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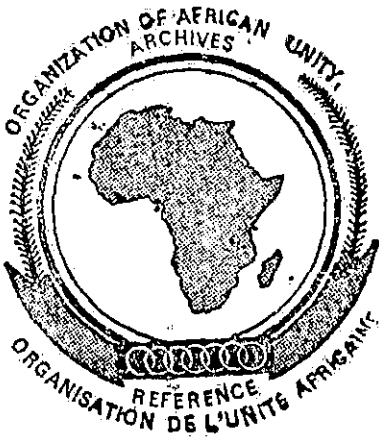
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Addis Ababa * أديس أبابا

CM/049 (XXIX)

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
Twenty-Ninth Ordinary Session
Libreville (Gabon)
23 - 30 June 1977

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY -
GENERAL ON THE REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEET-
ING FOR AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA OF THE
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICA-
TION JOINTLY ORGANISED UNDER THE AUSPICES
OF THE O. A. U. AND UNEP
IN NAIROBI 12 - 16 APRIL 1977.



CM 0819

MICROFICHE

Introduction:

The symposium on drought and desertification in Africa planned by the O.A.U. General Secretariat for Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in conformity with resolution CM/450 (XXV) Kampala (18 - 25 July 1975), was finally held in Nairobi from 12 to 16 April 1977 jointly with the United Nations African regional preparatory conference on desertification, organised by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

Economic considerations, various efforts and means available have made it possible to merge these two conferences into only one after fruitful exchanges between the OAU General Secretariat and the United Nations Environmental programme and putting this one under the auspices of the OAU and UNEP.

1. Opening of the Conference

The opening ceremony took place on Tuesday 12 April 1977 at 10 a.m. at the Kenyatta Center. In the opening speech delivered by His Excellency Mr. J.G. Kiano, Kenyan Minister for Water Development he welcomed all delegates and drew the attention of all participants on the importance of the desertification phenomenon, the subject-matter of the meeting. Then short speeches were delivered by Ambassador Nouredine Djoudi, O.A.U. Assistant Secretary General, Mr. David Ganao, Assistant Executive Secretary of the E.C.A. and lastly, by Mr. Mustafa Tolba, Executive Director of UNEP and Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on desertification.

2. Participation at the Conference

25 O.A.U. Member States (Algeria, Peoples Republic of Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Upper Volta, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Chad and Zaire) sent delegates to this Conference. The delegation of the O.A.U. General Secretariat was led by Ambassador Ejondi OAU, Assistant Secretary General and besides were:

- Mr. Aklé Moise, Chief-Section for Drought and other National Disasters.
- Mr. I.M. Nur, Chief of Natural Resources Section.
- Dr. P.G. Atang, Director of IBAR (Nairobi)
- Dr. P.C. Nderito, Assistant Director of IBAR (Nairobi)
- Mr. P. Diouf, Director of the OAU Regional FAO/WHO/OMS joint Food and Nutrition Commission in Accra.

Furthermore delegates from International Organisations, eight of which came from the family of the United Nations (UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNIC, UNSO, WHO, WMO, ECA, etc.), 6 from the family of inter-government organisations (BADEA, CILSS, ENDA, IDRC, UICN, LWR, etc.).

France, Great Britain, Federal Republic of Germany, U.S.A. and Switzerland sent observers.

The Conference elected by acclamation Mr. G.K. Muhoho, Director of the National Secretariat for The Environment of Kenya, to the chairmanship of the Conference's Bureau - 3 Vice chairmen were also elected.

- M.J. Mendouga (Cameroon) 1st Vice - Chairman
- M.A. Shata (Egypt) 2nd Vice - Chairman.
- Mr. R. Dadoo (Ghana) 3rd Vice - Chairman, and
M.H. Diallo (Upper Volta) was elected rapporteur for the
Conference.

After amendments by delegates the following Agenda
was adopted:-

- (a) Examination of the document "General Survey of
desertification", prepared by UNEP (item 4 of the provisional
agenda) of the preparatory meetings for the Americas, Africa,
South of the Sahara, Mediterranean Region, Asia and the Pacific.
- (b) Examination of document DESCON F/AFRICA/Z the plan of
action for fighting against desertification (item 5 of the
Agenda of preparatory meetings for Africa South of the Sahara).
- (c) Arrangements for the United Nations Conference on des-
ertification.

