

**Twenty-seventh session of the Commission /
Eighteenth Meeting of the Conference of
Ministers Responsible for Economic
Development and Planning**

**Summary of Statements made
during the General Debate**



**United Nations
Economic Commission
for Africa**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
20-23 April 1992**

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Ghana

In his opening remarks the representative of Ghana, thanked the ECA secretariat, TEPCOW and the Acting Executive Secretary of ECA for the excellent documents and reports that had been prepared for the deliberation of the Conference.

In his address to the Conference, he made remarks on three issues, namely: the policy and management framework of ECA, as contained in Document E/ECA/CM.18/4, the issue of ECA MULPOCs and the ECA-sponsored institutions.

With regard to the issue of policy and management framework of the ECA, he emphasized that Document E/ECA/CM.18/4 contained very important issues which required in-depth study. He concurred with the suggestions contained in the document relating to the new directions of the Commission for the 1990s.

On the issue of ECA Conference, the representative strongly supported the ECA Executive Secretary's intention to stimulate increased attendance at these conferences and meetings by focusing the agenda of such conferences and meetings on specific themes and by reducing the length and frequency of future meetings to one in every three years.

However, he suggested that in addition to the measures being suggested, efforts should be made to ensure close coordination with the OAU in scheduling of meetings and conferences.

To emphasize the question of coordination of meetings, he cited the meeting of TEPCOW organized by ECA and the one on disasters in Africa organized by OAU during the same period. The consequence was that attendance to the OAU meeting was poor and the ECA unable to devote the necessary attention to the proceedings of the OAU meeting, in spite of the fact that it was a follow up to a resolution adopted in January 1990 by the United Nations of which ECA is an integral part.

On the question of the MULPOCs, the representative of Ghana, emphasized that the responsibilities of these institutions should be clearly defined, in order to make them economically viable. This would, in turn, enhance the credibility of ECA and improve the MULPOCs impact to the member States. He suggested that the secretariat of ECA should have outlined the tasks envisaged for the MULPOCs in the future. He also wondered if there might not be duplication of tasks between the MULPOCs and the newly

created ECA-MRAG (the Multidisciplinary Advisory Group).

Regarding the ECA-sponsored institutions, he concurred with the information contained in the ECA policy document, that most of these institutions were on the verge of collapse, partly because the member States did not provide the necessary support, and partly because of mismanagement. To deal with these problems, the ECA in its policy document had outlined some corrective measures to be undertaken. However, the representative of Ghana felt that a thorough review should be undertaken to determine the future of these institutions taking into consideration the member States' priority concerns as well as the question of cost effectiveness.

Côte d'Ivoire

The representative of Côte d'Ivoire briefed the Conference on the prevailing difficult economic situation of his country in the face of the ongoing world economic crisis. He informed the Conference that during the second half of the 1980s, the economy had performed poorly owing to the slump in the world market of basic commodities on which it heavily depended.

He further underscored the similarity of views between proposals made by ECA on its new directions and the economic recovery programme of Côte d'Ivoire. It was on that basis that he expressed his country's unreserved support to the recommendations relating to the new directions of ECA as contained in the documents submitted to the Conference by the secretariat.

In his capacity as representative of the country that had chaired the meeting which drew up the document on the African Common Position in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), he gave an overview of the five salient points contained in that important document. Essentially, the document focused on Africa's geographical and the socio-economic peculiarities, the continent's minimal contribution to the global deterioration of the environment as well as the close link between solving that problem and alleviating poverty. Aware of that interaction, Africa undertook to establish a development process that protected the environment and defined its development priorities in order to minimize the impact of external economic constraints.

In conclusion, the representative of Côte d'Ivoire proposed that the Conference of Mini-

sters should send a message of congratulation to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, United Nations Secretary-General.

Egypt

The representative of Egypt supported the suggestion made by the delegate of Côte d'Ivoire to send a congratulatory message to the United Nations Secretary-General. He congratulated the ECA Acting Executive Secretary for the good conference theme, in view of the impact of the changes that are taking place in Africa and in other parts of the world on the work of the Commission.

He affirmed that the Egyptian delegation supported the resolutions that had been adopted by the thirteenth meeting of the Technical Committee of the Whole to enhance the work of the Commission.

He suggested that a committee at the level of the ambassadors accredited to Ethiopia, ECA and the OAU should be set up to assist the Executive Secretary in implementing the Commission's priorities. On the question of coordination, the Egyptian representative supported the idea of ECA coordinating its activities with other agencies, especially the OAU, ADB and Intergovernmental agencies especially in the establishment of the African Economic Community. He expressed gratitude to the OAU, ECA and ADB for the work so far undertaken towards that end.

To underscore the question of sound economic management, the representative of Egypt shared with the Conference, the Egyptian experience in the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programme (AAF-SAP). He stated that the Egyptian Third Development Plan 1991-1997 stressed private sector development. To this end, clear policies on monetary affairs, wages etc. had been promulgated by the Egyptian Government. The 1991-1997 Development Plan also aimed at achieving maximum flexibility to attract direct foreign investment.

In conclusion, the representative of Egypt, underscored that the Government of Egypt still placed emphasis on planning, which he believed played a role of a catalyst. He also added that report given by the World Bank indicated that the Egyptian Structural Adjustment Programme was a success.

Ethiopia

The representative of Ethiopia reviewed the ECA's past achievements and the crucial role it had played in the promotion of socio-economic strategies for Africa's development. He agreed that ECA should consider new directions, having taken stock of the changing world and recognized the necessity of African economies to emerge from the slow growth and stagnation that had characterized them. He said that Africa's economic recovery and development should be based on good governance and sound economic policy.

Referring to the socio-economic and political situation of Ethiopia, he underscored the role of the government in the: promotion of a market economy by providing adequate economic and social infrastructures to the private operators; rehabilitation of factories and farms; streamlining of the administration; and the promotion of appropriate investment measures aimed at attracting private and foreign investors. In doing so, the government had abandoned the system of centralized economy and had adopted a framework which would enable the Ethiopian peoples to make important contributions in improving their economic welfare.

In an attempt to enhance the efficiency of the ECA secretariat, the representative of Ethiopia called for: the adoption of a multidisciplinary approach for effective programme implementation; the rationalization of the programmes, structure and functions of the secretariat; and increased accountability to the Conference of Ministers with regard to programme and project performance. He underscored the vital importance of human investment both for member States and ECA secretariat. He requested ECA to play a coordinating role by collecting and disseminating to governments all information on fellowships and training, with emphasis on opportunities offered in the context of African inter-country cooperation. He urged the secretariat to strengthen its management capacity by upgrading the skills of its staff. Finally, he suggested that ECA should be an African think-tank, which would attempt to read the future in order to give its member States advance warning of problems that they have to face.

Senegal

The representative of Senegal expressed his deep appreciation of the secretariat of ECA under the able leadership of the Executive Secretary for

the reduction of the volume of documents and the quality of the documents in contents and presentation. He observed that the documents were better focused and relevant.

He commended the Executive Secretary for setting up a high level Task Force to assist him in drawing up the New Directions for the Economic Commission for Africa. He said the initiative was timely and suggested that ECA had to change its orientation in order to effectively assist its member States in meeting the challenges of the 1990s and beyond. In particular, he expressed his satisfaction that the New orientation gives ECA a catalytic and coordinating role with a view to strengthening and increasing its participation in the execution of multisectoral projects.

