

# EAST AFRICA - DESERT LOCUST CRISIS

FACT SHEET #1, FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2020

MARCH 6, 2020

## NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

**8**

Countries Affected in the East Africa Region<sup>2</sup>  
FAO – March 2020

**20.2**  
**million**

Estimated People Already Experiencing Severe Acute Food Insecurity in Affected Countries<sup>3</sup>  
FAO – February 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

- Current desert locust infestations are largest in Ethiopia and Somalia in 25 years, Kenya in 70 years
- Desert locusts reach the DRC, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda
- FAO requests \$153.2 million for regional response across ten countries
- USAID/OFDA supports control efforts in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia

## HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

FOR THE DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020

USAID/OFDA<sup>1</sup>

\$19,068,232

**\$19,068,232**

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Desert locusts have spread rapidly across East Africa since December 2019, threatening crops and pasture critical to the livelihoods of local populations. Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia remain the most heavily impacted, with bands of hoppers—immature, wingless locusts—and swarms of adult locusts devouring vegetation in multiple areas; mature desert locusts continue to breed in all three countries as of early March. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warns that the next generation of the pest will likely form swarms in late March and into April, coinciding with seasonal rains and the upcoming planting season. While locust infestations have not immediately impacted food security, relief actors anticipate increased emergency food assistance needs during the latter half of 2020.
- On February 26, FAO issued an appeal for \$138 million—revised from the late January request for \$76 million to support response activities through July—to scale up efforts to curb the spread of desert locust swarms, protect livelihoods and bolster early recovery, and improve response coordination and preparedness in eight affected countries through December. In early March, the UN agency requested an additional \$15.2 million to support locust-related response efforts in Sudan and Yemen.
- USAID/OFDA is providing \$18 million to scale up pest control operations through direct interventions and local capacity building in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, the countries most affected by the desert locust. Between mid-November 2019 and late February 2020, the U.S. Government (USG) declared disasters for Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya due to the humanitarian impact of the locust infestations.

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

<sup>2</sup> Figure 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

<sup>3</sup> 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 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.

## CURRENT SITUATION

- Desert locust populations have proliferated in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya in recent months due to a confluence of ecological conditions, primarily above-average rainfall in the East Africa region between October and December 2019. The current locust infestation is the largest Ethiopia and Somalia have experienced in 25 years, and the largest Kenya has experienced in more than 70 years, FAO reports. As of mid-February 2020, desert locusts had affected at least 581,000 and 173,000 acres of land in Ethiopia and Kenya, respectively. In Somalia, response actors have identified 445,000 acres of land requiring urgent pest control interventions, although insecurity-related access constraints are preventing technical experts from conducting comprehensive surveillance activities.
- Locust infestations also intensified in Djibouti, Eritrea, and Sudan in recent months due to increased rainfall and the arrival of desert locust swarms from other affected countries, FAO reports.
- In early February, desert locusts arrived in Uganda and Tanzania from Kenya; while several mature swarms were observed in northeastern Uganda, only a small group of mature desert locusts had been identified in Tanzania as of late February, according to FAO. In mid-February, mature locust swarms crossed from Uganda into South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria State, where soil is suitable for desert locust egg-laying; FAO reports risk of new swarms arriving from Kenya in the coming weeks. Simultaneously, a few mature swarms arrived in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from Uganda but quickly dispersed.
- Adult desert locust swarms were breeding in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia as of early March, increasing the risk to food security and livelihoods in the region, according to FAO. The UN agency reports breeding also continues in areas along the Red Sea coast, including in Eritrea and Sudan, as well as Saudi Arabia and Yemen.
- Most areas of Somalia, as well as parts of Ethiopia and Kenya, are projected to experience average to above-average levels of rainfall during the April-to-June *gu* rains, according to the January 2020 Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum forecast. Given that wet conditions are favorable for desert locust breeding, accelerated efforts to control the pest prior to the start of the *gu* rains is critical. However, access constraints and capacity gaps significantly complicate operations in Somalia.
- FAO warns that if not adequately controlled, desert locust populations in East Africa could swell to approximately 400 times their current size by June. The current desert locust upsurge has the potential to develop into a plague—a period of one or more years of widespread locust infestations in the form of hopper bands or adult swarms—which could devastate the livelihoods of millions of additional people across the region, according to the UN agency.
- On February 26, FAO increased the funding appeal for the revised regional response plan from \$76 million to \$138 million to scale up efforts to curb the spread of desert locust swarms, protect livelihoods and bolster early livelihoods recovery, and improve response coordination and preparedness in eight affected countries through December 2020. The regional appeal was revised in February due to the continued increase of desert locust populations and spread of the pest to additional countries. In early March, the UN agency requested an additional \$15.2 million to support response efforts in Sudan and Yemen. FAO underscores that international funding is urgently required to respond to acute needs in all affected countries.

