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**THE AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ON  
HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND THE OUTCOMES OF THE WORLD  
SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:  
IMPLEMENTATION, FOLLOW-UP AND  
MONITORING**

# **THE AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ON HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE OUTCOMES OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION, FOLLOW-UP AND MONITORING<sup>1</sup>**

## **1. Background**

1. Most parts of the world have experienced, over the past two decades or so, a serious deterioration in the social and economic conditions, characterized by the rise in unemployment, poverty, crime, violence and civil strife. They are manifesting themselves in social tensions and disintegration which threaten global security and development. Allied to this, the social and economic crises are eroding and reversing the substantial material progress achieved globally during the second half of this century. It is against the backdrop of the concern about the worsening social and economic conditions and their destabilizing effects on many societies; and acknowledgment of the significance of the social dimension in sustainable development that the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 47/92 of 16 December 1992, which calls for convening a World Summit for Social Development at the level of Heads of State or Government to tackle the critical problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. The major objectives of the Summit<sup>2</sup> were identified, among others, as putting the needs of the people at the centre of development; placing special priority on the social needs of the least developed countries; mobilizing resources for social development; enabling the active involvement of all citizens in the development process; and recommending effective actions and policies for the UN system in the sphere of social development.

2. The convening of the Summit is a step forward towards implementation of the commitment made in the Charter of the United Nations "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedoms, ..." with a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being.<sup>3</sup> The Summit addressed the following core issues:

- Reduction and elimination of wide-spread poverty;
- Productive employment and the reduction of unemployment; and
- Social integration.

3. The Summit mapped out new directions and approaches for social policies in order to tackle these core social issues. The preparation and

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<sup>1</sup> ECA/OAU (1994) *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa*. Addis Ababa; and the United Nations (1995) *World Summit for Social Development*, 6-12 March 1995, New York.

<sup>2</sup> *The World Summit for Social Development* and the "Summit" are used interchangeably in this report.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice*, (October 1945), New York, p. 1.

adoption of the draft Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development went through three separate sessions of the preparatory committee meetings at the UN Headquarters in New York during January 1994 to January 1995. The World Summit for Social Development took place in Copenhagen during 6-12 March 1995 to consider the draft Declaration and Programme of Action for social development. The Summit was attended by world leaders from 117 countries to end global poverty, enhance productive employment opportunities and reduce unemployment and promote and foster social integration. Although social issues have been placed at the top of the international agenda by a series of major UN conferences, the World Summit for Social Development was a first meeting of its kind to take on the profound challenge of tackling the critical issue of global poverty, which is, in the final analysis, the root cause of a myriad of social and economic problems. Furthermore, it was the largest gathering of world leaders which ended with the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action. The Summit document is, in a way, a blueprint on how to create more socially equitable and just societies, free of inequities in the distribution of national wealth and discrimination against the fellow human being.

4. In compliance with the UN General Assembly resolution 47/92, the joint secretariat of ECA and OAU embarked on a series of actions aimed at ensuring that Africa would be well prepared for the Summit and that an African common position on the issues to be discussed at the Summit would be collectively adopted at the highest political level in Africa. At the level of ECA, the ECA's Conference of Ministers Responsible for Economic Development and Planning decided by resolution 749 (XXVIII) that an African common position on the issues before the Summit should be prepared by the First meeting of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development. The meeting of this Conference took place on 20 and 21 January 1994, during which it adopted the document entitled : *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa*.<sup>4</sup> The conference transmitted the document to the first session of the Preparatory Committee (PREPCOM I) for the World Summit for Social Development which met in New York during 31 January to 11 February 1994. The African Common Position was distributed as an official document of PREPCOM I and was well received by it.

5. At the level of the OAU, the document was subsequently presented to and adopted and endorsed by a number of high level meetings, including the Seventeenth Ordinary Session of the OAU Labour Commission; 60th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers; and the 30th Ordinary Session of the

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<sup>4</sup> The *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa* and the "African Common Position" are used interchangeably in this report.

Assembly of Heads of State and Government.<sup>5</sup> A declaration on Human and Social Development (AHG/DECL. 5(XXX)) was adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. It should be recalled that the *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa* was an official document presented at PREPCOM I of the World Summit for Social Development. In this regard, the African Common Position was Africa's substantive contribution to the Summit. Some of the human and social issues and concerns of the African region were reflected in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the Summit.

6. The elaboration of the African Common Position and the Declaration on Human and Social Development and their transmission by the African Heads of State and Government as official documents of the World Summit for Social Development afforded Africa a unique opportunity not only to put the social and human concerns of Africa at the top of the global agenda but also to underscore the determination of African countries and peoples to tackle the grave human and social situation in the region and to mobilize the support of the world community in these actions.

7. This report is organized in five sections. The common concerns of Africa, as reflected in the African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa and The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, are reviewed in section II. This is with a view to examining the extent to which Africa's concerns, as articulated in the former, are reflected in the final report of the Summit. Section III deals with the modalities of implementation, follow-up, monitoring and reporting of the outcomes of the African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa and the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development at the national, regional and international levels. In this regard, the report argues for the need to adopt an integrated and coordinated approach. Section IV examines the role of the United Nations system in the implementation and follow-up of the outcomes of the *World Summit for Social Development*. In view of the fact that a number of recent major United Nations conferences have addressed social issues and have come up with appropriate agendas, programmes of action and recommendations in this regard, the need to formulate and adopt an integrated and coordinated UN system-wide approach in the area of social development is being increasingly realized. This is based on the recognition that not only are there considerable overlaps in the agendas and programmes of action of these conferences, but the individual implementation and follow-up of the proposed

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<sup>5</sup> The Seventeenth Ordinary Session of the OAU Labour Commission, 18-24 April 1994, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the 60th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, 6-11 June 1994, Tunis, Tunisia; and the Thirtieth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, 13-15 June 1994, Tunis, Tunisia.

actions of the conferences will also tax the already limited capacity and resources of member States. In the light of this recognition, the section also discusses the modalities of the proposed UN system-wide integrated approach for implementing the recommendations of the main recent United Nations conferences in the field of social development. Finally, the major conclusions of the report are summarized in section V.

## **II. The African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa and the Outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development: Comparative Analysis**

8. Africa was the first region to prepare and submit to the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the World Summit for Social Development, which met in January 1994, a regional common position on the issues before the Summit. This fact, as well as the regular participation and intervention of the African delegation at the meetings of the Preparatory Committee and the active lobbying of the African group in New York, helped in crystallizing the concerns of Africa and bringing these to the attention of the PREPCOM sessions. The African Common Position provides an assessment of the state of human and social development in Africa; outlines Africa's major human and social development concerns and objectives; articulates an Actionable Agenda for human and social development in Africa; and spells out the modalities for implementing, monitoring, follow-up and reporting on the Common Position.

9. Against the backdrop of the gravity of human and social conditions in Africa, the African Common Position maps out an actionable agenda for human and social development, which includes actions at the national level, such as policy shifts and increased resources in the areas of poverty alleviation, creating productive employment and income, social integration, peace and political stability and the promotion and consolidation of popular participation in development in the region. It also delineates the complementary actions that will need to be taken by Africa's external development partners to support African efforts at achieving human-centred development. In this context, paragraph 84 of the African Common Position underscores the need to put in place new emphasis on policies aimed at sustainable development and transformation in Africa. This includes, among others, early action by the international community on outstanding issues such as external resource flows, debt, trade and providing, in general, an enabling external economic environment that will facilitate human-centred development in Africa.

