Distr.
LIMITED

ECA/ENV/UNDP/09
November 1991

Original: English

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

MISSION REPORT ON THE UNDP GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY WORKSHOP GABORONE, BOTSWANA 30 OCTOBER - 2 NOVEMBER 1991

by

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MISSION OBJECTIVES

The objective of this mission was to participate in the UNDP sponsored workshop on Global Environmental Facility (GEF) as a resource person in two areas of my expertise, namely the formulation of the African Common Position on Environment and Development in the context of UNCED preparatory process, and also to advise on strategies for adoption in Africa on limiting emissions of greenhouse gases particularly the sequestration of carbon dioxide. The second objective was to assess the role which ECA might play in the GEF project.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

At the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Workshop in Gaborone, three themes were discussed, namely the funding mechanisms of the Global Environmental Facility, the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the African Common Position on Environment and Development in the context of UNCED.

This report focuses on activities of GEF as the last two themes have already been extensively covered in other reports (e.g. First Regional African Ministerial Preparatory Conference for UNCED (Cairo) and Second Regional African Ministerial Preparatory Conference for UNCED (Abidjan).

The report is therefore, divided in five sections. Section I is an introduction and deals with organizational matters as well as the opening ceremony. Section II gives an account of general issues including membership to GEF as well as the roles of the implementing agencies. Section III focuses on the GEF priority areas while Section IV; summarizes information on the UNDP small grants programme. Section V reviews the workshop recommendations within the context of UNCED preparatory process.

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

1. The GEF Workshop was held in Gaborone, Botswana from 30 October - 2 November 1991. It was sponsored by the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The workshop was attended by Government delegates representing the following countries: Botswana, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The workshop was also attended by delegates from the UNDP, World Bank, UNEP, ECA OAU and UNCED. The list of participants is attached to this report as Annex I.

2. The Opening Ceremony was addressed by Mr. S. Liphuko, Secretary for Natural Resources Board, of the Government of Botswana, Mr. Paul Newman, Acting British High Commissioner and ODA representative and Ms. E. Fong, UNDP Resident Representative in Botswana. Mr. Liphuko underscored the importance GEF and added that its establishment was in the right direction although the facility would not be able to provide adequate funds globally. Mr. Newman informed the participants that GEF represented a major move towards environmental planning and that GEF funds were grants. Ms. Fong reaffirmed the UNDP's role in the operationalization of GEF on the three global environmental issues, namely global warning, conservation of biological diversity and the prevention of pollution of international waters.

SECTION II

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. The GEF was established by representatives of a group of industrialized and developing countries in Paris in November 1990.

It became operational in July 1991. It is a three-year pilot programme providing grants at low interest rates to developing countries with a 1989 GDP of US$4000 or less, primarily to address critical global environmental problems in the following areas:

(i) reducing and limiting missions of greenhouse gases which cause global warning;

(ii) preserving the earth's biological diversity and maintaining natural habitats;

(iii) arresting the pollution of international waters;

(iv) protecting the ozone layer from further depletion.

Membership to GEF

4. The GEF donors are called "participants", while the board of governors is referred to as the "Participants Group". The latter is the policy making body of GEF. It costs US$4 million to become a member of the participants group. Currently, there are only two African countries (Zimbabwe and Cote d'Ivoire) which are members of the group. However, about 40 African countries have expressed an interest to become members of the group. The World Bank has hinted that it would pay off at least US$1 million for African countries which express a desire to become members of the Group. In addition, several Governments have offered to sponsor African countries to become "participants". The core fund contributions are payable in cash or non-negotiable notes. Developing countries may pay their contributions over 8 years at US$500,000 per year. A few contributors have elected to make resources available to the facility through co-financing.

5. GEF projects are reviewed by the implementation committee (IC), which has authority to commit funds for projects they approve. The IC is made up of individuals from UNDP, UNEP and World Bank.

