

SITUATION

The desert locust is considered the most destructive migratory pest in the world as it is highly mobile and feeds on large quantities of any kind of green vegetation, including crops, pasture, and fodder. The current desert locust outbreak has the potential to cause deterioration in the food security situation across the East Africa region. Now, there is urgent need for support for 2.5 million people in the Horn of Africa¹. The government of Somalia declared the locust upsurge a national disaster in February 2020

In addition to over 11.9 million people already experiencing severe acute food insecurity in the five countries, the desert locust crisis poses potential threat to the food security of another 20.1 million people with the expected second generation of locust with the UN warning a second generation would be even more destructive. (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC] Phase 2).

The worst desert locust outbreak in decades is underway in East and the Greater Horn of Africa; according to experts this is the worst outbreak in over 25 years in Ethiopia and Somalia and the worst observed in over 70 years in Kenya (ReliefWeb, 2020).

Currently, immature swarms are present in northwest Kenya, from where a swarm has crossed into adjacent areas of northeast Uganda, a locust swarm from Kenya is also expected to migrate northwards across South Sudan. Other swarms from northwest Kenya are likely to migrate north to Ethiopia where they will disperse mature and breed. Upon arrival, the swarms will quickly mature and lay eggs. This, together with current infestations, from the first outbreak, are likely to cause a further increase in locust populations in affected areas (FAO, July 2020). This situation finds the region in an already fragile context where food security has also been affected by floods and secondary effects COVID-19 including loss of livelihoods².

Already, the first outbreak affected Ethiopia, northwest Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda, and Somalia, where tens of thousands of hectares of cropland and pasture were damaged with potentially severe consequences to agriculture and pastoral based livelihoods.

Recent floods across the Horn and East Africa created favorable breeding conditions for the desert locust. These conditions have allowed breeding until July 2020 and the favorable conditions could lead to 500 times more locusts (according to FAO³).

Kenya

In Kenya over 70,000 ha of land have already been infested, crops, fodder and pasture decimated posing a great risk to agricultural livelihoods. Agropastoral communities in 26 Counties in the north were infested and severely affected as they are only just recovering from a cycle of prolonged drought and floods. The most affected Counties include Turkana Marsabit, Baringo, Isiolo, Samburu, Tana River, Wajir, Mandera and Laikipia. In the affected counties, there is reported decrease staple food availability, decreased purchasing power and increase prices of staple food, resulting in some malnutrition cases⁴. The invasion is expected will the end of 2020⁵. The crisis poses a potential threat to the food security of at least 9 million people (IPC Phase 2 and above) in Kenya. Multiple years of poor rains, and recent flooding in late 2019 and early 2020, have resulted in widespread food insecurity, with severe acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) currently 3.1 million in Kenya.

1 FAO June 2020: Desert locust Upsurge in the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen Regional update #5 – 16 June 2020

2 FAO (April 2020), Desert Locust Crisis Appeal 2 FAO June 2020: Desert locust Upsurge in the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen Regional update #5 – 16 June 2020

3 <http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html>

4

[https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Kenya%20Cash%20Consortium%20Locust%20Needs%20Assessment Kenya zoom in to %20submit fi....pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Kenya%20Cash%20Consortium%20Locust%20Needs%20Assessment%20Kenya%20submit%20fi....pdf)

5 <http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/common/ecg/562/en/DL501e.pdf>

Somalia

On 2nd February 2020, the Government of Somalia declared the Desert Locust upsurge a national emergency posing a major threat to the country's already fragile food security situation. As of end of June, the desert locust situation continues to be categorized at the highest threat level "Dangerous" as adult groups and swarms were present laying eggs on the northern plateau and central region. Bands of hoppers are reported in Puntland, Galmudug and Somaliland regions covering an estimated 180,000 hectares of land being infested with the hoppers and breeding adults that has resulted in damaged crops and pasture. Reports from government surveys confirm the hatching of the fourth generation in those three regions and control efforts targeting the older nymphs, adults and newly emerged hoppers ongoing coupled with surveillance. The April-June Gu rain season provided favourable ecological conditions suitable for the development of new generation of desert locusts while the season crop production in agropastoral and rain-fed areas continues to be under threat due to the ongoing breeding of Desert Locust in Galmudug, Somaliland and Puntland, and in neighbouring countries and dire impacts on the rural livelihoods are expected⁶. This led to FAO launching a desert locust crisis action plan that covering January-December 2020 in line with the Government-led response to the locust upsurge. The highlights the most pressing funding needs in Somalia to be i) Desert locust control in and around the breeding areas ii) Livelihood protection and cash assistance in areas at high risk of invasion. Since the start of control operations, 10,245 hectares have been treated using biopesticides in Somalia's key breeding areas by the government with the direct support of FAO. Government will continue these operations and plans to spray 180,000 hectares across the country by end of 2020. Similarly, FAO is working with government to protect livelihoods for 30,000 pastoral and agropastoral households in Northern and Central Somalia through provision 3,600 MT of rangeland cubes⁷ during the dry season to supplement scarce resources in affected areas. FAO and the government underscore an urgent need for other key international players and partners to strengthen and scale up successful measures that anticipate and mitigate the risks of the desert locust upsurge on the livelihoods of the affected communities.⁸

