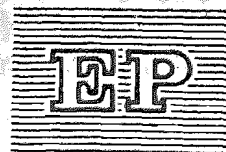




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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION: PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION - MEASURES TO BE TAKEN FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION

Report of the Executive Director

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/170 of 19 December 1977 on "Measures to be taken for the benefit of the Sudano-Saharan region". It provides a brief account of the roles and activities of the main competent existing organs in the Sudano-Saharan region, and indicates:

- (a) Proposed measures and modes of action for implementing projects and programmes to combat desertification in the Sudano-Saharan region;
- (b) Proposed measures to improve institutional arrangements in the Sudano-Saharan region, including the establishment of a sub-regional office of UNEP in the region for the purposes stipulated in paragraph 2 of resolution 32/170.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 32/170 of 19 December 1977, the General Assembly:

"2. Requests the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to consider at its sixth session, on the basis of a report by the Executive Director of the Programme which will take account of the role and activities of the competent existing organs in the region, measures to improve institutional arrangements in the Sudano-Sahelian region, including the establishment of a sub-regional office of the United Nations Environment Programme in the region for the purpose of supporting efforts undertaken at the national and regional levels by the countries concerned to combat desertification and of encouraging and co-ordinating, in co-operation with competent existing organs, assistance from developed countries, multilateral financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental donors;

"3. Further requests the Governing Council to include in its agenda, when it considers the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, an item concerning measures and modes of action for implementing projects and programmes to combat desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region".

2. The report is based on a study of the role and activities of the competent existing organs in the region in fields related to combating desertification. It has been prepared by the secretariat of UNEP in co-operation with the United Nations Sahelian Office and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and in consultation with other relevant organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system

3. In the context of this report, the Sudano-Sahelian region is defined as the belt extending across Africa south of the Sahara and north of the equator from the Atlantic Ocean on the west to the Indian Ocean on the east and consisting of the Sudanian and Sahelian zones as defined geographically. This belt is shown on the Desertification Map of the World at a scale of 1:25 million submitted to the United Nations Conference on Desertification (A/CONF.74/2). It includes all or parts of the following 15 countries: Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Upper Volta. The same problems of desertification exist in varying degrees throughout the region. For this reason the Sudano-Sahelian region should be considered in its totality in respect to combating desertification and implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, particularly its recommendations concerning actions at the regional level.

11. ROLES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE MAIN COMPETENT EXISTING ORGANS IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION

4. Many existing International and regional institutions, both within and outside the United Nations system, are engaged in activities related to combating desertification in the region. The main competent organs among these institutions are briefly described below. For further information, a more detailed description of their activities can be made available to the Governing Council.

A. INTERGOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS OUTSIDE THE UNITED NATIONS

5. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) has, since its establishment in 1963, had as its main objectives the strengthening of African unity and the co-ordination and support of co-operative activities among its member States to improve the living conditions of their peoples, the elimination of colonialism, the promotion of international co-operation and the harmonization of their efforts in the fields of politics, economics, science and technology, transport and communications, defence and security.

6. The African Development Bank (ADB) was established in 1964 with headquarters at Abidjan and now has a membership of 41 African States. Its purpose is to contribute to the rapid economic development and social progress of its member States by promoting investment in Africa. Its activities include financing of investment projects and programmes, participating in the selection, study and preparation of projects, and mobilizing resources for financing.

7. The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (ABEDA) was established in 1975 with headquarters at Khartoum. Its membership includes 18 countries. Its purpose is to contribute to the economic development of Africa by encouraging Arab capital investment in countries of independent Africa. It is particularly concerned with the development of infrastructure, agriculture, training and technical assistance and the expansion of food production.

8. The Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) was established in 1973 at Ouagadougou, following the severe drought in the Sahel. Its members are the eight Sahelian countries, namely Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta. It is responsible for co-ordinating a wide range of rehabilitation and development programmes to combat the effects of drought at the sub-regional level. Since its establishment, the role and programme of CILSS have been fully supported by the United Nations system through the co-ordinating efforts of the United Nations Sahelian Office. In 1977, CILSS adopted a general strategy for development to achieve self-sufficiency in food which included measures that could have an impact on combating desertification.