10. To this end, paragraphs 85, 86 and 88 elaborate on the nature of the external economic environment for supporting Africa's human and social development efforts and building human resource capacities and institutions in Africa. For example, paragraph 85 calls for "...a substantial increase in resource flows to Africa, a fundamental reassessment of current aid policies and practices and an unambiguous commitment to support human-centred development...by all development partners."<sup>6</sup> It emphasises the need for major policy shifts in the area of official development assistance (ODA)--one that is based on commitment to human and social development. Paragraph 86 goes

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<sup>6</sup> ECA/OAU (1994) *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa*, op. cit., para 85, p. 36.

on to state that "...at least 20 per cent of ODA should be committed to human development programmes as compared with the present average of 7 per cent. Africa's development partners should commit themselves to meeting this target and match increased allocations that African countries will make to human and social development fields."<sup>7</sup> In the same vein, paragraph 81 of the African Common Position calls for a substantial increase in public spending on all areas of human and social development. In this regard, it proposes the increase "...from its current average level of 14 per cent to 30 per cent, and, thereafter to maintain a growth rate in public spending in these sectors above the population growth rate."<sup>8</sup> It also recommends a variety of approaches that African countries could set in motion to mobilize and redirect resources for human and social development. It goes even further to propose that any increased allocations that African countries will make to human and social development should be matched by Africa's external development partners. In a way, from the above a 30/20 principle is implied in the African Common Position, i.e. 30 per cent of public spending and 20 per cent of ODA on human and social development.

11. Paragraph 87 of the African Common Position draws attention to the new opportunity to redirect resources for human and social development through harvesting part of the peace dividend. Since the end of the cold war, military spending by industrialized countries has declined resulting in the peace dividend to the tune of US\$ 76 billion between 1987-90. Paragraph 88 underscores the importance of Africa's creditors to take bold measures to substantially reduce Africa's debt burden. It goes on to say that "...urgent measures need to be taken to write off debt, adopt full Trinidad terms which allow for the cancellation of two thirds of Paris Club debt and alleviate the burden of debt to multilateral institutions..."<sup>9</sup> Other measures advocated, in this regard, to support human and social development efforts in Africa include the effective application of debt for human development swaps.<sup>10</sup>

12. The importance of North-South and South-South partnerships to create secure international environment for human and social development is highlighted in paragraph 89 of the African Common Position. In this regard, the international community is being urged to make contributions in support of peace, reconciliation and conflict resolutions in Africa by contributing to the recently launched OAU Peace Fund.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., para 86, p. 37.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., para 81, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., para 88, p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

13. The achievement of the objective of human-centred development could be compromised if the social dimension of structural adjustment programmes in African countries is not taken into account. To this end, paragraph 80 of the African Common Position underscores the need for African countries to integrate the social dimension into the IMF/World Bank-backed structural adjustment programmes to ensure and safeguard that the gains that could be made through implementing the measures in support of human development are not reversed. In this regard, a number of measures have been proposed, such as reduction of government expenditure on defence and on non-productive public sector activities; and expenditure switching to increase government allocations on the social sectors.<sup>11</sup> Notwithstanding the national efforts, the African Common Position reiterates the urgent need for the international community to fulfil the promise of support to enable Africa to implement the Actionable Agenda, as contained in the African Common Position. This means that the flow of resources, terms of trade, commodity prices and Africa's debt burden must, finally, be dealt with in a manner which no longer frustrates the dream of the people of Africa.

14. The World Summit for Social Development adopted the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action for Social Development. The Declaration is a reaffirmation by heads of state or government to end global poverty; achieve the goal of full employment and foster stable and just societies. It includes an analysis of the current world social situation; reasons for convening the Summit; and an outline of the main principles and goals of social development. These are followed by ten commitments or agreements made by the world's leaders in the global drive for social progress and development, namely:<sup>12</sup>

- Creating an enabling economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment for the achievement of social development;
- Eradication of poverty in the world through decisive national actions and international cooperation;
- Promoting full employment as a basic priority;
- Promoting social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, tolerance and respect for diversity;
- Promoting full respect for human dignity and achieving equality and equity between men and women;
- Promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education, the highest attainable standard of

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., explanatory footnote on pp. 33-34.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations (1995) *World Summit for Social Development* 6-12 March 1995, op. cit., Section C. Commitments, pp. 12-33.



- physical and mental health and the access of all to primary health care;
- Accelerating the economic, social and human resource development of African and the least developed countries;
- Ensuring that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals;
- Increasing significantly and/ or utilizing more efficiently the resources allocated in social development; and
- Improving and strengthening for international, regional and sub-regional cooperation for social development.

15. The Programme of Action for Social Development outlines policies, actions and measures to implement the principles and fulfil the commitments articulated in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development. The actions recommended relate to creating, within a framework of sustained growth and sustainable development, an environment at the national and international levels which will be supportive and conducive to social development, including eradicating poverty, enhancing productive employment and reducing unemployment, and fostering social integration. The Programme of Action includes the following five chapters:<sup>13</sup>

Chapter 1: An Enabling Environment for Social Development

Chapter 2: Eradication of Poverty

Chapter 3: Expansion of Productive Employment and Reduction of Unemployment

Chapter 4: Social Integration

Chapter 5: Implementation and Follow-up

16. Africa received recognition in several parts of the final documents of the Summit. For example, in accordance with Commitment 7 of the Copenhagen Declaration, the world leaders committed themselves to accelerating the economic, social and human-centred development of Africa and the least developed countries, through various actions as contained in paragraphs (a) through (g):<sup>14</sup>

- "(a) Implement, at the national level, structural adjustment policies, which should include social development goals, as well as effective development strategies that establish more favourable

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, Part Two, pp. 41-128.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, Commitment 7 (a) to (g), pp. 26-27.

climate for trade and investment, give priority to human resource development and further promote the development of democratic institutions;

- (b) Support the domestic efforts of Africa and the least developed countries to implement economic reforms, programmes to increase food security, and commodity diversification efforts through international cooperation, including South-South cooperation and technical and financial assistance, as well as trade and partnership;
- (c) Find effective, development-oriented and durable solutions to external debt problems, through the immediate implementation of the terms of debt forgiveness agreed upon in the Paris Club in December 1994, which encompass debt reduction, including cancellation or other debt relief measures; invite the international financial institutions to examine innovative approaches to assist low-income countries with a high proportion of multilateral debt, with a view to alleviating their debt burdens; and develop techniques of debt conversion applied to social development programmes and projects in conformity with Summit priorities. These actions should take into account the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s<sup>15</sup> and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s,<sup>16</sup> and should be implemented as soon as possible;
- (d) Ensure the implementation of the strategies and measures for the development of Africa decided by the international community, and support the reform efforts, development strategies and programmes decided by the African countries and the least developed countries;
- (e) Increase official development assistance, both overall and for social programmes, and improve its impact, consistent with countries' economic circumstances and capacities to assist, and consistent with commitments in international agreements;
- (f) Consider ratifying the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought

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<sup>15</sup> General Assembly resolution 46/151, annex, sect. II.

<sup>16</sup> Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 3-14 September 1990 (A/CONF. 147/18), part one.

and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,<sup>17</sup> and support African countries in the implementation of urgent action to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought;

- (g) Take all necessary measures to ensure that communicable diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, do not restrict or reverse the progress made in economic and social development."

17. The Summit came out very strongly on the issue of promoting social development goals, in particular eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment and reducing unemployment, and enhancing social integration, when implementing structural adjustment programmes. In this regard, at the national level, the world leaders committed themselves to promoting basic social programmes and expenditures and protecting the vulnerable sections of society from budget cuts; reviewing the impact of structural adjustment and developing appropriate policies to reduce their negative effects; designing policies to reinforce the social development components of all adjustment programmes; and ensuring that women do not bear a disproportionate burden resulting from adjustment programmes.<sup>18</sup> At the international level, the world leaders agreed that international lending for adjustment is targeted at social development; that structural adjustment programmes respond to the specific concerns and needs of each country; and solicit the support and cooperation of regional and international organizations, and the United Nations system, to incorporate and integrated social development goals into their respective activities.<sup>19</sup>

18. Commitment 9 has special relevance to Africa in that it underscores the importance of mobilizing and allocating increased resources at the national and international levels for social development to achieve the goals of the Summit. At the national level, the Summit leaders committed themselves to:<sup>20</sup> develop policies to promote and mobilize domestic savings for social programmes; implement economic policies for sustained economic growth to support social development; enhance access to productive resources for small and micro-enterprises including the informal sector; develop a fair, progressive and efficient taxation systems; ensure transparency and accountability in the use of public resources, giving priority to improving basic social services; explore innovative ways of generating new public and private financial resources through the reduction of excessive military expenditure and the possible reallocation of such savings for social and economic development; and utilizing

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<sup>17</sup> A/49/84/Add.2, annex, appendix II.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Commitment 8, (a) and (b); (d) and (e), pp. 27-28.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Commitment 8 (f) to (h), p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, Commitment 9, pp. 28-31.

and developing fully the potentials and contribution of cooperatives for achieving social development goals, in particular eradicating poverty, generating productive employment and fostering social integration.