Procedure of Deliberations:

After the adoption of the Agenda, discussions were centred
on two main points for which the General Secretariat of the
United Nations Conference on desertification had drawn up
provisional documents:

- The process and causes of desertification
- and the plan of action to combat desertification..

a) Concerning the first point, delegates from participating
states and international governmental and non-governmental
organisations observed after a general survey given by
Professor Kassas member of the Secretariat of the United
Nations Conference on desertification that the process of

desertification should be seen, as far as Africa is concerned, in the broad context of ecological degradation. Some delegates and the representative of the OAU General Secretariat stressed on the notable increase in human and animal population leading to over exploitation of land, water, forests and to the problems of transition from subsistence to Market Economy.

Several national monographs were mentioned concerning progress made in deserts. One delegation stressed in particular the need for all countries to show desertification and its progress on their national atlases. Other delegations and W.M.O. underlined the need for international cooperation in the field of preparation of scientific documents as well as the exchange of information. The O.A.U. representative emphasised the role played in the process of desertification through the usage of massive destructive weapons by colonial and racist wars such as those still going on in Southern Africa (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, etc.).

The importance of this matter was seen by the whole conference which adopted a special recommendation on this question concerning the strategy to combat desertification.

(b) Discussion on the Plan of Action

The second item on the Agenda dealing with the examination of the Plan of Action to combat desertification, brought about long discussions. After its presentation by Dr. Tara and Professor Rozanou from the pilot projects to combat desertification researches, various delegations made observations concerning the plan of action based on national and international experiences already encountered

concerning the fight against desertification. Deletions, additions, rearrangements were made in the provisional plan of action. Finally observations made at the meeting reflected the depth of African experience in the matter. Consequently numerous recommendations on the plan of action were improved upon on the basis of this experience. The African context made it possible to give the plan of action a special seal. It is as a result of this that it was requested that some recommendations should take into account of specific problems of Africa, such as the problem of extensive pastoralism in the humid zones (Afro-Alpine region), problems of evaluation and planning, population and health, pluvial agriculture and irrigational farming, problems of soil conservation, water and vegetation conservation as well as the need to provide for sources of additional power in Africa local or otherwise.

The regional development needs was the subject of various discussions as regards to importance of improving and widening road and communications net work. Concerning structural problems related to the implementation of the plan of action, the possibility of establishing or strengthening national machineries to combat desertification was examined. The Conference however did not overlook the precarious economic situation of numerous countries involved in desertification; it especially underlined the need for cooperation and international financial assistance to solve desertification problems.

Concerning institutional arrangements proposed for supervising and coordinating consecutive operations for the implementation of the plan of action after the United Nations Conference in September 1977, the delegates felt that no new institution or machinery will be necessary given the fact

~~that the United Nations has already made available appropriate~~ machineries. Nevertheless, the conference recommended that the coordination of all operations related to the implementation of the plan of action be carried out in close collaboration with the O.A.U. General Secretariat.

c) Funding Problems

The conference took note of the proposal by the General Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on desertification which advocates a meeting of financial experts for next winter in order to prepare a draft funding plan. The conference however, requested for a recommendation to be taken calling for the establishment of a special international fund to combat desertification. Various international organisations explained financial problems that they experienced and called for some lucidity in the creations of new funding structures. Concerning this subject all delegations present at the regional preparatory conference at Nairobi were called upon to grapple with this matter again and then take up when they return to their respective countries, the financial questions with the technical ministries and the appropriate national institutions so that the requests for the assistance already fixed could be underlined along with an indication of approximate financial implications and that all these requests be sent to the General Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on desertification as basis for evaluating global needs.

(d) Arrangements for the United Nations Conference on desertification.

Finally, the conference approved arrangements for the United Nations Conference on desertification planned for 29th August to 9th September 1977 in Nairobi, arrangements were submitted by Mr. Ralph Towney, the Conference's Director.

