

EAST AFRICA - DESERT LOCUST CRISIS

FACT SHEET #2, FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2020

APRIL 20, 2020

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

8

Countries Affected in East Africa²
FAO – March 2020

24.8
million

People Already Experiencing Severe Acute Food Insecurity in Affected Countries³
FAO – March 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

- Locust swarms continue to form and mature across East Africa
- USG declares disaster for projected impact of desert locusts in Sudan
- Late March rainfall generates conditions conducive for further breeding in the Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia; additional swarms will begin forming in June, threatening food security and livelihoods

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

FOR THE DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020

USAID/OFDA¹

\$19,068,232

\$19,068,232

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- The desert locust situation in East Africa remains concerning, as bands of hoppers—immature, wingless locusts—and an increasing number of new swarms continue to form. Breeding in areas outside the region—including in the Arabian Peninsula and along the Iran–Pakistan border—could also result in additional invasions unless new generations of locusts are adequately controlled, relief actors report.
- To date, the impact of the pest has remained limited and localized, as most crops were harvested by the time swarms initially arrived in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia—the most affected countries—in late 2019. However, widespread rainfall in late March has been conducive to further breeding in the three countries in recent weeks. The formation of new swarms, expected in late June and July, will coincide with the start of the harvest season, underscoring the urgent need for effective control measures in affected areas, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- FAO has similarly emphasized the need to rapidly scale up control operations in Sudan, where two new locust swarms arrived from Eritrea in mid-March. The UN agency reports that uncontrolled infestations in parts of Sudan and nearby countries could threaten agricultural production in Sudan, particularly if environmental conditions facilitate additional breeding and invasions in April and June. In response, the U.S. Government (USG) issued a disaster declaration due to the projected humanitarian impact of desert locusts in Sudan on April 13.
- Travel restrictions related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic are challenging efforts to scale up response operations in affected countries, though ongoing ground control and surveillance efforts were continuing without disruption as of mid-April, FAO reports.

¹USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)

²Figure includes East African countries included in FAO's regional response plan and addendum, as of early March: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania

³Figure 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 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 is not currently available for Djibouti or Eritrea.

LOCUST LOCATIONS AND SWARM MOVEMENT

- Relief actors remain concerned regarding the desert locust situation in East Africa, as new swarms continue to form and mature in northern and central Kenya, southern Ethiopia, and parts of Somalia. Heavy rains in late March have also generated favorable breeding conditions in the three countries, allowing the new swarms to stay in place, mature, and lay eggs, though some swarms could move from Kenya to Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia, FAO reports. Locust eggs will hatch into hoppers during May, forming additional swarms in late June and July. The formation of new swarms will coincide with the beginning of the harvest season, representing an unprecedented threat to food security and livelihoods in several countries across East Africa, according to FAO.
- Meanwhile, FAO projects that locusts that are breeding and further developing in Yemen and Saudi Arabia will mature and form swarms in the coming months, some of which will move west and south across the Gulf of Aden and reach Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia from late June onward. Between July and August, swarms from Saudi Arabia could also cross the Red Sea and reach the interior of Sudan, where they could breed and threaten vital crops and pastureland.
- A large swarm was detected in southern Ethiopia's Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNP) Region on April 8, while new swarms had appeared in the country's Amhara and Somali regions by mid-April, FAO reports. Several immature and maturing swarms also appeared in several districts in northeast Uganda—where planting has begun—between April 5 and 7, with at least one swarm later invading South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria State on April 8. While relief actors continue to monitor desert locust activity in Uganda, existing desert locusts pose a minimal threat to populations in South Sudan due to unfavorable conditions for breeding and movement in the country, according to FAO.
- Overall, desert locusts were present in 161 *woredas* in Ethiopia as of early April, with hopper bands observed in the country's Oromiya and SNNP regions, including in the agriculturally-dense Rift Valley, FAO reports. Locusts were also present in 26 of Kenya's 47 counties as of early April. Cross-border movements of immature swarms along the borders of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia continue, with swarms originating in Somalia recently invading Ethiopia through the country's Aysha town, Somali, according to FAO.
- FAO and Government of Sudan (GoS) authorities, including the Ministry of Agriculture's Plant Protection Directorate (PPD), also continue to launch control operations against desert locust swarms that arrived in the Tokar Delta area of Sudan's Red Sea State—located along the Sudan–Eritrea border—in mid-March. PPD teams have surveyed nearly 2.5 million acres in Sudan and had treated more than 740,000 acres in winter breeding areas as of early March—successfully inhibiting widespread breeding in eastern Sudan. However, FAO forecasts that unmitigated breeding in other countries in the region could result in additional locust swarms spreading to parts of North Darfur, North Kordofan, and River Nile states, where favorable conditions may trigger further breeding during May and June. The pests could also invade agricultural fields in Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and White Nile states in the coming months, impacting crop production across Sudan, where nearly 6.2 million people are already in need of emergency food assistance due to reduced harvests, accelerating inflation, and steep food price increases, according to the country's Humanitarian Response Plan.
- On April 13, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Brian Shukan declared a disaster due to the projected impact of uncontrolled locust infestations on food security and livelihoods across Sudan. USAID/OFDA staff based in Khartoum, Sudan, and Washington, D.C., continue to coordinate with the GoS, FAO, and other stakeholders to determine the appropriate form of assistance for supporting the desert locust response in Sudan.

