

63108

Distr.:
LIMITED

ECA/NRD/ENV.27/90
September 1990

Original: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

BACK-TO-OFFICE REPORT

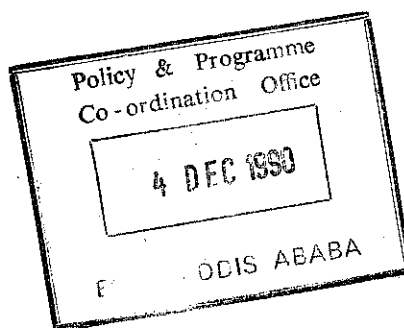
On

Seventeenth meeting of the Inter-Agency Working Group
on Desertification (IAWGD)

17-19 September 1990 (Rome)

by

Regional Advisor on Drought and Desertification Control



Purpose of Mission

To participate in the Seventeenth meeting of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification (IAWGD).

1. The seventeenth meeting of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification (IAWGD) was held from 17-19 September 1990 at the FAO Headquarters in Rome. It was officially opened by Mr. S. Evteev, Assistant Deputy Director of UNEP, who also chaired the meeting.

2. The meeting was attended by representatives from the following agencies and organs of the United Nations: ECA, FAO, ILO, UNDRO, UNDTCD, UNEP, UNESCO, WFC, WFP, IFAD, UNSO/UNDP and WMO. A representative of SADCC also attended the meeting.

Agenda

3. The meeting adopted the following agenda for its work:

- (i) Implementation of the General Assembly resolution 44/172 and the outcome of the Nairobi Session of the Preparatory Committee for UNCED-1992;
 - (a) Outcome of the UNEP Governing Council Second Special Session and the Preparatory Committee of UNCED-1992;
 - (b) UNEP Status Report on Global assessment of desertification and preparation of the world Atlas on Thematic Maps on Desertification;
 - (c) Consideration of the inputs of the Working Group members and governments to the reports required under the General Assembly resolutions 44/172 and the decision of the Preparatory Committee of UNCED-1992;
- (ii) Review of DESCON-7 agenda and the role of governments and the co-sponsors in contributing to DESCON mechanism.
- (iii) Follow-up on proposal at the 16 meeting of the working group on action to mobilize technical and financial assistance for the SADCC's Kalahari-Namib regional action plan;
- (iv) Report on meeting organized by UNSO on harmonization of strategic planning frameworks for environment and natural resources management, held in New York, 27-28 August 1990;
- (v) Any other business;

- (vi) Next meetings;
 - (a) Ad-hoc meetings
 - (b) Next regular meeting
- (vii) Adoption of Draft Report of IAWGD Seventeenth meeting;
- (viii) Adoption of the Draft Report of the IAWGD, through DOEM, to ACC on co-ordination and follow-up on implementation of PACD.
- (ix) Closure of the meeting.

OPENING REMARKS

4. In his opening remarks, Mr. Evteev welcomed the participants and thanked FAO for hosting the meeting. He looked forward to constructive contributions of the Working Group. He pointed out that important resolutions and decisions had been made by the GA and the UNEP Governing Council respectively, since the last meeting of the Working Group. The UN system was required to take actions on preparatory process for UNCED-1992. There was need to consider decisions of the Preparatory Committee at its first session in Nairobi, 6-31 August 1990.

DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEMS

Outcome of Nairobi Session of UNCED-1992 and related implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/172

5. The agenda was introduced by the Secretariat by presenting a working paper under the title: Note on the Preparatory Actions for the UN Conference on Environment and Development. In the presentation the Secretariat highlighted the relevant paragraphs of the GA resolution 44/172 which require reports to be submitted to UNCED, through the Preparatory Committee. It also outlined the outcome and decisions of the Preparatory Committee debate on the agenda items 2(b) and (c) addressing land resources and loss and desertification and drought. Detailed reporting was also provided on the status of global assessment activities and preparation of Thematic Atlas of Desertification by UNEP.

6. The Secretariat also reported that UNEP proposed, for the purpose of responding to the GA resolution requirements, that the Executive Director's Report would be prepared and would highlight global assessment of desertification, progress in implementation of PACD, financing implementation of PACD and recommendations for the future.

