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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

African Centre for Women

*Second Preparatory Meeting for the Sixth African
Regional Conference on Women*

Tunis, Tunisia
18-19 June 1999

**Report of the
Second Preparatory Meeting for the Sixth Africa
Regional Conference on Women**

Tunis, Tunisia (18-19 June 1999)

I. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The Second Preparatory Meeting for the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women was held on 18 and 19 June 1999 in Tunis, Tunisia at the Conference Hall of Abou Nawas Hotel. It was organised by the ECA African Centre for Women (ACW) in cooperation with the Ministry of Women's and Family Affairs of Tunisia, Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Development.
2. The following countries attended the meeting, Algeria, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia. The non-governmental organizations attending were; ABANTU for Development, Akina Mama wa Africa (AMWA), Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), the Federation of Women's Networks on Peace (FEFARP), African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Union Maghrebine des Associations féminines (UMAF), Association Tunisienne des Mères (ATM), Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie, and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF). The African Development Bank (ADB), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), and the North African Sub-regional Development Centre of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa were also represented.

II. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)

3. Two statements were made during the opening ceremony.
4. On behalf of Mr. K. Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Ms. Joséphine Ouédraogo, Director of the African Centre for Women thanked the Government of Tunisia for having offered to host the meeting and paid a tribute to Tunisia for having presided over the work of the Committee on Women and Development during the last two years.
5. Unlike its predecessors, the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women would be distinct in three essential aspects:
 - Opening up the Conference to effective NGO participation with the objective of strengthening partnerships between decision-makers and representatives of Civil Society;
 - Preparing a five-year regional Plan of Action for removing the political and institutional impediments to the implementation of the Global and Regional Platforms and addressing such new issues as the AIDS pandemic; and
 - Providing an occasion to demonstrate the capacity of African countries to conduct together an objective analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of national and institutional strategies regarding the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action.
6. The Sixth Regional Conference would also feed into the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly which would be held in June 2000 to review the progress made by African countries. The results of the two-day meeting would facilitate the coordination work of

ACW as the Secretariat of the Sixth Regional Conference.

7. She commended the Chairperson of Committee on Women and Development of the meeting for her hospitality and her commitment to the cause of African women.

8. Ms. Neziha Zarrouk, Minister for Women and Family Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women welcomed all participants and thanked ECA for the efforts it was making to enhance the role of women in world development.

9. She reaffirmed Tunisia's commitment to concerted African action and welcomed the focus of efforts on promoting the advancement of women in all areas of concern. That had been confirmed by the holding in Nairobi in 1985 of the Third World Conference on Women. In light of the primary areas of concern defined by the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, she called on participants to elicit the involvement of all people of goodwill in following up the implementation of the Global and African Platforms for Action.

10. She paid a tribute to African countries for the progress they had made in working for peace and urged them to continue.

11. In the context of poverty eradication and marginalisation, she recalled the appeal made by Mr. Zine EL Abidine Ben Ali, President of Tunisia, for a more balanced system of cooperation between the North and the South.

12. In Tunisia, the revitalisation of NGO roles had enabled civil society to make headway in the implementation of the Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action.

13. At the approach of the third millenium, many challenges were emerging and Africa needed to address them by adopting a methodological and objective approach.

14. She concluded that the existing partnerships between Governments and NGOs would have a positive impact on the success of the current meeting which should come out with a programme to be submitted to the upcoming African Regional Conference in Addis Ababa.

Programme of work (agenda item 2)

15. The meeting adopted the following agenda items and the proposed programme of work:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Programme of work
3. Review of the preparation of country reports
4. Review of the status of documentation for the Conference
5. Modalities of registration of participants
6. Adoption of the final Draft of the Conference programme
7. Report on progress in resource mobilization

8. Modalities of participation of NGOs at the Conference (plenaries, thematic review workshops)
9. Modalities for establishing the Drafting groups for the five year action plan and the Conference declaration
10. Principles and modalities for electing the Bureau of the Sixth African Regional Conference
11. Principles and modalities for renewing the membership of the Committee on Women and Development (to be arranged alongside the Conference)
12. Consideration and adoption of the summary report and closing remarks

Review of the preparation of country reports (agenda item 3)

