FINAL COMMUNIQUE
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-Second Session of the Commission
and
Thirteenth Meeting of the Conference of Ministers
23-27 April 1987
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

FINAL COMMUNIQUE


2. The meeting was honoured by both the enlightening opening address of His Excellency Comrade Addis Tesla, Member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Workers Party of Ethiopia and Vice-Chairman of the National Committee for Central Planning of Socialist Ethiopia, on behalf of the Head of State of Ethiopia, and, on 25 April 1987, by the inspiring Third ECA Silver Jubilee Lecture on Africa in the Year 2000 and Beyond by His Excellency General Olusegun Obasanjo, former Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Conference of Ministers also received with appreciation the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, delivered by the Executive Secretary, which highlights his effort to mobilize the entire United Nations System for the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, and the international community for providing the necessary technical and financial support to African countries. The Conference expressed support for the efforts of the Secretary-General, especially the setting up of a special group of eminent persons to advise him on actions required for the alleviation of the financial burdens of the hard-pressed African countries.

3. The Conference of Ministers also expressed its gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, Mr. Idé Oumarou, for his thoughtful statement at the opening of the meeting. The Conference of Ministers was also privileged to welcome the United Nations Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, Mr. Jean Ripert, and Mr. Stephen Lewis, Ambassador of Canada to the United Nations and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for the United Nations Programme of Action, both of whom addressed the meeting.
4. In his introductory statement, the Executive Secretary of ECA provided an in-depth overall account of developments that have taken place in various socio-economic sectors as well as activities at national, subregional and continental levels with respect to the implementation of Africa's Priority Programme for African Economic Recovery and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. In his assessment of African economic performance, the Executive Secretary drew the attention of the Conference to the Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa 1985-1986, the ECA/ADB Economic Report on Africa, 1987 and ECA's Preliminary Survey on the Implementation of APPER and UN-PAAEND.

5. The meeting unanimously elected Mr. Soumaïla Cissé, Minister of Planning (Niger) as Chairman. He was assisted by a Bureau composed of the following other elected officers: Dr. Raja'a Abdel Rasoul, Vice-Minister of Planning (Egypt), First Vice-Chairman; Dr. Michael M. Sefali, Minister of Planning, Ministry of Planning, Manpower and Economic Development (Lesotho), Second Vice-Chairman; and Citoyen Sambwa Pida N'Bagui, State Commissioner for Planning (Zaire), Rapporteur.

6. The following forty States of the Commission took part in the meeting, most of them represented by their Ministers responsible for Economic Development and Planning, and other plenipotentiaries: Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

7. The meeting was also attended by observers from the following member States of the United Nations, non-members of the Commission: Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Germany (Democratic Republic), Germany (Federal Republic), Greece, Holy See, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela and Yugoslavia. The Organization of African Unity as well as most United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and several intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations including ECA-sponsored institutions were represented as observers. The African National Congress of South Africa was also represented.

8. The 13th meeting of the Conference of Ministers was the culmination of six separate intergovernmental meetings which were also held in Addis Ababa from 6 April 1987. These included (i) Seminar on Traditional Practices affecting the Health of Women and Children in Africa; (ii) the Sixth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of African Least-Developed Countries; (iii) the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in the Development Process; (iv) the meeting of the Central African Documentation and Information System (CADIS); (v) the Eighth Meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW) and (vi) the PADIS Technical Committee Meeting. As usual the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole provided the Conference with detailed comprehensive proposals, recommendations and resolutions on all items on its agenda. The Conference welcomed the excellent preparatory work done by TEPCOW which enabled it to undertake a comprehensive review of basic issues related to African development in the limited time available.
9. In reviewing the economic performance of the region in 1986, the Conference noted with satisfaction the generally good performance of agriculture which has markedly recovered from the severe and unprecedented drought of the 1983-1985 period. The good performance of this dominant sector of the African economy was positively reflected in the overall growth performance of many African countries especially non-oil exporters. Such a trend gives grounds for hope in the future, particularly for the implementation of sections in the UN-PAAERD dealing with the food and agricultural sector.

10. The Conference of Ministers commended the initiative of the ECA Executive Secretary in preparing an assessment of the efforts of the African countries in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, based on questionnaire returned from most of the member States. The Conference was encouraged by the steps taken by the majority of African countries with regard to such important issues as emergency preparedness mechanisms, afforestation programmes, provision of incentives for increasing food and agricultural production, land reform, structural adjustment and policy reforms programmes, and domestic resources mobilization.

11. The meeting noted with appreciation that African countries have begun to live up to their commitments in implementing the measures contained in the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development especially policy reforms for better management of their economies, efficient allocation of scarce resources, better control over public expenditure, full participation of the population in development, especially women, etc. The Conference urged the countries that have not done so, to fill the questionnaire prepared by the ECA Secretariat so as to have a more complete picture of Africa's response to UN-PAAERD. It also decided that the ECA Secretariat should expand the scope of the questionnaire so that African countries as well as the world community could be constantly kept informed of the efforts of the African region in its search for better future for its people.

12. While recognizing the tremendous efforts being made by African countries, the meeting noted with great concern the lack of concrete response from the international community especially bilateral and multilateral donors particularly in such critical areas as primary export commodities, concessional financial flows, protectionism in developed economies, and external indebtedness. The Conference was however encouraged by the recent initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General in seeking to provide durable solutions to Africa's pressing needs for adequate resources. Unless the present trend of a net capital outflow from Africa is reversed, the prospects for the domestic mobilization of the required US$89 billion for the implementation of UN-PAAERD will be dim.