19. At the international level, the commitments include<sup>21</sup> facilitating the flow to developing countries of international finance, technology, skills for providing new and additional resources on a predictable basis; fulfilling the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for overall ODA as soon as possible and increasing the flow of external resources for the countries experiencing problems relating to refugees and displaced persons; ensuring the urgent implementation of existing debt-relief agreements and negotiating further initiatives in this regard for those low-income countries, which are heavily indebted, at an early date; inviting the international financial institutions to explore innovative approaches for alleviating multilateral debt of low-income countries; developing techniques of debt swaps for social development programmes. In the context of the effects of the implementation of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, the Summit affirmed "...the need to assist African countries and the least developed countries in evaluating the impact of the implementation of the Final Act so that they can benefit fully."<sup>22</sup> Similarly, paragraph 10 (d) of the Programme of Action of the Summit reiterates the need to assist developing countries, particularly African countries to take advantage of expanded international trading opportunities.<sup>23</sup> The importance of international cooperation particularly supporting South-South cooperation is also underscored in Commitment 9 (n).

20. Within the framework of international support to developing countries, paragraph 11 of the Programme of Action calls for giving priority to the needs and concerns of Africa and the least developed countries. In this regard, a number of necessary actions at the national and international levels have been proposed in the Programme of Action. Some of these actions relate to:<sup>24</sup> implementing policies and strategies conducive for social development, trade, investments, human resource development and encouraging the development of democratic institutions; supporting the efforts of African countries to create an enabling environment for attracting foreign and domestic direct investment, encouraging savings, promoting the full participation of the private sector, including non-governmental organizations in the growth and development process; supporting economic reforms to improve the functioning of commodity markets and commodity diversification through international cooperation and partnership; finding effective, development-oriented and durable solutions to tackling the external debt problem through implementation of existing

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Commitment 9 (i) through (m) and (o), pp. 30-31.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, Commitment 9, sub-para (p), p. 31.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, Programme of Action, para 10 (d), p. 46.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Programme of Action, para 11 (a) through (h), pp. 46-47.

agreements as well as negotiating further initiatives in this regard; increasing ODA assistance both in total and for social development programmes; "...and striving to attain the agreed upon target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance and 0.15 per cent to the least developed countries as soon as possible."<sup>25</sup>

21. From the above analysis it appears that the concerns of the African region received proportionately greater attention in the outcomes of the Summit than those of the other regions of the world. The burning issues affecting adversely the African region, such as debt reduction/relief, structural adjustment programmes, trade, ODA, favourable external economic environment, etc., have been reflected in the Summit document. This is largely attributed to the African Common Position document which so eloquently articulated to the international community the gravity of human and social conditions in Africa. It should be reiterated that the African Common Position was well received by the various sessions of the Preparatory Committee and the Summit itself in that several sections of the final document of the Summit did detail on the need for special measures to improve the critical social situation in the African region.

22. The commitments and targets for social development at the national level are clearly spelt out in the Summit document. However, the commitments at the international level are fixed neither in terms of absolute figures nor of implementation deadlines. Even where certain magnitudes are given, as in the case of the 20/20 initiative for social programmes, the text of the Programme of Action is not binding. For example, paragraph 88 (c) of the Programme of Action conveys this ambiguity; "Agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing country partners to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of ODA and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes;" and paragraph 88 (b) of the Programme of Action "Striving for the fulfilment of the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for overall official development assistance (ODA) as soon as possible..."<sup>26</sup> Phrases such as "as soon as possible" or "as far as possible" have been frequently used in the final document to qualify statements of intent, which is not the same as a firm commitment to social programmes at the international level. However, the above notwithstanding, the Summit document does incorporate the concerns and needs of the African region. Thanks to the timely preparation of the African Common Position and the diligence and commitment with which the African delegation put across to the Summit, the human and social development problems and concerns of the African region have been addressed rather visibly.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Programme of Action, para 11 (h), pp. 47-48.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., para 88 (c), p. 117 and para 88 (b), p. 116 respectively.

### **III. Implementation and Follow-up of the African Common Position and the Outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development**

23. A number of international fora on social and economic areas, including the Summit have addressed the burning issues such as reducing and eliminating widespread poverty, expanding productive employment and reducing unemployment, fostering social integration and other social issues. They have made recommendations to tackle these problems. But the real challenge lies in the effective implementation, follow-up and reporting on progress made in this regard.

24. Both the African Common Position and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development advocate the need to adopt an integrated and coordinated approach towards implementation and follow-up at the national, regional and international levels, with the full recognition that the main responsibility for these actions rests with the countries themselves. Such a strategy calls not only for major policy shifts and a redirection of resources to human development at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, but also similar actions by Africa's development partners, including international development agencies, bilateral donors, NGOs and people's organizations. Furthermore, both documents emphasize the need to fully involve all social partners including civil society and the private sector. The importance of complementing national efforts in social and human development by the international community is also underscored in both documents. This section attempts to review the modalities of implementation and follow-up as proposed in both the African Common Position and the Summit Programme of Action. In this regard, it will review the policy shifts, actions and resources indispensable for effective implementation and follow-up at the national, regional and international levels.

#### **A. Implementation**

##### **(i) National Level:**

25. The successful implementation of Africa's common objectives, action plans and development strategies to contain and reverse the state of human and social development in the region requires the pursuit of vigorous policy shifts as elaborated in the African Common Position. In this regard, the African Common Position states that "...nothing less than a reorientation of the whole basis of development in the region. Such reorientation must build upon and strengthen indigenous capacities and capabilities and instill self-confidence... What is needed is a comprehensive and integrated strategy of development and structural transformation in which human development concerns form the

core."<sup>27</sup> This is the most fundamental challenge facing Africa and its leaders. They must find the courage to defend their resolutions and implement their own plans.

26. The African Common Position reiterates that the effective implementation of the policies and measures at the national level should be the collective responsibility of governments, civil society, NGOs and the private sector. This calls for forging active partnerships between governments, civil society, NGOs and the private sector to implement the Actionable Agenda as contained in the African Common Position. The Agenda clearly states that: "We as Africans, governments and people, must commit ourselves to such a compact for human development in our region."<sup>28</sup> It should be added here that while the onus for initiating and sustaining the implementation momentum lies mainly with national governments, they must create appropriate opportunities for the "...various stake-holders to ensure that this Agenda becomes, indisputably, a people's Agenda."<sup>29</sup> Therefore, it is only by making such policy shifts and through empowering the people and their communities that the people can effectively tackle some of the pressing human and social problems on their own, and be able to generate in governments the political will and the required support needed to attack the interrelated facets of the crisis.

