International Aid and the Environment

Food distribution at a transit camp for internally displaced persons, in Southern Sudan. The humanitarian aid programme in the country is the largest of its kind worldwide.
International aid and the environment

14.1 Introduction and assessment activities

Introduction

International aid represents approximately three percent of Sudan’s economy, and the humanitarian aid programme in the country is the largest of its kind worldwide. Some 15 percent of the population are completely or largely dependent on international food aid for survival, and the number is rising due to the Darfur crisis.

A core principle for the UN programme in Sudan and elsewhere is to ‘do no harm’ through the provision of aid. This applies to the environment as well. Indeed, humanitarian, recovery and development aid programmes that inadvertently create or exacerbate local environmental problems may, in the long run, do more harm than good to local communities aspiring to sustainable livelihoods. In this context, a review of the environmental impacts of the international aid programme in Sudan was considered an appropriate component of the UNEP post-conflict assessment.

Furthermore Sudan, like many developing countries, receives international aid from a variety of sources for a number of environmental issues as diverse as biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, control of redundant pesticides and transboundary water resources management. In view of UNEP’s planned follow-up capacity-building activities in Sudan, an evaluation of the impact of such programmes was also deemed necessary.

Assessment activities

The assessment of the impact of international aid was included in the overall scope of activities carried out by UNEP in Sudan. A significant amount of background information was available on humanitarian, recovery, development, and environmental aid: the UN and Partners Work Plan for 2006 [14.1] provided a detailed basis for a desk-based analysis, and substantial project documentation (including progress and closure reports) was available for virtually all of the environment-specific aid programmes identified, such as those funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

UNEP assessment teams visited dozens of aid projects as they travelled through Sudan, gaining a first-hand impression of impacts in the field. The projects and programmes viewed include:

The influx of large numbers of displaced persons and the associated humanitarian aid has created a ‘relief economy’ in some Darfurian towns, which is in turn driving environmental degradation
• food aid programmes managed by WFP, contractors and partners in several states;
• UN agency and government-managed internally displaced persons camps in Darfur;
• the WFP-managed Southern Sudan roads and Bor dyke projects;
• FAO agricultural projects in Southern Kordofan;
• UN and other agency compound- and facility-building programmes in Southern Sudan;
• return and support programmes managed by WFP, FAO, UNHCR and IOM in Jonglei state;
• EC-sponsored Oxfam agricultural projects in the Tokar delta, in Red Sea state;
• the Dinder National Park GEF project;
• the USAID STEP project training facilities in Southern Sudan;
• the Port Sudan GEF project for the Marine Environmental Protection Authority; and
• the Nile Basin Initiative project offices and sites.

UN Sudan environmental impact grading and integration assessment

The environmental impact of UN aid and peacekeeping programmes is rarely studied, due to the understandable priority of providing urgently needed vital services and commodities such as security, food, drinking water and shelter. In Sudan, however, the humanitarian programme has now been managing a series of crises for over twenty years. The UN and partners spend over USD 2 billion per year in the country (including peacekeeping costs [14.2]) and work in a number of environmentally degraded regions like Northern Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Kassala. UNEP therefore considers that an assessment of the environmental impacts of the UN Sudan programme is warranted.

The international aid community in Sudan operates at least partly outside the national regulatory framework. For environmental issues, such as the potential impact of the programmes it manages, the aid community is effectively fully self-governed. There is no single mandatory or even agreed environmental standard or code of conduct guiding the UN agencies and their partners operating in Sudan and or other post-conflict countries.

To date, the most relevant document is the SPHERE Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response [14.3], which includes some guidance notes and limited standards on the environmental impact of specific activities. Several agencies also have internal guidelines, which are generally voluntary and applied at the discretion of the agency country director (or head of mission for peacekeepers).

In the absence of an agreed and appropriate existing standard, UNEP adopted a three-part system for this assessment:

1. Assessing the potential negative environmental impacts of projects using the established UNEP/World Bank ‘ABC’ project screening system;
2. Searching for evidence of integration of environmental issues into project design and implementation by qualitative review; and
3. Searching for potential positive environmental impacts of projects by qualitative review.