7. A special report containing expert studies on financing desertification in accordance with GA resolution (para 7) would be produced separately.

8. The Secretariat also introduced, for consideration by the Working Group, a proposal for support, reports and documents to be provided by the various actors: IAWGD, governments IGOs, Regional Commissions and intergovernmental bodies. This was intended to co-ordinate efforts in preparation of the reports required by the GA and the Preparatory Committee. In addressing the agenda item, the Working Group focused its discussion on how best to address reporting requirements of the GA resolution 44/172, GC decisions, and those of Preparatory Committee. The consensus of the meeting was as follows:

- (i) The meeting recognized a risk of overlap and duplication between reports required by the GA in its resolution and those called for by the decisions of the Preparatory Committee. The meeting further noted that UNCED Secretariat was about to establish an ad hoc Working Party where agencies most concerned with desertification control would be represented.
- (ii) The meeting, while prepared to contribute to preparation of the reports required under the GA resolution and the Preparatory Committee decisions, emphasized that effort should be made to avoid duplication in preparation of the required reports.

9. In order to avoid duplication in reporting, the Working Group suggested the following:

- (i) Regional reports to be submitted directly to UNCED-1992, could be prepared in such a way that they contribute as a source for UNEP's drafting of the report on evaluation of progress in implementation of PACD in respective regions.
- (ii) The information available at the subregional bodies such as IGADD, CILSS, SADCC, etc. should be used for the reporting purposes as these bodies are operationally in touch with the constituent countries.
- (iii) As regards the national reports which UNEP needs in order to respond to the GA resolution 44/172, the Working Group suggested the use of available information, such as that prepared by UNSO on UNPAAERD. This would reduce the burden of reporting by governments.

- (iv) There is need for interactive process amongst the agencies and organizations of the UN system concerning the various reports to ensure that they can be prepared in a way that meet the respective requirements.

10. On the question of Global Assessment of Desertification Control, several members of the Working Group expressed their views. The UNDRO representative, for example, suggested that the World Drought Hazard Map be included with additional experimental maps amongst the Thematic Atlases of Desertification.

**DESCON 7 AGENDA AND ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS AND
CO-SPONSORS IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE DESCON MECHANISMS**

11. This item was introduced by the Secretariat which provided the following information:

- (i) The meeting of DESCON-7 was planned for 10-12 December 1990 in accordance with GA resolution 44/172 paras 9 and 10 which required DESCON to meet every year until UNCED-1992 and every two years thereafter.
- (ii) The draft agenda items for DESCON-7 for the discussion by the Working Group.

12. In discussing this item the Working Group focused its comments on proposed agenda for DESCON-7. The following agenda items were then proposed for the two planned sessions, DESCON-7 and DESCON-8 for consideration by the DESCON Secretariat.

- (i) to review terms of reference, functions and operational modalities for DESCON;
- (ii) consideration of drafts of studies on financing desertification control currently under preparation by UNEP as required by GA resolution 44/172;
- (iii) comment on evaluation of the PACD recently undertaken by UNEP as required by GC decision 15/23;
- (iv) consideration of the item "exchange of information";
- (v) consideration of the item "public awareness" - on the eve of UNCED-1992.

Follow-up on proposal at 16 meeting of Working Group on Action to Mobilize Technical and Financial Support for SADCC's Kalahari-Namib subregional Action Plan (agenda item 3)

13. The plan of action for the Kalahari-Namib subregion was presented to the Working Group by the SADCC representative. The plan had been prepared with the assistance of UNEP in response to a request expressed by SADCC at the Sixteenth Meeting of the Working Group. The Working Group had agreed at that meeting to adopt SADCC as a test case for its inter-agency action to mobilize technical and financial resources to assist selected member countries of SADCC to develop and implement national and subregional programmes to combat desertification (see para 8(c) Report of Working Group of Sixteenth Meeting).

14. The plan of action was contained in two volumes - Volume I: Project Description and Volume II: Country Projects (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe). It provides a frame for establishment of pilot projects on land use planning, natural resource management and monitoring, transects and training of personnel during the first phase over a four year period. The second phase is projected for consolidating results and expanding of activities to other areas.

