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REPORT ON THE
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION (UNCOD)^{1/},
29 August to 9 September 1977
Nairobi, Kenya

by

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1: Introduction

1. The convention of the United Nations Conference on Desertification, as can be seen in the forthcoming chapters, was recommended and decided by the General Assembly in December 1974. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was requested to co-ordinate the preparatory activities together with appropriate UN organizations and specialized agencies. In the course of the preparatory stage from December 1974 until 28 August 1977, a number of UN agencies, i.e. UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, UNFPA, FAO, WMO, IBRD, etc. co-operated and actively supported the Secretariat of UNCOD in undertaking a number of studies and production of the background and principal documents for submission to the UNCOD.

2. UNIDO was also invited to participate as "observer" in four preparatory meetings which took place early this year in Santiago de Chile - Algarve, Portugal - Nairobi, Kenya - and New Delhi, India. However, UNIDO was not fully involved in the preparatory work of the UNCOD. From the correspondence exchanged it can be seen that UNIDO was represented in one preparatory meeting (Santiago de Chile) in March 1977.

3. In June this year the Least Developed Countries Section, which is involved in UNIDO activities in the Sudano-Sahelian Zone, was requested, along with other Sections concerned, by the Inter-Agency Programme Co-ordination Section, to make comments on the Draft Plan of Action prepared for consideration by the Conference on Desertification and to make appropriate recommendations regarding UNIDO's contribution to the UNCOD. The Least Developed Countries Section, after studying the documents, recommended that, in view of UNIDO's present and past activities for the Sudano-Sahelian Zone, UNIDO should play a more active role in the preparation of and participation in the forthcoming Conference on Desertification. It was also suggested that the Section responsible for the preparation of the UNIDO document "Co-operative Programme of Action on Appropriate Technology" may be involved in the preparation for the UNCOD, since a number of projects included in that document are similar to the activities recommended by the Plan of Action as appropriate measures to combat desertification.

4. Finally, in August this year the Least Developed Countries Section was requested to make the necessary preparations and to send, on behalf of UNIDO, a staff member to attend the UNCOD. Therefore, Mr. Zeweri was nominated to attend the Conference together with Mr. G. Kastengren, UNIDO Senior Industrial Development Field Adviser in Nairobi.

5. Despite the very limited time available, a statement was prepared by the Least Developed Countries Section which was delivered in a summarized form on behalf of the Executive Director on the third day of the Conference. The full text was distributed among the participants. The UNIDO address (see Annex II), indicating UNIDO's past activities in arid and semi-arid zones and some proposed areas which might help the affected countries in their endeavours to combat desertification, received appreciation and was referred to by many speakers in their deliberations. The role of industrialization and urbanization in arid areas to enable the utilization of advanced technology in the implementation of measures to combat desertification was emphasized by many delegates. One speaker proposed a new amendment on the "Combination of Industrialization and Urbanization with the Development of Agriculture and Effects on the Ecology in Arid Areas" which was included in Chapter III of the Plan of Action under recommendation No.3 Part B and unanimously approved by the Conference (for the details of this recommendation see para. 24 of this report).

II: The Conference

A: Background

6. The African drought of 1968-1973 aroused world attention, not only to drought disaster, but to the problem of desertification in general, and provided the immediate background to the General Assembly Resolution 3337(XXIX) of 17 December 1974, whereby it was decided "to initiate concerted international action to combat desertification", and to convene in 1977 a United Nations Conference on Desertification

(UNCOD). The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to authorize the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to establish a small conference secretariat and to convene an ad hoc inter-agency task force to assist the secretariat in the preparation for the conference.

7. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UNDP to provide financial and technical assistance for the Conference preparations. Subsequently the General Assembly, in Resolution 3511(XXX) of 15 December 1975, requested the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) to help finance the demographic studies carried out as part of the preparation, and the Governing Council of UNEP to act as the intergovernmental preparatory body for the Conference. In its Resolution 31/108 of 16 December 1976, the General Assembly designated the Executive Director of UNEP as Secretary General of the Conference.

B: Preparation

8. In accordance with the General Assembly's call for "the assessment of all available data and information on desertification", the Secretariat of the UNCOD decided to strengthen the information obtainable from field experience by initiating a set of selected case studies. Altogether fifteen case studies have been carried out which are documented in (A/CONF.74/2 - 23)*. Two such studies were carried out in arid regions with cold-season rainfall (Chile and Tunisia), two in arid regions with warm-season rainfall (India and Niger), and two on irrigated lands affected by water-logging and salinization (Iraq and Pakistan). All those studies were financed by UNDP with UNESCO serving as executing agency (except in Chile, where the executing agency was the World Bank). Six states volunteered to contribute nine additional case studies, one each for Australia, Iran, Israel and the USA, two from the Soviet Republic and three from China. These studies examined the desertification

* All documents mentioned in this report are available in the Library for use

process in its historical setting, emphasized the lessons to be learnt and described remedial measures undertaken. All these case studies, which were presented to the Conference as background documents, were summarized in one of the principal documents (A/CONF.74/4).

