

**ANNUAL REPORT OF  
THE HUMANITARIAN / RESIDENT COORDINATOR  
ON THE USE OF CERF GRANTS**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Timor-Leste</b>
<b>Humanitarian / Resident Coordinator</b>	<b>Finn Reske-Nielsen</b>
<b>Reporting Period</b>	<b>January - December 2007</b>

**I. Executive Summary**

In 2007, CERF grants were needed in Timor-Leste for critical responses in three different sectors: Food Aid, Agriculture, and Coordination and Support Services. The need for the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) funding in the food aid and agriculture sector resulted from the time critical needs for response to a locust outbreak and a rice shortage. In the Coordination and Support Services sector, CERF funding was sought to improve emergency telecommunications in order to enhance the security of the humanitarian staff.

Food insecurity represents one of the most critical concerns in Timor-Leste, which is aggravated by the internal displacement crisis as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have lost their livelihoods. In the capital city of Dili, food security depends on income as subsistence agriculture is only limited in an urban environment. In rural areas, the majority of the population depends on subsistence agriculture and is very vulnerable to adverse weather and climate effects. The internal displacement crisis resulting from the civil unrest in 2006 added additional strain on many families. Approximately 30,000 persons are still sheltered in Dili IDP camps and continue to struggle to regain their livelihoods, while an estimated 70,000 persons reside with host families in the districts putting additional pressure on the food security of host communities.

This fragile food security situation was further aggravated by delayed and erratic rainfall as part of the El Niño phenomenon, which resulted in as much as 50 percent crop yield reduction in some of the worst-affected districts along the northern belt. Food insecurity was further compounded by a locust outbreak in 2007 in Bobonaro and Ermera districts which suffered from a significant outbreak of the tropical migratory locust, *Locusta migratoria migratorioides*, since the end of February. The locust infestation needed to be controlled immediately in order to prevent further damage to crops as well as the spread to other districts and therefore to safeguard the food security of 30,000 rice farming households and 50,000 maize farming households. Due to the short time frame, the CERF grants were essential to ensure a timely and adequate response.

At the same time, a regional rice crisis occurred, which resulted in a rice shortage in Timor-Leste in February and March 2007. This rice shortage also exacerbated the pre-election security situation giving rise to additional tensions in an already fragile environment. With these acute accumulated pressures in an already precarious food and nutrition situation. The World Food Programme (WFP) had used its in-country strategic food reserve stocks to distribute emergency ration to IDPs after the April 2006 crisis. Although donors responded to the Flash Appeal during the second half of 2006, continued assistance to the increasing number of IDPs started to deplete WFP's available stocks towards the end of 2006. The CERF grant bridged the resources gap until WFP received additional contributions from donors in response to the CAP 2007 for Timor-Leste, which was launched on 18 January 2007. The 2,093 MT of assorted food commodities (rice, vegetable oil, sugar and beans) procured with CERF funding provided a life-line for vulnerable populations.

Agency	Agency Project	Sector	Window*	Approved Amount \$ / Date	Disbursement Date
WFP	Emergency Food Assistance to IDPs and other vulnerable populations in Timor-Leste (06-WFP-341)	Food	Rapid Response	\$ 1,500,000 19-12-2006	05-01-2007
WFP	Provision of emergency telecommunication cluster services to the humanitarian community in Timor -Leste (07-WFP-076)	Coordination and support services	Rapid Response	\$ 209,571 14-12-2007	04-01-2008
FAO	Emergency Response to control locust outbreak in Timor -Leste (07-FAO-018)	Agriculture	Rapid Response	\$ 464,615 29-05-2007	08-06-2007
FAO	Emergency Response to Control a Locust Outbreak in Timor-Leste (07-FAO-013)	Agriculture	Rapid Response	\$ 626,378 02-04-2007	10-04-2007
Total				\$ 2,800,564	

