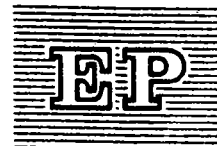




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INTRODUCTORY REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Addendum

RESULTS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE CLEARING-HOUSE

Report of the Executive Director

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision 14/6, entitled "The Clearing-house mechanism", Governing Council, inter alia, requested the Executive Director "to arrange for an external evaluation of the Clearing-house mechanism to be conducted and for the results to be presented to the Governing Council at its next regular session".
2. To assure a balanced and impartial evaluation, the Executive Director appointed three external evaluators: two designated by Governments of industrialized countries that have actively supported the Clearing-house and the third, selected by the Executive Director, from a developing country that had received assistance through the Clearing-house. The Executive Director requested the assistance of the Governments of Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, the principal supporters of the Clearing-house, in nominating the evaluators. The Governments of Finland, Norway and Sweden mutually agreed to designate as external evaluator Mr. Anders Forsse from Sweden, and the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and Netherlands agreed to designate Mr. Albert Wiggers from the Netherlands. The Executive Director nominated Mr. Mansour Khalid, from Sudan, as the third external evaluator.
3. The three evaluators conducted their work during the month of September 1988, when they met in Nairobi with the Executive Director and UNEP officials. Their report is based on the documentation provided to them before their visit to UNEP headquarters, on the results of their interviews with UNEP officials, and on their long-standing experience in international environmental affairs.

II. SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

4. The evaluation team's report presents a series of conclusions and recommendations which are summarized below, arranged in accordance with the terms of reference for the evaluation.^{1/}

Achievements

5. The team expressed its appreciation of the work carried out by the Clearing-house during the period 1982-1988. They stated that they were impressed by the way the clearing-house function had been applied in UNEP's work and by the diversity of the actions undertaken. The team observed, however, that their study had been confined to written and oral information obtained from UNEP headquarters and should be supplemented by on-the-spot studies of the impacts of the UNEP clearing-house activities in a few selected countries.

Efficiency and catalytic impact

6. Affirming their support for the clearing-house function of promoting sustainable development in countries which require external assistance for that purpose, the team nevertheless maintained that the way in which that function has been exercised could and should be improved. They proposed that the distribution of tasks between the Clearing-house Unit and other UNEP entities be reviewed with a view to distinguishing between tasks that are mainly substantive - the design and content of programmes and projects - and those that involve largely presentation and negotiation.

Relevance to sustainable development

7. The team considered the "formulation, monitoring and evaluation of long-term programmes and projects to meet the most serious environmental problems of developing countries", focusing as it does on sustainable development, one of the most central tasks of the organization as a whole, equal in significance to UNEP's global responsibilities. In that respect, the team stated that an important task of UNEP was to provide assistance in building up the organizational, administrative, legislative and scientific infrastructure of developing countries whose Governments are determined to solve their environmental problems.

8. The team called for much greater UNEP co-operation with organizations, such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), which, like UNEP, are initiating extensive multi-disciplinary efforts towards sustainable development.

^{1/} The report of the evaluators, in its original version (English), is available upon request from the secretariat.

Policy in relation to UNEP's mandate

9. The team considered that greater emphasis should be placed on meeting the needs of developing countries, particularly in light of pronouncements made during recent years by the Governing Council. In this connection, the team concluded that, from its inception, the clearing-house function had been an integral part of UNEP's mandate with respect to assisting developing countries and that this function involved the organization as a whole and a great many of its units in particular.

10. The team concluded that the clearing-house function had three broad components:

- (i) the assessment of environment-related problems in developing countries and the identification of the most serious of these problems;
- (ii) the preparation of programmes and projects, long-term and/or short-term, designed to alleviate those serious problems;
- (iii) the presentation of such programmes and/or projects to prospective donors, with a view to obtaining their participation in implementation.

11. If UNEP is to fulfil this mandate, additional resources would be required. Moreover, a review of the organizational structure of UNEP might well lead to improved staff resource economy.

Causes of successes and failures

12. For a number of reasons, including an inequitable distribution of tasks among the various secretariat units involved, a debatable organizational structure, and critical under-staffing in some units, the evaluators expressed the view that UNEP efforts towards the promotion of sustainable development did not appear to meet entirely the expectations of the Clearing-house sponsors. The team stated that the overall efficiency of the clearing-house function would benefit from a more precise definition of the tasks of the Unit and a clearer description of the division of labour between the Unit and other parts of the organization.

