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**REPORT ON ECA DEVELOPMENT PLANNING ACTIVITIES (1994-1995) AND
EXAMINATION OF WORKPROGRAMME (1996-1997) WITH CONSIDERATION OF
THE STRATEGY FOR THE PERIOD 1998-1999**

INTRODUCTION

During the biennium 1994-1995, the ECA work programme was geared towards the systematic implementation of the major objectives and priorities of the Lagos Plan of Action, the final Act of Lagos, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990's, the Abuja Treaty, and the Fourth United Nations Development Decade of the International Development Strategy. In this context, the work programme of 1994-1995 was developed and oriented to the identification of priorities and the analysis of the current problems and the constraints to Africa's development. The work was also undertaken with the important aim to help planners and decision-makers in the preparation of coherent and consistent development plans within the framework of appropriate strategies and policy measures.

SECTION ONE: REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN THE FIELD OF
DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND POLICIES - 1994-1995

Research in the area of macro-economic issues and management aimed at (a) improving national mechanisms for the review and appraisal of socio-economic condition; (b) appraisal of development policies and programmes including strengthening planning machineries, methodologies and techniques through developing appropriate analytical tools of data analysis and projections.

Major activities in this areas included publication of the annual Survey of Economic and Social Condition in Africa for 1994-1995.

The survey analyses recent trends and developments in the various sectors of the African economies, the main problems and policies behind these trends and their implications for growth and development. The Economic Report on Africa for 1994 and 1995 were also prepared to give the salient features of Africa's socio-economic development during these two periods. It portrays recent development trends both in the domestic area and the external front.

In the area of planning, a study was prepared on "strategic planning in the food sub-sector". The study addresses the need for undertaking appropriate policies for maintaining adequate levels of food security through enhancement of food production, distribution, marketing and storage in the context of increased regional co-operation in food.

In the area of economic modelling and projections, the ECA prepared a detailed review of the status and practices of economic modelling in African countries. The report was prepared with the view of enabling African countries to share experiences in quantitative analysis of the problems and prospects of some critical development areas. A study on short-term forecasting systems for policy design and macro-economic management was undertaken for one country. The macro-economic model was designed with the view to examining the implications of some planned and targeted policy changes.

In the area of least development countries, a study was undertaken to rationalize the flows of foreign direct investment to the least privileged countries of Africa through appropriate measures relating to incentive structures, including attractive tax incentives, appropriate economic reforms aiming at enhancing the role of the private sector, developing infrastructure and financial institutions; and a stable macro-economic and political environment.

A study on evaluation performance of specialized farm credit institutions in African LDCs was undertaken with the view to addressing the issue that farm credit institutions have not yet been brought into sharp focus into the overall agriculture production policies and strategies. The study suggested a number of recommendations to improve the institutional credit systems in favour of the small holder.

A document was prepared on the review of progress achieved by the African least developed countries in the implementation of the Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. The document generated a Special Memorandum on the Mid-term Global Review of the implementation by the ECA Conference of Ministers.

SECTION TWO: WORK PROGRAMME IN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND POLICIES

1996-1997

The objectives of the work programme are centered around the implementation of Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty, and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990's in the field of development planning, and the resolution of the current economic and social crisis facing Africa. This subprogramme will address the need for the continuous promotion of the process of economic and social development and growth in Africa, with emphasis on a regional approach to development

The main features of the work programme and priorities for 1996-1997 as adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers, include:

1. International co-operation

Liaison and co-operation on development issues and policies with Africa and non-African, non-governmental organizations, regional and interregional bodies.

2. Parliamentary services

- (a) Parliamentary documentation to the ECA Conference of Ministers; the Conference of African Ministers of Finance; and, the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Demographers and Information Specialists;
- (b) Substantive services. (i) Ninth session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Demographers and Information Specialists (1996); (ii) Conference of African Ministers of Finance (1997); (iii) Intergovernmental Group of Experts Preparatory to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance (1997);
- (c) Ad hoc expert group meetings. (i) Critical development issues and socio-economic policies; (ii) Exchange rate policies in the framework of the implementation of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community.

