



**EMERGENCY PREVENTION SYSTEM FOR TRANSBOUNDARY ANIMAL AND  
PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES (EMPRES) - DESERT LOCUST COMPONENT**

**THIRD MEETING**

**of the**

**EMPRES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**for the**

**CENTRAL REGION PROGRAMME**

**Rome, 7 — 8 December 2000**

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

## **OPENING**

1. The Third Meeting of the EMPRES (Desert Locust) Consultative Committee for the Central Region Programme was opened by Ms. Louise Fresco, Assistant Director-General, Agriculture Department. She welcomed participants from the locust-affected countries and from the donor community to Rome. She noted that the meeting was planned for only two days and there were several important items on the Agenda. It was likely that discussions would need to be intense to cover the items in the time available.(see Annex I for List of Participants)
2. Ms. Fresco reminded the meeting that EMPRES was a Special Programme of the Director-General and was therefore particularly important to FAO. FAO continued to provide considerable support to EMPRES through its Regular Programme resources. EMPRES had reached an important point in its development as it came to the end of Phase I, and embarked on Phase II in January 2001. Many lessons had been learnt from the first phase and the structure that had been developed, in participation with member countries and donors, for Phase II should allow progress to be more easily measured. The Assistant Director-General also noted that several new technologies should become operational during Phase II, including the use of satellite imagery to aid locust surveys and of biopesticides to achieve effective control in as environmentally friendly manner as possible. She said that it should be remembered that EMPRES was planned as a long-term initiative and that it was important that support continued for the required period. She also recognized the crucial and essential role played by the member countries in strengthening their own capacities for efficient locust survey and control in collaboration with EMPRES. The success of EMPRES depended on the extent to which this was achieved.

Ms. Fresco offered her encouragement for a useful meeting, which would contribute to keeping the EMPRES Programme on course for the eventual achievement of its objectives.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

3. The Agenda was adopted, with the addition of one item under Any Other Business, namely a discussion on the frequency of future Consultative Committee meetings (see Annex II).

## **REVIEW OF EMPRES PROGRESS AND CONSTRAINTS IN 2000**

4. The Acting Coordinator EMPRES Central Region (EMPRES/CR), Mr.C.Pantenius, presented a report of EMPRES progress since the last Consultative Committee in November 1999. The report was structured to give the status of each planned activity under each Output, according to the revised Programme Document. Where the activity had not taken place, either partly or completely, reasons for the deviation were given.
5. The Acting Coordinator described the activities that had been carried out towards achieving coordination of the programme. The Participatory Workshop in El-Tur,

Egypt in which member countries, donors and FAO staff had been involved was the major event of the year. The logical framework produced by the Workshop which was expanded into an Implementation Document for Phase II provided a strong and transparent base on which to build the second phase and should allow its progress more easily to be monitored. Improvements had also occurred in coordination between EMPRES and the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC) where a joint workplan had been followed, and with the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) where moves in the same direction were being made.

6. The Acting Coordinator mentioned the significant progress made by Sudan in implementing its Country Focus Programme (CFP). He noted that this programme was delayed in Eritrea and Yemen. Mr. Pantenius also described the many activities in connection with training.
7. On Research, it was noted that two Workshops had been held, one in June to advise on appropriate directions for research into Desert Locust economics and the other in November to review progress in the Central Region on Desert Locust research in general and how to stimulate more research activity within the region. It was recognized that progress had been limited with only three national research activities launched (in Yemen, Sudan and Ethiopia).
8. Additional information was provided by Sweden, the Netherlands, the U.K., and USAID, on the activities they were sponsoring bilaterally as direct or indirect contributions to EMPRES. These involved work on identifying environmentally sensitive areas in locust habitats, studies on economics, studies on Desert Locust population dynamics related to control strategies, development and implementation of the RAMSES data management and decision-making system, and biopesticide development and the regional harmonization of registration procedures.
9. The Acting Director of DLCO-EA reported that his organization had aircraft based in Asmara and Addis Ababa which were available for locust survey and control. A third aircraft would also soon be deployed to Sudan in order to assist with the proposed joint-border-survey between Eritrea and Sudan. The aircraft were also now insured for work in any of the EMPRES countries, if required. The DLCO-EA Chairman had recently approved a link up with EMPRES to strengthen locust survey capacity in Somalia. Although DLCO-EA member countries had increase their contributions by 8% in the last financial year, the organization continued to be financially insecure and sought donor assistance.
10. The Acting Coordinator was complimented on the well-structured report, which allowed participants to see where progress had been made, where activities had had to be postponed and where difficulties had occurred. The delegate from Sudan said that he was pleased to see that EMPRES had made significant progress in his country and that Sudan stood ready to continue this close collaboration during Phase II. The delegate from Djibouti noted that his country had recently established email and other communications with EMPRES and was ready to initiate other activities. He asked for consideration of including Djibouti in any francophone training activities that might occur in EMPRES Western Region. The delegate from Eritrea mentioned the importance of the coastal plains in his country as a source of locust outbreaks within

the Region, and the need for inputs from EMPRES for his country. In this respect, he asked for clarification about the future location of the Coordinator's post. The delegate from Ethiopia requested that current levels of EMPRES activities in his country be maintained. He also mentioned his interest in DGPS trials and in further opportunities to receive support for national locust research activities. The delegate from Yemen said that his country appreciated the continued assistance being provided through EMPRES in terms of expertise and resources.

