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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

Implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In paragraph 8 of resolution 32/172 of 19 December 1977, the General Assembly requested the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to report to it, through the Economic and Social Council, at its thirty-third session and every two years thereafter, on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The Governing Council's report on this matter to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session constitutes section II of the annex to the present note.
2. In paragraph 6 of resolution 33/88 of 15 December 1978, the Assembly requested the Governing Council to report to it annually on the implementation of the Plan of Action in the Sudano-Sahelian region. In paragraph 8 of resolution 34/187 of 18 December 1979, the Assembly requested the Governing Council to continue to report to it annually, through the Economic and Social Council. The Council's response to these requests is contained in section III of the annex, which also incorporates the report requested of the Council by paragraph 5 of resolution 34/187, on the possibility of including Djibouti, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau in the list of countries which receive assistance through the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in implementing the Plan of Action in the region.
3. Section IV of the annex highlights the constraints that still hinder the implementation of the Plan of Action, while section V presents the action taken by the Governing Council of UNEP at its eighth session.

* A/35/150.

ANNEX

Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme
on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification
submitted in accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly
resolution 32/172 and paragraphs 5 and 8 of General Assembly
resolution 34/187.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. This report, submitted in accordance with paragraph 8 of resolution 32/172 of 19 December 1977, paragraph 6 of resolution 33/88 of 15 December 1978 and paragraph 8 of resolution 34/187 of 18 December 1979, constitutes the report which the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is required to submit to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

2. The Economic and Social Council, at its second regular session of 1980, considered the subject during its consideration of the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on the work of its eighth session and the decisions annexed thereto (UNEP/GC.8/10 and Corr. 1-4). The present report is based on a report presented to the Governing Council at its eighth session, ^{1/} which has been updated by the Executive Director to 30 June 1980, as authorized by the UNEP Governing Council in decision 8/17 of 29 April 1980.

3. The report comprises four main sections. Section II deals with the over-all progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification since the thirty-third session of the General Assembly. Section III deals specifically with the implementation of the Plan of Action in the Sudano-Sahelian region since the preparation of the annual report submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session (A/34/405, annex). Section IV contains concluding remarks highlighting the constraints that still hinder the implementation of the Plan of Action. Section V describes the action taken by the Governing Council of UNEP at its eighth session.

^{1/} UNEP/GC.8/6 and Corr.1 and 2, Add.1, Add.1/Corr.1, Add.2, Add.2/Corr.1, Add.3 and Add.3/Corr.1.

II. CO-ORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

A. ACTION TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND DECISIONS OF THE
GOVERNING COUNCIL OF UNEP

4. Since the thirty-third session of the General Assembly, efforts have been undertaken to implement the relevant resolutions adopted at its thirty-second and thirty-third sessions (32/168, 32/169 and 32/172 of 19 December 1977; 33/88 and 33/89 of 15 December 1978), as well as the relevant decisions of the Governing Council of UNEP adopted at its sixth and seventh sessions. These called for the establishment of the Desertification Unit of UNEP, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification (IAWGD) and the Consultative Group for Desertification Control, the enlargement of the mandate and capacities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), the establishment of the Special Account to Combat Desertification, and the study on additional measures for financing the Plan of Action.

1. Desertification Unit of UNEP

5. The Desertification Unit established within the UNEP Bureau of the Programme in accordance with Governing Council decision 6/13 E of 24 May 1978 has now become fully operational. In accordance with Governing Council decision 7/3, paragraph 4 (c) of 3 May 1979, this Unit co-ordinates and follows-up activities related to the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and to arid and semi-arid lands ecosystems, and serves as the secretariat for both IAWGD and the Consultative Group for Desertification Control.

2. United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office

6. The United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), including its regional office at Ouagadougou, has now become fully operational with regard to its additional mandate to act, on behalf of UNEP, in promoting and co-ordinating the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the fifteen countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region.

7. Resources to finance UNSO's additional anti-desertification responsibilities are being provided by UNEP and UNDP in equal shares. Financing for institutional support has been used to enlarge the organizational and administrative capacity of UNSO, especially of its regional office at Ouagadougou: five out of six additional professional posts are located in the Ouagadougou office. Programme support financing is being utilized to carry out the planning and programming functions of UNSO.

8. In 1980-1981, programme support funds will be used for: assistance to Governments in refining project proposals identified during the UNSO planning and programming missions; support to national planning authorities in the preparation and monitoring of the implementation of national plans for combating desertification; dissemination of information on the application of existing technologies and on innovative techniques, including methods for promoting popular awareness and participation through seminars, workshops and fellowships for policy-makers and decision-makers; provision of direct support to training and research institutions; and possibly the design and initiation of pilot projects.

9. A more detailed account of UNSO's activities on behalf of UNEP in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Saharan region is given in section III of the present document.

3. Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification

10. The Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification (IAWGD), established in compliance with General Assembly resolution 32/172, held its second meeting on 17 September 1979.

11. A draft compendium of activities related to combating desertification conducted by individual organizations and bodies of the United Nations system was prepared by the Desertification Unit of UNEP in close collaboration with the members of IAWGD. IAWGD invited those agencies which have not so far been in a position to provide full information on their activities to do so as soon as possible, so that a comprehensive document can be prepared which will give a complete survey of the United Nations system anti-desertification efforts and activities, and which will serve as a tool for decision-making within the system on the selection of areas for future programmes. IAWGD agreed to recommend to its member agencies that some of the 24 man-months of professional staff services to be put annually at the disposal of the Desertification Unit be utilized for the over-all redrafting and in-depth analysis of the compendium. This task should be accomplished during 1980.

12. A preliminary analysis of the draft compendium, undertaken by IAWGD, was presented by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) in its report to the Governing Council at its eighth session (UNEP/GC.8/4), which also identified obstacles to the full implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, and recommended that high priority be given, within each of the United Nations agencies and bodies concerned, to activities which would contribute to the implementation of the Plan of Action, as well as to financial support for such activities.

13. The Working Group met at Geneva from 24 to 26 March 1980 to review the material submitted by agencies and organizations of the United Nations system on their activities, both in progress and planned, in the area of desertification. The meeting reviewed and evaluated material submitted by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, ECLA, ESCAP, UNIDO, UNDP, UNDRO, WFP, ILO, FAO, WHO, WMO and the World Bank. Based on its analysis of the information provided, the Working Group adopted a table of contents for an analytical report which is being prepared by the UNEP Desertification Unit and, after circulation to members of the Working Group before finalization, will be submitted to the next meeting of the Working Group, to be held in September 1980.

4. Consultative Group for Desertification Control

14. The membership of the Group is now as follows:

Co-sponsors: United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), World Food Council (WFC), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO);

Members: Australia, Bolivia, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, India, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Netherlands, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Sweden, United States of America, Upper Volta, Uruguay, United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Commission of the European Communities, Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

A number of Governments indicated the desire to be associated with the Group as observers. These are:

Canada, Cape Verde, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Italy, Kuwait, Mali, Mauritania, New Zealand, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Spain, Switzerland, USSR, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Venezuela.

