

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



68704
E
PROVISIONAL

E/CN.14/C.1/SR.15(VI)
26 February 1964

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
Sixth session
Addis Ababa, 19 February - 3 March 1964

COMMITTEE I

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING

held at Africa Hall, Addis Ababa,
on Monday 25 February 1964 at 3.00 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. SAGBO (Dahomey)
Secretary: Mr. EWING

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AGRICULTURE item 5 (c) of the agenda(continued)

The place of agriculture in the harmonization and co-ordination of national development plans

Mr. ASEM (Ghana) made a statement^{1/}.

At the conclusion of a brief discussion on procedure in which Mr. HART (Nigeria), Mr. KAMITATU (Congo,(Leopoldville)), Mr. ZAYATI (Tunisia), Mr. SEBTI (Morocco), and Mr. BARLOW (Uganda) participated, Ato Afework ZELLEKE (Ethiopia) proposed that the statement of the representative of Ghana in view of its importance and the possible effects of the proposals it contained should be reproduced as a document of the Commission and that discussion of the matter should be postponed to a subsequent meeting.

It was so decided.

Preliminary report on the African Timber Trends Study (E/CN.14/242, E/CN.14/272)

Mr. KAMITATU (Congo,(Leopoldville)) congratulated the mission which visited the Congo on its excellent report (E/CN.14/272). He nonetheless felt obliged to point out certain errors arising from inadequate understanding of the economic realities of the Congo.

The infrastructure of the Congo had not been established in terms of mining transport. In fact the export of mineral wealth had been subsequent to the establishment of certain railway lines; furthermore, a large part of the network served exclusively agricultural regions. The Katanga secession, moreover, had shown that the Congolese transport network was not indispensable to the transport of copper.

The report had said that Congolese industry was relatively under-developed; but on the contrary, the Congo was relatively well developed in comparison with the other countries of Central Africa. Also, the cement industry was not one of the major ones as it represented only 9 per cent of total production.

^{1/} The text in extenso of the statement made by the representative of Ghana was distributed under reference number E/CN.14/L.180.

It was to be regretted that the report had not given figures for 1962, although they were already available when it was drafted.

As to forest workings, the report merely gathered already familiar documents and drew no specific conclusions. Furthermore, the explanation it gave with regard to the backwardness of that industry was not satisfactory as the relative weakness of the timber industry could not be attributed to the tightness of the Belgian market. Had that been the case, the same factor ought to have checked the expansion of other sectors, but that had not been the case, since Belgium had never absorbed more than one-third of the Congo's exports.

Similar criticisms could be made with regard to the chapter on the paper industry and the shortage of manpower.

It was therefore to be hoped that the final report would contain practical and well-warranted recommendations.

Mr. DIAKITE (Mali) congratulated the Economic Commission for Africa on document E/CN.14/242 and wished to see it supplemented by studies on questions connected with savannah and sahel timber as these were the only local fuels being used for household and industrial purposes. The ECA should therefore prepare studies on: the destruction of the savannah by man, the renewal of reserves and the control of brush fires; the working of timber resources, particularly from the standpoint of rapid utilization and renewal; soil stabilization, as part of the struggle against sahelization; the use of timber in traditional construction, giving a list of the species most in use and defining the conditions for increasing reserves.

Mr. ASEM (Ghana) felt that the ECA might propose means suitable to the development of an African timber trade as well as the types of industry which might make it possible to use the timber of the continent.

Mr. HART (Nigeria) stressed that timber resources ought to be worked far more intensively, as the establishment of new industries opened up new possibilities of employment and increased export revenue. Unfortunately, the rapid development of timber resources was checked by the absence of reliable statistics. It would be necessary to make an inventory of timber resources and determine the species the utilization of which would be profitable.

The Government of Nigeria, with the help of foreign experts, had begun aerial prospecting of the country's forests. In that regard it would be well to train African personnel and establish in each country photogrammetric services making it possible to obtain the basic data required for estimating the profitability of reserves.

