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PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS

United Nations Development Programme co-operation with non-governmental organizations and grass-roots organizations

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

As part of its effort to encourage grass-roots approaches to development and to expand in-country co-operation among the Governments of developing countries, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) field offices and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UNDP launched the Partners in Development Programme in 1988. Under this programme, UNDP Resident Representatives in 40 countries were enabled to grant awards totalling $25,000 per country in direct support of NGO grass-roots activities to strengthen indigenous NGOs. The programme has been enthusiastically received by participating field offices, Governments and NGOs. Steps taken in 1988 to establish the Africa 2000 Network, a programme linking Africa-based grass-roots organizations and NGOs in a continent-wide effort to combat environmental degradation and promote ecologically sustainable development, included a consultation in Nairobi, missions to eight African countries and the preparation of a project document for the initial five-year programme. Funding for the preparatory phase was received from the Governments of Canada and Denmark. These and other Governments are being approached for future support.
Other activities to further co-operation with grass-roots organizations and NGOs have included assistance to UNDP field offices with the establishment of national computerized databases on NGOs; the preparation of a major regional project in Africa to strengthen collaboration among Governments, UNDP and NGOs; two regional training seminars in Africa and the Asia/Pacific regions involving participants from UNDP, Government agencies and NGO associations; and support for conferences of NGOs organized by recipient Governments and UNDP in Colombia, Ghana and Tunisia. Several UNDP-associated funds and programmes, notably the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) significantly expanded their grass-roots development activities and co-operation with NGOs in 1988.
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This paper will describe some of the principal actions taken by UNDP in 1988 to further co-operation with NGOs and grass-roots organizations in accordance with recommendations contained in Governing Council resolution 88/27 of 1 July 1988.

II. PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

2. As part of its effort to encourage grass-roots development and expand field level co-operation among the Governments of developing countries UNDP field offices and NGOs, UNDP has launched a major new initiative, the Partners in Development Programme. Under this programme (INT/88/703), which was supported by a grant of $1 million from Special Programme Resources (SPR) in 1988, the Resident Representatives in 40 countries were enabled to grant awards totalling $25,000 per country in direct support of NGO activities.

3. Projects eligible for support under the Partners in Development Programme include innovative NGO projects that support self-help initiatives at the community level, activities that increase the effectiveness of indigenous NGOs or NGO associations, and activities involving co-operation among the host Government, UNDP and the local NGO community. Preference is given to projects submitted by indigenous voluntary development organizations. Criteria applicable to the Programme as a whole, however, have been modified from country to country, depending on local circumstances, and each Resident Representative has been encouraged to implement the programme flexibly in response to local conditions and needs. Although programme implementation and procedures have also varied from country to country, many Resident Representatives have established ad hoc screening/selection committees to review NGO projects submitted for Partners in Development Programme awards. These committees have often been composed of representatives from the host Government, United Nations organizations (in addition to UNDP), bilateral donor agencies and NGOs. Special procedures and forms have been used to implement the programme with maximum simplicity and flexibility, a feature much appreciated by participating field offices and NGOs.

4. The 40 field offices invited to participate in 1988 were those in Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

5. Of the field offices participating in 1988, 37 made at least one award in support of an NGO activity. Eleven of these offices chose to allocate their total allocation of $25,000 to a single NGO activity but most offices elected to support between two and seven projects. The total number of projects funded in 1988 was 101.

6. Most projects funded by the Partners in Development Programme involve community-based activities in rural areas. Many of these address themes of major
interest to UNDP. In all four regions, awards were made to projects focusing on the role of women in development, including activities to train women for employment and/or to support women's small-scale enterprises. A significant number of Programme projects address problems relating to youth, including unemployment and drug abuse. The introduction of appropriate technology was supported by some Programme awards, especially in Benin. Innovative projects to protect the environment, including training projects on how to conserve energy and/or achieve sustainable development in Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe, were also funded. Participatory development projects in rural areas, based on the ways in which communities perceived their needs, were supported in every region, especially Africa, where NGOs received Programme awards for income-generating and other village-level activities in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Togo and Zimbabwe. Community-based small business enterprises were also supported in Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Grenada, Jamaica and Sri Lanka. Urban needs are being addressed by Programme projects in Cairo (an integrated care centre for residents of a poor area inhabited by zabaleen, garbage collectors), Quito and regional cities in Peru.