15. During January - March 1980, missions headed by senior officers of UNEP, in which representatives of the Desertification Unit and UNSO participated, visited various co-sponsors, potential donor countries and institutions to consult on the preparations for the second session of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control, on the projects presented for the Group's consideration and on the general procedures for the work of the Group. These missions were well received, and in almost all instances at the highest level; the Executive Director expressed his gratitude for this during the Group's second session.

16. The Group's second session (Nairobi, 12-14 March 1980) which was preceded by a meeting of the co-sponsors on 10 and 11 March, was attended by 24 co-sponsors and core members of the Group. In addition, 17 observers and invited participants attended.

17. A total of 27 project proposals were presented to the Group. Of these 20, from 13 countries of the Sudano Sahelian-region, were submitted by UNSO, while 7, from 5 countries, were submitted by the Desertification Unit. All the project proposals submitted by Governments for consideration by the Consultative Group were supported by written assurances indicating the priority accorded to the projects, their technical correctness, agreement to the costing and the level of financial commitment to the project by the Government.

18. Twenty-six projects received declarations of support from one or more of the categories of participants, namely: donor countries, United Nations organizations, and financial institutions. Appropriate steps for follow-up action and co-ordination of offers of financial support for projects were agreed to at the meeting. The Group also agreed on proposals regarding its future work.

19. It was widely emphasized that desertification control was not an isolated activity, but an integral part of the economic and social development of the countries concerned. The main aim of the Consultative Group's second session was to move to the operational phase of its activities, and that goal was achieved. Although no specific commitments were forthcoming, the results of the Consultative Group's meeting in terms of support for projects can be considered a positive first step in mobilizing resources to combat desertification.

5. Special Account to combat desertification

20. The Special Account was established within the United Nations in March 1979. The Executive Director of UNEP, in a letter of 20 August 1979, invited Governments to give favourable consideration to contributing generously to the Special Account.

21. Several Governments have since expressed their general support for the Special Account: Algeria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, India, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Seychelles, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Thailand, Tonga, Tunisia, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, and Zambia. The Government of Kenya, while expressing its support for the Special Account and maintaining that the additional measures and means of financing should be derived from voluntary contributions, proposed that this could be achieved by a special pledging conference organized by the Secretary-General, probably at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

22. On the other hand, a number of Governments - Australia, Austria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, South Africa, Singapore, Switzerland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America - have indicated their negative reaction to the establishment of the Special Account and their unwillingness to contribute to it.

23. While considering matters related to the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification at its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 34/184 of 18 December 1979, stressed the urgency of implementing the Plan of Action, in view of the acute seriousness of the problem in many countries, particularly developing countries, and of the limited resources which it had been possible to mobilize so far to combat desertification, and took note with satisfaction of the opening of the Special Account to finance the implementation of the Plan. It also noted with concern the lack of adequate financial resources for the implementation of the Plan of Action and the slow progress achieved so far; noted also with concern that no contribution to the Special Account had been made so far; and called upon Governments and financial organizations to contribute generously to the Special Account, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the Plan of Action. As of 30 June 1980, only Mexico had announced a contribution to the Special Account.

6. Study on additional measures for financing the Plan of Action

24. The study prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 32/172 was submitted, with the comments of the UNEP Governing Council, to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session as document A/33/260. By resolution 33/89, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to solicit the views of Governments concerning the study. The Secretary-General invited Governments to provide their views to the Executive Director of UNEP. These were presented to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session in document A/34/575. By resolution 34/184, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Governing Council of UNEP, to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session a report on the basis of a study to be prepared for this purpose. The Secretary-General, through the Executive Director of UNEP, consulted the Governing Council on the structure of the required study. By decision 8/17, paragraph 9, the Council approved the over-all structure of

the study. The group of high-level experts convened by the Executive Director to prepare the study met in early May and early June 1980, and will meet again in July to finalize the study. The report of the Secretary-General will be issued as document A/35/

B. ACTION TAKEN BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS
THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

25. The General Assembly, at its thirty-fourth session, considered several documents related, in full or in part, to the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification:

- A/34/25 - Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on the work of its seventh session;
- A/34/405 - Note by the Secretary-General presenting the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region;
- A/34/406 - Report of the Secretary-General on measures taken for the benefit of the Sudano-Sahelian region;
- A/34/575 - Report of the Secretary-General on additional measures and means of financing for the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

26. Three resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session, all on 18 December 1979:

- 34/184 - Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;
- 34/185 - Plan of Action to Combat Desertification:
restoration and improvement of the Fouta-Djallon massif;
- 34/187 - Implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat
Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

27. As to the over-all implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, the General Assembly, in addition to the provisions described in paragraphs 23 and 24 above, by the other operative paragraphs of its resolution 34/184 expressed its appreciation to UNEP for its work as co-ordinator for the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and called upon donor countries and interested organizations to participate actively in the work of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control and to support the projects submitted to them through the Group.

28. The call on donor countries and interested organizations referred to in paragraph 27 above was brought to the attention of Governments and organizations.

29. By its resolution 34/185, the General Assembly invited the Governing Council of UNEP to consider favourably the inclusion of the pilot project for the improvement and restoration of the Fouta-Djallon massif in its programme of action against desertification, and requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session on the implementation of the resolution. The report of the Secretary-General will be issued as document A/35/ 368 .

30. The General Assembly resolutions related to the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region, including resolutions 34/185 and 34/187, will be dealt with in section II of the present report, and action by the Governing Council in response to these resolutions is presented in section IV.

C. ACTION TAKEN BY UNEP AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

I. Revision and refinement of the project proposals
within the transnational concepts for desertifi-
cation control approved by the United Nations
Conference on Desertification

31. The Desertification Unit and UNSO, in co-operation with Governments and the agencies concerned, have revised and refined the project proposals referred to in paragraph 14 above.

(a) North African Green Belt

32. Within this concept, five projects - two from each of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Tunisia and one from Egypt - have been finalized, and were submitted to the Consultative Group for Desertification Control at the request of the Governments concerned. All of them received declarations of support.

(b) Major Regional Aquifer in North East Africa

33. Two national components of the project concept, together with a component on co-ordination, were refined in a series of meetings by the Governments of Egypt and Sudan with the co-operation of the Desertification Unit, the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and UNESCO. At the request of the two Governments, these project proposals were submitted to the Consultative Group, and both received declarations of support.

(c) Desertification Monitoring Programme in South America

34. A technical mission from the GEMS programme activity centre of UNEP and the Desertification Unit visited Argentina, Bolivia and Peru in late 1978, conducted meetings and discussions with the authorities concerned and at the same time collected the data and information required for project formulation. Three project proposals, one for each country, were prepared in close co-operation with representatives of the Governments concerned. Bolivia requested the presentation of its national component to the Consultative Group, where it received a declaration of support.

