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UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

BUILDING MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
FOR
THE WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES



DRAFT OUTLINE OF CONSTITUTION AND FUNCTIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The building materials and construction industries occupy an important place among the sectors making an essential contribution to the national economies of the African countries by reason of the fundamental links that connect them with a large number of economic activities. They also constitute an essential component in the process of improving human settlements. The two components of the sector, namely the numerous type of building materials and related raw materials and factors of production and construction systems and services, are interdependent, but are nevertheless of crucial importance individually. Unfortunately, if the position with regard to these two components in the African region is looked at carefully, their development at the present time is extremely inadequate in relation to actual needs.

2. However, if the African region as a whole is considered, it will be seen that resources of raw materials needed for the production of building materials do exist. These resources are being exploited in some parts of Africa, but only to a very limited extent. On the whole, there is a need for systematic studies of raw materials availability, and for determining their quality and the prospects for commercial utilization. Some building materials are produced in Africa, but the industry has great difficulty in meeting the ever-increasing demand. Likewise, construction services of one kind or another are available, but the indigenous element in these services is unfortunately either lacking or extremely limited. In addition, such services operate with un-African concepts and procedures, and seldom call for the use of locally available materials and skills. This leads to an excessive dependence on imported building materials and on foreign firms and personnel for the provision of construction services. As a result, both building materials and construction services account for a large share of the foreign exchange expenditure of African countries. For example, net imports of building materials (cement, lime, plaster, glass, structural clay products, veneers, wood, plywood and other manufactured wood products, structural iron and steel, paints, pigments and varnishes, etc.) during 1976 and 1977 in the African region amounted to \$US 3,020 and \$US 3,680 million respectively. Total expenditure on construction must therefore have been about \$US 10 billion in each of these years. Based on this trend, and on the assumption that para-urban and rural constructions will be progressively improved and modernized as a result of improvements in design, materials and construction techniques, the rate of growth of the demand for building materials and construction services may be greater in the future than it was in the past. On this basis, it is forecast that total expenditure on construction in the year 2000 may be around \$US 30 billion. The challenge to the development of building materials and construction services implied by this estimate is a formidable one.

3. Studies undertaken by ECA in this field have shown that the challenge of development in this sector must be taken up at all costs if the objective of self-sufficiency in this field by the year 2000 is to be achieved. Accordingly, a detailed plan for the development of this sector has been drawn up by ECA in collaboration with UNCHS, UNEP, UNIDO, OAU and African governments. This programme is also based on the results of the various ECA field missions and related activities since 1977, and on the recommendations and resolutions of the fourth ECA Conference of Ministers (Kinshasa, February 1977); the fourth Conference of African Ministers of Industry (Kaduna, November 1977); the Intergovernmental Regional

Committee on Human Settlements (Addis Ababa, October 1978), the fifth Conference of African Ministers of Industry (Addis Ababa, October 1979) and two meetings of African experts on the building materials and construction industries (Addis Ababa, July 1978 and July 1979).

4. The essential elements of the development programme drawn up by ECA are as follows:
- (a) Assisting member States in developing or improving and strengthening their general policies, strategies and operational instruments for effectively identifying, co-ordinating and implementing their programmes and projects for developing the building materials and construction industries.
 - (b) Assisting African countries in creating new facilities for the production of building materials, while at the same time improving those already in existence, based on the criteria of appropriate technology, self-sufficiency in basic raw materials, plant size in balance with that of local markets within reasonable transport distance, efficient use of capacity, and quality standardization.
 - (c) Assisting African Governments in promoting the rationalization of construction systems and services so as to bring them increasingly into line with local conditions and requirements, and hence to reduce costs.
 - (d) Assisting member States to build up and strengthen their research capabilities in the building materials and construction field as an effective tool for developing, new, practical and low-cost technologies and for modernizing existing traditional methods.
 - (e) Assisting African Governments in creating other basic infrastructure, including information, training and up-grading of skilled manpower, facilities for the supply of building materials, etc.