6. The participants are expected to meet twice a year. Such meetings are composed of representatives from both industrialized and developing countries. The meetings normally (i) review application of terms and conditions and determine whether any changes should be recommended (ii) discuss the policy framework of GEF (iii) consider work programme of the three implementing agencies. The chairman of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) is also invited to attend the meeting and report to the participants.

Roles of GEF implementing agencies

World Bank

7. It is the Trustee of the Fund. It is responsible for disbursing funds according to the desires of the participants and the IC recommendations. The bank is also responsible for those projects which are investment in nature. In this context, the bank identifies and undertakes appraisal and supervision of such projects.

UNDP

8. UNDP is responsible for implementing GEF projects which are technical in nature. In addition, UNDP is the administrator of GEF Preinvestment Facility (PRIF) - primarily for pre-investment activities associated with proposed World Bank GEF investment projects. Such preinvestment activities are treated as any other UNDP projects. UNDP is also responsible for administering the "GEF Small Grants Programme" to support innovative activities by community groups and NGOs. The level of funding for national

projects cannot exceed US$50,000, however regional or subregional initiatives may be funded up to US$250,000. UNDP Resident Representative coordinates activities at the country level to ensure that GEF programmes are complementary with other developing activities.

UNEP

9. Its primary responsibility is to disseminate information on GEF as well as maintaining the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of GEF. It also provides technical support in programme development. STAP is a scientific body; it develops criteria for the three areas of GEF. UNEP also helps developing countries to define their needs. In this context, it coordinates research and data gathering.

Level of funding

10. A GEF project may be funded up to US$10 million. Projects costing between US$5-10 million must be reviewed by IC and the participants themselves. This is not the case for projects costing less than US$5 million. With respect to projects addressing the protection of the ozone layer, an additional provision is that only nations party to the Montreal Protocol are eligible. The ozone layer depletion was not addressed by the Gaborone workshop.

11. GEF funds may be used for different types of projects including:

(i) investment projects
(ii) technical assistance
(iii) preinvestment and feasibility studies
(iv) training and the
(v) reinforcement of institutions

SECTION III

GEF PRIORITY AREAS

Limiting the emissions of greenhouse gases

12. The approval of a project is based partly on its effectiveness in reducing the emissions of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere as well as meeting the objectives of the national development and environmental strategies. The benefits must also be sustainable in the long run. With regard to reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, areas for action include energy technologies in power generation, agriculture, mining and industry. In developing countries, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources (solar, wind, biomass, hydropower) as well as the sustainable management of existing forests stand a good chance of receiving GEF financing. Other projects which would merit support include:

(i) reduction of gas flaring in oil fields;

(ii) limiting methane emissions from coal mining operations;

(iii) reducing burning of wood;

(iv) rehabilitation and maintenance of tropical forests and savanna woodlands;

(v) massive reforestation;

(vi) combating desertification.

Protection of international waters

13. The basic environmental problem here is the dumping of solid and liquid wastes in oceans and seas. Marine oil spills industrial waste and water pollution affect international water systems and biodiversity. GEF also supports measures to present and clean up toxic waste pollution along major international rivers and to conserve unique bodies of international waters.

The following is a list of the kinds of projects that are eligible:

(i) Reduction of pollution load (domestic, human, industrial, etc.) in "River Systems and Coastal areas;

(ii) Protection of oceans through oceanographic monitoring and research;

(iii) Potential increase in capability and environmental management (assessment and monitoring);

(iv) Contingency planning for oil spills.

Protection of biodiversity

14. The varied ecosystems and the diverse species represent an invaluable global resource, ranging from medicine, through genetic resource for food production to the regulation of climate and rainfall patterns. GEF would support efforts in developing countries to manage specific areas to ensure protection of ecosystems and biodiversity. Indeed, this is the most popular of the GEF activities, and has been targeted to receive 40 per cent of the funds. It is now acknowledged that the rate of extinction of species globally exceeds the rate of regeneration.

