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REGIONAL SEMINAR ON ALTERNATIVE PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT
AND LIFE STYLES IN WESTERN ASIA
21 - 25 January 1980, Beirut, Lebanon

(Note of the Executive Secretary)

In accordance with UNEP's Governing Council decision 89 (IV) which requested the Executive Director to devote increased attention to the relationships between environment and development, and its decision 6/6 which invited the governments and international organizations to participate in the preparation, proceedings and follow-up to the regional seminars on alternative patterns of development and life styles, a regional seminar was held in Beirut during the period 21 - 25 January 1980.

The main purpose of the seminar-which was jointly organized by the secretariats of UNEP and ECWA-was to provide a forum for development planners and decision-makers in order to examine the issues involved in the planning and implementation of sound developmental patterns that would satisfy both ecological and socio-economic exigencies. The findings of the seminar would also help generate ideas relevant to the formulation of a new International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

The seminar was attended by delegates of the following members of the commission: Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, PLO, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Yemen Arab Republic. Representatives of the following United Nations organizations and specialized agencies attended: ILO, UNCHS, UNDP and UNEPA. Also attending were the representatives of the Arab Planning Institute, the Council of Arab Economic Unity and the American University of Beirut.

The representative of the President of the Council of Ministers of Lebanon, the Executive Secretary of ECWA and the representative of the Executive Director of UNEP delivered opening addresses in which they stressed that the topic of the seminar was a subject of great preoccupation of the governments in the region during times, when damage to the environment accompanying the drive for development was beginning to threaten the quality of life itself. The need for the protection of the environment and for the consideration of environmental factors in the developmental plans and the priorities of the developing countries were also underlined. The hope was expressed that the seminar would provide an opportunity for an extensive

and open-minded exchange of views and information among the participants and that it would prepare the way for concrete action at the national, regional and international levels.

The following working documents prepared by international consultants were presented to the seminar for discussion:

1. A keynote and overview paper;
2. Agriculture development and land management in relation to environment and food supply needs in the ECWA region;
3. Development and management of water resources in the ECWA region;
4. Case study on the Aswan High Dam: Its impact on the environment and its side-effects;
5. Present trends in industrialization and urbanization and their economic, social and environmental implications;
6. Environmental implications of oil and alternative sources of energy in the ECWA region, and
7. Economic, social and environmental implications for the ECWA region of present and future trends in international relations.

The documents broadly reflected the most important environmental problems associated with development in these sectors and elaborated, whenever possible, upon feasible approaches, policies and other alternatives that would promote environmentally sound development within these sectors.

The seminar adopted a set of recommendations covering economic development strategy, land and water management, industrial development strategy, pollution and patterns of consumption of oil and the seminar recommended further that the following programme of studies should be undertaken by the secretariats of both ECWA and UNEP:

I. Economic development strategy

The economic development strategy for the Third Development Decade underlined, inter alia, the following:

1. Promotion of national and collective self-reliance as the path to good development;
2. Orientation of development to secure basic human needs (material and non-material);
3. Selection of appropriate technology and the development of an independent scientific and technological base through the joint efforts of the countries of the region;
4. Promotion of sound environmental management as a basic element of development planning;
5. Need to review production and consumptive patterns for the rational utilization of resources;
6. Strengthening of financial co-operation between countries rich in human, agricultural and industrial resources, and countries rich in financial resources in order to serve the interests of integrated economic development.

II. Land and water management

The seminar emphasized the need to raise the annual rate of growth in agriculture to keep pace with the growing food demand. This could be achieved, inter alia, through the following:

1. Better land and water use planning in order to intensify crop production, reduce fallow areas and narrow the gap between food production and demand;
2. Control of soil salinity and waterlogging in irrigated areas through proper irrigation practices, drainage systems and rational water use;
3. Control of desertification through better management of the eco-systems including controlled grazing practices, planting of shelter belts, and the non-ploughing of marginal rainland ($\approx 25\text{mm/annum}$) which should be left as permanent pastures;

4. Strengthening of rural institutions, including credit institutions, co-operatives and extension services and training of farmers in soil and water management;
5. It is essential to stop the encroachment of buildings on agricultural land and to reduce the flow of rural-urban migration. This can be achieved through an integrated rural development strategy of which agricultural development is only one element;
6. Since the future challenge facing the region will be in meeting a growing food demand and narrowing the food gap, it is necessary that an integrated regional development strategy based on specialization in production and ecological considerations be established. Balanced development (agricultural and non-agricultural) will maximize the benefits deriving from an overall development strategy. The portion of agriculture in total investment should be greatly increased in both national and regional plans;
7. The intensive development of agriculture will have negative effects on the environment resulting from the increased use of fertilizers and pesticides, the intensive cropping of land, the expansion of irrigated areas, overyearly storage, etc. Therefore, the negative effects of such factors should be reduced through a better land and water use policy.

