



# UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/36/144

23 September 1981

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: CHINESE/ENGLISH/  
FRENCH/RUSSIAN/  
SPANISH

Thirty-sixth session  
Agenda item 69 (j)

## DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION: ENVIRONMENT

### Implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification

#### Note by the Secretary-General

In paragraph 6 of resolution 33/88 of 15 December 1978, the General Assembly requested the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to report to it annually on the implementation of the Plan of Action in the Sudano-Sahelian region. In paragraph 8 of resolution 34/187 of 18 December 1979 and in paragraph 9 of resolution 35/72 of 5 December 1980, the Assembly requested the Governing Council to continue to report to it annually, through the Economic and Social Council. The Council's response to these requests is contained in the attached report, which also incorporates under section V the report requested of the Council by paragraph 5 of resolution 35/72 on the possibility of including Benin in the list of countries which receive assistance through the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in implementing the Plan of Action in the region.

ANNEX

Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment  
Programme on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat  
Desertification submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions  
33/88, 34/187 and 35/72

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THE SUDANO-  
SAHELIAN REGION

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 33/88 of 15 December 1978, 34/187 of 18 December 1979 and 35/72 of 5 December 1980. The first of these resolutions requested the Governing Council of UNEP to submit an annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region. This request was reiterated in resolutions 34/187 and 35/72, which requested the Governing Council to continue to report annually, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Plan in the region. By decision 9/22 B of 26 May 1981, a/, paragraph 5, the Council authorized the Executive Director to submit his report on the implementation of the Plan of Action in the Sudano-Sahelian region (UNEP/GC.9/8/Add.1), together with the decision, to the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session. Paragraph 3 of the decision, whereby the Council decided to include Benin among the countries eligible to receive assistance through the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, constitutes a response to paragraph 5 of resolution 35/72. Relevant discussions during the Governing Council are reflected in chapter III, paragraph 99 and chapter V, paragraphs 251 and 252, of the report of the Council on the work of its ninth session. b/

2. The report describes the implementation of the Plan in the Sudano-Sahelian region since July 1980, when the last report of the Governing Council to the General Assembly was prepared. It also includes the Executive Director's comments and recommendations regarding the invitation by the General Assembly to the Council, in paragraph 5 of resolution 35/72, that it consider including Benin in the list of countries receiving support through the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) and, in response to paragraph 7 of Governing Council decision 8/17 of 29 April 1980, an account of UNSO's operational expenditures for 1978-1980 and their place within UNSO's total operational expenditures related to its anti-desertification mandate.

## II. PLANNING, PROGRAMMING AND PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

3. In developing the initial desertification control programme for the region, UNSO has launched a series of interagency planning and programming missions to the countries concerned, designed:

(a) To assess the problem of desertification in the countries, including their causes and consequences;

(b) To review ongoing activities relevant to desertification control;

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a/ The text of the decision is annexed to the present report.

b/ Official Records of the United Nations, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/36/25).

(c) To discuss with Governments the preparation of national plans for combating desertification, including appropriate institutional machinery for implementation, co-ordination and monitoring;

(d) To assist in the identification, formulation and appraisal of priority projects submitted by Governments for assistance in resource mobilization.

4. As noted in the Executive Director's report to the Council at its eighth session (UNEP/GC.8/6), 108 priority projects, some of which are already operational, were identified by Governments in the course of the above-mentioned UNSO missions as falling within the scope of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and submitted to UNSO for assistance in mobilizing the additional financial resources required for their implementation. Since then, further consultations with a number of Governments have raised the total number of project proposals to 118, requiring an investment of \$644 million, of which a total of \$401 million has been committed from bilateral and multilateral sources, including the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities, which is managed by UNSO.

5. In its decision 8/17 of 29 April 1980, the UNEP Governing Council added Djibouti to the list of countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region and included Guinea and Guinea-Bissau among the countries eligible to receive assistance through UNSO. This decision was endorsed by the UNDP Governing Council in its decision 80/45 of 30 June 1980 and noted with satisfaction by the General Assembly in its resolution 35/72 of 5 December 1980. In response to these additional mandates, UNSO sent a planning and programming mission to Djibouti in November 1980. Discussions are taking place with the Government on the mission's findings and recommendations, and approval of the final report, including the priority projects which will form part of the initial desertification control programme in Djibouti, is expected shortly. A similar mission will visit Guinea in early March 1981, and consultations are taking place concerning the timing of programming missions to Chad, Guinea-Bissau and Uganda.

