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EAST AFRICA - DESERT LOCUST CRISIS

FACT SHEET #3, FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2020 — MAY 18, 2020

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

9

Countries Affected in East Africa[2]
FAO – March 2020

26.2 million

People Already Experiencing Severe Acute Food Insecurity in Affected Countries[3]
FAO and FEWS NET – April 2020

2.5 million

Acres of Land Targeted for Rapid Surveillance and Control Measures
FAO – February 2020

$153.2 million

Regional Response Funding Appeal
FAO – March 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

- Heavy rains disrupt control operations, support additional breeding in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia
- Monitoring and surveillance capacity continue to require strengthening across East Africa
- Control teams treat 902,000 acres in 10 countries between January and April, guarding 720,000 tons of cereal crops against locusts

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

FOR THE DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020

USAID/OFDA[1]	$19,568,232
$19,568,232	

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Relief actors continue to emphasize the need to scale up desert locust control operations in central and northern Kenya, southern Ethiopia, and parts of Somalia, where locusts were continuing to mature and form additional swarms as of mid-May. Widespread rainfall will likely also facilitate further breeding in the coming weeks, and effective control measures are urgently required to prevent new swarms—expected to form in June and July, during the beginning of the harvest season—from further undermining agricultural and livestock production, as well as food security, in the three countries, according to the UN Agriculture and Food Organization (FAO).
- Although control operations are ongoing, FAO reports that limited surveillance capacity was hindering efforts to scale up response interventions, as well as preventing the optimal use of available aircraft, as of late April. Flight and shipping restrictions—initiated in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic—have also delayed deliveries of essential equipment and supplies in several countries in recent weeks.
- FAO notes that intensified control efforts may have contributed to reduced locust populations in key epicenters in Kenya and Ethiopia during April; however, adverse weather conditions in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia have hindered surveillance and control activities during May.
- USAID/OFDA continues to support the desert locust response in East Africa, providing nearly $19.6 million to bolster surveillance and pest control activities, as well strengthen local capacity to manage infestations, in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan to date. In recent weeks, USAID/OFDA funding has supported the provision of critical equipment—including aircraft and vehicles for surveillance and control—to response teams, and training on locust monitoring, detection, and control.

[1] USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)
[2] Figure includes East African countries included in FAO's regional response plan and addendum, as of early March: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania.
[3] Figure reflects combined estimates of populations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda currently experiencing IPC 3—Crisis—or higher levels of acute food insecurity. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a standardized tool that aims to classify the severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5. IPC data are not currently available for Djibouti or Eritrea.

LOCUST LOCATIONS AND SWARM MOVEMENT

- The desert locust situation has worsened in some parts of eastern Africa in recent weeks, with swarms in southern Ethiopia maturing and spreading north and east into the country's Afar and Somali regions, and mature swarms in Kenya expanding further north into Marsabit and Turkana counties, FAO reports. In central Somalia, scattered adult locusts were present in Galgadud Region—near the Ethiopia–Somalia border—as of May 13. Bands of hoppers—immature, wingless locusts—also continued to mature in eastern Afar and Ethiopia's Dire Dawa Region, as well as adjacent areas of northwest Somalia, damaging vegetation. Meanwhile, climatic conditions remained suitable for locust development in southern parts of Sudan and South Sudan, western Ethiopia, coastal parts of Eritrea, and across Djibouti as of mid-May, according to FAO.
- Desert locusts were present in 28 of Kenya's 47 counties as of early May according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), though control operations in April had caused swarms to decline significantly in the country's Isiolo County—the former epicenter of the locust outbreak—as of mid-May, FAO reports. Similarly, while mature swarms were present in Ethiopia's northern Amhara, Oromiya, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP) regions, control operations in April reduced locust numbers in southern parts of Oromiya and SNNP during the month.
- Despite the successful control of some infestations in recent weeks, breeding is ongoing in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, with hatching already underway in parts of Kenya. New generations of locusts are projected to form swarms in late June and July, coinciding with the beginning of the harvest season in the three countries. Recent rainfall—which is disrupting surveillance and control efforts in affected areas—will also facilitate additional breeding, likely causing locusts to proliferate further in central and northern Kenya; central, northern, and southern Somalia; and eastern and southern Ethiopia in the coming weeks. However, cooler temperatures, heavy rain, and prevailing wind patterns will likely mitigate the spread of locusts into high and medium agricultural production areas in western Kenya and the Rift Valley, FEWS NET reports.
- Relief actors are concerned that swarms formed in spring breeding areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and the Arabian Peninsula could spread into West Africa's Sahel region in the coming months. If the pests arrive in Sudan prior to the start of the country's June-to-October rainy season, swarms could travel onward and reach eastern Chad by as early as mid-June. Although the risk of locusts proliferating throughout West Africa remains low, FAO notes the need to closely monitor weather patterns and ongoing breeding in Ethiopia, Kenya, and the Arabian Peninsula. Sudan's Plant Protection Directorate also recommends continued surveillance in all summer breeding areas of Sudan in the coming weeks; USAID/OFDA staff based in Nairobi, Kenya, and Khartoum, Sudan, continue to track locust activity in and around Sudan, though the situation in the country remained calm as of mid-May.