27. The African Common Position stressed that the importance of working consciously to alleviate poverty and sustain human development at the national level requires providing the appropriate conditions and designing national policy packages or action plans for raising the productivity of the labour force in the agricultural and informal sectors, as well as in the formal sector, and in creating "...an enabling environment that would unleash entrepreneurial talents, creativity, enthusiasm and the productive capacity of the people."<sup>30</sup> "Appropriate conditions" in this context imply not only making policy commitments but also making shifts that are doable or implementable. Specific examples of policy shifts and areas of action to mitigate the debilitating effects of poverty are outlined in paragraph 58, and in brief, they include, *inter alia*:<sup>31</sup> labour-intensive, employment-focused investment policies, removing institutional and policy biases against women, pursuing pricing policies and other macro-economic measures including public-spending that benefit the poor, targeting resources and social services to the poor, instituting comprehensive prevention and control programmes for major diseases, and eradicating illiteracy.

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<sup>27</sup> ECA/OAU (1994) *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa*, op. cit., para 55, pp. 19-20.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., para 56, p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., para 91, p. 38.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., para 58, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., para 58, p. 21.

28. In the substantive policy area of promoting productive employment and income generation, the Actionable Agenda of the African Common Position recommends a comprehensive approach which should be linked with the overall economic, particularly investment policies, to guarantee its sustainability. It also recognizes the need for an integrated approach in the building and strengthening of human capacity by taking concrete steps to reform and refashion education and training to match the needs of the region. It addresses policy measures and actions that are required in the formal, agricultural, rural non-farm and informal sectors to create employment and improve labour and agricultural productivity (paragraphs 62, 64 and 65). In general, the outcome of these measures will depend on how formal, informal and agricultural policy mixes are implemented at the national level, for it makes no sense to advocate measures in support of employment creation in the informal sector, while at the same time adopting policies that would negatively affect the sector and/or labour productivity, as is currently the practice in many African countries.

29. The Actionable Agenda of the African Common Position delineates the role of the family in promoting social integration, peace and political stability. It notes that "The weakening of the family and related social problems, ethnic and communal tensions, political instability and lack of human security have thwarted progress in human development."<sup>32</sup> In view of the important role of the family in fostering social cohesion, paragraph 66 goes on to propose that efforts should be made to develop policies and institutions to enhance social integration and political stability in the African region by meeting family economic needs, upgrading existing welfare services and programmes, rehabilitation of infrastructure, promoting the status of women, utilizing African traditions and other mechanisms of conflict mediation and resolution, incorporating peace education, respect for human rights and environmental protection concerns in school curricula and through other media, and affirming the responsibility of governments in spearheading national reconciliation efforts by integrating former adversaries into the mainstream of political, social and economic life.<sup>33</sup>

30. Finally, the Actionable Agenda of the African Common Position advocates accelerated progress in democratization and popular participation as the basic pre-condition for the effective implementation of the African Common Position. Thus "... that greater participation and consensus-building is required at all levels in the formulation and implementation of economic and social policies, including the identification and elimination of laws and bureaucratic procedures that pose obstacles to peoples participation."<sup>34</sup> The Agenda reiterates the principles of the *African Charter for Popular Participation in*

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., para 66, p. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., para 66, pp. 26-27.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., para 72, p. 29.



*Development* which underscores the importance "...to open up political processes to accommodate freedom of opinions, tolerate differences, accept consensus, protect and respect basic human rights and the right of the people to express themselves freely, as well as enhance the role of the organizations and institutions of civil society, including popular and voluntary associations, in human and social development."<sup>35</sup>

31. While shifts and actions in substantive policy areas are commendable, implementation will be difficult unless countries can provide adequate and assured resources in all areas of human development. Accordingly, the Actionable Agenda of the African Common Position emphasizes the need for policy packages to be implemented in each country through the mobilization of domestic resources and their efficient utilization. Determined national action is required to make sure that these resources are adequate while various ways and means of increasing and redirecting resources for human and social development should be explored. The Agenda begins by recommending that "...public spending on all areas of human development should increase from the current average level of 14 per cent to 30 per cent, and, thereafter to maintain a growth rate in public outlays in these sectors at above the population growth rate..."<sup>36</sup> Other methods suggested in paragraph 81 for raising the required resources include reducing military spending by at least one-third from its current level and directing these resources to human development; curtailing expenditure in non-productive public sector activities; rationalizing fiscal policies and enforcing accountability in the use of national resources; employing cost-effective strategies and targeting resources in the priority areas of human development.

32. The Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development recognizes that the success of policy directions and measures in achieving social development and ensuring human well-being for all throughout the world depends on their effective implementation and follow-up. Similar to the emphasis of the African Common Position, the Programme of Action of the Summit also stresses that the main responsibility of implementing the outcome of the Summit rests with national governments. In asserting that "nothing short of a renewed and massive political will at the national and international levels to invest in people and their well-being will achieve the objectives of social development", the Programme of Action emphasizes that at all levels of implementation, the important and essential requirements are:<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., para 73, p. 29. (original source: ECA (1990) *African Charter for Popular Participation in Development*, Addis Ababa: E/ECA/CM.16/11, p. 21.

<sup>36</sup> ECA/OAU (1994) *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa*, op. cit., para 81, p. 34.

<sup>37</sup> United Nations (1995) *World Summit for Social Development* 6-12 March 1995, op. cit., para 82, pp. 111-112.

- "The promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the support for democratic institutions and the empowerment of women;
- The integration of goals, programmes and review mechanisms that have developed separately in response to specific problems;
- Partnership involving States, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, especially voluntary organizations, other major groups as defined in Agenda 21, the media, families and individuals;
- The recognition of diversity in the world and the need to take measures geared to achieve the Summit goals;
- The empowerment of people, who are to be assisted so that they fully participate in setting goals, designing programmes, implementing activities and evaluating performance;
- Efforts to mobilize new and additional financial resources that are both adequate and predictable, and are mobilized in a way that maximizes the availability of such resources, and uses all available funding sources and mechanisms, *inter alia*, multilateral, bilateral and private sources, including on concessional and grant terms; and
- Solidarity, extending the concept of partnership and a moral imperative of mutual respect and concern among individuals, communities and nations."

Allied to this, member States are encouraged to promote and adopt an integrated approach to the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national level, in accordance with national specificities. In this regard, section A of Chapter 5 dealing with national strategies, evaluations and reviews delineates the following actions to facilitate implementation:<sup>38</sup>

- analysis and review of macroeconomic, microeconomic and sectoral policies and their impact on poverty, employment, social integration and social development;
- enhance government policies and programmes to promote social development by strengthening the coordination of efforts, the efficiency and operational capacity of public management structures, and facilitating the effective and transparent use of resources...
- assess the extent, distribution and characteristics of poverty, unemployment, social tension and social exclusion and take measures to reverse them;
- preparation by 1996 of "comprehensive cross sectoral strategies for implementing the Summit outcome and national strategies for

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., para 83, pp. 112-113.

social development"(83 (d)); such strategies should include financial and budget considerations, should cut across "traditional sectoral boundaries with transparency and accountability"(83 (e)); and should promote and strengthen "institutional capacity-building for inter-ministerial coordination, inter-sectoral collaboration... and the vertical integration from national capitals to local districts"(83 (g)) should be promoted;

- integrate social development goals into national development plans, policies and budgets...and these should be formulated and implemented with the participation of the groups directly affected;
- the elaboration of time-bound goals and targets for reducing overall poverty, eradicating absolute poverty, expanding employment, reducing unemployment and enhancing social integration;
- promote and strengthen institutional capacity building for inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration in the use of resources;
- assess poverty, the development of quantitative and qualitative indicators of social development, including, where possible, disaggregation by gender so as to monitor the magnitude, incidence, persistence and pervasiveness of poverty in the country;
- strengthen implementation and monitoring mechanisms, including the participation of civil society in policy making and collaboration with international organizations; and
- all countries should regularly assess their progress towards implementing the outcome of the Summit, possibly in the form of periodic national reports.

33. The world leaders emphasized the importance of involving and strengthening civil society including the private sector in the effective implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action. While not as detailed or as exhaustive as the African Common Position, the Summit acknowledges that if civil society is fragmented and weak, it will hinder democratic consolidation and the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national level. The emergence of a dense network of autonomous civil associations, non-governmental organizations and community groups, business enterprises, trade unions, farmers' organizations, cooperatives, research and educational institutions, and the media are all invited to enhance their contribution to social development.

