



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/34/405
28 September 1979

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-fourth session
Agenda item 60

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

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

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In paragraph 6 of resolution 33/88 of 15 December 1978, entitled "Measures to be taken for the benefit of the Sudano-Sahelian region", the General Assembly requested the Governing Council of UNEP to submit to the Assembly an annual report on the implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The report of the Governing Council is annexed to the present document.
2. In paragraph 5 of the same resolution, the Secretary-General was requested to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the resolution. The report was issued on 27 August 1979 (A/34/406).

ANNEX

Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment
Programme on the implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of
the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, submitted in
accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 33/88

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 2	2
II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION	3 - 26	2
A. Implementation of the UNDP/UNEP joint venture	3 - 6	2
B. Relations of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office with UNDP and UNEP	7 - 10	3
C. Cost of expansion of the mandate of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office	11	4
D. Planning, programming and resource mobilization by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office	12 - 20	5
E. Action by the Governing Council of UNEP (April/May 1979)	21	7
F. Action by the Governing Council of UNDP (June 1979) . .	22 - 24	7
G. Action by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1979	25 - 26	8

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in response to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 33/88 of 15 December 1978, in which the Assembly requested the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to submit to it an annual report on the implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. In response to that request, the Executive Director of UNEP submitted to the Council at its seventh session, as chapter II of his report on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (UNEP/GC.7/10 and Add.1), a report on the implementation of the Plan in the Sudano-Sahelian region describing developments up to the end of March 1979.

2. After considering the Executive Director's report, the Governing Council, in its decision 7/13 B of 3 May 1979, inter alia, noted with satisfaction chapter II of the report and authorized the Executive Director to update it in the light of any major developments in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region and to submit it, on behalf of the Governing Council, to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session as the report requested by Assembly resolution 33/88 of 15 December 1978. This report is therefore being submitted by the Executive Director on behalf of the Governing Council, based on the texts previously endorsed by the Governing Council and incorporating an account of subsequent developments up to August 1979.

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

A. Implementation of the UNDP/UNEP joint venture

3. Following the action of the General Assembly, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Executive Director of UNEP signed, on 8 January 1979, a Memorandum of Understanding which established the modalities of the joint venture of UNEP and UNDP in connexion with the responsibilities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) to co-ordinate the efforts of the United Nations system to assist, on behalf of UNEP, the 15 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The Memorandum of Understanding spells out in detail, in conformity with the relevant decisions of the Governing Council of UNDP and the Governing Council of UNEP, the legislative authority of the joint venture, the role and objectives of UNSO and its functions with respect to its additional mandate, the institutional relationship between UNSO, UNEP and UNDP, and the staffing, financial and other support by UNEP and UNDP to UNSO's activities in desertification control. The Executive Director of UNEP and the Administrator of UNDP sent a joint letter to the Governments of the 15 countries concerned, informing them of the designation of UNSO as the arm of the United Nations to assist them, on behalf of UNEP, in their efforts to implement the Plan of Action to

/...

Combat Desertification, and assuring them that UNSO would carry out its activities with the full support of UNEP and UNDP and would receive guidance from the executive heads of the two organizations. The Administrator of UNDP also notified the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, as well as UNDP resident representatives, of the additional mandate of UNSO.

4. In working towards its objectives, UNSO will carry out the functions of planning and programming, resource mobilization and project implementation and will seek to obtain the full participation of the relevant national services in activities financed by it. It will assist, with the technical support of UNEP, in formulating regional desertification control programmes and co-ordinating them with other regional programmes and strategies, and will help in identifying priorities and formulating national projects. This function will be carried out in direct and sustained contact with individual countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region and, as appropriate, with their regional organizations.

5. All projects thus identified, formulated and approved by the Governments concerned will be presented for financing to the donor community, either by the Governments or by UNSO through all possible channels, including the Consultative Group for Desertification Control and any other mechanism envisaged by UNEP for that purpose. The financing may be bilateral, multilateral, in the form of contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities, or through consortium arrangements and multi-bilateral efforts, and the projects may be implemented bilaterally, multilaterally or multi-bilaterally. UNSO will maintain monitoring responsibility for projects executed under Trust Fund financing, and will report fully to donors on the disposition of their contributions.

6. All missions relating to its anti-desertification functions will be led by a representative of UNSO or undertaken by UNEP after consultation with UNSO. In undertaking such missions, UNSO will count on the support of the UNEP substantive divisions and the Desertification Unit recently established within the UNEP secretariat. In order to maintain effective contacts with countries and relevant organizations of the region, UNSO will also make full use, in its contacts with Governments, of the existing United Nations structures in the region, such as the network of UNDP resident representatives and the regional and country offices of the various bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

B. Relations of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office
with UNDP and UNEP

7. UNSO will continue to be a component of the immediate office of the Administrator of UNDP, and remains under his over-all supervision. UNDP will continue to provide UNSO with technical support on request, in addition to the full range of administrative support. The Division of Finance of UNDP will continue to prepare, annually, an accounting of the actual expenditures of the administrative budget of the joint UNEP/UNDP venture related to the UNSO mandate for desertification control. On operational matters related to its enlarged functions,

UNSO will work closely with the UNDP Regional Bureaux for Africa and for the Arab States. UNSO will be responsible for preparing the report of the Administrator on its activities called for by the UNDP Governing Council in its decisions 25/10 of 27 June 1978 and 79/20 of 28 June 1979.

