



FAO-CRC Executive Secretary witnessed Eritrea's commitment to control desert locust



Dr. Mamoon Alalawi giving press conference to local and international media

Executive secretary of the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC), Dr. Mamoon Alalawi witnessed Eritrea's commitment in controlling desert locust in a press conference arranged by the Ministry to representatives of local and international media on March 15, 2019.

Dr. Mamoon made this note after he made a three days visit from 12-14 March, 2019 to vast areas of Northern Red sea which were subjected to massive desert locust infestations from December to mid March 2019.

“Those who managed the desert locust infestation in more than 32,000 hectares of land with very limited resources are really heroes” he underscored.

“Eritrea continuously not only saves its crops from desert locust threat but also eliminates these harmful pests from affecting other countries.” he further stressed. “All countries which are directly or indirectly affected by desert locust need to reinforce their cooperation to put these pests' effect to tolerable thresholds.”

Finally he outlined the major limitations he observed in Eritrea that include shortage of spraying vehicles and adequate facilities in the controlling stations. He said, CRC will do its best to alleviate these problems along with its funding partners.

In his visit Dr. Mamoon discussed many relevant issues with H.E Arefaine Berhe, Eritrea's Minister of Agriculture, other senior Ministry officials and

Northern Red Sea experts as well as control operation site managers.

Dr. Mamoon moreover handed over ten, AU 8000 backpack, motorized pesticide sprayers to the Minister of Agriculture in the name of CRC.

It is to be noted that CRC is a big regional organization composed of 16 member countries including Eritrea.



Ministry of Agriculture assesses desert locust control operations

The Ministry of Agriculture assessed the desert locust control operations along with its partners in Massawa city on April 4, 2019.

During the assessment meeting, Mr. Tesfit Ghebregabhier, head of crop production division in the Northern Red Sea (NRS) region presented a detailed report that manifested the endeavors of the government and farmers of Eritrea.

In the report he presented, Mr. Tesfit mentioned surveillance and control operations in all stations namely; Karura, Girat, Gulbub, Sheeb, Emberemi and Foro.

According to his report, the control operations were conducted in two phases starting from the first week of December, 2018 until end of March, 2019.

The report revealed that a total of 36,192 hectares of desert locust infested land was treated with proper dosage of pesticides.

“To control and manage such a huge infestation with limited human resource; only nineteen experts, eight scouts, and ten drivers is as great success” noted Mr. Tesfit. “However full cooperation and coordination of all relevant government bodies and farmers were indispensable.” Mr. Tesfit also mentioned adequate supply

of effective pesticides and early surveillance as major success of the campaign.

Finally Mr. Tesfit put shortage of spraying vehicles, under-equipped control stations, shortage of trainings on health and safety among major limitations of the campaign against desert locust. He, therefore, urged concerned bodies to address these limitations.

During the assessment meeting, a report on awareness raising conducted and endeavors made to disproof some misleading news about desert locust status in Eritrea was also presented by Information, communication and documentation unit of Agricultural Extension Department of the Ministry.

Moreover, a short report on environmental, health and safety assessment on desert locust control area was presented by Mr. Kaleab Hale, Agro-chemicals regulatory unit head at the Regulatory Services Department of the Ministry.

H.E B/ General Teclé Libsu, Northern Red Sea Governor, in his speech, commended the diligence of the control operations staff and coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture in the day-to-day activities of the campaign.



He said, “We were a bit hesitant if we would manage to control the continuous outbreaks emerged here and there with the limited resources we had. However, finally the previous experience of the Ministry and experts as well as their incredible hard work in the deserts proved to us everything was possible.”

Finally he expressed his administration’s readiness to reinforce desert locust control operations.

H.E Arefaine Berhe, Eritrea’s Minister of Agriculture, in his closing remarks said, “After all, it is the human factor more than anything else which makes a big difference. you, control and surveillance teams proved that it is, indeed, the case. The incredible locust upsurge is now history.”

Furthermore, he thanked all relevant bodies and farmers for their contributions in the success of the campaign.

Finally he mentioned the efforts being made to alleviate the limitations mentioned above. He said, “Desert locust will always be there with us; and we are accustomed to tackle it with the limited resources we have. However the Ministry along with its development partners will try to fill the gaps from time to time.”

During the assessment meeting, the Ministry’s desert locust management team, NRS senior officials, Chairperson of NRS regional assembly, sub zoba administrators and control operations staff participated.

