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PROGRAMME PLANNING
Country and intercountry programmes and projects

THIRD COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR THE SUDAN

Note by the Administrator

I. PROCESS OF THE PROGRAMMING EXERCISE

1. The preparation of the present country programme for the Sudan has been a
continuing process that commenced in 1986 with the Resident Representative's note,
in which the adoption of a programme aimed at improving the living conditions of
the least developed rural communities on a long-term, self-sustaining basis was
initially proposed. The evaluation of the second country programme, carried out in
November 1986, was the second step in the exercise.

2. Two interagency missions were fielded to assist in developing the strategy
underlying the country programme: a Needs Assessment Mission, in January 1987, and
a Project Identification Mission in April 1987. Both missions included
participants from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and
Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour
Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization
(UNIDO). In addition, the World Food Programme (WFP) and some non-governmental
organizations (NGOs) (namely, OXFAM and CARE) also participated in the first
mission, while the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the United Nations Capital
Development Fund (UNCDF), the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) and the
United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) joined the Project
Identification Mission. The Government participated actively and the strategy
adopted for the third cycle was decided through close consultation with government
representatives from the central, regional and district levels.
3. Further consultations were held with major agencies and UNV for discussions on the thrust of the country programme and the modalities of its implementation.

II. THE THIRD COUNTRY PROGRAMME

4. The country programme is confined to three objectives which either contribute directly to rural development or are in support of it: sustained area development; regional planning; and improved rural resources utilization. Other fields of activity related to development, e.g., water resources, desertification control and environmental concerns will be addressed as integral parts of the area development scheme (ADS) projects.

5. The main theme of the country programme, sustained rural development, absorbs more than half the available resources; it fully coincides with the national plan being developed by the Government, which will give priority to rehabilitating and developing rural areas and less emphasis on large-scale agriculture and non-agriculturally based industry. As the ultimate beneficiaries of the national development effort and the main agents for socio-economic change, the people will be more actively involved in decision-making at the local level.

6. The key challenge to UNDP and the Government in implementing the third country programme will be in demonstrating that an approach to rural development in the Sudan, which is sustainable in the long term, despite chronic institutional and economic constraints is viable. The approach aims at stimulating village-level economic activity and local self-reliance through strengthened community level institutions. Project interventions, developed on the basis of needs identified by the beneficiaries themselves will be designed to increase the disposable income of beneficiaries and to minimize dependence upon external inputs. Special ADS will benefit a total population of 610,000 and operate at the area council level.

7. The regional planning objective is closely related to the promotion of rural development in the Sudan. It aims at creating in the regional governments the capacity to analyse development potential and constraints in the regions as well as to identify and formulate viable projects to assist rural communities in the five selected areas to use their resources more successfully.

8. Optimal utilization of rural resources is the third component of the country programme. In this context, assistance will be applied to areas such as rural water development; rehabilitation and long-term management of forest resources; replication in other regions of the country of the Special Public Works Programme, successfully carried out in the White Nile Province. The Programme is expected to develop forestry improvement, irrigation and the surface construction of water reservoirs (hafirs), schools and health centres.

9. An unprogrammed reserve of $2,000 has been set aside to provide immediate new resources for perhaps new programming initiatives in those areas of the country not covered under the present programme, should circumstances so warrant, and as a source of additional inputs to cover new needs which might arise in support of the overall objectives described above. It has not, however, been considered necessary
to provide a programmed reserve in view of the built-in flexibility in the design of all major projects in this programme.

III. MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

10. The assessment of the two previous country programmes has resulted in many positive lessons which have already provided useful inputs to the present exercise; they are also expected to improve programme management in the third cycle, leading to a more systematic needs assessment and project identification and an innovative approach in project selection and design, with less emphasis on institution-building.

11. Special efforts will be made to involve women in decision-making, project planning and implementation. The participation of local grassroots organizations and existing national and international NGOs will be emphasized. UNVs will play an active role in the implementation of the programme. Greater consideration will be given to the recruitment of highly qualified national experts. Short-term consultants will be preferred in sectors where an acceptable level of counterpart capacity already exists.

12. The special characteristics of the sustained area development scheme approach calls for constant direct interaction between the various participants. The results from the initial phase of programme implementation by the executing agencies will serve in deciding the optimal modalities for implementing the main body of the programme. Their willingness to approach the execution of the programme in a flexible and innovative manner will also be critical to the successful implementation of the programme.

13. The technical assistance efforts carried out by UNDP will be complemented by substantial contributions from UNCDF and UNSO. Subject to positive appraisal of individual projects, UNCDF is committed to finance, directly or through resource mobilization, $22,700,000 worth of specific investments to contribute to the achievement of the strategy adopted for the third country programme. The UNSO contribution to the fight against drought and desertification is estimated at $14,200.

14. The replicability of the scheme devised is one of its essential characteristics and should prove fruitful at an early stage of programme execution. As of now, third-party interest has already been confirmed and parallel financing from the United Nations and other sources is under consideration.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

15. The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the third country programme for the Sudan.