cooperation among affected countries. Through the Commission, Member States share resources, technical expertise, and early warning systems, enabling more timely and effective responses. These efforts promote sustainable control measures, strengthen preparedness, and help reduce crop and pasture losses. In particular, the Agreement has the following key objectives:

1. **Promote timely and transparent information exchange:**
Facilitate the regular sharing of locust data and control updates among Member States and with FAO to support early warning systems and coordinated responses.
2. **Strengthen national control efforts:**
Support the implementation of effective national measures to manage and reduce the impact of locust outbreaks.
3. **Ensure accountability through reporting mechanisms:**
Encourage consistent reporting on national actions to track progress, support regional planning, and promote transparency.

MAIN ELEMENTS

The Agreement is designed to foster regional cooperation and coordinated action against locust outbreaks, including through:

1. **Institutional Cooperation Framework:**
Establishes a body — the Commission — responsible for coordinating desert locust control efforts. Membership is open to FAO Member Nations and Associate Members in the Central Region.



2. **Surveillance and Monitoring:**
Supports national surveillance systems for early detection and continuous monitoring of locust populations, enabling timely and informed responses.
3. **Control Measures and Capacity Building:**
Promotes joint, scientifically sound control strategies using environmentally safe methods, while strengthening national capacities through training, institutional support, and preventive planning.
4. **Technical Assistance and Information Sharing:**
Facilitates the exchange of data, best practices, and scientific research through the FAO Desert Locust Information Service and member collaboration, enabling access to expert guidance and technologies for effective, coordinated responses.

By addressing these elements, the Agreement strengthens regional collaboration and provides a comprehensive approach to combating desert locusts in the Central Region.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR PARTIES

The Agreement offers a wide range of benefits to Member States, clustered into three main areas: sustainability, economic benefits, and governance:

A. SUSTAINABILITY

The Agreement enhances the long-term management of locust control through the development of sustainable strategies and access to technical expertise and resources. This collaborative effort defined under the Agreement as comprising the territories of Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Furthermore, coordinated pest management measures promote a more effective and environmentally responsible approach across the Region.

B. ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The Agreement advances **early detection and rapid response to locust outbreaks, enabling Member States to reduce crop losses, protect agricultural assets, and sustain rural livelihoods**. It promotes coordinated regional action, which is often more cost-effective than isolated national efforts, and facilitates access to international funding and partnerships that strengthen resources for locust control and broader agricultural development. Member States also benefit from established response mechanisms that can help minimize economic losses during outbreaks.

C. GOVERNANCE

The Agreement fosters **regional cooperation and promotes a unified approach to locust monitoring and control**. It provides a structured platform for joint action, enabling Member States to address a shared transboundary threat through collective effort. Through standardized mechanisms, the Agreement strengthens governance by enhancing coordination, transparency, and institutional knowledge-sharing. It supports collaborative decision-making, reinforces shared responsibility, and encourages diplomatic engagement — contributing to more effective and efficient locust management across the region.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Agreement, model instruments for adherence to the Agreement and treaty processes in FAO, please contact: treaties@fao.org