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REORGANIZATION OF THE MULPOCs: FOLLOW-UP ON THE REPORT OF THE EVALUATION MISSION TO REVIEW THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MULPOCs WITH A VIEW TO STRENGTHENING THEM AND MAKING THEM MORE EFFECTIVE
INTRODUCTION

1. At its sixteenth meeting held at Tripoli, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in May 1990, the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa took note of the report of the Review Team on the structures, organization and operations of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs). In the light of the critical assessment of the proposals of the Review Team, the Conference endorsed the main conclusions and recommendations of the Review Team. The member States concurred with the conclusion that the objectives and purposes for which the MULPOCs were established are more valid today than they were 13 years ago, giving the socio-economic challenges confronting the African countries in the 1990s. They strongly requested the United Nations General Assembly to provide the MULPOCs with additional human and financial resources to enable them to respond more effectively to multinational and multisectoral programming requirements based on priorities identified by the member States and the IGOs. They proposed specifically that the MULPOCs should be provided with a minimal core staff to achieve their objectives. They supported the recommendation that the current number and composition of the MULPOCs should be maintained since they fit in with the structure of existing subregional economic groupings. They decided that the MULPOCs should report directly to the ECA Conference of Ministers through the Committee of Intergovernmental Experts which will be responsible for supervising the activities of the MULPOCs at the subregional level. They stressed the relevance of the MULPOCs as United Nations agencies to provide technical assistance for promoting economic integration and co-operation especially in the field of multinational and multisectoral programme formulation and implementation.

2. The Council of Ministers adopted, therefore, resolution 1990/76 entitled "Transforming and strengthening the Multinational Programming and Operational Centre of the Economic Commission for Africa" to be presented to the Economic and Social Council and to the United Nations General Assembly for endorsement and implementation.

3. The second regular session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 4 to 27 July 1990 adopted the resolution 702 (XXV) on Transforming and strengthening the MULPOCs for submission to the General Assembly. Some members of ECOSOC, particularly, Italy, speaking on behalf of EEC and USSR requested to make a full study on the financial implications of the resolution 702 (XXV). The Secretary-General presented to the General Assembly the resolution 702 (XXV) with two supporting documents: (a) a report showing the additional staff requirements for MULPOCs during the biennium 1992-1993; (b) the programmatic justification of this additional staff.

I. ADDITIONAL STAFF REQUIREMENTS FOR MULPOCs, 1992-1993

4. Eight additional professional staff posts have been requested to strengthen the operational activities of the MULPOCs as dictated by the priority areas established by their member States during the biennium 1992-1993. With the available staff presently in post at the MULPOCs, the eight additional professionals will help to constitute the minimum core staff
needed to effectively respond to the needs of member States. Fourteen additional General Service staff were also requested to provide support for the eight additional professional staff, and to reinforce the existing support staff, which is considered as being inadequate.

5. This is the breakdown of requirements:

Two P-5: One for Niamey MULPOC who should be an agronomist and one for Yaounde MULPOC who should be a transport economist;

Two P-4: One for Lusaka MULPOC who should be a mining engineer and one for Tangier MULPOC who should be an agronomist;

Two P-3: One for Gisenyi MULPOC who should be an agronomist and one for Tangier who should be an environmental expert on marine life;

Two P-2: One should be for Gisenyi who should be an expert in women in development and one in Yaounde who would be an agronomist.

6. The differences in levels refer to the complexity of the task envisaged at each subregion. They also depend on the felt need to balance as much as possible the expertise in all the MULPOCs. This latter preoccupation made it necessary to take into account the level of the current staffing of MULPOCs.

7. The following justifications were given to support the request for each of the eight posts.

**Niamey MULPOC: Agronomist, P-5**

8. The West African subregion continues to face serious problems of food shortage. The achievement of self-sufficiency in food by the subregion is an important goal to be reached. The need for an agronomist at the P-5 level is, therefore, obvious.

9. The agronomist should have some knowledge in hydrology, irrigation and in general agricultural problems. He/she will promote also projects in the subregion which deal with basic development issues of agriculture, e.g. small irrigation schemes, small-scale livestock development, water conservation, afforestation linked to agriculture, etc.