5. This framework for the development programme, which envisages tasks at the national, subregional and regional levels, has been welcomed by African Governments as a positive approach towards solving the basic problems confronting the sector, and ECA has been requested to render the necessary operational assistance to countries in giving effect to the proposals. In this context, ECA has already designed a questionnaire to enable African Governments to identify the areas of action and their priorities, and to formulate specific projects to be carried out at the national, subregional and regional levels.

II. OBJECTIVES

6. Success and effectiveness in identifying, planning and executing specific projects under the programme will greatly depend on the nature and dynamism of the project machinery which has over-all responsibility for developing and executing the programme in its entirety. While the need for speedier development of the sector is increasingly recognized, the situation in most African countries is one of fragmented and dispersed development initiatives and action responsibilities among too many agencies and a lack of concern for the harmonious co-ordination of all the elements of the sector. In particular, there is a lack of synchronization and integration of decisions on the sector with the decisions taken in the other economic sectors with which the sector concerned has basic linkages. This kind of decision making, which is not greatly concerned with other sectors, tends to perpetuate the constraints that, in the past, have seriously hindered the development of this sector. The programme therefore proposes to assist African countries

to establish machinery or strengthen it where it already exists, to focus exclusively on the needs of the sector in relation to the other economic sectors, and be in close touch with the executing agencies concerned with the specific subprogrammes and projects. Such machinery would also identify the operational and other constraints hindering the implementation of projects in this field and suggest to the decision-making and executing agencies the policy to be adopted and the means of overcoming these constraints, as far as the programming, execution, evaluation and follow-up of the projects are concerned. This concept has been unreservedly endorsed by African Government representatives in discussions and meetings of African experts as fulfilling a great need at the national level.

7. A point of some concern is that, while the African region as a whole possesses adequate resources of the raw materials required for the development of this sector, these resources are not distributed geographically on an equitable basis; they are not available in the requisite quantity or quality in each and every country. This is a handicap from the purely national point of view, but one that can be overcome at the subregional level because all countries have in common the need for materials, the type of construction activities, and the types of building materials and construction services. Increasing the production and use of building materials requires a firm and adequate base in terms of factors of production, technology and technical documentation, markets, etc. If there is a constraint in any country in respect of any of these aspects, it will tend to hinder even those activities for which that country is otherwise well equipped. For, example, it may not be possible for all countries to achieve the correct balance between the concept of minimum economic production of building materials and the practical necessities in terms of the size of the local market; as a result, the production possibilities may not materialize. The continuation of this kind of situation in a number of countries might delay achievement of the objective of regional self-sufficiency by the year 2000. In these circumstances, the strategy of integrated decisions and actions and purposeful promotion of interrelated projects based on mutual interest and priority linkages, and on practical modalities of implementation transcending national perspectives and limitations, may be useful. This would mean the grouping of some of the countries on a subregional, economic, or other basis of co-operation, and the pooling of their raw material resources and other basic inputs, including energy, technical information infrastructure, technology, market, up-grading of skilled manpower, training facilities, etc. Co-operation arrangements can be designed so as to deal with whole projects or parts thereof, in accordance with national convenience and prerogatives, and without precluding national action.

8. For the purpose of such a "common sector development strategy", the programme proposes that a "Building Materials and Construction Industries Development Council" be set up to provide a continual stimulus to the development of the sector in the subregion.

III. FUNCTIONS

9. The Building Materials and Construction Industries Development Council (hereinafter referred to as "The Development Council") shall:

- (a) Act as an expert and as a task force for the development of the building materials and construction industries sector in the subregion, on behalf of the countries members of the Development Council;
- (b) Assess the subregion's long and short-term requirements for building materials and construction services and, in particular, their specific and individual components, taking into account the details of those aspects of national economic development plans that are directly or indirectly related to construction activities;