16. Under this agenda item, the Committee noted that the process of preparing national reports had started in November 1997 on the occasion of the First Subregional follow-up meeting in West Africa. Other sub-regional meetings had subsequently been held in Central Africa (June 1998), North Africa (October 1998) and for Eastern and Southern African together in February 1999. It was at those meetings that the substance of country reports had been determined together with the deadlines for submitting country reports to the New York Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and ECA.
17. The representative of the secretariat informed participants that, to date, only two out of 53 countries had submitted their country report to ECA. That was a cause for anxiety because even though the ECA deadline had been set for 31 July' the report to DAW should have been submitted by 30 April with a copy to ECA.
18. Once the 53 country reports had been received, ECA would prepare a regional summary report covering the following four areas:
 - i. an executive summary highlighting the main features of the reports;
 - ii. an introduction specifying the context within which the Platforms had been implemented;
 - iii. a two-part review dealing respectively with:
 - the environmental factors that enabled or hindered the implementation process;
 - the implementation of the key areas of concern where priority action regarding objectives, actions taken, actors, financial resources allocated and indicators would be highlighted;
 - iv. the conclusion should state what remained to be accomplished relative to the commitments made at various levels and urgent issues which will have to be addressed over the coming five years.
19. To speed up the submission of reports to ECA, ACW planned to use the national focal points, intensify working contacts with Ministries responsible for Women's Affairs and UNDP offices in the various countries as well as diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa. Other United Nations Specialized Agencies were urged to use their good offices to assist in speeding up the finalization and submission of the report.

20. During the ensuing discussion, some countries raised the unending issue of communication between ECA and the member States and requested the secretariat to endeavour to maintain contact by the most direct (telephone, fax, etc.) means possible. Regarding country reports, each country needed to prepare only one report covering its joint review with NGOs and other actors. Some countries (Algeria, Congo, Morocco, Rwanda and Senegal) announced that their reports were being finalised and would be transmitted to ECA by 31 July 1999. Algeria and Cameroon submitted copies of their country reports to the secretariat.

21. Regarding NGOs that had prepared separate reports, the secretariat indicated that when preparing the regional synthesis, those reports would be taken into account.

22. Some countries proposed to draft their own synthesis of the outcome of the national review exercise in order to facilitate the drafting of ECA's summary report and to reduce, to the minimum, differences in substance between country reports and the regional review. In conclusion, a number of countries felt it would be important for all governmental, non-governmental, United Nations and other actors to be involved in the evaluation exercise and the finalization of the country papers.

Review of the status of documentation for the Conference (agenda item 4)

23. The meeting considered the status of documentation for the Conference. Concerning the proposed regional plan of action, the meeting noted that a proposal would be prepared by ECA and submitted to the Conference. In addition, three reviews would be submitted to the Conference by one representative of national Governments, one accredited NGOs and United Nations agencies.

24. Seven international experts had been recruited by ECA to draft the critical thematic reviews or summary notes at the regional level. Those reviews would serve as introduction and provide a framework for discussions for the twelve assessment workshops during the Conference.

25. A CD-ROM and comparative statistical brochures on the status of women in Africa would be disseminated during the Conference.

26. Discussions focused on the following issues:

- whether to have two national reports, one expressing governmental views and the other expressing non-governmental views;
- encouraging member States to prepare their country reports in consultation with civil society organizations and the importance of strengthening partnership between governments and NGOs in the pursuit of women's advancement;
- the need for delegations to receive in advance the Conference documents;
- the importance for member States to prepare a synthesis of their country report. That approach would facilitate ECA's task of drafting the regional synthesis report; and
- the need for ECA to send statistical documents to member States for validation before publication.

27. Following discussions participants came to the following conclusion:

- each country should send a single report to ECA incorporating the views of NGOs;
- country reports should be accompanied by a summary of national priorities;
- national, sub-regional and regional NGOs should consult each other and select which should be their Conference spokesperson. The name of the designated spokesperson should reach ECA one month before the Conference;
- ECA should send one set of the Conference documents to each country. The National Focal Point will be responsible for reproducing the documents for distribution to members of the delegation.