9. Based on the findings of the case studies and the conclusions of the component reviews, which were summarized in another principal document entitled "Desertification: an overview", (A/CONF.74/1/Rev.1), six feasibility studies of trans-national projects were prepared by the Secretariat, with the co-operation of the Governments concerned and with the assistance of FAO, UNESCO, regional organizations and institutions, expert groups, and in consultation with the Ad hoc Inter-agency Task Force. These studies, documented in (A/CONF.74/24 - 29), are summarized in one separate document, (A/CONF.74/3/Add.1). The establishment of all projects contained in the feasibility studies required 40 agreements from the 29 countries concerned, and 18 of these agreements had been obtained before the Conference convened. These projects, requiring a total amount of \$ 195 million, are concerned with:-

- the establishment of coherent greenbelts as mosaics of productive land use and conservation measures, one along the northern edge of the Sahara desert and another along that desert's southern rim;
- the monitoring of desertification and related natural resources, one in arid regions of South America, another in South-West Asia;
- the stratification of livestock in pastoral lands south of the Sahara;
- the management of aquifers in North-East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

10. In accordance with the General Assembly Resolution 3337(XIX), a world map of "areas affected and likely to be affected by desertification", at a scale of 1:25 million, was prepared by FAO and UNESCO with the assistance of UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). FAO also prepared a desertification map of Africa north of the Equator, and a desertification map was prepared for South America, both at a scale

of 1.5 million.

11. To comply with the request of the General Assembly in Resolution 3337(XXIX), the Secretariat prepared a draft plan of action to combat desertification (A/CONF.74/3), for submission to the UNCOD. The Plan of Action, operating on national, regional and international levels, is meant to present "an effective, comprehensive and co-ordinated action programme against desertification, including the building up of the indigenous and autonomous science and technology capacity in the areas concerned". The Plan of Action, therefore, does not describe specific projects and programmes, but indicates the kind of measures that should be undertaken and provides comprehensive guidelines for the design of specific projects. The Plan of Action was submitted to the Conference as a principal document and was subject to the long and profound discussions.

12. All the above-mentioned documents, which were presented as background and/or principal documents to the UNCOD, were already reviewed by a panel of senior consultants, composed of 23 internationally recognized experts from 13 countries. They were also reviewed in four regional preparatory meetings held in the Spring of 1977 at Santiago, Chile, for the Americas, at Algarve, Portugal, for the Mediterranean region, at Nairobi, Kenya, for Africa South of the Sahara, and at New Delhi, India, for Asia and the Pacific. General Conference preparations were reviewed at meetings of the Ad hoc Inter-agency Task Force and by the Governing Council of UNEP acting in its role as the intergovernmental preparatory body for the Conference.

C: Procedures

13. The UNCOD was attended by representatives of 92 countries, 9 inter-governmental organizations, 5 U.N. Specialized Agencies, UN Council for Namibia, PLO, South African People's Organization, National Liberation Movements (AZANIA), 16 United Nations offices and organs and 44 non-governmental organizations.*

* The document (A/CONF.74/INF.3) contains a detailed list of participants and is available in the Library.

14. The Conference was opened on behalf of the Secretary General of the United Nations by Dr. Mostafa K. Tolba, the Executive Director of UNEP, who was at the same time the Secretary-General of the UNCOD. After hearing the messages of the Secretary General of the United Nations, H.E. Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, President of Kenya, and President Carter, the Conference elected by acclamation the Minister for Water Development of Kenya, Mr. Juliano G. Kiano, as President of the Conference.
15. At its 2nd Plenary Meeting on 29 August 1977 the Conference established a Committee of the Whole and allocated to it item 4 (Processes and Causes of Desertification) and item 5 (Plan of Action to Combat Desertification) of the Agenda*. The Conference also established working groups and sub-groups on follow-up and financing.
- i) Plenary Meetings:
16. The plenary meetings were a forum for general debate where fruitful opinions, information and experiences on desertification were exchanged. It gave an opportunity for the international community to take stock of a serious global situation and as a means of mobilizing world opinion in support of remedial and preventive measures. In the course of ten plenary meetings from 29 August to 5 September it was agreed that:-
- a) climate and ecological changes, as well as technological, human and social aspects, are the main causes of desertification. There was broad agreement that the process of desertification, and in particular its acceleration in recent years, was largely due to the actions of man, who has misused the land as he has sought to wrest a living from often fragile ecosystems;

* The Agenda consisted of 6 items:-

1. Opening of the Conference
2. Organization of work
3. General debate
4. Processes and causes of desertification
5. Plan of Action to Combat Desertification
6. Adoption of the report of the Conference

- b) the problem of desertification was therefore a global human problem which, in view of the world's increasing food requirements, and because desertification could be a self-accelerating process, requires urgent action. It was agreed that action against desertification be given high priority and integrated with national development plans and priorities. It was recognized that, while global commitment was essential, the core of the campaign against desertification would lie in national actions;
- c) although the problem was global, desertification has exerted its most devastating impact in the third world, where many developing nations were not only seriously affected but also lacked the resources necessary to cope with the problems. Therefore, desertification was primarily a problem of developing nations;
- d) man now possesses sufficient knowledge and technological means to begin action against desertification without delay. That means that countries should initiate practical actions to combat desertification and not wait for further and additional researches and studies which, however, might be necessary in future.