9. The Inter-African Committee for Hydraulic Studies (CIEH) was established in 1960 with headquarters at Ouagadougou. Its members are Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Upper Volta. Its purpose is to facilitate co-operation between member States in hydraulic surveys and projects. Its main fields of activities include climatology, hydrology, hydrogeology, water technology and urban and farm water systems.

10. The Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS) was established in 1972 with headquarters at Dakar. Members are Mali, Mauritania and Senegal. Its major objectives are to increase the standard of living of inhabitants in the river basin, to maintain an ecological balance of the

Immediate environment and to render the economies of the participating countries less vulnerable to climatic conditions and external factors. To this end, the Organization co-ordinates the various efforts of its member States so as to develop the resources of the Senegal river basin rationally.

11. The River Niger Commission (CFN) was established in 1968 with headquarters in Niamey, Niger. Its members are Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Upper Volta. The Commission encourages, promotes and co-ordinates studies and programmes relating to the use and development of resources of the Niger River Basin. Among other functions, it formulates, on behalf of member States, requests for financial and technical assistance.

12. The Lake Chad Basin Commission (CBLT) was established in 1964 with headquarters at N'Djamena. Its members are Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The purpose of the Commission is to intensify the co-operation and efforts of its members in the development of the Chad Basin. The activities of CBLT include surveys of resources, livestock production, agriculture, fisheries, transport and telecommunications, tse-tse eradication and hydrology.

13. The Liptako-Gourma Region Integrated Development Authority was established in 1970 with headquarters at Ouagadougou, Upper Volta. Its members are Mali, Niger and Upper Volta. The main purpose of the Authority is to promote the regional development of minerals, energy, agriculture, grazing and fishery resources in the region. It carries out economic studies and projects related to infrastructure, energy, mines, livestock, agriculture and water, and seeks funds to finance such projects.

14. The Senegambia Permanent Secretariat was established in 1967 with headquarters at Banjul, Gambia. Its members are Gambia and Senegal. The principal purpose of the Senegambia Secretariat is to promote the development of the Gambia River basin. It also promotes cultural, social, economic and financial co-operation in an effort to strengthen the solidarity of the two member States.

B. INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

15. The United Nations system, through its programming, financing and executing bodies, has been deeply involved in various activities concerning the socio-economic development of the Sudano-Sahelian region, including measures which have a bearing on the problem of combating desertification. In addition to its regular programmes, special efforts for the region were undertaken by the Secretary-General, following the severe drought of the late 1960s and early 1970s, in conformity with the relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions. In order effectively to co-ordinate, strengthen and sustain these special efforts, certain institutional arrangements were established to give special emphasis to both the emergency measures and the medium- and long-term requirements.

1. United Nations bodies

16. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through country programmes for each of the countries in the region, as well as through inter-country projects, has been assisting in a wide variety of pre-investment activities, including range management, river basin

development, soil surveys, improved land use and training schemes. UNDP also has a network of resident representatives stationed in each country who assist in co-ordinating the assistance of the United Nations family in their countries of accreditation. UNDP works closely with each of the countries within the context of their national development strategies. The projects which it finances emphasize particularly technical assistance.

17. The United Nations Sahelian Office (UNSO) was established in 1973 by the Secretary-General as the focal point and the central co-ordinating unit of the United Nations system for the implementation of the rehabilitation and development programmes in the Sudano-Sahelian region. Its activities presently cover eight drought-stricken Sahelian countries, namely, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta. UNSO is organizationally located in the immediate office of the Administrator of UNDP. In addition to having the benefit of the expertise available at UNDP Headquarters, UNSO has the full use of the network of UNDP resident representatives as well as its own field office, currently located at Ouagadougou. Functioning entirely on an extra-budgetary basis, UNSO assists the countries concerned in planning, mobilizing resources and implementing priority projects in a wide range of rehabilitation and development activities.

18. The World Bank extends substantial loans in the region, which are used for capital investment, rural development and agricultural production projects. Following the severe drought of 1968-1973, the World Bank allocated special emergency funds for assistance to the CILSS member States. The World Bank has a regional office at Nairobi, covering East Africa, another at Abidjan covering West Africa, and a representative stationed at Ouagadougou.

19. The World Food Programme (WFP) has provided considerable food aid, including storage and transport, to the Sahelian countries during emergency periods. In addition, it provides assistance in the form of food aid connected with development projects. It supports development projects by facilitating their implementation through its Food for Work programme.

20. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the body within the United Nations system now entrusted by the General Assembly with the overall task of combating desertification. As part of his functions as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Desertification, the Executive Director initiated a number of activities, some of which are concerned with the Sudano-Sahelian region.

21. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has as its main purpose the furtherance of regional economic co-operation among African countries. This includes the promotion of trade, the development of transport, the promotion of industrial development, research in agriculture and the development of human resources. The Commission has established four sub-regional offices and United Nations

Development Advisory Teams located at Niamey, Yaoundé, Tangier and Lusaka. They are presently being converted into multinational programming and operational centres financed by UNDP, whose main purpose is to promote ECA policies and programmes and to foster regional economic co-operation among participating States. The centres receive operational guidance from representatives of the countries concerned at the ministerial level.

2. Specialized agencies

22. The specialized agencies of the United Nations have considerable activities designed to promote the socio-economic development of the region which have a bearing on the programme of combating desertification. These activities are mainly of a professional and technical nature, involving the sectors of interest of the agencies concerned. A great portion of these activities are financed from UNDP resources.

23. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has extensive and varied programmes in agricultural development. These include soil surveys, afforestation, sand dune fixation, range and livestock management, water resources development and irrigation schemes, agricultural research, and disease and pest control. The Ecological Management of Arid and Semi-Arid Rangeland (EMASAR) project is a joint FAO/UNEP undertaking which is applicable to the region. FAO has a regional office located at Accra. It also has senior agricultural advisers in a number of countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region who work closely with UNDP resident representatives. Following the severe drought in the Sahel from 1968 to 1973, FAO established the Office of Special Relief Operations (OSRO) to provide assistance during the emergency period in the Sahel in co-operation with WFP and UNSO.

24. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has activities closely related to arid land ecosystems, including the synthesizing and disseminating of information on arid land development, training in land use (especially of pastoral resources) and hydrological research, including floods, droughts and water resources. The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme has projects concerning grazing lands and irrigation in arid and semi-arid zones, including the Sudano-Sahelian region. UNESCO has been collaborating with FAO on a world soil map project and with FAO and UNEP on the world map of desertification and world assessment of soil degradation projects, all of which involve the Sudano-Sahelian region.

25. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has been providing assistance to Governments in strengthening their meteorological services, expanding and strengthening meteorological and hydrological stations and monitoring and forecasting climatic conditions and extremes. It has been concerned with problems of desertification partly attributable to climatic changes, and collaborated with FAO and UNESCO in preparing the World Map of Desertification, as well as with the United Nations Conference on Desertification on various subjects.

26. World Health Organization (WHO) activities in the region involve the entire range of the Organization's programme, including environmental health and disease control and prevention. These activities are adapted to the particular conditions inherent in a desert-prone environment.

27. Other organizations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) also have activities concerning the socio-economic development of the Sudano-Sahelian region, which have a bearing on the programme of combating desertification.

C. CLUB DU SAHEL

28. The Club du Sahel, established in 1975, has as its main objective the provision of assistance to CILSS member States in formulating medium- and long-term development strategies for the purpose of achieving self-sufficiency in food and in promoting and sustaining the interest of the international community in the development problems of the CILSS member States. It is a voluntary association of donor countries, the CILSS member States, United Nations organs and agencies, and other international organizations operating in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

D. GENERAL COMMENTS

29. It is clear from this brief survey of institutional arrangements in the Sudano-Sahelian region that there are numerous organizations whose activities are concerned with the development of the region and have a bearing on the control of desertification. It is also clear, however, that none of the existing institutions is concerned primarily with the problem of desertification, or with the Sudano-Sahelian region as a distinct geographical entity. Accordingly, there is a need for more intensive and systematic arrangements for co-ordinating the activities to combat desertification in the region and making them more effective. As the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification involves a concerted multi-disciplinary programme, a central co-ordinating machinery is needed to deal with the region as a whole. Section IV below examines several options for improving the institutional arrangements designed to cope with the problem of desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

III. PROPOSED MEASURES AND MODES OF ACTION FOR IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION

30. The general approach to combating desertification and the main activities required are contained in the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification which was adopted by the United Nations Conference on Desertification and approved by the General Assembly at its thirty-second session in decision 32/172 of 19 December 1977.

