

UNITED NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME



Distr.  
GENERAL

DP/SR.689  
17 June 1980

Original: ENGLISH

GOVERNING COUNCIL

Twenty-seventh session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 689th MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Wednesday, 11 June 1980, at 3 p.m.

President

Mr. POPESCU

(Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

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- (h) STANDARDIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION PROCEDURES (DP/468)

1. Mrs. SIPILA (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that a comprehensive review of the progress achieved during the first half of the United Nations Decade for Women would be made when the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women met in Copenhagen in July 1980. A more detailed programme of action for the following five years would then be adopted stressing the special sub-theme of employment, health and education.

2. The progress made in the integration of women in development had been described in document DP/453. While some progress had admittedly been made in integrating women in that process, both as beneficiaries and as contributors, it was equally true that in no country had women yet been integrated on equal terms with men,

particularly in planning and decision-making positions as well as in the implementation of development plans. In no country had women's needs been taken fully into account when plans had been made and funding provided.

3. On the other hand, promising progress had been made during the past two years in the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. Through the field projects which it had financed, the Fund had acted as a catalyst in increasing an understanding of the situation of women and their needs. The Fund had so far had approximately \$11 million at its disposal and had accepted 120 projects for funding during the short period it had been in operation. There was a definite trend towards country programmes with about two-thirds of project proposals coming direct from resident representatives. Most projects involved planning, rural development, small-scale industries and action-oriented research, in virtually equal proportions. Small amounts had been provided for the training of trainers and for information and communication support.
4. She was most grateful to the more than 60 donor countries to the Voluntary Fund and to the Administrator and his staff for their co-operation with the Fund. There was no doubt that the Fund had proved to be an excellent experiment in the effort to achieve the goals of the international development strategies and of the World Plan of Action of the United Nations Decade for Women, as well as the objectives of UNDP's own resolutions and recommendations concerning the full integration of women in development.
5. There was, however, one problem. Owing to the constantly increasing need for country programmes, the Fund was currently subject to serious financial restraints, caused by the position of many important donor countries which were major contributors to UNDP but did not consider it possible to contribute to separate funds.
6. The General Assembly had decided to continue the activities of the Voluntary Fund until the end of 1985. During that period, the Fund should be able to demonstrate its capacity to assist countries and UNDP in their efforts to integrate women fully in development, in co-operation with the United Nations system, Governments and non-governmental organizations.
7. There seemed to be only one possibility of improving the situation, namely, to request all potential donor countries to reconsider their decision on the question of contributing to the Voluntary Fund on the grounds that, firstly, it was a temporary fund, and secondly, it had been a successful experiment. Emphasis could also be placed on the fact that the Fund ought to be given the means to succeed in its efforts to assist UNDP, and the needy countries and their people in particular, gradually to integrate women in all their country programmes.
8. On the basis of a recent resolution of the Economic and Social Council, a special opportunity would be provided at the forthcoming World Conference in Copenhagen for the announcement of intentions to make pledges to the Voluntary Fund. That opportunity, together with the Pledging Conference for Development in New York in November 1980, would provide Governments with an excellent opening for promoting innovative ways of expanding development during the new Development Decade and the latter part of the United Nations Decade for Women through financing projects proposed to the Voluntary Fund. The number of those projects were likely to increase gradually, especially when the activities of the Voluntary Fund became better known at the World Conference.

9. No developing country could afford not to benefit from the funding possibilities which the Voluntary Fund offered for the integration of women in development, or to leave unmet the needs reflected in the project proposals. The projects concerned areas which deeply affected the countries' current and future development, especially through the chain effect which the situation of women had on children and the family and on society as a whole.

10. Mr. SRIVASTAVA (Secretary-General of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization) said that the situation of developing countries in world shipping was very unsatisfactory, as their participation was currently less than ten per cent. It would be impossible for those countries to increase their participation unless they could build up their technical capabilities. A few years ago IMCO did not have a single adviser. Thanks to UNDP and, in particular, to the Administrator, the organization currently had advisers on maritime training, maritime pollution and technical port problems as well as regional advisers, who provided technical assistance to the maritime administrations of developing countries.

