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DESERT LOCUST CONTROL COMMITTEE

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USAID'S EMERGENCY TRANSBOUNDARY OUTBREAK PEST PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 8b)

Introduction

Agricultural production in sub-Saharan Africa lags behind other regions of the world. Per capita food production in most of these countries is declining due to agricultural and related sectors not keeping up with population growth. This is further exacerbated by recurring infestations of emergency transboundary outbreak pests (ETOPs), including locusts, grasshoppers, armyworm, grain-eating birds and rodents. The Desert Locust (DL), the most damaging ETOP known, has plagued Africa and the Middle-East throughout recorded history. The advances in survey and control technologies, successes and weaknesses in the 1986/89 and 2003/05 campaigns, and early interventions in 1992/4 that averted what could have become another plague, have all contributed to better understand ETOPs. However, the continued threats these pests pose require the development of more effective prevention, control tools, and strategies.

Program goal

➤ To improve food security, economic well-being and livelihoods of affected populations and help preserve and conserve natural resources and the environment of host-countries for sustainable development.

Strategies

The main focus of USAID's strategy for ETOP programs is to build upon the existing structures and capture the lessons learned to develop enhanced, effective, affordable, safer and sustainable means of addressing ETOP problems by:

- Supporting early warning and monitoring in breeding/outbreak areas;
- Establishing standards and criteria for effective control interventions;
- Providing technical, financial and material assistance for activities that fully embrace U.S. environmental concerns and regulations;
- Supporting adaptive and innovative research and advances and new technologies in pest identification, survey, early warning and control;

- Developing host-country and regional human capacity to reassert and maintain control of the threat posed by ETOPs;
- Promoting and encouraging collaborations among neighbouring countries in planning and implementing cross-border surveillance, control operations and optimizing resource utilization. USAID strategies recognize the importance of containing the initial emergencies and their contributions in getting through a crisis as well as the role of long-term programs such as integrated pest management (IPM) in addressing the ETOP problems. To execute these strategies, USAID created the Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement (AELGA), formerly known as Africa Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Assistance in early 1987 and to date, this is the only long-term bilateral donor program exclusively dedicated to ETOPs.

Emergency Operations: Donor collaborations and coordination

Many bilateral donors, international and regional organizations, and private and voluntary agencies, have been or may be working on ETOP related issues and have a unique contribution to make to address this problem. In this regard, USAID gives high priority to supporting inter-organizational networking, but maintains the right to take actions that may differ from those resulting from such collaborative efforts, if it feels that the networking process has not generated adequate and timely responses.

USAID recognizes that the primary responsibility for responding to ETOP invasions resides within the host-governments. It also believes strongly in the creation of a national Donor Coordinating or Steering Committee (DC/SC) whose actions must be accepted and approved by the host-government if and when external interventions are requested and assistance is provided. It sees DC/SC as a useful forum for the exchange of technical and financial information and developing coordinated responses. Generally it provides resources in response to country plans or programs approved by the DC/SC and which represent the policy of the host-government. FAO, an organization responsible for coordinating world-wide responses to the locust problem, often uses these programs for issuance of an appeal for donor support.

USAID Missions with an actual or potential ETOP problem prepare their own local Action Plans that take into account the requirements identified in the Country Plans of the Donor Coordinating Committees, and propose initiatives for USAID funding, over the short-, medium- and long-term. These plans are reviewed at the headquarters for adherence to policy guidelines, priorities established among competing demands, and appropriate resources are allocated within available funds.

Capacity building

Since its inception in early 1987, AELGA has been actively involved in a number of activities to strengthen national and regional capacities to address ETOP and related problems. Some of these activities include the three-phase Country-Focus Trainer-Training program and the Specialized Interregional Trainer-Training programs. From 1994 to 2005, AELGA trained some 2,500 crop protection officers, field agents and lead farmers in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Senegal and Tanzania in identification, survey, prevention and safer control of ETOPs through its country-focus training program. Thousands more received training from AELGA and its partners, including FAO during the previous decade.

