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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION: ENVIRONMENT;
DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee,
Mr. David Payton (New Zealand), on the basis of informal
consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/44/L.33

Plan of action to combat desertification

A

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 32/172 of 19 December 1977, by which it approved the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification 1/ and all its subsequent resolutions,

Recalling also its resolution S-13/2 of 1 June 1986, by which it adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, identifying measures to combat desertification as one of its priorities,

Recalling further its resolution 44/____ of _____ on the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held 15 years after the adoption of the Nairobi Plan of Action to Combat Desertification,

* Reissued for technical reasons.

1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Desertification, Nairobi, 29 August-9 September 1977 (A/CONF.74/36), chap. I.

Deeply concerned that the problem of desertification, which has a global impact, is still on the fringe of the growing awareness of the international community that it is imperative to combat environmental deterioration effectively within the framework of the interdependence of nations,

Gravely concerned by the continuing spread and intensification of desertification in developing countries, particularly in Africa, and the ineffable human suffering, economic and financial losses and social disruption caused by this scourge,

Aware that drought and desertification place a considerable burden on the economic and financial capacity of the developing countries affected and that the negative effects of the international economic environment impede their efforts in undertaking effective and sustained programmes to combat desertification, for which they bear primary responsibility,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/189, 2/ and of the relevant section of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme; 3/

2. Expresses its deep concern about the inadequacy of financial resources for the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

3. Urges Governments, in particular, those of the developed countries, organizations of the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies to increase and intensify their efforts to combat desertification and to accord the highest priority to the recommendations in the Plan of Action;

4. Invites the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to consult the principal international organizations, private foundations, individuals and the major media enterprises that finance or promote environmental protection activities in order to draw their attention to the compelling need to consider desertification control on an equal footing with other current environmental issues;

5. Also invites the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to accord high priority to desertification control and to deploy all means necessary, including financial, scientific and technological resources, to halt and reverse the process of desertification with a view to preserving the ecological balance of the planet;

6. Invites the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to contribute substantially to the discussion on desertification at the 1992 Conference inter alia, by undertaking a general evaluation, sufficiently in

2/ A/44/351-E/1989/122.

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/44/25).

advance, of the progress achieved in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

7. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, to submit to the 1992 Conference, through the Preparatory Committee, a report containing relevant expert studies, which shall comprise, inter alia, the following topics:

(a) An inventory of relevant suggestions and proposals formulated within the United Nations system on the possibility of utilizing new methods to finance the programmes of multilateral organizations at the global level, over and above regular budgets and conventional extrabudgetary resources;

(b) The state of implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, objectives and courses of action to further the struggle against desertification, including evaluation of the additional resources needed in order to attain the minimum objectives of the struggle against desertification;

(c) A study of ways and means of promoting, in particular in the developing countries, research and development of technology to combat desertification, comprising that which already exists and that which may become available, and of procedures for the transfer of this technology, on favourable terms, in particular to developing countries;

(d) Possibilities for obtaining loans on concessional terms from Governments and other sources of financing, to combat desertification;

(e) Possibilities for reducing the impact of desertification, including by reforestation through mechanisms involving the cancellation or reduction of external debt;

(f) Possibilities for strengthening and co-ordinating the activities of funds established for that purpose in various international institutions;

(g) Ways of encouraging the active participation of non-governmental organizations, foundations and individuals in the financing of training and scientific research programmes combating desertification, including reforestation;

8. Decides to close the Special Account to finance the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, and requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to effect the necessary actions and procedures;

9. Also decides that, the Consultative Group for Desertification Control will meet every year until the 1992 Conference on environment and development and every two years thereafter, and reaffirms its mandate as contained in resolutions 32/172 of 19 December 1977 and 39/168 of 17 December 1984;

10. Calls upon the Consultative Group, in co-operation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, to make contributions to enhancing awareness of environmental issues and to intensify its efforts to

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mobilize additional resources, to exchange information on scientific research, national programmes and the implementation of the Plan of Action and to give its opinions on the actions to be undertaken in the battle against desertification;

11. Urges the Governments of countries affected by desertification to accord high priority, in their national development plans, to medium-term and long-term strategies and programmes for desertification control;

12. Requests the Secretary-General, together with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, to submit a report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the various provisions of this resolution, and to ensure that it is submitted, immediately after publication, to the preparatory committee for the United Nations conference on environment and development.

B

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

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 32/170 of 19 December 1977, 33/88 of 15 December 1978, 34/187 of 18 December 1979, 35/72 of 5 December 1980, 36/190 of 17 December 1981, 37/216 of 20 December 1982, 38/164 of 19 December 1983, 39/168 B and 39/206 of 17 December 1984, 40/198 B of 17 December 1985, S-13/2 of 1 June 1986 and 42/189 B of 11 December 1987,

Bearing in mind the special seriousness of the problem of desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region and of the critical situations it creates, which impede the economic and social development of the region and have tragic implications for the living conditions of the population,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme on the activities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, 4/ as well as the relevant section of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme;

2. Stresses with deep concern

(a) That desertification in the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region has worsened and spread to other regions of Africa;

(b) That the chronic insufficiency of financial resources continues to pose obstacles to desertification control;

4/ DP/1989/50.

(c) That the battle against desertification requires financial and technical resources beyond the means of the affected countries;

3. Urges the affected countries that have not yet done so to include projects to combat desertification and drought in their national development plans and to accord high priority to them;

4. Also urges the affected countries to use all appropriate mechanisms, including the round-table meetings of the United Nations Development Programme and the Consultative Groups of the World Bank in order to mobilize resources for the implementation of programmes to combat desertification, and appeals to donor countries to provide substantial additional resources for the financing of such programmes;

5. Expresses gratification that the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office has endorsed the concept of sustainable development in adopting a global approach to the question of the management and conservation of natural resources and environmental issues and in emphasizing the incorporation of desertification control activities in national development plans;

6. Urges the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office to assist the countries of the region with their preparations for the 1992 Conference and with the resulting follow-up activities;

7. Takes note with appreciation of the interest displayed by the Paris economic summit of July 1989 in aspects of the struggle against desertification and, specifically, in the planned observatory for the Sahara and the Sahel;

8. Expresses its gratitude to the Governments that contribute to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities, and renews its urgent appeal to all members of the donor community to contribute substantially to the Fund in order to enable the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office to respond more effectively to the pressing needs of the African countries stricken by desertification;

9. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen their common undertaking to support the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office;

10. Invites the United Nations Sudano Sahelian Office to:

(a) Intensify its efforts to mobilize additional resources to support the efforts of the countries covered under its mandates, and of the relevant regional organizations, in particular, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development and the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel;

(b) To continue to support COMIDES (Conference ministérielle pour une politique concertée de lutte contre la désertification) and, in this context, to co-operate with the Southern African Development and Co-ordination Conference and with the Arab Maghreb Union.