11. IMCO gave high priority to technical co-operation and was probably unique in the United Nations system in having included its Technical Co-operation Committee in its Convention as a constitutional organ. The help given by IMCO to developing countries had increased their awareness of the need to enhance their technical capacity. He therefore appealed to the Council to continue its support to IMCO. Provided such support was made available he would hope that, in four or five years' time, the developing countries would be able to develop self-sustaining growth in the maritime field. Shipping was a very complex industry and continuing UNDP support was crucial. IMCO was a small agency, had no field network of its own and was therefore unusually dependent on the services which could be provided by UNDP, in particular, by resident representatives, all of whom had been of the greatest assistance to IMCO.

12. The developing countries had reached a point where they required more help through legal advisory services. IMCO currently had one adviser for its 118 member States and the demand for such services was escalating. Unless developing countries incorporated the technical requirements of international standards in their law, they would not be able to operate their shipping in international waters. They accordingly required technical assistance from IMCO in the legal field to modernize their law. In order to provide adequate help in that field the Council of IMCO had asked him to seek UNDP's support for at least two additional legal advisers.

13. He fully endorsed the Administrator's appeal for use of the UNDP umbrella for meeting the needs of the developing countries. He hoped that the Governing Council would give priority to the maritime sector during the forthcoming cycle. Such assistance was central to the developing countries' hopes of obtaining more equitable participation in the world maritime industry.

14. Mr. LIPTAU (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his Government attached the highest priority to IMCO and its work. It shared the organization's basic philosophy and welcomed its close links with UNDP. IMCO's programmes were fully in line with the UNDP consensus of 1970. He assured the Secretary-General that the organization's realistic approach would be sympathetically followed by his delegation.

15. Mr. AASE (Norway) said that his country, as a leading shipping nation, had always strongly supported IMCO. His delegation would willingly co-operate with IMCO in assisting the technical development of the developing countries and in providing them with assistance in building a maritime technical capability, as well as an administrative and legislative framework for their shipping industries.

16. Mr. BIDAUT (France) said that his delegation welcomed the work done by IMCO's regional and interregional advisers on the question of maritime legislation. It fully supported IMCO's request to UNDP in that connexion and was satisfied with the technical co-operation afforded by IMCO to the developing countries.

17. Mr. KANE (Senegal) said that his delegation associated itself with others in thanking IMCO for its help in seeking a more acceptable world order in the maritime field. He supported the Secretary-General's request that, as IMCO was too small to be represented everywhere, UNDP should act as a link between IMCO headquarters and the developing countries. To assist the efforts of developing countries to establish new systems of maritime legislation, UNDP might consider allocating part of the country IPFs for that purpose.

18. Mr. SRIVASTAVA (Secretary-General of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization) said he welcomed the support which those representatives who had spoken had given to his request. IMCO had already received substantial support from the Federal Republic of Germany, Norway and France over and above what had been provided through UNDP. He would pursue the suggestion of the representative of Senegal.

19. Mr. MORSE (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that he had noted the comments made by delegations. He was ready to put the field network of UNDP at IMCO's disposal, and was already in contact with the Secretary-General with a view to determining how the needs of the developing countries could best be met.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES (agenda item 7) (continued)

(f) ASSISTANCE TO DROUGHT-STRIKEN COUNTRIES IN AFRICA AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION (continued)

(i) UNITED NATIONS SUDANO-SAHELIAN OFFICE

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDIUM-TERM AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION (DP/486)

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION (DP/455, 494)

(ii) ASSISTANCE TO THE DROUGHT-STRIKEN COUNTRIES IN AFRICA (DP/450)

20. Mr. MAGDI (Director, United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme of the Sudano-Sahelian region (DP/486) and the report of the Administrator on the implementation of the Plan of

Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region (DP/455), said that the former report described the activities carried out by UNSO to assist the drought-stricken countries of the Sahel and their regional organization, the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), while the latter report described the work of UNSO in assisting, on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, south of the Sahara and north of the Equator, in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

21. UNSO was endeavouring to assist the member States of CILSS in mitigating the effects of future droughts, attaining self-sufficiency in staple foods and accelerating socio-economic development. Assistance was given, at the request of the Governments concerned and in conformity with national and regional priorities, in the planning and programming of priority projects, programmes, the mobilization of resources, and the implementation, through the resources of the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities, of priority projects not undertaken bilaterally. The projects were executed, in accordance with UNDP rules and regulations, by the competent United Nations executing agencies or by national services under the supervision of the UNDP resident representative.