17. All speakers (including UNIDO's) gave in the course of the ten plenary meetings a detailed account of their past and planned activities aiming at combating desertification. They also indicated the interest and readiness of their respective countries and/or organizations to cooperate in relevant actions arising from the Plan of Action to be approved by the Conference.

ii) Committee of the Whole:

18. The primary function of the UNCOD, however, was to produce a realistic and effective plan of action, coupled with financial and institutional recommendations, that would ensure the plan's implementation. For this purpose, a Draft Plan of Action (A/CONF.74/3) was

presented by the Secretary-General of the Conference as the principal document to the Committee of the Whole for further deliberations.

19. Following its review and the consideration of individual recommendations of the Plan of Action in the course of prolonged debates and exhaustive discussions by the Committee of the Whole from 3 to 9 September 1977, the Plan of Action underwent widespread changes and amendments and was finally adopted by the Conference. This plan, which operates on national, regional and international levels, contains, in six chapters, detailed recommendations on combating desertification at all levels.* The technical component of the draft plan has three principal pivots:-

- a) The key to combating desertification is to be found in proper land use and water management, and hence the draft plan gives special attention to the improved land use policies, improved management of soil and water resources under various systems of land use.
- b) Desertification is fundamentally a human problem, and action to combat desertification should centre on people living in areas affected or likely to be affected by desertification, should aim at their welfare and should depend on their active participation.
- c) Gaps in knowledge and requirements for adaptation of technologies to local needs call for strengthening indigenous scientific and technological capabilities.

D: Recommendations on immediate initial actions

20. It was agreed that an effective implementation of the Plan of Action can be ensured if international institutional arrangements for co-ordination and follow-up, as well as appropriate financial

* For details, see Draft Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (A/CONF.74/L.36), available in the Library

arrangements, will be made available. For this purpose the Conference recommended the following immediate actions, which were approved by the majority of the participants.

i) Recommendations for follow-up:

21. It was recognized that a focus is needed that can draw together existing institutional endeavours and administrative machinery and mobilize the resources required to carry out the Plan of Action. At the same time, it was agreed that no new institution in the UN system is needed to carry out this work. The Conference recommended, therefore, that the UNEP with its Governing Council and the Environment Co-ordination Board (ECB), which was established in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 2997(XXVII) of 15 December 1972, should be responsible for following-up and co-ordinating the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. It was further recommended that the regional economic commissions have responsibility for co-ordinating, catalyzing and executing interregional programmes adopted by the member states concerned. The work arising from the Plan of Action is thus a responsibility of the United Nations system, whereby the UNEP plays the role of catalyst and co-ordinator.

ii) Recommendations on financial arrangements:

22. The following forms of financing the activities arising from the Plan of Action were recommended by the Conference:-

a) Sub-regional co-operation:

When so required, sub-regional co-operation shall be initiated or intensified among groups of countries like the Organization of American States and individual countries affected by desertification with a view towards formulating other specific joint programmes and development assistance requests. Sub-regional groups may wish to invite donor representatives to participate in these efforts. UNEP should assist these sub-regional groups with technical expertise, and relate their proposed programmes to the implementation of the global plan of action.

b) Bilateral, multilateral and multi-bilateral assistance:

The developing countries should give due priority to desertification problems in their development assistance requests. The existing financial institutions within the UN system, as well as multilateral and bilateral donors outside the system should allocate part of their resources to finance activities advocated in the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. To that end, a review of priorities and the activities of those institutions, particularly those within the UN system, should be undertaken without delay.

c) Consultative group/club, or group-type financing:

The Executive Director of UNEP should, immediately after the adoption of the Plan of Action by the General Assembly, convene a consultative group comprising representatives from appropriate UN agencies and bodies and other agencies as might be required, including major donors, both traditional and new, and multilateral financing agencies, and from developing countries having a substantial interest in combating desertification. The group, which would meet as and when required, would assist UNEP and ECB in the coordination of activities undertaken with the resources mobilized by it. This group would be serviced by a very small number of highly qualified staff, who would be drawn from the various UN agencies concerned. It could also draw on consultants and institutions primarily in the affected areas or areas likely to be affected by desertification.

d) Special account:

The General Assembly should be invited to take the necessary measures to create at the global level within the United Nations a special account for implementing the Plan of Action, which should draw its resources from, inter alia, contributions from member states, international taxation (usually desert products like oil, minerals, as well as users of the machinery for exploiting these products), donations, multilateral financing institutions and from interest free loans.

e) Additional measures of financing:

The General Assembly should be invited to request the Governing Council of UNEP to have prepared, by a small group of high-level specialists in international financing of projects and programmes, a study of the possibility of funds in trust, fiscal measures entailing automaticity, and in international fund. The Governing Council of UNEP should be requested to submit a final report on the subject of additional measures of financing to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session, through the Economic and Social Council.

