



# Locust Crisis in Madagascar

25 September 2013

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Since April 2012, Madagascar has been facing a **plague** of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, that threatens the livelihoods of **13 million people** in the country, 9 million of whom earn a living from agriculture.
- Up to two-thirds of the country are feared infested. Findings from a damage assessment conducted in May 2013 indicate that **rice crop losses due to locusts in 2012/13 vary from 10 to as much as 40 percent** in 17 of Madagascar's 22 regions.
- The Ministry of Agriculture of Madagascar declared a **national disaster on 27 November 2012** and requested assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to address the current locust plague.
- It is estimated that at least **three successive locust control campaigns costing USD 41.5 million are required** to return to a recession period by treating over 2 million hectares between September 2013 and September 2016. **One or two campaigns alone, will not be enough to reach this objective.**
- The three-year programme jointly prepared by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture in response to the plague, implemented and coordinated by FAO, focuses on:
  - **Improving the monitoring and analysis of the locust situation**
  - **Large-scale aerial control operations**
  - **Monitoring and mitigating the impact of locust control operations on human health and the environment**
  - **Assessing the effectiveness of each locust campaign and the impact of locusts on crops and pastures**
- The **current funding gap is USD 18.4 million** required for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 campaigns. Should all the funds not be available on time to undertake the campaigns, the plague could wipe out food crops and livestock pastures – and with it, a family's ability to provide for itself.

## LATEST UPDATE

During the past few weeks, prevailing southwesterly winds and vegetation drying-out favored the movement of swarms from the outbreak area (southwest of Madagascar) towards the western and northeastern parts of the invasion area. More reports of swarms as well as damage to young plants of rice and maize were reported from Maintirano, Tsiroanomandidy, Soavinandriana and Faratsiho areas. In addition, some non-gregarious locust populations already matured, and egg-laying started in the central part of the outbreak area (Ranohira and Vavalovo).

## RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN

**Locust Watch Unit**, mandated with the collection and analysis of locust and weather data, provides a regular overview of the situation, and is essential for monitoring the locust situation and guiding survey and control operations. The Locust Watch Unit was established earlier this year within the Plant Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and has carried out six field assessments to date.

A **damage assessment** was conducted in April/May 2013 to estimate the impact of the locust plague on agricultural production. Forecasts indicate that Madagascar could suffer total rice crop losses of up to 300 000 tonnes this year. Losses are mainly concentrated in the south, where as much as 40 percent of the crop may be lost due to locusts. In the worst case, the damage to the total rice crop would almost double the level of rice imports in 2012. The result of a Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) conducted in June/July 2013 will be available early October 2013.

**Preparedness for the first locust campaign (September 2013 – August 2014):** The first campaign was officially launched on 20 September 2013; aerial survey operations to assess the locust situation and localize the hotspots of the locust populations in order to forecast their likely movements and deploy the aerial control bases will begin on 26 September in the west. The procurement of critical inputs such as pesticides, vehicles and equipment for survey and control operations is well underway. The first lots of biopesticide, conventional pesticide and Insect Growth Regulator will be delivered from October onwards. Key technical specialists including a Campaign Coordinator, a Locust Expert, two Logisticians, two Environmentalists and a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Expert are already on site. National specialized expertise is also being mobilized in close collaboration with the National Anti-Locust Centre, the Plant Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Coordination Unit. Spraying operations are expected to start by late October, after the onset of the rainy season.

**Pesticide triangulation (donation of pesticides from a country with available stocks to a recipient country).** Triangulation allows pesticides to be quickly made available for emergency control operations and reduces not only the cost of the operations but also the total quantity of pesticides present on the continent and consequently the potential environmental risk. **Agreed donations of pesticides. Algeria: 30 000 litres, Mauritania: 30 000 litres, Morocco: 200 000 litres and Senegal: 15 000 litres.**

Funding required (USD)	Funding received by FAO (USD)	Funding gap (USD)
<b>41.5 million</b> FAO Appeal, 18 December 2012	<b>23.1 million</b> (Austria, Belgium, CERF-OCHA, France, European Union, Norway, USA, World Bank loan to Madagascar)	<b>18.4 million</b>

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- All up-to-date information is available on our Website: [www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/madagascar-locust/en/](http://www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/madagascar-locust/en/)
- FAO Response Coordinator: Dr Annie Monard, +39 06 570 53311, [annie.monard@fao.org](mailto:annie.monard@fao.org)
- FAO Operations / Donor Focal Point: Daniela Mangione, +39 06 570 54107, [daniela.mangione@fao.org](mailto:daniela.mangione@fao.org)