



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



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# ESTABLISHING AN FAO COMMISSION ON LOCUSTS IN CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

Locusts are a constant threat to agriculture in Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA). The Asian Migratory Locust (*Locusta migratoria migratoria*), the Italian Locust (*Calliptamus italicus*) and the Moroccan Locust (*Dociostaurus maroccanus*) jeopardise food security and

livelihoods of over 20 million of the rural populations in CCA. Locusts are migrant and transboundary pests, able to fly over 100 km per day. Their traditional habitats are often situated on both sides of borders between countries, resulting in frequent locust movements

across political boundaries. Locusts are highly voracious pests capable to quickly destroy any crop or pastureland. On average, in CCA, over the past ten years, locusts have infested 7.2 million hectares and required the treatment of 4.2 million hectares with chemical insecticides annually.

## WHY IS A REGIONAL BODY NEEDED?

Considering the constant threat posed by these transboundary pests, no sustainable solution is possible without regional cooperation. With political borders situated across historical locust breeding areas, if a country faces an outbreak, some of its neighbours are likely facing a similar situation and in danger too. No country is ever protected from locust swarms arriving from neighbours.

Regional cooperation is key for prevention of locust damages. It allows regular and timely exchange of information and experience between countries, which is crucial for early warning and early reaction and thus prevention. Improved national and regional management result in reduced damage to crops and rangelands, allowing to minimize negative impact to human health and the environment and alleviate financial costs.

As of now, regional cooperation is ensured thanks to the FAO multi-funded "Programme to improve national and

regional locust management in CCA", launched in 2011 to the benefit of ten CCA countries. It allowed creating a regional network and strengthening capacities; however, its continuation is entirely dependent on donor contributions.

A regional body is thus needed to warrant a sustainable regional cooperation in the long term. In addition to ten CCA countries, cooperation can be extended to other neighbours such as China and Iran (Islamic Republic of).

## WHY AN FAO COMMISSION AND HOW DOES IT FUNCTION?

An FAO Commission established under Article XIV of its Constitution gives the highest guarantee in terms of sustainability as well as strong ownership to Member countries.

It is a permanent body, providing a clear framework for regional cooperation. While it relies on FAO as neutral facilitator, it offers high autonomy to its Members, with decision-making of its own and a decision-making body

# KEY FACTS



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**THREE LOCUST PESTS  
JEOPARDIZING FOOD  
SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS  
IN CCA, WITH 25 MILLION HA  
OF CULTIVATED AREAS UNDER  
THREAT**

**AT LEAST TEN COUNTRIES  
CONCERNED: AFGHANISTAN,  
ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN,  
GEORGIA, KAZAKHSTAN,  
KYRGYZSTAN, THE RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION, TAJIKISTAN,  
TURKMENISTAN, AND  
UZBEKISTAN; ADJACENT  
REGIONS OF IRAN (ISLAMIC  
REPUBLIC OF) AND CHINA ARE  
ALSO THREATENED**

**KEY CHALLENGE:  
SUSTAINABILITY OF NATIONAL  
AND REGIONAL LOCUST  
MANAGEMENT, RELYING ON  
PREVENTION, REGIONAL  
COOPERATION AND UP-TO-  
DATE CONTROL STRATEGIES  
AND TOOLS**

**ONLY A PERMANENT  
BODY CAN GUARANTEE  
A LONG-TERM REGIONAL  
COOPERATION**

**BENEFITS:  
REDUCED DAMAGE TO CROPS  
AND RANGELANDS, REDUCED  
IMPACT ON HUMAN HEALTH  
AND THE ENVIRONMENT AND  
REDUCED FINANCIAL COSTS**

**FAO COMMISSION ON  
LOCUSTS IN CCA**

**WEBSITE:**

[www.fao.org/ag/locusts-CCA](http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts-CCA)



comprising all Members and meeting in regular sessions. Annual contributions by Member countries are mandatory.

FAO provides technical, administrative, operational and financial support to the Commission, which has to follow the rules and financial regulations of the Organization. The Executive Secretary is appointed by the Director-General and administratively and financially responsible to him. All activities and financial operations must be in line with the workplan and budget endorsed by the decision-making body. Such Commission can be coupled with a programme or projects and extra voluntary contributions.

The idea to create an FAO Commission on locusts in CCA is not new as the first attempt to formalize regional cooperation dates back to 2000. It has been a recurring question since then. Recently it was discussed several times during the annual Workshops held in the framework of the FAO Programme on locusts in CCA.

### RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS

While countries have the primary responsibility for locust management at the national level, the regional Commission should promote prevention and facilitate regional cooperation to better address locust issues, especially in border areas. It can ensure a range of functions:

- Regional exchange of information for early warning, relying on use of modern digital tools for real-time data collection and analysis towards improved forecast at national and regional levels.

- Coordination of joint activities, such as locust cross-border surveys and possibly treatments.
- Improvement of locust management, through capacity strengthening and up-to-date survey and control practices in the respect of human health and the environment.
- National or intra-regional assistance in case of critical locust situation, including resource mobilization.

### HOW IS THE COMMISSION FUNDED?

Member countries are expected to make mandatory annual contributions, which form the Commission's core budget, and can be complemented by voluntary ones. The issue of costs and contributions' calculation is a key issue for countries' decisions and long-term involvement in the Commission. There is a variety of scales that can be determined for this purpose, for instance based on wealth, surface area, cultivated area, average locust-infested area, agricultural yields, etc.

### HOW IS AN FAO COMMISSION CREATED?

A regional Commission is established according to the rules of the Organization. Based on countries' official requests, regional technical meetings are convened to negotiate the treaty. Once an agreement is reached, the treaty is brought to the attention of the FAO Governing bodies, which must approve it. Countries follow their national procedures to ratify or adhere to the treaty, which has the same legal force as other legally binding international agreements (only countries can dissolve the Commission according to established procedures).