<b>Total amount of humanitarian funding required and received (per reporting year)</b>	<b>Required:</b> \$36,346,541 (CAP 2007) <b>Received:</b> \$25,109,289 (CAP 2007) \$31,574,801 (Total Humanitarian Funding 2007)			
<b>Total amount of CERF funding received by funding window</b>	<b>Rapid Response:</b> \$2,800,564 <b>Underfunded:</b> \$0  <b>Grand Total:</b> \$2,800,564			
<b>Total amount of CERF funding for direct UN agency/IOM implementation and total amount forwarded to implementing partners</b>	Food Aid: <u>\$1,278,928</u> Coordination and Support Services: <u>\$209,571</u> Agriculture: <u>\$1,090,993</u> <b>Total UN agencies/IOM:</b> <u>\$2,579,492</u> Food Aid <u>\$221,072</u> <b>Total implementing partners:</b> <u>\$221,072</u>			
<b>Approximate total number of beneficiaries reached with CERF funding (disaggregated by sex/age if possible)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>under 5 years of age</b>	<b>Female (If available)</b>	<b>Male (If available)</b>
	721,065	Not known	Not known	Not known
<b>Geographic areas of implementation</b>	Food aid – all 13 districts of Timor-Leste, Locust response: Bobonaro, Ermera, Cova-Lima, and Liquica			

## **II. Coordination and Partnership-Building**

### **(a) Decision-making process:**

#### Food Aid

The request for CERF funding was based on the evaluation that a break in the food pipeline was imminent, which needed to be prevented urgently. This was due to the fact that WFP had used its in-country strategic food reserve stocks in response to the 2006 IDP crisis and stocks started to deplete towards the end of 2006.

#### Coordination and Support Services

In June/July of 2007, WFP undertook an assessment of the available security telecommunication services to study the needs, identify operational shortfalls and evaluate the response capacity, in order to meet the UN Security Phase two requirement of the country. The results of this study pointed to areas in which improvements were needed.

#### Agriculture

Joint Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries (MAFF) / Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) assessments in areas affected by locust infestations had revealed the risk of a significant outbreak, especially as the neighbouring Indonesian provinces in West Timor were experiencing a significant outbreak of the locust at the same time. It was recognised that timely aerial spraying was needed in order to control the outbreak, which required immediate funding.

### **(b) Coordination amongst the humanitarian country team:**

#### Food Aid

Food assistance and provision of food stocks were closely coordinated between the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion (MTRC)<sup>1</sup> of Timor-Leste and WFP. Food aid was also regularly discussed within the IASC Country Team, consisting of UN agencies and NGOs, and with liaison officers of the security forces.

#### Coordination and Support Services

The implementation of the CERF funded project to enhance security telecommunication in Timor-Leste was closely coordinated with the Joint NGO Safety Office (JINGO) in Timor-Leste and all UN humanitarian agencies. All UN Agencies and NGOs are currently receiving radio training through this project.

#### Agriculture

Action in plant protection is closely coordinated between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries (MAFF)<sup>2</sup> and FAO. Joint assessments have been undertaken in conjunction with the implementation of the locust control project.

### **(c) Partnerships:**

A partnership between the relevant Government Ministries and UN agencies was the key for the planning and implementation of the CERF funded projects. Partnerships with NGO implementing partners were important for the implementation of the Food Aid project. In addition to its partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and International NGOs (such as World Vision), WFP entered into Field Level Agreements with six local NGOs (FONGTIL, PROSPEK, Fratena, Matak, Rede Lian Bobonaro and FINA) for distribution of food commodities in Dili and the districts. NGOs in locust affected districts, such as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam), CARE, and Haburus Moris, were trained by FAO and involved, on a voluntary basis, in community information/awareness campaigns prior to control operations. All humanitarian partners are beneficiaries of the security telecommunications project.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Fourth Constitutional Government of Timor-Leste (in power since August 2007) renamed the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion (MTRC) to Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS).

<sup>2</sup> The Fourth Constitutional Government of Timor-Leste (in power since August 2007) renamed the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, and Fisheries (MAFF) to Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF).

**(d) Prioritization process:**

The projects in food aid and agriculture responded to a time critical need, and were therefore prioritised for submission to the CERF. The coordination and support services project was prioritised for submission to the CERF due to its nature of supporting life saving operations. Submissions were prioritised on the basis of discussions with the Humanitarian Coordinator, which had been preceded by discussions within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Timor-Leste or the UN Country Team (UNCT) respectively.