He encouraged the Executive Secretary to go ahead with the setting up of a Consultative Committee made of African Ambassadors residing in Addis Ababa. He said that this Committee, should help him in his efforts towards coordination and harmonization of the work programme of ECA with those of the OAU and ADB.

The Islamic Republic of Iran

The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran noted that many countries in Africa are trapped in poverty and under-development, in spite of their rich natural resources. This indicated the necessity of proper economic planning and optimal utilization of resources. He observed that ECA's services to African countries had been directed towards this end. He stressed human resources development, in terms of elementary, secondary, graduate, and technical education emphasizing the elementary and technical levels. He also stressed that Africa's culture and traditions should be duly taken into account in economic planning. In this respect, he deplored the new threat of annihilation facing different cultures, to replace them with attitudes and values that are alien to developing countries. As experience has shown, it is not possible to achieve real development and economic growth without due consideration to cultural identity and human values.

With regard to the new world order, he called for cooperation between developed and developing countries based on bilateral and mutual interests. He expressed the opinion that South-South cooperation was crucial in accelerating economic growth of the least developed countries, especially in Africa, without being relegated permanently to the role of mere suppliers of raw materials. He noted that in the new

international order following fundamental change in East-West relations, past antagonisms were being replaced by dominant economic relationships. He called upon Third World countries to put aside minor differences so as to increase co-operation and integration among themselves to overcome their vulnerability to international socio-economic crises.

The representative expressed the opinion that the debt crisis facing developing countries was due to: improper utilization of loans, and the interest-oriented objectives of the creditors which had a negative effect on the socio-economic development of debtor countries. He called for a different relationship between creditors and the debtor countries in which both would share equitably in the profit-loss outcome of investments. Under this new outlook, which is in agreement with explicit guidelines of Islam, debtor countries would invest loan capital in projects with promise of positive economic returns in the mutual interests of both parties. He also noted the importance of appropriate technology transfer to developing countries, the timely completion of crucial projects, and unimpeded access to world markets for their products, as pre-requisites for debt repayment.

The representative noted that, in spite of her own post-war economic reconstruction burden, Iran was involved in bilateral programmes involving a number of African countries namely: Ghana, the Sudan, Sierra Leone, and the United Republic of Tanzania, in diverse fields: agricultural extension services, road construction, potable water supplies, establishing clinics and health centres, and small-scale industries in rural areas. The Islamic Republic was also involved in just and mutually profitable economic co-operation with some countries, notably Zambia, Guinea, Madagascar and the Seychelles. This was a clear expression of his country's sincere interest in a positive relationship with African countries.

Morocco

The representative of Morocco indicated some of the economic achievements of his country in 1991 and stated that the challenge of the 1990s consisted in raising the economic growth rate in Africa to a level comparable to that of the developing regions. That challenge could be met if African countries, among other things, developed human resources, the social capacity for absorption of new technologies, promoted entrepreneurship based on private initiative and opted for decentralized development.

Africa, he maintained, should adapt its positions and strategies to global changes. To that end, it was necessary to analyze the reactions of the international community to the fourth United Nations Development Decade, the final review of UN-PAAERD and the adoption of the New Agenda for the development of Africa.

In order to reflect thoroughly on crucial issues and to increase the effectiveness of Conferences of Ministers responsible for economic development, the representative of Morocco proposed the establishment of an African Ministerial Committee which would meet regularly between the annual sessions of the Conferences. He also proposed that ECA should conduct a biennial evaluation of progress made in the implementation of the new United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa during the 1990s.

He stressed that the economic integration of the continent should, first of all, be tackled at the subregional level, where the MULPOCs could play a decisive role. Accordingly, the North African subregion had established the Maghreb Union and was awaiting a study from ECA on the establishment of a preferential trade area for that subregion. Referring to paragraph 15 of resolution 708 (XXVI), he called for the strengthening of the human and material resources of the MULPOCs and a clear definition of their objectives. He urgently appealed to ECA to support the Transport and Communications Committee of the Tangiers MULPOC.

Continuing his intervention, he informed the Conference about new approaches currently being considered in the North African subregion to reform economic planning and management. In that connection, he requested ECA and UNDP to cooperate with the subregion to organize a scientific meeting on the revival of planning in North Africa and possibly to draw conclusions for the whole continent.

He expressed support for the new directions proposed by the Executive Secretary for the Commission, and suggested that the development of entrepreneurship and private initiative, rationalization of the private sector and development management should be among the future priorities of ECA.

Observing that the regional cooperation organizations were dying slowly from lack of resources, the representative of Morocco suggested that to resolve the problem a think-tank should be established within ECA to explore new

mechanisms for the payment of contributions, to define a new mandate for the organizations, to redirect objectives in the light of new global changes and to find a definitive solution acceptable to all member States.

Guinea

The representative of Guinea welcomed ECA's important achievements in identifying development problems in Africa and formulating strategies for solving them. He noted that the challenge of development, restructuring and transformation of the continent, which today fell on ECA, could only be met if all the member States, individually and collectively, improved their economic and social performance by implementing the plans of action and integration treaties adopted at the subregional and regional levels.

On economic performance in Guinea, he stated that encouraging results had been obtained following the adoption of economic and financial reform programmes. Average GDP growth rate since 1986 had been between 4 and 5 per cent and the inflation rate had been reduced from 72 per cent in 1986 to 18 per cent in 1981.

He noted that in some countries, implementation of various plans and strategies lacked enthusiasm which undermined the overall results of ECA-sponsored strategies and programmes. This was mainly due to the constraints exerted on them by the agreements signed with certain donors laid undue emphasis in structural adjustment programmes and confirmation agreements with the World Bank and IMF. Increased cooperation between ECA and the Bretton Woods institutions and ADB was, therefore, necessary to ensure that the concerns of African countries were catered for more adequately.

He exhorted the Conference to give its full support to the numerous and positive initiatives taken by the Executive Secretary. He particularly commended the imaginative suggestions made by the Executive Secretary to make ECA more operational, more efficient and more competitive in a constantly changing world where the operating framework of United Nations executing agencies was becoming increasingly competitive. He underscored the need to adopt new approaches to enable ECA to better carry out its mandate through new more functional relationships with its development partners.

He invited the Conference to give serious thought to the proposal by the Executive

Secretary with regard to the establishment of a Committee of Ambassadors to further strengthen the effectiveness of ECA and to hasten in the implementation of the new directions of the secretariat. The terms of reference of the Committee should be defined so that it could start work as soon as possible. He supported the recommendations made by the Executive Secretary to rationalize the Ministers' meetings in view of the low level of participation in the current meetings.

With regard to ECA-sponsored institutions, he invited the Commission to conduct a study designed to enable them to fully play their role.

He paid tribute to Professor Adebayo Adedeji and all his predecessors for their contribution in the defence of the economic and social interests of Africa. He also felt that the theme proposed for the Conference was consistent with the constant pursuit of efficiency.