15. In presenting the project of the Action Plan, the representative of SADCC informed the Working Group that the first phase is costed at US\$1 million for technical and financial assistance for putting in place the several pilot components envisaged. He appealed to members of the Working Group to provide the required assistance in accordance with their respective mandates.

16. The Working Group responded positively to the proposed Action Plan and congratulated the SADCC Secretariat for excellent effort put into the preparation of the documents. Several members indicated how, under their respective programmes, they could support the project proposed by the Action Plan. It was agreed that IAWGD could deal directly with SADCC concerning the assistance required under the project. The SADCC representative explained that the SADCC Co-ordinating Unit for Soil and Water Conservation and Land Utilization is authorized to co-ordinate all technical and financial support to the Action Plan on behalf of member States.

Report of meeting Organized by UNSO on Harmonization of Strategic Frameworks for Environment and Natural Resources Management 27-28 August 1990, N.Y. (agenda item 4)

17. The representative of UNSO made a presentation on the above meeting and a Note was distributed to the members of IAWGD. The meeting had been organized by UNSO to exchange views on the problems encountered because of multiplicity of initiatives related to strategic planning for Environment and Resource Management, which in the Sudano-Sahelian region often overlap with each other. Thus, UNSO felt that there was a need to harmonize interventions and avoid duplication in preparation and implementation of these strategic frameworks.

18. A core group of multilateral organizations which, at present, are most directly concerned with this type of initiative in the Sudano-Sahelian subregion had been invited: the World Bank, (Environmental Action Plan), IUCN (National Conservation Strategies), FAO (Tropical Forestry Action Plan-IFAP) and UNEP.

19. According to the UNSO representative, the meeting was a success as there was a general agreement regarding the problems faced by the plurality of initiatives, and a number of initial concrete approaches to ensure better co-operation.

20. In this spirit, the participants in the meeting agreed on a number of guiding principles for launching and implementing the strategic framework process. They also agreed to take measures to ensure a better exchange of information on activities amongst their respective organizations. These include the convening of an ad-hoc Working Group of their organizations which would meet periodically in order to, inter alia, review and harmonize interventions in specific countries.

21. The members of IAWGD congratulated UNSO for its initiative and expressed their general agreement with the guiding principles and measures adopted during their meeting in New York. UNSO was invited to report on the follow-up to the N.Y. meeting at IAWGD meeting in 1992.

Any Other Business (agenda item 5)

22. No other items were brought up by the participants for discussion.

Adoption of the IAWGD Seventeenth meeting (agenda item 6)

23. The draft IAWGD was adopted with slight amendments.

Adoption of draft report of IAWGD through DOEM, to ACC on co-ordination and follow-up on implementation of PACD (agenda item 7)

24. The draft report was prepared by the Secretariat with the assistance of UNSO and UNESCO. It was considered and amended by the meeting for transmission to DOEM.

Closure of meeting (agenda item 8)

25. The meeting of IAWGD was closed at 1800 hours on 19 September 1990 by the Chairman.

REFLECTIONS OVER SEVENTEENTH IAWGD MEETING

26. The Seventeenth meeting of IAWGD was a success. The meeting discussed the implementation of the General Assembly resolution pertaining to the preparatory process of UNCED 1992 including the outcome of the Nairobi Session of PrepCom.

27. The meeting also discussed agenda for the Seventh Desertification Control Consultative Group (DESCON) in Rome. The sixteenth meeting of IAWGD had suggested that DESCON be wound up as it had failed to procure the necessary resources for combating desertification since its inception. However, this decision was stood over by the UNEP Governing Council due to pressure from member States who did not want to see DESCON "killed". The GA, by resolution 44/172 decided that DESCON should meet once a year until the UNCED-1992 and every two years thereafter. It was, therefore, necessary for the 17 meeting of IAWGD to prepare agenda for the next two meetings of DESCON (see paragraph 12).

28. Item 4 on the Agenda pertained to the meeting that had been organized by UNSO in New York on harmonization of strategic planning frameworks for environment and natural resources management. The meeting was organized by UNSO and attended by World Bank, UNEP, FAO and IUCN. The seventeenth meeting of IAWGD took note with satisfaction the results of the UNSO meeting.