Recommendations

13. The distribution of tasks between the Clearing-house Unit and other UNEP entities concerned, the Office of the Environment Programme in particular should be revised so as to leave the Clearing-house Unit essentially the tasks of internal co-ordination, presentation of activities to donors and fund-raising in connection with such proposed activities. The other, more substantive tasks pertaining to the clearing-house function, such as assessment of environmental problems in developing countries, the identification of programmes and projects designed to alleviate these problems, and the preparation, implementation and monitoring of such projects and programmes, should be entrusted, in principle, to other UNEP entities.

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14. The staff strength of the Clearing-house Unit should be reviewed to provide it with the capacity and status commensurate with its tasks and the need to represent UNEP adequately in its external contacts concerning presentation and fund-raising. The team expressed concern that a basic substantive task such as "formulating, monitoring and evaluation of long-term programmes and projects to meet the most serious environmental problems of developing countries" should have been assigned to a unit of three professionals, headed by an officer at the P-4 level. The team expected that such tasks should be performed by a substantially larger unit, headed by an officer at a level comparable to the rank of others carrying out similar tasks in international and national administrations.

15. The number and level of staff of other entities involved in UNEP'S clearing-house function, in particular those of the Office of the Environment Programme, should be reviewed with the aim of strengthening them sufficiently to perform their many vital tasks or dispensing with them altogether so as to utilize their staff capacity in other areas.

16. The terminology used in UNEP with regard to the clearing-house function(s), clearing-house mechanism, clearing-house activities and Clearing-house (Unit), should be clarified.

17. UNEP should prepare a long and medium-term clearing-house fund-raising plan for presentation to donors, including activities of a global nature and activities addressed specifically to the problems of developing countries.

III. COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

18. The Executive Director deeply appreciates the work undertaken by the evaluators to clarify the scope and role of UNEP in exercising its clearing-house function for the purpose of increasing the flow of resources to developing countries to help them with their most serious environmental problems. His comments on their report follow the order in which the team's conclusions and recommendations were presented (see paras 4 - 17, above).

Achievements

19. In response to the team's suggestion that it visit a few selected developing countries for supplementary studies of the impact of the activities implemented through the clearing-house function, the Executive Director agreed to organize such visits and will report on the additional information received from the evaluators in a supplement to the present report.

Efficiency and catalytic impact

20. The Executive Director agrees with the team that improvements can be made in the exercise of the clearing-house function to achieve optimal results. He has taken note of the suggestion to distinguish between tasks that relate mainly to programme substance - the design and content of programmes and projects - and has agreed to entrust more of those responsibilities to the Office of the Environment Programme. Tasks that are primarily matters of co-ordination, presentation, and negotiation will remain in part the responsibility of the Clearing-house Unit.

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Relevance to sustainable development

21. As the team noted, the principal focus of the clearing-house function is assisting developing countries to achieve environmentally sound development and helping to mobilize the resources required for such development. The Executive Director has designated the Deputy Executive Director as the senior official responsible for co-ordinating these efforts throughout UNEP as a whole. The Clearing-house Unit is the principal secretariat unit assisting him in this role.

Policy in relation to UNEP's mandate

22. As to the team's observation that the clearing-house function has been part of the mandate of UNEP since the organization's establishment, the Executive Director agrees, pointing out that this crucial role is outlined in the Stockholm Declaration of 1972 and in the first decision adopted by the Governing Council of UNEP on the general policy objectives of the programme. Subsequent decisions of the Governing Council as well as resolutions of both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, have restated this responsibility on many occasions.

23. As to the team's reference to the diversity of action undertaken by the Clearing-house, the Executive Director agrees that assistance to developing countries must be focused on priorities directly related to the catalytic and co-ordinating role of UNEP emphatically reiterated in the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which includes among "the major priorities and functions of UNEP,":

- "(e) To initiate and support the programmes and activities worked out by the developing countries for dealing with their serious environmental problems;
- "(f) To initiate and facilitate the development and, upon request, the co-ordination of implementation of action plans in the developing countries for the management of ecosystems and critical environmental problems ...;
- "(g) In co-operation with other concerned institutions, to establish and strengthen the institutional and professional capacity of developing countries with a view to integrating environmental considerations into their development policy and planning." 2/

Causes of successes and failures

24. In considering UNEP's successes and failures in exercising its clearing-house function, the Executive Director wishes to point out that, in addition to the shortcomings listed by the evaluators, for which remedial action will be undertaken (see paras 29-33 below), other constraints have hampered the exercise of the clearing-house function.

2/ Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, para. 117, General Assembly resolution 42/186, Annex.