Tunisia

The Representative of Tunisia said that the opening statements of Messrs. Diallo and Salim, ECA Acting Executive Secretary and the OAU Secretary-General respectively, had defrayed some of his concerns and were most inspiring. He reiterated Tunisia's support to the new orientations of ECA in the 1990s and the recommendations contained in the document presented by the Acting Executive Secretary. He said that his country fully adhered to them and would contribute vigorously to their implementation. In this connection, he welcomed Mr. Diallo's commitment to implement these recommendations and requested him to do whatever was necessary to achieve this.

He thanked Mr. Diallo and his colleagues at ECA who had shown their desire to closely involve member States in the broad management of ECA's operations. He also thanked all those who supported the proposal for the establishment of an advisory Committee composed of heads of diplomatic missions responsible for the review of ECA's operations and programme of work. He suggested that this Committee may wish to hold informal meetings every two months. He underscored the need for ECA to undertake radical structural reforms immediately, having solely in mind the interest of Africa.

Reviewing the major policy issues to which Tunisia was according vital importance, he underscored the role of women in the political, economic and social change in African countries.

He underscored women's role in the promotion of family life, health, agriculture and recently in the resolution of conflicts. He added that women could play a role in fostering democracy and promoting human rights. Women in Tunisia were represented in all the economic sectors and the business community. In this connection, he welcomed the establishment of the African Association of Business Women. The representative of Tunisia then called for more attention to the youth and their role in African societies. He requested ECA to consider the problems and aspirations of African youth as an important parameter in the development process. Lastly, he suggested that environmental issues should be addressed through international cooperation in order to find appropriate solutions to the crucial problems facing the globe.

Madagascar

In his address to the Conference, the representative of Madagascar first described the political crisis that his country had been going through and informed the Conference about the policies that the transitional government had adopted in order to restore individual liberties, democracy and economic liberalism. The transitional emergency plan adopted, consisted of promoting human-centred development through: the improvement of primary health care, intensification of the campaign against endemic diseases, improvement of the living standards of the poorest social groups, protection and advancement of women, improvement of educational standards and environmental protection.

Within the framework of environmental protection, the representative of Madagascar stated that actions were being taken to sensitize the people to reduce their charcoal consumption and hence deforestation. Furthermore, research carried out by Malagasy researchers had made it possible to rationalize the use of charcoal, on one hand and to produce an improved form of charcoal, on the other.

The representative of Madagascar supported the new directions proposed by the Executive Secretary of ECA, affirming that they would help the Commission and the region to meet the challenges that Africa faced within the area of development which were also similar to those pursued by Madagascar.

Zimbabwe

The representative of the Republic of Zimbabwe expressed his gratitude to the Acting Ex-

Executive Secretary of ECA for having initiated the "New Directions for the Economic Commission for Africa in the 1990s" as the theme for the Conference of Ministers. He noted that Africa was at the threshold of a new era unleashed by the recent geopolitical changes which had profound economic implications for Africa's survival. He expressed support for ECA's role within its continued mandate, especially, its coordinating rôle in enhancing subregional and regional economic cooperation and integration. He cited PTA and SADCC as two successful subregional organizations which could benefit from closer coordination with ECA. He reiterated his country's support for the common positions and programmes adopted by Africa, particularly, the treaty establishing the African Economic Community, and the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation. He stressed that while African countries continued to maintain close economic relations with countries of the North, improvement of intra-African economic relations was imperative. He emphasized that for the thrust towards the creation of the African Economic Community to be reinforced, closer consultation and liaison between ECA, OAU, and the ADB was necessary.

On the question of the environment and natural resources, the representative supported the establishment of institutional and regulatory measures to ensure better management of the environment and natural resources. While welcoming the cooperation of IGOs, he cautioned the possibility for imposition of inadequately researched opinions and decisions. He cited the case of the over-grown size of the elephant herd in Zimbabwe as a case in point. He emphasized that if ecological critics remain adamant against the necessity to cull this surplus resource, then such critics should provide arrangements to buy surplus animals for resettlement in the countries whose herds had been depleted by poachers.

The representative drew attention to the grave socio-economic crisis in the Eastern and Southern Africa subregion arising from the prolonged, most devastating drought in the area's recorded history. He informed the Conference that the current crisis has resulted in crop losses of the order of 50 - 100 per cent. This catastrophe he said had been added to the lingering economic distortions due to apartheid; inadequate roads, railways, and communications damaged by apartheid-sponsored bandits; and a massive refugee problem. He noted that this drought also came at a time when his country is in the midst of the throes of economic restructuring, a bitter but necessary pill. He called upon the

international community to rally to his country's assistance in all manner possible, noting that his country urgently needs food supplies and other material assistance before the next cropping season.

The Congo

The representative of the Congo congratulated the Executive Secretary on the new style of work he was instituting at the Commission, the results of which were reflected in the quality of the documents submitted for consideration.

He observed that the changes that had taken place in the world and the economic crisis afflicting Africa had not spared the Congo. The country had therefore chosen the path of democracy in order to curb the crisis.

He commended the ECA restructuring efforts initiated by the Executive Secretary to improve the management capacity of the organization and enable it provide more productive assistance to members States, which had themselves already formulated a wide range of plans, strategies and even programmes. He strongly supported the new directions recommended by ECA to help Africa successfully pursue the goals it had set itself to improve the situation of its peoples and thereby ensure the economic development of the continent.

Zambia

The Zambian representative concurred with the views of other representatives on the need to reduce the frequency of ECA conferences in order to reduce costs and increase the capacity to implementing resolutions adopted by conferences. Additionally, he emphasized that member States attendance at many meetings was costly, particularly, in light of the dwindling resources at the disposal of member States.

The delegation suggested that information on refugees and disaster situations should be included in the compilation of the African regional report on economic and social conditions. Turning to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, the representative of Zambia observed that the successful implementation of this New Agenda will largely depend *inter alia* on the implementation of the commitments of the African Governments and the international donor community. He suggested that the implementation of the commitments of the two parties should be reviewed on annual basis, and that the rate of implementation of the New Agen-

da should systematically be brought before the ECA Conference of Ministers.

Regarding the new directions for the Economic Commission for Africa in the 1990s, the representative of Zambia said that the recommended approaches were sound and viable and should therefore be particularly in view of the grave economic and social problems facing the continent.

He stressed the role of the OAU as a regional political institution, the ECA as the Economic and Programming institution and ADB as a funding institution. He suggested that the ECA should further articulate its specific role in the tripartite arrangement towards the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda during the next session of the Conference of Ministers.

Turning to the question of conferences, the representative suggested that the agenda of conferences should be targeted to specific themes and issues and the ECA secretariat should be streamlined to strike a balance between the workload and capacity to deliver. He abhorred the operative capability at the MULPOCs, and the financial situation of ECA-sponsored institutions, and suggested that these situations rendered them inefficient in monitoring development programmes. He observed that the 1980s were referred to as a lost decade for Africa, and hoped that the 1990s would make a difference by pursuing vigorously the goals that have been set in the New Agenda.

Kenya

The representative of the Republic of Kenya expressed appreciation for the lucid and informative papers that the ECA secretariat had put before the Conference of the Council of Ministers. Although his country was in broad agreement with the New Agenda for Africa's development in the 1990s, he felt that a number of issues were significant enough to have been addressed through specific background papers for consideration at this conference, notably the problems of: refugees; droughts; food shortages; and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). While he was not raising these issues for debate on this occasion, he recommended that appropriate papers be prepared on these issues for the benefit of African States as major problems to be addressed by them in the 1990s. On the refugee problem, he deplored the concomitant waste of human resources and the disruption of agricultural activities, noting that

this particular problem was of Africa's own creation.