E: Recommendations requiring UNIDO involvement

23. The Conference agreed that the fight against desertification can be successful if such endeavours will be accompanied by appropriate industrial development measures regarding the desertified areas, without damaging the ecological balance of those areas. Some delegates stated that, according to the experiences gained in their countries, programmes for the development of arid lands (through the building of power stations, new towns and villages, and mines, oil production, and heavy and light industry) based on sound ecological and sociological principles, can form the basis for the full utilization of local manpower, the supply of adequate water to towns, industry and agriculture, high labour productivity, and a high material and cultural level for the people of such areas.
24. The Plan of Action, as adopted by UNCOD, has therefore provided sufficient grounds for UNIDO's future involvement in implementing the various recommendations of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The following recommendations, however, particularly emphasize the responsibility which UNIDO will have to bear in future in order to cooperate with the endeavours of the international community in combating desertification:-
- (1) Under recommendation No.3, Chapter III, Part B, it is requested that "steps be taken within the framework of the programme and

budget of UNEP, in conjunction with UNEP, UNIDO and other appropriate United Nations Organizations, as well as interested countries to:

- "a) study and publicize positive and negative local and world-wide experience of the role which industrialization and urbanization play under different social and economic conditions in changing the ecological status of the environment and intensifying, preventing or eliminating the processes of desertification in arid areas;
 - "b) consider the feasibility of organizing and holding in the period from 1978 to 1980, under the auspices and at the expense of UNEP, several regional and one general international meetings for the discussion of national, regional and world-wide experience of combining industrial development and urbanization in arid areas with crop and animal husbandry, irrigated farming and forestry;
 - "c) provide arid-zone developing countries with regular scientific advice on studying and planning industrial and urban development programmes in arid zones, if the concerned countries desire;
 - "d) publish reviews and monographs illustrating the successes of arid-zone countries in promoting economic and social development while preserving the environment."
- (2) Recommendation No.18 of the Plan of Action calls for "controlling and improving the conventional use of energy sources based on the use of vegetation". The recommendation requests that "the existing local or imported technologies for gas and electricity production, as well as for heating or cooling or mechanical purposes, be implemented as far as practicable, and that research be vigorously pursued on the use of alternative or unconventional energy sources in the drylands that will yield simple, inexpensive, useful and socially acceptable devices to serve the needs of dry-land peoples".

- (3) Finally recommendation No.22 asks the General Assembly to request "the Secretary General of the United Nations and the governing bodies of the UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNCTAD and the UN Regional Commissions, invites the governing bodies of FAO, WHO, UNESCO, WHO, IBRD and other relevant UN bodies to support, in their respective fields, international action to combat desertification in the context of the Plan of Action, and to make appropriate provisions and allocations in their programmes".

III: The Future Role of UNIDO in Combating Desertification

25. It may be recalled that the role of UNIDO in the arid and drought-affected areas was so far limited, although some activities have been undertaken in the Sudano-Sahelian Zone which were related to desertification (for details see Annex II). However, in view of the gravity of the problem of desertification, which was repeatedly emphasized by the participants of UNCOD, and the subsequent recommendations made in the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, UNIDO should in future play a more active role in the arid and semi-arid areas of Africa and other parts of the world. This may be achieved by making immediate appropriate provisions and allocations and establishing priorities for the industrial projects in the subject areas.
26. As a first step to this end it is hereby suggested that the proposed study on the "development of suitable industries in the semi-arid zones of the least developed countries with particular emphasis on drought-affected countries (Sudano-Sahelian Zone, Ethiopia, Somalia etc.) be given priority and included in the study programme of UNIDO for earliest implementation. This proposal was made in 1976 by the Least Developed Countries Section and reaffirmed by the Intergovernmental Expert Group Meeting on the Industrialization of the Least Developed Countries from 15-24 November 1976 in Vienna", and reflected in their final report.

27. In undertaking the appropriate activities towards the implementation of the Plan of Action, as adopted by UNCOD, UNIDO should establish contacts with other UN Organizations such as UNEP, UNESCO, WHO, WMO, FAO, which were actively involved in the preparation of the UNCOD since December 1974. The purpose of these consultations should be to ensure co-ordination of the activities aimed at combating desertification in the affected areas.
28. For the same reason informal views were exchanged during the UNCOD in Nairobi, between the representatives of UNIDO and FAO regarding the possibility of organizing meetings to discuss various points on the development of arid and semi-arid zone plants as a source of industrial raw material and their processing, as well as the establishment of industries which make a minimal call on water resources for their operation. The representative of FAO agreed to discuss the matter in FAO Headquarters and provide UNIDO with their views and/or proposals in the near future, which will form the basis for further dialogues between the two organizations on the subject.

Annex I

In the course of two weeks the following draft resolutions were submitted, discussed and finally approved by the Conference:*

- A. Draft Resolution submitted by the representatives of the United Nations Council of Namibia on desertification in Namibia

At its 13th Plenary Meeting on 7 September 1977, the Conference adopted by consensus a draft resolution contained in document A/CONF.74/L.28. The Resolution recognizes that proper implementation in Namibia of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification will not be possible until the illegal occupation by South Africa has been terminated and Namibia has achieved independence.