### **III. Implementation and Results**

#### **Rapid Response projects**

##### Food Aid

WFP had used its in-country strategic food reserve stocks to distribute emergency rations to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) after the April 2006 crisis. Although donors responded to the Flash Appeal for humanitarian food aid during the second half of 2006, continued assistance to the increasing number of IDPs started to deplete WFP's available stocks towards the end of 2006.

The 2006 crisis had already put heavy pressure on people's food security and as a consequence food shortages occurred. Adverse weather conditions due to El Niño and delayed rains threatened to have further unfavourable effects on the next crop. These had worsened the already fragile food security situation across Timor-Leste.

WFP approached CERF and was allocated a grant of \$1.5 million, which enabled WFP to immediately procure 2,093 MT of assorted food commodities (rice, vegetable oil, sugar and beans).

WFP was able to reach more than 240,000 vulnerable and food insecure people through this donation. The beneficiaries included 129,540 IDPs living in IDP camps in Dili and in the districts through general food distribution, 30,150 malnourished children under the age of five, pregnant and lactating women through the emergency maternal and child health programme, and 77,995 pupils in 378 primary schools through the emergency school feeding programme.

In addition, emergency food-for-work/asset activities were initiated on a small scale in Oecusse and Baucau districts for 3,385 food-insecure people, based on the recommendations of various WFP assessments. These activities aim at addressing short-term and long-term food insecurity by using food assistance as payment for labour on the creation of community-based agricultural and infrastructure assets.

The CERF grant also bridged the resources gap until WFP received additional contributions from donors in response to the Consolidated Appeal (CAP) 2007 launched in January. Supportive donors included New Zealand, USA, Japan, Canada, Australia, Ireland and ECHO.

Due to the timely disbursement of the CERF grant, WFP was able to keep a full food ration for beneficiaries during the most difficult time (lean season). Without this project, food insecurity would have been exacerbated and existing serious chronic malnutrition levels could have been elevated from already being among the worst levels in Asia (42.6 percent of children under five years of age are underweight: 46.7 percent are "too short" or stunted).

Working together with the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion (MTRC) of the Government of Timor-Leste and partners, WFP was able to provide necessary food assistance to the targeted populations as well as to monitor and evaluate the activities.

In addition to the partnership with IOM and International NGOs such as World Vision, WFP entered into Field Level Agreements with six local NGOs (FONGTIL, PROSPEK, Fratena, Matak, Rede Lian Bobonaro and FINA) for distribution of food commodities in Dili and the districts. This provided good opportunities for capacity building of these NGOs through necessary trainings to become a partner in the larger humanitarian community.

## Coordination and Support Services

WFP conducted an assessment in June/July 2007 to study the needs, identify operational shortfalls and the response capacity in the provision of security telecommunication services in Timor-Leste, in order to meet UN Security Phase two requirements.

Severe shortfalls were identified as a result of this assessment. Recommendations were made to the Timor-Leste Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) on how these shortfalls could be addressed to ensure that the minimum telecommunication standards could be implemented for the UN Country Team (UNCT).

As a result, the HC approached CERF, with strong endorsement by UNCT, to strengthen and expand the common Inter-Agency Security Telecommunication (IAET) services in the single UN common operational area of Dili.

WFP's FITTEST (Fast IT and Telecoms Emergency and Support Team) commenced the project in the first week of March 2008. Initial meetings have taken place with relevant partners such as UNDSS, UNMIT, UN agencies, international agencies and NGOs. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been instituted for the common radio room and a robust training regime has commenced with the Radio Operators.

In addition, the team visited relevant project sites, such as the radio repeater site in Dili, and conducted radio training for partners.

In the following three months, WFP's FITTEST will address the identified shortfalls, upgrade the existing network, install new security telecommunications facilities, and establish independent communication mechanisms.

WFP, in its capacity as the security telecommunication services provider within the Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (ETC), will coordinate and implement this project.