Modalities for registration of participants (agenda item 5)

28. The Director of ACW introduced this agenda item, specifying that national delegations would be composed of twenty members broken down as follows:

- Governmental representatives (9):
 - a. the minister responsible for women's advancement as Head of delegation;
 - b. four experts from that ministry;
 - c. four experts from other ministerial departments
- Two parliamentarians
- Two media representatives
- Three representatives of thematic NGOs specialising in three different priority areas of the Platform for Action
- Three representatives of women's associations
- One youth representative aged no more than 25 years

29. The Director of ACW also requested each country to designate a focal point for coordinating the composition of the national delegation which will participate in the Conference. She described the terms of reference of such national focal points and the procedural instructions which would be communicated by ACW in a circular.

30. She specified that the national focal point would be responsible for receiving notifications of the payment of registration fees.

31. The registration fee was set at \$US50 per person for members of national delegations and \$US200 for participants from sub-regional, regional and international organizations. The list of delegations, payment notifications and registration forms should be sent to ECA before 30 September 1999.

32. The 200 dollar registration fee was considered excessive for regional and sub-regional NGO representatives and reduced to 50 dollars per participant.

Adoption of the final Draft of the Conference Programme (agenda item 6)

33. This item was introduced with a description of the proposed programme submitted for consideration and final adoption before presentation to the Conference. The introduction provided details of the programme of work and the sequencing of the various sessions.

34. The programme provided for:

- pre-Conferences consultations among NGOs, youth associations and Governments on the review to be submitted to the Conference;
- the Conference itself would discuss:
 - reviews prepared by the various categories of actors
 - thematic evaluations in working groups
 - working group reports in plenary
 - the finalization of the draft Plan of Action 2000 to 2005 and the draft Declaration by drafting groups
 - the adoption of Action Plan and Declaration (by Heads of National delegations)
- parallel activities to be determined

35. The proposed Conference programme was adopted without amendment.

36. During the discussion, participants wondered whether the Conference would draw lessons from the outcome of evaluations conducted by other world Conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Social Summit. It was pointed out that such evaluations could be reflected in the workshop discussions.

37. Some participants asked how issues emerging after the Beijing Conference would be addressed. It was noted that such issues would also be considered during the discussions on the twelve critical areas of concern.

38. Some participants were concerned about the adequacy of the measures taken by the secretariat to ensure that the group reports were exhaustive. ACW reassured them that, having learned from the experience of ECA's 40th Anniversary Conference, it would make internal arrangements for the drafting of reports to ensure that they accurately reflected the conclusions of plenary and workshop proceedings.

39. In reply to the question as to why the African cultural identity forum had been cancelled, it was explained that the idea had been abandoned for lack of the human and material resources required for adequate preparation.

40. In order to secure the full and effective involvement of all parties in the finalisation of the proposed 2000-2005 Plan of Action, it was agreed that a copy of the document would be sent in advance to participants for consideration before the Conference.

Report on progress in resource mobilization (agenda item 7)

41. The introduction of this agenda item indicated that the Conference was estimated to cost \$US823,300. This amount essentially covered technical backstopping, translation of documents, interpretation in the three working languages, documents reproduction, publication, logistical and administrative support. The cost estimate did not, however, cover the travel and subsistence of participants.

42. CIDA, ILO and SIDA had contributed a total of \$US116,000. Negotiations were being conducted to secure contributions from OAU, ADB and UNFPA.

43. The analysis of the above amount mobilized by ECA shows that it represents 30% of the required total budget.
44. During the discussion on this item, participants emphasized the need to mobilize the entire financing required as early as possible.
45. The representative of ADB confirmed that while her organization was a partner, it did not have the funds for organizing this type of activity. She therefore had formulated a project for mobilizing \$US60,000 for consultancies and \$US120,000 for translation of the Conference documents and would shortly communicate to ECA the results of the quest for financing.
46. The representative of UNDP indicated that her organization would contribute at two levels:
- The UNDP country offices would contribute to financing the travel of national delegations representing government and civil society;
 - The regional programme would offer \$US25,000 for consultancies.
47. The representative of UNIFEM announced that her organization would contribute as follows:
- \$US40,000 for consultancy work, preferably on the theme of violence against women or women in the media;
 - Production of CD-ROM
 - Compilation of statistical brochures
 - Financing the participation of some NGOs and civil society organizations
 - Preparing eight country reports
 - Participating of Africa in the work of the March 2000 Preparatory Committee meeting and the Beijing +5 review session in June 2000.
48. She added that the pledges would be communicated shortly to ECA and the funds obligated from July 1999.
49. The representative of the "Agence intergouvernementale de la francophonie" stressed the need for having the working documents in all the languages in order to ensure productive participation in the work of the Conference. In that regard, she announced that her organization would contribute to making the documents available in French and would communicate later the level of its contribution.