- B. Draft Resolution submitted by Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Upper Volta, Gambia and Cape Verde on drought in the Sahelian Countries

At its 15th Plenary Meeting on 8 September 1977, the Conference adopted by consensus a draft resolution contained in document A/CONF.74/L.37. The Resolution recommends, among others, that increased aid be given to all Sahelian countries, which are once again stricken by drought.

- C. Draft Resolution submitted by the delegates of Syrian Arab Republic, Sudan, Libya, Algeria, Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, Iraq, Kuwait, Egypt, Tunisia, and Mauritania on desertification in Israel

At its 15th Plenary Meeting on 8 September 1977, the Conference considered a draft resolution contained in document A/CONF.74/L.33 sponsored by the above delegates. The Resolution denounces the document A/CONF.74/20, "Case Study on Desertification in Israel", and states that the policies of settlement and displacement of populations in the Negev, on the West Bank of Jordan, and in other places in the area constitute an aggravating factor leading to desertification. The

* The full text of the resolutions are available in the Library

Resolution was put to the vote by roll call by the representative of Australia on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States and was adopted by the Conference by 45 votes to 17 with 14 abstentions.

D. Draft Resolution submitted by the delegation of Cape Verde on the effect of mass destruction on ecosystems

The Conference adopted by consensus the above resolution which was contained in document A/CONF.74/L.32/Rev.1. The Resolution condemns the use of any techniques and destructive weapons that cause the destruction of the environment and demands the prohibition of the use of poisons in water as a weapon of war.

E. Draft Resolution submitted by the delegation of Cape Verde on colonial practices leading to desertification

The Conference adopted by consensus the above resolution contained in A/CONF.74/L.7/Rev.1. The Resolution condemns the policy of Bantustanization which, by grouping together in restricted areas of poor land the very great majority of the black population of South Africa, gives rise to excessive pressure on that land which is a very serious factor in desertification and degradation of the environment.

F. Draft Resolution submitted by the delegations of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Lesotho, Morocco, Nepal, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Uganda, Upper Volta, Botswana, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Yemen, Senegal and Mauritania on additional assistance to the Least Developed Countries

At its 18th meeting on 9 September 1977, the Conference adopted by consensus the above resolution contained in A/CONF.74/L.38. The Resolution urges the United Nations, the specialised agencies and financial institutions to extend, in addition to the current international and bilateral assistance, appropriate technical and financial assistance to the least developed countries.

G. Draft Resolution submitted by the Committee of the Whole

The Conference adopted the above resolution which is contained in A/CONF.74/L.30/Rev.1. The Resolution appreciates the preparatory work done by the Secretariat of the UNCOD and approves them, including the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The Resolution also urges that the necessary financial and other resources for the implementation of these recommendations be made available so that they may be effectively implemented by all concerned.

Annex II

UNIDO's Address on behalf of the Executive Director
to the UN Conference on Desertification
held in Nairobi from 29 August to 9 September 1977

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this Conference on behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Dr. Abd-El Rahman Khate, and to convey his best wishes to you, Mr. President, and to other distinguished delegates, for a successful accomplishment of vital tasks set forth in accordance with the recommendations reflected in the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. I should congratulate you, Mr. President, on behalf of the Executive Director of UNIDO, on your election as the President of the Conference. Unfortunately Dr. Abd-El Rahman Khate, due to his absence on leave, was not able to address personally this very important assembly. I am therefore extending my gratitude on his behalf to the Government and the people of Kenya for their warm hospitality and support granted to the participants of the Conference.

Mr. President, UNIDO appreciates very much and is pleased to participate and co-operate in the efforts of the international community to solve the specific problems of more than 600 million people who are constantly being threatened by the widespread effects of desertification. Millions of hectares of formerly productive soils are being annually lost due to the destruction of biological potential of land, under the combined pressures of adverse and fluctuating climatic conditions and extensive exploitation, which lead ultimately to a desert-like environment. Shortage of food supply, the excessive migration and exodus of the rural population from the rural areas to the cities, increasing unemployment in the industrial agglomerations and the low standard of living of the rural population are the direct socio-economic consequences of the above process.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, combating desertification means, in practical terms, arresting the progress and stemming the spread of deserts and re-claiming desertified land for productive use. This

challenging task can be achieved only if the international community as a whole, and particularly the developing countries themselves, make it their aim to do so through the urgent elaboration and continuous monitoring of medium and long-term plans and management at all levels. Given the inter-dependence of the development process, population changes and requirements, as well as the climatical variation and the social, political and cultural factors which are the main causes of desertification, it seems that the effects of desertification can best be ameliorated if action is taken in all these areas, supported by international co-operation.

Mr. President, UNIDO, as part of the international community, is fully aware of its vital role in assisting the countries affected by desertification. The Lima Declaration and Plan of Action, established in the Spring of 1975, which is a veritable charter for the industrialization of the Third World, provides UNIDO with a new mandate, new tasks, which considerably enlarge its field of action and thus increase its responsibilities in assisting the social and economic development of developing countries. The Lima Declaration (in paragraph 62 item g) has recommended UNIDO to take appropriate action by "speedy examination and establishment of infrastructures permitting the harnessing and full utilization of water resources and the establishment of agro-industries with special emphasis on the countries affected by drought". The central element in the Declaration and its various recommendations is to assist the developing countries in their endeavours to increase their share of world industrial production from 7 per cent at present to 25 per cent by the year 2000.