- (c) Undertake or organize the requisite studies and expert surveys of existing resources in respect of basic raw materials and other inputs, production and infrastructure facilities, skilled manpower, etc., and identify gaps and joint subregional activities;
- (d) Formulate, on the basis of the above assessment, an over-all evaluation of the development of the sector, with a clear indication of needs and possibilities, the relationship between consumption and production, and the modalities for developing the individual elements thereof;
- (e) Identify, in particular, the developmental actions required in respect of the following:
 - (i) Raw materials exploration, investigation, mining, beneficiation, etc.;
 - (ii) Energy, water and other resources;
 - (iii) Transport and communications infrastructure;
 - (iv) Production of essential materials, such as cement, bricks, tiles, lime, building stone, durable roofing materials, etc., in the first instance, and of glass, ceramics and metallurgical products at a later stage;
 - (v) Marketing and distribution systems and services designed to satisfy consumer needs wherever a demand exists;
 - (vi) Skilled manpower for the production of materials and construction services;
- (f) Undertake, promote and help to ~~organize the requisite~~ prefeasibility and feasibility studies, project engineering activities, market promotion, etc., in connexion with the tasks set out in (e) above;
- (g) Promote, where required, pilot plants and demonstration projects prior to commercial production, as a means of popularizing specific materials, techniques and construction systems;
- (h) Promote and structure research systems and services in respect of building and building materials, product standardization and quality control, improvement of traditional materials and construction techniques, technology development, information and data-bank systems, development of construction companies, and training and retraining of staff;
- (i) Promote the rationalization of construction systems in terms of the reformulation of building codes and regulations and of building materials standards; this should rapidly reduce costs and speed up the acquisition of technical skills by national personnel;
- (j) Keep abreast of development in the building materials and construction industries in other parts of Africa and in other developing regions, with particular reference to co-operation arrangements between countries, and consider how they can be adapted to the subregions's problems and needs.

IV. SCOPE

10. The Development Council shall cover the needs of the countries members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

11. It shall be open, subject to ECOWAS policy and convenience, to other adjacent countries on a regional or geographical contiguity or other basis, if this is mutually advantageous and if justification arises for expanding its coverage.

V. AUTHORITY

12. The Development Council shall be an intergovernmental mechanism and a high-level operational instrument for the ECOWAS countries (and for others, if it is so decided) for the pursuit of specific policies and programmes in the field of building materials and construction industries.

13. It shall derive its origin, authority and mandate from a "Steering Committee" consisting of representatives of member countries. This Committee may be an already existing mechanism in ECOWAS, but in any case shall be an interministerial body with powers of decision.

14. The Development Council shall report to the Steering Committee, at intervals to be laid down, and act on its mandate.

VI. STRUCTURE

15. The Development Council shall be formed through a special agreement (possibly in the context of the agreement to establish ECOWAS) between the Governments members of this regional intergovernmental organization, namely Benin, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and the Upper Volta. The agreement shall also cover other Governments in the event that its membership is expanded.

16. Initially, the Development Council, which is intended to serve as a specialist working group, may be an integral part of one of the ECOWAS special committees, provided that the functions listed in section III above are included among the principal tasks of one of those committees. If this is not the case, and still in the initial stage, the terms of reference of the most suitable special committee must be extended and its expertise thereby increased. Similarly, it would be desirable for a representative of the Economic Commission for Africa to act as adviser to the Development Council; this will, in any case, be necessary at this stage, not only for defining specific projects but also for mobilizing all the kinds of assistance needed for implementing those projects.

17. The rules and regulations of the Development Council shall be based on such observations, opinions, comments and suggestions as may be made during the meeting at which it is established. They shall determine the practical conditions under which it shall function, the fundamental objective being to initiate, as soon as possible, practical, specific and realistic activities for the benefit of the peoples of the subregion in the building materials and construction sector.

ANNEX
DRAFT RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE BUILDING MATERIALS
AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
FOR THE ECOWAS COUNTRIES

CHAPTER I: MEMBERSHIP

Article 1. The Council shall consist of 34 members, including the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman; 32 members shall be drawn from the contracting countries on an equal basis, namely two members per country. The secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) shall each be represented by a member without the right to vote.

Article 2. In the event of other countries joining the Council, the membership shall be expanded on an equal basis of two members from each country.

Article 3. Members shall have an adequate background and expertise in the field of building materials and construction industries, and experience of top-level microplanning of this subsector. One of the two representatives of each country should preferably be the head of the national nodal agency ("nodal mechanism") and the other the Secretary-General of the ministry most concerned with the development of the subsector.

CHAPTER II: OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

A. The Chairman

Article 4. The Development Council shall elect its Chairman from among the country representatives.