(d) Desertification Monitoring Programme in South West Asia

35. A technical mission from GEMS to assist countries in formulating their national components visited Afghanistan, India and Pakistan in May 1979, and was complemented by an additional technical consultant mission to India. Although work is continuing in the countries to prepare basic data and first draft of background papers, only in Pakistan has significant progress been made up till now.

(e) Transnational projects in the Sudano-Sahelian region

36. Project proposals within the transnational concepts of management of livestock and rangelands in the Sudano-Sahelian region (SOLAR) and the Sahel Green Belt were elaborated by UNSO. Several project proposals within these two concepts have been prepared for submission to the Consultative Group.

2. Other projects

37. The UNEP-supported elements of EMASAR (Ecological Management of Arid and Semi-Arid Rangelands and MAB-3/IPAL (Man and the Biosphere programme, project 3, Integrated Project on Arid Lands) are small portions of larger programmes within FAO and UNESCO respectively. The EMASAR programme of FAO aims at furthering the application of ecological knowledge in the management of range resources, and is essentially based on national action programmes. IPAL is a part of the UNESCO MAB-3 programme dealing essentially with research on ecological and sociological interactions in the arid and semi-arid zones between man and grazing lands. The two programmes have a co-ordinating secretariat based in Rome.

38. A joint mission to evaluate the UNEP - supported elements of these programmes was organized during May-June 1979, with a view to providing guidance to the Desertification Unit as regards the long-term future of these projects. The Executive Director is now considering, in consultation with FAO and UNESCO, the best ways of continuation of UNEP's support for the EMASAR and MAB-3 programmes in the light of the recommendations of the joint mission.

39. The International Co-ordinating Council (ICC) of the MAB programme, at its sixth session (November 1979), analysed in depth the MAB activities in arid and semi-arid lands (projects 3 and 4), and noted that efforts to establish a global network of biosphere reserves in arid and semi-arid areas were still insufficient bearing in mind the problems of desertification in particular.

40. A UNEP/USSR project on combating desertification through integrated development, established as a direct response to Recommendation 4 of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, envisages the utilization of industrialization and urbanization as means of combating desertification. It will be financed mostly from the non-convertible currency portion of the Environment Fund and executed by the Government of the USSR in co-operation with UNIDO. Several countries affected by desertification have expressed their intention to participate in this project, for which the first programming meeting was held in Moscow (February 1979) with the participation of representatives of Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Mali, Mexico, Peru, the USSR, UNEP and UNIDO. The implementation of the project has now started. It is expected that other countries as well as agencies concerned will join it in the future.

41. International desertification control training courses, organized jointly by UNEP and the Government of the USSR for specialists from the developing countries, were held during 1978 and 1979. An international meeting held in Alma-Ata, USSR, in May 1979 to evaluate these courses, and attended by representatives of the USSR, UNEP, FAO and UNESCO as well as by nine international specialists from different parts of the world, recommended the establishment

of these courses on a permanent basis, the expansion of the programme by adding "range ecology, management and productivity" to the present subjects of "sand-dune stabilization" and salinity control under irrigation", and the ensurance of FAO and UNESCO participation in these courses. Arrangements for the implementation of these recommendations are being considered.

42. An international desertification control training course organized jointly by UNEP and the Government of China was held in 1978. The 1979 course was postponed for administrative reasons. Arrangements are being undertaken to establish these courses on a permanent basis and to expand the programme beyond the present subject of "sand-dune stabilization".

43. During 1980, a working meeting of the United Nations agencies concerned (UNEP, UNESCO, FAO), probably together with the United Nations University (UNU) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), will be convened by UNEP to work out a comprehensive and co-ordinated global network of training programmes to meet the requirements of the implementation of the Plan of Action.

44. Guidelines for a UNEP/FAO project on desertification assessment and mapping were set on the basis of the findings of an expert meeting (May 1979) which recommended a set of indicators to be utilized for the assessment and mapping of desertification at various scales and for different purposes. The project will be executed by FAO in co-operation with UNESCO, WMO and the International Society of Soil Science (ISSS). It is expected that the first draft of the methodology for desertification assessment and mapping will be prepared and reviewed during the second half of 1980, after which it will be available for practical field testing and further elaboration.

45. Between July 1979 and May 1980, the Desertification Unit organized preliminary planning/programming missions to Bangladesh, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Democratic Yemen, Lesotho, Nepal, United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen Arab Republic. Similar missions are planned for Afghanistan, Malawi and Rwanda. The main purpose of these missions is to explore the existing situation in the countries with respect to desertification and the on-going activities to combat it, and to offer UNEP's assistance to the Governments in the preparation of national plans of action to combat desertification in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Desertification. As a result of these missions, several Governments have already requested the Executive Director to provide them with assistance.

46. A UNU workshop on training and management for arid lands (Federal Republic of Germany, 29 October - 1 November 1979) was attended by some 30 participants from the worldwide academic community concerned with arid lands and by representatives of UNEP, UNSO and UNESCO. The outcome will be presented to the UNU Advisory Committee for its programme on the use and management of natural resources, with a view to adapting its priorities concerning arid lands to the recommendations of the workshop.

47. The eighth World Meteorological Congress (May 1979) approved the initiation, during the period 1980-1983, of studies to ascertain how agrometeorologists in semi-arid and arid areas may be able to assist agriculturists and planners by providing them with information on the likely effects of land management practices on desertification and soil degradation and erosion. The WMO Commission for Agrometeorology, at its seventh session, established a working group on

agrometeorological aspects of land management in arid and semi-arid areas, with special reference to desertification problems. WMO has also continued to collect and process climatic data for the Sudano-Sahelian region. Several expert missions were sent to developing countries to assist in strengthening meteorological services for agriculture and land management planning. Following consultations with the Desertification Unit, WMO has presented to UNEP for consideration a project proposal on the assessment of meteorological effects on Sahelian pastoral ecosystems. The possibility of merging this project proposal with the AGRHYMET project (Regional programme for the strengthening of the agro-meteorological and hydrological services in the Sudano-Sahelian region) will be discussed between UNEP and WMO. These activities are planned and carried out within the WMO Plan of Action in the Meteorological and Hydrological Aspects of the Combat Against Desertification, adopted by WMO in 1978 following the recommendations of the Desertification Conference.

48. The International Labour Office (ILO) implements a range of vocational training programmes related to development of skills among rural populations in arid and marginal zones. Certain of these skills are required for the application of improved farming techniques appropriate to arid ecosystems, including irrigation. Others are designed to develop small industries as alternative means of employment in rural zones. Some recent examples are the ILO-UNSO project on rural artisans in Nigeria, a similar ILO-UNDP project in Upper Volta including the establishment of a national artisan training centre, and a feasibility study in Cape Verde.

