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OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

ASSISTANCE TO DROUGHT-STRICKEN COUNTRIES IN AFRICA AND
FOLLOW-UP TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION
UNITED NATIONS SUDANO-SAHELIAN OFFICEIMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION
IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGIONReport of the AdministratorSummary

In response to the request of the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session (decision 79/20, II), the Administrator is submitting an annual report on the implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The report describes the initial desertification control programme of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) for the region, UNSO's initial resource mobilization efforts and project approvals, its activities to strengthen collaborative action within the United Nations system for assisting the countries of the region in implementing the Plan of Action as well as its activities to ensure co-ordination at the regional level. The report also describes the request of the General Assembly in resolution 34/187 that the UNEP Governing Council examine the possibility of including Djibouti, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau in the list of countries eligible for assistance through UNSO in implementing the Plan of Action. The UNEP Governing Council will consider these proposals at its eighth session from 16 to 20 April 1980. The Administrator will inform the UNDP Governing Council of any relevant action in this regard.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 8 of Governing Council decision 79/20, II, which requested the Administrator to continue to report annually to the Governing Council on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region. In that decision, the Governing Council also took note with satisfaction of the first report of the Administrator (DP/395) on the implementation of the Plan of Action in the region, which described the initial activities of UNSO under the enlarged mandate conferred upon it by the General Assembly in resolution 33/88 of 15 December 1978.

2. As may be recalled from the Administrator's first report, the General Assembly, in resolution 33/88, designated UNSO, in addition to its current functions, as the arm of the United Nations responsible for assisting, on behalf of UNEP, the efforts of the 15 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region ^{1/}to implement the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, this enterprise to be carried out as a joint responsibility of UNDP and UNEP. Shortly after the adoption of General Assembly resolution 33/88, the Administrator and the Executive Director of UNEP signed a Memorandum of Understanding, spelling out the modalities of the joint venture and the role and functions of UNSO in helping the countries of the region in combating desertification. These and other developments concerning the establishment and launching of UNSO's enlarged mandate are described in the Administrator's first report cited above.

II. INITIAL DESERTIFICATION CONTROL PROGRAMME FOR THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION

3. In accordance with its planning and programming functions, UNSO prepared, with the approval of the Executive Director of UNEP, an initial work-plan and timetable. The work-plan included arrangements for the organization of planning and programming missions to the region. The purposes of the missions, in which experts from organizations concerned of the United Nations system participated, included the following:

- (a) An assessment of the problem of desertification in the countries, including their causes and consequences;
- (b) A review of ongoing activities relevant to desertification control;
- (c) Discussions with the Governments on the preparation of national plans for combating desertification, including appropriate institutional machinery for implementation, co-ordination and monitoring; and
- (d) Assistance in the identification, formulation and appraisal of priority projects submitted by the Governments for UNSO assistance in resource mobilization.

^{1/} Cape Verde, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Cameroon and Upper Volta.

4. During the first half of 1979, UNSO sent desertification control planning and programming missions to 13 of the 15 countries of the region. Only Chad and Uganda were not visited, and at the time this report was being written, consultations were taking place for sending similar missions to these countries. Following the missions, reports were prepared containing assessments of the problems of desertification, reviews of on-going activities relative to desertification control, recommendations regarding national planning and institutional machinery for implementation, co-ordination and monitoring. The reports were also accompanied by annexes containing summaries of projects which were submitted by the Governments to UNSO with requests for assistance in mobilizing the necessary resources. The draft reports and annexes were sent to the United Nations organizations concerned for their comments and observations and again to the Governments of the region for their review and approval. Following the receipt of the Agencies' comments and the Governments' approval, the reports were submitted to the Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system and the international donor community.

5. In all, 107 priority projects, with the necessary project documents, have been submitted by the Governments to UNSO for assistance. The greatest number of projects are in forestry, followed by rangeland and livestock management, water resources management and sand dune fixation. These types of projects account for 74 per cent of the total projects submitted, reflecting the pattern of the desertification problems of the region. Projects for institutional support to Governments in planning, co-ordination, monitoring and technical services as well as in consciousness raising on the problem of desertification account for 10 per cent of the total projects presented. Other projects have also been submitted in the area of arid land agriculture, flora and fauna reserves and alternative sources of energy. A breakdown of the projects, according to type of activity, is shown in Table 1. (see page 10).