The Nairobi preparatory meeting prays that the delegations at the United Nations Conference in August - September 1977 be attended by the highest possible leaders and that the authors of monographs participate in the deliberations of this conference.

Besides, the African regional conference appealed to the General Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on desertification to ensure that steps are taken in order that newly independent countries and which will become part of desertification be duly invited.

Conclusion

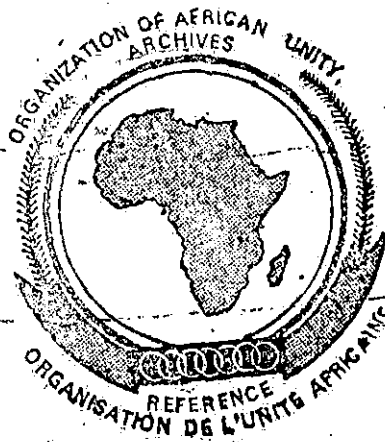
The OAU/UNEP Panafrican Conference that has just been held in Nairobi on desertification was remarkable and of great importance to the O.A.U.

It could be recalled that in its resolution CM/Res. 450 (XXV) the Council of Ministers called upon the General Secretariat within the framework of making preparations for the United Nations Conference on desertification in September to hold a symposium so as to harmonise African positions before the world conference.

This objective has by and large been achieved, the 18 recommendations adopted at the Nairobi meeting show clearly the African identity of points of views.

~~The delegation from the O.A.U. General Secretariat played an important role in bringing about this harmonisation.~~

Texts of the said draft recommendations are attached to this report for information. Altogether these draft recommendations as well as accompanying remarks will form a document to be submitted to the United Nations Conference on desertification in September 1977. Lastly, the O.A.U. General Secretariat will then present to the next session of the Council final texts of recommendations to be adopted there.



Draft Resolution:

The O.A.U. Council of Ministers meeting in its twenty-ninth Ordinary Session in Libreville, from 23rd, June to 29th June 1977;

Having taken note of the report on the OAU/UNEP (Nairobi). Regional Preparatory Conference on desertification contained in document CM/

Recalling paragraph 9 of its resolution CM/Res. 450 (XXV) concerning the organisation by the Secretariat of a preparatory symposium of experts on desertification with a view to harmonising African positions before the United Nations Conference on desertification planned for 1977;

- (1) Takes note of the said report.
- (2) Urges all OAU Member States to participate actively in the United Nations Conference on desertification in August - September 1977.
- (3) Requests the Administrative Secretary of the OAU to present a complete report on the matter at the 30th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers.

LIST OF DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE OAU/UNEP
REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING ON DESERTIFICATION HELD IN
NAIROBI

(12 - 16 APRIL 1977)

N.B. This list of texts of recommendations duly amended is given here as a guideline; it will appear in the final report of the meeting whose publication will be done by the General Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on desertification. This report will be sent to all Member States when it will be ready.

Recommendation No. 1

It is recommended that in areas affected or likely to be affected by desertification, changes in land-use practices based on ecologically and economically sound principles should be introduced in conformity with social equity and geared to economic and social development.

Recommendation No. 2

It is recommended to study the causes and assess the seriousness and the consequences of desertification to find out how it has affected soil, vegetation and population in countries already affected or likely to be affected and take appropriate steps at the national and regional levels to ensure the control of desertification development.

Recommendation No. 3

It is recommended that countries should adopt demographic policies that will support programmes for improving land use, giving priority to the maintenance of an adequate rural labour force and to the resettlement of those migrating from rural to urban areas so as to minimize economic and social distress.

Recommendation No. 4

It is recommended that programmes should be undertaken to provide dryland peoples with health care of a quality comparable to that provided to more accessible elements in the population, with particular emphasis on health, nutrition and family planning, for those governments which need them.

Recommendation No. 5

It is recommended that efficient and ecologically sound water management and development be introduced as part of the measures to combat desertification.

Recommendation No. 6

It is recommended that governments take appropriate measures to protect and ameliorate degraded conditions in dryland pastures and forests, to introduce systems of rangeland, forests and livestock management to improve the lot of desert pastoral communities.