The UNEP/World Bank ‘ABC’ system for screening the environmental impact of projects is a qualitative process that gives a preliminary rating to projects based on project size, type, and location [14.4]:

• Category A: likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts (on a national scale);
• Category B: likely to have adverse environmental impacts; and
• Category C: likely to have negligible or no environmental impact.
14.2 Overview of international aid in Sudan

A major and long-standing aid programme

Foreign aid – which has played a crucial role in the country’s development – has had a turbulent history in Sudan, with changes in the political regime and economic crises leading to corresponding modifications in donor country programmes.

Development aid commenced after independence and continues to this day. Sudan first obtained public sector loans for development from a wide variety of international agencies and individual governments. Major lenders included the World Bank (both the International Development Association and the International Finance Corporation), as well as the governments of the United States, China, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia. As Sudan defaulted on some of its debts in the late 1970s, however, many of these credit providers have now ceased development loans and provide direct grants or other forms of assistance instead.

Large-scale humanitarian aid, which now constitutes approximately 80 percent of direct international aid to Sudan, started in the 1980s. Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) was established in April 1989 as a consortium of two UN agencies, UNICEF and the World Food Programme, as well as more than 35 non-governmental organizations [14.5]. It provided humanitarian assistance to central and south Sudan without a major break for 17 years, and continues today, in modified form. Current large-scale humanitarian assistance operations in Darfur began in 2003 and are ongoing, with over 2,000,000 beneficiaries [14.1].

The aid programme for 2006

Total international aid to Sudan for 2006 was valued at over USD 2 billion, making Sudan the largest recipient of direct aid in Africa. Approximately USD 1.7 billion were received in the form of grants, commodities and services, and other direct assistance monitored by the UN. Other sources of aid, which are less easily quantifiable, included aid managed outside the UN system, aid from Arab states and China, and development loans from a range of international partners.

Given that Sudan’s estimated gross domestic product for 2005 was USD 85.5 billion [14.6], international aid in 2006 represented 2 to 4 percent of the economy (depending on the method of measurement and multiplier effect). Table 26 shows the total humanitarian aid requested in the UN Work Plan of January 2006, broken down into twelve themes or sectors. Table 27 shows the same expenditure divided by state and region (with some projects labelled as national in scope).
In practice, expenditure is further broken down into two major categories: humanitarian (USD 1.519 billion or 88 percent), and recovery and development (USD 211 million or 12 percent).

The strong emphasis on humanitarian projects shows that the majority of international aid to Sudan is currently aimed at saving lives. In line with humanitarian needs, most of the aid goes to Darfur and Southern Sudan. Recovery and development needs are secondary. Projects related to good governance – which is a core issue for environment – received USD 12 million or 0.7 percent of the total amount of aid for 2006.

### 14.3 Overview of environmental aid programmes in Sudan

#### Historical programmes related to the environment

Investment in the environment in Sudan began in the form of wildlife-related initiatives in the early 20th century. These were followed in the post-war period by a range of technical studies on soil, flora and fauna, some quite detailed in nature [14.7]. After independence, investment in environmentally beneficial projects continued but on an insignificant scale compared to the environmentally destructive agricultural development projects initiated at the same time. The most significant historical aid projects are probably the forestry and shelter belt projects implemented and managed by FAO from the 1970s to the 1990s, evidence of which UNEP sighted in the course of field reconnaissance in Khartoum state, White Nile state and Northern Kordofan.

#### Current structure

The current arrangements for the delivery of environmentally oriented aid programmes to Sudan are not structured or formally connected in any way, and are not comprehensively recorded in any management system. Based on the information available, UNEP has categorized environment-related projects and expenditure for 2006 in Table 28 on the following page.