7. A significant number of awards were also made to support the development of the NGO movement and the strengthening of NGO umbrella groups and associations. In Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Rwanda, Togo, Uganda and Zaire, Partners in Development Programme awards have been used to support NGO training programmes, newsletters and round-table meetings. In Tunisia, Programme funds are supporting a round-table exercise on funding NGO development activities and a management training programme for indigenous NGOs. In Asia, a project funded by the Programme involves Australian NGOs in an effort to strengthen the role of Solomon Islands NGOs in development; in the Philippines and Thailand, major surveys of NGO development capabilities are being funded by the programme. In Latin America and the Caribbean, NGO associations in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica and Peru are being strengthened through training activities and activities to support computerized networking and the sharing of development information.

8. According to year-end evaluative reports by participating Resident Representatives, there have been very affirmative responses and/or active participation from many host Governments in the Partners in Development Programme. Government responses have been most positive in countries where the Government has already initiated policies favouring grass-roots approaches to development and/or collaboration with NGOs, including such countries as Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ghana, Guinea, the Philippines, Rwanda and Zaire. Governments exploring new relationships with NGOs as a basis for possible future co-operation in development, including the Governments of such countries as Brazil and Tunisia, have also especially welcomed the programme.

9. NGOs have also responded enthusiastically to the programme, which is perceived by many as offering a unique opportunity for co-operation with UNDP.

10. The participation of representatives from UNDP-associated programmes and other United Nations agencies in the Partners in Development Programme selection processes/mechanisms has clearly benefited co-operation between the United Nations and NGOs at the country level. Year-end reports received to date indicate that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank, the
International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNIFEM, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization have taken part in programme implementation in a number of countries including Bangladesh, Bolivia, Botswana, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Jordan, Malawi, Morocco, the Philippines, Togo and Zaire. The aid agencies of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United States have also been represented on some Partners in Development Programme selection committees.

11. A number of the Resident Representatives already submitting evaluative reports on their experience with the Partners in Development Programme in 1988 have suggested that the Programme has affected UNDP/Government/NGO relations in their countries of assignment by: (a) increasing the Government's knowledge of and positive attitudes towards NGOs; (b) contributing to improved co-operation and co-ordination among NGOs, UNDP and the Government; (c) stimulating the Government to consider using NGOs to carry out Government/UNDP-sponsored projects; (d) increasing knowledge of and positive attitudes towards co-operation with NGOs among the UNDP field office staff; (e) helping to direct resources to indigenous sectors of the population/communities which are often neglected; (f) enhancing NGO capabilities of providing development assistance; (g) strengthening co-operation and co-ordination among NGOs; and (h) paving the way for approaches to the Government, United Nations agencies and bilateral donors for increased support of NGO projects.

12. Reports from the field offices and comments by Governments, NGOs and other United Nations agencies lead to the conclusion that the Partners in Development Programme has been a considerable success in its initial pilot year of operation. Despite the modest scale of resources invested in the Programme, it has helped substantially to inform Governments and field offices about local NGOs, especially indigenous organizations; to improve co-operation among United Nations system organizations, NGOs and the Governments to strengthen the development capacities of NGOs; and to direct resources to sectors of the population and communities that have been previously neglected.

13. Negative comments regarding the Partners in Development Programme have centred on the small size of resources available to the programme. At least 10 field offices have urged that the allocations be increased - in some cases at the request of the Government. It has also been suggested that UNDP establish a permanent NGO development fund to provide continuity of support for NGOs.

14. All targeted field offices have expressed interest in continuing their participation in 1989, and 16 other field offices have asked to be included. To meet these expressions of interest, the Administrator has decided to extend the Programme, at the same per-country funding level ($25,000), to 60 countries in 1989, utilizing $1 million from SPR and $500,000 from the Special Measures Fund for the Least Developed Countries (SMF/LDCs) to support Programme operations in 20 LDCs.

15. The Division for Non-Governmental Organizations at UNDP headquarters provides support services for and monitors the implementation of the Partners in Development Programme, consulting with the Regional Bureaux on countries to be included in the Programme and other substantive matters.