6. The total cost of the 107 projects submitted by the Governments to UNSO is estimated at \$640 million, of which \$395 million have already been pledged or are being provided by various sources including the Governments themselves, and an additional \$246 million in financing are required. The projects identified by the Governments with the planning and programming missions are related to the individual recommendations of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. Table 2 (see pages 11 and 12) shows the individual recommendations of the Plan of Action and the number of projects, the objectives of which fall within the framework of the recommendations. The categories of recommendations for national and regional

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action and the number of projects that refer to these recommendations are as follows:

<u>Category of Recommendations</u>	<u>Number of projects</u> ^{2/}
A. Evaluation of desertification and improvement of land management	28
B. The combination of industrialization and urbanization with the development of agriculture and their effects on the ecology in arid areas	-
C. Corrective anti-desertification measures	122
D. Socio-economic aspects	1
E. Insurance against the risk and effect of drought	6
F. Strengthening science and technology at the national level	27
G. Integration of anti-desertification programme into comprehensive development plans	4

7. The projects identified thus far by the Governments in conjunction with the UNSO planning and programming missions, constitute an initial desertification control programme for the region. It should be noted that this programme is only a beginning in UNSO's efforts to assist the countries in implementing the Plan of Action and do not represent a comprehensive programme to combat desertification. They are first steps, however, in the development of a dynamic, action-oriented programme. The implementation of the projects, furthermore, will assist the Governments in producing early results while further planning and programming continues on the basis of sustained consultations between the Governments, the United Nations agencies concerned, UNSO and sources of financing.

8. In the preparation of the initial desertification control programme for the Sudano-Sahelian region, emphasis has been placed on the fact that desertification is a problem of development as well as a major form of environmental degradation and that anti-desertification activities and development are closely intertwined. Thus, desertification control is aimed primarily at preventing the further loss of productive land, at a time when food deficits are growing and need to be redressed.

^{2/} The grand and category totals exceed the number of projects since in most cases, each project addresses itself to more than one recommendation of the Plan of Action.

Corrective measures in anti-desertification projects are also designed to restore or increase the productivity of degraded range, rain-fed and irrigated lands. Since most of the desertification taking place in the region is in rural areas, an overwhelming majority of the projects in the initial programme form part and parcel of the countries' programmes of integrated rural development.

9. In view of the persistence of the problem in the face of traditional methods of combating desertification, UNSO has placed emphasis on the use of innovative approaches, including the application of science and technology, technical co-operation among developing countries and methods for securing popular participation. The initial programme also includes development projects to provide the populations of arid and semi-arid regions with alternatives to livelihood systems, land use methods, energy utilization and other behavioural patterns where these lead to desertification and no options presently exist. These include plant species of commercial value which play a dual role of checking desert creep and providing new sources of income, as well as alternative sources of energy other than the cutting of firewood.

III. INITIAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND PROJECT APPROVALS

10. Parallel to its planning and programming activities, UNSO has already initiated resource mobilization and obtained or provided support for projects. At the time of the preparation of this report, external financing has been obtained at the request of the Governments for two projects through the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities. These include an FAO-executed priority pilot project for the protection and development of the Casamance Forest in Senegal. This pilot project is a component of the transnational Green Belt project. Its objectives are the protection, reforestation and natural regeneration of the Tabor Forest in the Casamance region from income generated through the ecologically controlled production of charcoal and timber. It is envisaged that the pilot project will lead to the large-scale development and protection of the forests of the entire region. By meeting a large part of the firewood needs of the country, the full project would present an alternative to the indiscriminate cutting of vegetation for fuel in semi-arid areas which is a cause of desertification. The Government of the Netherlands is contributing \$1 million to the UNSO Trust Fund for the implementation of the project.

11. The second project is a government-executed pilot project for erosion control in the island of San Joao Baptista in Cape Verde, with contributions from the Government of Ireland. The project, which costs a total of \$200,000, involves reforestation, terracing and other methods of erosion control which could be applied throughout this severely desertified country.

