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UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



PROVISIONAL
E/CN.14/SR.143(IX)
7 February 1969
Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
Ninth session
Addis Ababa, 3-14 February 1969

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-THIRD MEETING
held at Africa Hall, Addis Ababa
on Thursday, 6 February 1969, at 10.25 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. A. Ayida (Nigeria)
Later: Mr. P. Lissouba (Congo (Brazzaville))
Executive Secretary: Mr. R.K.A. Gardiner
Secretary: Mr. H.L. Senghor

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Participants wishing to have corrections made to this provisional summary record are requested to write them on two copies of the record and to send the corrected copies to the office of the Secretary of the Commission as soon as possible. If necessary, the corrected copies may be sent by post to the office of the Secretary of the Commission, Economic Commission for Africa (P.O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) after the session.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA AND ADOPTION OF
COMMEMORATIVE RESOLUTION (Item 2 of the revised provisional agenda)

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES (continued)

The ACTING CHAIRMAN announced that three further messages of congratulation had been received, from the President of Somalia, the Hammarskjold Foundation and Mr. Mekki Abbas, the Commission's first Executive Secretary. The full texts of those messages would be incorporated in the document containing all other similar messages.

OPENING OF THE SESSION (Item 1 of the revised provisional agenda)

The Acting Chairman declared open the ninth session of the Commission.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Item 3 of the revised provisional agenda)

The Acting Chairman called for nominations for the office of Chairman.

Mr. LOKO (Dahomey) proposed Mr. Lissouba (Congo (Brazzaville)).

Mr. MALUMBA (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Mr. MISSALLATI (Libya), Mr. MBOYA (Kenya) and Mr. RAZAFIMBAHINY (Madagascar) seconded the proposal.

Mr. Lissouba (Congo (Brazzaville)) was elected Chairman by acclamation and took the chair.

The CHAIRMAN expressed deep appreciation for the honour conferred upon his country by his election, and assured the Commission of his dedication to the African cause. He would spare no effort in the common interest.

Africa expected much of ECA and, to quote from the Executive Secretary's report "A Venture in Self-Reliance", its great days were "still to come" and it "would really show its paces in the next ten years". Those words were a promise of the possibilities to the forthcoming decade held in store for Africa.

In launching the new African era, the Commission's responsibility was great - his own even more so. Whatever the precise form of ECA's

action in that sense, one thing was certain: it would spring from Africa's own determination to find itself and develop according to its own needs and philosophy. There were, however, at least three prerequisites to ECA's action: in the first place, a tangible effort should be made to achieve economic integration at the sub-regional level. ECA's record in regard to certain sub-regions was not very encouraging - a remark that should not, however, be construed as criticism but rather as evidence of member States' dedication to their own organization. Secondly, ECA should make a frank attempt to decolonize Africa mentally, by encouraging consumption of African goods and the use of African skills - in a word, by reinvesting all things African with their true worth. The question of technical assistance also merited careful review. Thirdly, member States should intensify their own interest in ECA, redefining its terms of reference and its institutional framework. Also, the role of the Chairman - and even of the Commission's other officers - should be reviewed, since they should not be merely a figure-head but rather a vital link between the secretariat, on the one hand, and member States and sub-regions, on the other.

Lastly, he voiced the hope that, with the help of the Commission's members, he would be enabled to guide the session to a successful conclusion.

The Chairman then called for nominations for the office of First Vice-Chairman.

Mr. BOUDJAKDI (Algeria) proposed Mr. El Nabi (Sudan).

Mr. ABDERRAHIM (Morocco), Mr. GABALLAH (United Arab Republic) and Mr. SYLLA (Senegal) seconded the proposal.

Mr. El Nabi (Sudan) was elected First Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN called for nominations for the office of Second Vice-Chairman.

Mr. NGALANDE (Zambia) proposed Mr. Masire (Botswana).

Mr. GONDWE (Malawi) seconded the proposal.

Mr. Masire (Botswana) was elected Second Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN called for nominations for the office of Rapporteur.

Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) proposed Dr. Sylla (Senegal).

Mr. PRATT (Sierra Leone) and Mr. BOTAN (Somalia) seconded the proposal.