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III. AFRICA 2000 NETWORK

16. Various activities leading to the establishment of the Africa 2000 Network were carried out in 1988. Steps taken in the preparatory phase were designed mainly: (a) to obtain the factual information needed as a basis for establishing the Network; and (b) to determine the views of relevant NGOs, Government officials and others regarding Network activities, structures and procedures.

17. The Africa 2000 Network, established under a multidonor trust fund, will link Africa-based grass-roots groups and NGOs in an innovative, continent-wide effort to combat environmental degradation and promote ecologically sustainable development. Network resources will be used: (a) to provide financial and technical assistance in response to village initiatives aimed at protecting the environment or furthering development in ecologically sustainable ways; (b) to strengthen the capacities of indigenous organizations, including grass-roots groups and NGOs, to undertake these types of activities; and (c) to support communications and networking activities among community groups, NGOs and sources of technical knowledge at local, national and subregional levels.

18. Preparatory activities included a consultation held in Nairobi, 1-3 March, which brought together approximately 30 persons with special experience in African environmental matters and community development, mainly including persons from Africa-based NGOs and NGO associations. Representatives from an African intergovernmental body, UNDP and other United Nations agencies, bilateral donors and several donor-country NGOs also participated. The consultation was organized by the NGO Division in association with the African NGOs Environment Network. Field missions were also mounted to eight countries (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Rwanda, Senegal and Zimbabwe). Mission personnel, including staff of the Division for Non-Governmental Organizations and specialists in forestry/natural resources management, consulted hundreds of persons from grass-roots organizations and NGOs, Government agencies, UNDP field offices, other United Nations system agencies and technical institutes. Information and views gathered from the Nairobi consultation and the field missions have been reflected in the project document for the Africa 2000 Network (GLO/89/GOI), which provides the basis for the implementation of a five-year programme beginning in January 1989.

19. Funding for the preparatory phase was provided by the Governments of Canada and Denmark. In accordance with Governing Council resolution 88/27 of 1 July 1988 a number of donors have been invited to contribute to the Africa 2000 Network Trust Fund in support of the initial five-year programme. Positive responses have been received to date from Canada, Italy, Japan and Norway.

IV. STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF RECIPIENT GOVERNMENTS TO WORK WITH NGOs BY ASSISTING WITH DATA COLLECTION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

20. UNDP has taken several initiatives to provide, or support the development of, data on NGOs as an aid to increased collaboration between recipient Governments and NGOs. In March 1988, the Division for Non-Governmental Organizations provided all UNDP offices (and through them, on request, recipient Governments) with detailed
profiles of approximately 300 international NGOs providing technical and financial assistance in developing countries. The Division has also continued to meet requests from UNDP programme staff for suggestions of particular NGOs which might be suitable for involvement in project planning, implementation and evaluation. It has also continued to encourage field offices and Governments to expand their collaboration with NGOs to implement indicative planning figure (IPF)-funded projects under the country programme, especially as a means of ensuring dialogue with beneficiaries concerning their needs and the design, implementation and monitoring of projects intended to assist them.

21. In late autumn, the Administrator wrote to all field offices, encouraging them to establish national computerized databases on local development NGOs, preferably jointly with an NGO association or with another United Nations agency, where an adequate NGO database does not already exist. The Division for Non-Governmental Organizations is supporting field office initiatives by providing a four-page questionnaire to be used in gathering data from NGOs and accompanying software. Assistance with desk-top publishing may also be available. Of the 53 field offices which have provided information on NGO data-gathering activities in their countries, 25 - almost half - have expressed interest in receiving the Division's questionnaire and related software. These include 10 field offices in Africa, five in the Arab States, six in Asia and the Pacific, and four in Latin America and the Caribbean. An additional 21 offices reported on other NGO-data gathering initiatives already completed or under way in their countries.

22. A major regional project to strengthen Government/UNDP/NGO collaboration was developed by the Regional Programme Division of the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) and the Division for Non-Governmental Organizations in 1988. This project (RAF/87/001) to be launched in early 1989, will provide support for: (a) strengthening eight African NGO associations, including national umbrella groups and regional associations; (b) identifying and developing practical modalities for effecting NGO/Government co-operation; and (c) strengthening information and training resources available to NGOs. It is expected that the project will ultimately benefit the rural and urban poor, who are the targets of NGO efforts to promote sustainable development.