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## FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

- More than 10 million people already facing Crisis—IPC 3—or worse levels of acute food insecurity due to recurrent drought, ongoing conflict, or high food prices, among other reasons—are residing in locust-affected areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan, according to recent IPC analyses; an additional 3.2 million severely food-insecure people in Uganda and South Sudan could also be impacted if locust swarms continue to spread. In addition, FAO reports that the current infestation is threatening the food security of more than 26,700 people residing in rural areas of Djibouti. The majority of populations in East Africa rely heavily on agriculture for livelihoods, including approximately 80 percent of Ethiopia's population and 75 percent of Kenya's population, according to the UN agency.
- The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) does not attribute any immediate, large-scale deterioration of harvests, pasture conditions, or acute food security conditions in late 2019 and early 2020 to desert locust infestations; to date, locust-related damage to crops and pasture has been limited and localized. However, locust-

induced crop and pasture losses may result in heightened emergency food assistance needs during the latter half of 2020, particularly in northeastern Kenya, central and southern Somalia, and southern Ethiopia. Given that the upcoming March-to-June cropping and pasture regeneration season in many countries coincides with the projected emergence of new hopper bands, FAO underscores that immediate action is required to control the infestation, mitigate the pests' destructive impact, and prevent food security conditions in affected countries from deteriorating further in the coming months.

- USAID Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) implementing partners continue to respond to the extant emergency food and nutrition needs of vulnerable populations in the region—including in many areas currently impacted by locust infestations—and continue to monitor potential additional needs.

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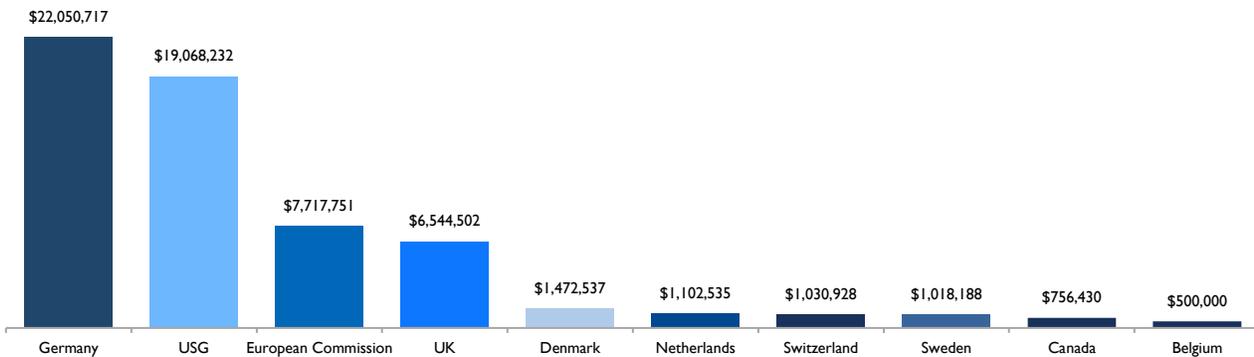
## **SURVEILLANCE AND PEST CONTROL OPERATIONS**