15. Some of the proposals which have been made to protect biodiversity include:

(i) protection of island ecosystems, watershed, wildlife and forests particularly those known to contain large number of endemic species:

(ii) proposals to halt desertification;

(iii) preservation of wetlands;

(iv) policies relating to protection of biodiversity

(v) institutional strengthening including involvement of local communities in management of protected areas;

(vi) promotion of biodiversity in agro-ecosystems.

SECTION IV

SMALL-GRANTS PROGRAMME (SGP)

16. The small-grants programme under the management of UNDP is expected to support small-scale activities conceived, planned and carried out by community groups, NGOs and NGO networks in countries that meet criteria for GEF. The objectives of the SGP include the following:

(i) demonstration of participatory strategies involving communities and local people;

(ii) development of project data and materials for future GEF programme;

(iii) test the effectiveness of the small grants approach;

(iv) identify kinds of community-based and NGO activities that have potential for making an impact.

17. In order for projects to be funded under this programme, they must conform to the criteria established for the selection of larger projects. Additionally, the projects should be innovative, replicable and should be designed to develop human and institutional capability as well as contributing to human welfare and sustainable development. It is further envisaged that such projects would have adequate scientific and technical basis including plans for evaluation and dissemination of results and knowledge.

18. Some of the areas or categories of programmes which are likely to be funded under the SGP include:

(i) research, data collection and inventories;

(ii) education, community mobilization and advocacy;

(iii) community-based participatory activities addressing problems in these areas.

19. As pointed out earlier, community or national projects are to be funded to the tune of US$50,000 each while subregional, regional or international projects will receive up to US$250,000 each. Some 35 developing countries have already been selected as possible "pilot countries" in which the SGP programme may be offered during the next three years. The African countries selected include: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon; Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya,

Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Egypt, Senegal, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. In addition, five countries have been selected from the Arab/Eastern Europe area, nine from Asia and the Pacific and nine from Latin America and the Caribbean.

20. It has been proposed that for each pilot country, a committee would be established to screen and recommend projects for GEF funding. It is further proposed that each pilot country would receive US$50,000 to 200,000. In some countries, broad-based screening and selection committees would be established while in others smaller ad hoc groups of consultants (local advisory panels) would constitute the selection committee. In either case, the committee would be responsible for the following:

(i) determining country specific priorities;

(ii) identifying NGOs, community groups and projects to be considered for award;

(iii) reviewing project proposals;

(iv) determine status of projects - i.e. whether they need further scientific review;

(v) selecting projects for award as well as establishing guidelines for the evaluation of funded projects. The country Resident Representative would be expected to liaise with the host government on procedures for carrying out small grants programme.

21. Projects organized on a subregional or regional basis especially in the area of biodiversity will be considered. Specific NGO and NGO networks may be invited to submit proposals for projects/services. Proposals for inter-country projects would

be submitted by UNDP Headquarters STAP Small-Grants Programme focal point for comments and to the relevant Regional Bureaux. Management of the Small-Grants Programme would be carried out by the UNDP backstopped by the Regional Bureaux.

22. For greenhouse gas reductions the criteria which have been set out for eligibility to GEF support include the following:

(i) improvements in end-use efficiency;

(ii) reduction of emissions intensity of energy production;

(iii) encouragement of beneficial fuel and transportation shifts;

(iv) non-carbon dioxide emission reduction, including urban and rural waste treatment;

(v) Combating deforestation.

23. The priority project areas for the protection of biodiversity include:

(i) establishment and consolidation of native protection areas;

(ii) promotion of sustainable use of biota;

(iii) education, training and research;

(iv) inventories;

(v) institution strengthening including development and suitability of national mechanisms to coordinate

conservation programmes and public awareness programmes.