It should be noted that while projects related to water and sanitation do have environmental aspects, they were not categorized as ‘environmental projects’ in this assessment. The criteria used by UNEP to identify specific ‘environmental projects’ were those provided by Part 1 of UN Millennium Development Goal no. 7: integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources. Only projects whose objectives correspond to these criteria were considered as ‘targeted environmental projects’. Note that Water and Sanitation is an entire sector of the UN Sudan Work Plan.
Targeted environmental projects within humanitarian programmes

Using the aforementioned criteria, the assessment identified only three projects in the humanitarian field in 2006 that were specifically targeted at environmental issues; UNEP is involved in two of these:

- the Tearfund Darfur environment study, which began in the third quarter of 2006 [14.8]; this assessment-based project is funded to a total of USD 200,000 by UNICEF, DFID, and UNHCR – UNEP has provided technical assistance;
- the International Red Cross flood preparedness and tree-planting project in IDP settlements in Khartoum; UNEP is funding this project for USD 60,000; and
- the forestation and provision of alternative energy resources (fuel-efficient stoves) project, funded to a total of USD 30,000 by the Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD).

Targeted environmental projects within recovery and development programmes

The UNEP assessment found only two projects in the recovery and development field in 2006 that were specifically targeted at environmental issues:

- the UNEP post-conflict environmental assessment for Sudan, funded by Sweden and the United Kingdom; and
- the Sudan Transitional Environment Programme (STEP) funded by USAID for approximately USD 6 million over a period of three years (see Case Study 14.1) [14.9, 14.10].
Mainstreaming environmental issues in conventional country programmes

There are no established criteria within the UN to determine whether an aid project has truly integrated or mainstreamed environmental issues into its design and implementation, or made a serious attempt to do so. Accordingly, the UNEP assessment was based on an ad hoc qualitative analysis using the following checklist of questions:

1. Has any form of environmental impact assessment, even very basic, been carried out?
2. Has the project design been altered significantly on the basis of such an EIA?
3. Have any proactive measures been taken to minimize environmental impacts?
4. Have any opportunities for a positive environmental impact been proactively included in the project?

UNEP screened over 650 country projects for Sudan in 2006 and found that only four could be considered by any reasonable measure to have truly mainstreamed environmental issues or made a serious attempt to do so. None of these were in the 2006 UN Work Plan:

- the USAID-sponsored WFP and GTZ management of the construction-related impacts of the Southern Sudan roads programme [14.11] (see Case Study 14.2);
- the USAID-sponsored construction of the Bor dyke [14.12];
- a camp rehabilitation project managed by UNHCR and IUCN in Kassala state [14.13]; and
- a town planning project sponsored by USAID in Southern Sudan [14.9].

CS 14.1 The USAID Sudan Transitional Environment Programme for Southern Sudan

The USAID Sudan Transitional Environment Programme (STEP), which is focused on stability and the prevention of conflict, was established in August 2005. It aims to address critical environmental issues that constitute potential sources of conflict in Southern Sudan.

The STEP team is currently working with the Directorate of Environmental Affairs in the GOSS Ministry of Environment, Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MEWCT), to establish an inter-ministerial GOSS Environmental Consultative Group, whose mandate is to bring together representatives of key ministries to discuss and sanction the establishment and implementation of government-wide environmental policies, procedures and guidelines for impact monitoring in selected sectors (transportation and roads, water and sanitation, oil exploration and production, education and health).

To date, the STEP team has trained 120 GOSS officials in environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures. These trained personnel are expected to conduct EIAs for all projects that are considered to have serious environmental consequences. STEP has also facilitated the establishment of the South Sudan National Environment Association (SSNEA), and contracted a short-term organizational establishment consultant from among the members of the organization to promote early activities within the membership.

In addition, STEP has organized study tours to sub-Saharan African countries for GOSS officials to be exposed to modern environmental and natural resources sustainable management practices.

The Programme’s most significant undertaking, in collaboration with the World Food Programme and the GOSS Ministry of Transport and Roads, has been the successful completion of environmental impact assessments for the WFP road project (see Case Study 14.2) and the Bor dyke.
Since late 2003, some 1,400 km of road have been rebuilt under the WFP project

CS 14.2 The Southern Sudan roads project

The Southern Sudan roads project is an example of how the assessment and mitigation of environmental impacts can be built into aid projects, as well as an illustration of how aid-funded development projects can have a significant negative effect on the environment.

Two decades of civil war destroyed the region’s road network and most other infrastructure, leaving it isolated and economically crippled. With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the return of peace, the need to connect isolated and remote areas to major towns was deemed a high priority by the Government of Southern Sudan, the United Nations and USAID.

