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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

First Meeting of the Follow-up Committee
of the MULPOC for North Africa

Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya,
14 May 1990

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE FOLLOW-UP
COMMITTEE OF THE MULPOC FOR NORTH AFRICA

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The first meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the MULPOC for North Africa was held in Tripoli, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on 14 May 1990. The meeting was formally opened by Mr. Amar Abba, Deputy Director of Economic Affairs and International Finance at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Algeria, in his capacity as Chairman of the ninth meeting of the Committee of Experts of the MULPOC. After recalling how the Follow-up Committee had been set up and the mandate given it, he stated that the current meeting was meant to inform participants of the past and future activities of the MULPOC. The composition of the Bureau was to be the same as that for the ninth meeting of Council of plenipotentiaries, namely:

Chairman: Algeria
Vice-Chairman: the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Rapporteur: Morocco

2. He concluded by emphasizing the fact that the report would be submitted to the meeting of experts of the Tangier-based MULPOC, which would take place early in 1991.

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following States members of the MULPOC: Algeria, Egypt, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco and Tunisia.

B. AGENDA

4. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of the officers
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
4. Report on implementation of the programme of work and priorities for the period 1988-1989
5. Interim report on the establishment of the programme of work and priorities for the period 1990-1991
6. Annual review of economic and social conditions in the subregion 1989-1990
7. Progress achieved in implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER)

8. Study on linking national transport network development plans with the subregional transport programme
9. Rationalization of the activities of the North African MULPOC
10. Report on emigration from the North African countries
11. Draft biennial work programme and priorities for the period 1992-1993
12. Activities of the subregional Committees of the MULPOC
13. Any other business
14. Closing of the meeting.

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Report on implementation of the work programme and priorities for the period 1988-1989 (agenda item 4)

5. A representative of the secretariat introduced document ECA/MULPOC/WORK PROG./88-89. He stated that the report reviewed activities that the MULPOC was to carry out during the period under review. It had been possible to carry out all those activities through to cooperation among the member States and, particularly, the substantial contribution made by national experts to the MULPOC.

6. During the ensuing debate, participants thanked the secretariat and acknowledged that the MULPOC could play a vital role through its activities, in the establishment of a Preferential Trade Area (PTA) in the North African subregion. The establishment of such a PTA should be facilitated considerably by the favourable atmosphere created by the formation of the Maghreb Union. Participants further expressed their desire for national experts of member States to be associated more with activities of the MULPOC. Finally, a representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya informed the Committee that Libyan women participated actively in all levels of socio-economic development and in the political life of the country, in addition to the armed people.

7. The meeting took note of the report.

Interim report on implementation of the programme of work and priorities for the period 1990-1991 (agenda item 5)

8. A representative of the secretariat introduced document ECA/MULPOC/WORK PROG./90-91 on agenda item 5. He outlined the 1990-1991 work programme which included activities relating to the organisation of several meetings and the implementation of two annual studies on the socio-economic situation in the subregion as well as two other major studies. The first study would deal with North Africa's foreign trade and the possibility of redirecting trade in the subregion. The second study on integration and economic co-operation in the

North African subregion would begin with consultation and exchange of views among officials of member States.

9. The meeting took note of the report and stressed the need for implementing the 1990-1991 work programme according to schedule. The representatives of Algeria and Egypt, in particular, hoped that the seminar on emigration would be organised in the second half of 1990 as programmed and invited the secretariat of ECA to make every arrangement for the proper organisation of the seminar.

Annual survey on economic and social conditions in the subregion 1989-1990
(agenda item 6)

10. Under this agenda item, representative of the secretariat introduced document ECA/MULPOC/TANGIER/FOL.COM/1 whose conclusions are based on an analysis of data and information provided by Government of the subregion on their economic and social situation as well as on data and information contained in international publications and newspaper articles on the situation of the subregion.

11. During the ensuing debate, participants thanked the secretariat and stated that this survey which needs to be updated, contained many errors and that its data did not tally with those contained in the Economic Report on Africa 1990 published by the ECA secretariat. The survey also failed to mention that Egypt had undertaken as far back as 1980, a structural adjustment programme in line with the spirit of AAF-SAP and that Algeria was carrying out profound economic reforms. Participants stated that the outlook presented in the survey was too optimistic and contrasted with reality. The meeting recommended that the study should be updated to reflect realities in the subregion. Comparative analyses covering other subregions, must appear in the study.

12. The meeting took note of the report, insisting that it should be updated.

Progress made in the implementation of UN-PAAERD and APPER (agenda item 7)

13. Under this agenda item, the secretariat presented document ECA/MULPOC/TANGIER/APPER/UN-PAAERD/01/89.

14. Participants thanked the secretariat for introducing the agenda item and stated that member States should increasingly be involved in the gathering of data for the preparation of such a document. In cases, the document tended to be very critical in aspects that did not always reflect reality. One such case was paragraph 10 (referring to the instability of Governments and the lack of...) which drew heavy criticism. Participants requested that such references should be clarified and corrected.

15. The meeting took note of the document and called for the review of certain assertions and/or the correction of some data, in particular paragraph 19 which should have rather read: "the co-operatives system which prevailed in the 1960s"... and not the 1980s.