Modalities of NGO participation in the Conference (agenda item 8)

50. The Director of ACW described the various stages in which proceedings would be conducted and the modalities of NGO participation in plenary sessions and workshops.
51. She indicated that there would be two categories of accredited NGOs to take the floor in the Plenary meetings:
- 53 NGOs, members of National delegations selected nationally, one per country,
 - 25 Sub-regional and regional NGOs which will be selected by ACW from the list established by the NGO Technical Preparatory Committee.

52. Mrs. Ouédraogo then made the following proposals:

- NGOs should organize themselves to designate their Conference representatives and spokespersons who will present their review to the Conference;
- In plenary, the floor will be given indiscriminately to accredited governmental and NGO representatives;
- The last plenary session before the closing of the Conference will be devoted to adopting a five year Plan of Action, modalities for Africa's participation in the Beijing +5 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly scheduled for June 2000 and the Conference Declaration. Only heads of national delegations will participate in that plenary session.

53. With regard to selection criteria, the NGOs attending jointly proposed the following criteria for the selection of NGOs:

- observer status with ECOSOC
- a minimum track record of five years of existence
- substantive operation in the thematic areas of the Beijing Platform
- involvement in the post-Beijing and Beijing +5 process
- proven institutional capacity
- regional or sub-regional spread and outreach
- the NGO coordinating Committee will send to ECA a comprehensive list of NGOs which meet these criteria in order to enable ACW to establish the final list of 25 regional and sub-regional NGOs .

54. The proposals were accepted with the understanding that for those sub-regions where NGO activities are recent, the five-year track record requirement would be waived.

55. The meeting also decided that the NGO Coordinating Committee would be made up of NGOs members of the Technical Preparatory Committee.

Modalities for establishing the Drafting groups for the five-year action plan and the Conference Declaration (agenda item 9)

56. The Director of ACW informed participants the finalization of the three documents called for the establishment of drafting groups. These were:

- the five-year Regional Action Plan;
- the Conference Declaration; and
- the modalities for Africa's participation at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in June 2000 on the Beijing +5.

57. ACW will prepare the drafts of these documents in advance in order to facilitate their consideration and adoption.

58. The drafting groups will comprise 25 people each as follows :

- three national experts from each of the five sub-regions
- One NGO per sub-region

- five IGO and cooperation agency representatives

59. A proposal was made to the effect that only those cooperation agencies, regional and international organizations which had contributed to the Conference would participate in the drafting of documents. Participants agreed to the following:

- Three separate drafting groups would be established;
- A cut-off date would be set for notification of the lists of national and sub-regional experts;
- The bureau of the Committee on Women and Development will be the only body entitled to receive on behalf of ACW the lists of national experts members of the drafting groups;
- Only those United Nations agencies and organizations which had directly contributed to the financing of the Conference would be invited to join in the drafting of the three documents;

Principles and modalities for electing the Bureau of the Sixth African Regional Conference (agenda item 10)

60. The Director of ACW informed participants that Ethiopia, as headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, would host the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women.

61. After recalling the composition of the Bureaux of previous preparatory conferences, she observed that, in principle, the selection of Bureau members took account of geographical and linguistic balance.

62. The meeting requested ECA to initiate consultations to this effect and to communicate the outcome to the Bureau of the Committee on Women and Development before the holding of the Conference.

63. The delegation of the Republic of Congo requested ECA to check whether the composition of the Bureau of the 4th Regional Conference held in Abuja had included that country.