In combating desertification UNIDO sees its main role as speeding up the development of the manufacturing sector as a whole and facilitating the industrial utilization of the available raw materials. This involves the development and transfer of technology suited to the conditions of arid zones; development of alternative sources of energy and the relevant devices to utilize these sources; regeneration of rangelands and improvement of agricultural productivity by local manufacture, repair and maintenance and wider use of agricultural tools and equipment; development of fertilizer and pesticide industries; promotion of fish and

other food processing industries in desert coastal areas; and last but not least, the organization of appropriate training programmes for managerial and technical personnel.

Taking note of the directives established in various General Assembly resolutions and the relevant recommendations of the Lima Declaration, UNIDO has already undertaken, within its limited financial resources, the following activities which are of considerable potential value to the drought-stricken countries:

- a) In 1975/76 a mobile demonstration unit for processing and use of plastics in agriculture, particularly for irrigation purposes, was sent by UNIDO to Mali and Upper Volta. The project, which was implemented through the joint UNIDO/Romania Centre for chemical and pharmaceutical industries, provided an opportunity for representatives from other Sahelian countries to take part in the activities of the demonstration unit. As a follow-up of this project, two other such projects are under consideration.
- b) In September 1976 a survey was sent to Senegal and Mauritania to prepare feasibility studies for cement and plastics plants which could help in the construction of dams and irrigation systems. The mission also assisted in the preparation of a long-term industrialization programme based on the hydro-electrical potential available in the area.
- c) UNIDO is presently co-operating with UNICEF in implementing a jointly financed project for a sea-water distillation plant in Somalia utilizing solar energy.
- d) In 1975 a UNIDO consultant undertook a survey of the need for and feasibility of pilot demonstration plants for the local manufacture and development of agricultural tools, implements and animal drawn equipment in the Sudano-Sahelian Zone. The recommendations contained in the report of the UNIDO consultant

are presently with the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and with the Governments concerned for their consideration.

- e) In 1976 assistance was given to Ethiopia, Cape Verde, Somalia, Mali and Senegal in the elaboration of agro-industry master plans and feasibility studies.
- f) A regional feasibility study of the fertilizer and pesticide industries in the countries covered by the United Nations Sahel Office and the Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel has just been completed. Similar technical assistance was provided earlier, in 1973/1974, to the Government of Ethiopia in the form of pre-feasibility studies and preparation of technical specification and evaluation of bids for the establishment of a fertilizer bulk handling and bagging plant.
- g) In April and May 1975 UNIDO participated jointly with UNDP, UNESCO and the Office for Technical Co-operation, in a joint mission to examine the development of applications of solar energy in the Sahelian countries. The mission visited institutions involved in solar energy research and application in the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta with a view to evaluating their current activities and discussing possibilities of producing, on a pilot scale, prototype equipment such as irrigation pumps and equipment for desalinization and water heating. As a result of this joint mission, UNIDO submitted, in October 1975, a proposal for a Regional Solar Energy Testing Development Centre to be considered for inclusion in the second cycle of UNDP Inter-Country Programming.
- h) In 1975 UNIDO also provided some assistance (equipment, expertise and training) to the Centre for Solar Equipment Production, Dakar (Senegal). The possibilities were evaluated of industrial production of equipment, to be operated by solar and other non-conventional sources of energy, which could be of particular

benefit to all countries of the Sahelian region affected by drought. Another project in the same field will be implemented by UNIDO in 1977/1978.

- i) In February 1977 UNIDO organized, in co-operation with the Austrian Solar and Space Agency, an expert group meeting on existing solar technology and the possibilities of manufacturing solar equipment in developing countries.
- ii) UNIDO is currently assisting Kenya and Ethiopia in designing and manufacturing of wind pump prototypes, arrangement of test site and selection of suitable types for commercial production.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, the problems of the affected countries are far too complex to be solved by some scattered, individual measures. Medium- and long-term schemes and programmes need to be developed in order to secure a co-ordinated and integrated approach for tackling specific problems. I wish to point out that the secretariat of UNIDO has prepared a Co-operative Programme of Action on Appropriate Industrial Technology, which was endorsed by the Industrial Development Board in June 1977. Many of the projects included in that programme are relevant to the arid zones. Particular attention has been given in this programme of action to rural problems and to the application of technology to rural development. Within the scheme of this programme the promotion of a number of appropriate small-scale industries is proposed, which would lead to the creation of job opportunities for the rural population, and also the economic utilization of natural resources available locally.

With your kind permission, Mr. President, I would like to mention some of the proposed projects:

- a) The preparation of a programme to promote the local manufacture and repair and maintenance of selected agricultural implements and tools in five of the least developed countries has been completed. The first phase of this programme will consist in

making available appropriate implements and the second phase in establishing a pilot demonstration plant in each country, with due consideration given to management training aspects. The implementation of this project will assist the countries in improving productivity in degraded rangelands.

