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FAO DESERT LOCUST CONTROL COMMITTEE

Thirty-ninth Session

Rome, 10-13 March 2009

The role of EMPRES within FAO's new emergency response system (Agenda Item 10)

Background

In November 2007, the FAO Conference welcomed the report of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE) and passed a resolution on the follow-up to the IEE. Based on the work of the Committee of the Conference, the Special Session of the Conference adopted Resolution 1/2008: the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal and extended the CoC-IEE to further develop outstanding aspects of follow-up and report to the FAO Conference in 2009.

A fundamental element of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) is a new results-based framework for FAO's work. It will provide a foundation for "Reform with Growth", prioritising and focusing work in line with Members' needs, clarifying the means-ends relationships through which FAO will contribute to agreed impacts in, and for, member countries. It will shift the Organization's focus from what it does with assessed contributions to what it intends to achieve through the integrated application of both assessed contributions and voluntary contributions, providing greater transparency and an improved basis for monitoring.

Within this context, the Crisis Management Centre (CMC) Framework is being implemented to achieve an integrated, coordinated and streamlined process in FAO for the prevention and management of crises along the food chain and other types of emergencies. The goal of the CMC is to address the challenges posed by the increased magnitude and frequency of large-scale emergencies emanating from plant pests, transboundary animal diseases and other threats to food safety and to provide coordinated and timely assistance to member countries in their emergency prevention and response efforts

FAO, building on the work of such programmes as the EMPRES Desert Locust, is leading a process to develop, refine and implement Strategic Objective I which addresses emergency prevention, preparedness, response, transition and disaster risk reduction. The ultimate result will be an organized, strategic and comprehensive approach to the emergency and disaster cycle to assure closer and cooperative relationships and to collectively use resources efficiently to accomplish critical goals.

The New FAO Strategic Framework

The elements of this new Strategic Framework and the results-based approach to programming consists of a hierarchy of:

- a) Three **Global Goals** (hunger reduction, elimination of poverty, sustainable management and utilization of natural resources) that represent the fundamental development impacts in the areas of FAO's mandate which the member countries aim to achieve;
- b) Eleven **Strategic Objectives** that contribute to the Global Goals in countries, regions and globally, which are expected to be achieved in ten years by member countries in collaboration with FAO;
- c) **Organizational Results** that define the outcome expected from the use by member countries and partners of FAO's products and services in the pursuit of each Strategic Objective; and
- d) **Core Functions** that represent the critical means of action to be employed by FAO to achieve results, drawing on the Organization's comparative advantages.

Of the eleven FAO Strategic Objectives, two pertain particularly to the work of EMPRES and the emergency functions of the Organization:

- *Sustainable intensification of crop production* (Strategic Objective A)
- *Improved preparedness for, and effective response to, food and agricultural threats and emergencies* (Strategic Objective I)

One of the Impact Focus Areas of the IPA is the prevention and reduction of the negative effects of transboundary animal and plant pest and food safety incidences on the economy, society and health. This Impact Focus Area will provide a focus to mobilise resources for priority results and to better attract extra-budgetary funding and partnerships to complement FAO's Regular Programme.

Lessons learnt from recent evaluations

The new CMC framework, including EMPRES functions for plant pests and health, is being fully considered in this strategic planning process. Lessons learnt from recent evaluations of FAO's emergency programmes (e.g. Desert Locust Response Evaluation, Real Time Evaluation (RTE) of the Tsunami response, avian influenza programme and others) underline the Organization's need to:

- **Streamline its rapid response processes** and to develop and implement a system-wide emergency cycle approach including the priority actions expected from headquarters, regional, sub-regional and country offices.
- **Develop adequate corporate tools.** Among these, the adaptation of Incident Command System (ICS) principles that provide a corporate mechanism for emergency response. The current CMC-Animal Health is using ICS concepts in its rapid response unit for new outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza and other transboundary animal diseases.
- **Adopt a holistic approach** to emergency prevention and management. Emergencies often occur in countries with fragile socio-economic, political and environmental structures related to weak governance, and inadequate preparedness or resources to effectively respond to emergencies. This requires a comprehensive understanding and response to the emergency.