11. On more general points of interest, Mr. Pantenius explained that EMPRES had evaluated the impact of training only by making pre- and post-training tests in order to measure the degree of uptake by trainees. A checklist had also been developed for control against which it was intended that the performance of staff who had been trained would be measured under actual operational conditions, but the system had not yet been implemented because no control had taken place. A similar system would be developed for survey. In connection with the diploma course at Khartoum University, the Acting Coordinator said that more publicity for the course was needed and support from EMPRES and CRC resources was required in order to have a first group of trainees initiated.
12. Joint-border surveys could serve several different purposes, including clarifying locust situations at critical times, fostering collaboration and confidence between neighbouring countries, standardising survey practices, and training locally and regionally. Each proposed joint survey required that the objectives be defined at the beginning in accordance to the countries' capacities and interests.
13. In connection with research, the Workshop had recommended a list of priority topics to be covered in the region and had proposed additional measures in order to encourage expanded involvement of regional institutions. Further efforts would be made to provide guidelines on preparing research proposals and to explain the limitations to potential applicants. It was noted that the usefulness of a new bibliography of locust publications had been questioned and that a decision needed to be taken on whether to continue this work or not. On bio-control research programmes, the Consultative Committee encouraged EMPRES to promote close collaboration between the various interested parties.
14. Concerning the location of the Coordinator's post, it was recalled that the policy was to avoid creating a new institution. Emphasis was directed at building up national and regional capacities. In this context, staff would be posted to locations according to the technical requirements of the programme. In the El-Tur workshop, great importance was given to creating sustainability in Phase II by gradually integrating activities into the CRC.
15. In conclusion, the Consultative Committee agreed that EMPRES had implemented almost all of the activities planned for 2000 and expressed their appreciation of the efforts made by the EMPRES FAO staff, by the staff of the locust-affected countries and of the support provided by the donor community. The Acting Coordinator was also commended for the format of the progress report which made it much easier to understand what progress had been achieved. The Committee agreed that EMPRES was progressing in the right direction and that bilateral activities fitted well with the

needs of the programme. The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that further efforts be made to activate the research component and to involve institutions within the region.

## **REVIEW OF THE WORKPLAN FOR 2001, AS DEVELOPED BY THE EIGHTH LIAISON OFFICERS MEETING**

16. The Acting Coordinator presented the workplan for 2001. It was explained that the workplan had been developed participatorily at the 8<sup>th</sup> Liaison Officers Meeting in Muscat, Oman, at the end of October. It was based on the activities and results given in the Implementation Document for Phase II. It was noted there were many activities to be covered during the year, if the Workplan was to be fully implemented.
17. A number of donors questioned the human resource capacity within EMPRES to deliver a large programme. It was noted that the Coordinator's post would be filled probably around mid-2001. The Consultative Committee nevertheless **URGED** that the post be filled as soon as possible. The post of Secretary to the CRC would be filled at about the same time, but for the first time for many years the Secretary would focus exclusively on locusts. Inevitably this would involve an important contribution to EMPRES. In addition, negotiations were reaching an advanced stage between FAO and GTZ to second a GTZ staff member to EMPRES. This staff member would devote 50% of his time to EMPRES activities. EMPRES had also recently been provided with an Associate Professional Officer funded by Sweden. Her duty station would be Khartoum and she would work on locust environmental issues. The other EMPRES staff would continue to include the International Research and Development Expert and two National Professional Officers. FAO HQ support for EMPRES was also being strengthened by the recently arrived Programme Support Officer who would be responsible for administrative and financial aspects. However, it was realized that the programme remained extensive in relation to the staff resources available.
18. In connection with contingency plans, different delegates mentioned the need to include certain key ministries in the planning process. The Committee agreed that this would vary from country to country and it was up to each country to decide which ones were appropriate. On the time-frame of some activities, it was explained that though the milestone might be required to be completed by the end of the Phase, initial stages had to be started during 2001.
19. Participants were generally concerned about the manner in which research proposals had been solicited up to now and about how they had been selected for funding. It was noted that the existing system had not worked well and lacked transparency. The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the matter should be looked into again and that a fair and transparent system be developed for screening proposals.
20. It was further **RECOMMENDED** that the Diploma Course at Khartoum University be costed and that it be advertised by EMPRES and CRC within the region and to the donor community. Ways should be found to enable participation from other countries.