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

- Although locust-related damage to crops and pastureland in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia remains relatively limited and localized to date, new swarms of desert locusts will likely significantly threaten food security and livelihoods in northern Somalia, northeastern Kenya, and south-central areas of Ethiopia in the coming months, particularly as insecurity is hindering effective surveillance and control measures in some affected areas, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). FEWS NET projects that the total number of people in Somalia experiencing Crisis—IPC 3—and higher levels of acute food insecurity will increase from the February estimate of 1.2 million to

more than 1.6 million people during the June-to-September period, due in part to the reduced ability of low-income households in locust-affected areas to cope with agricultural losses. Meanwhile, internal USAID analysis and an April 7 interagency assessment suggest that between 500,000 and 976,000 people in Ethiopia—primarily populations in Oromiya and Somali—could require emergency food assistance due to locust-related crop and pasture damage in the coming months.

- Approximately 8.5 million people in Ethiopia are already experiencing Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity, according to FEWS NET; of these, an estimated 6 million are residing in locust-affected areas of the country. FAO warns that unless swarms are adequately controlled, locusts will cause large-scale crop, pasture, and forest-cover loss, exacerbating food insecurity in crisis-affected areas—particularly areas emerging from recurrent drought. As of early April, desert locusts—in conjunction with the negative impacts of premature harvesting, typical post-harvest losses, and flooding in the Somali—had contributed to the loss of 356,000 metric tons (MTs) of cereal crops, affecting approximately 806,000 farming households in Ethiopia, according to the recent interagency assessment.
- Meanwhile, desert locust infestations caused 2 percent of main *deyr* season crop losses in Somalia, though off-season *deyr* crops remained unaffected by the pests as of mid-February, according to a March FEWS NET report. While anticipated above-average rainfall during the April-to-June *gu* rainy season is projected to support pasture regeneration and planting activities, partially offsetting the pests' impact, FEWS NET warns that *gu* rains could also facilitate a new wave of breeding and worsen the regional spread of locusts. Separately, FAO forecasts that desert locust infestations in Somalia could potentially affect 445,000 acres of pasture and agricultural land through June. The Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia also estimates that locusts could devour up to 19,000 MTs of crops produced during the *gu* harvest—an amount of food sufficient to support an estimated 281,000 people for six months.
- Locust infestations have caused 5–15 percent of crop and pasture losses in northern Kenya to date, according to recent Kenya Food Security Steering Group and County Steering Groups estimates. However, above-average October-to-December rains have resulted in significantly above-average forage in pastoral areas and a favorable early 2020 harvest, ultimately mitigating the impact of desert locusts on current food security conditions in Kenya. Given that average rainfall projections for Kenya's March-to-May long rains season will likely lead to continued availability of forage for livestock, food security monitors anticipate the impact of desert locust infestations to remain limited and localized in the coming months. Relatively colder temperatures and a shift in seasonal winds will also limit the spread of locust swarms into key agricultural areas in western Kenya, likely resulting in average national crop yields in the latter half of 2020. Despite favorable near-term projections, food security actors note that desert locust surveillance and control efforts will likely determine the extent of the pests' impact on agricultural production and food security in Kenya—particularly in the country's arid and semi-arid lands—during the latter half of 2020.
- Desert locust infestations could also negatively impact small-scale agriculture and pasture conditions across Djibouti if additional swarms from Ethiopia and Somalia invade the country during the coming months, potentially resulting in a deterioration of food security conditions during the latter half of 2020, according to FAO and FEWS NET. In addition, relief actors are concerned about the impact of desert locusts in northeastern Uganda, where populations are already facing Stressed—IPC 2—levels of acute food insecurity, according to FEWS NET.
- In response to extant needs, USAID Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) implementing partners continue to provide emergency food and nutrition assistance to vulnerable populations in East Africa, including in many locust-affected areas of the region. USAID/FFP partners also continue to monitor potential additional needs resulting from the impact of locust infestations.

