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منظمة
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DESERT LOCUST CONTROL COMMITTEE

42nd Session

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Lessons learned and evaluations carried out by FAO and partners

FAO's Real Time Evaluation (RTE)

Agenda item 5b

General overview

The devastating Desert Locust upsurge the world witnessed during 2020-2021 period was the worst in the past 25 years required urgent response.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) due to its unique mandate responded and mobilized more than USD 243 million from resource partners and organized a response.

The response was organized along three key pillars:

- Curbing the spread of desert locusts through control and surveillance operations;
- Coordination and preparedness of the rapid surge support;
- Safeguarding livelihoods and promoting recovery through livelihood protection and farmer re-engagement packages.

This response provided important lessons that would form the basis of future interventions. However, lessons from this response could only be extracted after evaluation is done in the affected countries. In this regard, the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) was requested to conduct a real-time evaluation (RTE) to determine successes of various aspects of response. OED organized evaluation in three phases that addressed various purposes.

Phase I - Evaluated early response activities, for both learning & accountability

Phase II - Evaluated control, surveillance and livelihood support

Phase III - Synthesized lessons learned from the response

Report

Experience of 2020–2021 shows that response to Desert Locust upsurges of this magnitude is a truly multi-actor endeavor. The aim of Phase III was to provide recommendations to improve multi-sector preparedness for and responses to future upsurges of the Desert Locust in the Horn of Africa and Yemen. Phase III report therefore highlighted significant contributions made by FAO in terms of conclusions (Annex I) and

Recommendations (Annex II) across full spectrum of preparation, surveillance and control of locust swarms and livelihood protection in the Horn of Africa and Southwest Asia. Recommendations are organized in eight principal lines: procurement and positioning, training, national locust control capacity, regional architecture, pesticides, data, livelihoods support, and innovation and learning.

Points for discussion and decisions

- *DLCC is invited to note the conclusions and recommendations of the RTE and share any further thoughts or relevant guidance.*

ANNEX I

Conclusion of the Phase III Evaluation

I. Conclusion

FAO's regional coordination mechanism has proven effective given the nature of the crisis, but it remains unclear how best to coordinate the livelihood response at this stage.

II. Conclusion

In hindsight, the 2020 appeal was well timed in that it balanced the operational need for early action with the advocacy need for donor engagement. Questions remain about the best way to turn locust forecasts into early warning and ultimately early action.

III. Conclusion

The production and dissemination of FAO's locust forecast, whilst broadly effective as a warning device at country-level, was not sufficient to sensitize donors to the risks posed by the upsurge in the months leading up to January 2020, and questions arose regarding the internal communication channels between technical and emergency teams.

IV. Conclusion

The wider funding response has been unusually strong in both scale and rapidity, whilst the use of the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) pooled allocations and an early Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) donation proved vital for the initial phases of upsurge response.

V. Conclusion

The reputation of FAO's technical capacity on desert locusts has been a critical part of both the donor response and the engagement of locust-affected countries.

VI. Conclusion

The pre-existing regional capacity for locust control in the Horn of Africa was significantly lower than in southwest Asia, with concerns raised about the functioning of the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) and the ability of the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC) to raise funds from member states in a timely fashion.

VII. Conclusion

National engagement in capacity-building and surge activities varied greatly, with successes observed in Kenya and Pakistan, good progress made in Somalia, despite persistent challenges round data collection and reporting, whilst difficulties remained in Ethiopia and Yemen most critically.

VIII. Conclusion 8

The quality and breadth of surveillance data is one of the success stories of this upsurge, despite significant gaps existing in certain areas and questions about the sustainability of FAO's desert Locust monitoring and forecasting expertise in the longer term. Innovations in the use of satellite imagery, whilst still embryonic, demonstrate the potential to improve data collection where access constraints and internet outages present obstacles to traditional approaches.

IX. Conclusion

Control operations have been broadly successful, contributing to the limitation of potentially significant movements from Kenya towards Sudan, in conjunction with supportive meteorological conditions. But problems remain in some countries.