49. The FAO Conference, at its twentieth session (Rome, 10-29 November 1979), noted the emphasis on the control of desertification and particularly welcomed continuing FAO activities in the Sahel supporting the considerable assistance provided bilaterally. It also welcomed continuing collaboration with UNEP.

50. When finalized, the compendium mentioned in paragraphs 11 and 12 above will provide a more comprehensive account of the activities within the United Nations system related to combating desertification.

D. ACTION BY REGIONAL COMMISSIONS AND OTHER REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES

1. General

51. None of the regional commissions has so far been able to organize an intergovernmental regional meeting, technical workshop or seminar to consider the immediate implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the region, as was recommended in paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 32/172, due to the fact that no special financial provisions were made in the regular budget for carrying out this recommendation. Such regional meetings are planned by ECLA, ECWA and ESCAP for 1980 and 1981.

2. Africa

52. Following up the implementation of the medium-term plan of action to combat drought and desertification, which constitutes a part of the Inter-African Programme of Action on the Control of Drought, Desertification and other Natural Disasters adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Standing Committee on Drought, Desertification and Natural Disasters of the OAU Council of Ministers recommended the immediate implementation of two projects:

(a) Development of a hydrogeological map of Africa;

(b) Integrated biological development and rehabilitation of the Fouta-Djallon Mountains.

53. In accepting these recommendations, the OAU Council of Ministers, at its July 1979 meeting, adopted two resolutions, in which, among other things, requested the appropriate United Nations agencies and the most concerned intergovernmental funding institutions to co-operate closely and fully with the OAU General Secretariat for the implementation of the preliminary programme of action; commended the decision of the Governing Council at its seventh session (decision 7/13 C) to give assistance to the implementation of the project for the preparation of a hydrogeological map of Africa; and requested the Executive Director to integrate the pilot project for the development and rehabilitation of the Fouta-Djallon Plateau with the transnational project for the establishment of a Saharan green belt.

54. A working meeting on the implementation of the OAU programme of action, convened by the OAU secretariat and attended by representatives of ECA, FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNSO, WHO, as well as of such inter-regional organizations as BADEA, CILSS, the Desert Locust Control Organization for East Africa and the Joint Anti-Locust and Anti-Aviurian Organization, elaborated on the details of the implementation of the above two projects and the OAU secretariat's proposals to establish an OAU/FAO/UNEP joint regional commission and joint relief fund to facilitate the implementation of the two projects.

55. The Desertification Unit consulted with OAU Headquarters on means of establishing working relationships and modalities for co-operation. The Executive Director is now considering the results of these negotiations and the OAU proposals concerned in the light of the General Assembly resolution 34/185 of 18 December 1979, in order to take concrete steps in implementing Governing Council decision 7/13 C. A draft memorandum of understanding between OAU and UNEP concerning these matters has been prepared and is being considered by the parties.

3. West Asia

56. The Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), at its sixth session (28 April - 5 May 1979) adopted a Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the ECWA Region as presented in a note by its Executive Secretary (E/ECWA/77 of 24 April 1979). A comprehensive and detailed plan will be worked out by ECWA during the 1980-1981 biennium. The priorities identified by ECWA for the Plan include:

(a) Monitoring of desertification processes;

(b) Activities related to land-use planning and management, particularly training;

(c) Monitoring of the human condition in arid and desertified areas;

(d) Strengthening of activities in the field of water resources development and use.

The Commission called on its member States and concerned regional and international organizations to provide all possible financial, technical and advisory assistance for the organization of a regional meeting on agricultural (natural) resources conservation and conservation policies in the ECWA countries, which it is planned to convene during the third quarter of 1980. Apart from the technical aspects concerned with major issues of conservation, the meeting will also discuss the implementation of the Plan of Action at the regional level and define regional programmes and projects more precisely with a view to enhancing their preparation and implementation.

57. The Commission also recommended that high priority be given to the implementation of the recommendations made by the ECWA/Iraq Foundation for Scientific Research international expert consultation on irrigation and agricultural development, (Baghdad, 24 February - 1 March 1979).

E. ACTION BY GOVERNMENTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

58. The following brief account of some of the specific activities reported by the Governments indicates how the implementation of the Plan of Action at the national level is developing:

- Afghanistan - A National Desertification Committee consisting of representatives of the relevant ministries and institutions has been established by the Government;
- Australia - The Government is prepared to direct more of its development assistance resources to desertification control activities in accordance with priorities set by developing countries. In regard to possible training for those involved in North African and Sahel "Green Belt" projects, Australia could provide assistance within its existing student programme. Placement in appropriate courses in Australia might also be arranged on behalf of other donors. Australia intends to conduct a course in desertification control, for about 20 countries of the Asian region, in 1981;
- Bangladesh - A vigorous tree-planting programme has been launched, and a canal-digging programme has been developed on a self-help basis;
- Bolivia - On 15 July 1979, a decree was passed creating the Commission on Arid and Semi-Arid Lands in accordance with the recommendations of the Desertification Conference;
- Botswana - The Government has embarked on a sand-dune stabilization project on a five-hectare plot situated in Bokspits area, which is highly susceptible to sand-dune formation due to overgrazing; this project will be extended to 25 hectares if funds are made available;

- China - In 1978, it was decided to "implement a green project", consisting of a 5.3 million hectare shelter belt system in northern China, and in the same year, a desertification research institute was established. The Government has officially designated 3 March as Tree Planting Day, and its policy is to prevent desertification of arid and semi-arid areas by managing them according to the characteristics of the ecosystems. To this end, a nation-wide survey of agricultural resources and research into the divisions between natural zones are being conducted.

Late in 1979, the environment protection law and the national forestry law were promulgated on a trial basis to strengthen the legal protection of natural resources and forest cover.

In co-operation with UNEP, China hosted an international training course in combating desertification in 1978, and has offered to host another in 1980. Consultations are also under way with UNEP on the establishment of a research and training centre for combating desertification;

- Denmark - The Government is ready to increase its bilateral assistance for desertification control provided affected countries give priority to such projects;

- France - France spends annually, through bilateral and multilateral aid mechanisms, about \$12.5 million on desertification control. In 1979, for the exceptional relief programme in the Sahel to fight drought and to promote self-sufficiency in food production, an additional credit of £25 million was provided. More than 20 projects are under consideration by interested Governments and competent French services, relating to forest development (\$3.2 million), irrigated agriculture (\$11.2 million) stockraising (\$3.2 million), and development of subsistence food crops (\$6.2 million). The total funds allocated by France to combating desertification trebled in 1979.