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

- Uncontrolled desert locust infestations continue to threaten food security and livelihoods across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, underscoring the ongoing need to scale up surveillance, control, and livelihood interventions in affected communities, FAO reports. In the coming months, restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic—which have already limited access to livelihood opportunities and contributed to food and fuel price increases by disrupting trade—will likely compound the impact of the pest, according to FEWS NET. Seasonal flooding is also hindering agricultural production in the three countries, even as the macroeconomic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic reduce household capacity to cope with environmental shocks.
- Without sustained humanitarian assistance, an estimated 3.5 million people across Somalia could face Crisis—IPC 3—or worse levels of food insecurity from June to September—an increase from the 2.7 million people considered at risk during May, according to FEWS NET. Internally displaced persons in urban areas, as well as populations residing in flood-prone areas along the Juba and Shabelle rivers and parts of Galgadud, Mudug, and Nugal regions, will be particularly vulnerable during this period, food security monitors report.
- Similarly, FEWS NET anticipates the number of people facing Stressed—IPC 2—or Crisis levels of acute food insecurity will increase across central and eastern Ethiopia and Kenya in the coming months. The proportion of people

experiencing Crisis or worse outcomes will be highest during the June-to-September *meher* lean season in Ethiopia, and between May and June in Kenya, due to reduced access to food among poor households in urban areas. However, food insecurity will likely peak during the August-to-September lean season in agricultural and pastoral areas of Kenya, according to FEWS NET.

- Although locust infestations have had a moderate impact in Somalia to date, the pest could pose a high risk to crop and livestock production in the coming months, particularly in northern Somalia's Togdheer and Woqooyi Galbeed regions, where planting is underway, FAO reports. FEWS NET anticipates that damage caused by locusts, as well as heavy flooding resulting from above-average April-to June *gu* rains, could reduce average crop yields by 15 to 25 percent during the upcoming harvest season. Unless adequate control measures are rapidly implemented, locust infestations could also threaten browse, crops, and pasture across Somalia throughout the October-to-December *deyr* season.
- Despite average to above-average rainfall during Ethiopia's February-to-May *belg* rainy season, FEWS NET anticipates a below-average harvest due to locust-related damage, as well as the late onset of seasonal rainfall, which has resulted in a poor start to the planting season and reduced planting area. Although infestations had a minimal impact on staple crop production across the country from January to March, locusts have caused extensive damage to irrigated vegetables and seasonal crops in recent months. For example, the pests had devoured approximately 81,500 acres of grazing land and nearly 371,000 acres of beans, maize, and sorghum in southern SNNP as of early April, FEWS NET reports.
- While the impact of infestations has varied across Kenya, recent assessments indicate that locusts have caused localized damage to rangeland in parts of Garissa, Isiolo, and Marsabit counties. Notably, locusts had destroyed between 25 to 30 percent of pasture in parts of Marsabit's Laisamis and North Horr sub-counties as of April, FEWS NET reports. In addition, response actors estimate that locusts could devour as much as 50 percent of browse, 46 percent of pasture, and 36 percent of crops in Turkana if control operations are not effectively scaled up by June. Infestations are also significantly threatening agricultural production in Embu, Kitui, Meru, Nithi, and Tharaka counties, where crops are in the early stages of growth, according to FEWS NET.
- Swarms of desert locusts also continue to threaten crop production in South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria State. As of late April, locusts had damaged nearly 5,000 acres of recently planted crops in Eastern Equatoria, including an estimated 10 percent of crops in the state's Magwi and Lopa counties, FAO and county authorities report. Locust-related damage—coupled with heightened intercommunal conflict, as well as emerging needs and vulnerabilities associated with the COVID-19 pandemic—will exacerbate food insecurity across South Sudan, likely resulting in more than 6.5 million people requiring food assistance from June to September, according to FEWS NET. In addition, FEWS NET warns that conditions in rural areas—where populations are already facing Crisis conditions—could deteriorate to Catastrophe—IPC 5—levels in the coming months.