X. Conclusion

Procurement and pesticide triangulation was a significant barrier to timely response, with constraints arising from limited market supply and transport restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

XI. Conclusion

Targeting of livelihood protection activities to those most affected by desert locusts has proven challenging in the Horn of Africa, given the number of pre-existing drivers of food insecurity in the region. This could potentially impede the targeting of those most affected by the Desert Locust upsurge, although it is too early to say at this stage.

ANNEX II**Recommendations of the Phase III Evaluation****PRIORITY AREA 1 – PROCUREMENT AND PRE-POSITIONING**

- R1. FAO should conduct a learning exercise regarding procurement for future desert locust upsurges.
 - R1a. Drawing up and regularly reviewing/updating pre-approved supplier lists for desert-locust specific items.
 - R1b. Building and maintaining such lists should allow FAO to prepare supply markets in advance.
- R2. Pre-positioning of pesticides and non-perishable items should be encouraged as far as possible prior to future upsurges, with stocks regularly reviewed and maintained during remission periods to ensure operational readiness.

PRIORITY AREA 2 – TRAINING

- R3. The major learning on national capacity from the 2020–2021 upsurge was that the TOT model developed under EMPRES should be re-booted for the future.
- R4. The newly established desert locust training facility in Sudan’s Red Sea Coast should be used as a hub for operational training in the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

PRIORITY AREA 3 – NATIONAL CAPACITY

- R5. FAO and the regional commissions should encourage all frontline countries to establish and maintain autonomous desert locust units with earmarked spending from national ministries of finance.
- R6. For invasion countries such as Kenya, desert locust training and resources should be developed and maintained within the units responsible for other transboundary pests affecting the Horn of Africa, such as the fall army worm.
- R7. In all countries of the Horn of Africa and Yemen, it is vital to continue practicing survey and control operations in order to maintain the momentum gained over 2020–2021.

PRIORITY AREA 4 – REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE

- R8. FAO and its partners should provide a package of capacity support for CRC.
- R9. FAO and its partners should also support CRC to improve its liaison with non-member countries on the boundary between frontline and invasion zones.
- R10. DLCO-EA member countries should commission an external review of the capacity of DLCO-EA to respond to future upsurges, and FAO should, where possible and appropriate, offer to support the resourcing of such a review. DLCO-EA has a clear role in the regional architecture of desert locust response, with a responsibility to work with national governments in the region and support control operations for small regional outbreaks, limiting the potential for larger upsurges.
- R11. Finally, FAO should actively engage all parties to re-convene efforts to improve the regional architecture during the 2020–2021 upsurge.

PRIORITY AREA 5 – PESTICIDES

- R12. FAO and CRC should work to address shortages in the supply of biopesticides
- R13. FAO should also continue recommending the increased use of insect growth regulator (IGR) with strip and barrier treatment as a means to treat large areas of nymph populations.
- R14. FAO should continue to support the use of chemical pesticides where crops are threatened by locusts.
- R15. FAO and its donor partners should also agree to avoid repeating imposition of requirements for the use of certain pesticides linked to particular aircraft.
- R16. FAO should consider commissioning “how to” guidance for gathering data on innovative practices in pesticide applications.

PRIORITY AREA 6 – DATA

- R17. The wider desert locust response community should look to ensure that early warning data is turned into timely response and action in future desert locust upsurges.
- R18. Desert locust surveys must be continued during recession periods across the Horn of Africa and Yemen.
- R19. FAO should begin succession planning within the DLIS now.

PRIORITY AREA 7 – LIVELIHOODS

- R20. FAO should work in the first instance with NGO consortia such as the RDLA membership.
- R21. Increased use of cash distributions to help tailor the response to local needs should be encouraged.
- R22. Coordination with national social protection mechanisms and cash working groups should be encouraged to support rapid delivery of livelihood protection support at scale.

PRIORITY AREA 8 – INNOVATION AND LEARNING

- R23. FAO should develop a dedicated mechanism sharing learning between countries during remission periods.
- R24. FAO should work with CRC to encourage sharing of lessons between countries within the Horn of Africa.
- R25. FAO and CRC should consider adding a requirement to document new techniques used during operations.
- R26. FAO and CRC should continue to work with affected countries to increase the use of improved satellite monitoring systems with enhanced definition to locate potential survey areas.
- R27. FAO should consider novel methods for supporting learning about new tools and approaches.