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DESERT LOCUST CONTROL COMMITTEE

Thirty-eighth Session

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PROPOSAL FOR AN EMERGENCY FUND FOR DESERT LOCUST MANAGEMENT (Agenda Item 6f)

1. INTRODUCTION

The first review of lessons learned from the 2003-2005 Desert Locust emergency was made at the Extraordinary Session of the DLCC in November/December 2004. This review identified the late arrival of funding as a major constraint in the execution of the control campaign. The DLCC discussed the issue and recommended that FAO, in consultation with donors, should consider establishing a substantial emergency fund that could be drawn on at the beginning of a Desert Locust upsurge.

This conclusion was reiterated at the internal After Action Review held in Rome in March 2005, and in a series of meetings involving representatives of locust-affected countries, including the Session of the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO) in June 2005, a specialist workshop on pesticide stocks jointly sponsored by the World Bank and FAO in May 2006, and at the Session of the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC) also in May 2006. The Multilateral Evaluation of the 2003-2005 Desert Locust Campaign found that locust-affected countries listed the creation of an emergency fund as the first of key issues. The Evaluation also recommended that FAO establish a “targeted intervention fund, with clear guidelines for its operation, so that it can rapidly undertake the necessary actions.”

The locust-affected countries have taken a further step in underlining their support for an emergency fund by proposing that consideration be given, in the Western Region, to the design of a “locust management financing mechanism”, and possibly placing any eventually unspent funds from the World Bank African Emergency Locust Project (AELP) in some sort of emergency fund. Part of the motivation for this proposal was to have funds available for: i) the rapid purchase of pesticides, so that it would not be necessary to hold a stock of pesticides in-country that risked becoming obsolete; and ii)

access to funding for emergency relief to people affected by locusts. In the Central Region, agreement in principle was given by the member countries of the Commission to allocate between US\$ 0.5 and 1 million from their own Commission Trust Fund to an emergency fund. The motivation for this was to provide assistance to resource-poor countries in the Region that were affected by an upsurge in locust populations, enabling them to carry out control and prevent the locusts from invading neighbouring countries. The details of how the emergency fund would function and how decisions would be taken to use it were to be developed by the Commission Secretariat, screened first by the Executive Committee and then presented to the full Session in 2008.

2. THE PURPOSE OF AN EMERGENCY FUND

It cannot be expected that all the Locust Control Units, even when they have development support provided by EMPRES, AELP, ADB and other donors, will have the necessary capacity to prevent all upsurges and plagues and meet the costs of the necessary measures to protect their crops when such emergencies occur. When meteorological conditions are favourable over very large areas of suitable locust habitat for a sufficiently extended time, allowing several generations of locusts to breed, national capacity may easily be overwhelmed. For example, if the national capacity in the Western Region had been strengthened to a sustainable level prior to the 2003/2005 locust emergency, outbreaks might have been discovered earlier in Mauritania, Mali and Niger, and the resulting upsurge might have been less severe. Nevertheless, the rapidity of the development of each outbreak and the subsequent upsurge, the extensive and inaccessible areas involved and the favourable weather conditions made it highly unlikely that any action in late 2003/early 2004 could have successfully stopped the upsurge.

On the other hand, if sufficient funds had been immediately available in late 2003 and early 2004, earlier planning for the summer campaign in the Sahel and pre-positioning of resources to treat the incoming swarms (June 2004) and their progeny could have been achieved. This would have protected crops better substantially reducing crop losses, and would have allowed a campaign against the first generation of hoppers which would most likely have led to fewer swarms forming and emigrating northwards and southwards during the autumn.

In the future, it can be expected that improvements in the LCUs, under EMPRES, will allow small outbreaks to be successfully controlled by the countries themselves, perhaps with some help from within the region. Such was the case in the Central Region in 2003/2004 where the combined efforts of Sudan and Saudi Arabia, coordinated by the CRC/EMPRES, succeeded in containing the outbreak that began in Sudan. Almost all the resources came from within the Region, with the Sudan contributing its own funds and pesticides and receiving bilateral assistance from Saudi Arabia worth US\$ 2 million.

If the LCUs, with the support of EMPRES and the Commissions, can address most outbreaks, it follows that an international emergency fund is needed to ensure the immediate availability of resources when large outbreaks and early upsurges occur. In the case of large outbreaks, upsurges and plagues, funds are mainly needed for survey helicopters, pesticides, spray aircraft, operational costs for survey and control, various equipment, safeguarding human health and the environment, and additional expertise. Funds are also needed to provide humanitarian relief to people who have been severely affected by locust damage to their crops and pastures. All of these items need to be

provided quickly when an emergency situation begins to develop or, in the case of humanitarian relief, very soon after the damage has been done.

A locust emergency action fund would provide key inputs for resource-poor countries in the expectation that the fund's resources would be sufficient to protect crops immediately against Desert Locust and, if conditions permit, contribute to the decline of the upsurge and provide time to mobilize additional funds as required. This would avoid the situation that occurred during the last upsurge when substantial funding only became available seven months after the first Appeal was issued in February 2004.