12. In addition to the above, UNSO, as part of its programming activities, has approved and initiated arrangements for the implementation of 16 projects relating to desertification control, in consultation with Agencies concerned of the United Nations system. These include projects of institutional support to Governments in the preparation of national plans, and the establishment or strengthening of

machinery for combating desertification. Arrangements are also being initiated for projects involving regional missions to address problems common to the region, such as fuelwood plantations around urban areas and the protection of grazing areas around watering points. The approved projects also include regional training schemes, two involving the Institute of the Sahel, and pilot projects involving groundwater recharging and the installation, maintenance and operation of tube wells. Finally, UNSO is organizing a project for the application of the most effective methods of the stabilization of moving sands with implications for dealing with the problem of sand dune fixation in the Sahel.

13. As part of its resource mobilization functions, UNSO has initiated a concerted series of consultations with donor Governments and organizations to secure financing for the priority projects submitted by the Governments to UNSO for assistance in resource mobilization. In this connexion, UNSO, in co-operation with UNEP, has visited various donors to discuss 20 fully formulated on-going projects (out of the 107 mentioned in paragraph 5) costing \$370 million. A total of \$333 million has already been pledged or is being provided by various sources, including the Governments themselves, but resources costing \$37 million are still required. At the time of the preparation of this report, these projects were scheduled for presentation to the Consultative Group for Desertification Control (DESCON), to be convened by the Executive Director in March 1980, for the purpose of mobilizing resources for desertification control projects. The Governments of the region requested UNSO to present the projects on their behalf for resource mobilization both at the pre-DESCON consultations and during the DESCON meeting itself.

IV. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. The conclusions of the Dakar meeting were reiterated at the Regional Meeting of Resident Representatives in Africa held from 7 to 17 January 1980 at Mbabane, Swaziland. Emphasis was placed on the role of the Resident Representatives in the implementation, in the Sudano-Sahelian region, of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, particularly in helping Governments and UNSO in identifying those priority projects for which UNSO resource mobilization efforts might be requested. It was noted that the Resident Representative should be the focal point for gathering relevant information, co-ordination, and assistance in facilitating the carrying out of UNSO's mandate in each country.

17. In carrying out its desertification control mandate, UNSO has been working closely with the Regional Bureaux for Africa and the Arab States and will intensify these close working relationships with the preparation of the third cycle of country programmes and their desertification control components. UNSO has also been working closely with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, which has agreed to support a number of desertification control projects identified by the UNSO planning and programming missions with the Governments. Close working relationships are also planned with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, which has indicated an interest in various aspects of desertification control projects, and with the United Nations Volunteers, which has indicated its readiness to provide a substantial number of volunteers for UNSO-supported desertification control projects.

18. To help ensure co-ordination at the regional level, UNSO organized and financed a joint meeting with CILSS and the Club du Sahel, under CILSS auspices, at Dakar from 20 to 24 November 1979. The meetings, in which representatives of the Member States of CILSS participated, had as its objective the establishment of a unified CILSS/UNSO plan for combating desertification in the member States of CILSS. The meeting was successful in preparing a unified plan for combating desertification, which incorporated the work prepared by the UNSO planning and

programming missions. The Plan includes a set of objectives, a strategy and a number of desertification control activities based on the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. Emphasis is placed on sand dune stabilization and the control of erosion and other forms of soil degradation; range management; forest protection and development; alternative energy sources and technology; research and training; and the preparation, application and integration with national development plans of schemes for the rational management of the natural resources of the region.

19. The unified plan was submitted to, and approved by, the CILSS Council of Ministers, which met at Ouagadougou on 11 and 12 January 1980. The Council of Ministers meeting was followed by a Heads of States Conference, which was addressed by the Administrator. The Conference agreed that desertification control should be among the top priorities of the member States of CILSS, and that the countries of the region should place emphasis on combating desertification in their development plans.

20. In addition to CILSS, UNSO has initiated extensive consultations with other regional organizations for the purpose of exchanging information on their respective activities, applying existing scientific and technological know-how and co-ordinating programmes and projects. These include the West Africa Economic Community (CEAO) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in the Executive Council of which UNSO has regularly participated as an observer. Contacts have also been made with regional and technical organizations outside the region, so that the Sudano-Sahelian region might benefit from the experience, know-how and resources of other countries suffering from desertification, through the mechanism of technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC). Contacts have been made in this connexion with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI) at Jodhpur, India. UNSO has also established working modalities for the application of science and technology relating to desertification control and arid lands development with the United Nations University (UNU), which has an extensive arid lands programme. In addition, UNSO has contacted other centres of expertise in the United States, Canada and Europe.