Principles and modalities for renewing the membership of the Committee on Women and Development (agenda item 11)

64. Introducing this agenda item, the Director of ACW recalled that at its most recent meeting held in Ouagadougou from 2 to 5 April 1999, the Committee on Women and Development had taken the following decisions:

- To renew the governmental membership of the Committee by two thirds alongside the African Regional Conference which will take place in Addis Ababa from 22 to 27 November 1999;
- To increase the number of governmental members to nineteen (3 for North Africa, 4 for Eastern Africa, 5 for West Africa, 3 for Central Africa and 4 for Southern Africa);
- To select members in alphabetical order (the first succeeding the last on the list).

65. She proposed a membership renewal plan in which the sub-regions would meet alongside the Conference to designate the new members. A letter signed by the chairperson of the Committee on Women and Development would be sent to member States in this regard.

66. She also outlined two options for the assumption of office by new members of the Committee:

Option one: New members would assume office at the next general meeting of the Committee in April 2001, elect the new Bureau on that occasion and prepare a work programme for the period 2001-2003 which corresponds to their term of office.

Option two: New members would assume office during the Regional Conference and immediately meet to elect their Bureau. The new bureau would meet immediately after the closing of the Conference to prepare a work schedule.

67. During the discussion, note was taken of the omission of the third new member for East Africa. According to the alphabetical order thus should be Djibouti.

68. Discussions also focused on the renewal of membership for North Africa because Algeria and Morocco did not feel they were current members of the Committee, not having been involved in all its activities. To address this issue, participants agreed on the need to follow the arrangement previously made at the Ouagadougou meeting of the Committee in April 1999, it being understood that any exceptions made would have to be applied to all the sub-regions.

69. The second of the two options was accepted. New members of the Committee would immediately assume office and hold their first meeting after the closing of the Conference in order to prepare the work schedule.

Consideration and adoption of the summary report and closing remarks (agenda item 12)

70. The session on this agenda item was chaired by His Excellency Mr. Tahar Sioud, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

71. The Director of ACW presented the summary report of the Second Meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee, stating that because of time constraints, it had been prepared under difficult conditions. She then invited participants to submit their written comments to the secretariat.

72. Following the presentation of the summary report and at the suggestion of one participant, it was agreed that Senegal and Tunisia would be considered honorable members of the incoming Committee on Women and Development given their extensive contribution to the preparation of the Dakar and Beijing Conferences and to the evaluation exercise. In their view, the accumulated experience of the two countries would be of great help to the Committee.

73. It was also decided that the Presidents of Senegal and Tunisia would be invited, at the forthcoming Assembly of OAU Heads of State and Government, to champion the cause of the Committee and to advocate for financial support of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women and Development.

74. In his closing statement, Mr. Tahar Sioud informed participants that Tunisian women were fully integrated in the workplace and in public life and were currently making a vital contribution to the building of an equitable society seeking progress within an environment of peace and stability.
75. They had come a long way since the struggle began with reformers such as Tahar Haddad and today the role of women was firmly implanted in the consciousness of Tunisian society. It was part and parcel of their identity and drew inspiration both from Arab-Islamic reasoning and the universal culture that modernization demands. It was this understanding which had led Tunisia to adopt the Platform for Action and to reaffirm the universality of women's rights.
76. The gender dimension had become a parameter for national planning and development. In his view, the African renaissance would not happen without due account being taken of the importance of the status and role of African women.
77. He concluded by challenging participants to focus the work of the Sixth Regional Conference on objective analysis, constructive criticism and the formulation of actionable plans. In doing that, it would be important to envisage moving into new spaces and scopes of action while giving pride of place to gender information, training, education and sensitization. As the millenium drew to a close, African women were called upon to use their legendary wisdom in asserting and mobilizing themselves.
78. He then thanked all and sundry for contributing to the success of the meeting.
79. On behalf of participants, Madam Mendili, representative of AMU, read out a vote of thanks to His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of Tunisia for his unflinching support of women's initiatives. The inspiration of his vision had imparted so much dynamism and efficacy to the follow-up and evaluation exercise conducted by the Committee.
80. She stressed that the status achieved over time by Tunisian women as development actors and beneficiaries was a source of pride for all African women.
81. She then thanked the President, Government and people of Tunisia for their warm hospitality and commended them for their efforts to promote friendship and peace among the people of Africa.
82. Madam Marie-Laure Kcutoua, representative of Côte d'Ivoire, read out, on behalf of all participants a vote of thanks to Her Excellency Madam Neziha Zarrouk, Minister responsible for Women and Children's Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Development, commending her for the able way in which she had guided the work of the Preparatory Committee and the warmth and attention accorded to participants.