He noted that the Conference was taking place at a time when the process of democratization was sweeping throughout Africa. He said that this development promoted transparency in the conduct of public affairs, increased public participation, and led to good governance, which should together improve economic performance and better living conditions for the African peoples.

He expressed the opinion that the sustainment of agricultural development would require projects which took into consideration some fundamental elements which should be correctly articulated.

The representative expressed appreciation for preparations made for UNTACDA II, and called for the resource mobilization committees and the national coordinating committees to be adequately informed about the next steps in the programme's implementation. He noted with satisfaction that maintenance and rehabilitation of infrastructures and equipment, as well as development of human resources were accorded a high priority in UNTACDA II, and recommended that research, science and technology should receive equal attention. Elaborating, he pointed out that Africa needs to decide on which technology was appropriate for development and maintenance of infrastructures; and he called for research on appropriate modes of transportation in light of Africa's stage of economic development, as well as on the problem of road safety. He noted that transport and communications were economic sectors that should pay for themselves, therefore, modalities should be put in place to ensure that funds were set aside for the purpose of their development and maintenance. He urged African States to remove non-physical barriers to the full utilization of subregional transport and communications infrastructures.

On industrial development, he emphasized the importance of strengthening inter-linkages between the industrial and agricultural sectors. He drew attention to the favourable potentials of harmonizing IDDA II and UNTACDA II, emphasizing the need to mobilize resources to enable African R and D institutions to be involved, to ensure the success of both programmes.

Rwanda

The representative of Rwanda first highlighted the adverse consequences of the war that

had been tearing his country apart and destroying its economic achievements. He stressed that in addition to the national disasters plaguing his country, the fall in the price of coffee and the galloping population increase were also an obstacle to genuine planning.

With regard to the continent's economic development, he strongly supported the new guidelines proposed by the Executive Secretary of ECA and, thus, cited Julius Nyerere's statement that Africans should first accept their condition of poverty and then gradually transform their potentials into something that would be authentically theirs. He supported the idea that the number of Ministerial meetings should be reduced, the activities of ECA and the OAU harmonized and a mechanism set up in ECA for periodical monitoring and evaluation of its activities, for the purpose of making corrections and adjustment before it is too late.

The continental organizations should preside over the activities of governments and regional projects, be given power of control, arbitration and surveillance with regard to member States in order to avoid their having to resort to foreign authorities for the settlement of social conflicts. There should be free movement of persons and goods in order to promote industrialization and develop trade.

With regard to protection of the environment, he said that his country was currently engaged in reforestation campaigns, protection of natural reserves, establishment of potable water resources and erosion control. In particular, Rwanda had already prepared its report on environment and development for its participation in the United Nations Conference on Environment to be held in Brazil this year.

Finally, he expressed the view of the Rwanda delegation that educating women meant educating the nation, and that he fully supported the initiative to establish an African Bank for women as well as a federation of women entrepreneurs. He emphasized that Rwanda had had a long experience in this area and was prepared to share that experience in the feasibility study to establish the Bank. He concluded by stressing that Rwanda wished to host the Bank and, thus, requested the support of the Conference.

Sierra Leone

The representative of Sierra Leone observed that Africa was in a state of economic and social emergency with, *inter alia*, severe food shortages,

lowest commodity prices for Africa's exports for years, crushing debt burden, civil strife and violence leading to loss of human life and destruction of physical infrastructure, and increasing refugee flows. He expressed the view that failure in reforming the continent's agricultural sector to effect increased food production in the region had been the main cause of Africa's woes. In this respect he welcomed statements of several delegations and observers which stressed the importance of the agricultural sector in African economic and social advancement. He called upon ECA to redouble its efforts in coordinating the activities of the various agencies involved in agricultural development in the African region so as to contribute towards solving the agricultural and food problems the continent was facing.

The representative further noted that with the increasing role of ECA in the economic and social aspects of Africa's development, consideration should be given towards changing the name of the institution to the Economic and Social Commission for Africa (ESCA). While acknowledging that the task of overcoming underdevelopment remained the responsibility of individual African countries, he urged the Commission to improve its information system so as to ensure the effective dissemination of its products to all of its potential consumers.

Algeria

The representative of Algeria underscored two factors which were responsible for the worsening economic and social situation of African countries. These were inappropriate economic policies adopted by many countries and the paucity of resources allocated to development due to the continuous worsening terms of trade and the debt servicing burden.

The representative informed the Conference that with regard to Algeria, its external debt, that was estimated at \$US25,000 million, had become unbearable since the country was compelled to repay 80 per cent of that loan in three years. He noted that the debt was essentially a commercial one and that conventional solutions through rescheduling could not be applied.

He emphasized that the inefficient organizational framework, the poor classification of priorities, the absence of concrete projects and follow-up mechanisms, the lack of commitment and interest by the international community, together explained the failure of global programmes such as UN-PAAERD or the various sectoral decades declared in favour of Africa. He stated

that the establishment of the African Economic Community augured well for the future. He was also happy to note that the Executive Secretary of ECA had undertaken indepth work to prepare ECA for the challenges facing the region.

He congratulated the Executive Secretary for his efforts to build on past achievements and exhorted him, within the framework of the reforms, to rationalize and improve ECA's services to member States. He insisted on cooperation amongst ECA, the OAU and ADB which should go beyond temporary consultations amongst their chief executives.

With respect to relations between ECA and economic groupings, he suggested that ECA should become the venue for exchange of views among secretariats. The MULPOCs should be restructured to make them more functional, and that they should be provided with financial resources commensurate with their mission.

He exhorted ECA to pay greater attention to problems of youth who constituted almost 70 per cent of the continent's population.

He emphasized that the Executive Secretary's initiative to bring ambassadors together monthly in order to brief them on ECA's work programme, problems and proposed solutions was very positive. He recommended that the initiative should be broadened at the level of ECA structures (divisions) and extended to members of the diplomatic missions. This would bring the member States closer to ECA, which would facilitate the implementation of its projects and activities.

Tanzania

The representative of the United Republic of Tanzania thanked the Government and the People of Ethiopia for the peaceful and warm atmosphere they had created for the Conference. He stated that his delegation was happy with all the papers brought before the Conference for discussion and endorsement. He, however, made a few suggestions in relation to the theme of the Conference "New Directions for the Commission in the 1990s". He pointed out that before embarking on new directions in the future, it would be advisable to draw up a list of all the objectives contained in the many documents sponsored by the ECA to-date and to draw up a timetable for their implementation.

Commenting on the mission/mandate of the Economic Commission for Africa, the repre-

sentative pointed out that the central mission of ECA was to initiate and participate in the implementation of measures for a concerted action for the socio-economic development of Africa. He emphasized that ECA should provide Africa with a wider vision of itself through intellectual leadership on economic and social issues, the promotion of regional cooperation among the member States and their intergovernmental institutions, and the strengthening of subregional institutions.

With regard to ECA's programmes and projects, the representative pointed out that the analysis of Africa's economic problems must follow the bottom-up concept. This meant that ECA should work closely with individual country experts in analyzing Africa's development problems and in developing programmes which aim at solving them. He maintained that, most ECA sponsored programmes have not been seriously taken up for implementation by member States partly because national experts are not involved at the initial stage of problem analysis and programme development.

