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UNDP RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES IN AFRICA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. For several years, the international community has appreciated that circumstances in Africa demand special attention. In the various intergovernmental fora, this has found expression in the establishment of special programmes of assistance and co-operation. The Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for its part, has charged UNDP with responding to these priorities in a variety of ways. In the process, it has been made aware that these tasks present a particular challenge to the Organization, demanding a new type and/or level of involvement in the development process.

2. In recent years, the Council has therefore adopted several decisions (84/18 and 84/19 of 29 June 1984, 85/36 of 29 June 1985, 86/43 of 27 June 1986, and 87/43 of 19 June 1987) aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Organization to meet the challenges resulting from major emergencies, from the need to pursue innovative technical co-operation policies and programmes, and from the commitment to ensure timely and effective delivery of resources made available for the regional and country programmes in Africa. UNDP budget proposals in this regard have been framed within an overall effort to sustain a zero-growth budget for the Organization as a whole. With the passage of time, however, it has become increasingly apparent that there is a serious mismatch between the tasks with which the Organization is entrusted in Africa and the budgetary resources with which it has been endowed. It has become clear that failure to address this problem in the immediate future will seriously impair UNDP capacity to meet the responsibilities it has been given by the international community, or to fulfil the expectations of the beneficiaries.

3. UNDP is keenly aware of the admonitions of the Governing Council that presentation of substantive budgetary proposals during an off-budget year must be avoided. It is felt, however, that the seriousness of the situation is sufficient to justify an exception in this case. The Council is being asked, therefore, to agree that at its thirty-fifth session in June 1988 it would consider and decide on a request for additional budgetary resources in support of UNDP operations in Africa on the basis of a detailed proposal for which justification is currently being prepared. The purpose of this note is (a) to provide the Council with summary information on some of the factors (e.g. emergencies and policy innovations) underlying the current resource constraints and thereby to ascertain its willingness to consider detailed proposals at the June session and (b) to request the Council's early approval of the use of Special Programme Resource (SPR) funds under the fourth cycle earmarking to assist Governments most seriously affected by emergencies from drought and famine in strengthening their emergency management capacity, including projects detailed in paragraph 5 below.

## II. THE EMERGENCY

4. Believing that there was some abatement in the intensity of the 1984-1986 drought and attendant famine in sub-Saharan Africa, which had wrought havoc on the human and animal population alike, the Governing Council, in its decision 87/43, halved the size of the emergency package. With the closure of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA) in December 1986, and the creation of national preparedness and prevention mechanisms, the international community was confident that residual problems could be managed effectively by UNDP within the budgetary levels established for 1988-1989. However, recent developments in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Sudan, Somalia, Malawi and Uganda have altered those perceptions radically. In Ethiopia today, some 5 million people are at risk and 1.3 million tons of emergency food aid are needed, along with renovation of the transport system and port capacity. It should also be noted that in 1986, after the emergency appeared to be on the wane, 4.8 million people were still receiving food aid estimated at 900,000 tons. The emergency food requirements of Mozambique are exacerbated by civil strife and insecurity, which also results in multitudes of displaced persons and refugees in neighbouring countries (400,000 in Malawi; 70,000 in Zimbabwe; and 26,000 in Zambia) which are also suffering from drought. In Sudan and Somalia refugees now number 975,000 and 840,000 respectively, with an estimated 1 million more persons displaced in the Sudan.

5. UNDP has drawn on the SPR to finance activities in support of these emergencies. Governing Council decision 84/19 approved \$1.5 million from SPR to finance United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) to assist with the emergencies in Angola, Ethiopia and Mozambique. That decision was specifically limited to a single approval. In view of the recurrent emergency conditions in these countries, the Administrator is, therefore, seeking Council approval for the use of SPR to finance the cost of UNVs - amounting to \$368,500 in Ethiopia and \$404,000 in Angola. UNDP is also receiving additional requests from the other affected countries.

### III. POLICY INNOVATIONS

6. Taking full account of the emergency and particularly conscious of the fact that long-term development was central to ensuring that such emergencies would not recur in the future, the 1986 Special Session of the General Assembly adopted a resolution calling upon African Governments to pursue policies and programmes geared to achieving economic reform. At the same time, the donor community was urged to increase tangible support to African Governments and the United Nations system was directed to implement the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD). In its decision 86/27, the Council authorized the Administrator to take appropriate action and UNDP assumed the important function of Secretary of the Steering Committee of UNPAAERD and also became active in the Inter-Agency Task Force and its technical subcommittees.

7. Council decision 85/36 authorized the establishment of economist posts within UNDP and decision 87/43 permitted the incorporation of those posts within the core budget, consistent with UNPAAERD needs. These decisions gave positive recognition to the crucial roles of UNDP as purveyor of coherent, policy-based technical co-operation and co-ordinator of assistance efforts. As African Governments adopted medium-term adjustment policies, they faced severe challenges in their capacities to manage their economies and co-ordinate aid flows as foreseen by the African Programme for Economic Recovery and Development (APERD). In the circumstances, UNDP was called upon to increase its efforts in strengthening the management capacity of these countries. Various instruments have been introduced or adopted to meet these urgent requirements, notably, the round-table process and national technical co-operation assessments and programmes (NATCAPs). In this respect, the frequency of round-table sessions in the various countries will be increased; there will be a round-table conference once every two years, instead of once every three to five years, as at present. This will more than enable the present administrative input required. Similarly, plans are under way to complete the pilot NATCAP exercise and to launch the process in the majority of the remaining countries in Africa by the end of the current cycle.

8. UNDP has become more deeply involved in the monitoring of aid flows, debt management, structural adjustment and policy reform, with particular regard to social dimensions. Agreement has also been reached with the World Bank that UNDP will lead the discussion on technical co-operation within the Consultative Group process. These initiatives were demanded by recipient Governments and encouraged by donors, as reflected in resolutions taken at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) by Ministers of Planning and at the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) High-level Meeting.

9. The Administrator also proposed at a recent DAC meeting the concept of a management facility to address the technical co-operation needs of low-income countries, drawing upon non-indicative planning figure (IPF) resources to assist in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the adjustment process. This was positively received by DAC and a task force within UNDP is currently examining how such a facility may quickly become operational. Such a facility will deepen the involvement of UNDP in the structural adjustment process. A first step in this

direction is the establishment of structural adjustment advisory teams for Africa whose purpose is to provide advise to African Governments in the field of macro-economic policy and resource mobilization strategies, especially with respect to management capacities.

10. As the Council is aware, there are substantial resources earmarked under SPR for the fourth cycle to deal with aid co-ordination, in particular round-table meetings and NATCAPs. The administrative costs involved at headquarters, however, cannot be financed from this source.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

11. Thirty-two country programmes for the Africa region, including those for Djibouti and Somalia, and the Regional Programme for Africa have already been approved by the Council. An additional 12, including that for the Sudan, will be presented to the Council at the February and June sessions. At this stage, UNDP will now direct its attention and energies to project design, monitoring of implementation, quality control and pipeline development. It must be recognized, however, that the intensity of emergencies and the pressure to adopt new policies create enormous burdens on existing staff resources in the field and at headquarters. There is a real risk that competing mandates may minimize effectiveness even in the most basic areas of programme delivery.

12. Given all the factors outlined above, UNDP is of the view that additional budgetary resources are essential to allow the Organization to respond adequately to the challenges of Africa. It is furthermore felt that the gravity of the need justifies a supplementary budget request to be prepared for the Council at its thirty-fifth session (June 1988).

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