Summary of conclusions

The Second Preparatory Meeting for the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women was held on 18 and 19 June 1999 in Tunis, Tunisia at the Conference Hall of Abou Nawas Hotel. It was organised by the ECA African Centre for Women (ACW) in cooperation with the Ministry of Women's and Family Affairs of Tunisia, Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Development.

The following countries attended the meeting, Algeria, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia. The non-governmental organizations attending were; ABANTU for Development, Akina Mama wa Africa (AMWA), Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), the Federation of Women's Networks on Peace (FEFARP), African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Union Maghrebine des Associations féminines (UMAF), Association Tunisienne des Mères (ATM), Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie, and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF). The African Development Bank (ADB), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNESCO, Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), and the North African Sub-regional Development Centre of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa were also represented.

After one and half days of sharing ideas under the Chairmanship of Honourable Ms. Neziha Zarrouk, Minister of Women Affairs of Tunisia and the Honourable Ms. Aminata Mbengue Ndiaye, Senegalese Minister of Family Affairs, Social Action and National Solidarity, a consensus emerged on the 11 items of the agenda summarized in 9 items.

1. Review of the Preparation of country reports

Given the small number of country reports received to date by ACW, the Committee appealed to member States to send their reports to ECA's African Centre for Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women (New York) by 31 July 1999.

2. Review of the status of documentation for the Conference

- Country reports should be prepared in consultation with national NGOs;
- To facilitate ECA's preparation of the regional summary documents, member States were invited to attach to their country report a summary of the national evaluation results
- ECA should send one set of the Conference documents to each country which will in turn reproduce it for distribution to all members of the delegation

3. Modalities for the registration of participants

- Each country should designate a national focal point for the preparation of the Sixth Regional Conference and send the address and other particulars of the focal points to ACW as speedily as possible;
- Participant registration forms will be made available to the national focal point of each country who will communicate to ECA the list of the 20 members of the national delegation;
- The national focal point will also be responsible for receiving notifications of the payment of registration fees by members of national delegations in accordance with the procedural instructions communicated by the ACW circular letter;
- Sub-regional and regional NGOs will receive separate invitations;

- The 200 dollar registration fee to be paid by regional and sub-regional NGO representatives was considered excessive and reduced to 50 dollars per participant.

4. Adoption of the final draft of the Conference programme

- The draft programme was retained with the substantive clarifications and the methodology adopted for the thematic evaluation workshops;
- The thematic workshops will be forums for critical discussion of progress made or otherwise and any shortfalls as well as a sharing of ideas on urgent remedial measures to be taken in the short and medium terms to speed up the implementation of the Platform;
- ECA will institute internal operating machinery for drafting the reports of the various sessions of the Conference, in particular the thematic workshops, with a view to avoiding any omission or loss of critical information on Conference proceedings;
- Discussions in the various thematic workshops will also reflect the progress made within the context of follow-up to other conferences such as those which took place in Cairo, Vienna or Copenhagen;
- The forum on African cultural identity as well as the African art exhibition have been cancelled for lack of human and material resources to prepare those events.

5. Modalities of NGO participation in the Conference programme

The NGO coordinating Committee for the Sixth Regional Conference will be made up of the NGOs members of the Technical preparatory Committee which have actively participated in the preparatory meetings.

A. Selection criteria:

- 53 NGOs will participate in the Conference (each representing the national NGOs) and will be selected nationally, one per country;
- The 25 sub-regional and regional NGOs participating in the Conference on behalf of the NGOs could bring up to two persons per NGO i.e. maximum of 50 persons in order to be able to participate in the ancillary activities
- The selection criteria for regional and sub-regional NGOs participating in the Conference are :
 - observer status with ECOSOC
 - a minimum track record of five years of existence
 - substantive operation in the thematic areas of the Beijing Platform
 - involvement in the post-Beijing and Beijing +5 process
 - proven institutional capacity
 - regional spread and outreach
 - the NGO coordinating Committee will send to ECA a comprehensive list of NGOs which meet these criteria in order to enable ACW to establish the final list of 25 regional and sub-regional NGOs .