Dr. Sylla (Senegal) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

INTRODUCTION BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE TEN-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT
"A VENTURE IN SELF-RELIANCE - TEN YEARS OF ECA" (E/CN.14/424)

The EXECUTIVE SECRETARY said the fact that much of ECA's pioneer work had spanned the first Development Decade - during which many member States had also gained their independence - and that the second Development Decade was about to be launched made the Commission's tenth anniversary a particularly auspicious occasion for taking stock, and for agreeing on the broad lines of action that would be most conducive to development in Africa in the forthcoming decade.

He congratulated the Chairman and the Commission's other officers on their election and expressed gratitude to the Ethiopian Government for their hospitality to the Commission over the past decade. He thanked ECA's member States for their active interest in, and co-operation with, the secretariat. Likewise, thanks were due to the member States of the other United Nations institutions, without whose generous help the secretariat would have been hard put to complete the first stage of stock-taking which had to be completed before plans for multinational sub-regional and regional economic co-operation could be drawn up. Bilateral aid, channelled through ECA was, to his mind, an effective way of ensuring balanced development planning and an equal share for all countries in the benefits reaped. He trusted that such aid would continue and indeed, as development plans reached the implementation stage, increase.

Expressing appreciation to the organizations of the United Nations system for their co-operation, he said that, if such co-operation had not always been easy, it was perhaps partly because each organization was autonomous. But, inasmuch as all were pledged to the cause of African development, every effort should be made to avoid any waste of resources and time. In the past, there had been too many meetings held and too few action programmes completed. As the late Dag Hammarskjold had warned at ECA's inaugural session in 1958, African government officials could not afford to spare time to attend international meetings that were not convened for clearly defined purposes.

It was the secretariat's hope that a co-ordinated United Nations programme would eventually be established in each region for each specialized field, and that global agencies and the regional economic commissions would work as one in executing such programmes. That would mean that, in future, ECA would not organize policy meetings or establish programmes when regional ministerial meetings had covered the same ground. A beginning had been made in that direction in co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization; the Conference of African Ministers of Agriculture, which met in Kampala in November 1968, had adopted ECA's draft work programme for agriculture.

Turning to ECA's relations with OAU, he mentioned some of the salient features of the co-operation between the two organizations and stressed that there was no duplication in their work programmes. It was hoped to evolve some machinery for enabling the member States of both to review the activities of the United Nations and other international agencies in Africa, so that African positions could be more clearly determined and African needs presented at both economic and political level.

Referring to Africa's need for training, research and experimental centres - which could be adequately financed, staffed and operated only on a multinational basis - he reported that the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations had recently established an International Institute of Tropical Agriculture at Ibadan, Nigeria. Also, informal discussions had recently taken place on a proposed programme for increasing West African rice production - a fact

he mentioned so that, when an ECA/FAO team shortly visited the countries concerned, interested governments would be in a position to offer the support needed to launch the programme by 1 June 1969. The programme's sponsors included the UNDP, IBRD, FAO, ECA, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Denmark and Canada, and among the problems it hoped to solve was how to increase rice production, thereby obviating dependence by sixteen West African countries on annual rice imports amounting in value to US\$50 million.

He then cited the names of the African institutions for training, negotiation and collective action which, thanks to the Commission's initiative, were now at the disposal of member States.

Commenting on the purpose for which ECA had been created, he said it was clear, from the debates on the matter within the United Nations family of organizations, that the Commission was intended to be primarily concerned with African problems. Its terms of reference contained a qualifying clause seeking to ensure that there would be no duplication between ECA's work and that of the other United Nations agencies and could be construed to suggest that, in its early years, it should devote much of its effort to increasing knowledge about economic and social problems in Africa and to stimulating a more clear-sighted view of such problems among African countries.

The work done by the Commission in the first ten years of its existence was described in detail in document E/CN.14/424, paragraphs 484-487 of which summed up certain of its salient points. It should not be thought that it had fundamentally transformed the relatively weak economics of most African countries on their accession to independence nor been reflected in conventional economic progress in the African region, because the problems which African countries had inherited from colonial times were too intractable. It was very disappointing that, in the first six years of ECA's existence, the growth of developing Africa had been the slowest of any major region in the world - only 3.5 per cent as compared with 4.5 per cent for the developing countries as a whole and 5 per cent for Latin America. The lessons of that disappointing experience could, however, be rewarding.

In order to contribute to the attainment of more rapid growth in Africa, the Commission must firstly, identify, extend and formulate solutions to the dominant problems of the region; secondly, carefully consider the size and nature of the contribution which could be made by individuals, institutions and countries outside the African continent; thirdly, formulate views on how the United Nations efforts in Africa could be co-ordinated and made most effective.