## Agriculture - Locust Control

The locust infestation during the beginning of 2007 was the most widespread and severe locust outbreak in the area since Timor-Leste's independence in 2002. The capacity of the Government to provide massive and urgent interventions was insufficient. The Plant Protection Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) had only three staff at headquarters, while the monitoring of plant pest and diseases at the district level was conducted by one general crop production staff in each district. Furthermore, appropriate equipment and inputs for locust control were not available in-country. FAO had been working with the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries in agriculture and food security sector in Timor-Leste since independence, and had therefore the advantage of having been involved with the Department of Crop Production staff at very early stage of implementation.

The Plant Protection Unit of MAFF was the main counterpart in the implementation. FAO strengthened the capacity of the unit in the survey of the outbreak, planning and decision-making on appropriate methodology for the implementation of locust control activities. Within the framework of the CERF funded project, FAO provided on-the-job training on effective locust outbreak control through locust experts from the Australian Plague and Locust Commission (APLC). The capacity of the Government to provide appropriate services on locust control to affected communities was therefore significantly strengthened. National and international NGOs in the affected districts, such as Oxfam, CARE, and Haburus Moris, were trained by FAO and involved, on a voluntary basis, in community information/awareness campaigns prior to control operations. A very good working relationship was also established between FAO and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in Timor Leste. ADF provided helicopter support for aerial surveys of locust swarms in order to provide a more rapid and effective locust control.

The neighbouring areas in Indonesian West Timor were under the same threat from a significant outbreak of the locust at the time. During the MAFF/FAO surveys in the Maliana area it became clear that locust filtered in from Indonesian West Timor. While this did not come as a surprise, as the environmental and vegetation conditions are identical, this cross-border migration of locusts complicated the situation. A coordinated control program on both sides of the border was needed to avert this situation.

Based on the survey results, planning commenced to undertake a coordinated aerial control by specially equipped helicopters and ground manual control program. This was used to reduce the size of the anticipated adult locust population. It was estimated that up to 8,000 ha of land would require treatment. As the outbreak was very intensive with bands and swarms in several sucos and districts, the use of a specialised helicopter fitted with ultra-low volume (ULV) application equipment to control the outbreak was the best option. Given the terrain and close proximity of the locust infestation to major watercourses in the area, aerial spraying with a bio-pesticide was chosen as the most rapid and environmentally safe option.

While the aerial control program targeted the majority of the locust infestations in the area, there was a requirement for complimentary manual control of locusts that directly threatened crops. Locust specific chemical pesticide, Fenitrothion, was chosen as it was faster acting. Plant protection officers carried out ground spraying after they had received training, ground control sprayers, and protective clothing from FAO. Simultaneously, local communities were trained to report on how to recognise and report outbreaks within their communities.

Realising the importance of the locust control operation for national food security and rural livelihoods and at the same time recognising the limitations of its staff capacity for a massive and urgent response, MAFF mobilised additional temporary staff to assist in the implementation. MAFF is now proposing the expansion and upgrading of the Plant Protection Unit and is applying for additional state funding. Monitoring of outbreaks and timely response will be decentralised and performed by the newly recruited District Plant Protection Officers.

Due to the timely provision of the CERF grant for rapid response, protection of the rice production was achieved, safeguarding the livelihoods of 30,000 rice farmers in the affected areas in four districts. The control operation limited the spread of the outbreak through the movement of swarms and restricted egg laying by locust adults in order to reduce the possibility of a larger population of nymphs and adults developing and surviving the dry season, which would have threatened the next main maize crop, and therewith the food security of 50,000 rural subsistence farming households, in the four affected districts. Also, the capacity of the Government to provide appropriate locust control services to affected communities was significantly strengthened through on-the-job training.

#### **(a) Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of the results is generally undertaken by the implementing agencies and in discussions with partners. The implementation of the locust control operation was periodically monitored and evaluated by MAFF, FAO and NGO partners. Locust control officers from the Locust Unit at FAO headquarters provided backstopping in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the control measures taken.