21. In the workplan, the use of the word EMPRES under responsibilities had meant to refer to the EMPRES staff, but given that EMPRES was recognized as a collaborative programme between the locust-affected countries, donors and FAO, a more explicit designation would be sought.
22. It was noted that EMPRES had three means by which its progress was assessed, the annual Liaison Officers Meeting, the Consultative Committee meetings, and independent mid-term Evaluation Mission. The next Evaluation Mission would normally take place some time during 2002.
23. For the bilateral programmes, it was noted that a Memorandum of Understanding was being developed for the contribution by Germany to Result 7. It was expected that Swedish assistance to environmental questions and economics would continue during Phase II. The delegate from the UK said that pending the outcome of a DFID evaluation of its assistance to locust management, it was not clear what contribution could be made available to 2001 activities, but requests could be made for case-by-case consideration. She mentioned that it was also necessary for the countries themselves to make it clear that locusts were a priority in their negotiations for British aid. For RAMSES development in the Central Region, the DLCO-EA delegate expressed interest in being included in any RAMSES expansion programme.
24. The Consultative Committee endorsed the 2001 Workplan as presented. It **RECOMMENDED** that the modalities of the GTZ/FAO cooperation should be further defined in terms of the division of responsibilities. Given the need for further inputs into RAMSES training/problem-solving, the Committee **RECOMMENDED** that FAO inform the UK authorities of these concerns. The Committee further **RECOMMENDED** that training be coordinated within the region both to avoid duplication of effort and to standardise methods of assessing training impact. The Committee also **RECOMMENDED** that FAO establish a Task Force to investigate how to guarantee the availability of operational quantities of biopesticides and report its conclusions to the DLCC for possible discussion and decision.

## **REVIEW OF 2000 EXPENDITURES, AND THE FINANCIAL OUTLOOK FOR PHASE II**

25. The Secretariat presented the issue. Details were given on the estimated expenditure achieved in 2000. It was explained that the estimates were only indicative as final returns from the field had not yet been received. The total expenditure was expected to be about US\$ 1.1 million in 2000 against the Trust Funds and FAO Regular Programme resources. Bilateral contributions had also been received from the UK and Sweden. Individual locust-affected countries also made significant contributions by supporting their own locust units.
26. Details were provided on the expected contributions to the three-year Phase II. A number of donors had given an indication of funding but could not commit themselves at this moment. If all the funds were provided, a total of US\$ 4.8 million was available, about US\$ 720,000 below the estimate of US\$ 5.52 million total made at the El-Tur Workshop. Details of the individual donor contributions were given. It was noted that a further US\$ one million was not yet firmly committed

27. The Netherlands representative noted that the Dutch contribution was restricted to the outputs identified in the specific FAO/Netherlands project document.
28. In connection with the search for additional donors, it was noted that there was some possibility that both Saudi Arabia and Oman might consider contributing to the costs of Phase II.
29. By way of clarification, it was pointed out that EMPRES expenditure would increase if there were some small locust outbreaks not because funds would be used for outbreak control, but because the outbreaks would provide opportunities for field trials and testing of new methodologies.
30. In conclusion, the Consultative Committee agreed that the funds available to EMPRES would be sufficient for 2001 provided donors were able to finalize the indicated commitments. Where there was any uncertainty, the Committee **RECOMMENDED** that donors do their utmost to secure the necessary funding. It further **RECOMMENDED** that in future reports, estimates should be given of the funding the Governments of locust-affected countries were putting into their locust control units or making available specifically for EMPRES activities. The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that FAO, with the support of existing donors and of locust-affected countries, continue efforts to secure sufficient funding for the whole of Phase II.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

31. Concerning the frequency of Consultative Committee meetings, it was agreed to meet again at the end of 2001 and it was **RECOMMENDED** that the next meeting should be held in the Central Region. The frequency of meetings should be placed on the Agenda for that meeting, to consider whether any change was needed.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

32. The report, with amendments, was adopted unanimously.

#### **CLOSURE**

33. The Director of the Plant Production and Protection Division, Mr. Mahmud Duwayri, thanked participants for the constructive and positive manner in which the meeting had been held. He felt sure that the recommendations made would contribute to strengthening the EMPRES Central Region Programme during the implementation of Phase II. He wished participants a safe journey home and formally declared the meeting closed.

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**AGENDA**

1. Opening
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Review of EMPRES Progress and Constraints in 2000
4. Review of the Workplan for 2001, as developed by the Eighth  
EMPRES Liaison Officers Meeting
5. Review of 2000 Expenditures, and the Financial Outlook for Phase II
6. Any Other Business
7. Adoption of the Report
8. Closure