23. Other efforts to further Government/NGO collaboration have included support by the Regional Bureaux and the Division for Non-Governmental Organizations for major conferences of NGOs mounted by UNDP field offices in collaboration with the host Government in Colombia, Ghana and Tunisia. These conferences have explored NGO roles in addressing issues of national importance, including the elimination of critical poverty, the alleviation of the adverse impacts of structural adjustment, and mobilization for national development.

24. There was also a significant increase in 1988 in the number of UNDP-sponsored projects involving grass-roots approaches to development and/or co-operation with NGOs. The Office for Project Services (OPS) reports in this connection that it contracted with 50 NGOs in 1987-1988 for project implementation services.

25. Informational materials developed by the Division for Non-Governmental Organizations including monthly newsnotes circulated to field office and
headquarters programme staff, helped to promote Government/UNDP/NGO collaboration by describing examples within the UNDP system of effective approaches to grass-roots development and co-operation with NGOs.

V. SIMPLIFYING PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES TO FACILITATE CO-OPERATION WITH GRASS-ROOTS GROUPS AND NGOs

26. UNDP was among the United Nations organizations participating in an informal review of operational activities carried out with NGOs, convened in Geneva in January 1988 by the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ(OPS)). Discussion focused in large part on the need to simplify United Nations agency procedures in order to achieve more effective co-operation with NGOs, especially indigenous NGOs. The Administrator circulated a report from the consultation to all field offices.

27. The Division for Non-Governmental Organizations has followed up on this consultation by undertaking a study of the practices, procedures, rules and regulations governing co-operation between organizations of the United Nations system and NGOs. Agencies consulted in the study include associated programmes such as UNCDF and UNIFEM as well as nine other United Nations organizations. The study is expected to identify instances in which the regulations of some United Nations organizations may be simpler and/or more flexible than those followed by UNDP. The Division hopes to draw on findings from the study to develop recommendations for consideration by the Division of Finance (DOF), OPS and other executing agencies regarding steps that could be taken to facilitate participation by NGOs in implementing UNDP-sponsored projects.

VI. TRAINING ACTIVITIES

28. Two major regional seminars mounted in 1988 were designed to provide training in participatory approaches and co-operation with grass-roots organizations and NGOs for Government, UNDP and NGO personnel. The first training seminar, held in Dhaka in March, brought together personnel from UNDP and UNFPA Field Offices, Government units concerned with NGOs, and NGOs and NGO associations in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. The second training seminar, held in Harare in December, drew participants from Governments, the United Nations system and NGOs in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Both seminars were intended to provide opportunities for United Nations, Government and NGO personnel to develop a better understanding of each other's viewpoints and to think through the potential benefits, and effective means, of co-operation among Governments, multilateral agencies and NGOs in the development process. Participants developed concrete follow-up action plans to implement their conclusions. The seminars were organized by the Division for Non-Governmental Organizations with assistance from the Institute of Cultural Affairs and, in the case of the Harare workshop, from the UNV Participatory Development Programme.

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VII. ASSOCIATED FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

29. The grass-roots/NGO initiatives outlined above relate to mainstream UNDP activities. Four of the seven UNDP-associated funds and programmes also carried out important activities relating to co-operation with grass-roots organizations and NGOs in 1988.

A. United Nations Capital Development Fund

30. Of 26 new projects approved in 1988, five will be executed in close collaboration with or with expert inputs from NGOs: in the Comoros, a French NGO will implement a pilot self-help management and health financing scheme in connection with a UNCDF-sponsored health centre to be managed, maintained and funded by local communities; in Equatorial Guinea, a local NGO is overseeing implementation of a UNCDF agriculture project; in Tuvalu, Save the Children Fund will help implement a water supply project by mobilizing household and village help; and, in Mali, Euro Action ACORD and World Vision will help execute rice plantation and flood control projects.

31. UNCDF also emphasizes local community participation in its project designs. In Somalia, for example, maintenance activities connected with a UNCDF rural feeder road construction project are organized on a local basis, involving villagers, through co-ops and farmers organizations. In Burma, local artisans and farmers participate in construction activities under a UNCDF rural biogas project.

