



هيئة مكافحة الجراد الصحراوي في المنطقة الوسطى  
**FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert  
Locust in the Central Region**

**Regional Meeting**

**Preparedness for the Desert Locust winter/spring breeding Season  
and coordination between member countries in the FAO Commission  
for Controlling Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC)**

FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa

Cairo, Egypt

3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2015

## Background

On November the 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015, FAO warned that recent torrential rains and cyclones that had fallen in northwest Africa, Yemen and Horn of Africa, could favour locust surge, and requested concerned countries to be vigilant during the next six months, to prevent the formation of Desert Locust swarms that may occur, similar to the Desert Locust plague during 2003- 2005. This could lead to an outbreak of locust swarms and therefore threaten food security and the livelihoods of rural communities.

Accordingly, as per the role of the Commission and its responsibilities in controlling the Desert Locust in the Near East Region as well as following up on the recommendations of the Regional Contingency Planning workshop for Desert Locust that was held in Hurgada, Egypt 13 – 18 February, 2015, and the implementation of the Preventative Control Strategy, the Commission called for a meeting for frontline countries; Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen, in addition to the Desert Locust Control Organization for East Africa (DLCO-EA) (see meeting agenda in appendix 1 & participant list in appendix 2).

Given the current circumstances in Yemen, the Yemeni delegate was unable to attend the meeting, but he joined it via Video Conference (VC), while the Omani delegate regretted his attendance.

## Opening session

Mr. Pasquale Steduto, FAOR Egypt & DRR, RNE, welcomed the member countries' representatives and thanked them for their interest in participating in this harmonization meeting between the breeding countries in the Commission to discuss the Desert Locust situation and the plan of action prepared by the member countries for winter and spring breeding seasons, wishing them success and fruitful meeting.

Mr. Heruy Asghedom, CRC Chairman, thanked Mr. Steduto for his speech praising the role played by the Regional Office in supporting the Commission's efforts in the fight against Desert Locust, and the importance of working together to avert the threat of Desert Locust in the region. He added that climate changes and the fall of unusual rainfall may lead to a major outbreak if it is not taken seriously by the countries and the international community. Therefore this meeting was an opportunity to understand the early preparations made by the countries in this aspect and coordinate efforts in the regional framework.

Mr. Mamoon Al-Alawi, Executive Secretary of the Commission, thanked the countries for responding to the invitation and eventually attended the meeting, reminding them that early response to emergency situations is one of the most important factors of preventive control of the Desert Locust strategy. Assessment of the current situation of Locust and follow-up of the member countries preparedness in the implementation of national contingency plans is also very important, especially after the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned of “recent torrential rains and cyclones could favour locust upsurge” which requires vigilance and continued monitoring in the north west Africa, the Horn of Africa and Yemen, especially in the light of the current circumstances in Yemen.

### **Desert Locust situation in the Member countries and preparations for breeding season**

Participating countries presented their reports on the Desert Locust situation, through the results of their latest survey operations conducted in the Desert Locust breeding areas. In addition to their preparedness for the winter/spring breeding season, following the implementation of the contingency planning recommendations.

#### **Eritrea**

Mr. Heruy presented a detailed report on recent DL situation and the consequent preoperational steps taken. He pointed out that three main camps were set up for the current breeding season along the Red Sea coast in; Karura, Shieb and Gelalo where surveys are being conducted periodically. Survey operations were conducted along the coastal plains adjacent to the Red Sea between Shieb until Karura on the Sudan/Eritrean border, where no locusts were reported. Therefore, the situation remains calm in Eritrea.

Further actions have been taken to provide the necessary support to the survey and control teams to start applying preventive control operations, if required. He also stated that 18,250 liters of pesticides have been made available in support of anticipating a major development and spread of locust. He added that a coordination committee, chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and the Red Sea governorate, meets on a weekly basis with the concerned authorities to follow up on any developments and to eliminate any difficulties that face the operations. Mr. Heruy extended his thanks and appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its support to Eritrea in the control of Desert Locust.

He requested the Commission financial support to provide some spare parts for DL sprayers.