3. OTHER EMERGENCY FUNDS

3.1. National Emergency Funding

At the 3rd CLCPRO Session in June 2005, a recommendation was made that countries should establish their own national emergency locust funds. Those that are better resourced, such as Algeria, Libya and Morocco, in the Western Region, and Saudi Arabia and Oman in the Central Region, already have such funds and can draw on them at short notice. The Sahelian and resource-poor countries in other Regions have much more limited possibilities but can access some of their national resources. For example, Mauritania was able to meet in part the cost of surveys and control in 2003/2004, mainly covering the salaries of the many extra staff that were recruited to support the campaign, but also the cost of fielding a spray aircraft to help with operations (the equivalent of US\$ 1.2 million). Such resources, available nationally, are useful for early reaction against locust populations, but are generally not nearly sufficient for any major campaign. Although the amounts available may increase through the interest in preventive control created by EMPRES and the Commissions, it is inevitable that outside assistance will be needed for locust emergencies in the Sahel and other resource-poor countries for the foreseeable future.

3.2. Regional Emergency Funds and Assistance

Action to initiate a regional emergency fund has been taken in the 25th Session of the CRC, using unspent funds accrued from previous years. The CRC has also habitually allocated US\$ 100,000 per biennium for emergency purposes. During the 2003-2005 emergency, Saudi Arabia provided US\$ 2.3 million bilaterally to strengthen Desert Locust control capacity in Sudan and Eritrea. In the Western Region, assistance provided by the Northwest African countries to their southern neighbours is estimated to have been worth about US\$ 20 million. It involved pesticides, spray aircraft and ground control teams. The EMPRES Western Region programme has identified the need to establish a protocol for cross-border survey and control teams as part of its 2006 work plan. As a follow-up, members of CCLPRO may wish to consider the establishment of a regional emergency fund in the future.

4. CONSIDERATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND

The DLCC may, as a follow-up to the recommendation of its extraordinary session and in line with the recommendation of the independent evaluation, consider further the establishment of an international trust fund, taking account of:

4.1. Size of an international trust fund

Based on the experience of the 2003-2005 Desert Locust upsurge, an emergency fund of about US\$ 30 million would be needed to provide emergency support to resource-poor locust-affected countries. This amount would allow nine countries each to receive: up to 100,000 litres of pesticide (total: US\$ 9 million at US\$ 10/litre including transport); two survey/spray helicopters or fixed-wing spray aircraft for 200 flying hours (total: US\$ 9 million at US\$ 2,500/hr including logistics); up to US\$ 500,000 to cover operational costs, equipment and expertise (total: US\$ 4.5 million); up to US\$ 500,000 for humanitarian aid; leaving about US\$ 3 million for handling/support cost charges. Within these overall costs, appropriate provisions would be made for the protection of human health and the environment.

In the event of a major upsurge such as that of 2003-2005, US\$ 30 million would cover the initial stages of a control campaign. The Multilateral Evaluation estimated that the total cost of the 2003-2005 campaign was US\$ 400 million including humanitarian food aid costs. International donors provided about half of the total. The expectation would be that an emergency fund of the size suggested would provide sufficient resources to allow for immediate purchase of pesticides, contracting of spray aircraft, operational funds and international expertise. This would provide time to start control activities as early as possible and limit damage to crops. It would also allow appeals to be made to the international donor community, if required.

4.2. Administration and Governance of an international trust fund

The organization entrusted with the administration of an international locust emergency action fund (LEAF) should be carefully chosen to ensure a clear and transparent administration, the absence of conflicts of interest, clearly defined conditions under which expenditure can be incurred and the immediate availability of resources when needed.

The conditions under which countries and other operators would have access to the fund would need to be clearly defined. A mechanism may be required to declare a locust emergency that would allow access to the fund. The DLCC may consider the establishment of a Committee that might include representatives of the country or each of the countries affected, representatives of the donors that support the Emergency Fund, independent locust and entomological expertise, the Secretariat of the relevant Regional Locust Commission(s) and the Locust Group at FAO Headquarters.

In order to make a decision, the Committee would need to be informed of the current locust situation and forecast, and the resources available from national and regional emergency funds. It would also need to be fully informed about any bilateral contributions from donors. Due to the mobility of locust swarms, resources would not be assigned to countries but would be available to a region or sub-region.

Operations provided for by the fund should meet latest best practices including application techniques, choice of equipment and pesticides, and protection of human health and the environment. As well as funds, the mechanism should provide for planning, supervision and monitoring to ensure effectiveness and consistency of the control operations. In this respect it should be recalled that parallel national, regional and donor funded emergency operations should complement, not duplicate, each other and that careful coordination and cooperation is a prerequisite of locust control.

The administration and access mechanism might be part of an overall Governance structure of the fund, which ensures oversight, the monitoring of availability of resources, their use and replenishment and evaluation.

4.3. Replenishment of an international trust fund

The size of the trust fund, and its replenishment should be considered at regular intervals. The DLCC may consider options for the replenishment of an international trust fund.