In addition to the above, an Arid Zones Unit was established in 1978 within the Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques and a small team was set up by the Comité de Lutte Contre l'Aridité en Milieu Tropical of the Direction Générale de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique to assemble, synthesize and disseminate information on arid zones accumulated by numerous French organizations. The general purpose of these arrangements is to help put French knowledge and competence in arid zones to use for the international community. A detailed account of these activities appears in Desertification Control Bulletin, Vol. 2, December 1979;

Germany, Federal
Republic of

- For its development assistance in the field of desertification control, to which special priority is given, the Federal Government has established the following guidelines: (a) Efforts should be concentrated on the affected Sahelian countries; (b) Suitable ongoing bilateral projects should be selected and expanded within the scope of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification; (c) The Federal Government will co-ordinate its activities as much as possible with other institutions, e.g. the Consultative Group for Desertification Control. Two important projects for the implementation of the above ideas are being prepared:

A three-phase pilot project for the co-ordination of the Government's anti-desertification activities:
Phase 1 - survey of suitable projects in the Sahelian countries and elaboration of concrete recommendations on the adaptation and expansion of these projects;
Phase 2 - on-the-spot co-ordination of the implementation of the recommendations worked out under Phase 1;
Phase 3 - evaluation of experience under Phase 2, and consideration of applicability to other regions;

A pilot project under the MAB-3 programme for the analysis and testing of alternative land-use systems in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

The Federal Government has also concluded an agreement to participate in the IPAL project in Kenya in the amount of DM4.2 million over the three years from July 1980;

Greece

- A new tropical and subtropical agriculture teaching and research centre is to be established in southern Greece;

Iran

- The Government has already shared its experience in desertification control, particularly sand-dune fixation, with other countries, and is willing to continue doing so. Iran offered during the second meeting of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control to provide technical assistance to a sand-dune fixation project in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and is also prepared to support a study to be conducted by UNEP and UNESCO on the relationship between man, his social values and his habitat on the basis of the teachings of great religions;

Kenya

- The five-year development plan (1979-1983) stresses development work in arid and semi-arid lands, which constitute 80 per cent of the country. Kenya is active in rangeland management and in monitoring. This will help build a data base which will be of importance for its anti-desertification plans. Other national activities include a tree planting day and encouragement of public participation in anti-desertification activities. On the international level, Kenya supports and participates in IPAL with UNEP and UNESCO;

Mexico

- Mexico has approved a contribution to the Special Account. A national plan of action to combat desertification is under preparation, and Mexico is prepared to share its experience with other countries;

Netherlands

- The Government considers the Consultative Group for Desertification Control a useful forum, and has therefore decided to change its status from observer to full member of the Group. It has also decided to make a special financial contribution of \$1.8 million for a project submitted by one of the Sudano-Sahelian countries to the second meeting of the Consultative Group;

Nigeria

- Efforts to fight the encroaching Sahara are on the increase and millions of seedlings are distributed annually free of charge. Environmental legislation is being developed, and will be enacted in due course;

Senegal

- The national institutions responsible for the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification within the country are: State Secretariat for Water and Forests, for the protection of nature and reafforestation; Ministry of Rural Development, for the problems of agriculture and food; Ministry of Urban Habitat and Environment, for problems related to the environment; Ministry of Equipment, for the problems of water control and development. The national desertification control programme includes inter alia control of bush fires (1,960 million F CFA), reafforestation and silvopastoral management in the northern zone (1,319 million F CFA), sand-dune fixation and gully control on the northern coast (1,109 million F CFA), reafforestation in the Senegal River Delta (680 million F CFA), reafforestation in the peri-urban areas of the western region (705 million F CFA), management of forests in Central Senegal (893 million F CFA), forest development in South Senegal (1,672 million F CFA) and improvement of agriculture lands in Central Senegal through reafforestation and windbreaks (1,089 million F CFA);

Spain

- For many years Spain has been implementing afforestation programmes in areas prone to soil erosion, which affects nearly 3 million hectares of agricultural lands. In addition, a programme to combat soil erosion in the Mediterranean region of Spain, with a cost of about \$1.5 billion for ten years, has been recently worked out in accordance with the recommendations of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

Suriname

- Suriname, with average annual rainfall of 2,200 mm and 90 per cent of its territory covered with forest vegetation, does not seem vulnerable to desertification. Most recently the Government has submitted to the Parliament its new Forest Law, that will legally protect the Suriname forest area specifically in those areas where it could be mostly damaged. Deforestation on a large scale does not occur in Suriname, and when development plans exist, as in the Kabalebo hydropower project, where large areas will be converted into a man-made lake, no activities take place without ample detailed ecological consideration;

Sweden

- The Government is ready to provide a substantial contribution from development assistance funds to a special "development window" of UNEP to finance activities related to environment in the third world, provided that other Governments are prepared to do the same. Such means could in part find an appropriate use in measures against desertification. At the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1980, the Swedish delegation announced its Government's decision to become a full member of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control;

Switzerland

- The Government attaches great importance to combating desertification and is following with interest the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action;

Turkey

- The General Directorate of the State agencies co-ordinating the fight against desertification is particularly responsible for wind soil erosion control and sand-dune fixation in agricultural lands. Activities include fixation of coastal sand-dunes over a total area of 37,000 ha (the present annual rate of fixation of about 300 ha is insufficient) and establishment of windbreaks and shelterbelts on private and State agricultural lands. Turkey has enough technicians and technical knowledge to combat desertification, but of the resources of TL 40 million required annually, only TL 4 million are available from the current national budget;

United Kingdom -
of Great
Britain and
Northern
Ireland

The United Kingdom is engaged in many scientific bilateral programmes for development in different countries which have a bearing on the problems of desertification, and also contributes to a number of multilateral projects such as the IPAL programme. Its contribution is not only financial, but draws on the wide expertise available in governmental and non-governmental institutions and in consultancy services. Loans to the most needy developing countries have been changed to grants. The United Kingdom's contribution to the desertification programme over the past 2-3 years has been some \$150 million;

Union of Soviet
Socialist
Republics

The USSR is strengthening and widening its contribution to the implementation of measures to combat desertification on both a multilateral and a bilateral basis. Progress has been made in the UNEP/USSR project to combat desertification through integrated approach to development, in accordance with recommendation 4 of the Plan of Action, and international courses on sand-dune fixation, salinization control and range ecology and productivity are being implemented in co-operation with UNEP;

United States
of America

- A broad based inter-agency committee has been established to plan and monitor national desertification efforts, and a national plan of action to combat desertification is under preparation. USAID will obligate more than \$36 million during 1980 for anti-desertification control in 11 countries, and a higher funding level is anticipated in 1981.

On the regional level, the United States of America and Mexico have signed an agreement on arid and semi-arid lands management and desertification control. The programme envisaged under the agreement includes co-operative research demonstration and application projects, a research programme on desertification monitoring which could be part of GEMS, a number of workshops on water harvesting, land management, etc., and a cost-benefit analysis of anti-desertification measures.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION

A. INTRODUCTION

59. The present report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 33/88 of 15 December 1978, which requested the Governing Council of UNEP to submit an annual report on the implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and paragraph 8 of resolution 34/187, which requested it to continue doing so.