## Ethiopia

Ms. Hewit Lemma Belihu presented a detailed report on the DL situation in Ethiopia and pointed out that no locusts were reported during the survey operations in the eastern region near Dire Dawa and Jijiga near the Somali borders during November 2015 and no significant developments are likely, unless locust breeding occurs in northern Somalia, where some swarms may move to the Ethiopian border into Somali region. She stated that 10,000 liters of pesticides have been made available which can be increased, if needed, due to the presence of pesticides production plants in Ethiopia that can meet the demand in a relatively short period. Ms. Belihu requested the Commission's financial and technical support to organize a training workshop on the maintenance of DL sprayer equipment and provide the necessary spare parts for sprayers to complete all preparations of control campaign.

## Egypt

Mr. Gamal Abdullatif presented a detailed report explaining the Desert Locust situation in Egypt during November 2015, where no locusts were reported during the survey operations near Lake Nasser in the Abu Simbel, Garf Hussein and Allaqi and on the Red Sea coast between Berenice and the Sudan border, in subcostal areas near El Sheikh El Shazly and Abraç, and Siwa oasis. He added that there are 13 main DL bases, followed by 52 sub-bases across Egypt, equipped with the necessary staff and equipment conducting regular survey operations and are ready for DL control operations. Mr. Abdullatif also mentioned that departmental resources have been enhanced with 18,300 liters of ULV pesticides, 49770 liters of EC, in addition to vehicles, DL sprayers and equipment campaign.

## Sultanate of Oman

Oman report was submitted through an email message, where the Desert Locust Center stated that the locust situation is currently calm. No significant developments are likely to occur in the coming period. In spite of that, the necessary preparation steps have been taken to conduct surveys and control Desert Locust in case necessary. He added in the report that there is coordination with all relevant authorities and that periodic surveys are being carried out in most of the areas that received rain recently. In addition, 30,000 liters of pesticides have been provided for control operations.

## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Mr. Mohammed Al-Shamrani presented a comprehensive report on the survey operations carried out During October and November 2015, where low numbers of immature solitarious adults were reported on the southern Red Sea coastal plains near Jizan. No locusts were reported elsewhere during the survey operations along the coast to Umm Lajj, while survey operations are still being carried out on a regular

basis for sites that received torrential rains and in traditional areas. He also pointed out that survey and control teams are distributed covering all winter breeding areas from Umm Lajj in the north to Jizan in the south. Vehicles, spraying equipment and aircrafts are also ready. Field camps have also been equipped and divided according to their capabilities so that they are able to deal with different infested areas. Moreover, the National Center has secured 100,000 liters of pesticides for control operations.

Mr. Shamrani also mentioned that Saudi Arabia agreed to support the State of Eritrea with 20,000 liters of pesticides to help them in the preparedness for winter breeding season and is now in process.

## Sudan

Mr. Mahgoub Moussa presented a report on the current Desert Locust situation in Sudan, where low numbers of mature solitarious adults were present on the western side of the Red Sea Hills near Haiya and on the Red Sea coast near Tokar Delta. Noting that rain had fallen on the winter breeding areas in October and November 2015, breeding conditions remain favourable for Desert Locust breeding. Survey operations during the winter campaign are being supervised directly from Suakin station. Four survey teams are distributed to cover winter/ spring season; Aiterba, to monitor southern coast and areas on the border with Eritrea, Tokar (Delta Tokar and Khor Baraka). Suakin for covering the central and northern coast and summer belt areas. Tomala for covering sub coastal areas, Wadi Daaeb and Oko.

Mr. Mahgoub also mentioned that 161.780 litres of pesticides are available for control operations in addition to sprayer equipment that cost around 1.5 million USD taking into account the initial stock of pesticides in Suakin station is 17,700 litres. A refresher training course on survey and control operations has been conducted, in addition to two training courses organized and conducted for plant protection officer in other states to prepare them for any development in the Desert Locust situation and hence control operations.

## Yemen

Mr. Adel Al-Shaibani gave an overview on the heavy rain fall in Southern Yemen and the DL situation. Heavy rains associated with tropical cyclone Chapala fell in southern coastal and interior areas of Yemen in early November 2015, followed by tropical cyclone Meg one week later, which also affected the interior of Yemen and western part of Tohama. The torrential rains, which by far exceeded the annual average rainfall for the entire year, caused flooding and damage indicating that environmental conditions were favorable for locust breeding.