### III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

6. As a follow-up to its planning, programming and project identification activities, UNSO has initiated various projects and provided assistance for their implementation from multilateral and bilateral financing sources directly or through the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities. UNSO efforts since July 1980 have resulted in mobilizing resources in the amount of \$14 million for 21 projects. These include \$4.6 million from Trust Fund resources, in addition to direct multilateral, bilateral and recipient Government contributions to the projects. UNSO will submit six projects to the third meeting of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control, which will be convened by the Executive Director in August 1981. These projects have an estimated total cost of \$15.3 million, of which \$4.4 million have already been secured and \$10.9 million of additional financing is required.

7. The projects in respect of which UNSO has secured financing or obtained expressions of interest from potential donors cover a number of substantive areas, the most important of which are: range and livestock management; forestry; water resources management; sand dune fixation; institutional support for policy planning, co-ordination and monitoring of programme implementation; and the development of alternative or supplementary livelihood systems and/or energy sources with a view to easing the strain from overgrazing and the cutting of fuelwood. The main projects in these areas to which UNSO has been providing assistance since July 1980 are described below.

#### Range and livestock

8. In Ethiopia, UNSO is contributing, from Trust Fund resources and jointly with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), a combined amount of \$2.1 million to assist in the management of a Government-executed long-term programme for the rehabilitation of forests and grazing and agricultural land. In Mauritania, UNSO is financing a feasibility study carried out by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) to develop a project for the protection of rangelands in the south-eastern section of the country, which is one of the key areas in its pastoral economy. On a regional basis, UNSO is financing, jointly with UNDP, a training project in **rangeland** management techniques, specially designed for national personnel from ministries and departments concerned with livestock production. The training is provided at the Ecole Tropicale Supérieure de Médecine Vétérinaire in Dakar. UNESCO is acting as executing agency for the project.

#### Forestry

9. In Niger, a Government-executed project for the establishment of an expanded green belt around Niamey has been initiated with joint financing from the Government, UNEP and UNSO and plans are being made for additional afforestation around eight towns of the country. In Upper Volta, the first phase of a project for village afforestation in the central region south of the capital was started in September 1980 with contributions from UNSO, as well as from the Government and the villages themselves, which are actively participating in the project.

#### Utilization, management and conservation of water resources

10. In Cape Verde, UNSO is providing complementary assistance, through a \$600,000 contribution to the Trust Fund from the Government of Italy, to an ongoing programme for surface water and groundwater exploration and utilization. The project, for which the United Nations is acting as executing agency, is also receiving support from the Government, UNDP and UNICEF. In Mauritania, a major project costing \$4.5 million has been initiated with a view to assisting the Government in the rehabilitation and construction of small earth dams for the collection, conservation and optimum utilization of surface water. Contributions to the project, which is being executed jointly by the UNDP Office for Projects Execution (UNDP/OPE) and FAO, are being provided by the Government, UNSO, UNDP,

UNCDF and the United Nations Emergency Operation. In Senegal, UNSO is supporting a major new project for the conservation and management of ground-water resources in the country, based on the findings of a completed project, which it had funded jointly with UNDP, on water management for Dakar and the northern littoral. This project will also utilize information from an UNSO-financed pilot project for the artificial recharge of selected aquifers, which was completed in December 1980.

#### Stabilization of moving sand dunes

11. In Mauritania, UNSO is supporting a major project for the identification and study of the major types of moving sand dunes and the various possible means of stabilizing them. This project, for which UNDP/OPE is acting as executing agency, will develop technologies which could be applied in other countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region. In Somalia, UNSO is also assisting a major Government-executed project for the stabilization of coastal sand dunes, which are moving inland on a broad front. Australia has contributed \$120,000 to the Trust Fund for this project.

