

*REPORT*

Rome,  
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6-8  
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# Desert Locust Technical Group

Sixth session



**Report of the Sixth Session of the**  
**DESERT LOCUST TECHNICAL GROUP**

**Rome, Italy**

**6-8 October 1998**

**Plant Production and Protection Division**  
**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**  
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## **1. OPENING**

The Opening of the Sixth Session of the Desert Locust Technical Group was chaired by Mr. Abdoulaye Sawadogo, Assistant Director-General, Agriculture Department. Opening remarks were made by Mr. Mahmud Duwayri, Director of the Plant Production and Protection Division, AGP. He welcomed participants to the meeting and reminded new members of the Terms of Reference of the Group. He mentioned a number of issues on which FAO looked to the Technical Group for advice, including the directions being taken by EMPRES, the collection of data on control potential, research priorities, the agenda for the next DLCC meeting and the future of the Technical Group itself.

He wished the meeting success in its deliberations.

A list of participants is given in Annex 1.

## **2. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND THE VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Mr. El Sayed El Bashir was elected as Chairman of the Session and Mr. Preben Ottesen as Vice-Chairman. A Drafting Committee composed of the FAO Secretariat, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman was approved.

## **3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The following Agenda was adopted:

1. Opening
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman
4. EMPRES Progress and Directions
5. The Usefulness of Collecting Data on Country Locust Control Potential
6. Locust Research Coordination/Priorities in the Central Region
7. The Status of Recommendations Made by the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the DLCC
8. The Future of the Technical Group in the EMPRES era
9. Provisional Agenda for the 35<sup>th</sup> Session of the DLCC
10. Proposed DLCC/Locustox Workshop on the Environmental Side-effects of Desert Locust Control.
11. Other Locust Species.
12. Any Other Business
13. Adoption of Report
14. Closure

#### **4. EMPRES PROGRESS AND DIRECTIONS**

A full field programme had been under implementation since early 1997, so far only in the Central Region. The presentation emphasised this region and was made by the EMPRES Central Region Coordinator. Progress made in appointing staff, in training, in assisting early survey/control operations, in enhancing national capacities and in coordination was described. The Coordinator also explained the intended direction for future training, and for improving survey and control.

In respect of the Western Region (West and North-west Africa), the meeting was informed that a revised Project Document that took into account comments made at a Workshop held in Mauritania in March 1998, was in the process of being circulated to donors and locust-affected countries. English and Arabic versions were being prepared. It was also noted that although a full field programme had not yet started, EMPRES resources have been made available to the Western Region to strengthen aspects of survey, reporting and control.

For the Eastern Region, EMPRES provided a small amount of assistance for equipment, surveys and training.

In discussion of the topic, several members representing the donors mentioned that reporting on the EMPRES Central Region Programme should follow the six-month schedule established in the Programme Document. It was explained that three reports had been prepared covering 1997, being the first year of full operations; 1) an EMPRES Liaison Officers meeting report which included a Workplan for 1998; 2) an EMPRES Annual Report for 1997; 3) a Financial Report on 1997 expenditure individually prepared for each donor. It was agreed that in addition to the Annual Report, a shorter interim report would be made in the intervening six months.

On the training programme being followed by EMPRES, it was suggested that courses on first aid in the field and on radio use and maintenance would be useful. The first point was noted as a useful suggestion in future and on the second, it was pointed out that such courses were already included by the Central Region Commission, but additional training in the subject would be worthwhile.

The Group noted that the formulation process for EMPRES Western Region, as requested by a FAO Conference decision, was reaching an advanced stage. It remained to be seen whether donor support would be forthcoming. It was also noted that many of the activities already taking place in the Western Region under existing donor-supported projects and with FAO Regular Programme assistance, were similar to those in the Central Region. Exchange of ideas, information, and personnel was already occurring, with a view to fruitful collaboration between the two regions.

A suggestion was made that representatives of the Western and Eastern Region should participate in the Central Region Consultative Committee, but it was explained

that the latter was intended entirely to focus on the Central Region Programme and that broader participation would not be appropriate.

In conclusion, the Group noted the report on EMPRES Progress and Directions, indicated a general support of the directions being followed and **RECOMMENDED** that points of detail on the EMPRES Central Region Programme should be discussed at the EMPRES Consultative Committee Meeting, scheduled to be held in Cairo in December 1998.