To facilitate the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the delivery of much-needed humanitarian aid to the remote regions of Southern Sudan, USAID contracted the World Food Programme (WFP) to rebuild and maintain the region’s dilapidated road network.

The WFP road project aims to rebuild more than 3,000 km of roads in the war-ravaged south, at a cost of USD 183 million. Pending sufficient funding, the entire region will eventually be opened up by improving road links between Kenya, Uganda and Sudan (see Figure 14.1). It will also connect the Nile River to key feeder roads. Once complete, it will be possible, for the first time in a generation, to travel by road from the southern borders of Sudan to Khartoum and onto Egypt. Since late 2003, WFP has rebuilt some 1,400 km of roads, repaired bridges and culverts, and in the process removed and destroyed some 200,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance in Southern Sudan. The project has linked major towns across the south and reopened trade routes with neighbouring countries.

The social and economic benefits of the work completed to date are undeniable: according to a recent WFP survey, the roads built so far have halved travel time to markets, schools and health centres. Bus services now operate on all major routes and the cost of public transport has decreased by 50 to 60 percent. The price of commodities has also fallen. Besides, the roads project employs 1,650 Sudanese nationals, including 250 working in de-mining.

The negative environmental impacts of the project, however, are also clear. According to the USAID-sponsored EIA, these include soil erosion, impacts on local hydrology, negative aspects of abandoned borrow pits, construction camp impacts, road dust, and most importantly, the indirect but real impact of opening up large regions of tropical forest and several protected areas.

UNEP can add one specific issue to this general list: the effect of traffic on wildlife, as seen on the Bor-Padak road in Jonglei state, which cuts directly across the annual migration route of several hundred thousand antelope (tiang and white-eared kob). The road is also likely to attract settlers and make large-scale hunting much easier. Appropriate mitigation measures are needed as a matter of urgency if this road is not to become the root cause of a decline in these wildlife populations.
Proposed and planned environmental programmes for Sudan

A number of projects related to the environment of Sudan have been proposed and are expected to start in 2007, subject to funding and other issues. These include:

- the Africa Parks Foundation-Cousteau Society project (Phase I) for protected area management and integrated coastal zone management (Red Sea state only);
- the Wildlife Conservation Society programme for Southern Sudan wildlife and protected area management;
- the expanded USAID Sudan Transitional Environment Programme (STEP) for Southern Sudan;
- the UNEP-UNICEF Darfur integrated water resource management project;
- the UNEP-UNDP Darfur aid and environment project;
- the UNEP-UNDP Darfur conflict and environment project; and
- the UN Habitat Darfur ‘woodless construction’ project.

Regional environmental programmes

As set out in Table 29 on the following page, Sudan is a participant in numerous regional programmes that include an element of aid provision on environmental topics, in addition to opportunities for networking and cooperating with surrounding countries. Each programme focuses on the issues related to the management of a major shared natural resource or a shared problem. Note that the total value covers all countries involved in the programme (UNEP efforts to obtain clarity on Sudan’s share were unsuccessful due to time constraints).

The majority of the funding for these programmes comes via the Global Environment Facility, and each programme is managed entirely separately. Administration and funds are managed by UNDP Khartoum.

Figure 14.1 Southern Sudan roads programme

Legend
- Current and planned road development
- Main settlements
- State boundary

Source:
Roads: World Food Programme (WFP).
Image: Blue Marble.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
The international aid community in Sudan includes a wide range of actors, as illustrated by this water point established by a partnership of UN and development cooperation agencies and international NGOs.