22. The projects and programmes covered the development of agricultural production, including hydraulic resources, irrigation systems, the local manufacture of agricultural tools and equipment, the establishment and operation of seed multiplication programmes, and the strengthening of crop protection capabilities.

23. Special emphasis was placed on the development of national and regional economic infrastructures such as feeder-road transport systems, storage facilities, telecommunications and agrometeorological and hydrological services. Projects had also been undertaken for the development of fishing resources and livestock production. Moreover, UNSO had stressed the strengthening of national and regional institutional capabilities, vocational and managerial training, research and health.

24. The report described the background and scope of UNSO's major programme on the development of an all-weather feeder-road system to open up the Sahelian region both for rehabilitation and development. Of the estimated requirement of \$110 million, approximately \$60 million had been secured either on a bilateral basis or through a contribution to the Trust Fund. Since May 1978, the financing secured through UNSO's efforts had permitted the construction of about 520 km of priority feeder roads in the Gambia, Mali, Senegal and Upper Volta. The construction phase of the programme in Mauritania and Niger would start within a month. In Cape Verde, an inter-island maritime traffic capability would be developed, for which UNSO had undertaken to assist the Government in mobilizing the necessary resources.

25. As part of the United Nations Decade for Transport and Communications in Africa, UNDP was helping to mobilize technical and financial resources to open up land-locked countries and isolated regions, develop and modernize transport facilities and promote national and regional trade in those areas.

26. Those activities had been made possible only by the response of the international community to UNSO's resource mobilization efforts, undertaken at the request of the countries of the region. An account of the campaign was given in document DP/486. Since 1 July 1975, the number of priority projects for which UNSO assistance had been requested had increased from 52, requiring an initial investment of \$153 million, to 108, requiring an investment of \$606 million. The sum of approximately \$340 million had been mobilized from bilateral and multilateral sources and from the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities. Out of that sum the Trust Fund had provided approximately \$63 million for 51 of the priority projects, of which 28 had been completed.
27. In addition, many multilateral financial institutions and various bodies of the United Nations system had supported the rehabilitation and development efforts in the Sahel. The total contribution of the organizations of the United Nations system, including the International Bank for Resettlement and Development (IBRD), between 1973 and 1978 had exceeded \$975 million.
28. UNSO's working methods were designed to be swift and flexible. Special emphasis was laid on strengthening national capabilities and engaging national services in direct implementation of projects under a system of full fiscal accountability. Of the 39 national projects implemented with UNSO financing of approximately \$59 million, 25 projects towards which UNSO had contributed \$33 million had been government-executed or carried out by government force account arrangements.
29. The report in document DP/486 cited the many donors to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities. Many donor countries were also making a significant bilateral contribution to rehabilitation and development programmes in the Sahelian region. They included Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Iran, Ireland, Japan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.
30. At the semi-annual meeting of the CILSS Council of Ministers in Ouagadougou in January 1980, he had given a progress report on UNSO's programme of support to the Governments of the region and CILSS. Such periodical reports were part of the close co-ordination with CILSS, which was maintained on a daily basis through working contacts with the CILSS executive secretariat and the UNSO regional office in Ouagadougou. At that meeting the Council of Ministers had approved the joint CILSS/UNSO programme for combating desertification in the CILSS member States.
31. The meeting of the Council of Ministers had been followed by the biennial meeting of the Conference of CILSS Heads of State, at which the Administrator had reported on the activities relating to drought and desertification, undertaken by the United Nations system through UNSO's programme.
32. Although the rehabilitation and development programmes of the CILSS member States were moving towards the objective of self-sufficiency in food, a great deal still remained to be done and a long-term commitment of support was required. Until the efforts of the countries concerned, strengthened by external aid, had had their full impact, intermittent food shortages would continue as was the case in Chad, Mauritania and Cape Verde at the present time.