The Commission was better equipped to identify problems and devise ways of solving them than it had been ten years before and, through its training courses and seminars, the African Governments had learnt to appreciate their own role in that connexion and the national organizational structures necessary to programmes of substantial development and economic co-operation. The next efforts of the Commission's work should, therefore, be to synthesize and apply the results of its research which required not only the concerted co-operation of all the United Nations organs and the assistance of the developed world but also the will of the African Governments to mobilize and apply their total resources to implement development plans through specific multinational, sub-regional or regional programmes.

With its limited resources, the Commission could only provide a spearhead in the common effort, but with the support and co-operation of member States, it could actively assist in securing assistance for the identification of viable projects. The proposals before the session on the work programme for 1969-1971 and its projection to 1973 should be viewed in that context.

The promises made by the developed countries during the past decade to assist the other countries to develop had not been fulfilled. The Commission intended to specify the amount and type of assistance which they should supply if their promises were to be met, since their recent large absolute and relative increases in income made it appear that there was no real obstacle to their doing so. It was true that some of the major lending countries were facing particular difficulties,

but it was difficult to believe that their balance of payment problems would prevent them from assisting the developing countries if they had the political will to do so.

The ECA welcomed the recent proposals to de-centralize operational activities within the United Nations system and hoped to see them reflected in organizational changes. The Commission had recently given much thought to ways in which its own activities could be dovetailed with those of the United Nations organs and especially to securing effective co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme. The regional Commissions were the only United Nations organs to possess no resources for operational programmes so that their findings had to be acted upon by other agencies. The Commission hoped that it would be able to participate fully in the execution of projects which it had identified and sometimes helped to design.

Despite its relative youth, the Commission was determined to contribute significantly to the promotion of economic and social development in Africa and to continue to press for the resources and requirements - inside and outside the United Nations - necessary for such development. It was to be hoped that the Commission itself could attract the financial and human resources which would enable it to provide the focal point for the kind of United Nations effort appropriate to African conditions.

Mr. MBOYA (Kenya) congratulated the secretariat on the work accomplished during the first ten years of the Commission's existence, as outlined in document E/CN.14/424. The Commission was now ready to build on the foundations laid down during the preliminary period of study and research. It was therefore an appropriate time for Africans to recognize that their aspirations at the time of independence would be attained not by slogans or political and emotional appeals, but by sober consideration of the realities before them and greater commitment and involvement of the people and their leaders in their struggle for development.

The rest of the world must also realize that African problems were their problems and that poverty and insecurity in that continent could have an impact on the whole world situation.

The title of the document, "A Venture in Self-Reliance", emphasized that the future of Africa depended on the African people. Self-reliance should be stressed for two reasons: firstly, to bring home to the young peoples of Africa that escape from poverty lay not in help even from their friends in other countries, but in constructive efforts within their own borders; secondly, to bring home to their friends and critics that, like other countries in other times, Africa was determined to escape from poverty through its own efforts, with outside co-operation if available.

In the modern world, however, self-reliance should not lead to a negative, isolated and inward-looking attitude, for the aspirations of the developing nations could be fulfilled only within the context of the world economy. Modern science and technology were bound to influence the desires and aspirations of the most ignorant peasant. African nations should not, therefore, go cap in hand to an international conference, but as members of the world community with common interests in matters which would affect the future of all mankind.

The first Development Decade had brought achievements and disappointments. The former included widespread decolonization and the almost universal acceptance of man's right to decide his own destiny. It was also

recognized in theory that poverty in any part of the world was bound to affect prosperity in other parts. It was disappointing, however, that words had not been matched by deeds and that, despite professions of brotherhood and co-operation, the gap between rich and poor countries was constantly widening.

Foreign aid, which was invariably the first to be cut by any nation faced with balance of payment problems, was never the cause of those problems, nor had its reduction helped to solve them.

As the representative of Malawi had said, the first Development Decade appeared to have applied more to the developed than to the developing countries, whose economic position in relation to the world situation as a whole had remained static or even deteriorated.

African countries were often accused of misusing funds supplied for development. Immediately after independence a few political leaders might not have correctly assessed the priorities but at present they were fully conscious of their countries' pressing requirements.