#### Policy planning, co-ordination and monitoring

12. In Kenya, UNSO's support includes assistance to the Government, with UNESCO as executing agency, in strengthening its institutional machinery and preparing work programmes for desertification control. UNSO is also providing advisory services to Somalia, with FAO as executing agency, and to Mauritania, with UNDP/OPE as executing agency, for the preparation of national plans of action to combat desertification. In the Sudan, institutional support is being provided, with UNESCO as executing agency, to the National Desertification Control Co-ordinating and Monitoring Unit with a \$300,000 contribution to the Trust Fund from the Netherlands Government.

13. In addition to the kinds of project described above, UNSO, on behalf of UNEP, is placing increasing emphasis on projects involving alternative and supplementary livelihood systems and sources of energy where existing traditional socio-economic activities contribute markedly to the process of desertification. In the Northern Kordofan province of the Sudan, a programme for the replanting of acacia senegal, a tree which produces gum arabic, is characteristic of this approach. It is being financed by the Trust Fund with a \$1.5 million contribution from the Netherlands Government and will serve the dual purpose of soil stabilization and the growing of a drought-resistant cash crop. Also in the Sudan, an UNSO-financed feasibility study is being carried out for the establishment of multipurpose fuelwood plantations around Khartoum to help solve the area's acute energy crisis. In the Gambia, UNSO is supporting a project for the preparation of an integrated energy master plan for which the World Bank is acting as the executing agency. In Mali, a preparatory mission visited Bamako in February 1981 to examine the possibility of establishing industrial plant for manufacturing solar energy products, including pumps, cooking stoves and water heaters.

14. It should be noted that, in addition to the donor Governments mentioned above that have contributed to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities, many other donor Governments have been assisting projects forming part of the region's desertification control programme on a bilateral basis.

#### IV. CO-ORDINATION AND INTERORGANIZATIONAL CO-OPERATION

15. UNSO has maintained close working contact with other bodies concerned, both within and outside the United Nations system. In January 1981, it participated in a meeting of UNDP resident representatives in the member States of CILSS to discuss the preparation of the third cycle of country programmes for the period 1982-1987, and of a common approach in assisting the countries concerned. One of the points stressed at the meeting was the importance that should be given to desertification control activities in the preparation of the third cycle of country programmes.

16. During the reporting period, UNSO participated in the Secretary-General's interagency mission on displaced persons in Ethiopia, where the Government has been co-ordinating its resettlement programmes with its efforts to control desertification. UNSO also participated in an East African regional meeting on desertification control sponsored by the Federal Republic of Germany at Khartoum in late 1980.

17. In view of the large number of least developed countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region, UNSO is also actively participating in the interagency meetings preparatory to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, which will be held in Paris from 1 to 14 September 1981.

#### V. BENIN

18. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 35/72, the General Assembly invited the Governing Council to examine, at its ninth session, the possibility of including Benin in the list of countries which receive assistance, on behalf of UNEP, through UNSO in implementing the Plan of Action in the Sudano-Sahelian region and to report on this matter to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

19. Benin extends about 420 miles from the Niger River, which forms part of its northern frontier, to the Atlantic Ocean in the south. While its southern climate is wet, the northern climate is sub-humid, and there is extensive savannah north of Abomey, close to the borders with the Sahelian countries of Niger and Upper Volta. Although the climate is less arid than that of the Sudano-Sahelian zone defined in the World Map of Desertification (A/CONF.74/2), the northern part of Benin also suffers from desertification, which is aggravated by the harmattan, a hot, dry wind blowing from Niger from December to March. The Atacora massif, in the northwest of Benin, also forms a watershed between the Volta and Niger basins and feeds into the Mékrou, Alibou and Sota Rivers, which are tributaries of the

Niger River along Benin's boundaries with Niger and Nigeria. In view of these geographical and ecological interrelationships between Benin and its northern Sahelian neighbours, it is recommended that the Governing Council favourably consider the inclusion of Benin among the countries which receive assistance through UNSO in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

#### VI. UNSO OPERATIONAL COSTS FOR DESERTIFICATION CONTROL IN 1978-1980

20. By paragraph 7 of Governing Council decision 8/17 of 29 April 1980, the Governing Council authorized the Executive Director to continue to contribute to UNSO for the 1980-1981 biennium, after consultations with the Administrator of UNDP, UNEP's share of the administrative and operational costs of the joint venture, based on work plans to be approved by the Executive Director. It also requested the Executive Director to submit to the Council, at its ninth session, a "full account of these operational expenditures for 1978-1980 and their place within the total operational expenditures of the Office related to its additional anti-desertification mandate", with a view to providing the Governing Council with a basis for considering future financing of the operational costs of the joint venture.

