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**UNITED NATIONS
(UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME)
and
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION**

**Memorandum of Understanding concerning co-operation.
Signed at Geneva on 6 July 1977**

Authentic text: English.

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**ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES
(PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES
POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT)**

et

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DU TRAVAIL

**Mémorandum d'accord concernant la coopération. Signé à
Genève le 6 juillet 1977**

Texte authentique : anglais.

Classé et inscrit au répertoire par le Secrétariat le 29 janvier 1979.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING¹ CONCERNING CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION AND THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

1. The present Memorandum of Understanding, agreed upon between the Director-General of the International Labour Office (ILO) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), defines the aims which the ILO and UNEP will jointly pursue and the practical arrangements necessary to achieve them.

2. United Nations General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1973,² which established the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Environment Secretariat, the Environment Fund, and the Environment Co-ordination Board, invited the organisations of the United Nations system to “adopt the measures that may be required to undertake concerted and co-ordinated programmes with regard to international environmental problems, taking into account existing procedures for prior consultation, particularly on programme and budgetary matters”.

3. The Governing Council of UNEP at its third session in April 1975 invited “the governing bodies and executive heads of the organisations and organs of the United Nations system to formulate, following consultations between the executive heads of such organisations and organs and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, activities to implement in the medium term the strategies approved by the Council as contained in the frameworks set out in the environment programme, in respect of matters which fall within their respective mandates, and to allocate the necessary resources for the purpose”.

4. The ILO’s activities in the field of environment are governed, in part, by the resolution adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 60th Session (June 1975) which invited the Governing Body of the ILO “to instruct the Director-General, as soon as resources permit, to undertake, in collaboration with, and with the support of, the United Nations Environment Programme, a coherent programme of ILO action concerning the environment which provides especially for educational and training activities in this field, as well as studies on the economic and social consequences of environmental policies”. The ILO’s activities in the field of the environment are also governed by the decision of its Governing Body at its November 1975 session that the Director-General should: “take any appropriate measures to ensure that the ILO plays its full part in formulating and executing the United Nations Environment Programme...”. The Governing Body also adopted guidelines for the development of a coherent programme of ILO action concerning the environment.

5. The present Memorandum of Understanding is intended, in part, to give effect to the above-mentioned General Assembly resolution, to the relevant

¹ Came into force on 6 July 1977 by signature, in accordance with section 21.

² United Nations, *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/8730)*, p. 43.

resolutions of the International Labour Conference and decisions of the Governing Body of the ILO and to the pertinent decisions of the Governing Council of UNEP. It is aimed at providing a framework for continuing co-operation and joint programming between UNEP and the ILO. Such joint programming is to be based on a reciprocal recognition of principles and modes of operation and on mutually supporting activities. The activities and measures emanating from joint programming will, in due course, be reflected in the draft programmes and budgets submitted to the Governing Body of the ILO and to the Governing Council of UNEP.

6. UNEP and the ILO agree that one of their common objectives is to promote sustainable satisfaction of basic human needs everywhere, and especially those of the poorest categories of the population; basic needs may be defined as threshold requirements for a decent human living in respect of food, shelter and clothing, as well as in respect of access to essential services such as safe drinking water, sanitation, health and education. Availability of productive and satisfying employment is considered both a means to, and an aspect of, the satisfaction of basic human needs. The ILO and UNEP recognise that natural and human resources should be used rationally and in the best long-term interests of societies so that an improved quality of life results for all. Thus, development and growth in all countries should be socially satisfactory and environmentally sound.

7. The ILO and UNEP recognise that informed popular participation and involvement are essential to the protection and enhancement of the human environment and for the rational use of countries' resources, natural and physical as well as human.

AREAS OF MUTUAL INTERESTS AND COLLABORATION

Working environment

8. The working environment is an integral part of the human environment. Problems of the general environment cannot be satisfactorily tackled unless the problems of the working environment are solved; similarly, lasting solutions to the problems of the working environment should be found in the larger context of the human environment. Improvement of the working environment should take account of its relation with the protection of the human environment.

9. With this perspective, the ILO and UNEP agree to cooperate in the following activities in the field of the working environment:

- (a) The appropriate design and location of factories and work-places so as to ensure a safe and healthy working environment and to protect the general environment;
- (b) The prevention and control of occupational accidents and diseases;
- (c) The prevention and control of air pollution, noise and vibration in the working environment;
- (d) Institutional support at the national, regional and local levels to improve the working environment;
- (e) Continuing liaison between the ILO's International Occupational and Health Information Centre (CIS) and UNEP's International Referral System (IRS), between the ILO's Working Conditions and Environment Department and

UNEP's International Register for Potentially Toxic Chemicals (IRPTC), and between the ILO's Industrial and analogous Committees and similar bodies and UNEP's Industry Programme;

- (f) The establishment within the framework of the ILO's International Programme for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (PIACT) of a link between the proposed international occupational safety and health hazards alert system and UNEP's Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS);
- (g) The elaboration and implementation of activities to be conducted within the framework of PIACT.