## **5. THE USEFULNESS OF COLLECTING DATA ON COUNTRY LOCUST CONTROL POTENTIAL**

A presentation was made by the Technical Director, Plant Protection Department, Pakistan in which the origins of the collection of these data were reviewed. It was argued that collecting data on pesticides, vehicles, radios, GPS, ULV sprayers, aircraft, personnel and meteorological equipment was an essential part of preparedness for locust upsurges. The data allowed shortfalls to be identified and action to be taken to fill known gaps more quickly. It would also allow countries with spare capacity, particularly in aerial spraying, to share equipment with their neighbours or even with another region.

The Group discussed the various options. These included that individual countries maintain their own list of locust control potential and update this list periodically. Such lists could be built into a contingency planning process which would identify resources available and those needed under different scenarios from recession to outbreaks, upsurges etc. It was noted that the lists were needed more in certain key recession countries and less in those which were mainly affected by invasions. The Group agreed that both EMPRES and the Commissions had a role in encouraging proper contingency planning and the development and updating of the lists as part of this process. It was reported that EMPRES had begun Contingency Planning Workshops in the Central Region. The question of analysis of the lists was raised and it was agreed that contingency planning involved such an analysis. It was noted that countries having updated contingency plans could expect a rapid response from donors because information would be quickly available on existing resources and anticipated needs for particular scenarios.

The Group **RECOMMENDED** that each locust-affected country should maintain a list of its existing resources available for locust survey and control, that this list should be updated before each summer and each winter/spring locust breeding season, and should be copied to the regional Commissions. The maintenance of such a list should be part of a national contingency planning process and it was further **RECOMMENDED** that both EMPRES and the Commissions should promote contingency planning as an important part of improved preparedness. It was also **RECOMMENDED** that copies of the contingency plans and the lists should be sent to FAO for analysis, this being

performed with the help of a consultant funded by the DLCC. Where information on resources was of supra-regional significance, as in pesticides available for triangulation or spray aircraft availability, it was **RECOMMENDED** that FAO HQ should be informed and should make the best use of them.

## **6. LOCUST RESEARCH COORDINATION PRIORITIES IN THE CENTRAL REGION**

The joint effort being made by the Central Region Commission (CRC) and the EMPRES Central Region Programme was described. Its overall priority is the development of systematic multi-disciplinary approaches to research towards devising rational locust control strategies. Its primary technical priority is to improve the understanding of locust population dynamics, as a means of aiding early detection of outbreaks.

With these objectives in mind, contacts have been made with research institutions within the region to promote and catalyse applied research on the Desert Locust under a “Solicited Research Programme”. Research institutions with proven track records globally have also been contacted to develop coordinated research on key topics of importance to improving control strategies and to encourage them to organize themselves into “Core Research Teams”. Topics include population dynamics, survey/meteorology, biological control, barrier applications/non-target impact testing, and environmental aspects.

In the discussions which followed, Group members stressed the importance of integrating external research efforts with institutions within the region. It was explained that the Core Research Teams had been asked, as a prerequisite, to include collaboration with regional institutions in their research proposals. Solicited Research Projects would thereby be linked with Core Research Teams.

Concerning the funding available for Central Region research, it was clarified that funds were available within several of the donor-funded projects supporting EMPRES and that the CRC/EMPRES could contribute not more than US\$ 15,000 for each of up to ten research programmes with institutions or individuals within the region. It was also expected that Core Research Teams would generate some of their own funding.

There was general agreement that although EMPRES and the CRC had a role in jointly coordinating research efforts within the region, it was also important that they facilitate field studies. It was suggested that the Core Research Teams should clearly identify the expected end point of their research and that these end points should fit the objectives of EMPRES. Research priorities should be set in full consultation with locust-affected countries and take into account their practical needs. Much



strategically oriented research related to locust surveying and delimiting locust populations on the one hand, and to determining control operation effectiveness on the other hand, remained to be done, and could probably be best done by institutions within the region.

The need to continue studies on the economic impacts of locusts was discussed, as were the difficulties which had occurred in getting such studies under way. It was agreed that any research studies in the region should be developed jointly with the anticipated host country from the earliest stages and with the support of the CRC/EMPRES. EMPRES had given the task of developing studies on locust impacts to its newly appointed Strategies Officer and hoped to develop a comprehensive approach in 1999. It was noted that the report on the 1997 Workshop on the economics of Desert Locust management and the paper which it had reviewed was delayed but now nearly complete. It would be printed and distributed in time for the Cairo meeting in December 1998.