33. The FAO Office of Special Relief Operations (OSRO) and WFP had been co-ordinating emergency assistance to those countries on the basis of the findings of multi-donor missions. UNSO had been closely associated with the OSRO/WFP efforts and would, as requested by the Governments, provide complementary assistance with medium-term development implications.

34. Turning to the report of the Administrator on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region (DP/455), he explained that the report concerned the activities undertaken by UNSO to assist, on behalf of UNEP, the 15 Sudano-Sahelian countries (Cape Verde, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Upper Volta and the United Republic of Cameroon) in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. From the organizational standpoint, those activities took the form of a joint UNDP/UNEP venture, agreed by the Administrator and the Executive Director of UNEP and approved by the respective Governing Councils.

35. During 1979, in conformity with the work plan agreed upon with the Executive Director of UNEP, UNSO's efforts had been largely directed towards enlarging its organization and functions and developing an action-oriented programme. Efforts had been made to activate the joint venture and to establish and develop working relationships with the countries concerned, the agencies of the United Nations system and the resident representatives. UNSO had carried out planning and programming missions to the countries of the region, after which a series of comprehensive reports on the problem of desertification in 13 countries had been produced. Each report included an annex describing ongoing or proposed projects for which the countries requested UNSO assistance. The total number of projects covered in the annexes was 107 and their estimated total cost was approximately \$642 million, of which \$395 million had already been secured. The reports also made reference to approximately 80 additional project ideas which had not reached a sufficiently advanced stage for inclusion in the annexes.

36. UNSO's principal functions had been planning and programming, resource mobilization, project implementation and monitoring, co-ordinating and reporting. All those functions involved continuous efforts to familiarize the relevant bodies with the severity of the desertification problem and with the action needed to overcome it. Most of the 107 projects were designed as components of integrated rural development programmes, and they covered various aspects of forestry development, such as conservation, afforestation, reforestation, and fuel wood plantations, rangeland and livestock management, agricultural production, fisheries, water resources, sand dune fixation, the application of alternative sources of energy, meteorology, transportation, park reserves, and institution building. In addition, many of the projects had training and research components.

37. Document DP/455 described the results of UNSO's continuing campaign of resource mobilization for the desertification control projects including the securing of a contribution of \$1 million for a large-scale pilot project for forest conservation and charcoal production in the Tobor forest of the Casamance region in Senegal. In addition, the sum of \$200,000 had been obtained for a labour-intensive soil-erosion control scheme in Cape Verde. The sum of

\$104,000 would be made available through UNSO's efforts for the extension of the on-going project for the development of a green belt around the city of Niamey in Niger. UNSO had also made funds available for a project in Kenya to assist the National Environmental Secretariat in co-ordinating and monitoring anti-desertification activities in Kenya, in planning its reorganization and designing its work programme within the context of the Government's current five-year development plan. In the Sudan, UNSO was providing institutional support for the Government's desertification control unit in the planning of its work programme. Similar institutional support projects for the Governments of Ethiopia and Somalia, financed from the Trust Fund, would be undertaken in the very near future. In Mauritania, UNSO had financed and participated in a seminar for the preparation of the framework for a national plan of action to combat desertification in Mauritania. In addition, it would be financing an evaluation mission for the expansion of a green Sahel belt in northern Cameroon. At the regional level, UNSO was, jointly with the Regional Bureau for Africa, supporting a programme carried out by the Institute of the Sahel for the training of pastoralists.