8. UNSO will function under the direct supervision of the Executive Director of UNEP and will report directly to him on all policy and planning matters related to the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region. On operational matters, UNSO will work closely with UNEP headquarters and the UNEP Regional Office for Africa, and will draw intensively on the technical backstopping and advice provided by the UNEP substantive divisions and the Desertification Unit. UNSO is responsible for preparing such reports on its activities to assist in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region as may be requested by the Executive Director of UNEP.

9. UNSO has made extensive contacts with the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to obtain their full co-operation in its efforts. Special visits were made to the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and both organizations agreed to make experts available to participate in the planning and programming missions. Similar visits to other agencies are planned in the near future. UNSO will be represented in the Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification.

10. In addition to its new desertification control functions, UNSO will continue to carry out its existing responsibilities in connexion with the rehabilitation and development of the eight drought-stricken countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region.

C. Cost of expansion of the mandate of the United Nations
Sudano-Sahelian Office

11. To carry out its expanded mandate on behalf of UNEP, i.e., implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region, UNSO has already increased its present staff by six Professionals (five at the Regional Office at Ouagadougou, one at Headquarters in New York), three General Service staff (one at Headquarters, two at the Regional Office) and one Field Service staff member. The administrative costs resulting from this enlargement of UNSO have been and will be borne by equal contributions to its Trust Fund from UNDP and UNEP. Accordingly, for 1978 UNDP and UNEP have each contributed \$90,000 to the Trust Fund to cover UNSO's administrative costs in connexion with its desertification control mandate. For 1979 UNDP and UNEP are contributing up to \$300,000 each to the Trust Fund, earmarked for the same purpose. Funding arrangements for 1980 and 1981 have since been approved by the Governing Council of UNDP and the Governing Council of UNEP; the magnitude of the follow-up assistance for the joint venture is indicated in sections E and F below.

D. Planning, programming and resource mobilization by the
United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office

12. To enable UNSO to engage in the project identification and formulation essential for carrying out the planning and programming functions relative to the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region, UNDP and UNEP contributed for the latter part of 1978 and 1979 \$300,000 each to be utilized for the purpose of preparatory work on those projects and programmes forming part of the Plan of Action in the region. This does not exclude the possibility of UNSO securing funds from other sources.

13. An operational plan for UNSO's desertification control activities for 1978-1979, prepared by UNSO in consultation with UNEP, has been approved by the Executive Director of UNEP. The plan provides for the organization and conduct by UNSO of missions to the 15 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region to ascertain the interest of the countries concerned in participating in the solar and Sahel Green Belt transnational projects, and to identify and formulate, with the Governments, priority national projects meeting the concept and objectives of these two transnational projects. In addition, the missions will assist the countries concerned in the design and development of their respective national programmes for the implementation of the Plan of Action, and will seek to identify the resources required for this purpose.

14. UNSO held consultations with Governments, UNEP and the resident representatives concerned on the preparation of the terms of reference and composition of the planning and programming missions. In this connexion, a meeting with the permanent representatives to the United Nations of the 15 Sudano-Sahelian countries took place at United Nations Headquarters on 9 March 1979. The Governments were further consulted on the timing, terms of reference and composition of the missions through the resident representatives concerned.

15. As at the end of July 1979, planning and programming missions had been sent to Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, the Sudan, the United Republic of Cameroon and the Upper Volta. The missions were received positively by the Governments concerned and had the full co-operation of the UNDP resident representatives in the countries. During these missions, various project proposals falling within the framework of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification were identified by the Governments visited. Chad and Uganda will be visited later at an appropriate date.

16. UNSO recognizes that programming is a continuous process, and will obtain the services of additional experts to assist Governments in such tasks as preparing national plans for combating desertification, organizing national institutional machinery for mobilizing and co-ordinating desertification control activities and identifying, preparing and appraising desertification control projects for financing and implementation. It is envisaged that future action will also include the identification of proposals for institutional support to increase national capabilities in research and training.

/...

17. UNSO will, in full collaboration with the countries concerned, undertake mobilization of resources required for the execution of those priority national projects which the Governments concerned have already presented to UNEP for assistance, and which are in an advanced stage of formulation. The projects which have received the appropriate support from the donor community will be submitted to the Consultative Group on Desertification Control at its next meeting. New projects as well as ongoing projects requiring expansion were identified during UNSO's planning and programming missions and also will be submitted in due course to the Consultative Group for its consideration.

18. UNSO has actually begun its resource mobilization efforts in connexion with those projects for which its assistance had already been requested and which were ready for submission to prospective donors. Following discussions with the Governments of Senegal and the Netherlands, an UNSO mission visited Dakar in January 1979 and signed an agreement with the Senegalese Government for the financing of a priority pilot project concerned with the development of the Casamance forest. The Government of the Netherlands has agreed to contribute \$1 million to the UNSO Trust Fund for the implementation of the project, for which FAO will serve as executing agency. Additional contributions are also expected from the Government of Senegal and from UNDP.