24. Areas or ecosystems which are likely to receive GEF support should exhibit following characteristics:

(i) rich in species and uniqueness of biota;

(ii) contain large number of endemic species

(iii) contain important gene pools related to economic species;

(iv) provide examples of sustainable management of biodiversity;

(v) ecologically diverse

(vi) degree of threat to biota

(vii) critical areas such as tropical forests, wetlands, coastal areas and watersheds.

25. The goal of reducing international water pollution includes pollution of fresh water systems as well as the increase in water scarcity which contribute to land degradation and desertification. GEF is giving priority to the following areas:

(i) reduction in pollution: river systems and coastal areas;

(ii) conservation of resources and related land degradation problems in water scarce areas;

(iii) protection of marine productivity and marine ecosystems;

(iv) potential increases in capability and environmental management.

26. The "Gefable" activities in this area include:

(i) assessment and control of land and water-based sources of transboundary fresh and marine pollution;

(ii) development of technologies for waste water treatment;

(iii) improved water management under water scarcity conditions to increase productivity;

(iv) improving the capability for assessing and managing the equatic environment.

SECTION V

WORKSHOPS SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

27. In the following paragraphs, I have reviewed the recommendations of the Gaborone workshop. Where appropriate, I have given a detailed account of my own observations and interpretation of the issues within the context of UNCED preparatory process. Finally, I have provided some practical solutions on ways of limiting carbon dioxide emissions through sustainable management of savannah grassland ecosystems as well undertaking massive plantation of bananas.

Participation in GEF

28. It was the view of the workshop participants that US$4 million payable in 8 years for membership to the club was too high for the developing countries of Africa. The decision of the World Bank and the willingness of some developed countries to pay off the membership fees for some developing countries was welcomed. It was further noted that countries need not be GEF participants in order to benefit from the fund. Participants also suggested the possibility of OAU or any such institution becoming a member of GEF on behalf of African member States.

29. Alternatively, it was suggested that GEF participants could allow a few African countries on a rotation basis to join GEF. The other issue raised in connection with membership relates to what happens to those countries which pay their membership but receive no benefits when the GEF project winds up. In view of the uncertainties and contradictions about payment of the club membership fees, it was resolved that the payment be waived for African countries.

GEF categories

30. GEF has selected four priority areas of global concern for funding (see para.3). By extrapolation one can conceivably treat some of the critical African environmental issues within the context of GEF priority programmes. The recently concluded Second Regional African Ministerial Preparatory Conference for UNCED has some twenty or so priority programmes in the African Environment and Development Agenda. Table I below shows the possible GEF category under which the various African priority issues could be covered for the purpose of funding.

31. It is clear from the information in this table that there are many priority issues which do not fall under any of the GEF priority programmes. For example, in Africa agricultural production constitutes the major sector of the economy. Yet, Africa is the only continent where per capita food production has continued to decline. The decline in commodity prices has necessitated the expansion of agriculture in fragile non-productive marginal lands in order to produce more for export. The continent must endeavour to feed its people by achieving and sustaining food-self sufficiency by diversifying their crop production.

Table I

Grouping of African priority programme under the four global GEF priority programmes (The four GEF environmental issues are reducing and limiting emissions of greenhouse gases (A), preserving the earth's biological diversity (B), arresting pollution of international waters (C) and protecting the ozone layer from further depletion (D)

Africa's priority programme	Possible GEF category (A,B,C.D)	Remarks
As adopted by Second African Regional Ministerial Conference for UNCED (Abidjan, Nov. 1991)		Coverage by extrapolation
Food self sufficiency and food security	Not covered	Agroforestry and diversification
Efficient and equitable use of water resources	C	River and Lack Basins programmes
Natural disasters (floods, volcano eruptions etc.)	Not covered	
Management of marine and coastal resources	B and C	
Health implications of development	Not covered	
Securing greater energy self-sufficiency	A	
Development of science and technology	Not covered	Possibly A,B,C and D
Managing demographic change and population pressures	Not covered	
Development of human settlements planning and management	Not covered	
Optimizing industrial production, pollution prevention and control	A and C	