- In response to the desert locust infestations, FAO is supporting the governments of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia to conduct aerial and ground control operations and surveillance activities. As of mid-February, response teams had treated approximately 124,800; 49,400; and 37,000 acres of land in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, respectively, FAO reports. In addition, the UN agency has deployed 15 desert locust experts and other personnel to support surveillance and coordination activities, provide technical advice, and assist with the procurement of supplies and equipment for aerial and ground control operations, as of late February. The Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) is also supporting response activities in some affected areas.
- In Kenya, FAO is training 300 members of the National Youth Service—a Government of Kenya civilian volunteer organization—to support and expand ground control operations. The trainees will deploy to areas of northern Kenya where hopper bands are present to collect data on desert locust populations and status of vegetation, plan control campaigns, determine appropriate preventive measures, and spray pesticides to contain hopper infestations. Ground control operations seek to target desert locust populations before the pests have developed into adults that form swarms, fly to other locations, and breed. The locusts are also most voracious during the hopper stage, underscoring the necessity of ground control efforts to mitigate crop and pasture loss, according to FAO.
- FAO and the DLCO-EA continue to support the Government of Ethiopia to conduct surveillance and control of the desert locust in Ethiopia. As of early March, the Government of Ethiopia Ministry of Agriculture has deployed more than 3,900 pest experts, scouts, and other personnel to support the response. During recent weeks, response efforts have been concentrated on controlling adult swarms and hopper bands in Somali Region, to minimize further breeding and swarm formation.
- In Somalia, authorities in the semi-autonomous regions of Puntland and Somaliland—in close collaboration with FAO—have completed some ground spraying operations using biopesticides and conducted surveillance activities. FAO is focusing its control operations in Puntland, Somaliland, and Galmudug Region given relative access and the presence of hopper bands, as well as supporting government authorities to survey more than 74,000 acres of affected land.
- The Government of Sudan continues to lead desert locust surveillance and control operations along the Red Sea coast and areas near the Nile River in Sudan's Northern State, according to the UN. As of early March, government-led surveillance activities had covered 2.5 million acres, while aerial and ground control activities had treated more than 741,000 acres, FAO reports.
- To support the response in South Sudan, FAO began a series of training sessions on locust control and management for relief actors in Eastern Equatoria in late February. USAID/FFP partner Catholic Relief Services has also initiated community mobilization and awareness-raising activities in the state.

## USG ASSISTANCE

- USAID/OFDA is providing \$18 million in FY 2020 funding to support surveillance and pest control activities and programs to build local capacity for pesticide management and use in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. With \$800,000 in additional USAID/OFDA support provided in January, FAO is training more than 300 pest experts and scouts and providing 5,000 sets of protective equipment for desert locust control operations in Ethiopia. As of early March, FAO was training stakeholders in Oromiya, Somali, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP) regions.
- Meanwhile, USG technical experts are conducting assessments and meeting with key stakeholders in affected countries to determine the impact of the regional desert locust infestation and identify priority needs. In December 2019, a USAID/OFDA pests and pesticides technical advisor traveled to Ethiopia and met with FAO staff, desert locust experts, and government officials from across the region to discuss the desert locust crisis. In addition, a USAID Bureau for Food Security (USAID/BFS) advisor traveled to Ethiopia and Kenya in early February to meet with regional FAO representatives, government officials, and local entomologists to better understand government-led locust response efforts—including gaps and implementation challenges—to inform potential USG response efforts, which could include both development and humanitarian programming. USAID/BFS is also coordinating with USAID Missions in affected countries to provide technical support and explore opportunities to adjust development activities to mitigate pest impacts.

### 2020 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING\* PER DONOR



\*Funding figures are as of March 6, 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, as they are highly mobile—locust swarms are carried on the wind—and rapidly consume vegetation, including crops and pasture land critical to maintaining the livelihoods and food security of populations in East Africa, according to FAO. On average, a swarm can travel up to 100 miles per day, and even a relatively small, 1 square kilometer swarm can consume in one day the amount of food sufficient for approximately 35,000 people.
- 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 the Horn of Africa, above-average rainfall in the region from September to December 2019 and 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 bands of hoppers—immature desert locusts without wings—and swarms of adult locusts, enabling several outbreaks to grow and develop into a regional upsurge, the second of three FAO levels classifying the scope 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 2019. 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 2020. Desert locusts reached Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, and the DRC 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. 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 to Ethiopia Michael A. Raynor declared a disaster due to the effects of the desert locust. On February 19, 2020, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Brian Neubert declared a disaster in Somalia for desert locust affected areas, 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.

### USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020 <sup>1</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/OFDA</b>			
<b>ETHIOPIA<sup>2</sup></b>			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$800,000
	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$7,000,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2020</b>			<b>\$7,800,000</b>
<b>KENYA</b>			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$4,000,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE KENYA RESPONSE IN FY 2020</b>			<b>\$4,000,000</b>
<b>SOMALIA</b>			
Implementing Partner	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$7,000,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE SOMALIA RESPONSE IN FY 2020</b>			<b>\$7,000,000</b>
<b>REGIONAL</b>			

Program Support	Regional	\$268,232
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE REGIONAL RESPONSE IN FY 2020</b>		<b>\$268,232</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020</b>		<b>\$19,068,232</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020</b>		<b>\$19,068,232</b>

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of March 6, 2020.

<sup>2</sup>The \$800,000 award to FAO's desert locust response in Ethiopia is also reported in the USG Ethiopia Complex Emergency fact sheet for FY 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](http://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](http://www.cidi.org).
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [www.reliefweb.int](http://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>