25. First, only limited additional resources have been provided to UNEP for the Clearing-house. Government departments and agencies concerned with international development co-operation have frequently been reluctant to consider UNEP's requests for additional resources for environmental projects, as their traditional operating procedures have been to deal directly with recipient Governments rather than with a third multilateral party, such as UNEP.

26. Accurate measurement of clearing-house's fund raising successes is often problematic. Donor support provided directly to developing countries for programmes or projects conceived jointly with UNEP is difficult to assess, as UNEP does not often participate directly in negotiations between donor and recipient Governments. In his Annual Reports, the Executive Director presents only the information he is able to obtain. Regrettably, developing countries that initially request UNEP's assistance for obtaining donor funding for environmental activities do not always ultimately give adequate priority in their own aid negotiations with donors to the programmes and projects for which they request such assistance. Hence, the initial request to UNEP may differ from the final request to the donor.

27. These constraints occasionally reduce the impact of the clearing-house function. To alleviate these problems, UNEP's clearing-house function must be better understood by Governments, the development co-operation agencies and other partners. To this end, the secretariat prepared and distributed widely in 1987 an information brochure on the Clearing-house, its purposes, procedures and activities. In addition, in their visits to host countries, the Clearing-house staff has made a particular effort to clarify the clearing-house role.

Recommendations

28. The Executive Director agrees to the recommendations of the evaluators regarding the distribution of tasks between the Clearing-house Unit and other UNEP entities concerned. So that the Unit may discharge its responsibilities more effectively, a much closer contact with donor agencies is envisaged through frequent and regular contacts at the working level between the Clearing-house Unit and representatives of donor agencies in their capitals.

29. The Executive Director has taken into account the recommendation of the evaluation team to define more clearly the responsibilities and the functions of the Unit, and its terms of reference are being revised.

30. The Executive Director notes the concern of the evaluation team that the Clearing-house Unit should be headed by an administrator who can represent UNEP with sufficient authority in external liaison with donors and has already requested United Nations Headquarters to reclassify the post at the Senior Programme Officer (P-5) level. In addition, as indicated earlier, the Deputy Executive Director is co-ordinating UNEP's efforts to assist developing countries in their efforts to achieve environmentally sound development and to mobilize the resources required. The Clearing-house Unit supports him in this role.

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31. The Executive Director agrees wholeheartedly with the evaluation team's recommendation that more support and additional personnel are required to carry out the clearing-house function more effectively. These needs must and can he believes, can, be provided from extra-budgetary resources, including the secondment of personnel from Governments and other organizations.

32. The Executive Director takes note of the recommendation to revise the terminology used in UNEP with regard to the clearing-house function and will seek ways to make these terms clearer and better understood.

33. The Executive Director notes the evaluation team's suggestion that a long and medium-term clearing-house plan should be prepared and presented to donors, addressing both problems of a global nature and the problems of developing countries in particular. He is therefore considering presenting and circulating regularly to donors a list of concrete proposals for supplementary funding, based on activities approved by the Governing Council, but for which the resources of the Environment Fund are insufficient. He will keep this activity under review.

34. Regarding the recommendation for increased co-operation with other organizations having related responsibilities and programmes, UNEP has intensified its efforts in this respect during the past year, developing its working relations with other UN bodies such as UNDP and the World Bank, particularly in connection with the implementation of measures for environmentally sound development. Working arrangements with the members of the Committee of International Development Institutions on the Environment (CIDIE), the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and IUCN have also been expanded. Further steps to this end will be taken in the years to come.

IV. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Governing Council may wish to:

(a) Note that an external evaluation of the Clearing-house has been carried out in accordance with decision 14/6 and that the Executive Director is taking the results of the evaluation into account in his management of the clearing-house function of UNEP;

(b) Note that the General Assembly has reaffirmed the need for additional financial resources from donor countries and organizations to assist developing countries in identifying, analyzing, monitoring, preventing and managing environment problems in accordance with their national development plans, priorities and objectives;

(c) Emphasize the role that UNEP can play through its clearing-house function to assist in obtaining such resources for developing countries;

(d) Request the Executive Director to continue his efforts to obtain additional resources, including staff, to manage and implement the activities of the Clearing-house, and to continue to clarify the clearing-house function to developing countries and to potential donors;

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(e) Reiterate its call upon Governments and other donors to consider favourably requests presented by UNEP in its clearing-house function, including requests for additional staff and for direct donor assistance presented with the full agreement of the Governments concerned, and in the understanding that these Governments will take the steps required to seek this assistance officially.
