

Madagascar locust update for the second and the third dekads of February, 2012 and a forecast for the next dekad

I. Meteorological and ecological conditions

Abundant rainfall was recorded in February in the northwest outbreak areas where Cyclone Giovanna made a passage and ecological conditions remained favorable for locusts to further develop. Rainfall was erratic and below normal in parts of the southern and central regions of the LMC outbreak areas.

II. Locust situation

Malagasy Migratory Locust

Several large groups of hoppers (immature wingless locusts) and sizeable swarms of Malagasy Migratory Locust (LMC) were detected in the northwest outbreak areas in the country during surveys conducted from the second through the fourth weeks of February. Egg laying and hatching continued and locust populations increased in Belomatra-Vineta plateau and the vicinities where favorable conditions persisted and deforestation over the past three decades had lead to a significant change in locust demographics. Locust numbers remained low or declined in parts of the southern and south-central outbreak areas where ecological conditions were unfavorable. Infections from entomopathogenic diseases may have further exacerbated the situation.

Red Locust

Red locust (NSE) hoppers continued developing in the outbreak areas in the Mahafaly Arc and Plateau, the Belomotra and the Ambohangy regions where mature adults and early instar hoppers were seen mixed with LMC during the 1st dekad of the month. The presence of NSE among LMC will create a synergy and stimulate both species to continue exhibit changes in morphology and behavior.

III. Impacts of current locust populations

No significant damage was reported during this time as most of the locusts were by their natural habitat, however, it will be imminent once they begin moving to other areas.

IV. Interventions

Ground control treated more than 12,830 ha from 6-28 February in the northwest gregarization areas bringing the total areas controlled since the current campaign began in September, 2011 to 22,343 ha (about 4,000 ha were treated against NSE). CNA will continue survey operations and consolidate pesticides from the various locust bases to the Toliara (Tuléar)

operational center. At the moment interventions are limited to ground operations due to lack of spray aircraft and other resources, including transportation facilities.

V. Inventory of resources and contributions

According to FAO-CNA team, contributions made to or pledged for the 2011-12 campaign, include USD 2 million from CERF, 300,000 Euro (about USD 400,000) and USD 273,000 in local currency from EU, 12,000 L of pesticides (worth USD 200,000) and possibly more from IFAD, two 4X4 Toyota Landcruiser from UNDP, 20,000 L of pesticides from GoM (15 May, 2012 delivery). Based on information obtained from the FAO-CNA, about 45% of the estimated resources need for the 2011-12 campaign has been received in cash or in kind or is pledged for).

Pesticide inventory and pipelines as of the end of February, 2012,

Quantity	Type	Source	Delivery date
24,473 L	Chlorpyrifos 240 UL & Deltaklor1* 125 UL	Misc. IFAD	in store Jan 13, 2012
1,092 Kg [#]	GreenMuscle™ (biopesticide)	from 2010-11 campaign	in store
16,000 L	Teflubenzuron [@] (IGR) 50 UL	FAO	March 15, 2012
6 000 L	Chlorpyrifos [@] 240 UL	FAO	March 15, 2012
20,000 L	conventional pesticides [@]	GoM	May 15

67,565 L/Kg (total)

*Deltaklor (120g/L of Chlorpyrifos-ethylet and 5g/L of deltamethrin)

[#] enough to treat 22,000 ha

[@] pipeline

VI. Forecast

LMC and NSE will continue developing in several areas in the northwest, including Belomatra-Vineta plateau where favorable breeding conditions persisted due to Cyclone Giovanna and owing to the deforestation over the past three decades that created favorable conditions and lead to a significant change in locust demographics. Locusts are expected to further develop and persist in the proximity of Fiherenana and Mikoboka and Analavelona massifs and the surroundings and threaten the biotopes in the coming dekads. According to FAO-CNA, some 50,000 ha will require treatment over the next two to three dekads to avert any major outbreaks and curb a potential upsurge. Other areas that experienced rainfall deficit or received erratic rainfall during February and January are not expected to see significant locust developments unless rains fall in the coming dekads.

Large-scale interventions can only be launched with aerial and reinforced ground operations. Planned aerial operations will likely coincide with more mobile locusts and 3rd generation hopper groups that will require intensive engagements. This situation could be further deteriorate if rains continue in the northwest and begin falling in other outbreak and invasion areas in the south, southwest and central regions in the coming dekads/months.

Aggressive surveillance and preventive interventions should be implemented to avert any major threats.

VII. FAO-CNA plans for the next dekads

The CERF-funded helicopter arrived in Antananarivo on March 2nd (originally planned for 25 February). It will be dispatched to Toliara to conduct survey operations from 8-9 March in Morandave and Mandabe basins. On March 10, an areal operation base will be established in Toliara and aerial operations will commence on March 11.

FAO and MoA/CNA are in contact with development partners and other international and national entities and continue providing updates on the locust situation, potential implications on food security and livelihoods of vulnerable communities and campaign operations run by FAO in close collaboration with DPV/CNA and other national entities. (Source: FAO-CNA/Miscellaneous 03/07-08/2012).

OFDA/TAG will continue monitoring the situation and issue updates and advice accordingly.

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