AELGA has provided specialized interregional training courses to more than 80 scientists, senior crop protection officers and researchers from Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Guinea Conakry, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Senegal South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe in biological control of L/G and vertebrate pest identification, monitoring, prevention and control. AELGA executes its training programs in collaboration with host-country and regional

organizations, FAO, international research institutions (e.g.; ICIPE, IITA), private sector, NGOs, and academia.

Adaptive, innovative research

USAID has been actively engaged in promoting, encouraging and sponsoring research in safer and affordable means of controlling Ls/Gs (e.g., biocontrol), crop loss assessments, economic studies of the DL, harmonization of L/G biopesticide registration procedures and many more.

Environmental safety awareness

USAID makes every effort to protect and preserve the environment and natural resources of countries for which it provides assistance. In line with this, AELGA has developed a comprehensive environmental documentation for the control of ETOPs in Africa and Asia. It has also prepared a dozen country-focus supplemental environmental assessments (SEAs), six amendments to the SEA and assisted a number of countries in raising environmental awareness of their staff and decision makers in ETOP operations.

Information Dissemination via electronic media

USAID/AELGA compiles current information on ETOP situations and disseminates it to its audiences, including USAID HQ and field missions, affected-countries, regional and international organizations, NGOs, private sector and other stakeholders. The reports (Sitreps) and updates are also posted on www.aelga.net

Obsolete pesticide disposal

USAID is actively engaged in supporting disposal and prevention of obsolete and dangerous pesticides around the world. It has played a crucial role in the removal of obsolete pesticides from Niger, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Tanzania, and other countries and remains committed to this cause.

Interventions

Since and including the last plague that ended in 1989, USAID contributed in excess of \$130 million to prevent, mitigate and control ETOPs. More than \$60 million of that was contributed to the 1986-89 L/G campaign and more than \$20 million was provided during the 2003-05 locust upsurges. A large portion of USAID's assistance for capacity development and mitigation activities is channeled through FAO with which AELGA has been partnering for over a decade and a half.

Disaster Assistance Response Team-Joint Operation Cell (DART-JOC)

USAID deployed a rapid response team - disaster assistance response team (DART), to Senegal and Mauritania to provide direct operational assistance in locust control to these countries. Supported and advised by a task force in OFDA/Washington, the DART deployed seven fixed-wing aircraft (6 spray aircraft - Air Tractors and one aircraft to support the spray operations), seven pilots, 36,000 litre-capacity fuel bladders for continuous supply of fuel, communication and safety equipment, PPE, generators, 450,000 l malathion 96% ULV and other materials essential for its operations. Additional DART members were also deployed to Mali, Mauritania and Niger to assist Ministries of Agriculture (MoAs).

The DART and MoA and MoD staff from Senegal and Mauritania who were already engaged in locust operations created a Joint Operation Cell (JOC) that planned and executed daily survey and spray operations from its bases in St. Louis and Podor in Senegal and Kaedi in

Mauritania. Spray operations commenced on 12 October, 2004 and treated close to 383,000 ha (282,000 ha in Mauritania and 101,000 ha in Senegal) before they were concluded on 10 November 2004. The JOC approach was lauded by the administration and the technical staff in the two countries as one of the most efficient and effective cross-border operations launched in the region in years. It was later tried by veteran DL experts and proven likewise.

Assistance from USAID bilateral Missions

USAID bilateral missions in Senegal and Mali as well as the regional program for West Africa (WARP) also provided assistance for ETOP operations during the 2003-05 upsurges. These Missions have also contributed more than \$5.6 million for relief and rehabilitation-related efforts for communities affected by the DL invasions and drought as well as for capacity development activities in these countries and the sub-region.

USAID's continued support for ETOP and related programs

Support for capacity building initiatives, the EMPRES programs, pesticide disposal as well as ETOP operations continue. In 2004, USAID signed a \$3 million, 5-year cooperative agreement with FAO to support these activities in affected-countries eligible for USAID's assistance.