19. In order to strengthen collaborative action within the United Nations system, UNSO held a meeting at Dakar from 30 May to 1 June 1979 with the UNDP resident representatives in the 15 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region and representatives of the other organizations concerned of the United Nations system. Representatives of the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) also attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss UNSO's new desertification control mandate and ways of ensuring collaborative action in carrying out this mandate. The Executive Director of UNEP addressed the meeting, which was also attended by the UNDP Assistant Administrators and Regional Directors for Africa and the Arab States. Presentations were made to the participants on the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, the Green Belt and SOLAR transnational projects, UNSO's new desertification control responsibilities, guidelines for the assessment of desertification control projects in the Sudano-Sahelian region and the UNSO planning and programming missions undertaken so far. The resident representatives gave detailed and comprehensive country-by-country descriptions of the problems of desertification and the relevant remedial activities being undertaken at the national and regional levels. The agencies then described their regional and global programmes and other activities related to desertification control, and reaffirmed their support for UNSO in its new desertification control functions.

20. After extensive discussions and exchanges of views, the Dakar meeting agreed on a set of conclusions which recognized the need for vigorous, concerted and immediate action to combat desertification in the region, through systematic national planning and co-ordination, the use of innovative approaches and the exchange of technology and experience through technical co-operation among developing countries. The conclusions also noted the importance of UNSO's co-operation with Governments, agencies and resident representatives at the national

level, as well as with various regional organizations, including CILSS. In addition, the conclusions recorded the agreement of the resident representatives to highlight the importance of anti-desertification measures in their normal contacts with the Governments and in the preparation of assistance programmes and to keep UNSO fully informed on and closely associated with the preparation, implementation and evaluation of desertification control activities. They further noted the agreement that UNSO would disseminate information on desertification control activities to the resident representatives, in order to ensure an effective exchange of information and experiences. On the question of financing, the conclusions stated the agreement of the resident representatives that priority would be accorded to desertification control in the region in the allocation of UNDP resources and the preparation of the third cycle of country programmes.

E. Action by the Governing Council of UNEP (April/May 1979)

21. As noted in paragraph 2 above, the Governing Council of UNEP, in its decision 7/13 B of 3 May 1979, inter alia noted with satisfaction chapter II of the Executive Director's report and authorized him to update the report and submit it on behalf of the Governing Council to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session, as requested in resolution 33/88. In that decision, the Governing Council also approved the action taken with respect to institutional arrangements in the Sudano-Sahelian region, endorsed the modalities of the joint venture, and authorized the Executive Director to continue to contribute to UNSO, after consultations with the Administrator of UNDP, UNEP's share of the administrative and programme costs of the joint venture, within the available resources of the Environment Fund.

F. Action by the Governing Council of UNDP (June 1979)

22. At its twenty-sixth session, in June 1979, the Governing Council of UNDP considered a report (DP/395), requested of the Administrator by its decision 25/10 of 27 June 1978, on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region. The report gave an account of the legislative antecedents of the Governing Council's decision and of related actions by other organs of the United Nations, described the development of the modalities of enlarging the organization and functions of UNSO, including its regional office at Ouagadougou, as agreed upon by the Administrator and the Executive Director of UNEP, and summarized the measures taken by the Administrator to implement decision 25/10.

23. The report was introduced by the Director of UNSO, who also provided the Council with information on developments that had taken place since the report was prepared, including the most recent planning and programming missions and the action taken by the UNEP Governing Council at its seventh session, in April and May 1979. He also described the financial requirements of the joint venture for 1980-1981.

24. On 28 June 1979, the UNDP Governing Council adopted decision 79/20, in which it, inter alia, took note with satisfaction of the Administrator's report, approved the actions taken with respect to institutional arrangements in the Sudano-Sahelian region, endorsed the modalities of the joint UNEP/UNDP venture and authorized the Administrator to continue to finance from appropriate programme funds the UNDP share of the administrative costs of the joint venture. In addition, it authorized the Administrator to finance UNDP's contribution, up to a total of \$330,000 for 1980 and \$368,000 for 1981, as UNDP's share of the programme support to the joint venture. Finally, the UNDP Governing Council requested the Administrator to keep under constant review the specific requirements of the countries of the region, and to extend to them within available resources further assistance through UNSO to ensure the timely and effective implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

G. Action by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1979

25. During the discussion in the Economic and Social Council of the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on the work of its seventh session, 1/ a number of delegations expressed support for the steps being taken by UNEP and its Executive Director to implement the Plan of Action in the Sudano-Sahelian region, as reflected in the Governing Council's report. Mention was made of the importance attached to the mobilization of resources to finance desertification control activities in the region and of the important roles of the Consultative Group and the Special Account in that respect.

26. In its resolution 1979/51 of 2 August 1979, the Economic and Social Council, inter alia, welcomed the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme and, in particular, those relating to its contribution to, among other matters, the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/34/25).