#### **(b) Initiatives that complemented CERF-funded projects**

As early detection of potential outbreaks is essential for the early and timely control of infestations, MAFF staff was trained in survey and monitoring techniques, and reporting systems were established within MAFF. As part of the monitoring and reporting system, a locust database is currently being developed. This additional activity is funded by AusAID to further strengthen and sustain the capacity of the newly established Plant Protection Unit. Additional equipment and motorcycles were also provided to the staff of the Unit for surveying and timely control of localised outbreaks. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Timor-Leste and the Government of Indonesia was signed at the end of 2007, facilitated by FAO, in order to undertake joint control of cross-border locust outbreaks on Timor Island.

### **IV. Lessons learned**

The 2007 CERF applications were processed smoothly. The quick release of the agreements and funding were achieved, which was extremely satisfactory and based on lessons learned from the 2006 experience.

## V. Results

Sector/ Cluster	CERF projects per sector	Amount disbursed (\$)	Number of Beneficiaries (by sex/age)	Implementing Partners	Expected Results/Outcomes	Actual results and improvements for the target beneficiaries
<b>Food Aid</b>	06-WFP-341 Emergency Food Assistance to IDPs and other vulnerable populations in Timor-Leste	1,500,000	241,065 vulnerable people including IDPs  Male:118,660 Female: 122,405  Children under 18: 169,940 Adults: 71,125	FONGTIL, PROSPEK, Fratena, Matak, Rede Lian Bobonaro and FINA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide food assistance to 219,000 vulnerable people including IDPs in order to avoid hunger and malnutrition, and protect livelihoods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immediate procurement of 2,093 mt of assorted food commodities (rice, vegetable oil, sugar and beans) enabled WFP to continue to provide a full food ration to 241,065 vulnerable people including IDPs during the 'lean' season.</li> </ul>
<b>Coordination and Support Services</b>	07-WFP-076 Provision of emergency telecommunication cluster services to the humanitarian community	209,571	All national and international UN staff members and humanitarian agencies present in the operational areas (20 U.N. Agencies, 770 U.N. Staff, 150 NGOs)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rectify shortfalls in MOSS (Minimum Operating Security Standards) compliance for security telecommunication s including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Institute standard equipment to increase network security.</li> <li>▪ VHF radio coverage for Dili/Districts</li> <li>▪ Standardized vehicle tracking procedures for UN agencies</li> <li>▪ Training for all UN/NGO staff</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Basic survey and preparatory work have been ongoing with relevant agencies to achieve objectives.</li> <li>▪ The project commenced on six March with deployment of FITTEST team and is scheduled to last four months.</li> </ul>

Sector/ Cluster	CERF projects per sector	Amount disbursed (\$)	Number of Beneficiaries (by sex/age)	Implementing Partners	Expected Results/Outcomes	Actual results and improvements for the target beneficiaries
<b>Agriculture - Locust Control</b>	07-FAO-018 07-FAO-013 Emergency Response to control a locust outbreak in Timor-Leste	1,090,993	30,000 rice farming households (estimated beneficiaries: 180,000);  50,000 Maize farming households (estimated beneficiaries: 300,000)	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protect rice production to safeguard livelihood of 30,000 rice farmers in the affected areas in four districts;</li> <li>▪ Limit the potential for spread of the outbreak into other districts by the movement of swarms; restrict egg laying by adult locusts to reduce the possibility of a larger population of nymphs and adults developing and surviving the dry season to directly threaten the next main maize crop,</li> <li>▪ Strengthen the capacity of the Government to provide appropriate locust control to the affected communities through on-the-job training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rice production was protected and livelihoods of 30,000 rice farmers in the affected areas in four districts safeguarded;</li> <li>▪ Outbreak was limited; Egg laying restricted and therefore reduced the possibility of a larger population of nymphs and adults developing and surviving the dry season to directly threaten the next main maize crop, hence the food security of 50,000 rural subsistent households, expected late in 2007, in the four affected districts.</li> <li>▪ Strengthened the capacity of the Government to provide appropriate locust control to affected communities through on-the-job training.</li> <li>▪ Plant Protection Unit of MAF is the main counterpart in the implementation. FAO has strengthened the capacity of the unit in the survey of the outbreak, to make planning and decision on appropriate methodology for the implementation of Locust infestation.</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,800,564</b>	<b>721,065</b>			



## VI. CERF IN ACTION: Success stories



World Food  
Programme

### **CERF grants helped to provide food security to vulnerable groups in times of food shortages**

One year after the 2006 civil unrest in Timor-Leste, the issue of internal displacement remained unsolved, forcing many Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to continue to live under food insecure circumstances.