**Yaounde MULPOC: Transport Expert, P-5**

10. The development of the Central African subregion has been seriously handicapped through lack of a good inter-State transport network system. This jeopardizes the attainment of self-sufficiency in food in particular and the development of inter-State trade in general.
11. The Transport Expert will promote projects for the establishment and development of inter-State road network, river transport to open up the hinterland of the subregion, coastal shipping, etc. He/she needs a solid experience which justifies the levels proposed for the recruitment.

**Lusaka MULPOC: Mining Engineer, P-4**

12. The subregion served by the Lusaka MULPOC heavily depends on mining activities as it is much endowed with many economic minerals including precious stones whose rational exploitation is likely to improve economic situation of some member States of the subregion.

13. The Mining Engineer to be recruited will assist in defining mining policies, promoting the rational exploitation and processing of the mineral resources of the subregion for meeting its needs. He/she will develop and promote feasible schemes for small-scale mining of precious stones linking available energy resources of the subregion with mineral resources so as to create complementarity in production.

**Tangier MULPOC: Agronomist, P-4**

14. The North African subregion quite recently experienced a severe deficit in food production and the situation is not likely to improve soon. The situation is, however, less pressing than in West Africa.

15. The Agronomist to be recruited is expected to promote the strengthening of agricultural and livestock research centres, afforestation linked with agriculture, water conservation schemes, etc.

**Gisenyi MULPOC: Agronomist, P-3**

16. The subregion comprising Gisenyi MULPOC is facing the serious problem of overpopulation. The growth rate of population exceeds that of agriculture and there is also a decrease in the availability of arable lands.

17. The Agronomist will be expected to initiate and develop schemes for the rational use of arable lands, increasing agricultural productivities, e.g. fish, livestock development as well as afforestation of hills, etc.

**Tangier MULPOC: Environmental Expert, P-3**

18. The Environmental Expert on marine life and marine resources should contribute immensely towards self-sufficiency in food in the subregion. Environmental problems raised by overpopulation in the coastal areas need to be tackled adequately.
19. Therefore, the environmental expert will undertake such activities as studies designed to raise awareness of, and subsequent action on the environmental problems caused by overpopulation in the Mediterranean. Such problems include: pollution, coastal deforestation, diminishing tillable lands, etc.

Gisenvi MULPOC: Women in Development Expert, P-2

20. Women have since been recognized to play an important role in food production, trade and cottage industry in the overall development process in this subregion.

21. Thus, the main function of an Expert on Women in Development will be to promote and improve the role of women in food production, development of trade and cottage industry. The size of the programme limited to three counties does not require a higher level of recruitment.

Yaounde MULPOC: Agronomist, P-2

22. The countries covered by the Yaounde MULPOC could easily achieve self-sufficiency in food production because of the abundant rainfall they receive. However, the subregion is a net importer of food products.

23. Thus, the Agronomist will assist in promoting the use of fertilizers in agriculture, the processing and preservation of foodstuffs such as tubers, water conservation and the development of small irrigation schemes in arid and semi-arid zones in the subregion.

II. PROGRAMMATIC JUSTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL STAFF REQUIREMENTS OF THE MULPOCs

24. It was explained that the additional staff requirements for MULPOCs were determined by a six-week mission of four United Nations consultants and staff who visited nine African countries and held intensive discussions with Ministers (especially Chairmen of MULPOC Council of Ministers), high-ranking officials of Governments and United Nations representatives in the field e.g. UNDP, FAO and ILO.

25. More than 200 people were interviewed. The unanimous consensus was that MULPOCs were an innovative concept which the United Nations failed to implement properly because of lack of human and financial resources.

26. It was well explained that the staff requirements were determined on the basis of priorities identified by officials of member States interviewed. The team referred to the fundamental relevant texts adopted by the United Nations, i.e. the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) with its sectoral priorities, the Final Act of Lagos (FAL) calling for economic integration at the subregional level, and the United Nations Programme of Action for Africa Economic Recovery
and Development (UN-PAAERD), which was adopted to avert the deep economic crisis being observed in every African country.