SURVEILLANCE AND PEST CONTROL

- FAO recently obtained critical surveillance equipment—including helicopters and global positioning system (GPS) units—with USAID/OFDA funding and reports that aircraft and pesticide stocks are now sufficient to support interventions in most areas. However, limited surveillance capacity in Kenya's Mandera, Marsabit, and Turkana counties, as well as parts of Ethiopia and Somalia, is hindering efforts to scale up control operations. Additional field monitors are needed to conduct ground surveillance in all three countries, and staff are needed to direct aerial spraying in Kenya, FAO reports. Planes in Ethiopia and Kenya—which should be treating up to 2,500 acres per day—have only treated between 750 and 1,000 acres per day in recent weeks. In response, FAO is seeking to improve the use of available aircraft to maximize acreage treated per day, including by analyzing data to determine whether inadequate coverage is due to delayed data reporting or other contributing factors. Additionally, the UN agency is bolstering surveillance capacity in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia by contracting additional helicopters to support operations—three in Ethiopia and two each in Kenya and Somalia. The helicopters will allow response teams to verify surveillance data and determine adequacy of control in hard-to-reach areas, including areas with rough, uneven terrain—where planes are typically unable to land—and areas that are difficult to reach by ground transportation or on foot.
- To increase ground surveillance capacity and further support timely and efficient locust control operations in affected countries, USAID is mobilizing humanitarian and development partners to participate in locust monitoring by using the

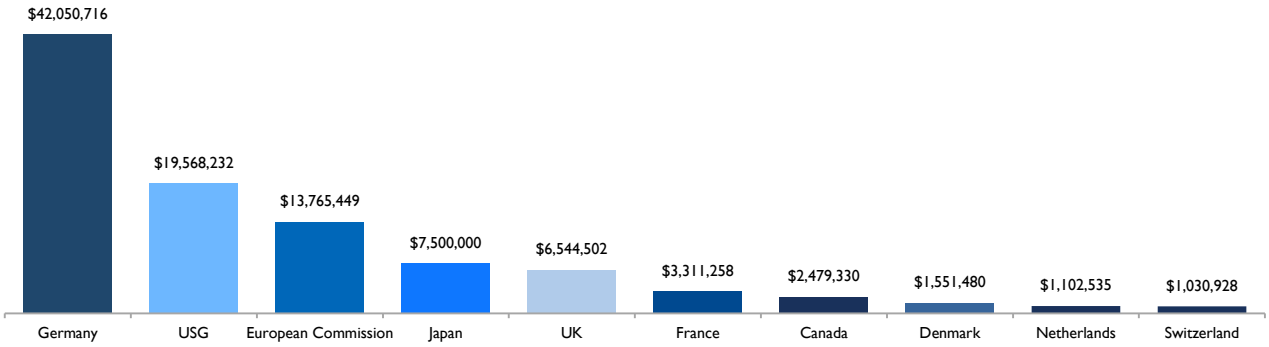
eLocust3M mobile application, which collects and transmits data on locust swarm locations and stages in real-time via satellite from the field to national locust centers. USAID/OFDA is also engaging with other donors and host country governments to promote the use of eLocust3M. Access to robust real-time monitoring data is critical for informing daily control operations, enabling teams to accurately determine locust locations, adjust pesticide application to local conditions, and compile precise flight plans that maximize the use of aircraft and other resources.

- Heavy rains and subsequent flooding are also hindering aerial and ground control interventions in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia by reducing visibility for airplanes and vehicles and rendering roads impassable. Heavy rainfall notably prevented aerial control planes from operating in Kenya during the week of April 20, and partially contributed to control teams treating fewer acres in April as compared to March, according to FAO. However, FAO notes that the reduction in treatment in Kenya is also likely due to successful control efforts and the movement of swarms into neighboring countries, both of which could have reduced the number of swarms targeted by control teams during the month.
- Meanwhile, the Government of Sudan (GoS) and FAO teams continue to conduct locust surveillance across Sudan. During April, response teams surveyed approximately 165,000 acres in winter breeding areas in Sudan's Red Sea State and along the Red Sea coast, as well as in potential summer breeding areas located in Northern and River Nile states. Some scattered immature and adult locusts were detected along the Red Sea coast and in River Nile during the month, though control measures were not required at the time, FAO reports; four aircraft remain on standby in Sudan to launch immediate operations if needed.
- Overall, FAO and government teams controlled nearly 902,000 acres of infested land across the 10 countries included in FAO's regional appeal—Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, and Yemen—between January and April. Based on preliminary analyses, FAO estimates that the control efforts guarded an estimated 720,000 tons of cereal crops—sufficient to support nearly 5 million people for one year—against locust-related damage, preventing an estimated $220 million in agricultural losses. In addition, the damage prevented to pastureland has safeguarded the livelihoods of approximately 350,000 pastoral households, according to FAO.
- In the coming weeks, FAO intends to launch surveillance and control operations in new breeding areas and locations with hopper bands. Teams in Somalia—having recently completed an FAO-led training on biopesticide formulation—have also initiated activities in known locust breeding areas near Nugal's Garoowe city, and northwestern parts of Galgadud.