Scattered immature solitarious adults, mixed with a few mature and copulating adults, were seen during surveys on the Red Sea coast near Al Zuhrah and from

north of Bajil to nearly Zabid. There is a risk of locust breeding during the next few months in areas where heavy rains have fallen, but due to insecurity, some areas on the northern coastal plains of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden coast, could not be surveyed.

The situation has worsened due to lack of operating expenses, needed to carry out quick surveys whenever possible, in addition to absence of vehicles for survey and control team, where all the vehicles belonging to the Locust Centre were taken during the events currently in Yemen.

Mr. AlShaibani requested financial support from the Commission, in the provision of operating expenses, which is one of the most important obstacles in this difficult phase. Noting that the center has a good stock of pesticides, 42,000 liters of pesticides and ULV sprayers are available for DL staff to intervene with Desert Locusts control operations, in addition to campaign equipment that have been provided by donors in 2014.

## **Somalia**

Mr. Stephen Njoka, Director of Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA), presented a report on the current Desert Locust situation in northern Somalia. No locusts were reported during survey operations which were carried out on the northwest coast, the escarpment between Berbera and the Djibouti border and in the northeast during the last week of November 2015. Scattered adults are likely to appear on the northwest coastal plains and breed on a small scale, locust numbers may increase in parts of the northeast that received rains from cyclone Meg.

Mr. Njoka stated that there is coordination with FAO office in Hargeisa and with the Ministry of Agriculture, where DLCO-EA will deploy an aircraft in Derdawa, Ethiopia to provide support and conduct aerial control in northern Somalia, if required. He also mentioned that a training course was conducted for technicians from the Ministry of Agriculture in northern Somalia under the supervision of DLCO-EA staff, in addition to other training courses planned in the coming period.

## **Forecast for the next period**

There is a risk Desert Locust breeding in Yemen in the next few months, which may apply to most countries where heavy rains have fallen during November, especially along the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, where ecological conditions are favourable for breeding. Scattered adults are likely to appear in these areas which may copulate during December with the possibility of some change in the Desert Locust situation in some countries in the region. Therefore, it is required that all countries remain vigilant and to monitor these areas in case control operation is required.

## Conclusion

It is clear that all countries have taken essential steps in the preparedness for the winter / spring breeding seasons to various degrees and depending on the available resources of each country. Also survey and control work plans were activated and teams took their positions in the winter breeding areas and are conducting survey consistently, reports on the locust situation were also sent on a regular basis.

Accordingly, all countries should work to bridge the gaps (shortcomings treatment) in the requirements on DL action plans, and to work on the completion of human, financial resources and equipment and prepare for the prevention of emergency situations that may occur. As the heavy rains including torrential downpours that fell on the region in general have the potential to trigger a massive upsurge in Desert Locust numbers, which can be devastating on crops and pastures and thus threaten food security and rural livelihoods of the affected countries.

## Recommendations

After intensive discussions of the countries reports, the implementation of the national contingency plans and to assist the Desert Locust Control units in front line countries maintain field surveys in order to avoid further escalation of Locust numbers, the meeting approved the following recommendations;

1. The Commission strongly recommends frontline countries to be vigilant and continue to carry out intensive surveys in rainfall and traditional breeding areas, in addition to preparedness of a control campaign, if needed.
2. Frontline countries should send accurate survey reports on a regular basis, using eLocust3, directly after carrying out the surveys/control operations to CRC and DLIS.
3. The Commission recommends frontline countries to complete the shortfalls in their campaign equipment, sprayer and pesticides for control operations as soon as possible.
4. The meeting agreed to assist LCU in Yemen with USD10,000 to cover the operation costs of Desert Locust surveys in the winter breeding areas.
5. The meeting agreed to support Eritrea with spare parts for ULV sprayers and requested the representative of Eritrea to send a list of required spare parts to the Secretariat of the Commission as soon as possible.
6. The meeting advised the Ministry of Agriculture of Eritrea to follow the competent authorities in Saudi Arabia, through official channels, to speed up the procurement procedures in Saudi Arabia of 20,000 litres of pesticide to be donated to Eritrea for the control of Desert Locust.
7. The meeting agreed to provide technical and financial support to Ethiopia to conduct a training course on the maintenance of ULV sprayers and provide the required spare parts.