Another problem not to be ignored was the destruction of forests by traditional methods of cultivation. The extension of market and food crops and crop rotation were largely responsible for the destruction of forests.

This involved the problem of land reform, which had been studied by the ECA in another document but which nonetheless ought to be mentioned here as it affected the entire rural population. Land reform should aim particularly at the expansion of natural reserves where the destruction of plants and animals would be forbidden. Finally, the more efficient use of mangrove wood, so widespread in West Africa, would help to raise the standard of living of the populations of swampy regions unsuited to agriculture.

Upon the publication of the final report, a seminar could be organized to study the whole question of supply and demand and lay down the policy to be followed to co-ordinate activity aimed at the profitable utilization of timber resources. The seminar would seek means for fostering intra-African trade in rough timber and wood products. Its essential task would be to co-ordinate industrial development on a regional basis.

The CHAIRMAN summed up the discussion and noted that the Committee desired that the statistical reports should be brought up to date, that the studies undertaken should contain practical suggestions and that the ECA should concern itself with problems of sahel wood and then suggest possibilities for developing the timber trade and establishing an inventory of timber resources on a broader basis than in the past.

Mr. WATTERSON (United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization) stated that he had taken note of the criticisms made by various speakers and that the final document would therefore be drafted accordingly and brought up to date according to the statistics available for 1962.

Mr. Watterson stated in reply to the representative of Mali, that the question of the savannah had been studied in a seminar which had met in

the Sudan at the end of 1963 and that a report would be published immediately. As to the development of an intra-African trade as advocated by the representative of Ghana, FAO was ready to co-operate with the ECA in any activity which the latter might care to undertake. In 1965 a conference on paper pulp would be organized in Cairo; in the same year a joint FAO/ECA advisory group would be established to study first the problems relating to paper pulp and then the operations of all wood industries.

In response to the observations of the representative of Nigeria, Mr. Watterson stated that FAO was ready if requested to give help to any countries to establish an integrated timber industry and to train the necessary staff. As to shifting cultivation, studies had been made on the Congo (Leopoldville) and the Ivory Coast. In that regard it would be well to recall that FAO's policy was to foster increased production in already cultivated zones rather than the cultivation of new zones. Furthermore, FAO had attentively studied the question of land reform and in December 1963 had organized a seminar in Sierra Leone to study that question.

Report on Locust Control (E/CN.14/243)

Mr. ZAYATI (Tunisia) regretted the fact that no steps had yet been taken to implement resolution 78 (V) of the Economic Commission for Africa. Certainly FAO had contemplated an inter-governmental meeting for March 1964, but it was to be regretted that so much time should pass since the adoption of the resolution in question.

Mr. ASEM (Ghana) said that there was hardly a place in Africa which was not threatened by locusts of one species or another. It would therefore be best to approach the problem of locust control on a continental level and establish close relations between FAO and each of the African locust control organizations. In the first stage the administration of that project could be left to FAO and subsequently entrusted to the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Organization of African Unity. The advantage of that arrangement would be that each member country of the OAU would have only one contribution to pay. Furthermore, it would be necessary to organize research to discover new pesticides, as after a certain time locusts developed resistance to the pesticides used until now.

Mr. MAPORA (Northern Rhodesia) said that the International Red Locust Control Service (IRLCS), whose headquarters was in his country, had already rendered great service in preventing any harmful return of the red locust. The absence of any recent invasion of that locust could be attributed to the successive treatment of known outbreak areas but it was to be feared that the danger might spread to other crop regions following the appearance of new outbreak areas. On the other hand, it was necessary to ensure that new pesticides would not be harmful to man or to crops. Only the joint organization of research and control operations could ensure the success of such action.

Mr. NOAH (Sierra Leone) agreed with the statements of the representatives of Ghana and Northern Rhodesia. As the locust knew neither political nor ideological frontiers it would be best to approach the problem on an international level.