The developed countries had spoken about aid as if it were a generous gift to undeserving people. In fact, aid had passed through three phases. First of all, the African continent had received grants from the occupying Powers. Then, it had been used as a weapon in cold war power politics and now it was based on self-interest on both sides. The developing countries wanted the aid to further their own development and the developed countries often gave it either largely in the form of military hardware, in order to help their own armaments industry, or as tied aid to be spent on certain goods which might not be essential to the country's economy, or which might be obtainable more cheaply elsewhere. Loans to the developing countries were not true aid because they had to be paid back and the debt burden of many African countries was such that it would swallow up any development of their economy for many years to come. Developed and developing countries must realize that aid was useless unless it could contribute to the realization of the aspirations of the people.

Another aspect of interdependence in the world economy was that of access to world markets; the international institutions which regulated that access were still influenced by the former colonial Powers.

All the great Powers on which the rest of the world relied were at present facing their own crises. It was not surprising, therefore, that the second Conference on Trade and Development should not have attained its aims. Both developing and developed countries must realize the need of a drastic review of their relationships. For instance, unless the African nations accorded priority to trade between themselves, UNCTAD could be of no use to them.

The developed countries and all international institutions agreed that agriculture should be the mainstay of the African economy. But the countries to which it should sell its produce were busy expanding their own agriculture and developing synthetics to replace natural products.

Another barrier to African exports was customs duties and the Kennedy Round had not eased the position in that respect for the African countries as it had for the developed countries.

He raised those points not because he was a pessimist but because, if they were to meet the challenge of the next Development Decade, African countries would have to accept the reality of the situation facing them and begin again to consider how best they could accelerate their development. He was not advocating that Africans should withdraw from the world or that they should sever all their multilateral and bilateral relationships; what he was advocating, however, was that Africans should recognize that their reliance on and trust in other countries was misplaced. Any African grouping based on the sympathy of former relationships would not survive for long. It was possible to join the European Economic Community - and his country had - or to enjoy Commonwealth preferences - and his country did - but in the final analysis neither the Community nor the Commonwealth would save Africa. If they were to succeed, Africans would have to evolve a new strategy for development and convince their

non-African friends of the need for such a strategy. The reality of self-interest should always be borne in mind. When, at the eighth session, he had appealed for a new strategy he had identified four areas in which action must be initiated, namely, the development of a continental infrastructure, the expansion of food production, storage and marketing, the development of human resources and the collection, analysis and dissemination of economic information. The world situation had changed little between the eighth and ninth sessions; that programme was, therefore, still valid and Africans should take joint action to implement it. If Africans themselves did not take their problems seriously they could not expect others to do so. Who, for instance, was responsible for the fact that no action had been taken on resolution 169 (VIII)? Certainly not the World Bank, other financial institutions or non-African countries. Unless Africans were prepared to recognize the urgency of the problems facing them no one else would. He sincerely hoped, therefore, that before the next session action would be taken to implement the provisions of the resolution.

The experience ECA had gained during the ten years of its existence should be put to good use in the extra thrust that must be made if the continent was to make progress. Rather than criticizing the Commission, a major instrument in Africa's contacts with the rest of the world, governments should set themselves the task of fashioning it for its role in African development and using it more effectively than in the past.

Africa's greatest asset was its spirit of nationalism, for it was that spirit which would help governments to face the challenge of development and win true independence. If they destroyed the spirit of nationalism Africans would destroy the only weapon they had in facing the challenge of the next ten years. African Governments must be true to their peoples and give the leadership expected of them; they must be realistic in analyzing their problems and acknowledging their limitations and approach their task with resolution. It was to be hoped that the new, forward-looking spirit of the President of the World Bank would be translated into action. Even a tripling of IBRD aid to Africa would be insufficient but

it would at least be the first step in recognizing Africa's need for accelerated development and securing a deeper awareness of African problems. It was up to Africans themselves to ensure that that spirit was fostered and that their problems were brought to the attention of the world at large.

Those responsible for formulating African development policies shouldered a heavy burden. Individually, countries did what they could but it must be understood that the future lay in being able to work collectively for accelerated development. While he accepted the slogan of self-reliance he wished to point out that the African in the bush had always been self-reliant: that was why he was still in the bush. The man in the bush did not need a lesson in self-reliance. He was waiting for something more and it was up to the Commission to help him to achieve his higher goals.

Mr. NIELSEN (Observer for the United States of America), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that the past decade in African history had been truly momentous. It had witnessed the revolution of independence and the emergence of new and dynamic approaches to economic and social development. Above all, the past decade had been one of intense challenge and vigorous response.