8. The activation of the joint border surveys of the winter breeding areas between Egypt and Sudan. The Secretariat of the Commission is to facilitate the joint border survey, depending on ecological condition and locust breeding habitats.
9. The activation of the joint border surveys of the winter breeding areas between Sudan and Eritrea. The Secretariat of the Commission is to facilitate the joint border survey, depending on ecological condition and locust breeding habitats.
10. Frontline countries are to send an update on their country's information, available resources and capacities available for Desert Locust Control operations to the Secretariat of the Commission in order to update the eLERT, as soon as possible.
11. Frontline countries are to start the use of the new version of DeLCoPA and to submit an updated version of their National Contingency Plan to the Secretariat of the Commission.
12. Collaboration between CRC and DLCO-EA in Desert Locust Management is to continue.
13. CRC, in collaboration and coordination with DLCO-EA, is to conduct a Regional Aerial training course on Desert Locust operations.
14. The delegates of the countries participating in this meeting are to report the results and recommendation of this meeting to the concerned authority to request the necessary support to the DLU.



## Appendix 1: Meeting agenda

المتحدث / presenter	الفعالية / activity	الوقت time/
أمين الهيئة Ex. Secretary of CRC	- افتتاح الاجتماع - حالة الجراد الصحراوي في المنطقة (ملخص عام) - Opening of the meeting Current Desert Locust situation in the region	<b>10:00</b>
الدول الأعضاء Member countries	تقارير الدول الأعضاء ومنظمة مكافحة الجراد في شرق أفريقيا (DLCO-EA) : - حالة الجراد الصحراوي في الدول الأعضاء - Desert Locust situation in the breeding countries member and DLCO-EA	<b>11:00</b>
	<i>break lunch</i> إستراحة غداء	<b>01:00</b>
أمين الهيئة الدول الأعضاء Ex. Secretary of CRC Member countries	استراتيجية مكافحة الوقائية والإجراءات المسبقة التي اتخذتها الدول ومتابعة تنفيذ توصيات حلقة العمل للتخطيط لطوارئ الجراد -Preventive control strategy and prior actions taken by Countries, -Implementation of contingency workshop recommendations	<b>02:00</b>
أمين الهيئة Ex. Secretary of CRC Member countries	التعاون الإقليمي في مجال مكافح الجراد الصحراوي ( المسح الحدودي بين السودان/ مصر & السودان/ أرتيريا... ) Regional cooperation in Desert Locust management (joint survey between Sudan-Egypt & Sudan, Eritrea etc.)	<b>03:00</b>
All / الجميع	ميزانية الطوارئ: الوطنية، الإقليمية والدولية Emergency support; National, regional and international	<b>04:00</b>
All / الجميع	التوصيات Recommendation	<b>05:00</b>
	أنهاء الاجتماع Closing remarks	<b>06:00</b>

## Appendix 2: Participants list

Country/ Organization	Name	Address	Contacts (Tel., Fax, E-mail)
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Ethiopia	Ms. Hiwot Lemma Senior Entomology Expert And Acting Director of Plant Protection	Ministry of Agriculture Addis Ababa Ethiopia	Tel.: 00251 111 6461147 Fax: 00251 1 416 46 2311 00251 1 116 46 2311 Mobile: 00251 911059130 E-mail: ghibefi@gmail.com
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Sudan	Mr. Mahgoub Mousa Mohammed Boshara Head of the Desert Locust Center	Plant Protection Directorate P.O. Box 14 - Khartoum North Sudan	Tel: 00249 185337437 Fax : 00249 185337495 Mobile: 00249 122523772/ 918001570 E-mail: mahgoubmousa@gmail.com
Yemen	Mr. Adel Ibrahim Al-Shaibani Director  Via video conference through FAO Yemen office	Desert Locust Monitoring and Control Centre General Directorate of Plant Protection P.O. Box 26 - Sana'a Republic of Yemen	Tel.: 00967 1 234500 Fax: 00967 1 250980 Mobile : 00967 712 662709 00967 777 892931 Email: adel_alshaibani@hotmail.com
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