34. Sub-section B of the Programme of Action highlights the importance of civil society including the private sector in implementing the Programme of Action at the national level. To enable these organizations to be effective

partners in this respect, some of the requirements will be, among others:<sup>39</sup>

- Encouraging and supporting the creation and development of these organizations, particularly among the disadvantaged and vulnerable people;
- Establishing legislative and regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements and consultative mechanisms for involving such organizations in the design, implementation and evaluation of social development strategies and programmes;
- Supporting capacity-building programmes for such organizations in critical areas, such as participatory planning, programme design, implementation and evaluation, economic and financial analysis, credit management, research information and advocacy;
- Providing resources, technical and other administrative support for initiatives taken and managed at the community level; and
- Strengthening networking and the exchange of expertise and experience among such organizations.

Paragraph 86 of the Programme of Action goes on to state that the contribution of civil society and the private sector in the implementation of the Programme of Action can be further enhanced by undertaking the following actions:<sup>40</sup>

- "a. Developing planning and policy-making procedures that facilitate partnership and cooperation between Governments and civil society in social development;
- b. Encouraging business enterprises to pursue investment and other policies, ... that will contribute to social development...;
- c. Enabling and encouraging trade unions to participate in the planning and implementation of social development programmes...and the development of an economic environment that facilitates sustained economic growth and sustainable development;
- d. Enabling and encouraging farmers' representative organizations and cooperatives to participate in the formulation and implementation of sustainable agricultural and rural development policies and programmes;

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., para 85 (a) through (e), p. 114.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., para 86 (a) through (g), pp. 114-115.

- e. Encouraging and facilitating the development of cooperatives, including among people living in poverty or belonging to vulnerable groups;
- f. Supporting academic and research institutions,... in their contribution to social development programmes, ...especially through collecting, analysing and disseminating information and ideas about economic and social development;
- g. Encouraging educational institutions, the media and other sources of public information and opinion to give special prominence to the challenges of social development..."

35. The Summit has underscored the importance of providing substantial new and additional resources, both public and private, for implementing the Programme of Action at the national level. It proposes a number of measures through which increased resources could be mobilized for social development. These measures include:<sup>41</sup>

- encouraging greater domestic savings and investment and cutting back on subsidies that do not benefit the poor;
- reducing excessive military expenditures and investments for arms production and acquisition in order to increase resources for social and economic development;
- giving high priority to social development in the allocation of public spending and ensuring predictable funding for the relevant programmes
- ensuring that the resources for social development are available at the of administration that is responsible for formulating and implementing the relevant programmes;
- increasing the effective and transparent utilization of public resources, reducing waste and combating corruption, and concentrating in areas of greatest social need; and
- developing innovative sources of funding, both private and public, and creating a supportive environment for the mobilization of resources for civil society.

36. Similar to the measures highlighted in the African Common Position, the various measures advocated above should provide adequate resources at the national level for financing the implementation of both the Actionable Agenda of the African Common Position and the Programme of Action of the Summit.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., sub-section C, Mobilization of Financial Resources, para. 87, pp. 115-116.

## (II) Regional Level

37. Regional commissions and intergovernmental organizations, such as the ECA, OAU, and ADB, have an important role to play in the implementation of the outcomes of the African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa and the World Summit for Social Development. The African Common Position states that "there is an important role for regional and sub-regional organizations in implementing the Actionable Agenda in areas of common or cross border interests including:

- advocacy of the primacy of human development;
- assisting member states in articulating policies and translating these into concrete strategies and actions; and assisting in monitoring the implementation of these policies;
- conflict mediation, management and resolution;
- the harmonization of sub-regional and regional strategies on the development and utilization of human resources; and
- networking at the sub-regional and regional level to address common concerns."<sup>42</sup>

38. The need for assisting countries in the implementation of the Agenda is not only to harmonize sub-regional and regional policies but also to avoid wasteful duplication of activities and resources. Overall national implementation programmes also need to fit within coherent regional approaches.

39. The final report of the World Summit for Social Development also details the measures and actions that need to be taken by regional commissions and bilateral and multilateral agencies in implementing the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Summit. Regional commissions, including bilateral and multilateral agencies, are called upon to support governments in the formulation of national strategies for social development by:<sup>43</sup>

- "Assisting countries to strengthen or rebuild their capacities for formulating, coordinating, implementing and monitoring integrated strategies for social development;
- Coordinating the assistance provided by different agencies for similar planning processes under other international action plans; and
- Developing improved concepts and programmes for the collection and dissemination of statistics and indicators for social

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<sup>42</sup> ECA/OAU (1994) *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa*, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>43</sup> United Nations (1995) *World Summit for Social Development*, 6-12 March 1995, op. cit., pp. 113-114.

development to facilitate review and policy analysis and provide expertise, advice and support to countries at their request."

40. Regional commissions were urged to encourage the implementation of the outcomes at the regional and sub-regional levels, in a collaborative manner with regional, intergovernmental organizations and banks.

41. Paragraph 96 (a) of the Programme of Action describes the role of the regional commissions of the United Nations. The need to adopt an integrated and coordinated approach at the regional level is called for to effectively implement the outcomes the African Common Position and the Summit. In the design of national action plans, the regional commissions of the United Nations, e.g. the ECA, in collaboration with other regional intergovernmental organizations (OAU and the ADB), the World Bank and IMF are called upon to offer advice, technical and financial assistance to the least developed countries, particularly African countries, for the effective implementation of the national action plans on social development.

### **(iii) International Level**

42. Both the African Common Position and the Summit emphasize that national and regional efforts at achieving human-centred development and mobilizing and redirecting resources must be supported by complementary actions by international development partners. This will require both policy shifts as well as firm commitment in terms of increased resource flows by international development partners to support human-centred development in Africa. According to the Actionable Agenda of the African Common Position and the Programme of Action of the Summit, the international policy shifts required from the Bretton Woods institutions, other development and financial agencies, bilateral donors and the international community concern providing a favourable external environment and a substantial increase in resource flows to Africa through, for example, increase in ODA and the 20/20 initiative, debt relief/reduction, trade and diverting some of the peace dividend for human development.

43. The Programme of Action provides for special measures to assist African and least developed countries towards implementation of the outcome of the Summit. In this context, it underscores the need for additional financial resources and more effective development cooperation and assistance. In addition, implementation will be facilitated if the United Nations System, bilateral agencies and other donors could provide, upon request, assistance to national authorities in their efforts at formulating national strategies for social development by strengthening or rebuilding national capacities, coordinating the assistance provided by agencies for the implementation of other international action plans, and development of concepts and programmes for the collection

and dissemination of indicators and statistics.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, implementation will be expedited if certain actions are taken at the international level to mobilize financial resources:<sup>45</sup>

- "Translating the commitments of the Summit into financial implications for social development programmes in developing countries, particularly Africa and the least developed countries" (88 (a));
- Agreeing on a 20/20 principle with 20 per cent of ODA and 20 per cent of the national budget respectively set aside for social development;
- Funds for social development should be found as developed countries strive "...for the fulfilment of the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for overall official development assistance as soon as possible, and increasing the share of funding for social development programmes..." (88 (b)); and
- "Giving high priority in ODA to the eradication of poverty in developing countries, in particular in Africa, low-income countries in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the least developed countries." (88 (d))

44. Both documents support a compact by which increased public spending should match a corresponding increase through ODA. This is with a view to mobilizing additional resources necessary from the country level and from the donor community to implement the Actionable Agenda and the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Summit. The international community should demonstrate its commitments to the development partners of the Third World, particularly of Africa by implementing (and not just pledging) measures to drastically reduce Africa's external debt burden. In order to generate additional resources for social development, the Actionable Agenda suggests that action should be taken at the international level to write "off ODA debt, adopt full Trinidad terms which allow for the cancellation of two thirds of Paris Club debt and alleviate the burden of debt to multilateral institutions which accounts for 25 per cent of total obligations and 40 per cent of total debt servicing payments".<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, it also calls for debt swaps to support human development.

