



Desert Locust threat in the Sahel

2012



17 December 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

- During the past six months, the Sahel in West Africa has been facing the most serious Desert Locust threat since 2005. More than **50 million people** were potentially affected in **Chad, Mali, Mauritania** and **Niger**.
- The situation is now gradually returning to normal in the northern Sahel where breeding has ended in **Mali, Niger** and **Chad**. As a result of control operations, only a few swarms formed in Niger and Chad and only small groups of adults moved to **Algeria** and **Libya**. Ground control operations are in progress in Niger, **Mauritania** and **Morocco**.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) requested **USD 10 million** in June 2012 for urgent action to coordinate the emergency campaign and allow national locusts control units to undertake the required operations.
- With the **USD 7.2 million** received so far (from Belgium, the Central Emergency Response Fund [CERF], France, United Kingdom and USA), FAO ensures **overall campaign coordination and technical support** through:
 - **A Regional Strategic Response Framework for the Desert Locust threat in the Sahel.**
 - **Regular update of the Regional Action Plan.**
 - **Strengthened the operational capacity of national survey and control teams in Niger, Chad and Mali.**
 - **Triangulation of pesticides** (airlifting pesticides from a country in the region with available stocks to a recipient country).
 - **Enhanced preparedness for potential upscale of interventions in Niger, Mauritania, Chad, Mali and Senegal.**
- Bilateral assistance of USD 1 million to Niger has allowed the country to further strengthen its survey and control capacity.
- **Current funding gap is USD 1.8 million.** Consequences of unmet requirements: reduction of field survey teams, less control, increased risk to crops, and more locusts will move to other countries.

LATEST UPDATE

The Desert Locust situation is gradually improving in the Sahel as of result of control operations and migration to Northwest Africa. In early December, a few small groups of adults and swarms formed in northern Niger and Chad, and small adult groups moved to southern Algeria and western Libya. Summer breeding has now ended in the northern Sahel where locust infestations are declining in Mali, Niger and Chad. Limited ground control operations are in progress in Niger and Morocco. Ground control operations continue against groups of hoppers and adults in northwest and central Mauritania, and against groups of adults in the southern part of the Western Sahara in Morocco. Strict vigilance should continue in Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria and Libya during December to detect any groups or swarms arriving from the Sahel.

RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN

Survey and control operations in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger continued as needed throughout October and November. Pesticide sprayers were delivered to the national Desert Locust control unit in Mali. Financial support was provided to Niger for renting ten vehicles for survey and control operations during November. Tenders have been launched for the procurement of camping gear, generators, protective clothing and satellite phones to strengthen survey and control operations and preparedness further in Chad, Mali and Niger.

Pesticide triangulation, agreed donations of pesticides. Algeria: 20 000 litres for Chad and 40 000 litres for Mali. Morocco: 60 000 litres each for Mali and Niger. Senegal: 18 000 litres for Chad. **Airlifting.** In collaboration with the World Food Programme, the first pesticide airlifting was successfully carried out in October (32 000 litres to Mali and 18 000 litres to Chad); a second airlifting of 30 000 litres of pesticides to Niger was undertaken in November; a third one of 20 000 litres of pesticides to Chad is scheduled for mid-December.

Aerial operations. As a precautionary measure, aircraft deployment is on standby in case aerial operations are needed towards mid-January.

Data transmission system (eLocust3). A project to upgrade the current system (eLocust2) started in October and will take advantage of the latest technologies to record field data and transmit it by satellite in a faster, more reliable and cost-effective manner in order to improve early warning further. Field deployment of eLocust3 units is expected to take place in spring 2013.

Funding required (USD)	Pledges (USD)	Funding received by FAO (USD)	Funding received bilaterally (USD)	Funding gap (USD)
10 million FAO appeal (21 June 2012)		7.2 million Donors: Belgium, CERF, France, United Kingdom and USA	1 million Donated to Niger*	1.8 million

* This amount reflects the needs identified for Niger within FAO's Appeal and covered by bilateral assistance; it does not reflect the total bilateral contributions received by Niger.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Addendum to Food and Nutrition Crisis in the Sahel: Urgent action to support the resilience of vulnerable populations – Desert Locust threat in the Sahel (June 2012): [English version](#) / [French version](#)
- Situation updates: [Locust Watch](#) / [Sahel Crises](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#)
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