Ethiopia

Over 75,219 hectares of land has been affected in Ethiopia. The highest areas affected by crop losses and food insecurity are Oromia and Somali regions, followed by Southern Nations and Nationalities People (SNNP). Other areas affected are Amhara and Tigray and have also reported substantial crop losses. 9With the fresh threat of the increased summer infestation, Afar and Somali are noted as potential sites for breeding. It is ¹⁰reported that an increased number of households are applying emergency livelihood coping strategies. These include increased sale of livestock, reduced expenditure on livestock, consumption of seed stocks. A notable feature is that the breeding stock are being sold indicating that the coping mechanisms have stretched (sales of 22% in August 2019 to 49% in June 2020¹¹). A joint assessment¹² indicate that 50% of pastureland has been affected by the locust plague and approximately 356,286 MT of grains affecting approximately 806,400 farming households. Looking at the food consumption score (FCI), it was 37% in August 2019, and by March 2020 it was at 41% and the dietary diversification (DD) from 3.4 in August 2019 and by March 2020 at 3.7 indexes. An increase in the numbers shows a declining food coping index. This is notable in the levels of malnutrition; the severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rates are 39% higher (March 2020) as compared to August 2019. With the decline in harvest, with an already grave food security situation, the UN predicts close to 1.8million people are in need of food assistance and agricultural/livelihood support. The situation is further

6 FAO, June 2020, Desert Locust Emergency in Somalia; FAO, May 2020, Desert Locust Emergency in Somalia

7 Rangeland Cubes are designed to supplement protein and energy to cattle grazing pastures.

8 FAO, April 2020, Desert Locust Crisis, Somalia Action Plan January – December 2020

9 FAO (July 3rd, 2020), Report

10 UNOHCA June 2020, Revised Humanitarian Response Plan

11 As Above

12 FAO February 2020, Joint Assessment Findings

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compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic, with the numbers on the rise, declining economic activities and crop losses, the food situation is critical.

South Sudan

In February 2020, the first large swarms invaded Eastern Equatoria state counties of Magwi, Torit, Ikotos, Lafon, Budi, and the semi-arid region of Kapoeta South and East from from the North Eastern districts of Uganda.

Among the worst affected areas are Magwi county which recorded the highest incidence of desert locust infestation with over 60 percent of crop fields invaded, followed by Torit County where about 12 percent of the fields were indicated to have been invaded by desert locusts (FAO,2020). According to the FAO Desert Locust Watch and forecasts from IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre(ICPA), the situation remains alarming as there is a threat of further desert locust spread from north western Kenya into eastern South Sudan thought out July 2020 as well as other invasions from the North Eastern corridor of Uganda. The desert locusts are expected to migrate onward to Sudan via South Sudan. Desert locusts in South Sudan represents an unprecedented threat to food security especially as it coincides with the ongoing planting season, the main agricultural season for the country. There are critical concerns that the country will face serious food crisis due to the locusts’ damage in addition to the devastation caused by floods since last year adding the prevailing impact of COVID-19. It is expected that provision of relief assistance will improve nutritional condition of approximately 49,900 people in the desert locust infested counties of Eastern Equatoria.

Uganda

In February 2020, the first wave of desert locusts (*Schistocerca gregaria*) invaded Uganda from neighbouring Kenya while the second desert locust invaded Uganda in April 2020.

The most affected districts are those neighbouring Kenya (Amudat District through Karita and Loro sub-counties) in Karamoja sub-region.

The desert locusts have already started causing food shortages and currently are now sighted in 24 districts in Teso, Lango, Acholi, Sebei and Bugisu sub-regions.

The existing swarms have caused damage to the vegetation cover and destroyed food crops such as sorghum, cassava, sweet potatoes, maize, millet, sesame, ground nuts, sunflower, cotton, citrus, beans, and mangoes in the afore mentioned regions. Lamwo district in Northern Uganda where DCA operates was one of the districts that were invaded by the desert locusts.

In this district, five sub counties already affected include Lokung, Agoro, Paloga, Madi Opei, Padibe East and Padibe West where the swarms have covered an average of 5 km².

In the latest development as of July 13th, 2020, reports indicate that Moroto district in Uganda has also been invaded by desert locusts and have destroyed several crop farms in Rupa Sub County. The locusts landed in Abule Sub- County on July 11th, 2020 and are seen to rapidly spread to Lolung Parish where they continue to devour crops (maize and sorghum) and various vegetables.

The Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) in Uganda are yet to carry out an assessment to establish the extent of the damage. This latest invasion comes at a time when crops are about to mature thus devastating the lives and livelihoods of thousands of people. Church of Uganda (CoU) through the Diocese of Karamoja in April 2020 intervened to reach out to the affected with both food and no food relief items and plan to engage further.