38. A special procedure for resource mobilization had been utilized earlier that year when UNSO had submitted 20 fully formulated on-going desertification control projects requiring additional financing to the second meeting of the Consultative Group of Desertification Control (DESCON) organized by the Executive Director of UNEP. At that meeting, held at Nairobi, expressions of interest and support had been received from various donors for most of the projects presented by UNSO. The Office was now engaged in negotiations with financing sources and executing agencies for the implementation of a project in the Sudan for the re-stocking of the Acacia Senegal tree, a major source of gum arabic. The project would be financed from contributions to the Trust Fund in the amount of \$1.8 million. Similar negotiations were in progress relating to a sand dune fixation project in Somalia, a soil erosion prevention project in Ethiopia, a project for strengthening the cartography unit in Nigeria and a study for the establishment of an arid zone forestry department in Amadou Bella University. Similar negotiations were under way for the financing of projects in Senegal, Cape Verde, Upper Volta, Mali and Mauritania.

39. UNSO was giving special attention to the problem of energy requirements in rural areas with a view to avoiding any further deterioration of forest resources and the growth of desertified areas. A joint study would be undertaken with IBRD on the energy problem in the Gambia, which would serve as a model for dealing with similar problems in other countries. A feasibility study for the establishment of fuel wood plantations in the Sudan and Ethiopia would also be undertaken with the assistance of the FAO Investment Centre.

40. UNSO had been co-operating closely with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and WFP, and both those organizations were considering the possibility of participating in the provision of certain components and projects in the UNSO programme.

41. Document DP/455 also mentioned action taken by UNSO to establish and maintain close working relationships with regional and intergovernmental organizations, notably the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for West Africa and various river and lake basin

commissions in the region. Of special note was the joint OAU/UNSO/FAO/UNESCO mission for the formulation of a programme for the restoration and conservation of the Foutah Djallon Massif in Guinea, with its profound implications for the principal rivers of west Africa. The mission's report would be made available to the Government in the near future.

42. In all its planning, programming and project implementation, UNSO was actively fostering the concept of technical co-operation among developing countries. It had taken an active part in the recent regional conference on TCDC, of African and Arab States, which had decided that drought management and desertification control should be designated priority areas for TCDC action. In addition, many working contacts for the exchange of information and experience had been established with the United Nations regional commissions and relevant specialized institutions.

43. UNSO had also been assisting the Executive Director of UNEP in preparing a comprehensive study on the modalities for the financing of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, as requested in General Assembly resolution 34/184. The study would form the basis of a report by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

44. The General Assembly, in its resolution 34/187, had invited the Governing Council of UNEP to examine the possibility of including Djibouti, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau in the list of countries receiving assistance through UNSO in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. Decision 8/17 of the Governing Council of UNEP, now before the Council, had added Djibouti to the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region and included Guinea and Guinea-Bissau among the countries eligible to receive assistance through UNSO in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. Djibouti had an arid climate severely affected by desertification and was located in the Sudano-Sahelian belt, as defined by the relevant organizations of the United Nations. Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, although lying outside the Sudano-Sahelian bio-climatic zone, bordered Senegal and Mali and were a major source of water in West Africa. Assuming the availability of the additional administrative and programme resources required and the approval of the Governing Council, UNSO was prepared to expand its desertification control activities to those three countries.

45. Both drought and desertification had far-reaching and complex implications for the development process and called for vigorous, innovative, and imaginative approaches. Although sufficient scientific knowledge and technology were available to halt and even reverse the process of desertification, there was a need for more concerted and effective application of that knowledge in order to maximize the impact of the resources available. Strong emphasis should be given to the application of experience gained in other countries in dealing with those problems through the exchange of views and an extensive use of TCDC. The task was immense, but UNSO, working closely with the countries of the region, the international community and the United Nations system, would make every effort to fulfil its responsibilities with the sense of urgency conveyed by the Governing Council and the General Assembly.

46. Mr. JASABE (Sierra Leone) noted the bleak outlook for the parts of Africa described in the Administrator's report on assistance to drought-stricken areas of Africa (DP/450) and in the statement of the Director of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office. Without a global effort, even worse difficulties lay ahead. There was a moral obligation on the international community to avert those difficulties, since world order involved respect for people and for their rights, including the right to survival as well as the right to food, shelter and health care; in the case of the people of Africa, those rights extended to the abolition of hunger and malnutrition. The Administrator's inaugural statement to the Council at its present session had included figures for the net cereal deficit in developing countries by the year 2000, the total gross investment required to achieve systematic growth in food production, and the number of people without adequate water supplies or shelter, or below the minimum calorie intake. The Administrator's statement was, in effect, an inventory of what needed to be done. Africa's problems called for the efforts of all States, including China and east European countries.