Table 29. Regional aid-based programmes related to the environment [14,14]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Total value (million USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA programme)</td>
<td>19,34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nile Basin Initiative, the environmental component of which is the Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project</td>
<td>27,15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulation of an action programme for the integrated management of the shared Nubian aquifer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration of sustainable alternatives to DDT and strengthening of national vector control capabilities in the Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>8,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstreaming conservation of migratory soaring birds into key productive sectors along the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway</td>
<td>10,24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of persistent organic pollutants and adoption of integrated pest management for termites</td>
<td>3,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of barriers to the introduction of cleaner artisanal gold mining and extraction technologies</td>
<td>7,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>76,85</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Table 30. Global Environment Facility projects for Sudan [14.14]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme name</th>
<th>Convention</th>
<th>Cost (million USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National biodiversity strategies, action plan and the report to the CBD</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>0.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation and management of habitats and species, and sustainable community</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use of biodiversity in Dinder National Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearing-house mechanism enabling activity</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of capacity-building needs and country-specific priorities in biodiversity management and conservation in Sudan</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>0.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-based rangeland rehabilitation for carbon sequestration</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity-building to enable Sudan’s response and communication to the UNFCCC</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrier removal to secure PV market penetration in semi-urban Sudan</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expedited financing of climate change enabling activities (Phase I)</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) for Global Environmental Management</td>
<td>Multi-focal areas</td>
<td>0.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial assistance to Sudan to meet its obligations under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)</td>
<td>Persistent organic pollutants (POPs)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4.765</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Global programmes promoting compliance with international conventions

As detailed in Chapter 13, Sudan is a signatory to sixteen multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). The majority of these MEAs provide aid to developing countries to assist them to work towards compliance with the terms of the agreement. This aid focuses on the years immediately following the signing, to support the signatories in understanding the obligations, collecting data, and planning a country-specific compliance programme. The best funded MEAs are the climate change (UNFCCC) and biodiversity (CBD) conventions, which are funded through the Global Environment Facility.

In the period 2002-2006, Sudan benefited from eleven GEF-funded projects to a total of USD 4.76 million, as detailed in Table 30 above.

Each programme is/was managed entirely separately. Administration and funds are/were managed by UNDP Khartoum. As of end 2006, Sudan had not yet proposed any projects for GEF funding Tranche 4.

14.4 Overview of impacts and issues for aid and the environment

Unintended impacts and coordination issues

UNEP’s assessment revealed a wide range of issues linked to unintended impacts of aid programmes, aid effectiveness and coordination. The key issues were considered to be:

- agricultural substitution by food aid;
- environmental impacts of humanitarian, and recovery and development country programmes;
- lack of issue integration into UN country programmes; and
- environment sector management and effectiveness.
Agricultural substitution by food aid

The dominant but unintended impact of aid on the environment in Sudan is linked to the provision of food aid by the international community to over 6,000,000 destitute people, or approximately 15 percent of the population. Food aid has been supplied to the Sudanese on a large scale since 1989. Its provision has become almost institutionalized and routine, particularly in Southern Sudan and increasingly in Darfur.

Without international or national aid, and in the absence of import purchasing power, this food would have to be produced in Sudan, placing an additional burden on the rural environment, particularly in the northern half of the Sahel. In many of the poorer and arid parts of Sudan such as Northern Darfur, it is clear that this extra load would intensify the observed land degradation to potentially critical levels.

This finding raises the important issue of how the international community proposes to eventually cease large-scale provision of food aid to Sudan. Any exit strategy will need to consider the risk of increased land degradation in the most vulnerable areas, if only to reduce the likelihood of having to remobilize food aid to the same areas as a result of famine arising from desertification.

The option of shifting large return populations to lesser stressed areas in order to reduce food aid is also problematic in the long term, as the assessment has shown that no area in Sudan is immune from the population-linked problems of deforestation and land degradation. Moving people south to higher rainfall areas will not solve the underlying problem.

One potential approach would be to focus on assisting economic development in order to enable more of the population to shift from subsistence agriculture to alternative livelihoods, relying on household purchasing power for food security. Food would be purchased from the domestic market, taking a share of what is currently exported. Such an approach would also have a linked environmental payback.

Environmental impacts of humanitarian, and recovery and development country programmes

Of the 661 projects screened, two projects were classified as Category A (likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts), one project as Category B (likely to have adverse environmental impacts), and 658 projects as Category C (likely to have negligible or no environmental impact).
The two Category A projects are the Southern Sudan roads rehabilitation programme (see Case Study 14.2) and the Bor flood control dyke project in Jonglei state by the Bor-Padak rural trunk road. Both of these major infrastructure initiatives have followed a form of EIA process, and are in this respect considered positive examples for the UN. However – as indicated in the EIA studies themselves [14.11, 14.12] – their negative environmental impacts are likely to be significant on a local scale. The negative environmental impacts of the Bor dyke project, in particular, have a direct link to livelihoods and food security.