Mr. KANE (Mauritania) observed that there were other predatory insects against which crops must be protected. Niger, Mauritania and Senegal had already joined forces in the struggle against these predatory insects but the ECA might be requested to obtain the co-operation of other countries in that effort.

Mr. WATTERSON (United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization) stressed that during the eighth session in May 1963 the FAO Committee on Desert Locust Control had recommended that all countries in the invasion area should participate in locust control, including not only the African countries but also the countries of the Middle East and of the Arabian Peninsula. Furthermore, a meeting would be organized in March 1964, for the countries of North Africa. As to East Africa, although a regression of the locust pest had been noted, it would none the less be best to make sure it did not return. With regard to the Desert Locust Control Organization for East Africa, difficulties did not fail to arise from the very outset and it had proved necessary to integrate it into the FAO; nevertheless, although the campaign would have to be directed by FAO, each country of East Africa would be responsible for carrying out the necessary measures. Co-operation

would have to extend beyond the bounds of Africa and be established on a world-wide scale, as the locust was one of the greatest plagues of agriculture.

The CHAIRMAN summed up the discussion and noted that the Committee wished the ECA to promote studies in search of new pesticides, co-ordinate the system of detecting new breeding-grounds of locust infestation and undertake action against other predatory insects.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN AGRICULTURE TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTINENT

Mr. ZAYATI (Tunisia) explained that it was on account of the importance of agricultural development for general development that his delegation had requested that the question be placed on the agenda of the session. Indeed, it would be desirable for the Economic Commission for Africa to consider the matter, in its turn, after the general Conference of the FAO, approaching it more particularly from the African point of view.

In Africa, where agricultural structures were out-of-date and techniques primitive, the agricultural sector did not contribute to the national income proportionately to the section of the active population employed therein, and increasingly lean harvests no longer even satisfied the food requirements of the population. Nevertheless, the experiences of some countries showed that it was possible to double production, over a given area, within a fixed period: thus Tunisia expected to double its grain production within ten years (1961-1970), despite a considerable reduction in the areas sown. A rapid transformation of agriculture was essential unless it was desired, that development should be at the expense of the rural masses.

The FAO survey (C 63/11) made it clear, moreover, that agricultural development could likewise encourage the establishment of new processing industries, using more and more manpower and thus contributing to the general development of the economy. That possibility of industrial development based on agriculture should engage the attention of the ECA, which ought to undertake comparative studies, based on previous experiences, of the necessary investments, the costs and methods of establishing small-scale processing industries and of the increase in value thus attained by agricultural products, as well as of the economic and social usefulness of new industries.

Mr. AMETHIER (Ivory Coast) said that the reports submitted by the FAO seemed one of the most complete and objective so far brought to the committee's notice. The Commission should be invited to act in such a manner that the conclusions contained therein should be followed by the Member States. If, however, agriculture had to be renovated and developed at a tempo enabling it to keep step with, or even outstrip increases in population and the general raising of incomes, it would still have to take care to preserve a balance, in order to avoid the occurrence of inflationary situations which would threaten to worsen deficits in the balance of payments.

Mr. DIAKITE (Mali), in his turn, congratulated the FAO on the excellence and conciseness of its report. He hoped that the LCA would study primary agricultural products and undertake an analysis of the industrial type, based on the principle of a rational apportionment of labour. Africa was a continent divided into clearly defined climatic areas. The poorness and inadequacy of means of communication made trade there very difficult. Thus it might be observed that in West Africa the countries on the seaboard were obliged to import foodstuffs, although the enormous possibilities of cultivating foodstuffs in the basins of the major continental rivers were not fully exploited. That situation meant, for one thing, a very considerable economic diminution and, for another, a reduction in the potential capital equipment of all the countries concerned. It was thus necessary to make an effort to study the appropriate means of encouraging trade between the different areas: lowering of cost price at production, improvement of transport conditions, the introduction of more favourable customs regulations, the restriction of dumping as practised by extra-African countries, and the establishment of an inter-African stabilization fund for products consumed in Africa, etc. A study of that kind would make it possible to gain a better knowledge of the profitability of crops in the various areas and, later on, to organize agricultural activities in accordance with the principle of rational international specialization, as was advocated in the industrial sector.