In the ten years of its existence ECA had made three great contributions to the common good: first, it had made a realistic appraisal of the African situation; secondly, it had indicated the path Africa must take if the expectations of independence were to be fulfilled; and, thirdly, it had concentrated on determining how the governments and peoples of Africa could achieve self-reliance. It was interesting to note, in that connexion, that the Commission's programme of work had come to reflect an increasingly realistic view of its ability to assist in meeting Africa's needs.

The decade under review had been a time of rapid evolution in American relationships with Africa. It was pertinent to recall that on the eve of the decade, American policy towards Africa was given a decisive thrust by the visit of Mr. Nixon, then Vice-President of the United States. As Mr. Nixon had said on that occasion, the United States was proud to be associated with the common quest for a better life. For America, which had had to discard old misconceptions and discover the new imperatives of African development, the period had been one of education and re-education about Africa. It had also been a time of growing recognition of the very special relationship between the United States and Africa, partly because of the history of America's national development and particularly because of the origin and links of its black population with Africa. The United States, too, was in the midst of profound changes in its national life. It took pride in them because they were evidence of the work in progress in the building of a more truly democratic society.

Out of the experience gained in recent years there had emerged five themes of American policy towards Africa. The first was the consolidation of nationhood. The United States supported the continued national development of the new African countries and did what it could to help them meet the aspirations of their peoples. It favoured peaceful evolution rather than armed eruption and was concerned when there was a breakdown in orderly progress. There was a long history of American support for territorial integrity as was illustrated by the United States attitude to the situations in the Congo and Nigeria. His Government believed that in Nigeria the humanitarian issue of saving the lives of innocent victims and the political issue of peaceful settlement both commanded the attention of all true friends of all Nigerians. The fact that efforts on both counts had fallen short of success was but a reason for trying harder.

The second theme to which he had referred was that of economic and social development. The United States not only favoured such development in Africa but had also provided significant economic and technical assistance to that end, its contributions to the developing nations of Africa

amounting to more than \$4 thousand million of public funds and over \$1 thousand million of private investment. He wished to assure the Commission of continuing American support for African efforts to development. Economic growth throughout the continent was essential to the welfare of each nation and also had broad international implications. It was conducive to sound relations between Africa and the rest of the world and depended upon and contributed to co-operative relationships among African States themselves. ECA had played a significant role in promoting regional co-operation by helping to establish such institutions as the African Development Bank, seeking opportunities for regional co-operation in industrial expansion, promoting co-operative efforts to meet the need for trained personnel and by assisting multinational projects such as the West African regional programme to improve rice production and marketing. Other members of the United Nations family such as UNDP, IBRD and IMF were also contributing to African development and it was satisfactory to note that co-operation between those bodies and the Commission was being strengthened.

The third theme was African self-reliance, for which there was no substitute. By being self-reliant, Africans would be able to avoid the danger of domination by others and make the best possible use of their financial, material and human resources.

Self-determination, majority rule and human equality was the fourth theme to which he had referred. The United States opposed any violation of those principles because it refused to condone abroad what it opposed at home. It knew from experience that failure to apply those principles tainted the character of a society and crippled its potential for economic and social advancement. No one underestimated the difficulties involved in seeking to change a prevailing situation but no one would advocate abandonment of principles just because they were difficult to achieve.

The fifth theme was the identity of aspirations knitting the peoples of the two continents together. The identity sprang from a common experience in the struggle for freedom, the African taking the form of national

independence and the American that of individual human rights. In essence the experiences were the same and were essential elements of life in the heart of Africa as in the heart of America.

In speaking of things common to all Africa, President Nixon had mentioned the love of independence and the determination to protect it; a search for economic progress and the means to achieve it; the quest for dignity and equality and the right to expect it from others. He had also said that Africa could achieve those goals and that the result in years to come would have profound effects on the rest of the world.

Mr. AYIDA (Nigeria) requested to see a copy of the United States statement. The Commission was concerned with economic matters and observers addressing it should adhere closely to its terms of reference. He reserved the right to raise the matter again when he had seen the statement.

Mr. OMABOE (Ghana), referring to rule 9 of the Commission's rules of procedure, pointed out that the Commission had not yet adopted its agenda.

The CHAIRMAN said that the provisional agenda would be discussed at the following meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.