Recommendation No. 7

It is recommended that comprehensive plans for soil and water conservation be introduced to combat desertification in rainfed farming drylands.

Recommendation No. 8

It is recommended that measures be taken to combat desertification in irrigated lands by preventing water logging, salinization and alkalinization, by reclaiming deteriorated lands, by modifying irrigation and farming techniques to increase productivity, by developing new irrigation schemes where appropriate, and through improvement of the social and economic conditions of people dependent upon irrigation agriculture.

Recommendation No. 9

It is recommended that special measures for vegetation, soil conservation, and stabilization of moving sands be undertaken in areas of localized human impact on watersheds, where resettlements, roads and farm lands are threatened, and along desert margins.

Recommendation No. 10

It is recommended that research be vigorously pursued on the use of alternative or unconventional energy sources in the drylands that will yield simple inexpensive and useful devices to serve the needs of dryland people.

Recommendation No. 11

It is recommended to develop and adopt insurance schemes that provide facilities for coping with drought disaster and which promote the social and economic changes required to reduce long-term risks of desertification.

Recommendation 12

It is recommended that a national and international campaign be undertaken to strengthen national scientific and technological capabilities against desertification. To this end, it is especially recommended that international governmental and non-governmental bodies which are specialised in these problem, provide information to the affected countries, and that former colonial powers provide them all the documents they possess on this matter.

Designate or set up national centres for the transfer and modification of technology adapted to local condition taking into account of the social, cultural and economic factors of the respective countries, and the dissemination of information on current progress in science and technology relating to desertification, and to provide advisory services on how to strengthen extension services that give instruction on the application of new technologies. For instance, it is desirable that for the transfer of technology be established in Africa from 1977.

Recommendation No. 13

It is recommended that where none exists national machinery to combat desertification and drought be established.

Recommendation No. 14

It is recommended that the Environment Coordination Committee should be responsible in collaboration with existing inter-governmental and financial institutions for following up the implementation and coordination of the Plan of Action.

Recommendation No. 15

It is recommended that an International Desertification Research Council should be established to be serviced by the Desertification Unit (see previous recommendation) to coordinate global, comprehensive research programmes, embracing existing national, regional and international research centres, for the rapid and economical acquisition and dissemination of new knowledge regarding the problems of desertification.

Recommendation No. 16

It is recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary General of the United Nations in collaboration with inter-governmental regional and financial institutions, and heads of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and invite the executive heads of Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations

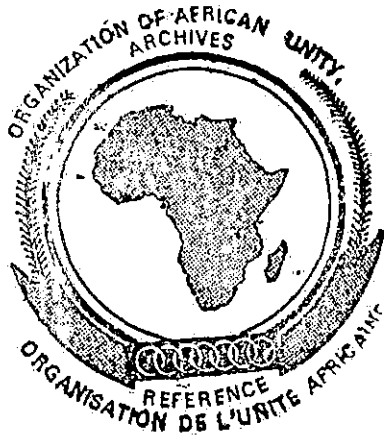
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Health Organization and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to support in their respective fields of activity international action to combat desertification in the context of the Plan of Action appropriate provisions and allocations in their programmes.

Recommendation No. 17

It is recommended that the United Nations General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to invite governmental and non-governmental international organisations concerned with desertification problems to participate in the implementation of the Plan of Action to combat desertification with a view to coordinating their activities with the world wide programme.

Recommendation No. 18

- (1) Underline the effects that arms and destruction practices have on the ecology of countries who have acceded to their national and international sovereignty through armed national liberation struggle and African countries which are still struggling for their independence.



- (2) Request the United Nations Conference on Desertification to condemn and if possible to ban the use of such arms and practices in the whole world and particularly in Africa.
- (3) Give special and priority attention to the programmes and financing of countries which were victims of drought and especially countries which have acceded to independence through national armed liberation struggle.

1977-06

Report of the Administrative
Secretary-General on the Regional
Preparatory Meeting for Africa South of
the Sahara of the United Nations
Conference on Desertification Jointly
Organised Under the Auspices of the
O.A.U. and UNEP in Nairobi 12-16
April 1977

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