While the proactive implementation of an EIA process by USAID is to be commended, the fact that this process was essentially self-managed by USAID and its contractors highlights an evident need for environmental governance at the national level and/or some form of environmental standard for international aid projects of this nature. At present, many bilateral agencies are more advanced than the UN in this respect, as they already have some form of environmental policy, standard and safeguard system in place.

The Category B project-related issue is linked to the operation of health clinics in Southern Sudan. The waste management situation in Southern Sudan is generally problematic, and there are currently no clinical waste management facilities in the region. Disposal options for clinical waste are thus far from optimal, although investments in waste management are underway as of early 2007.

The great majority of projects rated as Category C are considered to have negligible environmental impacts on the national scale, but adverse effects are expected at the local level for all projects, except for purely human resource projects such as training.

However, the cumulative impact of more than 650 projects is expected to be very significant. In this context, environmental best practice or proactive mitigation measures at the local level become more important.

**Lack of issue integration into UN country programmes**

Not one of the 658 non-environmental projects listed in the 2006 UN Work Plan were judged by UNEP to have fully integrated or ‘mainstreamed’ environmental issues, though one project had made a serious attempt to do so (the WFP and GTZ management of the construction-related impacts of the Southern Sudan roads programme, see Case Study 14.2).

This finding is surprising in its uniformity and indicates that the UN humanitarian, recovery and development teams in Sudan are clearly not taking environmental issues into account in project planning and implementation in the field, despite some awareness of the importance of environmental issues within the aid community.

UNEP looked for best practice in environmental management in aid projects through a process of project field inspections and desk study reviews, and found that individual examples of good practice stood out against a background of generally indifferent or poor environmental management. Waste management and use of construction materials contributing to deforestation were two key areas of concern.

**Environment sector aid management and effectiveness**

A range of management issues significantly reduce the environmental aid sector’s effectiveness in Sudan. The key problems are fragmentation, lack of coordination, limited prioritization and lack of counterpart funding. These issues are perhaps not unique to Sudan or to the environment sector, but nonetheless need to be addressed if future aid is to be used to the country’s best advantage.

The total budget allocated to the environment in Sudan by the international aid community is almost impossible to evaluate accurately, as the sector is extremely fragmented. UNEP identified over twenty ongoing or proposed aid-funded environmental activities for Sudan, through a year-long process of enquiry and discovery; it is likely that a number of additional existing projects were not found.

Coordination is quite limited, and there is no central reporting system. Furthermore, there is no formal or regular forum in which the numerous actors in the environmental field can meet and exchange information – all such events to date
have been ad hoc. The MEA and GEF global structure contributes to this confusion, as it results in a number of separate teams and projects running in parallel, with no permanent country presence and multiple reporting lines.

In addition, there is no consistent country-driven prioritization process. Generally speaking, regional programmes appear to be reasonably well aligned with country needs, as they have long consultation and development processes that allow for more meaningful local input. In contrast, global MEA activities in Sudan are presently managed in a formulaic manner, by which a series of standard steps are taken in order to progress eligibility for subsequent funding. This is not conducive to the alignment of future projects with the priorities of the country.

This overall negative review is somewhat offset by the quality of the individual projects. While the UNEP assessment did not extend to a project audit level, the reconnaissance work indicated that individual projects were often very well designed and managed. Many projects had very accurately identified several of the key issues and developed appropriate solutions. Two good examples of this were the programme for Dinder National Park managed by UNDP and HCENR, and the rehabilitation of community rangelands project managed by UNDP. Both have now been completed.

A further defining feature of the environmental aid sector over the last decade has been the very limited extent of government counterpart funding. In many projects, the funding has been 100 percent international, with no financial contribution by the government. This has resulted in aid-generated structural problems and a lack of government ownership and continuity.