47. The report on drought-stricken areas mentioned a number of elements common to drought conditions including, of course, the lack of adequate rainfall, together with inadequate response by the international community, the lack of programmes to eliminate drought, and the underlying shortage of food. The international community had done much to improve food supplies, but much still remained to be done. In the matter of implementation, the African States were well aware of the importance of food aid as a source of power and as a factor having political dimensions analogous to those of oil; food should therefore preoccupy the international community to the same extent as oil.

48. The question of the efficient handling and the delivery cost of food aid was also important in Africa. It was vital to be able to deliver the right kind of food rapidly, before it was too late.

49. With regard to specific matters raised in the report, he agreed that while food aid was undoubtedly necessary, there was also an overriding need to end the situation of food shortage. That could not be done by African countries alone, and various international and multilateral efforts had therefore been undertaken to that end. He noted the international assistance given to CILSS and hoped for a positive response to the request for further funding.

50. UNDP had played an important role in integrated river and lake basin development schemes in Chad, the Gambia and Niger, and all those projects would require further funding.

51. He noted the assistance being given to a regional energy development plan for Sahelian countries and a plan to control crop pests. He welcomed the UNDP decision to promote the adoption of a five-year (1980-1986) global action programme for crop and harvest protection.

52. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa had stated at the 687th meeting that external aid must be strengthened, especially with regard to the food situation, since the death toll was a challenge to the international conscience.

53. The General Assembly, in its resolution 33/88, had recognized the need to combat desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region and had authorized a co-ordinated plan of action by UNDP, UNEP and UNSO. He noted that from paragraphs 5 and 6 of

document DP/455 107 projects had been submitted to UNSO for assistance, but that of the total estimated cost of \$640 million, only \$395 million had been pledged. He appealed for full funding of the programme. The problem of desertification was as much a hindrance to development as inadequate food production. There was a need for innovative approaches, the application of science and technology and technical co-operation among developing countries and other methods of securing popular participation. He was not calling for a technological solution which would cause upheaval in African societies but rather for alternatives to traditional methods; in other words, for technology appropriate to the conditions.

54. The traditional source of energy in all African countries was firewood but as a result of heavy cutting by the rural populations, the African countryside had become gradually deforested, while there had also been environmental losses as a result of shifting cultivation. Efforts to find alternative sources of energy had been hampered by lack of finance. Aid was therefore needed to repair the damage to vegetation, and for the protection, reforestation and natural regeneration of African woodlands. The contribution of the Netherlands Government to the Casamance forest project in Senegal was a notable achievement in that respect, and the initiation of arrangements for projects involving regional missions to study problems such as fuelwood plantations around urban areas was another step in the right direction. At a recent meeting in Dakar, a number of affected countries had discussed various proposals and strategies and he looked forward to implementation of their conclusions.

55. If UNSO was to combat drought successfully, it must co-operate very closely with regional commissions and agencies to ensure that available resources were used to the full.

56. He welcomed the decision to include Djibouti, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau in the list of countries eligible for UNSO aid.

57. The General Assembly resolution to which he had referred did not indicate the source of financing for the measures it authorized, while the phrase in Governing Council decision 25/10 "to finance the UNDP share ... from the appropriate programme funds ..." was ambiguous. The Administrator had therefore suggested alternative methods of finance. The Sierra Leonean delegation endorsed the Administrator's recommendation that the necessary funding should come from the UNDP programme support and administrative services budget (DP/494, para. 6, option (b)). He therefore supported the additional budgetary appropriation of \$614,650 that would be required (DP/494, para. 7(b)).

58. He expressed appreciation to all those who had helped combat the drought problem. Aid was needed from all quarters, from West and East alike. The oil-exporting countries should show understanding and solidarity with the world to which they belonged.