The Group **RECOMMENDED** that the efforts made jointly by the CRC and EMPRES to catalyse, promote and coordinate research in the region should continue, with national research institutions as far as possible integrated into every programme. It was further **RECOMMENDED** that emphasis should be given to facilitating field work within the region. It was also **RECOMMENDED** that studies on locust impacts should be continued as an important element in locust research.

## 7. **THE STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE 34<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE DLCC**

Nineteen recommendations were made at the 34<sup>th</sup> Session. The paper reviewed the status of each one. Points which were highlighted included Desert Locust reporting improvement analysis, the new Phase of the Locustox Project, the 1998 meeting of the Pesticide Referee Group (PRG), the uncertainty concerning the future of the Remote-Sensing Project, the lack of candidates for the Eastern Region fellowships, the Eastern Region Secretariat, the update of the Guidelines and the current state of the DLCC Trust Fund budget. Two separate papers related to the recommendations (Agenda items 5 and 6) had also been tabled.

In further elaboration of the highlights, it was mentioned that the PRG had broken new ground by inviting representatives of the pesticide industry to provide additional information on the efficacy and environmental side-effects of their products during a hearing before the PRG sat in its normal closed meeting. This opportunity seemed to have been warmly welcomed by those that took part. It was also noted that both the PRG and FAO welcomed comments on the Report. Unfortunately the French version of the Sixth PRG had still not been circulated. It was hoped that the Seventh PRG report in both English and French would be circulated within a few weeks.

On e-mail connections, it was noted that out of 18 key Desert Locust countries, 9 had e-mail operating at their Plant Protection Departments, but only one (Egypt) was transmitting completed locust survey/control forms electronically. It was hoped that others would follow soon. EMPRES Central Region had organized computer training to encourage better communication and reporting.

Updated information was provided on Trust Fund expenditure which had now reached \$ 83,759 for 1998, but implementation of several items was delayed.

Participants felt that the paper on research coordination had not properly addressed the DLCC recommendation which had referred to the coordination of Desert Locust research as a whole, whereas the paper had only considered the Central Region.

The Group noted that action on some recommendations had made little progress because of staff shortages in the FAO Locust Group. The Secretariat reported that the matter was receiving high level attention and it was hoped that some solutions might be forthcoming next year.

The Group **COMMENDED** the Secretariat for its actions on the recommendations where progress and/or positive action had been achieved. Where delays had occurred, it was **RECOMMENDED** that the outstanding matters be attended to as quickly as possible and action be taken urgently to resolve staff shortages in the Locust Group. It was further **URGED** that studies on Remote-sensing and electronic locust data management should be continued in order that the techniques could be made available as operational tools to locust-affected countries.

## **8. THE FUTURE OF THE TECHNICAL GROUP IN THE EMPRES ERA**

The presentation reviewed the Terms of Reference of the Technical Group and discussed the extent to which there would be duplication with the EMPRES Central Region Consultative Committee. Options for the future of the Group, subject to endorsement by the DLCC, included: a) maintaining the *status quo*; b) suspending the Group and replacing it with the Consultative Committee; c) suspending the Group and holding *ad hoc* Experts' Consultations when specific technical details required discussion.

Most participants felt that option a) 'maintaining the *status quo*' was most preferable. The main reason given was that EMPRES at present had only a full field programme in the Central Region and the Consultative Committee would therefore not be representative of all interested countries. There was, however, a general consensus that the Technical Group's discussions had not had enough technical content and the Group had tended to be presented with information papers rather than ones which allowed technical discussion. It was noted that the Technical Group did not need to meet every year if there were no technical matters requiring discussion. Mention was

made that all the working papers bar one had been prepared by the Secretariat and it was felt that more contribution should be expected from Group members.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that a paper on the role of the Technical Group should be prepared for the next DLCC. It was further **RECOMMENDED** that members of the Group should meet at the end of the DLCC, draw up an Agenda for the next Group meeting, based on the DLCC recommendations and designed to promote technical discussion, allocate the preparation of papers to members, the Secretariat or consultants, and agree on which experts it would be useful to invite to provide specialist inputs.