21. In resolution 34/187 adopted on 18 December 1979, the General Assembly inter alia, invited the UNEP Governing Council to examine at its next session the possibility of the inclusion of Djibouti, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau in the list of countries which receive assistance through UNSO in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region and to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session on the matter. In his report to the UNEP Governing Council on this subject (UNEP/GC.8/6), the Executive Director of UNEP notes that Djibouti has an arid climate, is severely affected by desertification and is located in the Sudano-Sahelian belt, as defined by the

relevant organs of the United Nations.^{3/} Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, although lying outside the Sudano-Sahelian bio-climatic zone, border Senegal and Mali and are a major source of water in West Africa. The Foutah-Djallon massif, located mainly in Guinea with sandstone outliers in Guinea-Bissau, is considered a primary source of the Gambia, the Niger, the Senegal and other rivers.

22. The proposals of the General Assembly noted above will be considered by the UNEP Governing Council at its eighth session, which will be held at Nairobi from 16 to 29 April 1980. The Administrator will inform the UNDP Governing Council of the relevant decisions taken at Nairobi in this regard.

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^{3/} The definition of the Sudano-Sahelian region, as contained in paragraph 3 of the Executive Director's report to the sixth session of the Governing Council (UNEP/GC/6/9/Add.2) and endorsed by the UNEP Governing Council in operative paragraph 1(a) of its decision 6/11,B of May 1978, which was subsequently endorsed, in turn, by ECOSOC resolution 1978/37 and by General Assembly resolution 33/88, is as follows:

"... 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.

Table 1

BREAKDOWN OF PROJECTS SUBMITTED BY GOVERNMENTS OF THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION
ACCORDING TO TYPE OF ACTIVITY

<u>Type of activity</u>	<u>Total number of projects</u>	<u>Percentage of total</u>
Anti-desertification strategy	2	2
Co-ordinating monitoring	3	3
Publicization of desertification problems	4	4
Forestry	6	6
Forestry rehabilitation	14	13
Forestry for fuelwood and construction	17	16
Rangeland and livestock	17	16
Agriculture	8	7
Fishery	2	2
Water resources	16	15
Sand dune/brises fixation/vents	8	7
Park reserves	6	6
Health and social services		
Meteorology	2	2
Alternative sources of energy	2	2
Total number of projects:	<hr/> 107 <hr/>	

Table 2

PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL
ACTION COVERED BY PROJECTS SUBMITTED BY GOVERNMENTS TO
UNSO FOR ASSISTANCE IN RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTION	NUMBER OF PROJECTS
A. Evaluation of Desertification and Improvement of Land Management	
1. Assessment of desertification process in order to define programme priorities.	9
2. Land use planning and management based on ecologically sound methods.	10
3. Public participation in prevention and combating of desertification.	9
B. The Combination of Industrialization and Urbanization with the Development of Agriculture and their Effects on the Ecology in Arid Areas	
4. Consideration of industrialization and urbanization in arid areas.	
C. Corrective Anti-Desertification Measures	
5. Water resources planning, development and management.	22
6. Rangeland and livestock management.	16
7. Soil and water conservation on rain-fed agricultural land.	11
8. Development and management of irrigated lands.	10
9. Protection and/or revegetation of vulnerable lands, including moving lands.	45
10. Conservation of flora and fauna.	11
11. Monitoring natural conditions of arid areas.	8

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NUMBER OF
PROJECTS

D. Socio-Economic Aspects	
12. Analysis of man-made factors in desertification.	14
13. Adoption of appropriate economic and demographic policies to vulnerable agro-ecosystems.	5
14. Health care services and family planning	1
15. Avoidance of constructing permanent buildings in affected areas.	
16. Monitoring of the human condition.	11
E. Insurance Against the Risk and Effect of Drought	
17. Preventive measures against the effects of drought.	6
F. Strengthening Science and Technology at the National Level	
18. Application of science and technology for rational utilization of resources.	10
19. Control of the use of vegetation as an energy source and research into unconventional energy sources.	3
20. Prioritization of training, education and information related to desertification.	12
21. Establishment of co-ordinated national machinery.	3
G. Integration of Anti-Desertification Programme into Comprehensive Development Plans	
22. Development of anti-desertification programmes in accordance with national development plans.	4