- b) The manufacture of a tractor known as "Tinkabi", motor powered and driver controlled, which has been developed with UNIDO assistance by the Industrial Development Corporation of Swaziland, might usefully be promoted in desert and semi-desert areas. The special characteristics of this tractor are simplicity and lack of unnecessary sophistication, low cost, ease of maintenance and suitability for small-volume of production. The design and manufacturing aspects of these tractors will be made known through a techno-economic workshop to be organized, which will be attended by representatives of interested developing countries, who will thus be enabled to examine their suitability and the possibility of local manufacture.
- c) The development by Governments of manufacture of clay bricks on an industrial scale will reduce costs and greatly facilitate the construction of dams, reservoirs and shelters etc., from the raw materials available locally. To this end, it is proposed that a permanent training and demonstration centre for building materials be established in Africa. An exhibition devoted to building material industries in rural areas, which has been planned by ESCAP with UNIDO's participation, is due to be held in Bandung, Indonesia, before the end of 1977. It will feature appropriate brickmaking technology and provide an opportunity for the exchange of experience among manufacturers from several countries of the region.
- d) A project proposal is currently under study within UNIDO which would enable drinking water to be produced by a simple and inexpensive method, namely, a combined ultraviolet and ozone treatment of bacteriologically impure raw water. If the idea can be successfully adopted, the affected countries will benefit by being able to prevent or control diseases borne by the water, and carried by insects, thus

greatly reducing the severity of a major human and social problem.

- e) UNIDO is also studying the prospects of manufacturing animal feed-stuffs, utilizing locally available raw materials, such as molasses, with addition of urea, vitamins and other fortifying substances. This will help the countries concerned to breed more productive animals and to regenerate the rangelands by reducing the grazing areas and utilizing for productive purposes the land thus released.

In addition to these projects, UNIDO is studying various aspects of establishing industries particularly appropriate to arid and semi-arid zones and utilizing those plants and crops as raw materials which can be grown in those zones. I should like to single out the projects for the extraction of oil.

- a) The jojoba plant, which grows in desert areas, is a good source of oil, very similar to whale oil, which is in short supply. This oil yields several waxes that find application in the chemical industry. UNIDO has included this project in its Co-operative Programme of Action on Appropriate Industrial Technology and intends to review the laboratory work done so far in this field, to study the possibility of adapting existing technologies and to draw up a programme for the commercial development of this technology.
- b) A good source of extraction of oil is the fruit of a tree, Balanites Aegyptiaca, which grows in semi-desert regions such as the border areas of the Sudano-Sahelian region. The above-mentioned UNIDO Programme of Action suggests that an integrated technology should be developed, starting with the collection of the fruit, cracking and preparation for processing. This programme will be initiated in the light of exploratory missions. Research and development will be prompted with the co-operation of existing institutions and the results will be disseminated.
- c) Coastal desert and arid areas are rich sources of food. Traditional methods of extraction of these resources can be enhanced by

introducing mariculture, modern fishing methods and fleets, rational fish processing and marketing schemes. Traditional maritime industries, such as shipbuilding, dry dock and ship repair and maintenance facilities, should be regarded as compatible development schemes for coastal desert and/or arid regions.

UNIDO has sufficient experience in all these areas and would be ready to offer assistance upon request.

- d) As part of UNIDO's programme for the development of the pharmaceutical industry, some steps have been taken towards utilization of medical plants through suitable technological development, application of the results achieved in some developing countries in order to promote manufacture of certain drugs in other developing countries.

- e) In the field of development and transfer of appropriate technology for non-conventional sources of energy, UNIDO plans, in addition to the technical assistance offered so far to many countries in the Sudano-Sahelian Zone, to assist in disseminating technological information relevant to this field, including information on such appropriate devices as water pumps, generators, distillators, cookers and coolers. For this purpose, UNIDO is helping to strengthen selected institutions for technology evaluation and prototype development in a number of developing countries.

One important non-conventional source of energy is, of course, the wind. Here, UNIDO is giving assistance to facilitate the design and manufacture of wind-mill components and the installation and operation of wind-mills. UNIDO is also considering strengthening the capability of selected institutions in some developing countries to undertake applied research and development, prototype fabrication, technical and performance assessment; assistance to other interested countries within the framework of co-operation among developing countries; and eventually the establishment of a pilot demonstration manufacturing plant that will act as a regional training centre.

In the field of bio-gas, UNIDO intends to undertake in the next two to three years, in co-operation with relevant United Nations Agencies, and in particular UNEP and ESCAP, a two-phase programme which would lead to mobilization and strengthening of the existing technologies and their transfer to other countries through the establishment of pilot demonstration projects within the framework of co-operation among developing countries.

- f) Agricultural wastes, such as rice straw and husk, groundnut shell, coconut and oil-palm wastes and forestry wastes from saw-mills and logging operations, can be effectively used by means of pyrolytic technology for production of carbon, charcoal, oil and gas. UNIDO's programme in this field consists of preparation of technology manuals; case studies; applied research and development on converter design and on stabilization of oils to prevent polymerization and corrosion; and establishment of a pilot plant for training purposes.