60. The second of the two resolutions referred to above also requested the Governing Council to examine the possibility of the inclusion of Djibouti, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau among the countries receiving assistance through UNSO in implementing the Plan of Action and to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session on the matter. In addition, resolution 34/185 invited the Governing Council of UNEP to consider favourably the inclusion of the pilot project for the improvement and restoration of the Fouta-Djallon massif in its programme of action against desertification. The Assembly noted in this connexion the co-operation between the Organization of African Unit (OAU) and UNEP and resolution CM/Res. 756 (XXXIII) concerning the integrated biological improvement of the massif in the context of action to combat desertification, and requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session on the implementation of the resolution. As the Fouta-Djallon massif is located in Guinea with outliers in Guinea-Bissau, this section also contains the Executive Director's comments and recommendations regarding the implementation of that request, which has obvious implications for the Sudano-Sahelian region.

B. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNEP/UNDP JOINT VENTURE

61. With the institutional support provided under the terms of UNEP Governing Council decision 6/11 B of 24 May 1978 and UNDP Governing Council decision 25/10, section II, of 27 June 1978, the necessary staff has been recruited and the Office is fully operational for carrying out the enlarged desertification control mandate assigned to it by General Assembly resolution 33/88. The programme support has been utilized for the preparation of an initial desertification programme in the region. Future extensions of the UNEP and UNDP support to the joint venture were authorized by UNEP Governing Council decision 7/13 B of 3 May 1979 and UNDP Governing Council decision 79/20, section II of 28 June 1979. In its resolution 34/187 of 18 December 1979, the General Assembly also requested the two Programmes to continue to provide support to the joint venture. In response to this request, the UNEP Governing Council, by decision 8/17, paragraph 7, authorized the Executive Director to continue for 1980-1981 to contribute to UNSO, after consultations with the Administrator of UNDP, the share contributed by UNEP of the administrative and operational costs of the joint venture on the basis of the work plan to be approved by the Executive Director, and to submit to the Governing Council at its ninth session a full account of the operational expenditures of UNSO related to its additional operational mandate, with a

view to providing the Governing Council with a basis for considering future financing of the operational costs of the joint venture. Subsequently, the Governing Council of UNDP, by decision 80/45 of 30 June 1980, authorized the Administrator, after consultations with the Executive Director of UNEP, to increase, in an amount equal to a UNEP increase, the UNDP share of the costs of the UNDP/UNEP joint venture. The UNDP Governing Council also requested the Administrator to continue to examine the specific needs of the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region and to grant to them, within available resources of the Programme, additional assistance through UNSO with a view to ensuring the timely and effective implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the region.

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

62. The purposes of the inter-agency planning and programming missions to 13 of the 15 countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region (Chad and Uganda will be visited at an appropriate later date) referred to in paragraph 15 of the annex to document A/34/405 included:

(a) Assessment of the problem of desertification in the countries, including their causes and consequences;

(b) 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;

(d) Assistance in the identification, formulation and appraisal of priority projects submitted by the Governments for assistance in resource mobilization.

63. The reports of the missions, including the projects submitted for assistance, have been completed following receipt of the comments of relevant organizations of the United Nations system, and approved by the Governments concerned. In all, 107 priority projects falling under the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification have been identified by Governments and submitted to UNSO. The greatest number of these projects are in forestry, rangeland and livestock management, water resources management and sand-dune fixation. These types account for 74 per cent of the projects, reflecting the pattern of desertification and the concerns of the Governments in the region. Table I indicates the number of projects which fall within the framework of the individual recommendations of the Plan of Action, and the total number of projects under each category of recommendation. ^{2/} The greatest number of projects relate to corrective anti-desertification measures. Projects for institutional support to Governments in planning, co-ordination, monitoring and technical services,

^{2/} These totals amount to more than the total number of projects, since most projects address themselves to more than one recommendation of the Plan of Action.

Table I

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

	<u>Number of Projects</u>
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
TOTAL A	<u>28</u>
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	-
TOTAL B	<u>-</u>
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	-
10. Conservation of flora and fauna	11
11. Monitoring natural conditions of arid areas	8
TOTAL C	<u>78</u>

Table 1 (cont'd)

	<u>Number of Projects</u>
D. SOCIAL-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
TOTAL D	<u>31</u>
E. INSURANCE AGAINST THE RISK AND EFFECT OF DROUGHT	
17. Preventive measures against the effects of drought	6
TOTAL E	<u>6</u>
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
TOTAL F	<u>28</u>
G. INTEGRATION OF ANTI-DESERTIFICATION PROGRAMME INTO COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLANS	
22. Development of anti-desertification programmes in accordance with national development plans	4
TOTAL G	<u>4</u>

as well as consciousness-raising, account for 10 per cent of the projects presented. Projects have also been submitted in the area of arid-land agriculture, protection of irrigation schemes, nature reserves and alternative sources of energy. With the approval of the Governments which requested UNSO assistance in mobilizing the necessary resources for project implementation, projects have been presented to the international donor community, including the Consultative Group for Desertification Control.

64. The total cost of the projects submitted to UNSO is estimated at \$642 million, of which \$395 million has already been secured and an additional \$247 million is required. Twenty fully formulated ongoing projects costing \$370 million, of which \$37 million are still required, were presented to the Consultative Group for Desertification Control at its second session in March 1980. During the session, various donors expressed interest in and/or indicated possible financial support for most of these projects. This matter is now being followed up as part of UNSO's resource mobilization activities. In this regard, UNSO is presently engaged in concrete negotiations with sources of financing and executing agencies for the implementation of a project in the Sudan for the re-stocking of the Acacia senegalensis tree which will be a major source of the world supply of gum arabic. This project will be financed from contributions to the Trust Fund in the amount of \$1.8 million. Similar negotiations for financing by donors are actively under way for a number of projects in Cape Verde, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Somalia.

65. In addition to UNSO's resource mobilization efforts through the Consultative Group, contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian activities have already been acquired for the implementation of several other projects in the desertification control programme. These include projects in Cape Verde, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and the Sudan.

66. In connexion with several projects, UNSO has been co-ordinating closely with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), both of which have been actively promoting those aspects of their programmes which are complementary to UNSO projects.

67. The projects identified thus far by 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 first step in implementing the Plan of Action, and does not represent a comprehensive programme to combat desertification in each of the countries, which is the ultimate goal of UNSO's activities. The implementation of the projects will assist Governments in producing early results while further planning and programming continues, on the basis of sustained consultations between Governments, the United Nations agencies concerned, UNSO and sources of financing.

68. 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 meeting, in which representatives of the CILSS member States participated, prepared a unified CILSS/UNSO plan for combating desertification in the countries

concerned which incorporates the work prepared by the UNSO planning and programming missions. It includes a set of objectives, strategies and desertification control activities based on the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. Emphasis is placed on sand-dune stabilization and 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.

