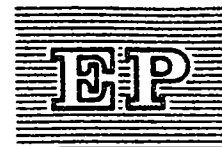




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## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

### WORK OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP FOR DESERTIFICATION CONTROL

#### Report of the Executive Director

Na.80-0100

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The second session of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control (Nairobi, 12-14 March 1980) was preceded by a meeting of the Co-sponsors on 10 and 11 March. The draft report of the Consultative Group on the session (DESCON 2/37) and the background papers presented to it can be made available to members of the Governing Council.
2. The session was attended by the following co-sponsors of the Consultative Group: United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Development Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and World Meteorological Organization.
3. The following core members were represented: France, Germany, Federal Republic of, India, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, Upper Volta, United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, and Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel.
4. Observers or invited participants from the following Governments attended the meeting: Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
5. Invited participants from the World Food Programme and the International Labour Organisation also attended the meeting.

## II. PREPARATIONS FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP

6. During January - March 1980, missions headed by senior officers of UNEP, in which representatives of the Desertification Unit and UNSO participated, visited various co-sponsors, potential donor countries and institutions to consult on the preparations for The Consultative Group's second session on the projects presented and on the general procedures of the work of the Group. These missions were well received, and in almost all instances at the highest level; the Executive Director expressed his gratitude for this during the Group's second session.

## III. PROJECT PROPOSALS

7. A total of 27 project proposals were presented to the Group. Of these 20, from 13 countries of the Sudano Sahelian-region, were submitted by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, while 7, from 5 countries, were submitted by the Desertification Unit.

8. All the project proposals submitted by Governments for consideration by the Consultative Group were supported by written assurances, addressed to the Executive Director of UNEP or the Director of the UNSO, indicating the priority accorded to the projects, their technical correctness, agreement to the costing and the level of financial commitment to the project by the Government. Most of the projects had 60 per cent or more of their total cost secured before presentation to the Consultative Group.

#### IV. RESULTS OF THE SESSION

##### A. Review of projects

9. To facilitate the Group's work, the Executive Director of UNEP, proposed, on behalf of the co-sponsors, that ad hoc groups of interested parties should meet to discuss the 27 projects presented to the meeting. The Group agreed to this procedure.

10. Twenty-six projects received declarations of support from one or more of the categories of participants, namely: donor countries, United Nations organizations, and financial institutions. Two projects received declarations of support from United Nations organizations only. One project received declaration of support from a financial institution. Seven projects received declarations of support from donor countries. Fourteen projects received declarations of support from two categories of participants; of these, support for 11 came from donor countries and United Nations organizations; of the remaining three, two received support from United Nations agencies and financial institutions and one from a financial institution and a donor country. Only two projects received declarations of support from all three categories of participants.

##### B. Follow up Action and Co-ordination of offers to Finance Projects

11. The Consultative Group agreed that:

(a) UNEP would immediately convey the declarations of support to potential donors and recipients, as appropriate;

(b) Where co-ordination of contributions to individual projects was needed the main responsibility rested with recipient Governments, which should make specific arrangements with potential donors and co-ordinate action at the field level, with competent international bodies providing advice on request. UNDP resident representative would extend all required assistance to Governments in that respect;

(c) Co-ordination should be adapted to the nature of each specific project;

(d) There should be no duplication or overlapping of existing co-ordinating mechanisms;

(e) The Consultative Group's role of mobilizing financing did not imply centralization of that function;

(f) The catalytic and co-ordinating role of UNEP in the whole process was recognized.

12. Representatives of donor countries indicated that the appropriate authorities in their countries would make early contact with prospective recipients of assistance, in order to facilitate those arrangements, and that they would keep the Executive Director informed of actions taken.

13. Representatives of donor institutions reiterated the need for requests from potential recipient countries to comply with the rules and regulations of their institutions.

14. The Executive Director of UNEP reiterated the fact that the local UNDP resident representative was also the representative of UNEP. He further confirmed that progress reports would be submitted to the Consultative Group on projects supported by financial resources raised with its assistance, to allow the Group to exercise its co-ordinating function in respect of such projects and enable it, where necessary to assist in the solution of problems that might arise.

#### C. Future work of the Consultative Group

15. The Group agreed to the Executive Director's proposals regarding its future work:

(a) That the interval between circulation of project documents and the convening of Consultative Group meetings would be increased from three to six months;

(b) That three months after receipt of the documents, UNEP/UNSO missions would be sent to potential donors to ascertain their interest in specific projects or project components;

(c) That potential recipients would then be invited to contact potential donors to answer queries and provide further information.

16. That procedure would ensure that by the time of the Group's meeting, donors would be in a better position to envisage specific commitments. They could then indicate whether the whole sum required for a given project could be provided, or whether gaps remained which the Consultative Group could then seek to have filled.

17. The Executive Director also suggested that the Group would review a smaller number of projects at each of its meetings, which could be held at more frequent intervals. The Group expressed support for that suggestion also.

D. General remarks

18. It was widely emphasized that desertification control was not an isolated activity, but an integral part of the economic and social development of the countries concerned. In that connexion, the need for UNEP and UNSO to give more support to the promotion of action at the national level, and also within the framework of CILSS, which took an overall approach to the problem at the level of the Sahelian region, was stressed.

19. The main aim of the Consultative Group's second session was to move to the operational phase of its activities. The Executive Director indicated his satisfaction that that goal had been achieved. Although no specific commitments had been forthcoming, the results of the Consultative Group's meeting in terms of support for projects could be considered a positive first step in mobilizing resources to combat desertification.

20. The Executive Director indicated that because of his expectation that more potential donors would opt to become members of the core group, he would expect the Group not to insist on the ceiling of 30 members. The meeting raised no objection.

21. At the closing meeting of the session, the representatives of Australia and Japan announced that their Governments had decided to change their status in the Group from observers to members of the core group.

V. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE  
GOVERNING COUNCIL

22. The Governing Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the present report and approve the agreement recorded therein;

(b) Take note with appreciation of the work of the Consultative Group at its second session and of the declarations of support expressed by several participants during the session, and urge them to translate these declarations into specific commitments in the near future;

(c) Request the Executive Director to follow up the results of the work of the Group's second session with a view to ensuring proper implementation of the agreements reached;

(d) Call on the Consultative Group to intensify its efforts to assist the Executive Director in the mobilization of financial resources needed for the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.