13. The meeting further took note of and expressed its full support for the two forthcoming major international conferences on (i) Africa: The Challenge of Recovery and Accelerated Development to be held at Abuja, Nigeria from 15 to 19 June 1987 and (ii) the Human Dimensions of African Economic Recovery to be held in Libreville, Gabon from 12 to 15 October 1987. These two international gatherings will, no doubt, constitute a step forward in the accelerated implementation of the UN-PAAERD. The meeting also commended the initiative of the Government of Niger to organize in June 1987 a Symposium on Grassroot Development.
14. The meeting reviewed extensively the activities of the Secretariat and discussed relevant issues in various socio-economic sectors. On the whole the Conference adopted 34 resolutions on actions required in various areas mainly the mobilization of financial and technological resources for food and agriculture in Africa, the mobilization of resources for the accelerated implementation of the Industrial Development Decade for Africa, the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade for Africa, Trade and Development including intra-African trade and trade with other regions of the world, the integration of women in development, natural resources exploration and exploitation and environment protection, the social, cultural and human dimensions for the development process in Africa, economic planning and management and the mobilization of domestic financial resources for economic and social development.

15. In order to strengthen the response capacities of the African region and its preparedness for coping with future natural calamities such as drought, desertification and cyclones, the Conference of Ministers has been following the preparatory activities for the establishment of an African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD). After a number of consultations between the ECA and UNDP Secretariats on the one hand, and some African member States on the other hand, the Conference of Ministers, at its present session decided on the constitution of ACMAD and accepted, with great appreciation, the offer of the Government of Niger to host the Centre. The Conference further adopted a resolution requesting the Executive Secretary to take all necessary measures to make the Centre operational and calling the international community to provide the necessary support.

16. The Conference of Ministers has focussed its deliberations at subregional economic co-operation and integration. In this regard, the meeting welcomed the new orientation given by ECA in promoting integration projects in basic economic sectors. The Conference also welcomed the decision of UNDP, in the framework of its 4th Programming Cycle, to denote substantial support of such orientation. The role and activities of the MULPCs were also reviewed by the Conference and their importance emphasized in fostering subregional economic co-operation.

17. In the field of Trade and Development, the Conference of Ministers focussed its attention on the preparations for UNCTAD VII. In this regard, the Conference endorsed the Addis Ababa Declaration of African Ministers responsible for Trade and Development Preparatory to UNCTAD VII, held from 16 to 18 March which puts great emphasis on such issues as resources for development including financial and related monetary questions, commodities, trade relations among countries having different economic and social systems as well as the problems of the Least-Developed countries.
18. As in the past, since 1980, the Conference of Ministers endorsed the report of the 7th Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African Least-Developed Countries (LDCs). The Conference noted with concern the increasing number of African LDCs from 21 countries in 1981 at the adoption of the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA) to 27 in 1987. It is therefore imperative to reverse the above trend and to accelerate the implementation of the SNPA. In this regard, the Conference was encouraged by the recent economic performances of African LDCs, many of them having recorded satisfactory growth rates in 1986, especially in the food and agriculture sector.

19. In accordance with Resolution 1987/112 adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its Fourth Meeting on 6 February 1987, the Conference of Ministers examined the report of the Executive Secretary on the streamlining and rationalizing of the intergovernmental structures of the Commission. The Conference expressed its support to the proposals aimed at reducing both the frequency of the meetings of subsidiary organs of the Commission and their duration.

20. The meeting was however concerned about the drastic reduction of resources of the ECA Secretariat which had a negative impact on the implementation of the 1986-1987 biennial programme, in spite of the commendable efforts of the Executive Secretary in mobilizing extra-budgetary resources for the implementation of the activities of the Secretariat. The Conference of Ministers, therefore, after a careful and detailed review of the proposed biennial work programme for 1988-1989 gave its full support to the above programme. The Conference of Ministers has consequently appealed to the United Nations General Assembly to ensure that the ECA Secretariat is provided with adequate resources especially in view of the important role it is playing in the implementation of APPR and UN-PAAERD. The Conference has also approved the 1990-1991 Medium-Term Plan.

21. The meeting also reviewed the progress made in the utilization of pledges to the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD) in 1985 and 1986 as well as projects and activities for the financing of which the 1987 pledging conference was held on Saturday 25 April 1987. The Sixth Pledging Conference took place on 25 April 1987 and, in spite of the severe financial constraints facing the region, eight African countries have announced contributions amounting to 304,429 US dollars while six other countries, who have also pledged will indicate to the ECA Secretariat the corresponding amounts. In addition, the Conference noted with appreciation the contribution of the staff of the ECA Secretariat who has also pledged an amount of 500,000 US dollars.

22. The year 1988 will be ECA 30th anniversary which will be celebrated during the twenty-third session of the Commission and fourteen meeting of the Conference of Ministers. The Conference accepted by acclamation and appreciation the invitation of the Government of Niger to host these activities. It was accordingly decided that the 23rd Session of the Commission and 14th Meeting of the Conference of Ministers together with the 30th Anniversary celebration will take place from 25 to 29 April 1988.
23. The ECA Conference of Ministers expressed its profound gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency Comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam, General-Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers Party of Socialist Ethiopia, Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council and Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Socialist Ethiopia, the Government and the People of Socialist Ethiopia for their generous hospitality for providing, once again, the necessary facilities for the holding of this session.

Done at Addis Ababa
27 April 1987