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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST

Thirty-seventh Session

Amman, Jordan, 5-8 February 2024 and 4-5 March 2024

Report on the Desert Locust Commission for the Central Region (CRC)

Executive Summary

The FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC) recognizes the urgent need to prevent the damage that the Desert Locust can cause in many member countries to the agrosylvopastoral resources and its socio-economic impact, as well as the serious damage to the environment that Desert Locust control operations may cause.

Member countries are strengthening their collaboration aiming to sustain the preventive control strategy and establish a mechanism of anticipation to deal with locust crisis.

The creation of a commission under the FAO aegis allows Members to benefit from FAO technical and managerial support. Financially, the Commission has its own trust fund funded by Members' contributions in addition to the risk management fund established by the Commission. The annual contribution of members is more than USD 500 000.

The Commission is engaged in a new dynamic of exchange and sharing efforts and means, supported by FAO and financial partners, notably the French Development Agency (AFD) and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

The statutory meetings of the Commission are bringing together members, observers and partners to discuss the strategy; review the implementation of the two-year work plan approved during the previous session and its budget; validate the financial report; and prepare and validate a new work plan and its budget.

Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:

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I. Summary of Recommendations

1. The 32nd Session resulted in 24 agreed recommendations. Here are the key ones to note:
 - a. Recommendation 1: The member countries are encouraged to regularly prepare, activate and continuously update national Desert Locust action and emergency plans and to send a copy to the Commission's Secretariat with the latest update.
 - b. Recommendation 2: The member countries, especially the breeding countries, should institutionalize all the units/centres/departments/directorates operating for the Desert Locust control. They should be administratively and financially autonomous with a sufficient annual operational budget in order to conduct various Desert Locust control operations.
 - c. Recommendation 3: The Commission strongly recommended that breeding countries should establish departments, centres, or units specialized in managing locust survey and control activities with financial resources to ensure efficient operation and successful management in accordance with the provisions of the Establishment Agreement of the Commission.
 - d. Recommendation 4: The Commission recommended that member countries should retain qualified cadres working in the field of locust control, as well as increase their numbers, and replace the retirees or staff, who have been transferred to other jobs, with new staff.
 - e. Recommendation 5: The member countries recommended that the Organization should pay more attention to the expansion of remote sensing applications so that members could improve national capacities regarding climate change and its potential impact on the Desert Locust situation.
 - f. Recommendation 6: The Commission recommended that member countries should take the necessary measures to obtain approvals and permits related to the use of drones in survey operations within their countries, before the Commission supports the introduction of this system into the survey in those countries, and inform the Commission Secretariat of any developments in this matter.
 - g. Recommendation 7: The member countries took note of the current projects of the Commission in cooperation with three different projects: the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development "Promoting early measures and rapid response to mitigate the effects of the desert locust invasion on food security and livelihoods in the central region OSRO/GLO/1036/KUW"; the French Development Agency Project (the fourth component of the project to "Consolidate the bases of the preventive control strategy and develop operational research on Desert Locust in the western region" GCP/GLO/096/FRA); and the New French Development Agency Project (subject to procedures) "Strengthening the preventive control of the desert locust in the central region" / Horn of Africa GCP/GLO/1081/FRA". The member countries have also approved the work plans suggested by the Commission's Secretariat to implement those projects.
 - h. Recommendation 8: The member countries agreed to transfer the seat of the Commission from the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (host of the Secretariat's headquarters) to one of the member countries. In this regard, the host country submits the request to the Organization/Commission accompanied by the approval to give diplomatic status to the mission and the signed agreement in accordance with the procedures followed by FAO. The Secretariat of the Commission should follow up and implement these recommendations with the countries wishing to host immediately.
 - i. Recommendation 9: The member countries unanimously agreed to cancel all arrears owed to the Trust Fund of the Commission on all countries until the end of the fiscal year 2021/2022. In contrast, all member countries should be committed to regular payment of the annual contributions assessed to the Trust Fund of the Commission, starting from the fiscal year 2022/2023.

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- j. Recommendation 10. The member countries agreed on the request submitted by the Federal Republic of Somalia to join the Commission as a “Nominated Member”. They also requested the Commission’s Secretariat to follow the administrative and legal procedures, according to the Establishment Agreement of the Commission and the regulations in force within FAO to obtain full membership.