Article 5. The Chairman shall hold office for one year. He shall be eligible for re-election for a further term of one year.

Article 6. He shall, on behalf of the Development Council, regularly and periodically report to and receive directions from the Steering Committee.

B. The Vice-Chairman

Article 7. The Vice-Chairman's election shall be on the same basis as that of the Chairman. He shall hold office for the same period as the Chairman.

Article 8. He shall perform the Chairman's duties if the latter is absent or unable to do so. He may be asked to undertake special missions.

C. Tenure of the Development Council

Article 9. The Development Council's tenure shall be decided by the Steering Committee. Initially, it shall be for a period of five years. It is, however, desirable from the point of view of the objectives for which it was set up that its tenure should be continuous and that it should be a permanent body.

D. Charter of responsibilities

Article 10. During its first year of operation, the Development Council's charter of responsibilities shall be in accordance with paragraph 9 of the draft outline of Constitution and Functions.

Article 11. This charter shall be subject to amendment in accordance with the needs and convenience of member countries.

E. Decisions of the Development Council

Article 12. The Council's decisions shall be by consensus or by simple majority vote.

Article 13. The Chairman shall have the power to put critical issues to formal vote for decision.

Article 14. All Council members from the 16 member countries shall have equal voting rights.

CHAPTER III: POWERS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Article 15. As already explained, the Development Council's decisions shall be subject to consideration and approval by the Steering Committee as the highest authority. The Committee may, however, in the interests of the work and in urgent cases, delegate to the Development Council its powers of execution on specific issues or aspects thereof. The Council's decisions shall then have the same force as if they had been taken by the Steering Committee.

CHAPTER IV: MEETINGS OF THE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Article 16. The Council shall meet at least once every six months.

Article 17. The meetings shall be convened on the basis of a definite agenda circulated in advance with the background documents.

Article 18. The proceedings shall be reported in formal minutes, which shall be circulated after approval by the Chairman.

Article 19. The Development Council may choose the venue for its meetings, which may be held either in the member countries or at the headquarters of ECOWAS or ECA.

Article 20. The Development Council may itself initiate and present projects for consideration at its meetings; it may also present proposals from the nodal mechanisms of its member countries, as well as from the ECOWAS and secretariats.

CHAPTER V: FOLLOW UP

Article 21. After each meeting, the Development Council shall prepare the necessary documents for consideration by the Steering Committee (or by the various nodal mechanisms, if it is authorized to deal directly with them by the Committee) on the

follow-up activities to be carried out. These documents shall deal with technical, financial and interagency co-operation, and the responsibilities of individual agencies shall be identified so that decisions can be made quickly and approved proposals speedily implemented.

CHAPTER VI: BUDGET

Article 22. The Steering Committee, on behalf of the contracting parties, shall determine the contribution of Council members towards the budget for the Council's first year of operation. It shall thereafter authorize budgets on the presentation of proposals by the Development Council.

Article 23. The Committee shall also decide and organize the audit and accounting system.

Article 24. Pending permanent arrangements for the administration of the allotted funds, it shall be open to the Committee to seek the services of the Economic Commission for Africa.

CHAPTER VII: SECRETARIAT

Article 25. The Development Council shall organize its own secretariat to handle administrative and technical project responsibilities.

Article 26. This secretariat shall be in the charge of a Director, who shall be responsible to the Development Council and act as its Secretary at Council meetings and related activities.

Article 27. Pending finalization of permanent arrangements, the Economic Commission for Africa may be requested to provide secretariat services. For this purpose, ECA will undertake necessary missions, hold discussions with the competent authorities, prepare and distribute the necessary documents for Development Council meetings, and organize the required follow-up activities.

Article 28. ECA will also provide technical backstopping for the Development Council's activities, assist it in organizing workshops, training programmes, and co-operation arrangements with Development Councils in the other African subregions and with organizations outside the African region.

CHAPTER VIII: HEADQUARTERS

Article 29. The Development Council shall have its permanent headquarters at.....
.....subject to the approval of the governments of the States members of ECOWAS.

Article 30. The host Government shall be expected to arrange for office accommodation for the Council and its services, in accordance with the provisions governing the establishment of ECOWAS.