The Plan emphasizes the need for immediate as well as medium- to long-term programmes to combat desertification which are fully applicable to the Sudano-Sahelian region. It also stresses the importance of action by Governments at the national level and the need for co-operative efforts to reinforce and integrate national, regional and international actions, and includes recommendations regarding the following set of interrelated subjects:

Assessment

- Desertification assessment and evaluation;
- Monitoring of desertification processes;

Management

- Improvement of land-use planning and management;
- Combination of industrialization with agriculture development;
- Improvement of water resources management;
- Improvement of rainfed agriculture;
- Improvement of irrigated agriculture;
- Protection and restoration of natural plant cover;
- Conservation of flora and fauna;
- Use of unconventional energy sources;
- Evaluation and analysis of socio-economic factors;
- Public participation in anti-desertification campaigns;
- Improvement of economic and demographic policies;
- Improvement of health care;
- Improvement of human settlements;
- Monitoring of the human conditions;
- Insurance against the risk and effects of drought;

Supporting measures

- Strengthening national capabilities, particularly in science and technology;

- Training, education and information;
- Establishing national machinery;
- Integration of anti-desertification programmes.

31. Within this general framework, the principal measures and modes of action for combating desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region would entail the following objectives on a regional level, which could be pursued by an appropriate regional institutional mechanism:

- (a) To co-ordinate anti-desertification programmes within the Sudano-Sahelian region, keep their implementation under review and assess their effectiveness;
- (b) To promote and encourage regional co-operation in the field of desertification and develop, as appropriate, policies to this end;
- (c) To provide general policy guidance for the direction and co-ordination of anti-desertification programmes within the region;
- (d) To support efforts undertaken at the national level by the countries of the region to combat desertification;
- (e) To encourage and co-ordinate assistance from developed countries, multilateral financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental donors to the countries of the region;
- (f) To co-ordinate the anti-desertification activities of international organizations in the region;
- (g) To organize and co-ordinate, through, among other means, the Consultative Group for Desertification Control, speedy implementation in the region of transnational projects to combat desertification starting, if so agreed by the Governments concerned, with one or both of the two projects concerning the region supported by the United Nations Conference on Desertification, namely:
 - (i) Sahel green belt;
 - (ii) Management of livestock and rangelands to combat desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region (SOLAR);
- (h) To promote and encourage the speedy implementation and regional expansion of such projects as EMASAR (FAO/UNEP), IPAL (UNESCO/UNEP) and DECARP (Sudan/UNEP) in full co-ordination with the two transnational projects mentioned in sub-paragraph (g) above;
- (i) To study the feasibility of new transnational projects in the region, including training, and organize the formulation of the mobilization of financial support needed for and the subsequent implementation of such projects;

(j) To assist the countries of the region in organizing at the national and regional levels the translation of the recommendations of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification into concrete priority projects for implementation;

(k) To promote the establishment in the region of an integrated anti-desertification experimental/training/demonstration centre or centres, as required, in accordance with the relevant recommendations of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

(l) To assist competent existing institutions in the region in expanding their activities to cover the problems of desertification.

IV. PROPOSED MEASURES TO IMPROVE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION

A. CHARACTERISTICS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM

32. As noted above, the General Assembly in resolution 32/170 requested the Governing Council to consider measures to improve institutional arrangements in the Sudano-Saharan region, including the establishment of a subregional office of UNEP in the region for the purpose of supporting efforts undertaken at the national and regional levels by the countries concerned to combat desertification. In the development of any improved institutional mechanism for the Sudano-Saharan region, the following essential elements must be taken into consideration:

(a) Clear designation as the focal point and co-ordinating body within the United Nations system for assisting in the implementation of the Plan of Action in the region;

(b) Capability of commencing operations in the region immediately after its establishment, in line with the need for immediate implementation as called for by General Assembly resolution 32/170;

(c) Location in the region;

(d) Ability to utilize existing United Nations structures and facilities in the region, such as the UNDP network of resident representatives and the regional and national offices of the various United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, in order to maintain effective, direct and sustained contacts with the countries and relevant organizations in the region;

(e) Close ties with bodies of the United Nations system concerned with financing and planning, as well as with the donor community;

(f) Sufficient flexibility and adaptability to respond promptly and effectively to the needs of the region for programming, resource mobilization and project implementation.