45. The Summit also advocates various actions for mobilizing additional resources at the international level for implementing the Programme of Action. The significant measures include taking action to reduce bilateral debts of

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Section A, para 84 (a) through (c), pp. 113-114.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Section C. Mobilization of Financial Resources, para 88, (a) through (o), pp. 117-118.

<sup>46</sup> ECA/OAU (1994) *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa*, op. cit., p. 37.



developing countries, particularly Africa, ensuring that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals and develop new initiatives and assisting adjusting countries to create conditions for economic growth, job creation, poverty eradication and social development.<sup>47</sup>

## **B. Follow-up, Monitoring and Reporting**

46. To ensure the effective implementation of the African Common Position and the Programme of Action of the Summit, the progress made at achieving the objectives of social development should be continuously assessed, reviewed and reported. The African Common Position and the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development call for the need for follow-up, monitoring and reporting at the national, regional and international levels. The monitoring, evaluation and implementation of the Agenda of the African Common Position and the Programme of Action is primarily the responsibility of the people and their governments. National governments should, therefore, establish monitoring systems appropriate for their respective national plans of action to implement the objectives of the African Common Position and the Summit. Such monitoring bodies should include major government ministries, representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations and community groups, business enterprises, trade unions, farmers organizations, cooperatives, research and educational institutions, all those involved in the design and implementation processes.

### **(i) National Level**

47. The African Common Position stressed that the most important level for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the implementation of the Actionable Agenda on human and social development is the national level. The African Common Position stipulates that a government focal point should be responsible for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the progress made on the state of human and social conditions in the region.<sup>48</sup> Governments must increasingly involve the active participation of people in monitoring and evaluation of the actions taken to implement the Actionable Agenda and the Programme of Action of the Summit. The role of community and grassroots organizations in reporting on and dissemination of the progress made is important because the bulk of the economic and social activities are carried out by the people at the community level. The energies and resources of the people are also required for the execution of human-centred development

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., para 90 (b), p. 119.; para 91 (a) through (c), p. 120; and para 92 (a) through (c), pp. 1, 20-121.

<sup>48</sup> ECA/OAU (1994) *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa*, op. cit., para 98, p. 41.

projects and so the people should be actively involved in monitoring the implementation of the Agenda. In this regard, governments need to put the necessary machinery in motion, centred around the active participation of all social partners, in monitoring, evaluation and reporting through published reports, workshops, symposia and other fora, at all levels of society.

48. Section A of Chapter 5 dealing with national strategies, evaluations and reviews specifies the measures and mechanisms to implement and monitor the outcome of the Summit. A call is made to strengthen "...implementation and monitoring mechanisms, including arrangements for the participation of civil society in policy-making and implementation and collaboration with international organizations",<sup>49</sup> while all countries are called upon to "...regularly assessing their progress towards implementing the outcome of the Summit, possibly in the form of periodic national reports, outlining successes, problems and obstacles. Such reports could be considered within the framework of an appropriate consolidated reporting system, taking into account the different reporting procedures in the economic, social and environmental fields".<sup>50</sup>

#### (ii) Regional Level.

49. Paragraph 100 of the African Common Position stipulated that the joint secretariat of UNECA and the OAU, and with the support and active collaboration of ADB and other intergovernmental organizations should be responsible for reporting on the progress made in the implementation of the African Common Position and the Summit.

50. ECA recently launched a Human Development in Africa Report series.<sup>51</sup> Resolution 799(XXX): Promoting human development in Africa (see Annex 1), of the ECA Conference of Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development Planning, urged member States to use the Human Development in Africa Reports as instruments for monitoring human development indicators and requested "...the Executive Secretary of the Commission and Africa's development partners to make use of this report as a framework to (a) promote the cause of human development in Africa; and (b) monitor progress in the attainment of regional targets set and the fulfilment of regional commitments made in respect of human development in fora such as the World Conference on Education for All, the World Summit for Children, the World Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development as well as within the framework of the African Common Position on Human and Social

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<sup>49</sup> United Nations (1995) *World Summit for Social Development*, 6-12 March 1995, op. cit., para 83 (i), p. 113.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., para 83 (j), p. 113.

<sup>51</sup> The first report in this series came out in 1995. See ECA (1995) *Human Development in Africa 1995 Report*, Addis Ababa.

Development in Africa."<sup>52</sup> The ECA secretariat will collaborate closely with member States and also with the OAU, ADB and agencies and organizations of the United Nations system with a view to ensuring effective follow-up and monitoring of the outcomes of both the African Common Position and the Summit. To succeed in this task, it is crucial that the joint secretariat should receive regular reports on the status of implementation of the African Common Position and the Summit from the national level.

51. Member States agreed in the documentation of the Summit to pursue various mechanisms and measures deemed necessary and appropriate in particular regions and sub-regions for the implementation and monitoring of the outcome of the Summit. The Summit stated that at the regional level, "the regional commissions, in cooperation with regional intergovernmental organizations and banks, could convene, on a biennial basis, a meeting at a high political level to evaluate the progress made towards fulfilling the outcome of the Summit, exchange views on their respective experiences and adopt appropriate mechanisms, to the Economic and Social Council on the outcome of such meetings."<sup>53</sup> In paragraph 95 (h) of the Programme of Action of the Summit, the regional commissions are also invited to report to the Economic and Social Council on the outcome of these meetings. In this vein, the regional commissions and other organizations at the regional or sub-regional levels are invited to strengthen their support to the implementation of the objectives of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action relating to an enabling environment for social development, eradicating poverty, employment creation, reduction of unemployment and social integration.

52. On the basis of the mandates given by both the African Common Position and the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the joint ECA/OAU secretariat, with the support and active collaboration of the ADB and other intergovernmental organizations, and other United Nations agencies will play an active role in assisting the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Human Development and its Follow-up Committee of Fifteen on monitoring and reporting on the outcomes of the African Common Position and the Summit.

### (iii) International Level

53. Though the people and their governments must take a leading role in the implementation and monitoring of the outcomes of the African Common Position and the Summit, the support of the international community is,

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<sup>52</sup> ECA (1995) Annual Report May 1994-May 1995, *Economic and Social Council Official Records, 1995, Supplement No. 18*, Addis Ababa: E/ECA/CM.21/17, Chapter IV, p. 53.

<sup>53</sup> United Nations (1995) *World Summit for Social Development*, 6-12 March 1995, op. cit., Commitment 10(b) p. 32.

indisputably, important. The Actionable Agenda in the African Common Position urges international development partners "...to encourage national implementation modalities in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly to ensure the effective implementation of social and human development programmes."<sup>54</sup> In the monitoring and reporting at international level, the Summit document has singled out the role of the United Nations system. Section IV in this report discusses the role of the United Nations system in the implementation and follow-up of the outcome of the Summit.

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<sup>54</sup> ECA/OAU (1994) *African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa*, op. cit., para 90, p. 38.