Study on the establishment of links between the national transport networks development plan and the subregional transport programme (agenda item 8)

16. In addition to introducing document ECA/MULPOC/TANGIER/TRANSPORT/01/89 on this agenda item, the secretariat drew attention to the following:

- (i) The implementation of the 1988-1989 biennial work programme had also covered the preparation of the following three studies included in the subregion's maritime transport programme:
 - Study on the guiding principles for the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes on manpower development in the area of maritime transport.
 - Study on the assessment and harmonization of maritime services, practices, regulations and policies in the subregion.
 - Study on the development of the shipbuilding industry in the subregion.
- (ii) The work programme that the North African Transport Committee adopted in November 1989 could be implemented only when member States provided the necessary financial support;
- (iii) Member States must contribute to the preparation of the programme for the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade for Africa (UNTACDA II).

17. With regard to the study on the establishment of links between national transport network development plans and the subregional transport programme, all participants regretted the fact that the study was no longer current and that it contained errors in all respects. Some data and information included in the study were erroneous. The study did not consider recent achievements in member States and projects recently identified within the Maghreb Union, such as the Maghreb highway project.

18. The representative of Algeria said that the study should have contained footnotes on pages 15 and 17 (of the french version) stating that the Tangier-Lagos highway project would be implemented in line with the recommendation of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning held in Tangier, Morocco, in November 1989. That recommendation had been based on the 1988 Kinshasa consensus on this issue.

19. There being no objection, the secretariat took due note of this proposal.

Rationalization of activities of the MULPOC for North Africa (agenda item 9)

20. After the introduction of document (ECA/MULPOC/TANGER/T.A.01/90) participants reaffirmed the importance they attached to the MULPOC and the need to scale down the number of the agenda items and the number of documents considered by its policy organs. It was stated that such rationalization of MULPOC activities in line with its work programme, resolutions of the policy organs and of the ECA Conference of Ministers.

Report on emigration from North African countries (agenda item 10)

21. Under this agenda item representative of the secretariat introduced document ECA/MULPOC/TANGIER/EM./90/1. The report reviewed issues relating to emigration from North African countries with emphasis on its characteristics and socio-economic impact. It also considered the problems relating to returning emigrants and their reintegration in society.

22. Participants thanked the secretariat for the quality of the report and its presentation. They expressed their wish to see emigration in Egypt and the Sudan included in the report. Egypt which had had a long experience in this field would be prepared to work with the MULPOC on a series of studies on this subject. The participants, particularly stressed the importance of holding the proposed seminar on emigration contained in the work programme of the MULPOC and urged the secretariat to organize the seminar during the 1990-1991 biennium.

23. The secretariat stated that it would do all in its power to ensure the holding of the seminar and that it had taken note of the suggestions made.

Draft biennial work programme and priorities from the period 1992-1993 (agenda item 11)

24. This agenda item was not discussed. However, participants stated that it was necessary to wait for the decision of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly on the transformation and strengthening of the MULPOCs, especially on the basis of the memorandum and resolution adopted by the twenty-fifth session of the ECA Conference of Ministers, in May 1990, as it would be premature to make any priority definition before then. On this score, the representative of Egypt urged the secretariat to make provision, in the 1992-1993 work programme, for popular participation involving mostly public and private operators of member states in the MULPOC meetings as well as for the proposed of new initiatives likely to improve the effectiveness of the MULPOC.

25. General participants recommended that the MULPOC work programme should take into account projects such as the Maghreb highway being implemented by the Maghreb Union.

Activities of the Subregional Committee of the MULPOC (agenda item 12)

26. The secretariat stated that there were only two reports of the Subregional Committee. One had featured under agenda item 8. The second had to do with PADIS whose official could not come to Tripoli owing to circumstances beyond his control.

27. The meeting took note of both reports.

28. Under this agenda item, the representative of Morocco stated that as part of its scheme for liberalising the taking of majority shares in the provision

of goods and services, Morocco was conducting a study on the organisation of competition in order to forestall the emergence of monopolies and agreements that would distort the rules of the market. To the extent that MULPOC countries adopt similar policies, the secretariat was urged to help with the implementation of the study so that it would benefit all countries of the region.

29. The meeting took due note.

Closing of the meeting (Agenda item 14)

30. At the closing session, the chairman stated that the meeting had been very useful in enabling member states of the MULPOC for North Africa to share views and experiences. That was important for revitalizing the MULPOC.

31. On behalf of participants and on his own behalf, the representative of Egypt congratulated Mr. Ben Saoud, Director of the MULPOC for North Africa on his efforts to operationalise the activities of the MULPOC. On his return to Egypt, he would do his utmost to ensure that the recommendations of the First meeting of the Follow-up Committee were implemented by his country.

32. He ended by thanking the secretariat for the work it had done at short notice.

33. The representative of Tunisia congratulated the chairman, the rapporteur and the secretariat together with all participants on the holding of the first meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the MULPOC for North Africa. He stressed that the creation of a preferential trade area would be a crucial stage in the economic integration of North Africa.

34. The chairman declared the meeting closed.

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