33. The specific functions of an improved institutional mechanism in supporting the efforts undertaken at the national and regional levels for the implementation of the Plan of Action will be the following:

(a) Planning and programming

The mechanism should play an active role in relevant planning activities undertaken in the region in so far as they may affect the issues of desertification. It should serve as a programme activity centre for assisting the countries concerned in the implementation of the Plan of Action in the region, with the capacity, under the guidance of UNEP, to formulate regional programmes, to co-ordinate them with other regional programmes and strategies and to help in the identification of priorities and in the formulation of national projects. This function should be carried out in close collaboration with individual Sudano-Sahelian countries and, as appropriate, with their regional organizations;

(b) Resource mobilization

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 the institutional mechanism, through all possible channels, including the Consultative Group for Desertification Control. The mechanism will undertake all necessary action with the interested donors in order to facilitate project financing. Projects concerning the Sudano-Sahelian region may be financed bilaterally, multilaterally or through contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities, as well as through a variety of consortium arrangements and multi-bilateral efforts. The Trust Fund will continue to be managed in full conformity with the relevant United Nations rules and regulations;

(c) Project implementation

Projects may be implemented bilaterally, multilaterally or by the United Nations system. In the case of projects financed directly by bilateral and multilateral institutions, the arrangements for project implementation will be decided in accordance with the established practices of the parties concerned. Projects financed through contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities should be executed, in collaboration with the Government concerned, by a competent executing agency of the United Nations system. The modalities of implementation and the selection of the executing agency for Trust Fund financed projects would be done in full consultation with UNEP.

B. ESTIMATED COST OF AN IMPROVED MECHANISM

34. Bearing in mind the above-noted functions and working modalities of a United Nations co-ordinating mechanism in the Sudano-Sahelian region, some general administrative and financial requirements for such an establishment should be considered. Subject to adjustments based on whichever institutional arrangements the Governing Council wish to opt for, these requirements could include:

(a) Personnel: Five professional officers together with appropriate support service staff;

(b) Provision for consultant services and extensive travel. In view of the wide geographical scope of the proposed mechanism, the diversity of expertise that will be required to cope with its tasks and the small establishment of professional staff proposed;

(c) Commensurate provision for office space, furniture, equipment and general operational expenses.

35. The estimated budget for the proposed mechanism for a fully operational year would be approximately \$800,000. The modalities of financing the administrative costs of the proposed mechanism will depend on the particular institutional arrangement selected by the Governing Council.

C. POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE MECHANISMS

1. Feasibility and implications of the establishment of a sub-regional office of UNEP in the Sudano-Sahelian region

36. The first alternative is naturally that referred to specifically in General Assembly resolution 32/170, i.e., a sub-regional Sudano-Sahelian office of UNEP. If such an office is established, the following implications could be envisaged:

(a) Negotiations with the Governments and regional bodies concerned on selecting a seat for the office, recruiting staff and acquiring office space and equipment. These prerequisites would permit starting operations by 1979 and making the office fully operational by 1980;

(b) The title of the office would be "The Anti-Desertification Sub-Regional Sudano-Sahelian Office of UNEP". Its geographical scope would include all fifteen countries of the region as defined in paragraph 3 of the present report;

(c) It would be a sub-regional office of the regional office of UNEP for Africa. All backstopping activities necessary for the operation of this office would be provided for by UNEP;

(d) Its objectives, functions and work modalities would include those outlined in paragraphs 31-33 of the present report.

2. Feasibility and implications of expanding the United Nations Sahelian Office into a joint UNDP/UNEP venture

37. The United Nations Sahelian Office (UNSO), carries out the mandate given to the Secretary-General by relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions concerning assistance to the drought-stricken countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region. Subject to the decision of the Governing Councils of UNEP and UNDP and in consultation with the countries concerned, the organization and functions of the Office might be enlarged to serve on behalf of UNEP as the United Nations mechanism to assist the countries concerned in the Sudano-Sahelian region in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. This enterprise would be carried out as a joint UNEP/UNDP venture; certain relevant factors with respect to UNSO's present responsibilities, functions, institutional arrangements, and working methods must be fully taken into account:

(a) UNSO's present organization, functions and working methods are consistent with those prescribed for the proposed mechanism in paragraphs 31-33 of the present report. The extent and nature of UNSO's working relationships with relevant United Nations bodies and donors community would also be helpful for the proposed mechanism. UNSO's present role, however, is geographically limited to eight of the fifteen countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region;

(b) Since UNSO's field office already exists at Ouagadougou, it would seem feasible to complete the requirements of a fully operational office in the region during 1978.