He emphasized that for ECA to be a voice of Africa, it had to be answerable to the ECA Conference of Ministers, and its programmes had to reflect the problems facing African countries as perceived and elaborated by African countries. He further observed that ECA would enhance Africa's self-respect by working closely with African member States through the ECA Conference of Ministers, by advocating African solutions to Africa's development problems and by borrowing only useful ideas from outside.

Commenting on African development problems, the representative pointed out that ECA experts should avoid globalizing Africa's development problems; instead, it should address peculiar problems faced by individual countries, or group of countries. He emphasized that the international economic environment had changed significantly and continued to change. The methods of analyzing economic development problems of Africa must therefore be up-to-date. In this connection, he suggested that ECA should make use of well qualified economists.

In conclusion, he commended the ECA secretariat for the high quality documents made available to the Conference and suggested that ECA should address itself to the following problems:

- (a) Food self-sufficiency in Africa,

- (b) Absence of viable transport and communications networks, and
- (c) The heavy debt burden facing African countries.

Cameroon

The delegate of Cameroon took the floor to underline the vital role that ECA must play in Africa's development struggle. It was within this framework that he hailed the proposals made by the secretariat on its new directions designed to meet the challenges that Africa was facing. He said that the directions were further dictated by the United Nations restructuring efforts. He, however, remarked that the proposals would have been further strengthened if lessons were drawn from national experiences.

In spite of the quite impressive range of development strategies, Africa, during the last decade, had been facing successive crises such as the debt, food, energy and budget crises which had further complicated the ability of African countries to alleviate such ills. He said, while recognizing the solution to Africa's problems, they remained, first and foremost, the responsibility of Africa itself. However, the international community should complement the efforts already undertaken in order to help Africa overcome the problems. He said this was essential in Africa's implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the development and recovery of Africa as well as in the search for solutions to its debt problems.

He then gave an overview of Cameroon's experience in the area of structural adjustment, economic restructuring, democratization and liberalization, environmental protection, and the encouragement of women to participate in development. To this end, the delegate of Cameroon expressed his country's support to all the resolutions submitted to the session for adoption.

Finally, he gave his impressions on the problem of regional cooperation in Africa. He said, in order to benefit from the economies of scale, African countries must integrate their production and communications structures. This should enable them to meet the high costs of modern technology, reduce the very high distribution costs and increase productivity in the agricultural sector, *inter alia*, by conducting research at the regional level. To this end, organizations such as ECA, the ADB and OAU must play the role of a catalyst in this process. Thus, by mobilizing its

"grey matter that had become raw materials", and with the assistance of the international community, Africa should be able to meet the challenges it was confronting.

Libya

The representative of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya reviewed the new challenges Africa would be facing in light of the changes and new developments on the international scene, and said that he fully agreed with the new directions proposed to address these specific issues in the 1990s. However, he inquired about the paradoxical situation whereby the international community and financial institutions were diverting most of their assistance to other regions of the world at a time when the African continent was in dire need of financial assistance.

He extended his support to the ECA Executive Secretary for his relentless efforts to properly address these issues by formulating ECA's new orientations for the enhancement of the efficiency of the institution. He underscored the need for ECA and the OAU to cooperate closely. He welcomed the initiative of the Executive Secretary to cut down on the number of meetings which should be, from now on, of high quality while ensuring the implementation of all resolutions adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers. He said that he was fully confident that ECA will achieve its goals, especially the fostering of women's role in all fields of development. But he requested ECA to cooperate with the ADB to find solutions to the problem of African indebtedness.

The representative further underscored the vital role the economic groupings should play in enhancing economic recovery and development. He said, Libya was a pioneer in the promotion and strengthening of economic cooperation programme and integration as shown by it being currently the Chairman of the intergovernmental committee of experts of the Tangiers MULPOC and by its strong technical cooperation programme with African countries. He warned that this cooperation could be jeopardized as Libya was faced by an economic blockade and would eventually withhold all its contributions and participation in all regional and international organizations.

Zaire

The representative of Zaire reviewed the measures undertaken for the economic recovery of his country. He also reviewed the major challenges Africa would be facing in the 1990s, name-

ly poverty, the problem of debt and financial resource mobilization, the promotion of the private sector and the establishment of the African Economic Community. With regard to the poverty issue, he said that the demographic factors should be taken into account in the formulation of policies for sustainable economic growth. He also recommended the adoption of effective policies for the allocation and mobilization of financial resources in order to properly address the debt issue. There were need to create machineries for technical assistance and financing of the private sector, especially the small and medium scale enterprises.

Noting the modest results achieved in the strengthening of subregional economic integration and the need to accelerate the establishment of the African Economic Community, he called for the development and promotion of productive structures aimed at strengthening the physical integration of African markets. In this context, the Zairean delegation endorsed the main recommendations contained in the documents submitted to the Conference by the ECA secretariat. It also noted with satisfaction the proposal by other delegations to establish an advisory ministerial committee of ECA to examine the problem of arrears of contributions to regional and sub-regional institutions by member States.

France

The observer from France stressed that the development crisis facing Africa could be resolved through among other measures the adoption of a strategy that would promote sustainable economic growth, greater popular participation, ensure the protection of the environment and slow down population growth. ECA should contribute to this strategy which should be implemented in a subregional context.

Sustainable growth entailed, first and foremost, a substantial improvement of the agricultural sector for the attainment of food security. To this end, there were real opportunities for improving agricultural production. While, industrial development and the establishment of infrastructure were also among the priorities, increasing food production was a fundamental necessity.

He commended the new orientation of ECA focusing on economic cooperation and integration. He called upon ECA, in that regard, to establish a sound balance between theoretical research and operational activities. He suggested the intensification of advisory services based on

preliminary analysis of programmes, advocating precision and realism in the setting of objectives and promoting a multisectoral approach in order to promote profitable activities and to facilitate more rapid programme adjustments.

He also stressed that when defining the mandate of committees and working groups, ECA should promote coherence and synergy of regional activities to be carried out by other organizations such as ADB, the OAU and the Bretton Woods institutions as well as those of the United Nations system, with a view to participating more actively in international conferences organized under the aegis of the United Nations.

France, on its part, would continue to make aid to Africa a priority, remain in solidarity with the least developed countries, contribute to peace, support democracy and continue playing a major role in development. He referred, particularly to the decision by France, together with the United Nations, to convene a big conference on the Sahara and the Sahel, scheduled on 14 and 15 May 1992 to establish a permanent observatory for analysis and consultation in order to fight against desertification in Africa.

He concluded by asserting that experience had shown that development aid policies to Africa should henceforth be increasingly focused on the creation of internal conditions necessary for their effectiveness. He added that external assistance given to Africa, bilateral or multilateral, could in no way be effective without an enabling economic, political and administrative environment.

Germany

The observer of the Federal Republic of Germany expressed the view that cooperation between Europe and the continent of Africa was more intensive than ever. In the case of Germany the major areas of cooperation with the African region included the preservation and protection of the environment, the creation of overall social and economic conditions conducive to development and progress at national and global levels, and regional cooperation and integration.