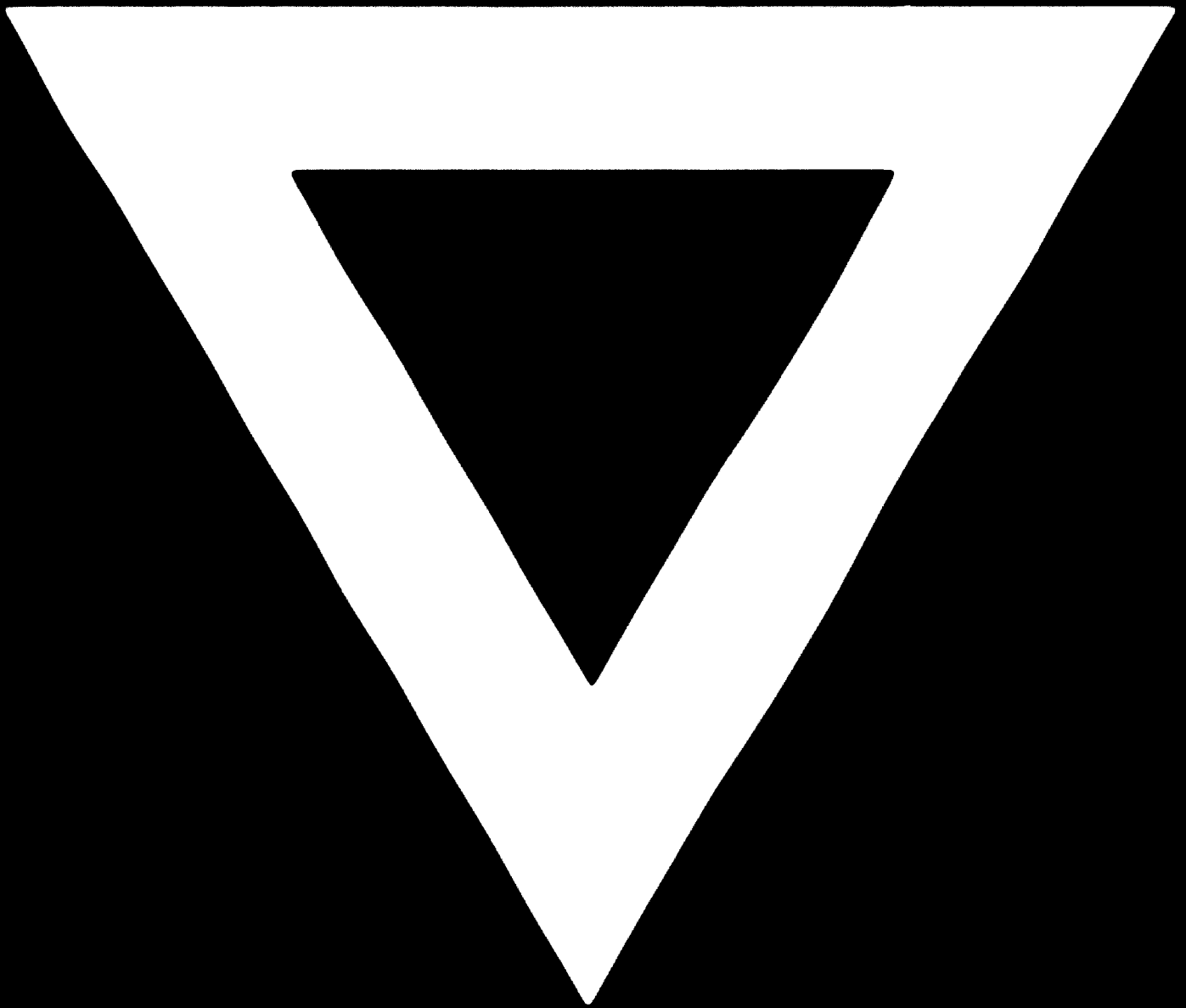
- g) An extensive programme of training in various fields of industry tailored to needs of the developing countries is a major activity of UNIDO. With regard to the countries affected by desertification, UNIDO is considering a proposal for establishing industrial training advisory services for the Sudano-Sahelian region. The objective is to develop a comprehensive programme of assistance at the regional level and to help strengthen the institutional infrastructure in the individual countries.

- h) UNIDO plans to discuss with FAO the possibility of organizing expert group meetings to discuss:
 - (i) development of arid and semi-arid zone plants as a source of industrial raw material and their processing possibilities;
 - (ii) establishment of industries which make a minimal call on water resources for their operation.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to assure you once again, on behalf of the Executive Director of UNIDO, of our readiness to whole-heartedly co-operate with our sister organizations in the UN family as well as other institutions concerned in developing the integrated programmes, particularly in the industrial sector, which are urgently needed to assist the affected countries. I would also like to assure you, Mr. President, that the recommendations of this Conference will be given full consideration by UNIDO and appropriately reflected in our future programmes and activities.



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