38. If the above course of action were to be pursued the following actions should be taken:

(a) Decisions of the Governing Councils of both UNEP and UNDP that UNSO, in addition to its present responsibilities, be designated as the mechanism to co-ordinate the United Nations efforts to assist in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region;

(b) Full consultation with the Sudano-Sahelian countries concerned with the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and with the relevant intergovernmental bodies;

(c) Increase in the scope of UNSO's activities to include the 15 countries of the region as specified in paragraph 3 of the present report;

(d) Renaming of the present United Nations Sahelian Office as the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office;

(e) Provision of backstopping activities for the Office by the African Bureau of UNDP and UNEP's Regional Office for Africa, as well as by the central services and field offices of the two organizations.

The specific modalities of the relationships between UNEP and UNDP with respect to the financing and administrative supervision of the joint venture would be worked out by the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNEP immediately following approval of the enlarged mandate for UNSO by the relevant United Nations bodies. In the initial phase of its activities under the enlarged mandate, the operations of the Office would continue to be financed on an extra-budgetary basis. This arrangement might be reviewed and modified if the situation warranted.

3. Feasibility and Implications of establishment of a multinational programming and operational centre in the Sudano-Sahelian region

39. A third possibility is to consider the feasibility of establishing a centre of this kind (see para. 21 above) in the Sudano-Sahelian region to assist in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the region. In this connexion it must be kept in mind that:

(a) The centres are envisaged as co-ordinating and operational institutions to carry out ECA policies and objectives;

(b) None of the existing centres coincides in geographical scope with the Sudano-Sahelian region as described in paragraph 3 of the present report. Portions of the Sudano-Sahelian region and other geographical regions of Africa are grouped according to different patterns of existing political and economic co-operation among the States concerned;

(c) The functions and the modalities of work of the centres, as defined at their establishment, do not coincide with those described in paragraphs 31-33 of the present report.

40. If such a centre is proposed as the mechanism for assisting in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region, the following implications could be envisaged:

(a) The establishment of the centre would require consideration and approval by ECA and its governing body, as well as by the Governments of the region. The necessary preparations for its establishment would permit the starting of operations in 1979, with the centre becoming fully operational by 1980;

(b) The geographical scope of the centre would cover all 15 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region as defined in paragraph 3 of this report. The present geographical scope and activities of the existing centres would also have to be redefined;

(c) The title of the office would be "The Sudano-Sahelian Multinational Programming and Operation Centre".

4. General comments

41. Depending on which institutional arrangement the Governing Council of UNEP may wish to opt for, a reporting system for the new mechanism will have to be worked out.

42. With respect to the authority line for the new mechanism:

(a) If the Governing Council opts for the UNEP sub-regional office arrangement, the office will fall under the authority of the Executive Director of UNEP and under the policy guidance of its Governing Council;

(b) If the Governing Council favours an expansion of the United Nations Sahelian Office into a joint UNDP/UNEP venture and entrusts it with the task, then, subject to the approval of the UNDP Governing Council, the modalities for the joint authority of the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNEP will have to be considered. The two executive heads would receive policy guidance in respect of the work of this office from their respective Governing Councils;

(c) Should the Governing Council decide on some other form of institutional arrangements, such as a multinational programming and operational centre, then the reporting mechanism and authority structure will have to be worked out accordingly.

43. A detailed statement of the financial implications involved, including the requisite modes of financing, will be prepared in the light of the decision reached by the Governing Council.

V. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

44. The Governing Council may wish:

(a) To note the report of the Executive Director on the measures to be taken for the benefit of the Sudano-Sahelian region;

(b) To express its views with respect to the Executive Director's proposals regarding measures and modes of action for implementing projects and programmes to combat desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region;

(c) To take a decision with respect to measures to improve institutional arrangements in the Sudano-Sahelian region, including the requisite modes of financing.

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