Mr. SEBTI (Morocco) pointed out that giving priority to agricultural development did not mean that parallel efforts should not be made in both sectors of the economy. The importance of the agricultural sector, however, could be explained by the fact that it occupied 80 to 90 per cent of the employable population, that it represented an immediately available source of foreign exchange and that it constituted an excellent springboard for industrialization. Indeed, it was thanks to the proposed establishment of processing industries based on their agricultural products that the African countries might hope to establish themselves profitably in foreign markets. He stressed the importance of that viability which must constitute a basic aim in all efforts towards industrialization, whether North Africa or Africa in general was concerned.

Ato AFEWORK ZELLEKE (Ethiopia) hoped that the Joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division, would undertake country-by-country surveys of the prospects of industrialization based on agricultural production: surveys of that kind would greatly assist the countries concerned to achieve their objectives. It would, moreover, be desirable for the ECA, the main task of which was to ensure the harmonization and co-ordination of plans, to see that agricultural development programmes and economic development programmes were synchronized.

Mr. ESSOME (Cameroun), congratulated the FAO on the remarkable work that it had accomplished but regretted the somewhat too general character of the report under review, which did not set forth the main reasons for certain phenomena which had, with justification, been described as anomalies in development. The authors of the report stressed the dangers of demographic increases, the inadequacy of subsistence goods and the diseases due to dietary deficiencies, but they did not seek to analyse their causes. The problem was often just as much that of dietary education as that of a lack of certain products that was characteristic. There was danger in failing to recognize that marketing conditions were at the root of many of those difficulties: thus, whereas bananas cost CFA Frs. 30 in Dquala, they were sold at CFA Frs. 30

for two bananas 700 kilometres inland, that was to say at about the same price as in France. Examples could be multiplied to demonstrate the extent to which it was necessary to improve marketing networks. Furthermore, the increase in the volume of the food products that would be available owing to the increase in the areas cultivated was difficult to assess: the surveys and investigations undertaken so far had not laid sufficient emphasis on that aspect of the matter. In contrast to that, the FAO survey analysed very thoroughly the question of industrialization. In that connexion, the slenderness of the financial means available to the African countries had been only too often stressed and, although solutions had been outlined within the framework of economic co-operation, they must nevertheless show far more boldness and put to the test the willingness of the developed countries to come to Africa's assistance. The moment had arrived when, basing their case on the notion of the division of Labour, they should ask Europe and America to leave to the African continent at least the sector of processing primary agricultural products. The FAO report contained certain pointers in that direction, but they were very timidly expressed and deserved to be made stronger and more explicit.

Mr. LOKO (Dahomey) associated himself with the remarks of the representative of Mali.

Mr. KAMITATU (Congo, Leopoldville) expressed his approval of the FAO report and agreed with the members of the Commission who had drawn attention to the important place that agriculture should occupy in economic development plans. Nevertheless, he stressed the necessity of the African countries establishing a proper balance between agriculture and industrialization if they wished to escape the stagnation which had been their lot until then, owing to the fact that their economies were based on subsistence agriculture only.

Mr. CURTIS-DORE (Guinea) stated that, contrarily to what they might read in the FAO report, there was not, to his knowledge, a single African country that did not give priority to agricultural development in its economic development plan.

Guinea, for its part, would propose that the Economic Commission for Africa should apply itself to studying the possibilities of increasing food production, specially by the improvement of areas of cultivation and by revalorization of the soil. As food products were often perishable, it would also be desirable to study questions of storage, transport and marketing. Finally, the establishment of small scale food industries offered the special advantage that it would allow them to find a solution to the distressing problem of cohesion which affected such a large number of African countries.