59. Mr. KANE (Senegal) said that one of the most serious problems confronting the world was the deterioration of the environment, which could make the planet uninhabitable in the medium and long term. In some parts of the world, however, the process presented an immediate menace. If, for example, desertification continued in the Sudano-Sahelian region, it would become an insurmountable obstacle to the development of the States of that region. Since the Sahara had begun to dry out many centuries earlier, the inexorable advance of the desert had eroded the very basis of agricultural societies and had led to migration of the population towards towns or the south. The Governments of the region, already facing the difficult

task of economic development, could not provide the vast resources needed to arrest desertification without help from the international community. That help, which was already being provided in many forms, should be extended and adapted in order to make it more effective. It should also be concentrated on long-term solutions, which, though sometimes more costly, always yielded greater benefits for both donors and recipients.

60. The Administrator's report (DP/450) showed that the situation in the Sahara was still serious. In 1979, drought had destroyed whole crops and accentuated the rate of exodus from rural areas. Extensive damage to crops had also been caused by insects and birds. The cereal production of three Sahelian countries had been practically non-existent whereas in other countries the rains had been insufficient and badly distributed. The relevant international organizations and donor countries should be congratulated on the rapidity with which they had responded to the requests for assistance made by the States of that region. That response had made it possible to alleviate the most serious food shortages but a lasting solution to the problem of drought could not be provided by limited measures designed to deal with a specific crisis. The ultimate aim should be to ensure that, after one generation, assistance was no longer required. Assistance should therefore consist in a basic restructuring of the social, economic and ecological environment of the region, with adequate technical and financial resources. Such a programme would greatly facilitate the efforts of the States in the region to achieve self-sufficiency in food and self-sustaining economies at both the national and regional levels.

61. Most Governments in the region had worked out medium- and long-term recovery programmes to combat the effects of drought and also intended to take other steps of a preventive nature, such as the development of water resources, irrigated cultivation and reafforestation. Since those measures were the only ones likely to halt the encroachment of the desert and rehabilitate agricultural production in the region, they should be given a certain priority in the allocation of international aid.

62. The Government of Senegal had given absolute priority in its economic and social development plan to improving the use of the country's water resources. With the Governments of Mali and Mauritania, it had established the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS) in 1974. That policy was being pursued and expanded, the only obstacle to its progress being the inadequacy of international financial assistance, particularly for building the Diama and Manantali dams. In the meantime, his country continued to suffer from drought.

63. Since desertification knew no frontiers, the fight against it must be international. Consequently, the Sahelian countries had established a number of bodies such as CILSS for the co-ordination of policies and for the sharing of resources and technical co-operation among the developing countries. The international community had shown its appreciation of those efforts by undertaking to supply up to 56 per cent of the total cost of the so-called "first generation" programme. He was sure that the welcome support to that action given by the Administrator at the fourth conference of the CILSS Heads of State in January 1980 would be given practical expression in UNDP technical and financial assistance to the CILSS/Sahel Club/UNSO joint drought control plan.

64. On the other hand, his country was concerned by the reluctance of donors to provide the necessary assistance for the development of the river and lake basins of the Sahel, which was the key factor in the fight against desertification. Failing assistance for that essential work, donors would continue to receive urgent appeals for food aid. Although the building of dams was costly, it was surely preferable to invest in a project which might effectively reduce the constant threat of famine rather than disseminate resources in small projects with a limited viability.

65. The Sahelian region could become self-sufficient in food through adequate irrigation, appropriate land management and realistic development programmes. It was to be hoped that the donor countries would realize that fact and see to what extent additional efforts could be made to put an effective end to food shortages and the problem of desertification in the region.

66. He was glad to hear that Djibouti, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau were to be included in the list of countries eligible to receive assistance through UNSO in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. That decision would entail a substantial increase in the resources of UNSO. His delegation was therefore in favour of the proposal made in paragraph 7 (b) of the document (DP/494) that the UNDP programme support and administrative services budget should be used to fund the joint UNDP/UNEP venture. He hoped that the Council would endorse that suggestion.

67. In conclusion, his delegation wished to thank all the countries and international organizations which had constantly supported the struggle to combat drought in the Sudano-Sahelian region and in particular UNDP for the effective support it had provided through its Regional Bureau for Africa and UNSO.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.