B. Participation in Conference proceedings

- NGOs should organize themselves to designate their Conference representatives and spokespersons who will present their review to the Conference;
- In plenary, the floor will be given indiscriminately to accredited governmental and NGO representatives;
- The last plenary session before the closing of the Conference will be devoted to adopting a five year Plan of Action, modalities for Africa's participation in the Beijing +5 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly scheduled for June 2000 and the

Conference Declaration. Only heads of national delegations will participate in this plenary session.

6. Establishment of drafting groups

- Three drafting groups will be established to finalize respectively
 - the five-year Action Plan;
 - the Conference Declaration;
 - the modalities for Africa's participation in the Beijing +5 review to be conducted at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly.
- The drafting groups will be made up of :
 - three national experts from each of the five sub-regions
 - One NGO per sub-region
 - five IGO and agency representatives
- The Bureau of the Committee on Women and Development will communicate to ECA the list of national experts

7. Mobilisation of financial resources

- The total Conference budget is estimated at \$US823,300 (not including the cost of travel and subsistence for participants) and the funds already mobilised account for approximately 30% of the total;
- Pledges were made during the meeting by ADB, UNDP, UNIFEM and the "Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie"
- Details of the amount of their contribution will be officially communicated to ECA;

8. Principles and modalities for electing the Bureau of the Sixth African Regional Conference

- Consultations regarding the election of the Bureau of the Sixth regional Conference will be conducted by ECA which will submit a provisional list to the Bureau of the Committee on Women and Development on the eve of the Conference;

9. Principles and modalities for renewing the membership of the Committee on Women and Development

- New members of the Committee will be elected alongside the Conference in accordance with modalities proposed by ECA. They shall begin their term of office immediately and hold their first meeting after the closing of the Conference in order to prepare their work programme.

**VOTE OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. ZINE EL ABIDINE BEN ALI
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA**

Participants attending the Second Meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee held on 18 and 19 June 1999 in Tunis, under the high patronage of Madam Leila Ben Ali, First Lady of the Republic of Tunisia, avail themselves of this happy occasion to express to His Excellency the President, their gratitude and appreciation for his constant and unfailing support to all the initiatives of African women.

They note with satisfaction that, under the leadership of Tunisia, the Committee on Women and Development and the Technical Preparatory Committee established under it, have been infused with greater dynamism for greater efficiency and rationalization in the follow-up and evaluation of programmes for the advancement of African women.

They are convinced that such dynamism holds great promise for the future of African women particularly at a time when Tunisia, under his enlightened leadership, is making great strides in its quest for modernization and progress.

For African women, this particularly positive development of making women full citizens and actors as well as beneficiaries of development, constitutes a source of pride.

In witness whereof the participants hereby express their sincere gratitude to him for the warm Tunisian hospitality they have enjoyed and commend his efforts aimed at strengthening the bonds of friendship and brotherhood among African people for the peace, stability and prosperity of the continent.

Done in Tunis, this 19th day of June
1999

**VOTE OF THANKS TO HER EXCELLENCY MADAM NEZIHA ZARROUK
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN AND FAMILY AFFAIRS IN THE OFFICE
OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CURRENT CHAIRPERSON OF THE
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT**

Participants attending the Second Meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee held on 18 and 19 June 1999 in Tunis.

Considering

The particular commitment of Madam Neziha Zarrouk, Minister responsible for Women and Family Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister and current Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Development, to securing the broadest participation of Committee members in the work of the Technical Preparatory Committee.

The key role that she has played in the preparatory process and in conducting the proceedings of the meeting.

The particular attention and warm hospitality extended to the Ministers members of the Committee on Women and Development and all participants attending the Second Meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee.

Hereby express their appreciation to Madam Neziha Zarrouk, Minister responsible for Women and Family Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister, for her constancy and availability.

Done in Tunis, this 19th day of June 1999

The Technical Preparatory Committee for
the Sixth Africa Regional Conference on Women

**Second Preparatory Meeting for the Sixth
Africa Regional Conference on Women**

18-19 June 1999, Tunis - Tunisia

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