#### **IV. The Role of the United Nations System in the Implementation and Follow-up**

54. Within the framework of the agenda for development and the need to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to the implementation, follow-up and assessment of the outcomes of the Summit together with the recommendations of other recent and planned UN conferences related to social development, the United Nations, as a development partner, has an important role to play. Responsibilities of the UN system in the implementation and follow-up of the Declaration and Programme of Action are detailed in section D of Chapter 5: Implementation and Follow-up, of the final report of the World Summit for Social Development.<sup>55</sup> The various roles of the UN system, as elaborated in the Programme of Action of the Summit document, are summarized as follows:

##### **(I) Development Assistance and Cooperation**

55. Paragraph 96 of the Programme of Action calls for the United Nations system to provide technical cooperation and other forms of assistance to the developing countries, particularly to African and the least developed countries, in implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. To this end the Programme of Action proposes that:

"The United Nations system, including the technical and sectoral agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, should expand and improve their cooperation in the field of social development to ensure that their efforts are complementary and, where possible, should combine resources in joint initiatives for social development built around common objectives of the Summit."<sup>56</sup>

56. Paragraph 99 (a) through (c) underscores the need for strengthening the United Nations operational activities for development in order to implement the outcome of the Summit. In this regard:<sup>57</sup>

"a. The United Nations Development Programme should organize United Nations system efforts towards capacity-building at the local, national and regional levels, and should support the coordinated implementation of social development programmes through its network of field offices;

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<sup>55</sup> United Nations (1995) World Summit for Social Development, 6-12 March 1995, op.cit., paras 94-100, pp. 121-126.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., para 96 (a), pp. 123-124.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., para 99 (a) through (c), pp. 125-126.

- b. Coordination at the country level should be improved through the resident coordinator system to take full account of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the Summit and related international agreements;
- c. The United Nations system should encourage and assist South-South cooperation and technical cooperation among developing countries, at all levels, as an important instrument for social development and the implementation of the Programme of Action."

57. From the above it is clear that inter-agency cooperation must be strengthened to support government actions at the national level. However, inter-agency efforts will need to be especially reinforced in the context of assisting individual countries implement the outcomes of the various conferences in the social field into concrete national plans of action.

**(ii) An integrated, UN-wide approach to providing  
development assistance to the follow-up to  
major UN conferences**

58. Paragraph 98 (d) in the Programme of Action calls on the United Nations Secretary-General to ensure the effective coordination of the outcome of the Summit. In view of the above and the fact that (in addition to the World Summit for Social Development), a number of recent major UN conferences<sup>58</sup> have addressed a number of common social issues which need to be followed-up, the new thinking in the UN system is to develop, in this regard, an integrated and a coordinated UN system-wide approach. This should be based on the mutually reinforcing nature of the declarations and programmes of action adopted by these various conferences. This is to avoid duplication and overlap and to sharpen the focus on common priority objectives. The integrated approach is being proposed with the objective of:

- (i) galvanizing the UN system around goals and objectives emerging from the main United Nations conferences over the last five years; and
- (ii) rationalizing and strengthening follow-up mechanisms by the UN system for the effective delivery of assistance at the country and regional levels.

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<sup>58</sup> The recent major UN conferences include: the World Summit for Children (1990); the Jomtien Conference on Education for All (1991); the UN Conference on Environment and Development (June 1992); the International Conference on Population and Development (1994); the World Summit for Social Development (March 1995); and the UN Conference on Women (September 1995).

59. In order for the United Nations system to work together as a unified force to provide coordinated technical and other assistance to member States in implementing the recommendations of major recent UN conferences, a goal-oriented programme approach needs to be applied. For this purpose, the United Nations has proposed the following five Inter-Agency Task Forces (ITFs) to achieve UN system-wide coordination relating to specific themes:

1. Basic Social Services for All
2. Access of the Poor to Productive Assets and livelihoods and Full Employment
3. Enabling Environment for Poverty Eradication and Social Development
4. Gender Equity and Advancement of Women
5. Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Environmental Resources

60. The proposed structure and operations of the ITFs are discussed in detail in agenda item 4 of this meeting of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development (see agenda item 4). In brief, the main functions of the ITFs will be to provide coordinated support and substantive backstopping to the UN country teams to facilitate their tasks in translating the agreed commitments and recommendations into appropriate actions to achieve the goals and objective of the recent major UN conferences in the field of economic and social development. This is with a view to enhancing the capacity of UN country teams and supporting the Resident Coordinators in their leadership and coordination roles.

61. In addition to the ITFs, there is a proposal to form a group, at the Headquarters, that will work together to develop an integrated UN approach to the goal of poverty eradication. The proposed group would develop common UN analytical and strategic approaches to poverty assessment and related issues with a view to sharing successful initiatives and other information; addressing issues common to ITFs (Nos.1, 2 and 3 above, which are the essential components of an overall UN support structure for poverty eradication); and in general to providing a focal point for the UN's work on poverty eradication. Furthermore, this will provide with an opportunity to move forward quickly with the implementation of the agenda of the World Summit for Social Development. However, ITF No. 4 above on Gender Equity and Advancement of Women would begin after the Beijing meeting on the World Conference on Women. It would appear that more time would be needed to reflect on how to link ITF No. 5 (Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and

Environmental Resources) to existing institutional set ups. From the above, it appears that initially the first three ITFs are likely to be proposed to achieve the UN system-wide coordination relating to specific themes.

62. The integrated UN-wide approach is aimed to bring the United Nations organizations together in implementing the recommendations of the main, recent UN conferences on development issues as well as assisting the UN system in simplifying its own conference follow-up responsibilities. In the same vein, this approach, it is hoped, would assist member States to effectively utilize their available human and financial capacities and resources and thereby not to overburden them through the separate implementation of the programmes and agendas of action of the various UN conferences in the social development field.

### **(iii) Promoting International Cooperation and Coherence**

63. The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action clearly states the need for international cooperation and assistance in the successful implementation of the objectives of social development. In addition to supporting national efforts through various forms of direct assistance, the United Nations promotes international cooperation through such intergovernmental bodies/mechanisms as the General Assembly and the governing bodies of specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions. Through Commitment 10 (c), member States have decided, at the international level, to secure the support and cooperation of all institutions of the United Nations system as well as international development agencies and multilateral development banks to take appropriate actions and measures to achieve the goals and commitments agreed to by the Summit. In this regard, paragraph 98 (a) through (c) of the Programme of Action calls for the General Assembly to give consideration to promoting and strengthening the coordination of the UN system activities and the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization; inviting their contributions to the implementation of the Programme of Action; and requesting the International Labour Organization to contribute particularly in the field of employment. This requires establishing regular and substantial dialogue among these organizations for more effective coordination of assistance for social development.

64. Similarly, paragraph 95 (d) of the Programme of Action states that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are invited to convene meetings of high-level representatives to promote international dialogue on critical social issues through international cooperation. Paragraph 95 (g) of the Programme of Action states that " The Secretary-General and the heads of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, ILO, the United Nations funds and programmes, and other relevant agencies should consider the possibility of holding joint meetings for the purpose of considering the implementation of



the Declaration and the Programme of Action.....".<sup>59</sup>

65. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of UN organizations in providing support for social development efforts at the national level, the Programme of Action stresses the need to renew, reform and revitalize the various parts of the UN system, particularly its operational activities (paragraph 96(b)). In this regard, "all specialized agencies and related organizations of the United Nations system are invited to strengthen and adjust their activities, programmes... to take into account the follow-up to the Summit."<sup>60</sup> In addition, "regular reports on their plans and programmes related to implementation should be provided to the appropriate forums by the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies."<sup>61</sup> In the same vein, paragraph 99 (d) stipulates that the United Nations development efforts should be supported by a substantial increase in resources commensurate with the needs of developing countries. Allied to this, the UN system's capacity for gathering and analysing social data and developing social indicators should be strengthened (paragraph 99 (e)). The capacity of the UN system to provide technical support and advice to individual countries should also be strengthened.

#### **(iv) Review, monitoring, follow-up and reporting**

66. Regarding the consideration of social development at inter-governmental level, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have important roles to play. These are elaborated below.

##### **(a) The role of the General Assembly**

67. The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action reaffirms that the General Assembly, as the highest intergovernmental mechanism, is the principal policy making and appraisal organ for monitoring and follow-up of the progress on the outcome of the Summit. The functions of the Assembly would be:

- Review the overall implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. In 1996, the Assembly "...should review the effectiveness of the steps taken to implement the outcome of the Summit with regard to poverty eradication, as part of the activities related to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty".<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> United Nations (1995) *World Summit for Social Development*, 6-12 March 1995, op. cit., para 95(g), p. 123.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., para 96 (b), p. 124.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., para 96 (d), p. 124.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., para 95 (a), p. 122.