B. United Nations Fund for Women

32. The highlights of UNIFEM relations with NGOs and grass-roots organizations in 1988 included the roles played by NGOs as executing agencies of UNIFEM projects; the emphasis in the UNIFEM biennium work programme on strengthening indigenous capacities, including NGO capacities, in the area of women in development; and the growing role played by NGOs in providing financial support for UNIFEM projects and in fund-raising and advocacy activities on behalf of UNIFEM.

33. Approximately 40 per cent of UNIFEM projects are executed by international and indigenous NGOs. To strengthen the capacity of indigenous organizations for grass-roots work, UNIFEM has mounted a number of special activities, including assisting the development or strengthening of women's development organizations in India and the Republic of Korea. In Africa, UNIFEM supported a meeting in Kenya leading to the establishment of a network of African NGOs concerned with women in development issues and efforts by African Business and Professional Women in Ghana to encourage the participation of more business women in commercial food processing. In Peru, UNIFEM supported a networking effort to assist NGOs involved in rural women's projects.

34. Various international NGOs and support groups in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States continue to provide significant resources for UNIFEM. NGO contributions to UNIFEM totalled $370,400.
C. United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office

35. With funding from the Danish International Development Agency, UNSO continues to support a major land management project in Niger implemented by Care International. NGOs also participated in a national workshop in Somalia to help prepare the National Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, supported by UNSO.

36. Also in 1988, UNSO supported a mission to Ethiopia, Kenya and the Sudan to explore the feasibility of establishing an NGO information network focusing on natural resource development and conservation, similar to the Sahel Information System in West Africa, involving four national NGO associations, the Industry Council for Development and the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS).

D. United Nations Volunteers

37. UNV has continued to develop and expand its regional Participatory Development Programme activities in Africa and Asia. In Africa, more than 80 grass-roots groups and organizations in 29 countries now share experiences through intercountry exchanges of village-level field workers under this programme, formerly known as the Domestic Development Services (DDS) programme. Two subregional training workshops in participatory methodologies were held in 1988 in Tanzania and Zaire; 60 persons from self-help groups, NGOs and Government grass-roots units in 18 countries participated. In Asia, a regional workshop involving NGO and Government representatives from 10 countries reviewed activities under this programme in the last three years and set future goals. An important development in Asia has been an agreement that local NGOs, the Nepal Children's Organization and the Lanka Mahila Samita of Sri Lanka, will implement significant multisectoral grass-roots projects in Nepal and Sri Lanka within the framework of the Participatory Development Programme. Activities were also launched in the South Pacific, where UNV and the Partners in Development Programme is now working with approximately 30 grass-roots groups and organizations in six countries to exchange skills and experiences in participatory methodologies aimed at facilitating productive contributions to development by young people. UNV and the Partners in Development Programme are also emphasizing women's participation in grass-roots programmes through publications and, in Africa, increased co-operation with UNIFEM. The Division for Non-Governmental Organizations and other units continue to co-operate with and receive support from UNV, especially through its Participatory Development Programme, in their grass-roots development activities.

E. United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service

38. Along with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) and other United Nations organizations, UNDP has continued to provide core support for NGLS, which works to inform the public of industrialized countries, including northern NGOs, about development issues and United Nations system programmes relating to development. The Division for Non-Governmental Organizations and the Regional Bureau for Africa have also supported several NGO-related projects organized by the NGLS offices in Geneva and New York, including meetings linking developing-country
NGOs to NGOs in donor countries and information-sharing activities in the South such as the Sahel Information System, a network of computerized NGO databases established in co-operation with the national NGO associations of Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal.

VIII. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

39. Several of the activities initiated in 1988 signal new approaches by UNDP to grass-roots and community development, especially the Partners in Development Programme and the Africa 2000 Network, which allow UNDP, for the first time, to provide direct support for relevant NGO projects and activities. It is hoped that supplementary contributions for these programmes will be forthcoming from both private (non-governmental) and bilateral donors. UNDP has already established a trust fund to receive contributions to the Africa 2000 Network and will establish a similar fund for contributions to the Partners in Development Programme, if needed. These funds will enable UNDP to serve as a channel for increased private and public support to the kinds of small-scale, human-centred projects that lead to self-sustaining development.