NEEDS

The insect invasion has put the Horn and East Africa region in a state of crisis. The insect invasion affected persons find themselves in a desperate situation, with many unmet vital humanitarian needs such as access to food security due to affected food security and livelihoods in addition to:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	sufficient food
<input type="checkbox"/>	safe shelter and basic non-food items
<input type="checkbox"/>	basic health services and facilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	safe drinking water, as well as sanitation and hygiene infrastructure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	livelihood activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	protection services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	adequate nutrition

The dire situation is further compounded for the insect invasion affected people with vulnerabilities with the food insecurity severely affecting pregnant or lactating woman .There is a pressing necessity to provide immediate assistance to minimize chronic food insecurity and to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are covered first.

STAKEHOLDERS

The following national and international entities are present and doing their best to respond to the crisis:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	National government	Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock in the five countries have been undertaking surveillance and control of the desert locust to curb spread
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	UN Agencies	FAO is supporting the national governments to undertake surveillance, aerial sprays for control. UNOCHA Regional Office for Southern and Eastern Africa has continued to coordinate the information flow across the region.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	INGOs	Regional Desert Locust Alliance (ACTED, OXFAM, Concern World Wide) have been undertaking surveillance, assessments, awareness and training as well as food security.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Red Cross Red Crescent Movement	Kenya Red Cross Society is undertaking the rapid needs assessments to determine the effects on food security and livelihoods as well as the efficacy of the insecticide sprays
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Military presence	The military in South Sudan and Uganda have been helping in areal and ground spraying of the desert locusts
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	National NGOs	Local NGOs are also Playing role in local partnership and implementation in South Sudan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Civil society groups	Civil society groups in South Sudan have been helping with advocacy, lobbying & volunteerism
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Faith based groups	Members of Act Alliance in Uganda and South Sudan have supported the respective governments in the surveillance and control. This includes DCA Uganda
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Philanthropy groups	Support the intervention with resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Host communities	Helping with information and local resources support
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Affected communities	Providing information and volunteer services

The Regional Desert Locust emergency response is currently being coordinated by UN -OCHA (nationally and regionally). To ensure that the humanitarian response is well coordinated and complementary, ACT forums will coordinate in cluster meetings with all relevant sector stakeholders (Kenya Humanitarian Partnership Team (KHPT), FAO, High-Level Desert Task Force, relevant Ministries of Agriculture, National Food Security Cluster, NGOs and faith based groups. Forums will establish an

open line of communication with crisis affected persons and communities to ensure a humanitarian response based on participation and feedback.

ACT Alliance

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ACT Alliance Horn and East Africa Sub regional forum has been working in Kenya, Uganda, Somali, South Sudan, and Ethiopia for more than 5 years, and requesting members are assisting /planning to help people affected by the desert insect invasion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ACT Alliance Horn and East Africa sub regional forum works in areas affected by the desert locust invasion and is assessing the impact of the disaster to better understand the needs and vulnerabilities among affected communities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ACT Alliance Horn and East Africa sub region forum is currently monitoring the situation and following coordination mechanisms from UN and government authorities on latest assessment reports to have an in-depth context analysis and better understanding of existing vulnerabilities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ACT Horn and East Africa sub region forum is monitoring the situation and emergency teams are ready/preparing to respond according to the results of a contextual analysis and rapid needs assessments conducted by UN and government relevant stakeholders in the four countries.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, ACT Horn and East Africa sub region forum has identified a gap in food security and livelihoods and has resolved that if funded, it will have the capacity to properly bridge the identified gap.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ACT Horn and East Africa Regional forum is planning to submit a Regional appeal to support communities affected by the negative effects of Desert Locust infestation on their livelihoods. ACT forum members will include Christian Aid in Ethiopia , LWF, NCA in South Sudan , DCA, CoU in Uganda and CWS, ADS in Kenya , among others. Sectors of intervention to support food security and livelihood will include cash transfer, seed, and feed emergency stocks among others all within WHO guidelines on COVID recommended standard practices of each country. Most affected areas in Kenya that will be targeted include Turkana, Marsabit, Baringo in Kenya; Oromia and Somali regions in Ethiopia ; Eastern Equatoria state counties of Magwi, Torit, Ikotos, Lafon, Budi in South Sudan and; Karamoja sub region in Uganda, where DCA and CoU ACT members are planning to support increased agricultural production and cash support to affected households through provision of “one-off” agricultural inputs using seed fares and asset protection cash grant and build capacity of local government administration on desert locust preparedness and response through strengthening capacity of responders in surveillance and monitoring among other activities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ACT Alliance Somalia Forum (through DKH) is already responding to desert locust infestation, with focus on Community Preparedness on effective Control Methods, Community based locust control measures and appropriate locust control knowledge for long term management. DKH will work with their local partner in Galmudug State also designed to counter food insecurity not only brought about by desert locusts, but also the effects of floods and COVID-19 pandemic.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Furthermore, ACT Alliance Horn and East Africa Sub region forum will engage in advocacy on the national and international level to ensure that the voices of those affected by the insect invasion are amplified.

**Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to the Director of Operations,
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