- "The General Assembly, at its fiftieth session should declare the first United Nations decade for the eradication of poverty,..."<sup>63</sup>  
The Assembly is requested to "....hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit..."<sup>64</sup>
- Promote international dialogue on critical social issues through the convening of meetings of high-level representatives (paragraph 95(d)).
- "The General Assembly should draw upon the initial work of the agenda for development working group on a common framework for the implementation of the outcome of conferences."<sup>65</sup>
- It should consider measures to ensure coherence in the activities of the United Nations system. To this end, the General Assembly should consider:
  - "Promoting and strengthening the coordination of United Nations system activities, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization at the global, regional and national levels in the area of economic and social development programmes..."<sup>66</sup>
  - Inviting the various international organizations such as the World Trade Organization, ILO, etc., to consider how they could contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action(98 (b)); and
  - "Requesting the Secretary General to ensure effective coordination of the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action."<sup>67</sup>

(b) The role of the Economic and Social Council

68. The Summit has also provided for the role of the Economic and Social Council in the follow-up activities. This is outlined in the Declaration and Programme of Action and is summarized as follows:

- System-wide coordination: The Council "...would oversee system-

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., para 95(c), p. 122.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., para 95(b), p. 122.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., para 95(e), p. 122.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., para 98(a), p. 125.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., para 98(d), p. 125.

wide coordination in the implementation of the Summit outcome and make recommendations in this regard."<sup>68</sup>

- Review and assessment of progress made towards implementation of the Summit outcome: Commitment 10 (f) of the Declaration "...requests the Council to review and assess, on the basis of reports of national Governments, the regional commissions, relevant functional commissions and specialized agencies, progress made by the international community towards implementing the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, and to report to the General Assembly, accordingly, for its appropriate consideration and actions".<sup>69</sup>
- Promotion of international dialogue: The Council and the General Assembly "...could convene meetings of high-level representatives to promote international dialogue on critical social issues and on policies for addressing them through international cooperation."<sup>70</sup>
- Elaboration of a common framework: "Within the framework of the discussions of the Economic and Social Council at its coordination segment of 1995 on a common framework for the implementation of the outcome of United Nations conferences in the economic and social fields, consideration should be given to the possibility of holding joint meetings of the Council and the Development Committee of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund,..."<sup>71</sup>

69. In order to support the Economic and Social Council in fulfilling its functions, Heads of State and Government committed themselves, through Commitment 10 (e) to "strengthen the structures, resources and processes of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, and other organizations within the United Nations system that are concerned with economic and social development".<sup>72</sup> This point is also made in paragraph 95 (f) of the Programme of Action, recommending that specialized agencies should have a closer working relationship with the Council to enable it to review progress towards implementing the outcome of the Summit as well as improving the Council's effectiveness.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., para 95(f), p. 122.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Commitment 10(f), pp. 32-33.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., para 95(d), p. 122.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., para 95(g), p. 123.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Commitment 10(e), p. 32.

## **V. Conclusion**

70. In line with the goals and objectives of the World Summit for Social Development, the African Common Position and the Summit underscore the need for an urgent and comprehensive approach to improve the social situation globally and in Africa. The gravity of the human and social conditions in Africa calls for nothing short of a massive and renewed commitment to invest in people and to improve their well-being. At the national level, African governments must demonstrate the political will to make the necessary policy shifts as well as the increased allocation and appropriate targeting of domestic resources for human and social development. Only then will it be possible to put human development policies at the heart of development planning to achieve sustained development and transformation in Africa.

71. The effective tackling of the core social issues of eradicating poverty, creating productive employment and reducing unemployment, and fostering social cohesion, will require the adoption of an integrated approach embracing actions in the economic, social, political, cultural and related spheres. Both the African Common Position and the Summit documents emphasize the need to adopt an integrated approach to the effective implementation of the Actionable Agenda and the Programme of Action respectively. Allied to this, all social partners, including the civil society and the private sector at the national level; and the international community have an important role to play in the effective implementation of the Actionable Agenda of the African Common Position and the Programme of Action of the Summit. This further makes it imperative to formulate and adopt a coordinated approach to minimize and avoid wasteful use of resources and to maximize the effectiveness of cooperation and partnerships at all levels - national and international.

72. Both the African Common Position and the Summit documents recognize that while the main responsibility for implementing the outcomes of the African Common Position and the Summit squarely rests with national governments, such national efforts must be complemented by increased and assured support and collaboration from Africa's external development partners. The convening of the Summit offers an opportunity to African countries, individually as well as a region, and the international community, at large, to translate their commitments into concrete actions by providing unambiguous development support and fulfil their promises to Africa's recovery and development. This will require a new and renewed commitment to human-centred development as the basis of international cooperation to provide an enabling external economic environment as well as an increased resource flow to Africa's efforts at implementing the African Common Position and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Without such assured complementary support from the international community, Africa's national efforts will be inadequate in bringing about and sustaining the required qualitative improvement in the human and social conditions in Africa.

73. The follow-up, monitoring and reporting of progress on the outcomes of the African Common Position and the Summit at the national, regional and international levels are necessary processes towards effective implementation of the agendas of both documents. Appropriate mechanisms need to be put in place at the national level which will provide a basis for activating regional and international level follow-up and reporting efforts. National level mechanisms will need to be developed taking into account the specificities of individual African countries. ECA, in close cooperation with OAU and other agencies of the United Nations, intends to play an active role in the monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the outcomes of the African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa and the World Summit for Social Development.

**Annex 1: Resolution 799(XXX):  
Promoting human development in Africa\***

**The Conference of Ministers,**

**Aware** of the primacy of the human being in the development process and of the need to focus the development endeavours of African countries on Human development,

**Emphasizes** the importance of the mobilization and development of human resources in Africa as a crucial factor in promoting sustained and increasingly self-reliant socio-economic development,

**Cognizant** of the increasing recognition of the imperative to set, and strive to achieve, human development goals in the development process,

**Aware** of the commitments made to the cause of social and human development by the Jomtien World Conference on Education and Development, the Cairo World Conference on Population and Development, the New York World Summit for Children and the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development and the need for their vigorous implementation in Africa,

**Recalling** the Commission's stance on human development as expressed in such landmark regional frameworks as the Lagos Plan of Action, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD), the Khartoum Declaration, the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP), the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development and the African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa and the African Platform for Action: African Common Position for the Advancement of Women,

**Deeply concerned** over the persistently deplorable human development situation prevailing on the continent,

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\* As adopted by ECA's Conference of Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development Planning at its Twenty-First Meeting. ECA (1995) **Annual Report 6 May 1994-3 May 1995, Economic and Social Council Official Records, 1995, Supplement No. 18**. Addis Ababa: E/ECA/CM.21/17, pp.52-53.

**Noting with appreciation** the collaboration of the agencies of the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization in the preparation of the maiden report,

1. **Commends** the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa for its initiative in launching the series of reports on human development in Africa;

2. **Urges** member States to support fully this initiative and to use these reports, at this initial stage, as instruments for monitoring human development indicators and to participate in future within the framework of the Commission in perfecting these instruments both from the theoretical and practical points of view, taking into account the specific features of Africa;

3. **Requests** the Executive Secretary of the Commission and Africa's development partners to make use of this report as a framework to

- (a) Promote the cause of human development in Africa; and
- (b) Monitor progress in the attainment of regional targets set and the fulfilment of regional commitments made in respect of human development in fora such as the World Conference on Education for All, the World Summit for Children, the World Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development as well as within the framework of the African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa;

4. **Further requests** the Executive Secretary of the Commission to submit a report every two years to the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Human Development and its Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen;

5. **Calls upon** the United Nations agencies and the international community at large to cooperate technically, materially and financially, with the Commission in the preparation of this report.