COVID-19 IMPACT

- COVID-19-related flight and shipping restrictions, as well as an increased global demand for control equipment, continue to impact the desert locust response, according to FAO and other response actors. Although cargo shipments—such as shipments of aircraft and vehicles required for surveillance, as well as biopesticides—have continued to enter Ethiopia and Somalia in recent weeks, some were delayed, including a shipment of 10 vehicles originally scheduled for delivery in Ethiopia during early April, FAO reports. Limited manufacturing capacity has also postponed deliveries of control equipment in Sudan in recent weeks.
- To avoid potential delays resulting from COVID-19-related movement restrictions in Sudan, the GoS intends to issue travel permits to locust response personnel in the coming days. In South Sudan, FAO has appealed to government authorities to similarly approve movement across national and state borders, allow flexibility for pilots on observing the mandatory 14-day quarantine period, and provide timely clearances for response supplies arriving from other countries.

2020 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING*
PER DONOR



*Funding figures are as of May 18, 2020. All international figures are according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service and based on international commitments during 2020, while USG figures are according to the USG and reflect USG funding in FY 2020, which began on October 1, 2019.

CONTEXT

- The desert locust is one of the most destructive migratory pests in the world, rapidly consuming most vegetation in its path, including crops and pastureland critical to maintaining the food security and livelihoods of populations in East Africa. Locust swarms are highly mobile and carried on the wind; swarms can travel up to 100 miles per day, and even a relatively small, 0.4 square mile-sized swarm can consume an amount of food sufficient for approximately 35,000 people in one day.
- Swarms of desert locusts crossed the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea from Yemen and entered Ethiopia and Somalia in June 2019. While desert locust infestations occur seasonally in parts of East Africa, above-average rainfall in the region from September to December 2019, as well as additional rains brought by Tropical Cyclone Pawan to eastern Somalia in early December, extended wet conditions conducive for breeding and generated abundant vegetation for the locusts to consume. Several successive generations of the pest formed multiple hopper bands and swarms of adult locusts, enabling several outbreaks to grow and develop into a regional upsurge, the second of three FAO levels classifying the scale of locust infestations, in late 2019.
- Between October and December 2019, locust swarms multiplied and traveled further west and south within Ethiopia and Somalia, arriving in Djibouti, Eritrea, and Kenya in December. New hopper bands formed along coastal plains in Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen during the same period, with swarms beginning to threaten agricultural production and food security in rural areas of Sudan in January. Desert locusts also reached Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in February.
- Populations across East Africa continue to experience severe levels of acute food insecurity, sustained and exacerbated by recurrent drought, seasonal flooding, conflict, and displacement. As such, desert locust-related damage to crops and pasture could have devastating effects on the food security and livelihoods of households in the region.
- On November 18, 2019, U.S. Ambassador Michael A. Raynor declared a disaster due to the impact of desert locust infestations in Ethiopia. On February 19, 2020, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Brian Neubert declared a disaster for desert locust-affected areas of Somalia, and on February 25, U.S. Ambassador Kyle McCarter issued a disaster declaration in Kenya due to the impacts of the pest across the country. U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Brian Shukan also declared a disaster due to the projected impact of uncontrolled locust infestations across Sudan on April 13.

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020[1]

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/OFDA			
ETHIOPIA			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	$7,800,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2020			**$7,800,000**
KENYA			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	$4,000,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE KENYA RESPONSE IN FY 2020			**$4,000,000**
SOMALIA			
Implementing Partner	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	$7,000,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE SOMALIA RESPONSE IN FY 2020			**$7,000,000**
SUDAN			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	$500,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE SUDAN RESPONSE IN FY 2020			**$500,000**
REGIONAL			
	Program Support	Regional	$268,232
TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE REGIONAL RESPONSE IN FY 2020			**$268,232**
TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020			**$19,568,232**
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020			**$19,568,232**

[1] Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of May 18, 2020.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at www.interaction.org.

USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.

More information can be found at:

- USAID Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org.
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID website at
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