He stated that over 40 per cent of Germany's overall development aid went to African countries, and that the country also played a major part in multilateral economic cooperation with Africa. He reaffirmed his Government's increased development assistance to the African region, particularly in respect of the poorer countries.

He pointed out that the German Government attached great importance to continuing cooperation with ECA. In particular, the German Government intended to promote two projects with ECA, one concerned with the development of the informal sector, and the other concerned with the participation by the people in the political process.

Russia

The representative of Russia commended ECA for its role in mobilizing efforts for implementing international strategies complementary to those taken by African countries themselves. He expressed the view that Africa's critical economic situation must be seen in the context of global complexities, of which, the way out could only be through concerted efforts.

He ascertained that despite the changes taking place in Russia, his country would continue to support Africa. He expressed Russia's support to states which were in the process of strengthening their independence, democratizing economic and political life, and ensuring respect for human rights.

He envisaged the new forms of cooperation between Russia and Africa to be one based on mutual advantage and in response to Africa's realities.

Russia is gradually moving towards a market oriented economy involving more heavily the private sector. The emerging Russia, he said would give greater impetus to Russia's political relations, trade, economic, monetary and financial ties with African countries.

He expressed the wish that ECA remains an effective and meaningful force in the development of Africa.

Sudan

The delegation of the Sudan observed that the African continent possessed abundant natural resources which had not been exploited and utilized effectively to serve the needs of the African people. He expressed the belief that through regional cooperation and integration, the increased use of indigenous resources and capabilities in development, and the support of Africa's development partners, the region would make better progress in future. In this respect he reported that the Sudan was taking the necessary measures towards the ratification of the treaty creating the African Economic Community and

expressed hope that other African countries which had not ratified the said treaty would soon do so.

He further informed the meeting about the economic state of the Sudan where a number of measures had recently been introduced to liberalize and restructure the economy with a view to stimulating its growth and encourage regional and international trade. He underlined that the government had simultaneously introduced various measures to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable groups in the society caused by the restructuring of the economy.

Lesotho

The representative of Lesotho stated that the African situation called for increased resources to address development issues. Underscoring the seriousness of the current drought afflicting the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa, he stated that the resources that would have been utilized for economic recovery would be diverted to solving problems caused by the drought.

Regarding the population pressure experienced in many African countries, he observed that since the problem had not been successfully addressed by the male segment of the population, he suggested that the involvement of women in population control programmes might be more productive.

Commenting on the recommendations and resolutions contained in TEPCOW report, he suggested that since most of these recommendations were significant to Africa's development efforts, they should be adopted for implementation.

Regarding the administrative reforms that had been initiated by the Acting Executive Secretary, he appealed to the ministers to give the necessary support for their implementation. He further supported the proposal made for establishing a consultative committee of ambassadors accredited to Ethiopia, the OAU and ECA to assist the Executive Secretary of ECA in the monitoring and evaluation of the Commission's programmes.

The representative of Lesotho abhorred the state of the MULPOCs and appealed to the Executive Secretary of the ECA to review the operations of the MULPOCs and ECA-sponsored institutions with a view to strengthening them. The importance of environmental management was emphasized by the representative. He informed the Conference that the Government of Lesotho was committed to the protection of the environment,

and had drawn up an environment plan; an institution was also being set up to implement this plan. He urged African member States to attend the forthcoming Environment Conference in Brazil in large numbers.

Angola

The representative of Angola indicated that the economic backwardness of African countries was caused by the East-West conflict which had finally disappeared. Therefore, Africa should seriously plan for its economic take-off within the context of the new global framework.

Touching on the economic situation of his country currently in the process of multi-party democracy, he stressed that the long national liberation struggle had destroyed the socio-economic infrastructure of the country. In spite of efforts to defend the national sovereignty, Angola had strived to support agriculture, health services and the integration of women in development.

Uganda

The representative of Uganda said that the Conference was taking place at a time when the region was going through various political and social changes. She invited the African countries to adopt common positions and programmes on policy issues. It was within this principle that the Ugandan delegation supported the objectives for the establishment of the African Economic Community, the treaty of which Uganda ratified in December 1991. The Lagos Plan of Action and the African Charter for Popular Participation for Development and Transformation, needed to be implemented for the common benefits of the region. The role of ECA in the implementation of these socio-economic development strategies was emphatically vital, particularly in its efforts to strengthen its relationship with Governments of member States, the OAU, ADB as well as the Bretton Woods institutions.

With regard to the New Agenda for Africa's Development in 1990s the delegate expressed the view, that its success will depend on cooperation between Africa and the International Community. He said that the implementation of the activities of the New Agenda would benefit from the Global Coalition in Africa. He informed that the second meeting of the Advisory Council will be held in Kampala, Uganda in May 1992 and invited member States to attend. She expressed her gratitude to the ECA Acting Executive

Secretary who has already confirmed his attendance.

The Ugandan delegation expressed its support to the views expressed by various members of delegation on issues of environment, population, international trade and finance. The delegation was also impressed by the quality of the documents of the subregional committee on women in development and gave maximum support to the recommendations contained therein, especially with regard to the establishment of the African Bank for Women. In recognising the role of women in conflict resolution, the delegation informed that the Uganda government was taking the initiative to hold a regional conference on women for peace so as to give the women leaders of the region an opportunity to design strategies for maintenance of peace in the region.

In conclusion, the delegation expressed its support to the adoption of the report of TEPCOW together with all the resolutions and decisions which were annexed to it.

Namibia

The representative from the Republic of Namibia expressed support for the recommendations submitted by TEPCOW. Particularly, he emphasized the importance of the conference theme: New Directions for ECA in the 1990s, which, he proposed, should be a turning point and a break with a past characterised by poverty, political turmoil and disappointing socio-economic performance for many countries in the region. He expressed support for ECA's proposed new orientation, and endorsed closer cooperation between ECA and other United Nations agencies, and regional IGOs and NGOs, as an imperative condition for the achievement of the priorities of the new direction. In the same light, he called for the strengthening of ECA-sponsored institutions. He noted that the African Economic Community represented a new formula by which the region could begin to solve its socio-economic problems, and to step up its production of goods and services as well as trade in a world dominated by the emerging economic and trading blocs. In this context, he associated his country with efforts in the Eastern and Southern Africa subregion to strengthen PTA and SADCC.

He expressed full support for Africa's Common Position to be tabled at the June 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. He noted that the common position was necessary to safe-guard regional interests with regard to the

environment. The representative endorsed ECA's initiatives on the issue of the role of women in development and welcomed proposals for the establishment of the Federation for African Women Entrepreneurs as well as an African Bank for Women.

The representative dwelt briefly on his country's human-centred development programmes aimed at the improvement of the people's living conditions, given the inequalities and imbalances inherited from the colonial era. The priority sectors in this programmes were agriculture, education, health, and housing. He observed that Namibia had also inherited a massive budget deficit and external debt owed to the South African government, which obliged it to seek assistance from the international donor community to supplement its own resources. The economy, which had suffered stagnation in the 1980s as a result of international sanctions against South Africa, the depletion of its high grade diamonds, and severe drought between 1982 and 1984, was showing signs of recovery, posting growth rates of 2.7 and 5 per cent, respectively, in 1990/1991 and 1991/1992. The extension of the country's exclusive economic zone to 200 miles, which had boosted the fisheries sector was an additional positive factor. There had also been an increase in the output of gold and diamonds after independence, with modest potential for growth in the medium-term.