The Khartoum-based secretariat of the GONU Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources was originally conceived as a coordinating body. Now however, most of its funding and activities are focused on the implementation of MEA and GEF-funded projects. As such, it has essentially become an organization sustained by international aid in the form of a series of often unrelated convention projects. Most of the HCENR staff work on a contract basis, and return to academia upon project completion. As a result, there has been negligible capacity-building in the core civil service from these projects.

The lack of government ownership in the environmental sector is also evident in the lack of counterpart funding. In many cases, projects have been shut down when international aid has ceased, and Sudan now has a series of needs assessments, capacity assessments, status reports and management plans that have progressed to final document stage and no further.

This lack of government counterpart funding for environmental issues was relatively understandable in the war economy that prevailed for over two decades. Now however, Sudan should start to contribute significantly to this sector.

**Analysis of the findings**

In the 2006 Work Plan, environment was designated by the UN as one of four cross-cutting issues for special focus (the other three were HIV/AIDS, gender and capacity-building). UNEP was nominated as the UN focal point for environment, and this assessment is one of its initial activities in attempting to ‘mainstream’ or integrate environmental issues into the UN aid agenda in Sudan.

The assessment results are overall fairly negative, but not uniformly so, as a number of high quality projects and efforts were noted. Two core problems were identified. First, the impacts of good individual projects and efforts are greatly weakened by a lack of integration into the core government and international aid programmes. Second, the environment and natural resource management sector suffers from a lack of funding and funding continuity. Indeed, the five environment-specific programmes within the UN 2006 Work Plan had a combined budget of approximately USD 2.8 million, representing less than 0.2 percent of the UN country programme expenditure.

In order to direct corrective action, the underlying causes for these problems need to be understood. UNEP has identified the following five factors:

1. **Humanitarian focus.** Humanitarian responses are typically designed for fast mobilization in emergencies, which allows little time for integration of cross-cutting issues like the environment. Agencies engaged in humanitarian work have mandates and management procedures to focus
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The dyke by the Bor-Padak rural trunk road was dug to control flooding in the region, but is now a cause for concern as it is leading the land beyond it to dry out and is thus reducing grazing land for both livestock and wildlife.

on supply to beneficiaries without corresponding attention to management of the (natural) resources used for supply. This exacerbates the risk of environmental degradation.

Sudan is unusual in that the emergency has been ongoing for many years, but given that the humanitarian needs are not diminishing on an annual basis, the general approach has not changed. Long-term resident UN programmes are usually development-focused; in Sudan it is the opposite.

2. Lack of a resident agency focal point for the environment. The promotion of environmental issues is a subject at the margins of the mandates of many UN agencies, but only one agency – UNEP – has it as its core mandate. Historically, UNEP has not been present in the field on a residential basis. As a result, the topic of environment is in part orphaned and struggles to compete for attention and funding, given the plethora of other often very urgent issues facing the UN country team.

3. Managerial separation of the global and regional environmental programmes from the UN country programme. At present, the majority of the funding for environment in Sudan comes from the secretariats of the multilateral environmental conventions (MEAs) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). A very small regional contribution comes directly from UNEP. None of these institutions currently have a residential presence in Sudan and are hence not answerable in any way to the UN country team (bar UNEP starting in 2006). UNDP is often tasked with administering convention and GEF projects, but does not have full discretion on allocation and management issues.

4. Lack of quantification and measurable results. In the general drive for aid effectiveness, it is important that needs and aid programme outputs be measured. This is very well established for the humanitarian sector (food tonnage delivered, number of wells installed etc.). In contrast, work in the environmental sector in Sudan has been largely
qualitative. Needs and outputs have not always been clearly defined and stated in the context of the overall goals of the UN response. This tends to work against attracting and retaining aid investment.

5. Lack of high-level government buy-in. The lack of significant and high-level pressure on the UN from GONU regarding environmental issues indicates that the government has not been convinced of the scale and importance of the needs in this sector either.

14.5 Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion

The assessment of the international aid programme in Sudan has raised a number of issues that need to be resolved to avoid inadvertently doing harm through the provision of aid, and to improve the effectiveness of aid expenditure in the environmental sector.

The dominant impact of aid on the environment in Sudan is the provision of food aid to some 15 percent of the population. Sudan is essentially now caught in a vicious circle of food aid dependence and environmental degradation: if food aid were reduced to encourage a return to agriculture, the result under current circumstances would be an intensification of land degradation, leading to the high likelihood of a return to food insecurity in the long term.