Towards the end of 2006, WFP faced a dilemma as the prolonged IDP assistance led to the depletion of WFP food stocks. Simultaneously, there were the early signs of a regional rice shortage, which added even more pressure. Additional resource mobilisation efforts had proven useful in avoiding WFP food pipeline breaks.

The CERF funding enabled WFP to procure 2,093 MT of assorted food commodities (rice, beans, sugar and vegetable oil) for timely distributions.

The food aid was channelled through a consolidated food aid response mechanism, which was developed in collaboration with the Government, UN agencies and NGO partners to prevent further deterioration of nutritional status among camp residents and to protect livelihoods in a post-crisis situation.

Metinaro IDP camp was one of the camps that benefited from the WFP food aid intervention, generated from the CERF grant.



**Food distribution at Metinaro IDP camp (Photo© WFP)**

Located 35 km to the east of Dili city, Metinaro IDP camp is one of the largest IDP camps, housing approximately 9,500 IDPs. The IDPs are seeking shelter near the National Defence Force of Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) base as this location is perceived as more secure, but at the same time they are more vulnerable to food insecurity in this area, as the camp is surrounded by barren terrains. The IDPs do not have many opportunities to participate in agricultural or income-generating activities. Without food aid, the deterioration of the nutritional status amongst these IDPs would have been unavoidable.

When WFP visited Metinaro camp, Mr Angelo, the camp manager, received WFP in the shade of a tarpaulin extended from the open WFP container where food aid distribution was in progress. Mr. Angelo insisted that he should be in the midst of all the activities in order to deliver food assistance to the camp residents in an efficient and fair manner with the volunteer force in the camp.

“WFP assorted food commodities of rice, beans, and vegetable oil are the only vital food sources for the majority of IDPs living in this camp. Without this assistance, it would be quite difficult for us to live here” he said. “In particular, in February and March 2007 during the rice crisis when there was hardly any rice available in the market, WFP rice was very much appreciated by us”, he continued.



World Food Programme

## Emergency telecommunications services for the humanitarian community in Timor-Leste

The continued insecurity in Timor-Leste and the lack of proper communication tools resulted in difficult and hazardous working conditions for humanitarian staff. In order to ensure safe operations for humanitarian NGO and UN staff throughout Timor-Leste and to meet UN security standards, a reliable common security telecommunication system was required, including being able to monitor and track field missions for the safety and security of staff.

The ongoing WFP project will address these gaps in telecommunications. The existing network will be upgraded and its coverage expanded, new security telecommunications facilities will be installed, as well as independent communication mechanisms and other standard operating procedures in accordance with UN security requirements. By completion of the project, UN agencies on the ground will have a 24/7 operational radio room (fully equipped, staffed, and trained); VHF repeater network for UN agencies, their implementing partners and participating NGOs; VHF and HF network and frequency management; and vehicle and staff movement tracking.



## CERF Grants Support Control of Locust Outbreak in Timor-Leste

Food insecurity represents one of the most critical humanitarian concerns in Timor-Leste. In the first half of 2007, delayed and erratic rainfall as a consequence of the El Niño effect compounded this situation. Farmers harvested 50 percent lower yield than expected in some of the worst-affected districts along the northern belt. Food insecurity was aggravated by an outbreak of the tropical migratory locust, *Locusta migratoria migratorioides* since the beginning of February 2007, in particular in Bobonaro and Ermera districts, and later on in Liquica and Covalima districts.



**Nymphs in field (Photo © FAO)**

appropriate control, the infestation could potentially have



**Ground spraying by MAF staff © FAO)**

Three main implications for food security can be highlighted as a direct result of the locust outbreak:

1) Without immediate control, the infestation could potentially have expanded into all of the rice cultivating areas in Bobonaro and Covalima, which are the two most important rice production districts, providing 25 percent of rice harvest in the country. This would have affected the livelihoods and food security situation of 30,000 rice farming households.