## **9. PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE 35<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE DLCC**

It was agreed to adopt the proposed Agenda as presented with some changes in order and three additional items. Item 14 should be advanced to 6 and item 6 demoted to after existing item 10. New topics to be included were an item on the economic impacts of Desert Locusts, an item on the future of the Technical Group, and one on the possible inclusion of other locust species in the mandate of the DLCC. A revised Agenda is attached (Annex 2).

## **10. PROPOSED DLCC/LOCUSTOX WORKSHOP ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL SIDE-EFFECTS OF DESERT LOCUST CONTROL**

A presentation was made of the proposed seminar, which related to a recommendation made at the 34<sup>th</sup> DLCC to disseminate more widely the work of the Locustox Project. The proposal was an eight day seminar to be conducted in English and French and to be held in Dakar, Senegal with about 35 participants drawn from DLCC member countries. A tentative budget of about US\$ 90,000 had been made.

In further elaboration, it was explained that the seminar was intended to be a train-the-trainers exercise and participants would be able to train operators back in their own countries afterwards using methods and equipment adapted to the local situation. It was noted that if the full amount of funds was not available, costs could be reduced by limiting participation. In addition to DLCC funds, and the provision of support in kind by Locustox, GTZ had also agreed to contribute. Funds were also likely to be available from the CRC and the EMPRES Central Region Programme.

In discussions, the Group felt that such a seminar should be limited to key Desert Locust countries not exceeding 20. Alternative venues to Dakar were considered including Casablanca and various places in the Central Region. It was felt that it would be difficult to handle a hands-on seminar in two languages and it was agreed that having one course in English and one in French would be better. No decision on the best venues was taken, this being left to the organizers (FAO and Locustox), but Dakar as one and the other in the Central Region might prove most appropriate.

The meeting **RECOMMENDED** that arrangements for the two seminars should go ahead, supported by the DLCC according to the previous recommendation.

## **11. OTHER LOCUST SPECIES**

A verbal presentation was made on the current preoccupations with other locust species, the Red Locust *Nomadacris septemfasciata*, the African Migratory Locust *Locusta migratoria migratorioides*, and the Malagasy Migratory Locust *L.m.capito*. It was suggested that the DLCC should be transformed into the LCC to incorporate these other two species.

Some participants felt that the DLCC could usefully be expanded to include other locust species if it was restricted to the two species mentioned. A global LCC would not be practical as it would need to include the Americas, all Asia and Australia, and would result in a vast membership. Other participants felt that the problem of the Desert Locust still required much attention, without the distraction of other species, the control of which was likely to require different approaches. Other comments included the need to identify clearly what benefits would result from including the two extra species in DLCC discussions and membership.

In conclusion, the meeting **RECOMMENDED** that a paper on the topic should be presented to the next DLCC.

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

Following the adoption of the Report, closing remarks were made by Mr. N. Van der Graaff, Chief, Plant Protection Service. He thanked members and observers for their valuable contributions. The Chairman formally closed the meeting, adding his thanks to all participants, to the Secretariat, to the interpreters and to the messenger.

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**PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE 35<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE DLCC**

**May/June 1999**

1. Opening of the Session.
2. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
3. Adoption of the Agenda.
4. Election of the Drafting Committee.
5. The Desert Locust Situation and Forecast: March 1997 to June 1999.
6. Implementation of the recommendations of the 34<sup>th</sup> Session, DLCC.
7. Desert Locust Reporting to FAO HQ – a follow-up analysis two years on.
8. Integrated Information Systems for Improved Desert Locust Management.
9. Analyses of recent Desert Locust Upsurges.
10. Report of the Sixth Session of the DLCC Technical Group.
11. The future role of the Technical Group.
12. The economic impact of the Desert Locust.
13. Report of the 1998 Pesticide Referee Group.
14. EMPRES Progress and Directions:
  - Central Region
  - Western Region
  - Eastern Region
15. Should other locust species be included in the DLCC's mandate?
16. Reports of Regional Commissions and Organizations:
  - (a) Central Region Commission
  - (b) North-west Africa Commission
  - (c) South-west Asia Commission
  - (d) DLCO-EA
  - (e) OCLALAV
  - (f) IRLCO-CSA
17. International Trust Fund 9161: Contributions/Expenditure/Proposed Workplan 1999/2000.
18. Any Other Business.
19. Date of next Session.
20. Adoption of Report.