3. Published material

- (a) Recurrent publications (i) Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa; (ii) Economic Bulletin for Africa; (iii) review of the socio-economic development conditions of African least developed, land-locked and island developing countries; (iv) review of African countries external debt profile;
- (b) Non-recurrent publications. (i) Africa's development strategies revisited; (ii) efficacy of monetary policies for macro-economic management in Africa; (iii) multimodal and transit transport and coastal resources management problems of African land-locked and island developing countries; (iv) study on the domestic debt problems of African countries; (v) study on adaption of financial instruments and structures for promoting small- and medium-scale enterprises and enhancing their contribution to Africa's growth (vi) study on policies and measures required to accelerate the process of monetary and financial integration in Africa; (vii) study on exchange rate volatility in Africa in the context of liberalization of financial sectors and its economic and social implications; (viii) progress report on follow-up activities to the establishment of the African Monetary Fund.

4. Operational activities

Advisory services on strengthening of capabilities for national planning; support to African least developed, land-locked and island developing countries; adaptation of financial instruments and structures to support small- and medium-scale industry; in strengthening monitoring and debt-management systems; and promotion of development of capital markets; strengthening capacities of economic and development management training institutions.

5. Co-ordination, harmonization and liaison

Participation in Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) task forces, United Nations Project Link, inter-agency meetings, round tables and consultations on the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries.

SECTION THREE: PROJECTED WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE PERIOD 1998-1999

The projected work programme for the period 1998-1999 is based on the Medium-Term Plan 1998-2001. The Secretariat will continue to review the current problems in the field of socio-economic development planning in the region and undertake in-depth studies in critical development areas with the view of assisting member states in the formulation and realization of consistent national development plans and initiation of appropriate national and subregional strategies and policy measures within the framework of the objectives of Africa's development strategies. The main relevant features of the Medium-Term Plan are reproduced below:

The work programme will address African countries need to develop economic and social policies relevant to and consistent with their national priorities. A major objective of this

subprogramme will be to undertake research and policy analysis on the performance of the African economy, and on a wide range of micro- and macro-economic as well as international economic policy issues. The findings from the economic analyses and research will provide the basis for policy dialogue with, and advice to African policy-makers on economic and social trends, with a view to anticipating emerging challenges and prescribing remedial and pro-active measures. In this regard, work will focus particularly on multi country studies addressing issues that are relevant to several countries or have subregional dimensions. ECA would also serve as a regional clearing house for spreading "best practices", by undertaking studies that identify and draw lessons from best practices in policies and an action within the region.

There is now much wider recognition that the true measure of economic development is in the social progress that it generates. Indeed, the strategy that has proved most effective in improving economic and social well-being has consisted of three elements: fostering growth that increases the use of labour - the biggest asset of the poor; investments in education and health; and assistance to the poor. Taking into account the multiplicity of actors in this area, and therefore, the need for selectivity this subprogramme will focus on three issues; namely, improving the social situation of women; higher education; and monitoring and analysis of poverty in Africa.

With regard to the advancement of women, the main task will be to assist governments to formulate and implement measures to improve the social situation of women. Particular emphasis will be placed on improving access of women to education, health and employment opportunities. Emphasis will also be placed through advocacy and awareness raising on the enhancement of women leadership roles in decision making in both the public and private sectors. This will be achieved by organizing forums for promoting dialogue between policy makers and community leaders as well as through research, advisory services and technical assistance.

Tertiary educational institutions, mainly the universities in Africa are in severe crisis. They are underfunded. The quality of learning has deteriorated. There is a huge outflow of skilled teachers from them to the private sector or to foreign countries. Consequently, these institutions are not able to fulfil their main missions which is to serve as centres of research and training. The subprogramme will accordingly, promote higher education reforms. Special effort will be devoted to exploiting information technology to disseminate ECA's information resources and those of other institutions to alleviate the problem of shortages of instructional materials being experienced in African universities.

African countries have committed themselves to taking measures towards reducing poverty, as part of an overall approach to advancing social development. Activities in the area of

analysis and monitoring of poverty will aim at reinforcing actions of governments by indicating what is working and not working in the fight against poverty. The Secretariat will work with other agencies to assist governments in strengthening their capacity for poverty assessment and monitoring at the national level.

The Economic Commission for Africa has a special responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of a number of international initiatives and programmes dedicated to or relevant to Africa's development. The special initiatives include the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF); the Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the 1990s; and the Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). To these will be added the UN System Special Initiative on Africa, which has been developed under the auspices of ACC. Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of these initiatives will be an important objective of the subprogramme.

It is expected that the activities to be undertaken by this subprogramme will result in the adoption and effective implementation of appropriate policies for economic and social advancement in member States.

The Joint Conference is, therefore invited to make suggestions and recommendations to the broad elements of the

E/ECA/PSPI.9/21
Page 10

1998-2001 work programme with the view to enabling the Secretariat to prepare a work programme for the 1998-1999 biennium for submission to the ECA Conference of Ministers.