On agriculture, the representative informed the conference that Namibia had been able to penetrate the European beef market under favourable terms under the Lomé IV Convention. He expressed doubt regarding further expansion of commercial ranching, in view of the limits imposed by poor land quality and water scarcity. Future expansion would depend on communal farmers, and proper policies. The drought affecting the whole subregion presented an uncertainty that was difficult to deal with.

The representative pledged that his country would strive for closer cooperation with ECA and the OAU, and with other countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa subregion in tackling common problems.

UNIDO

The observer for UNIDO took note of the ECA Acting Executive Secretary's decision to implement the reforms of the secretariat adopted by TEPCOW. He said that he was happy to see that ECA's new orientations were in conformity with the priorities of UNIDO's Medium-term Plan,

1992-1997. He particularly noted that human resources development, technological development, environment, integration of women in industrial development, promotion of the role of the private sector were issues which would offer the opportunity for ECA and UNIDO to enhance their fruitful cooperation. This was exemplified by the joint ECA/OAU/UNIDO Committee. He assured the Conference that UNIDO would continue to be ECA's committed partner at the disposal of African countries.

He welcomed and underscored the strategic importance of the tripartite cooperation between ECA, the OAU and ADB which was given due emphasis in the plan for reforms and the new orientations of ECA activities, and pledged that UNIDO would do its utmost to contribute fully to the work of this new machinery, especially through the implementation of IDDA II for the effective industrialization of the continent.

UNDP

An observer for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) informed the meeting that the Fifth UNDP Inter-country Programme for Africa, based upon the decisions of the third extraordinary meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers held in Windhoek, Namibia in 1991 would be considered by the UNDP Governing Council which was scheduled to take place in Geneva from 5 to 28 May 1992. The activities for UNDP assistance within the Fifth Cycle would be towards supporting regional co-operation and integration, supporting long-term strategic planning, and fostering human development in the African region.

Under regional cooperation and integration activities which would constitute the bulk of UNDP assistance, emphasis would be directed towards assisting and facilitating the rationalization and harmonisation of IGOs and assisting the establishment of the African Economic Community. The key sectors which would benefit from regional cooperation and integration activities would be agriculture, trade and finance, transport and communications, industry, and science and technology. Under long-term strategic planning emphasis would be on developing human and institutional capabilities for strategic planning and management of natural resources and environment. With regard to fostering human development focus would be on education, health, WID, employment, poverty alleviation and private sector development. It was pointed out that many of the activities within the UNDP Fifth Cycle had already started or were to

soon commence as they were approved before the start of the Fifth Cycle within the context of continuous programming.

The meeting was informed that the Regional Programme for Africa was facing a critical financial situation during the Fifth Cycle due mainly to the decision of the UNDP Governing Council to reduce the regional IPF by one third in order to increase allocations in favour of least developed countries. Additionally, the difficult financial situation was also due to the borrowing from the Fifth Cycle exercised in order to respond to numerous requests for funding from the IGOs and the African countries as the continent started to face a severe crisis. The combination of these factors had created a difficult financial situation which had obliged UNDP to take some measures which would have serious consequences on new proposals for the Fifth Cycle Programme and UNDP/ECA cooperation as it related to the Commission's extrabudgetary resources.

The necessity for the effective participation of African delegations from the permanent missions in New York and Geneva in the deliberations of the UNDP Governing Council, where decisions on the distribution and disbursement of UNDP resources were made was underlined in order to mobilize increased resources for Africa's development. To this effect African countries were requested to ensure their full participation at future UNDP Governing Council meetings. Another area of innovation would be for member States to facilitate the linkage wherever possible between national and regional projects. UNDP had already informed all its Resident Representatives to make provisions for such linkages in their IPFs. Accordingly, it was anticipated that, with the agreement of the respective governments, sub-regional and regional activities which were complementary to national development could be funded through national IPFs. Additionally, possibilities of cost sharing and co-financing of sub-regional and regional projects among UNDP, multilateral and bilateral donors could be explored.

FAO

An observer of the Food and Agricultural Organizations (FAO) observed that Africa's agricultural performance had continued to be both poor and environmentally destructive. In this connection, he appealed to all concerned parties to adhere to the recommendations of the International Scheme for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of African Lands (ISCRAL) adopted by African Ministers of Agriculture in 1990, the

implementation of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan and other environmental protection and development schemes. He pointed out that while ECA and FAO cooperated effectively as co-founders and co-managers of the Joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division, FAO wished to expand this cooperation, within the limits of their mandate and resources, to cover other areas of mutual interest to the two organizations.

He noted that agriculture and rural transformation were the basis for African survival and development. Any meaningful structural transformation of African economies could only be achieved through the transformation of the rural sector where 85 per cent of the continent's population lived. In planning for the region's agricultural development, the support of FAO was available to member States and their institutions through its headquarters and the Regional Office for Africa as well as the Joint ECA/FAO Agricultural Division. Regarding subregional and regional projects in the agricultural and rural sector, the FAO observer suggested that ECA could collaborate with FAO in undertaking detailed studies intended to promote the establishment of the African Economic Community.

Common fund for commodities

The observer for the Common Fund for Commodities said that the Fund was attending for the first time the session of the ECA Conference of Ministers. He introduced his organization which emanated from the United Nations, since the Agreement establishing the Common Fund for Commodities was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). ECA was represented at the various stages of the Negotiating Conference.

He then provided the Conference with a status report on the establishment and functioning of this international organization ECA had helped to create. He outlined the potentials for developing countries in general and commodity producers and exporters in particular, and what benefits the countries from the Africa region could derive from the establishment of such a financial institution. The Common Fund was established to support, through its First Account, the financing of buffer-stocking arrangements undertaken by International Commodity Organizations to stabilize the price of their respective commodities at levels that were remunerative to producers and equitable to consumers and to finance, through its Second Account, commodity development measures proposed by Internation-

al Commodity Bodies. However, since the entry into force of the Agreement over two years ago, the First Account had yet to become operational. Fortunately, the Second Account had entered its operational stage and has already embarked on project financing. He concluded by inviting African countries to play a more active role in the international commodity bodies in which they were members and to promote more of their projects for submission to the Common Fund for Financing. He underscored the important and vital role for ECA and ADB and suggested that ECA could play a catalytic role in providing technical assistance in the identification and preparation of project proposals.

WMO

The representative of WMO, underscored the leadership role of ECA in the development of Africa and emphasized that this leadership should be accompanied by the provision of optimum solutions to the basic problems of Africa. He took note of the Acting Executive Secretary's planned orientation of the Commission.

He noted that WMO with the ECA could cooperate in assisting member States in the monitoring of drought. He emphasized that the involvement of Africa in all aspects of conference on environment and development, especially on matters related to the convention of climatic change would be determinant to the future development of Africa. He further stated that ECA had been cooperating closely with WMO and its organs in providing the necessary technical support to ACMAD, to ensure that it is fully operational. ACMAD benefitted from all the networks set up by WMO in Africa and the world at large. He reiterated WMO's commitment to provide ACMAD with all the facilities and contacts in collaboration with the ECA, and assured the Executive Secretary of the ECA of the readiness of WMO to work closely with the ECA in the implementation of its strategies, to meet the challenges of development in matters related to climate and water.