69. 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 the biennial meeting of the CILSS Heads of State Conference. In summing up the work of the Conference, His Excellency Moussa Traore, President of Mali and current Chairman of the Conference, also emphasized the high priority which the Governments accord to the task of combating desertification, which poses a very grave threat to their long-term development.

70. In addition to its relationship with CILSS, UNSO has initiated action for the establishment and maintenance of close working relationships and the exchange of information and experience with concerned regional and intergovernmental organizations, notably OAU, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and various river and lake basin commissions in the region, as well as with UNU.

71. In all of its planning and programming and project implementation, UNSO actively and concretely fosters the concepts of technical co-operation among developing countries (TDC). In this connexion, UNSO actively participated in the recent African and Arab regional conferences on TCDC. The conference of African States recognized the vital importance of the fight to contain drought and the processes of desertification and the fact that drought management and desertification control are fruitful areas for TCDC. Accordingly, it resolved that drought management and desertification control be designated priority areas for TCDC action.

D. INCLUSION OF DJIBOUTI, GUINEA AND GUINEA-BISSAU AMONG THE COUNTRIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE FROM UNSO

72. The definition of the Sudano-Sahelian region, as contained in paragraph 3 of the Executive Director's report to the Governing Council at its sixth session (UNEP/GC.6/9/Add.2) and endorsed by the Governing Council in paragraph 1 (a) of its decision 6/11 B of 24 May 1978, and subsequently by the Economic and Social Council 3/ and the General Assembly, 4/ is as follows:

"3. In the context of this report, the Sudano-Sahelian region is defined as 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

3/ Resolution 1978/37 11 of 21 July 1978.

4/ Resolution 33/88 of 15 December 1978.

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."

Djibouti is located completely within the Sudano-Sahelian belt, as shown on the Desertification Map of the World. The country has an arid climate, with an average rainfall of less than 125 millimetres annually, and is severely affected by desertification.

73. At its eighth session the UNEP Governing Council, by decision 8/17, paragraph 11, decided to add Djibouti to the list of countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, thereby making it eligible to receive assistance through UNSO in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

74. Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, which are located south of the Sahara and north of the Equator, do not fall within the belt shown in the World Map of Desertification, partly because their rainfall and related ecological factors place them outside the zones of arid and semi-arid bio-climates. It should be noted, however, that the two countries, which border Senegal and Mali, are a major source of water in West Africa. Although rainfall in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau is plentiful, they have long dry seasons, and these and the intensive population of the Fouta-Djallon massif have significant adverse influences on the ecology of the western part of the Sudano-Sahelian region, with which they also have extensive economic and social relations.

75. In view of the above, the Governing Council decided by decision 8/17, paragraph 11, to include Guinea and Guinea-Bissau among the countries eligible to receive assistance through UNSO in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

E. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON THE FOUTA-DJALLON MASSIF

76. The Fouta-Djallon massif, located mainly in Guinea with sandstone outliers in Guinea-Bissau, is considered a primary source of the Gambia, Niger, Senegal and other rivers. The General Assembly, by resolution 34/185, therefore invited the UNEP Governing Council to consider favourably the inclusion of the pilot project for the improvement and restoration of the Fouta-Djallon massif in its programme of action against desertification.

77. Prior to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 34/185, the UNEP Governing Council, by its decision 7/13 (C) of 3 May 1979, had requested the Executive Director to "pursue, within available resources, the activities being carried out in the /African/ region by expanding those integrated pilot activities that would benefit all the affected countries", and, in co-operation with the United Nations specialized agencies, to co-operate closely with the secretariats of OAU and other African intergovernmental organizations in taking joint action to mobilize efforts and resources to combat desertification in the African region.

78. More information relating to OAU views on the Fouta-Djallon massif and co-operative actions between OAU and UNEP on the matter is given in paragraphs 49-52 above.

79. The Executive Director of UNEP recommended to the Governing Council at its eighth session the inclusion of the Fouta-Djallon Massif pilot project in the programme of action against desertification. The Council decided, by decision 8/17, paragraph 10, to include this pilot project within the programme of action of UNEP against desertification. The Council also noted the intention of the Executive Director to consider, with OAU, how it could be integrated within the transnational concept of green belts in the Sahara. As stated above (para. 29), the implementation of General Assembly resolution 34/185 is the subject of a separate report by the Secretary-General (A/35/368).

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

80. The United Nations Conference on Desertification envisaged the full implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification by the year 2000, and included in the Plan recommendations for immediate initial action to be implemented within the seven year period 1978-1984. The Plan was endorsed by the General Assembly in 1977. The progress reported to the Assembly in document A/34/405 and the present report is not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem, and there are still obstacles that hinder the full implementation of the Plan of Action. Productive lands are still being lost every year. Drought hazards still menace extensive territories and their societies.

81. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, in its report to the UNEP Governing Council at its eighth session (UNEP/GC.8/4), identified, on the basis of a preliminary analysis of the draft report of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification, the main trends in the ongoing and planned activities of the United Nations system towards the full implementation of the recommendations of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, and described areas where more emphasis was required. In the same report, it recognized the following major constraints on the full implementation of the Plan of Action:

"(a) Governments of countries faced with desertification problems or risks, while confronted with conflicting demands and scarce financial and human resources, appeared unable at present to assign sufficiently high priority to desertification prevention or control, and had only to a limited degree included such measures in their national development plans;

"(b) There was a need to strengthen co-operation within the United Nations system, so as to ensure the proper multidisciplinary approach to projects and to arrange for effective pooling of the efforts and resources of various agencies and bodies, with a view to their most efficient utilization, in as many as possible of the geographical areas and subject matters concerned with desertification;

"(c) Although there was a wealth of known technology in the area of desertification control, there was still need to fill gaps in that knowledge, particularly as regards integrated interdisciplinary approaches, including socio-cultural dimensions, and efforts towards teaching the existing knowledge to potential utilizers were far from sufficient, particularly at the level of extension agents and farmers/pastoralists;

"(d) Insufficient financing was seriously limiting the efforts of the United Nations system to implement the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. There was an urgent need for external sources of financing to increase their assistance to anti-desertification projects. The United Nations Conference on Desertification had estimated that resources of the order of \$400 million annually, in addition to current development assistance, would be needed to halt deterioration. Funds of such magnitude had not as yet been forthcoming."