- Establish **advance funding** mechanism to respond quickly to new emergencies or to act in a preventive and preparedness mode. Advance funding is crucial to early mitigation or preparedness measures before the crisis develops and expands.
- Use a **multidisciplinary approach**, through teams ensuring technical, management, policy, institutional and communication functions comprising an adequate assessment of the emergency impact on livelihoods, human health and the environment. Food insecurity and other humanitarian crises may compound the impact of the biological threats on the food chain.
- FAO will expand and strengthen its **partnership** with other agencies, associations and specialized organizations, as an active part of the UN system in synergy with non-governmental organizations at the service of National Governments.

Implementation of Strategic Objective I

Since the latter part of 2008, FAO emergency and technical staff have been developing and validating the strategic planning process by formulating Organizational Results (OR) to support the Strategic Objective I. The performance management component will follow the strategic planning process and the requisite indicators and targets are in place. In this process, four ORs were reviewed and reformulated, and are presented below, along with Strategic Objective I and some sample actions and indicators under each one:

OR 1: Countries and partners are increasingly better prepared to prevent, mitigate and respond to crises, threats and emergencies. (Preparedness)

- FAO early warning systems, e.g. the Desert Locust Information Service provide relevant and timely analysis and information for effective decision-making.
- Governments and partners are better prepared themselves to prevent, mitigate and respond to food and agricultural threats and emergencies such as Desert Locust.
- EMPRES support to contingency plans in member countries to address a variety of problems that may be encountered during a real emergency, e.g. preparing plans to face locust outbreaks and upsurges.

OR 2: Countries and partners are supported in responding effectively to crises and emergencies with food and agricultural interventions. (Response)

- Assist Governments and relevant partners and provide an effective response in the food and agriculture sectors following an emergency, e.g. undertaking a locust control campaign.
- Conduct or provide technical advice for preparation of gender-sensitive needs assessments, plans of action and responses ensuring that affected rural poor households and communities recover quickly.
- Implement the FAO Crisis Management Framework for Plant Pest and Health emergencies and incorporate Incident Command System principles in emergency response mechanisms.

OR 3: Countries and partners have benefited from improved transitions and linkages between emergency, rehabilitation and development. (Transition)

- Governments implement disaster risk reduction measures and strategies in bridging the gap between relief/response and development.
- Transition planning undertaken from the beginning of response actions.
- Advocacy support to mobilise required resources to facilitate the transition from emergency to development.

OR 4: Countries that are at risk of crises have reduced vulnerability to threats through food and agriculture related policies and programmes. (Disaster risk reduction)

- High risk and disaster prone countries have improved disaster risk reduction systems integrating food, agriculture and natural resources components.
- Capacity building in disaster risk reduction measures is undertaken to enable effective sustainable recoveries from disasters and minimize and mitigate future impacts.
- EMPRES support to policies that encourage national and international research activities in such areas as bio-control, population dynamics, survey methodology and economic impact.

EMPRES as a vital component of FAO's emergency response

It is clear that the EMPRES Locust component fits in strategically within this framework to play a significant role in the fulfilment of the **Strategic Objective I** *to improve preparedness for and effective response to food and agriculture threats and emergencies*. The results-based approach will build on the pillars of success in the EMPRES Locust programme to strengthen national and regional capacity for early detection, communications, contingency planning, control, applied research and safeguarding health and the environment. Emergency preparedness and response must address the specific needs of agriculture-based populations of smallholders, pastoralists, fishers, forest users, and others directly or indirectly affected by locust infestations and the impacts of control measures.

EMPRES efforts to help countries in West and Northwest Africa become proficient in the core locust management activities described above will be a key cornerstone of this strategic framework and the achievement of the organizational results.

The Challenges

The global financial crisis notwithstanding, governments and international organizations must assign sufficient priority to capacity building in risk analysis, early warning, contingency planning, preparedness, and coordination of response in emergencies and building back better. Progress that has been achieved so far in the EMPRES Locust programme must be fully integrated into the overall strategic planning and development of technical and operational capacity to support member countries and assure maximization of current and future resources. Equally, the capacity building efforts of national and international disaster management institutions enable the governments of countries experiencing emergencies to play new and stronger roles in risk reduction and the coordination of external assistance.