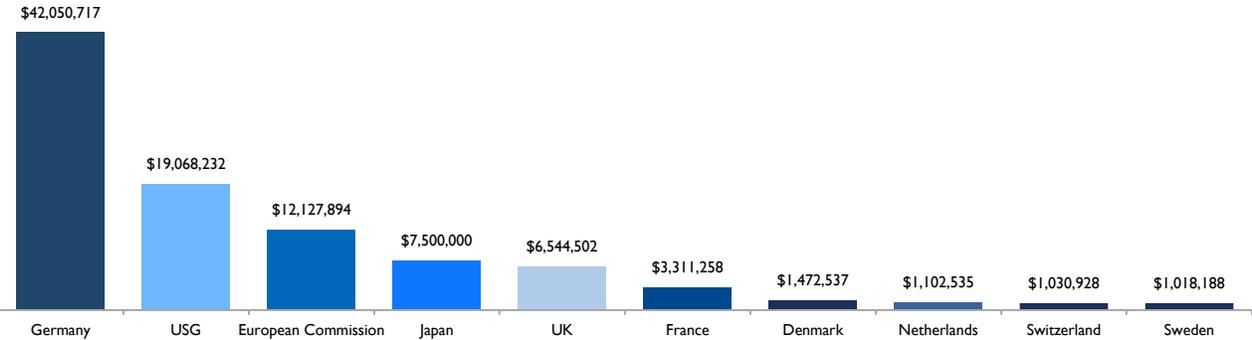
SURVEILLANCE AND PEST CONTROL

- The COVID-19 pandemic has complicated efforts to control desert locust infestations in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, with FAO reporting delays in deliveries of pesticides and personal protective equipment in recent weeks. In addition, while the three countries continue to prioritize surveillance and control operations, FAO notes that recently introduced confinement measures—requiring travelers to undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine period upon entering a new country—could impact the UN agency's plans to deploy technical experts to affected areas and postpone the arrival of

additional helicopters and flying crews. Although ground control and surveillance efforts were continuing uninterrupted as of April 20, with some countries beginning to ease COVID-19-related restrictions in support of ongoing response efforts, FAO continues to anticipate that the restrictions could potentially disrupt or delay critical interventions in the coming weeks.

- FAO is working to address anticipated pesticide shortfalls and personnel gaps in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of early April, pesticide stocks in Ethiopia were sufficient to support the UN agency’s control operations through June. FAO has also resolved recent disruptions to the pesticide supply chain in Kenya by procuring pesticides locally, securing the pipeline through at least mid-2020. In addition, more than 2,000 kilograms of biopesticides—sufficient to treat 100,000 acres of land—were recently delivered in Somalia following a series of delays, FAO reports.
- As of mid-April, response teams had treated an estimated 362,000; 151,000; and 40,000 acres of locust-infested land in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, respectively, since January, FAO reports. With USAID/OFDA funding, FAO continues to support aerial and ground control operations in Ethiopia and Kenya, including aerial spraying through at least 10 fixed-wing aircraft as of mid-April. In Somalia, where launching aerial control operations remains challenging due to ongoing insecurity, USAID/OFDA is supporting locust control teams to conduct ground interventions against the pest—including in hard-to-reach areas—through the use of backpack and vehicle-mounted sprayers.
- To inform desert locust control operations, USAID’s Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (USAID/RFS)—through SERVIR, a joint partnership with the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)—is bolstering FAO’s global locust monitoring system, enabling the UN agency to identify targeted treatment areas by strengthening forecasting of breeding locations and swarm movements. USAID/RFS is also providing technical assistance to improve damage assessments, allowing response actors to better understand the extent of locust-related damage to crops and pastureland in affected areas. In particular, the new high-resolution land cover maps produced under SERVIR will aid analysis and interpretation of how locust-related damage will impact food security in East Africa.
- In addition, USAID/OFDA continues to support the provision of training and equipment for the safe handling, use, and disposal of pesticides in locust-affected areas, such as training on the use of vehicle-mounted sprayers for locust control teams in Somalia. USAID/OFDA is also separately supporting FAO to train scouts and ground control teams in Ethiopia and Kenya; the UN agency has trained approximately 600 scouts and ground control team members in Kenya to date, and plans to train nearly 600 control agents in Ethiopia with USAID/OFDA funding in the coming weeks.

2020 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING*
PER DONOR



*Funding figures are as of April 20, 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, 1 square kilometer-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 2020¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/OFDA			
ETHIOPIA²			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$800,000
	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$7,000,000
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
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		\$19,068,232
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020		\$19,068,232

¹Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of April 20, 2020.

²The \$800,000 award for FAO's desert locust response in Ethiopia is also reported in FY 2020 USG Ethiopia Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #1.

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, dietary, 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 <http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/working-crises-and-conflict/responding-times-crisis/where-we-work>