27. It was also pointed out that the main objective in strengthening the staffing of MULPOCs was therefore, to implement first and foremost the programmes adopted by the Conference of Heads of State of the various economic communities. For example, in West Africa, the ECOWAS Summit adopted in May 1986 an economic recovery programme centred on the achievement of food self-sufficiency. In Central Africa, the last Summit of the ECCAS adopted a resolution stressing the importance of transport and telecommunications links in the subregion. This resolution inter alia "authorized the Secretary-General of ECCAS to pursue negotiations with the EEC, the World Bank and other donors with a view to securing financing for projects and studies relating to surface transport and approved the decision on the choice of priority road segments to be studied or maintained on a priority basis". Other decisions of policy organs of other subregional economic groupings could be cited to support staffing requirements of MULPOCs. To a large extent, therefore, staffing requirements in each subregion were based on local conditions and requirements. This explains the lack of uniformity of proposals between subregions.

28. But the sectoral expertise requested for MULPOCs has also been dictated by priorities set by the Councils of Ministers of MULPOCs and eventually endorsed by the General Assembly in the form of programme of work and priorities of MULPOCs included in the overall ECA work programme. These priorities were identified at the first meetings of the Councils of Ministers in 1978 and adjusted on a periodic basis since then. For example, the Council of Ministers of the Yaounde MULPOC identified at its inaugural meeting on 3 March 1978 the following as being priority areas: agriculture, transport, industry, energy and trade. Similarly, in March 1987 the Council of Ministers of the Gisenyi MULPOC adopted a work programme for the 1988-1989 biennium comprising: food and agriculture, integration of women in development, industry, energy and natural resources, transport and communications, and trade and finance. Those decisions were supplemented by resolutions on the orientation for, and major projects in each priority sector.

29. It was stressed in the presentation that past experience has shown that the impact of the outputs produced by general economists who were the only professional staff provided to the MULPOCs was very limited because the MULPOC staff could not deal in depth with technical issues in priority sectors. It is for this reason that the officials of member States interviewed insisted on the strengthening of MULPOCs through the provision of sectoral expertise in order to respond to priorities set by highest decision-making bodies of the subregional organizations.

30. The priorities for each subregion at the time of the review mission are indicated hereafter (c.f., Report of the Review Team). The present request for eight additional professional staff covers only part of these priorities for the period 1992-1993.
31. In determining the above key priority areas for each MULPOC and the corresponding levels of expertise required, due consideration has been given to complementary resources which may be made available for short-term advice from within ECA’s regular programme and/or operational projects.

32. In this regard, major efforts will be made to align advisory services provided under Section 24 with specific requirements of the MULPOC. Thus, additional requirements of the MULPOC will partly be met by the ECA Multidisciplinary Regional Advisory Group (ECA-MRAG), a team of 10 Section 24 advisers organized to provide multisectoral assistance on the integration strategies which will pave the way for the coming African Economic Community, alternative patterns of structural adjustment, and certain sectoral areas based on the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA). Thus, the team includes experts in the fields of economic planning and integration, financial and monetary affairs, environment including drought and desertification and the social and human dimensions of structural adjustment.

33. Beginning in 1991, the ECA-MRAG will conduct programming exercises at the Committees of Experts meetings in each of the MULPOCs, which will be designed to transform them into operational, rather than administrative centres. Technical staff recruited under the present request would also participate in this exercise. The programme of work thus developed will cover a period of 6 to 12 months, and will be communicated on an annual basis to the ECA Conference of Ministers, who will comment on priorities and performance.

34. Furthermore, current operational activities funded from extrabudgetary resources expected to continue over the biennium will make provisions for technical assistance to the subregions in the fields of industry and transport including maritime transport (through the second Industrial Decade for Africa, and the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade), and science and technology.

35. Other requirements in specialized technical fields, in particular technology, livestock, mining, etc. will be met from technical advisory services provided to ECA under bilateral co-operation agreements.

III. THE DECISION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

36. Mr. Mselle, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions said that, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/45/57) on the functioning of the MULPOCs, an overall assessment of the activities of the MULPOCs had led to the conclusion that the objectives for which they had been established were still valid. It was therefore intended to maintain them as they were currently structured.