5. SUPPORT FOR AN EMERGENCY FUND

The creation of an emergency fund depends on the support given by the locust-affected countries and by the international donor community. If affected countries decided to place any eventually unspent AELP funds in an emergency fund, this would provide direct support to the fund. Alternatively they could approach donor representatives in their countries to contribute to such a fund. Some donors may be reluctant to contribute funds for emergency purposes if the funds are not going to be used immediately, on the grounds that funds would have a better economic return by being invested in other projects (irrigation, private sector). Others might first wish to agree on the regulations that would control the fund's use before supporting it.

6. ALTERNATIVES TO AN EMERGENCY FUND

6.1. Making greater use of the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA)

SFERA is a system of advance funding against committed donor contributions, i.e. if FAO receives confirmation in writing that a recognized donor will contribute a certain sum to an emergency, SFERA can advance these funds pending the arrival of the monies in FAO accounts. According to the FAO Finance Committee working paper FC110/11 of September 2005, very little use was made of SFERA for the recent locust emergency, only US\$ 100,000 being advanced in support of an emergency coordination unit in Senegal. Subsequently SFERA contributed a further US\$ 200,000 for needs assessment and coordination. At the time SFERA had a total budget of US\$ 2 million, but the absence of firm commitments from donors in support of the locust emergency prevented the use of the Working Capital component of SFERA. Plans are now being made for SFERA's expansion up to about US\$ 20 million. However, since there are likely to be substantial delays even in obtaining written commitments from donors for a locust emergency, the advance mechanism of SFERA may be of limited interest.

6.2. Making use of CERF:

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) was established at the UN General Assembly at the end of 2005 to provide emergency, life-saving assistance to victims of disasters and conflicts. As of June 2006, CERF had received US\$ 158 million in contributions and commitments, and a further US\$ 105 million in pledges. According to the CERF website, applications for grants need to be field-driven, require a needs assessment, and must be approved by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator or Resident Coordinator. Furthermore, applications "must verify that the CERF is an emergency

funding source and that all other donor leads, country-level or relevant agency stand-by funds appropriate for immediate disbursement (whether revolving or not) have been exhausted.” Funds are limited to a maximum of US\$ 30 million for any given emergency and have to be used within three months. Whether an application to CERF concerning a locust emergency would comply, even with the highly summarized details given above, is open to question. Locust emergencies may not directly threaten people’s lives, it is unlikely that it could be proved that all other donor leads had been exhausted, and most locust emergencies last considerably longer than three months. Perhaps experience with other emergencies will allow FAO to assess how CERF performs in practice, and therefore whether its use would be appropriate for locusts. The use of CERF for loans against donor pledges should also be explored.

6.3. Advance funding agreements with donors:

Another possibility would be for FAO to draw up agreements in advance with the donors that have traditionally supported locust emergencies, preferably for contributions to multi-donor Trust Funds that have the maximum flexibility. The agreements would be signed and approved in advance so that, in the event of a locust emergency, the funds could be committed within days. Each agreement could have a fixed duration, for example five years. There could be the possibility of extension of the duration, or provision for a new identical agreement to replace it for an additional five years. Donors may prefer this system as the money for a locust emergency would remain in their treasuries, rather than be in an emergency fund that may not be used for several years, as long as Desert Locust populations remain in recession.

At the onset of a locust crisis, SFERA and the Loan Component of CERF could be used to make funds immediately available (to a probable limit of US\$ 15 million) against signed donor commitments. Despite the availability of this money, speed of commitment would be very important to avoid delay while the funds are converted into the spray aircraft/ helicopter contracts, pesticide orders and other essential inputs.

The establishment of advanced Funding Agreements, either on their own or in combination with an emergency locust trust fund, would also require several of the provisions of the locust emergency trust fund, including the mechanism for declaring an emergency and subsequent activation of the Agreements.

7. CONCLUSIONS/POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

The need for emergency funding for combating the Desert Locust is widely recognized in locust-affected countries and by FAO. Action is already being taken at the national and regional levels to establish such funds, but they are unlikely to be large enough to address a major locust threat. The DLCC at its extra-ordinary session in 2004 discussed the issue and recommended that FAO, in consultation with donors, should consider establishing a substantial emergency fund that could be drawn on at the beginning of a Desert Locust upsurge. In its further deliberations on the desirability of the establishment of a trust fund and, if considered appropriate, on the options and modalities of operation of such trust fund, the Committee may wish to consider:

- (a) the purpose of a Desert Locust Emergency Action Fund;
- (b) the appropriate size of a Desert Locust Emergency Action Fund;
- (c) the Administering Organization of a Desert Locust Emergency Action Fund;

- (d) the conditions and mechanism that would govern access to the fund;.
- (e) operational arrangements of activities provided under a Desert Locust Emergency Action Fund;.
- (f) the need, if any, for Governance structure for the fund;:
- (g) replenishment of fund;
- (h) evaluation mechanism and indicators;
- (i) procedure for establishment of the fund and timing of its establishment including whether to recommend to the FAO Conference, through the FAO Council, to consider the establishment of a Desert Locust Emergency Action Fund.