Mr. KANE (Mauritania) emphasized the fact that his country, which contained a mining district where the standard of living was improving rapidly and a sahelian area condemned to stagnation as a consequence of soil erosion and continued use of out-of-date methods of cultivation, would soon have to face a problem of regional imbalance, unless energetic measures were taken. He would therefore be grateful to the Economic Commission for Africa if it would undertake thorough-going studies on soil improvement and revision of agricultural methods, and if it would organize the training of agricultural supervisory staff on a regional scale.

Mr. MANKOUBI (Togo) said that it was not enough to speak of the importance of agriculture: it was necessary to strive actively to find methods of agricultural development. Three possible measures were open to the African countries: improvement of agricultural structures, diversification of crops, and improvement in the quality of food products.

He advocated in particular, the establishment of an African "green pool", in other words a fund upon which they could draw in order to extend financial assistance to agricultural agencies and, as a matter of priority, to organizations the operations of which transcended the limits of national frontiers.

Moreover, the Economic Commission for Africa missions constituted on the pattern of the industrial co-ordination missions, and acting in co-operation with the FAO, should tour the sub-regions of Africa with a view to harmonizing agricultural production.

Mr. ASEM (Ghana) pointed out that the processing of agricultural products presented two aspects which it was necessary to bear in mind: **firstly, the African countries must ensure, by means of agreements, that their traditional partners would consent to give up their own processing industries and import agricultural products processed in Africa; and secondly, industrialization, although it resulted in higher earnings, might at the same time threaten to entail increased expenditure. Therefore, before allocating the necessary capital and manpower to industrialization, they must take care to ensure that the transition from subsistence agriculture to market agriculture took place smoothly; and it was essential, to that end, to increase the efficiency of agricultural methods by having fuller recourse to science and modern technology.**

Mr. MAPOMA (Northern Rhodesia) considered that they should pay **far more** regard than they had done until then, to subsistence agriculture, which was still a subject about which very little was known and which some people tended sometimes to place in the category of unproductive activities. Accurate knowledge of that sector was essential in order to evaluate with exactitude the national income and national product. It had been said that such a survey would be difficult to carry out: for that reason, it should be all the more tempting to the economists of the Economic Commission for Africa.

Mr. KOHN (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization) thanked the members of the Committee for the interest that they had shown in the FAO report. **Frequently, there was a tendency to consider agricultural development and industrialization as mutually exclusive activities: that was not the view of the FAO, which considered those activities, on the contrary, as being parallel and complementary.**

As far as the transition from subsistence agriculture to market agriculture was concerned, Mr. Kohn informed them that an expert group was shortly to consider that question under the auspices of the FAO (April-May 1964) and that it would apply itself, above all, to discovering methods which would help them to evaluate the part **played** by the subsistence

sector in **agricultural** production as a whole. The third FAO Regional Conference for Africa which would be held in September 1964, would take up that question anew and would consider it particularly from the viewpoint of measures that should be taken at government level, so as to accelerate the transition. In addition, the Conference would have on its agenda an item entitled "Enhancing production and productivity", and under that head it would study the application of science and technology in a manner appropriate to increase agricultural productivity: there was, in fact, no reason why the African countries should not already have recourse to the most modern methods, taking the progress achieved in Europe and America as an example.

He **said**, in conclusion, that the FAO had noted carefully the studies which it had been requested to undertake in the course of the current meeting, **and** that it would do its utmost to justify the confidence placed in that organization.

PROPOSAL BY UPPER VOLTA REGARDING THE CONSIDERATION OF ITEM 5 (c), (iv)
OF THE AGENDA

Mr. DAMIBA (Upper Volta) stressed the fact that the industrial integration of Africa would confront them with payments problems which should be solved by the co-ordination of the means of payment on a continental scale. With that purpose in view, the question of establishing an African Payments Union came quite naturally within the competence of the Economics Committee. The delegation of Upper Volta therefore proposed that the Committee should request the plenary Commission to refer back to the Committee for its consideration item 5 (c), (iv) of the agenda.

It was decided.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.