29. The UNSO statement which was tabled at the IAWGD meeting did not define the "strategic frameworks". The Working Group was later informed that strategic frameworks included soil conservation, forestry development, etc. This suggested to us that UNSO was seeking additional mandate from the General Assembly through ACC for the management of environment and natural resources in the Sudano-Sahelian countries. In fact, UNSO had provided the participants of their meeting a background paper entitled "Environment and Natural Resources Management in the Sudan-Sahelian Countries". However, this background paper nor its summary was made available to the IAWGD participants.

30. A part from the general agreement on co-ordination and harmonization of programmes on drought and desertification control as well as the management of natural resources in the Sudan-Sahelian countries, the UNSO meeting also reached agreement on other issues, including the following:

- (i) the impact of strategic framework is, in addition to its contents and coverage, also determined to a high degree by the strategic location of the focal point within the Government responsible for its formulation; concerned international organizations should assist governments in identifying and supporting the most appropriate focal point for this purpose;
- (ii) strategic frameworks in the natural resources management field have to be integrated into the economic development process in order to achieve maximum impact;
- (iii) strengthening institutions and national capacities was emphasized enabling governments to manage the planning process and to monitor the development and the protection of their natural resources.

31. The other issues listed in the UNSO statement are relatively similar to the ones listed above. The issues listed as (ii) and (iii) above are totally acceptable to me as they pertain to the integration of various sectors in development process and the strengthening of national and subregional capabilities for the effective exploitation of the natural resources.

32. The first issue suggests, however, that international organizations should participate in identifying the focal point (i.e. ministry or department) to "house" specific strategic frameworks. Needless to say that many African governments will view this as an interference in their internal affairs. For example, World Bank or UNSO cannot insist on the establishment of say, Environmental Secretariat under the Ministry of Planning or Finance in country A simply because the secretariat is likely to receive greater support for environmental conservation strategies. Most governments will certainly resist this kind of interference.

33. The participants in the UNSO meeting further resolved that:

- (i) it will be unnecessary for international organizations to promote or embark simultaneously on more than one national strategic framework;
- (ii) in countries where major strategic framework process is firmly established, the other concerned organizations might play a useful role in complementing the initiative.

34. Although I fully endorse the harmonization of programmes and projects, the problem of land degradation including desertification is so immense in the Sudan-Sahelian subregion that one international organization will certainly not be able to cope with any major strategic framework whether it be afforestation, soil conservation or sand dune stabilization.

35. Moreover, the decision by the UNSO group barring international organizations from embarking simultaneously on more than one national strategic framework is totally contrary to the principle of integrated economic development approach. Moreover, different international organizations have different mandates and it is unlikely that they will be able to support/complement the initiatives of each other.

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE MEETING OF IAWGD 17-19 SEPTEMBER 1990

ORGANIZATION	NAME	FUNCTION
UNEP	Mr. S. Evteev	Assistant Executive Director- (Chairman)
UNEP	Mr. S.S. Sangweni	Senior Programme Officer - (Secretary)
ILO	Mr. L.R. Kohler	Official Responsible for Environment, Energy and Human Settlements
IFAD	Mr. N.J. Ahmad	Technical Advisory Unit
FAO	Mr. Elhadji Sene	Forestry Department
FAO	Mr. F. Riveros	Agriculture Department
ECA	Mr. S.K. Imbamba	Regional Advisor
SADCC	Mr. Bataung Leleka	Director
UNDRO	Mr. Dusan Zupka	Co-ordination Officer
UNDTCD	Mr. Frank J. Pinto	Energy Advisor and Environment Focal Point
UNESCO	Mr. Gisbert Glaser	Deputy Co-ordinator for the Environment
UNSO/UNDP	Ms. S. Chahkar-Farhang	Chief, Planning Analysis and Information Section

ECA/NRD/ENV.27/90

WMO

Mr. N. Gbeckor-Kove

Scientific Officer,
Agricultural
Meteorology
Division, World
Climate Programme
Department

UNCSTD

Mr. D. Pilati

Scientific Affairs
Officer