Human settlements

10. It is essential that the development and spatial spread of human settlements be carefully directed so that they contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the vast majority of the population everywhere. The notion of human settlements as ecosystems is of particular interest in this respect.

11. The ILO and UNEP will co-operate in tackling the adverse effects on quality of human life of overcrowding of population and of production activity in relation to land-carrying capacity, environmental degradation, infrastructural facilities and the pleasantness of physical surroundings.

12. In particular, the ILO and UNEP agree to co-operate in the following activities:

- (a) Developing policies for balanced urban and rural growth, account being taken of the ecological and human opportunities and constraints;
- (b) Promoting improvements in the quality of rural habitat in terms of basic housing and physical infrastructural needs and of general enhancement of the environment;
- (c) Promoting improvement of urban settlements through planned easing of congestion, improvement of slums, provision of low-cost housing and development of physical infrastructure and services;
- (d) Promoting development and use of appropriate building materials and construction techniques for low-cost and environmentally sound urban and rural housing.

Environment and development

13. The ILO and UNEP recognise that a fundamental objective of development is the satisfaction of basic human needs for all consistent with the protection and improvement of the human environment. Strategies of growth, of development and of eradication of acute poverty should be guided by, among other things, consideration of rational use of natural and human resources and of optimal distribution of productive activities and human settlements. To ensure environmentally sound development, it is essential to eradicate acute mass poverty everywhere and to effect such changes in patterns of consumption, resource use and population growth and distribution as would minimise waste, conserve scarce resources and protect the interests of future generations.

14. With this perspective, the ILO and UNEP agree to co-operate in the following activities:

- (a) Assessment of basic human needs and determination of viable approaches to their lasting satisfaction;
- (b) The study of alternative patterns of development consistent with environmental protection and enhancement;
- (c) Promotion of balanced rural and urban development and conducting of research, including case studies towards this end, with a view to helping bring about such distributions of populations and of production activity as would be conducive to achieving sustained improvement in the quality of life for all;
- (d) Identification, development and promotion of socially appropriate and environmentally sound technologies in construction, agriculture and industry;
- (e) Strengthening of institutional capabilities at national and regional levels to facilitate development and adoption of appropriate and environmentally sound technologies in particular and of environmentally sound development patterns in general.

Education and training

15. As stated above, UNEP and the ILO agree that informed popular participation is crucial to the protection and enhancement of the environment. Consequently, education, training and information programmes need to be developed for various professional groups according to their needs. The professional groups to which the ILO has direct access include enterprise management, trade union leaders, workers' educators, members of co-operatives, labour inspectors and administrators, vocational training authorities, employment service officers and decision-makers in the social and labour policy areas.

16. In particular, the ILO and UNEP agree to co-operate in the following activities:

- (a) Participation in the multilateral co-ordination of education and training within the United Nations system, including close co-ordination with UNESCO and UNIDO as well as with the Regional Centre for Environmental Education in Madrid and the Centre d'Etudes Industrielles in Geneva;
- (b) Promotion of awareness of environmental considerations in the ILO's ongoing education and training programmes;
- (c) Promotion of awareness of environmental considerations among employers' and workers' organisations.

Reciprocal representation

17. In accordance with article II of the Agreement between the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation, representatives of UNEP will be invited to attend the meetings of the International Labour Conference and its committees, the Governing Body and its committees, and such general, regional or other special meetings as the ILO may convene. UNEP may participate, without a vote, in the deliberations of these bodies with respect to items on their agendas in which UNEP has indicated that it has an interest.

18. Representatives of the ILO will likewise be invited to attend the meetings of the Governing Council of UNEP as well as its committees and to participate, without a vote, in the deliberations of these bodies with respect to items on their agenda in which the ILO has indicated that it has an interest.

Means of co-operation

19. The operational means of continuing UNEP/ILO co-operation will include the following:

- Consultation in the formulation of Conventions, standards and Recommendations in the field of the working environment;
- Participation in projects and programmes of mutual interest;
- Jointly convened technical and promotional meetings in the areas of mutual interest;
- Mutual association in relevant technical assistance missions/projects;
- Intensive exchange of information in areas of mutual interest and on pertinent institutional matters;
- Continuing arrangement and increasing use of effective “focal points” in the respective organisations.

20. In accordance with Resolution 1958 (LIX) adopted by the Economic and Social Council,¹ the ILO will, in so far as resources permit, allocate the necessary priorities and resources for the maximum success of activities of joint interest. In accordance with Resolution 2997 (XXVII) adopted by the General Assembly on institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental co-operation, the Environment Fund shall finance wholly or partly, in so far as resources permit, the costs of the new environmental initiatives undertaken within the United Nations system. The ILO and UNEP will encourage, either individually or jointly, appropriate outside financial assistance to supplement their own resources.

21. The present Memorandum will come into effect upon signature. It may be modified at any time by agreement between the parties and may be terminated by either party at six months’ notice in writing.

[Signed]

MOSTAPHA K. TOLBA
Executive Director
United Nations Environment
Programme

Geneva, 6 July 1977

[Signed]

FRANCIS BLANCHARD
Director-General
International Labour Office

Geneva, 6 July 1977

¹ United Nations, *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 1*, p. 12.