Management of biodiversity and bio-technology	B	To include marine biodiversity
Mitigating global warming and climate change	A	Household energy-efficiency
Rational development of forest resources	A and B	
Reversing desertification in Africa	A and B	
Development of mineral resources	Not covered	
Popular participation and enhancement of the roles of NGOs, youth and women	A,B,C,D	
Development of environmental legislation	Not covered	Institution strengthening
Environmental education, training and public awareness	A,B.C,D	
Management of solid and hazardous waste	C	
Additional resources for environmental rehabilitation	Not covered	
Poverty eradication	Not covered directly	
Drought monitoring	Not covered	

32. It is also pertinent to add that African governments will not benefit substantially from GEF funds unless the funds are directed to the African Universities and research institutions. Only in such institutions would one expect the kinds of technical and professional staff to cope with the kinds of projects suggested by STAP. How can African governments faced with crises of all sorts involve themselves in things that they do not understand? The following list of project areas recommended by STAP is certainly for University academic programmes and not for African NGOs or governments:

(i) Reduction of emissions intensity of energy production, e.g. through biomass gasifiers and gas turbines;

(ii) Non-carbon dioxide emission reductions, including through urban and rural waste treatment;

(iii) Development of alternative sources of energy for community use e.g. biogas, solar and wind power;

(iv) Small-scale building projects with innovative approaches, e,g. insulation, that conserve energy;

(v) Research in agroforestry, crop diversification and soil renewal activities for preservation of biodiversity;

(vi) Research on economic benefits that can be derived from biodiversity;

(vii) Species identification and data conservation;

(viii) Studies on land tenure policies.

Level of funding

33. The amount of funds available in GEF is obviously too small for global environmental protection and management. Although the African priority programmes have not been costed in detail, the amount available in GEF would certainly not reverse or alleviate environmental deterioration of this region leave alone other regions. The small grants programme of US$50,000 per project per country is totally inadequate to say the least. A conservation project involving say four contiguous countries would be funded to

the tune of US$250,000 i.e. approximately US$62,500 per country. Yet, the GEF programme activities are expected to be innovative as they would be subjected to vigorous review and appraisal by the implementing agencies. Moreover, only US$300 million is left between now and the end of the three-year experimental period of GEF. It is, therefore, most doubtful that Africa will benefit from this experimental venture.

Selection, processing and implementation of projects

34. GEF is a foreign concept; it originated from the industrialized countries. Like most of the other approaches of external assistance, GEF advocates a top-down approach; take it or leave it. Like SAP, it is most likely that only a few countries will succeed in obtaining adequate resources for halting and reversing environmental degradation. The GEF priority programmes are externally conceived. The Governments are not being involved in the selection and formulation of the projects. Only three implementing agencies are involved. It would have been useful if the GEF participants involved other agencies or organizations in the implementation of projects. Certainly, projects relating to climate change should be implemented by WMO, while those concerned with all aspects of forestry should be the responsibility of FAO. The Banks "innovative" approach is essentially the same as that used for its regular programmes. In fact, most of the bank's GEF programmes are part of the regular Bank's own programmes which are under the management of the regular bank managers. It is, therefore, the same old story but packaged in different clothing.

35. It is my view that GEF is an academic exercise and should be characterized as a passing cloud unless the three implementing agencies translate the GEF concept-making it less academic and more meaningful to those millions who are deeply affected by the vicious cycle of poverty and land degradation. There is, therefore, the need to establish the Green Fund at UNCED 1992 for Agenda 21 to

ensure access by developing countries to new and additional financial resources needed for integration of environmental dimensions in development policies and processes.

Limiting carbon dioxide emissions in Africa

36. It has been estimated that fossil-fuel burning and deforestation contribute 2.4 per cent and 0.9 per cent carbon dioxide respectively to the atmosphere. The African countries contribute towards a rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide and other trace gases (except CFCs) through deforestation and burning. Halting deforestation world-wide will reduce carbon dioxide emission to the atmosphere by about 2.5 billion tonnes/year which is needed to stabilize atmospheric composition.