82. The Plan of Action envisages that its implementation be carried out "by Governments through their national institutions, with the support, when requested, of international or bilateral programmes". Apart from the obstacles recognized in the ACC report mentioned above, there are other constraints that seem to impede full-scale implementation of the Plan of Action at the national level:

(a) Action to combat desertification at the national level need to be integrated within the framework of a national plan to combat desertification. UNEP produced and disseminated a study on guidelines for the preparation of national plans of action to combat desertification. To date, only two countries - Mexico and the United States of America - have informed UNEP that national plans of action to combat desertification are in the course of preparation (see para. 58 above). A limited number of countries suffering from desertification have requested UNEP's assistance in the formulation of national plans. Without such plans, anti-desertification actions will remain incoherent and ineffective; moreover, these plans need to be integral components of national development plans (Recommendation 22 of the Plan of Action) and should receive due priority in national endeavour;

(b) Implementation of national programmes needs to be supported by indigenous scientific machinery capable of effectively undertaking the principal components of: monitoring and assessment of desertification hazards, survey of resources of arid lands, application of available scientific knowledge and technologies in corrective anti-desertification measures, and integration of anti-desertification actions into comprehensive national plans for arid-land development;

(c) One of the prevalent constraints on national action is the evident shortage of manpower with the multidisciplinary training needed for planning and management of desertification projects. Reference is made in paragraphs 41-43 above to training programmes, but the need is much more extensive.

83. Many aspects of desertification hazards transcend national political borders and need to be managed on a transnational scale. The Plan of Action recognized this dimension, identified in each of its component recommendations those activities to be carried out at the regional level, and endorsed in particular in recommendations for immediate initial action on six transnational projects. These six projects were presented to the Desertification Conference as samples of regional co-ordinated ventures. Unfortunately, however, political realities and strained relations between neighbouring countries are often not conducive to the implementation of such joint programmes.

84. At the international level, the principal constraint remains the shortage of available financial resources. The General Assembly has repeatedly called for generous contributions to the Special Account to finance the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and for strong support for the work of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control. ACC has reiterated (UNEP/GC.8/4; para. 38) that "Financing was a major constraint on the over-all implementation of the recommendations of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, and additional funds and means of financing were required within the United Nations system in order to allow for a more

comprehensive response by the system to the 28 recommendations adopted by the Desertification Conference.". ACC further recognized in paragraph 39 of its report, "that high priority should be given, within each of the United Nations agencies and bodies concerned, to activities which would complement the present implementation of the Plan of Action by the United Nations system, as well as to the financial support for such activities.".

85. The Governing Council believes that the information reviewed in this report on action taken by countries affected by desertification and by countries assisting them to implement programmes for combating desertification, as well as on actions at the regional and global levels, is still far from demonstrating a comprehensive concerted effort. It is evident that national and international efforts need to be intensified, and additional resources need to be made available, in order to achieve the goals envisaged by the United Nations Conference on Desertification and endorsed by the General Assembly.

V. ACTION BY THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL AT
ITS EIGHTH SESSION

86. At the 12th meeting of its eighth session, on 29 April 1980, the Governing Council of UNEP unanimously adopted decision 8/17, "Implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification", the text of which reads as follows:

"The Governing Council,

"Recalling General Assembly resolutions 33/88 and 33/89 of 15 December 1978, 33/170 of 20 December 1978, 34/187 of 18 December 1979 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1978/37 of 21 July 1978;

"Recalling further its decisions 6/11 of 24 May 1978 and 7/13 of May 1979,

"Stressing the seriousness of desertification and its adverse effects on the people of the countries affected by it, particularly in the Sudano-Sahelian region, and the need to intensify desertification control measures,

"Having examined the report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification,

"1. Notes the actions taken by Governments, the United Nations Environment Programme and members of the United Nations system for the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

"2. Notes the report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, and the measures taken by the Governments, the United Nations Environment Programme and other competent organs of the United Nations, particularly those taken by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme;

"3. Further notes that priority is being given to efforts to combat desertification in the 15 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, as well as in the least developed among the developing countries outside that region;

"4. Notes with satisfaction the efforts made by the Executive Director and urges him to reinforce further the collaborative relations between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Organization of African Unity;

"5. Calls on Governments and the relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system, as appropriate, in view of the principal obstacles to the full implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification as identified by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and by the Executive Director:

"(a) To assign sufficiently high priority to prevention or combat of desertification, to include such measures in their national development plans, and to take fully advantage of international assistance in this respect as and when required, using for this purpose bilateral and multi-lateral mechanisms as appropriate;

"(b) To strengthen the efforts and co-operation of the United Nations system ^{In the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification} so as to ensure the proper multidisciplinary approach to projects and to arrange for effective pooling of the efforts and resources of its various agencies and bodies with a view to ensuring the most efficient utilization of these resources;

"(c) Together with other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to increase their efforts to close the gaps in knowledge and appropriate technology related to combating desertification, with particular emphasis on socio-cultural dimensions and the teaching of the existing and newly acquired knowledge to potential users, particularly at the level of extension agents and farmers/pastoralists;

"6. Takes note with appreciation of the work of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control at its second session and of the declarations of support expressed by several participants during the session, and urges them to translate these declarations into specific commitments in the near future, requests the Executive Director to follow up the results of the work of the Group's second session with a view to ensuring proper implementation of the agreements reached and calls on the Consultative Group to intensify its efforts to assist the Executive Director in the mobilization of resources needed for the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

"7. Authorizes the Executive Director to continue for 1980-1981 to contribute to the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, after consultations with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, the share contributed by the United Nations Environment Programme of the administrative and operational costs of the joint venture on the basis of the work plan to be approved by the Executive Director, within the available resources of the Environment Fund, and to submit to the Governing Council, at its ninth session, the full account of these operational expenditures for 1978-1980 and their place within the total operational expenditures of the Office related to its additional anti-desertification mandate, with a view to providing the Governing Council with a basis for considering future financing of the operational costs of the joint venture;

"8. Strongly appeals to international financial institutions, multi-lateral financial organizations and Governments of industrialized countries, and of developing countries in a position to do so, to give their financial support and contribute generously to the Special Account, with a view to enhancing the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

"9. Approves the over-all structure of the study on additional measures for financing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification to be prepared by a group of high-level specialists in international financing, to be convened by the Executive Director, in response to General Assembly resolution 34/184 of 18 December 1979;

"10. Decides to include the pilot project for the improvement and restoration of the Fouta-Djallon massif within the programme of action of the United Nations Environment Programme against desertification and notes the intention of the Executive Director thereon;

"11. Further decides to add Djibouti to the list of countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region and to include Guinea and Guinea-Bissau among the countries eligible to receive assistance through the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

"12. Authorizes the Executive Director to update the report of the Governing Council before its submission to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, on the basis of:

"(a) Inclusion of the main elements of the report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination;

"(b) Incorporation of the necessary changes in the report in the light of the discussions of the Governing Council;

"(c) Inclusion of major actions in the inventory of activities of the United Nations system not included in the report;

"(d) Inclusion of major development in the implementation of the Plan of Action since the preparation of the report.

"13. Further authorizes the Executive Director to submit the updated report and the decision of the Governing Council on this matter to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session on behalf of the Governing Council."