21. UNTSO received the approval of the Executive Director of UNEP for its 1978-1979 and 1980-1981 work plans. The total operational budget under the joint venture for the period 1978-1980, \$1.4 million, was shared equally by UNEP and UNDP. To date \$1,369,059 of this amount has been obligated.

22. Of the above, \$1,165,359 has been for national and regional projects, such as advisory services, training schemes, feasibility studies and small-scale pilot and demonstration projects of a catalytic nature. The remaining \$203,700 has been used mainly for planning and programming missions, project identification, formulation and evaluation missions and miscellaneous programme-related activities. A breakdown of the utilization of the joint venture operational budget for 1979 to 1980 c/ is as follows:

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c/ In fact, the joint venture made no budgetary provisions and no operational joint venture financed commitments were made in 1978. The only budgetary provisions made were for administrative "start-up" costs in late 1978. The operational budget therefore covers only the 1979-1980 biennium.



Project assistance

<u>Country</u>	<u>No. of projects</u>	<u>Cost</u> <u>(\$US)</u>
Cape Verde	1	115,000
Ethiopia	1	30,000
Kenya	1	25,000
Mauritania	3	92,000
Niger	1	41,500
Nigeria	1	25,000
Senegal	1	100,000
Somalia	1	30,000
Sudan	1	40,000
Upper Volta	2	338,089
Regional	6	328,770
Total	19	1,165,359
<u>Missions and miscellaneous</u>		203,700
GRAND TOTAL		1,369,059

23. From the latter part of 1978 to 1980, the total financial commitments in the context of desertification control incurred by UNSO from Trust Fund resources, including the contributions of UNEP and UNDP under the joint venture, amounted to \$6.5 million. In addition, during this period, UNSO assisted in the mobilization of approximately \$17.1 million from bilateral and multilateral sources which was provided directly to anti-desertification projects.

24. It should be noted that UNSO's administrative and operational resources for desertification control are entirely extrabudgetary in nature. The programme funds are used mainly as seed money for the mobilization of larger resources from the donor community. As the initial desertification control efforts under the joint venture were effectively initiated only in 1979, UNSO's initial expenditures of programme funds were mainly for the planning and programming missions and project identification and formulation. However, since late 1979 and in 1980, UNSO has been mobilizing substantial and growing amounts of resources. In addition, three countries - Djibouti, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau - have been added to UNSO's mandate by the UNEP Governing Council.

APPENDIX

Application of General Assembly resolution 35/72 of 5 December 1980  
on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification  
in the Sudano-Sahelian region

The Governing Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 32/170 of 19 December 1977, 33/88 of 15 December 1978, 34/187 of 18 December 1979 and 35/72 and 35/88 of 5 December 1980,

Recalling further its decisions 6/11 of 24 May 1978, 7/13 of May 1979 and 8/17 of 29 April 1980,

Stressing the seriousness of desertification and its adverse effects on the people of the countries affected by it, particularly in the Sudano-Sahelian region, and the need to intensify desertification control measures,

Having examined the reports of the Executive Director on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region and on the resolutions and decisions of the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly and of the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1980 of relevance to the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme, a/

1. Notes with satisfaction the report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region and the measures taken in that respect by the Governments, the United Nations Environment Programme and other competent organs of the United Nations, particularly those taken by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme;

2. Further notes that priority is being given to efforts to combat desertification in the 18 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, as well as in the least developed among the developing countries outside that region;

3. Decides to include Benin among the countries eligible to receive assistance through the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

4. Authorizes the Executive Director to continue to contribute to the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, after consultations with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, the Environment Programme's share of the administrative and operational costs of the joint venture for 1982-1983, on the basis of the work plan to be approved by the Executive Director;

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a/ UNEP/GC.9/8/Add.1 and UNEP/GC.9/2/Add.1, respectively.

5. Further authorizes the Executive Director to submit his report and the decision of the Governing Council on this subject, on behalf of the Governing Council, to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

9th meeting

26 May 1981