



# **REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

## **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ANIMAL INDUSTRY & FISHERIES**

### **PRESS STATEMENT ON THE STATUS OF THE DESERT LOCUST INVASION AND CONTROL IN UGANDA**

FAO Country Representative

Desert Locust Control Organization - East Africa Representative

Members of the Media Fraternity

Fellow Countrymen

Good morning!

***Why the Desert Locust after 70 years?***

Following changes in climate across the globe, there have been cyclonic wind movements across the Indian Ocean resulting in heavy rains and as a result creating a conducive environment for massive breeding of the Desert Locusts in Asia and Africa.

Consequently, large swarms of locusts from Yemen crossed into Africa through Somalia and Ethiopia and went into Kenya covering close to 30% of Kenya's vegetation cover. These are the worst affected areas on the Continent. Eritrea and Djibouti have large infestations as well now. Over the last week; mature adult swarms have been confirmed crossing into north eastern Uganda and northern Tanzania.

It is worth noting that whereas our neighbors in Kenya took 8 days to respond to the first attack of desert locusts, Uganda took less than 24 hours to respond and reduced the parental population.

The National Inter-ministerial Committee led by Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister wishes to inform the public as follows.



## ***State of Locust Invasion in Uganda:***

1. Locust Swarms in Uganda have now been confirmed in the following sub-regions: Karamoja, Teso, Acholi, Lango and Sebei. The existing swarms are classified as mature adult locusts that are mainly laying eggs. However, a new swarm of locusts entered Uganda from Kenya through Nakabat, Rupa sub-county at the border with Kenya, yesterday. Our field teams are following the swarm for effective control.
2. It is anticipated that the first swarms that invaded the country on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 laid eggs; and these eggs may hatch into hoppers – the most destructive stage of the desert locust lifecycle, anytime. Our technical teams and the UPDF are on the ground boosting surveillance to ensure that the emerging generation of locusts is controlled.
3. The crops in the region that may be affected by this outbreak include; sorghum, cassava, sweet potato, maize, millet, simsim, ground nuts, sunflower, cotton, citrus and mangoes
4. *Cost Benefit Analysis:* Government of Uganda recognizes that whereas the funding provided to control the locust invasion is being utilized and remains a source of interest to some parties, the greater loss and risk to the country would have been even worse if we did nothing given the feeding patterns of the desert locusts
5. *Potential Revenue Risk:* For some of the key crops that are vulnerable to the Desert Locust invasion in the affected areas; below is a summary of the export revenue earned by Uganda from these crops in 2018
  - a. Fruits and Vegetables: US\$ 40.6million
  - b. Maize: US\$ 106.8million
  - c. Cotton: US\$44.3million
  - d. Simsim: US\$ 26.6million

Collectively, this would come to US\$ 218.3million per annum potential revenue for Uganda that is at risk from just 4 crops of the 11 crops at stake if we did nothing

*Desert Locust Control Activities Costs in other countries:* In Algeria, Egypt and Morocco; a total of US\$3 trillion was spent to control the desert locusts' invasion.

6. Government of Uganda in collaboration with her partners – FAO and DLCO has, within all means possible, taken an all-out offensive approach within the Karamoja, Teso, Acholi, and Lango sub-regions to contain the situation. The initiatives undertaken include:

- a. *Coordination of relevant stakeholders:* Different stakeholder engagements have been conducted within the Karamoja, Teso and Acholi sub-regions to enlighten the public on the Desert Locust, its behavior, first response and what to avoid like eating dead locusts. This has been in collaboration with different government ministries, departments and agencies
- b. *Enhanced Surveillance (which involves studying the migration patterns and areas where the Desert Locusts could be laying eggs)*
  - i. Surveillance and GIS teams continue to work hand in hand with the support of the UPDF in the region to construct maps of sites where the eggs have been laid
  - ii. This will enable the technical staff to survey and monitor the hotspots for any locust outbreak.
  - iii. These surveillance maps will provide coordinates for the aircraft that will be used in the aerial spraying of the nymphs and immature locusts that will be hatched into the region in less than 2 weeks.

- c. *Procurement of Supplies*: A DLCO aerial spraying aircraft has been received in the country and is in Moroto as we speak. Ground spraying is also still being carried out as Government procures more chemical supplies to be used by the trained experts.
- d. *Sensitization and Awareness* creation in different fora has been done and continues to be done with different players including; Development Partners, Policy Makers, Inter-Ministerial Committee
- e. *Capacity Building*:
  - i. Capacity Building of Trainers of Trainers of 200 Technical staff has been conducted. They have in turn conducted; continuous training of extension officers, District Information Officers, District Production Officers, Regional media on identification, reporting and first response when locusts are sighted; another 500 are being trained in Acholi sub-region as we speak
  - ii. Over 1000 UPDF Officers have been trained on ground spraying and the exercise is still ongoing in different parts of the country.
- f. *Environmental Impact*: We are partnering with the National Environmental Management Agency and other partners to ensure that there are minimal effects to the environment during the desert locust control activities
- g. The supporting experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Desert Locust Control Organization and National Agricultural Research Organization are still in the region undertaking refresher training of extension workers and surveillance teams from the Ministry of Agriculture and Districts in the region

7. The Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries pledges to keep the nation updated on the developments and progress made in the effort to avert a food crisis and any other resultant impact in the Country.

**For God and My Country**

**Hon. Vincent Bamulangaki Ssempijja (MP)**

**Minister for Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries.**