37. It is pertinent to point out that the developed countries have been emitting carbon dioxide to the atmosphere since the industrial revolution. To day, they are contributing 75 per cent of carbon dioxide to the global atmosphere through fossil fuel burning. It has been suggested that the industrialized countries should replace fossil fuel with alternative energy sources such as solar, wind energy, hydro-power, tidal and ocean thermal conversion. In view of the fact that they are responsible for the excessive emissions, they must take immediate action to reduce and stabilize such emissions including the transfer of technology and financial resources to the developing world to enable them tackle the problem of climate change. The developed world has the financial resources and the technical capacity to adopt rapidly to other forms of environmentally friendly energies.

38. While waiting for the outcome of the current negotiations on climate change convention and the gestation period after Brazil, the African region can embark on long term strategies of revegetation of the continent for the purpose of sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

39. A lot has been written about afforestation and reforestation programmes in Africa. However, a casual examination of the map of Africa shows clearly that only a small portion of the region receives a sufficient amount of rainfall to sustain a forest ecosystem. In the humid tropics where the fallow period in shifting cultivation has been markedly reduced resulting in a herbaceous savannah grassland, such areas may readily revert to a forest climax if allowed to. However, because of activities of pastoralists and the poor soil conditions, invasion of a typical savannah grassland ecosystem by trees is usually retarded.

40. The potential productivity and nutritive value of grasses is exceptionally high. Grasses are also know to contribute organic matter to the soil and thereby restore the fertility of the soil.

41. Recent studies on the capacity of tropical grasslands to stabilize global carbon dioxide have revealed that they covert far more carbon dioxide into carbohydrates than the tropical rain forests. Yet, as pointed out earlier, grasslands are not very much in the news in contrast to tropical rain forests. Until recently, tropical grasslands were ignored as being unproductive.

42. The productivity of plants is the rate at which carbon dioxide is sequestered from the atmosphere and transformed into carbohydrates. This process (photosynthesis) occurs in green leaves, algae and some bacteria. Most tropical grasses are perennial; that means that some grasses or their parts die while others are still assimilating carbon dioxide. In addition, these grasses store most of their food in underground roots and rhizomes.

43. Recent studies supported by UNEP on grassland productivity in a dry savanna grassland (Kenya), in a bamboo forest (China), in a wetland grassland (Brazil), in asaline grassland (Mexico) and in a wet savannah-type grassland (southern part of Thailand) have shown clearly that tropical grasslands account for over 25 per cent of

photosynthetic productivity of land. The tropical grasslands are, therefore, equal if not better than tropical forests in extracting carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and fixing into carbohydrates.

44. In many parts of the tropics, the grasslands are under pressure to be turned into farm lands for growth of crop plants such as sorghum, cotton, pineapples and rice. Conversion of grassland ecosystem into farm lands will result into lower productivity than the original native species of grasses. Additionally, this conversion will undoubtedly increase soil erosion. More importantly, the loss of grassland ecosystem leads to the loss of genetic biodiversity which could be used for improvement of food crops. The grass family is the principal source of man's food, and yet less than a dozen species of domesticated grasses furnish the bulk of man's food supply. However, domesticated grass species and the wild ones provide more animal fodder than all other types plants combined.

45. In view of the importance of savannah grasslands in Africa, appropriate programmes and projects, particularly in the area of sustainable management of savannah rangelands, should be formulated for funding by GEF. Indeed, projects in this area would be addressing the two environmental problems of reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and preserving the earth's biological diversity already identified by GEF. If we cannot afforest the Sudano-Sahelian subregion because of adverse physical and climatic conditions, why not revegetate some of the areas using appropriate grass species?

ANNEX

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY WORKSHOP
GABORONE, BOTSWANA
30 OCTOBER - 2 NOVEMBER 1991

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