37. He noted that the staff resources of the MULPOCs for the biennium 1990-1991 totalled 63 posts, financed from both the regular budget and extrabudgetary sources. It was estimated that an additional 18 posts would be needed in the next biennium.
38. The Advisory Committee intended to review the Secretary-General’s proposal for additional posts for the MULPOCs in the context of its review of the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993. In that connection, the Committee requested a report which clearly indicated the specific programme of work of the MULPOCs and its relationship to the programme of work of ECA. The report should also provide a breakdown of the various funding sources for all the posts, indicating whether each of the posts was funded from regular or from extrabudgetary sources.

39. Furthermore, a clear indication should be provided on the proper status of the MULPOCs. If they were an integral part of the ECA secretariat, it would seem appropriate that they should report to the ECA Conference of Ministers through the Executive Secretary of ECA rather than, as stated in paragraph 21 of the report, to the ECA Conference of Ministers through the committees of intergovernmental experts. The rationale for that arrangement should be explained in the report of the Secretary-General.

40. The Chairman said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Fifth Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the report of the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/45/57 and endorse the Advisory Committee’s comments and recommendations.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECISION AS CONTAINED IN DOCUMENT A/C.5/45/57

41. The Council of Ministers might consider whether each MULPOC work programme is specific to the conditions and requirements of their respective subregion and adheres to the orientations given by the member States and the highest policy-making organs of IGOs. It might also examine the relation between the programme of work of ECA and those of the MULPOCs. The programme of the MULPOCs complement that of ECA, but it is directly addressed to the specific conditions and requirements of the subregions. The full implementation of the programme of MULPOCs requires the presence of the multidisciplinary team in each subregion which has an intimate knowledge of the subregion and maintains a close working relationship with the member States and the IGOs' secretariats.

42. As for the question raised by the Chairman of ACABQ who pointed out that if the MULPOCs were an integral part of ECA secretariat it would seem appropriate that they should report to the ECA Conference of Ministers through the Executive Secretary of ECA rather than through the Committee of Intergovernmental Experts, the secretariat has the following explanation to provide. The subregional committees of intergovernmental experts should be considered as sub-committees of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole of the ECA Conference of Ministers which meet to prepare the work of the Committees in their respective subregion. Their relevance result from the specificity of the programme of each MULPOC. It is only these sub-committees which are competent to express judgement on the programme of the MULPOCs and the results of their achievement in their respective subregions. This
explains the rationale why the Council of Ministers’ meetings were cancelled at the level of the MULPOCs. Indeed it would have appeared awkward that the Council of Ministers of the MULPOCs report to the TEPCOW. But it is absolutely normal that the TEPCOW has sub-committees at the level of each MULPOC to consider the development issues and operational projects pertaining to the subregions. The Council of Ministers should give its opinion on this question raised by ACABQ.

43. As defined by the terms of reference of the MULPOCs that the Council has adopted last year in Tripoli, the programme budget 1992-1993 of the MULPOCs before the Council gives priority to advisory services in project identification, formulation and execution in the field of economic integration and co-operation in order to make available to member States and IGOs pre-feasibility and feasibility studies which could be implemented by them. The work programme of the MULPOCs put also emphasis on seminars, workshops and round-tables with a view to promoting important development issues or projects. Each programme emphasizes the role of women in development and develops a close working relationship with the IGOs in their respective subregions. Assistance will be given to the economic communities to harmonize and co-ordinate their activities with those of other subregional multisectoral and sectoral organizations and among themselves in each subregion. The economic communities will be also assisted in the formulation of common policies in industry, agriculture, transport, energy and trade while economic integration projects will be promoted simultaneously. It must be also stressed that the work programme of the Economic Co-operation Office (ECO) is well integrated with those of the MULPOCs. The role of ECO is to tackle important development issues so as to orient the work of the MULPOCs more effectively in the field. The same relationship also exists between the technical divisions of ECA and the MULPOCs in the sectoral fields. The MULPOCs become therefore the true technical arms of ECA in each subregion.

44. Finally the programme budget of each MULPOC provides a breakdown of the various funding sources for all the posts as well as a breakdown of the various funding sources for all the posts, including whether each of the posts was funded from regular or extrabudgetary sources.