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CO-ORDINATION QUESTIONS

Addendum

Report of the Executive Director on the Third Joint Meeting of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the bureau of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the bureau of its Governing Council.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977, the General Assembly urged, inter alia, that the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the bureau of the Commission on Human Settlements should meet biannually with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the bureau of its Governing Council to review together their respective priorities and programmes for improving human settlements and to strengthen and extend co-operation between the two organizations. 1/ The two bureaux held their third joint meeting, together with the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) and the Executive Director of UNEP, at Nairobi on 4 and 5 December 1980. 2/

2. The joint meeting adopted its report on 5 December 1980. 3/

II. Consideration of discussion paper

3. The joint meeting had before it a discussion paper, prepared jointly by the secretariats of UNCHS and UNEP, on co-operation between them and review of their respective priorities and programmes.

A. Format of discussion paper

4. In its review of the discussion paper, the joint meeting expressed the view that it would be helpful to have discussion papers structured according to the issues, areas of co-operation, etc., set forth in the report of the second joint bureau meeting. The joint meeting also suggested that the discussion paper should include estimated costs to UNEP and UNCHS of the various on-going and proposed co-operative projects.

B. Current co-operative activities

5. In discussing current co-operative activities between UNEP and UNCHS, the joint meeting stressed the need for Governments to be provided with periodic information on the status of on-going projects.

1/ In its resolution 35/77B of 5 December 1980, the General Assembly, noting the recommendations of the Commission on Human Settlements at its third session and of the Governing Council of UNEP at its eighth session that the joint bureau meetings should be held annually, approved the holding of joint bureau meetings once a year rather than on a biannual basis.

2/ A report on the first joint meeting was submitted to the Council at its seventh session in document UNEP/GC.7/11; a report on the second joint meeting was submitted to the Council at its eighth session in document UNEP/GC.8/4.

3/ The report of the joint meeting, together with the discussion paper, which was restructured at the request of the joint meeting, will be made available on request to delegations to the Governing Council at its ninth session.

III. Projects under joint preparation

6. The joint meeting took note of the fact that the Government of Mexico had initiated implementation of the proposed joint UNEP/UNCHS project entitled "Environmental impact assessment on urban development in the Valley of Mexico", which was closely related to the UNEP-supported project in Brazil entitled "Development and application of appropriate environmental impact assessment and management methodologies for the industrial/touristic corridor area between Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo".
7. With regard to the proposed joint project entitled "Guidelines on environmental aspects of human settlements planning and management", the view was expressed that the guidelines should be widely discussed by Governments, agencies and financing organizations before they were finalized. They might be recommended by the governing bodies of UNEP and UNCHS for use by both donor and recipient Governments, as well as multilateral organizations, in designing human settlements projects.
8. Support was expressed for giving priority to the development of guidelines envisaged in the joint activities of UNEP and UNCHS. Another important area of co-operative activity was information, and, in that context, co-operation with non-governmental organizations was considered useful and desirable. The joint meeting was of the opinion that, in general, priority consideration should be given to those activities that were designed in sufficient detail for immediate implementation.
9. The two Executive Directors informed the meeting of the co-operation between UNEP and UNCHS on the preparations for the 1982 state of the environment report and the 1985 global report on human settlements.
10. The meeting welcomed the efforts made by the two secretariats in the utilization of UNEP's non-convertible currencies for joint projects such as the UNCHS/UNEP project in Ankara, Turkey, on "Technical assistance in metropolitan planning" as well as their on-going discussions concerning the further utilization of such currencies. The hope was expressed that at future joint bureau meetings, relevant proposals would be presented in greater detail and precision and would also include a greater variety of projects.
11. The joint meeting also urged UNEP and UNCHS, in their joint activities, to intensify co-operation with other United Nations bodies having relevant expertise.
12. The joint meeting recommended that, in developing the principles and substantive content of the medium-term plans of UNEP and UNCHS for 1984-1989, due regard should be given to the New International Development Strategy, recently adopted by the General Assembly. Similarly, activities of UNEP and UNCHS in the field of water supply and waste management in urban and rural areas should be developed within the context of the International Decade for Drinking Water and Sanitation (1981-1990), with emphasis on the environmental implications of development of human settlements infrastructures.

13. Stress was placed on the need to undertake follow-up activities based on the conclusions of the regional seminars on alternative patterns of development and life styles, as well as of other similar seminars and symposiums convened by UNEP, the conclusions of which contained important guidelines and recommendations on the environmental aspects of settlements development.

14. The joint meeting welcomed the intention of UNEP and UNCHS to give special attention in their medium-term plans to the following objectives:

(a) Amelioration of the environmental conditions of low-income settlements through the provision of basic infrastructure and services;

(b) Provision and conservation of energy in the planning and management of human settlements;

(c) Environmentally sound development and preservation of fragile ecosystems, such as arid lands, humid tropics, tropical rain forests and coastal zones, in relation to the planning and development of human settlements;

(d) Development and preservation of agricultural land in relation to the growth and development of urban and rural settlements;

(e) Environmental stress induced by very large urban areas;

(f) Appropriate technology for human settlements development;

(g) Water supply and waste management problems in urban and rural settlements, in view of the fact that a high percentage of all deaths in developing countries are related to deficiencies in water supply and waste disposal.

IV. Proposed dates for sessions of the UNEP Governing Council
and the Commission on Human Settlements in 1982

15. The meeting recommended:

(a) That the UNEP Governing Council session of special character and the tenth regular session of the Governing Council should be held during the period 10 May to 4 June 1982.

(b) That the fifth session of the Commission on Human Settlements should be held from 26 April to 5 May 1982.

V. Translation and Interpretation for joint bureau meetings

16. With one exception, the members of the two bureaux felt that future joint meetings should be provided with interpretation facilities and documentation in those official languages of the United Nations spoken by members attending the meeting. The meeting agreed to recommend this to their respective governing bodies. It also agreed to recommend that that the joint bureau meetings should be held immediately before or after other United Nations meetings for which interpretation is provided, such as the inter-sessional informal consultations with Governments held annually by UNEP in the first half of December, so that the extra expenditure would be confined to the daily subsistence allowances for the interpreters, their travel costs being met from the budget of the other meeting.

17. One member expressed serious reservations with respect to the proposed recommendation: some Governments, including his own, had on various occasions expressed doubts about the usefulness of the joint bureau meetings in cost-benefit terms, and any recommendation which would involve extra costs would therefore be undesirable. In that connexion, he pleaded for discontinuation of the joint bureau meetings. Another member stated that the reasons for holding the joint meetings were still valid.