The analysis of the other links between international aid and the environment in Sudan indicates that most aid does not cause significant harm to the environment. However, integration of environmental issues into the current programme is negligible, and the environment-related expenditure that does occur – while it is acknowledged and welcomed – suffers from a range of management problems that reduce its effectiveness.

Background to the recommendations

Given the current environmental situation in Sudan, increased international aid for environmental issues is warranted. All other issues being equal, the level of food security in many parts of Sudan will gradually drop and rural livelihoods will be increasingly threatened unless problems such as desertification and deforestation are tackled. This in turn will drive conflict, displacement, and further degradation, and as a result increase demands for humanitarian aid and peacekeeping.

At the same time as investment is increased, the effectiveness of all expenditure for environmental issues will need to be significantly improved through better coordination and other structural reforms.

The recommendations below are based on the themes of improved UN coordination and national ownership, which are two of the principles currently driving UN and aid reform in Africa and elsewhere. The majority of the programmes requiring investment are listed in other chapters; the financial investment in this chapter relates solely to coordination and UN agency assistance.

Recommendations for the United Nations in Sudan

R14.1 Implement a focal point and long-term, centralized environmental technical assistance service for aid agencies in Sudan. The long-term goal is the full integration of environmental issues into the UN aid programme in Sudan. This recommendation entails the establishment of UNEP offices in Khartoum and Juba, the provision of a service for environmental advice and rapid assessment for all agencies and NGOs, and a focal point to promote investment and coordination in environmental issues.

CA: TA; PB: UNCT; UNP: UNEP; CE: 3M; DU: 3 years

R14.2 Help mainstream environmental issues into the UN programme through improved structure and monitoring via the UN Work Plan. This would entail measures such as collating and including all ongoing environmental projects from all parties into the annual UN Work Plan process and elevating environment from a ‘cross-cutting issue’ to an investment sector or sub-sector.

CA: GROL; PB: UN RCHC; UNP: UNEP and UNDP; CE: nil; DU: ongoing
R14.3 Advise future international environmental aid proposals and funding offers to fit within a national management framework presented by the combination of the UN Work Plan, the UNEP assessment and the GONU and GOSS NPEM processes. This would not entail additional fund-raising, but only directing funds towards priority areas and projects as determined by these linked processes, which have already conducted the groundwork to develop a list of priorities and have a high level of ownership at the national level.

CA: GROL; PB: UN RCHC; UNP: UNEP and UNDP; CE: nil; DU: ongoing

R14.4 Set government counterpart funding as a key criterion for funding environmental projects in Sudan. The level of funding provided by the government partner is a litmus test for government commitment and the prospects for sustainable project benefits. The international: national funding ratio should in no case be greater than 4:1, and should ideally be 1:1 or less.

CA: GROL; PB: GONU and GOSS; UNP: UNEP; CE: nil; DU: 3 years then review

Recommendations for the Government of National Unity

R14.5 Officially designate and support the GONU Ministry of Environment and Physical Development as the GONU focal point for liaison for all international aid projects in the environmental sector that require a GONU government partner, including MEAs and GEF projects. This will significantly assist coordination and central planning. Once contact and a framework are established, liaison can be delegated to the appropriate level on a project-specific basis. This initiative needs to include capacity-building (see Chapter 13) to enable the government to participate actively in such projects.

CA: GROL; PB: MEPD; UNP: UNEP; CE: nil; DU: 3 years then review

Recommendations for the Government of Southern Sudan

R14.6 Officially nominate and support the GOSS Ministry of Environment, Wildlife Conservation and Tourism as the GOSS focal point for liaison for all international aid projects in the environmental sector that require a GOSS government partner, including GEF projects. This will significantly assist coordination and central planning. Once contact and a framework are established, liaison can be delegated to the appropriate level on a project-specific basis. This initiative needs to include capacity-building (see Chapter 13) to enable the government to actively participate in such projects.

CA: GROL; PB: MEWCT; UNP: UNEP; CE: nil; DU: 3 years then review