III. Industrial development strategy

1. The industrial development strategies of the ECWA countries should give top priority to the following objectives:
 - (a) Securing the basic needs of the population, particularly low-income groups;
 - (b) Rational allocation of resources in the selection of production techniques;
 - (c) Accelerate shift from the prevailing imitative industrialization pattern to a more creative pattern; thereby rationalizing the distribution of scarce resources among the different industrial sectors;
 - (d) Limiting the negative ecological impacts of industrialization and promoting optimum environmental conditions within industrial establishments;

2. Scientific research and science and technology centres in the ECWA region should be supported and provided with the high quality and quantity of qualified manpower they require in order to achieve liberation from that technological dependency that thwarts all efforts at genuine, independent development;
3. The ECWA countries should give greater attention to the human element as the artisan of development; hence the importance of administrative development and the review of education and vocational training curricula in arming the Arab individual for independent development;
4. The principle of comprehensive and balanced planning should be adopted as a basic component of socio-economic planning mechanisms. The purpose is to make sure that the comparative advantage of the developmental resources of different regions of a single country are recognized and exploited; that all regions are included in the development effort and receive an equitable share of its fruits; that rural-urban migration is stemmed and the geographic concentration of industrial and service facilities and its negative implications is avoided;
5. Economic and social development policies should be oriented to the protection of rural population, to the fight against poverty and the income disparities between rural and urban dwellers and to the promotion of the equitable distribution of the fruits of development among all categories of society.

IV. In the area of oil

It is recommended that:

1. ECWA countries that have not yet done so, adhere to the relevant international conventions to combat pollution, especially the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships;
2. Full support be given to the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Gulf Action Plan to combat pollution;
3. Local anti-pollution legislation be introduced;

4. Wasteful patterns of consumption be avoided;
5. Excessive depletion of oil resources be avoided and their development be geared to the legitimate needs of the region and to the interests of future generations;
6. The oil producing countries of the region obtain a fairer share in the downstream operations of shipping, refining and marketing;
7. Future plans be made for a greater use of renewable and recyclable resources, especially solar energy and an Arab Solar Research Centre be created.

Recommendations for future studies

The following are some of the studies that the seminar recommended to be undertaken by the secretariats of ECWA in collaboration with UNEP:

1. An exhaustive study of the economic relations between the ECWA countries and the external world, with special reference to the industrialized countries. The study should aim at the promotion of greater collective self-reliance among the countries of the region;
2. Additional studies on the basic needs of the region (understood in their dynamic sense), such as food security, clothing, shelter and social services. These studies should identify the needs of each of the countries of the region and should propose strategies for meeting these needs in the foreseeable future;
3. Additional research on integrated rural development. A better balance between industrial and agricultural development will further the objective of an improved rural environment;
4. Studies on the development of solar energy as a measure for reducing environmental pollution and dependence on the non-renewable resource of oil;
5. Studies of the impact of the utilization of Arab financial resources on the Arab environment, especially the way the expenditure of these massive funds, accumulated rapidly in recent years, has precipitated population movements, exploitation of natural resources and transformation in consumption and production patterns;

6. Up-dating those country and regional studies in the hands of international and regional organizations (such as ECWA and League of Arab States' IDCAS) which relate to the industrial problems of the public and private sectors and proposing resolutions for those problems at the country level.

Follow-up action

In follow-up to the regional seminar, the secretariat proposes that:

(a) The recommendations and conclusions and selected substantive studies will be widely disseminated with a view to promoting awareness of alternative policies in respect of education, resource use and management patterns of production and consumption and the design and management of settlement. This dissemination would also help promote the formulation of long-term programmes of action within the countries of the region. It is the intention to publish the final report of the seminar in Arabic and English;

(b) The recommendations of the seminar will be used, as appropriate, for the preparation of UNEP's and ECWA's contributions for the formulation of the New International Development Strategy for the 1980s;

(c) The proposed study programme will be incorporated in ECWA's future work programmes. In pursuing environmental dimensions of development, the secretariat has the following options in this regard:

- (i) The incorporation of environmentally oriented studies/projects under the umbrella of the relevant substantive programmes of the Commission;
- (ii) The formulation and establishment of a separate environment programme. It should be noted that all regional commissions with the exception of ECWA have an environment programme;
- (iii) A combination of increased emphasis on environmental dimensions of development within substantive programmes plus the establishment of a separate environment programme taking care of cross-sectoral environment issues only.

The secretariat considers that the third option is the most appropriate one for dealing with the environmental concerns in the ECWA region. It is felt that a small programme with appropriate resources dealing with environmental cross-sectoral issues could best serve the region. It should be recalled that the present Environmental Co-ordination Unit of the ECWA secretariat undertakes only promotional and supporting activities, but does not undertake projects. The Unit is financed by UNEP initially for a period of two years ending 31 December 1980. Although the secretariat will endeavour to secure UNEP funding for another two-year period, it is obvious that more permanent arrangements for dealing with environmental questions have to be worked out for the future. In this connexion, the secretariat considers that the new medium-term plan for 1984-1989 for which the preparations will start towards the end of 1980 would provide the best opportunity to formulate a separate environment programme under the umbrella of the Commission's work programme. This approach would imply that the programme budget 1984-1989 would need to incorporate resources for such a programme.