2) The weather condition in the affected areas was very favourable to the locusts' reproduction. Therefore, the outbreak, if not properly controlled, would have continued into the second rice planting season in June/July, as well as into the next main maize planting season starting towards the end of October. Food security

of 50,000 maize farming households in the four affected districts could have been severely impacted.

3) Locusts were also damaging the pasture areas; therefore increased mortality of grazing animals in the infested areas would have had to be expected within a few months, if the severe outbreak had not been properly controlled.



**Nymphs in rice field (Photo © FAO)**

In late March, some 1,059 ha of cropland was infested and 4,459 ha of crops were affected. A mission, conducted jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), noted that some 4,500 households were affected facing immediate food insecurity. Locusts had damaged 80 percent of the maize crops and destroyed 70 percent of rice seedlings for the next crop as well as between five and 15 percent of rice crops were destroyed. Planning commenced to undertake a coordinated control program by air with a specially equipped helicopter and with ground manual spraying to reduce the size of the anticipated adult population (estimated up to 8,000 ha required treatment). With an initial CERF grant of \$626,000 in April 2007, FAO provided technical and operational assistance to the MAFF for critical locust control and monitoring operations. FAO was



**Successful control of highly gregarious migratory locust using the bio-pesticide Green Guard (Photo © FAO)**



**Locust outbreak in Timor-Leste (Photo © FAO)**

also supplying urgently needed pesticide, ULV sprayers and other key equipment as well as training to control the infestation to further spread. A follow-up FAO/MAFF survey during May revealed that the number of households that have suffered crop losses had risen to 7,500 and the infestation had expanded southwards to the district of Covalima risking affecting 20,000 ha of rice cultivation areas in all western districts. The additional May CERF grant of \$465,000 allowed for more flying hours with the spraying helicopter as the budget for the aerial campaign had to be adjusted, not least because the area to be controlled had expanded.

Given the terrain and close proximity of the locust infestation to major watercourses in the area, use of a specialized helicopter and control with a bio-pesticide (Green Guard®) was the best option for a rapid and environmentally safe aerial control operation. Complimentary manual control of locusts directly threatening crops was undertaken on the ground with fast acting locust specific chemical pesticides (Fenitrothion). Plant protection officers carried out this important activity following training from FAO, using ground control sprayers and protective clothing provided by FAO.



**Locust spraying in Timor-Leste (Photo © OCHA)**

The control operation funded by the CERF Rapid Response grant:

- Protected rice production and safeguarded livelihoods of 30,000 rice farmers in the affected areas in four districts;
  - Limited the outbreak into other districts; restricted egg laying by adult locusts to reduce the possibility of a larger population of nymphs and adults
- developing and surviving the dry season, which would have threatened the following main maize crop and therefore the food security of 50,000 rural subsistence farmer households in late 2007 in the four affected districts;
- Strengthened the capacity of the government to provide appropriate locust control service to affected communities, through on-the-job training.

## List of Acronyms

**ADF-** Australian Defence Force

**APLC-** Australian Plague and Locust Commission

**CERF-** Central Emergency Response Fund

**ECHO-** European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office

**ETC-** Emergency Telecommunication Cluster

**FAO-** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

**FITEST-** Fast IT and Telecoms Emergency and Support Team

**FONGTIL-** Timor Leste NGO Forum

**HC-** Humanitarian Coordinator

**IASC-** Inter- Agency Standing Committee

**IDPs-** Internally Displaced Persons

**IOM-** International Organization for Migration

**JINGO-** Joint NGO Safety Office

**MAFF-** Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries

**MTRC-** Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion

**NGO-** Non-governmental organization

**OXFAM-** Oxford Committee for Famine Relief

**SOPs-** Standard Operating Procedures

**ULV-** Ultra low volume

**UNCT-** United Nations Country Team

**UNDSS-** United Nations Department of Safety and Security

**UNMIT-** United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste

**WFP-** World Food Programme