

No. 830

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**UNITED NATIONS  
(UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME)  
and  
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Memorandum of Understanding concerning cooperation.  
Signed at Rome on 13 July 1977**

*Authentic text: English.*

*Filed and recorded by the Secretariat on 29 January 1979.*

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**ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES  
(PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES  
POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT)  
et  
ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES  
POUR L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE**

**Mémorandum d'accord concernant la coopération. Signé à  
Rome le 13 juillet 1977**

*Texte authentique : anglais.*

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

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING<sup>1</sup> CONCERNING CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

## I. OBJECTIVES

1. This Memorandum of Understanding between the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines the principles and areas of cooperation between FAO and UNEP and the arrangements to be made for this purpose in the light of experience gained as a result of the practical cooperation already established.

2. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2997 (XXVII)<sup>2</sup> established the United Nations Environment Programme, the Environment Secretariat, and the Environment Fund, together with the Governing Council and the Environment Coordination Board. It invited the organizations of the UN 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".

A basic assumption behind the establishment of UNEP, which is reflected in various aspects of its institutional make-up and mode of operation, is that responsibilities for the environment at the international level are spread throughout the UN organization. Through its three levels of programmatic approach, UNEP progressively seeks the assistance of the UN system in identifying environmental problems, action in hand related to these, the gaps in knowledge, and implementation of the required actions to fill in the gaps. In this sense, the Governing Council of UNEP, by laying down the action plan, provides "general policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes within the UN system" (Resolution 2997 (XXVII) paragraph 2(b).)

3. The functions of FAO in the field of the environment are governed by the Preamble and Article I of the FAO Constitution, and by the related recommendations and decisions of its Governing Bodies. In particular, the FAO Conference at its 17th Session in November 1973 recommended that the programme framework "Natural Resources for Food and Agriculture" should constitute "the basis for coordinating and developing FAO's environmental activities, in cooperation with the UN Environment Programme and the other UN and non-UN agencies concerned", and stressed that "FAO should mobilize, with the assistance of UNEP, its expertise and resources to assist Member Governments concerned in implementing national campaigns and regional cooperation in preventing and reducing environmental degradation of natural resources for food and agriculture".

<sup>1</sup> Came into force on 13 July 1977 by signature, in accordance with section IV (16).

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

4. FAO has in these terms recognized the role of environmental considerations in the field of its responsibilities. It has sought to make arrangements to play its full part in formulating and executing the United Nations Environment Programme in co-operation with the other UN agencies and with the Environment Secretariat in particular. UNEP recognizes the prime role of FAO in the field of food and agriculture, including fisheries, forestry, and related products.

5. This Memorandum of Understanding aims at giving practical effect to the above-mentioned General Assembly Resolution as well as to the recommendations and decisions of the FAO Governing Bodies by providing for regular joint programming between UNEP and FAO. Joint programming is based on the reciprocal recognition of responsibilities and priorities and on the development of mutually supporting programmes which will appropriately be reflected in the draft programmes and budgets submitted to the Governing Bodies of FAO and to the Governing Council of UNEP.

## II. AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND COOPERATION

6. FAO and UNEP recognize that natural resources should be used rationally and in the best long-term interests of mankind and should result in the improvement of the quality of life. Thus, the productive capacity of the environment must be maintained and resources so used as to promote development on a sustained basis.

7. Cooperation in the areas of mutual interest of FAO and UNEP will be based on (i) the programme framework entitled "Natural Resources for Food and Agriculture" as defined and approved by the FAO Conference and (ii) relevant "programme activities" as defined and approved by the UNEP Governing Council. Specific areas of cooperation within the following main areas of mutual interest will be agreed upon in the course of joint programming by FAO and UNEP, taking into account the priorities set by their respective Governing Bodies:

- (a) *Environmental monitoring and assessment of natural resources for food and agriculture including forestry and fisheries*
  - (i) Surveys and inventories, basic studies and other reference information/relating to problems of degradation and depletion of natural resources and to levels of pollution and pollution effects in different media and biota of importance for agriculture, forestry and fisheries including food and animal feed.
  - (ii) Development of methodology and facilities for specific monitoring activities related to the above-mentioned problems.
  - (iii) Design and establishment of specialized programmes and coherent networks for the monitoring of critical areas for food and agriculture, particularly those natural resources which are the most endangered.
  - (iv) Development of standards and criteria for assessment of levels of pollution in different media including food and of natural resources degradation related to agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

