



General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/44/296 ✓
E/1989/81
31 May 1989

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-fourth session
Item 83 (g) of the preliminary list*
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION:
DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Second regular session of 1989
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION:
DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

Countries stricken by desertification and drought in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in response to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 42/188, of 11 December 1987, that the Secretary-General submit to the Assembly at its forty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1989, a report on the implementation of that resolution. The report should be read in conjunction with other reports now before the Assembly, which deal in detail with the questions of desertification and drought in Africa. These include:

(a) The report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification 1987-1988 (UNEP/GC.15/9/Add.4), which will be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session through the Economic and Social Council. The report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 42/189 of 11 December 1987. It covers the 1987-1988 biennium and includes sections on the implementation of the Plan of Action in the Sudano-Sahelian region and on financing the Plan.

(b) The report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to the Governing Council on the activities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) (DP/1989/50). The report covers the assistance of UNSO and other entities within UNDP to the drought-recovery and desertification-

* A/44/50/Rev.1.

control activities of the 22 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, as well as of other countries of Africa. That report also responds to the reporting requirements of the General Assembly concerning the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programmes in the Sudano-Sahelian region (General Assembly resolutions 3094 (XXVIII) of 11 December 1973 and 39/206 of 17 December 1984.

2. The reports cited above constitute the substantive reporting of the Secretariat and other organs of the United Nations on the subjects of desertification and drought. They are being submitted in accordance with the new biennial reporting cycle of the General Assembly, as established in resolution 40/209 of 17 December 1985, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that all problems relating to desertification and drought be considered in future during odd years under one sub-item entitled "Desertification and drought", under the item entitled "Development and international economic co-operation".

3. The attention of the General Assembly is also drawn to the activities of specialized agencies of the United Nations, which are described in reports to their respective governing bodies.

4. In resolution 42/188, the General Assembly took note with satisfaction of the proposals for concrete measures to be taken, as set out in the report of the Secretary-General on countries stricken by desertification and drought (A/41/346-E/1986/96, paras. 53-77). In the resolution, the Assembly also took note of the activities of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD) in dealing with the problems of desertification and drought in the western Sahel and in East Africa, respectively. It appealed urgently to the members of the international community to continue, while strengthening their support for the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (General Assembly resolution S-13/2 of 1 June 1986, annex), to support those intergovernmental bodies, as well as the Ministerial Conference for a joint policy to combat desertification in the countries of CILSS and the Economic Community of West African States, in the Maghreb countries, in Egypt and in the Sudan (COMIDES).

5. In the resolution the Assembly further reaffirmed the role of UNSO in the co-ordination of the efforts of the United Nations to help the States members of CILSS and IGADD to carry out their programmes and appealed to all Governments to increase their support for UNSO, in particular by making voluntary contributions to its general resources and earmarked contributions for specific projects sponsored by the Office to enable it to respond to the priority needs of the Sudano-Sahelian countries. It also welcomed with satisfaction the establishment of the Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Desertification and Drought by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). 1/ Finally, the Assembly appealed to all members of the international community, organs and bodies of the United Nations, regional and subregional financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations to continue to give their full support in all forms, including financial and technical aid, to the development efforts of the countries stricken by desertification and drought.

6. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 42/188, the United Nations system has continued to assist the countries of Africa stricken by desertification and drought on a number of fronts. The activities to combat desertification are described in detail in the report of the Governing Council of UNEP, which was designated by the General Assembly as the organ within the United Nations system responsible for following-up and co-ordinating the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Desertification. 2/ Particular attention is drawn to the chapter of the report on the implementation of the Plan of Action in the Sudano-Sahelian region, for which the General Assembly designated UNSO as the entity responsible, on behalf of UNEP, for assisting the 22 countries of the region in implementing the Plan of Action under a joint venture of UNEP and UNDP. That report indicates that the problems of desertification continue to persist in the fragile ecosystems of Africa's drylands.

7. The section on the financing of the Plan of Action also highlights the constraints to the development efforts of the countries of the region, especially the lack of adequate financial resources to support desertification control and ecologically sound development programmes and projects. The Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Desertification and Drought is the subject of a report by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to its Governing Council. 3/ The report indicates that 14 drought-affected countries in eastern, western and southern Africa were benefiting from the special programme, as at the end of 1988.

8. As the entity within the United Nations system specifically mandated by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to assist the 22 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region of Africa in the fields of desertification and drought, UNSO continued its activities in those fields. In addition to the implementation of concrete projects and programmes, it took steps to strengthen its co-ordination role as reaffirmed by the General Assembly. In line with resolution 42/188 and previous resolutions of the Assembly, UNSO has strengthened its contacts with IGADD and CILSS, and established a regional office in East Africa to deal with IGADD in the same way that its office in Ouagadougou deals with CILSS. It provided financial support to the Ministerial Conference for a just policy to combat desertification in the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and the Economic Community of West African States, in the Maghreb Countries, in Egypt and in the Sudan (COMIDES) and attended one of their meetings, held at the ministerial level in Algiers in October 1988. UNSO has also increased its activities of direct support to Governments in the area of planning, co-ordination and monitoring at the country level. The Office has intensified its resource mobilization activities and has been holding discussions with donor Governments with a view to increasing the overall volume of resources, as well as the number of contributors to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities. The activities of the Office, as well as of other entities within the framework of UNDP, are described in detail in the Administrator's report cited above.

9. Among the areas of emphasis of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development are the problems of desertification and drought, to which a special chapter is devoted. They are reflected in the programmes of the different members of the United Nations system and are part of

the work programme of the multi-agency Steering Committee of the Programme of Action, the secretariat of which has been established in the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. An important part of its work is the preparation of an assessment of the effectiveness of new measures to combat desertification and drought. UNSO will play a leading role in the preparation of this assessment, together with agencies concerned of the United Nations system.

10. The foregoing is an overview of the activities and of available reports on activities carried out in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/188. It indicates that action to assist the countries of Africa stricken by desertification and drought is being carried out on a broad front by the United Nations system, various intergovernmental bodies outside the system and by bilateral assistance agencies.

Notes

- 1/ See IFAD, GC 9/L.7.
- 2/ A/CONF.74/36, chap. I.
- 3/ IFAD, GC 12/L.7.