- (v) Assessment of the impact of man's agricultural and non-agricultural activities on natural resources for food and agriculture, including forestry and fisheries, and identification of trends and potential problems.
- (b) *Ecological management of natural resources for food and agriculture including forestry and fisheries*
  - (i) Development, promotion and application of ecologically sound management systems and practices for sustained productivity and for improving the quality of life in rural areas.
  - (ii) Control of specific problems relating to conservation of natural resources and environment protection, through development and implementation of concerted action programmes (such as integrated pest control, soil conservation, desertification control and forest fire control).
  - (iii) Control and rational management of agricultural and agro-industrial wastes.
  - (iv) Strengthening systems and capabilities for control of food contamination and of the sources and effects of pollution on the food chains.
  - (v) Development of environmental law and institutions at the national and international level.
  - (vi) Promotion of environmental education and training related to food and agriculture, including forestry and fisheries.
  - (vii) Promotion of information exchange in the above fields of interest.
- (c) *Conservation and management of ecosystems*

FAO and UNEP will continue to cooperate in this area within the framework of the agreement reached between representatives of members of the Ecosystems Conservation Group (UNEP, FAO, UNESCO, IUCN) on 24 May 1977 in Nairobi.

### III. ARRANGEMENTS FOR COOPERATION

8. FAO and UNEP shall maintain a close working relationship in accordance with the provisions of this Memorandum and such arrangements as may be agreed upon from time to time by the Director-General of FAO and the Executive Director of UNEP, including the designation of focal points within their secretariats for the purpose of cooperation.

9. Regular joint programming, as a most important means of cooperation and coordination, will be effected through formal sessions and regular consultations, through visits and correspondence, enabling FAO and UNEP to be kept informed on all programmes and projects in the areas of mutual interest and cooperation. It is understood that joint programming also includes consultation on such programmes and projects in the above-mentioned areas of mutual interest as may be carried out unilaterally by FAO or UNEP, within their respective areas of responsibility or jointly with other organizations.

10. The formulation of joint FAO/UNEP programmes will be a continuous process and will provide a means by which agreed activities may be financed

from the Environment Fund or other sources. In this connection FAO and UNEP recall General Assembly Resolution 2997 (XXVII) on the Environment Fund, which decided that “in order to enable the Governing Council of UNEP to fulfil its policy-guidance role for the direction and co-ordination of environmental activities, the Environment Fund shall finance wholly or partly the costs of the new environmental initiatives undertaken within the United Nations system”, and that the Environment Fund “shall be directed to the need for effective co-ordination in the implementation of international environmental programmes of the organizations in the UN system and other international organizations”. FAO and UNEP recognize the financial constraints inherent in their respective programmes and budgets and undertake to encourage, either individually or jointly, appropriate financial assistance from external sources.

11. On the basis of article II of the Agreement between the United Nations and FAO, representatives of UNEP shall be invited to attend the meetings of the FAO Conference and its committees; the FAO Council and those of its committees as are concerned with matters relating to environment and natural resources; and such general, regional or technical meetings concerning the above-mentioned areas of mutual interest as FAO may convene; and to participate, without vote, in the deliberations of these bodies and meetings with respect to items on their agenda in which UNEP has indicated that it has an interest. Representatives of UNEP shall be afforded full opportunity for presenting to FAO Governing Bodies and their Committees the views of UNEP within the scope of its activities.

12. Representatives of FAO shall likewise be invited to attend the meetings of the Governing Council of UNEP and its committees, as well as any *ad hoc* meetings concerning the above-mentioned areas of mutual interest that may be convened by UNEP, and to participate, without vote, in the deliberations of these bodies and meetings with respect to items on their agenda in which FAO has indicated that it has an interest. Representatives of FAO shall be afforded full opportunity for presenting to the UNEP Governing Council and its committees the views of FAO on questions within the scope of its activities.

13. Subject to such arrangements as may be necessary for the safeguarding of confidential material, the fullest and promptest exchange of information and documents shall be made between FAO and UNEP. In particular:

- (a) FAO will transmit to UNEP, and afford UNEP an opportunity to comment on, relevant FAO programme documents prepared for the meetings referred to in paragraph 11 above;
- (b) UNEP will transmit to FAO, and afford FAO an opportunity to contribute to and comment on, relevant UNEP programme documents prepared for the meetings referred to in paragraph 12 above.

14. It is understood that, in addition to the above, FAO and UNEP will cooperate as necessary and practicable in the provision of technical assistance to developing countries, in joint publications and in the convening of joint meetings, seminars and workshops. It is further understood that, beyond the arrangements for joint programming, each of the parties to this Memorandum will consult with the other party on the formulation and implementation of those of its programmes and projects which are likely to affect the area of responsibility of the other party.

## IV. FINAL PROVISIONS

15. This Memorandum of Understanding is without prejudice to agreements concluded by either FAO or UNEP with other organizations or programmes within the UN system.

16. This 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.

MOSTAFA K. TOLBA  
Executive Director  
United Nations  
Environment Programme

*[Signed]*

*Date: 13/7/1977*

EDOUARD SAOUMA  
Director-General  
Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

*[Signed]*

*Date: 13/7/77*