WHO

In his statement, the Observer from the World Health Organization (WHO) deplored the fact that priority was not given to the health sector in developing countries, in general, and African countries in particular. In those countries, the health sector was considered unproductive and a budget "guzzler," thus being relegated to the second place.

However, there was no doubt about the existence of a close and mutual relationship between the health of the population and economic development, and this link should be taken into account in setting priorities and formulating policies for development. He drew the attention of participants to the initiative taken by his Organization for appropriate and efficient health planning aimed at achieving the objective of providing primary health care to all the people of the least privileged countries. Finally, he drew participants' attention to the problem of aids and its effect on Africa's development, but expressed satisfaction that African leaders were taking this epidemic seriously by agreeing to accord a specific agenda item to it during the next Summit of Heads of State and Government of OAU, in Dakar.

ADB

The Observer for the African Development Bank (ADB) drew participants' attention to the context of the economic and social crisis with which Africa had entered the last decade of the twentieth century and the crisis which had resulted in a general deterioration of the living conditions of African peoples. This phenomena had been a direct consequence of an unfavourable internal and external environment. This challenge implied a development based more and more on the pooling of the efforts of African countries through their various integration frameworks. Hence, the three major regional institutions, namely, the African Development Bank, the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Commission for Africa should, among other things, support the development efforts of countries of the continent.

Moreover, in an effort to prove this complementarity, ADB had, in cooperation with ECA, participated in various activities aimed at improving African economies. In that context, the three Organizations had had consultations at the highest level and set up a joint secretariat as a framework for continuous consultations. Such meetings had, among other things, aimed at avoiding duplication of efforts and divergence of points of view on issues of Africa's development. The Secretary-General of the Global Coalition for Africa had also participated as observer in one of the two meetings of the heads of the three institutions.

The Bank had also directly assisted African countries facing serious development problems by providing them concessional resources or even grants. Such resources had been directed at

various sectors, including investment, strengthening of the institutional capacities of countries and supporting their political and institutional reforms. It should be emphasized that the Bank had also developed its support to the private sector, debt management, regional economic integration, strengthening the role of women in development as well as environmental policies.

Contacts had also been established between the Bank and South Africa. The Chairman of the Bank and the leaders of ANC had held discussions on how independent South Africa could become a member of the Bank and on how the latter could assist this country when a majority government was eventually established.

UNEP

The observer for the United Nations Environment Programme recalled that her institution had been cooperating with ECA for a long time. She explained that recently, the two institutions had collaborated in the preparation of the "African Common Position" to be adopted at the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). She further explained that UNEP, the ECA and OAU were members of the joint secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment established in 1983 to look into issues relating to environmental protection, food self-sufficiency and energy in African countries.

She informed the Conference about some activities undertaken by UNEP, including the sponsoring of some of the African participants to UNCED preparatory committee and the holding of the fourth session of the UNCED preparatory Committee. The session, she said, had recommended that UNEP should be strengthened at the subregional and regional levels, but that objective risked being impeded by lack of resources. She appealed to African Governments and peoples to endeavour to find a solution to that problem as soon as possible in order to safeguard their environment. He assured the countries that UNEP was at their disposal and would work together with them in their struggle to develop.

ILO

The observer from ILO congratulated the secretariat for the excellent Economic Report on Africa, especially the report on the social situation which highlighted issues vital to the future development of Africa. The issues elaborated in the report painted a very disturbing picture in the fields of social development. He observed that

unemployment situation was very distressing as more and more people would become unemployed by the year 2000. The implication was that African planners must attach the highest priority to conscious planning for productive employment generation.

He referred the meeting to the Declaration on the Employment Crisis in Africa, which recommended possible solutions. These included increased emphasis on sectors and projects which were employment intensive, allocation of higher proportion of domestic resources to employment promotion efforts and the strengthening of employment promotion institutions. In this regard, ILO intended to intensify further its cooperation with Africa in the fields falling within its mandate, specially on the advancement of democracy, fight against poverty especially through employment promotion, and improvement in the working and living conditions. He went on to emphasize the need for an enabling environment conducive for popular participation in designing and implementing development policies.

The observer from ILO congratulated the Executive Secretary and his secretariat on the inspiring imaginative and pragmatic approach proposed in the New Direction formulating ECA's new orientation. This he said, ILO fully supported, especially the emphasis placed on integrated socio-economic planning, human centered development and the promotion of women in development which were areas of common interest to ILO. He stated that ILO intended to continue its fruitful collaboration with ECA, OAU, the ADB and African member States.

CIRDAFRICA

The observer for the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Africa (CIRDAFRICA) noted that his organisation was established to promote cooperation between countries and to provide technical assistance in the area of rural development as a cornerstone for meaningful economic development. Its current memberships comprised seventeen countries. It was undertaking programmes in the field of training and research on questions closely related to the needs of African countries in the field of rural development.

He observed, however, that like many other African institutions, CIRDAFRICA was faced with financial difficulties, arising from its member countries' non-fulfilment of their obligations and commitments. As a consequence of this, the

implementation rate for the Centre's programmes was falling to an unsatisfactory level. Assistance had been solicited from a number of donor agencies, but their response had so far been unpromising, due to their reluctance to support institutions which do not receive a sufficient level of support from member countries.

He called upon African countries and ECA to support the continued existence of CIRDAFRICA so that it continue to contribute its share to Africa's development through its main areas of focus.

UNESCO

The representative of UNESCO thanked ECA for being invited UNESCO to TEPCOW and to the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers. He outlined the mandate of UNESCO, which included the promotion of education, the sciences, culture and communication, and stressed that the activities of UNESCO were geared towards addressing areas of human concern in the agenda of member States.

He stressed that UNESCO's efforts in the outlined areas could not be accomplished without paying close attention to the wider socio-economic contexts in which education, science, culture and communication thrived. Since ECA was the competent institution with rich experience and viable programmes in these wider socio-economic issues, UNESCO would continue to collaborate with ECA.

Commenting on the cooperation between UNESCO and ECA, he stated that UNESCO had a long history of collaboration with ECA, and UNESCO's regional office in Dakar had a joint consultative committee with ECA. He further observed that ECA had a large number of common concerns including human resources development, science and technology, the environment, population issues, women, communications, and statistics. He welcomed ECA's plan to harmonize its activities with other agencies, and looked forward to having UNESCO's activities in Africa harmonized with those of the ECA. He outlined a number of areas of concern in the UNESCO's biennial action plan to which the experience of ECA would be tapped.

Regarding the question of "Youth in development", the representative stated that UNESCO had some experience in problems related to youth and would be glad to share these with ECA. He took note of the resolution recommending regular conferences of Ministers of science and technology for development, and told the Conference that UNESCO with the collaboration of OAU and ECA had already organized two conferences, namely CASTAFRICA I and II, similar to the ones being proposed. He finally thanked the Acting Executive Secretary of the ECA, Mr. Issa Diallo for having participated personally in the last general Conference of UNESCO, and for delivering an excellent message to the plenary session.

UNHCR

The observer for UNHCR defined a refugee as a person who had left his country due to persecution for political, religious, social affiliation, tribal or ethnic reasons. Refugees estimated to number about six million in Africa, came from all socio-professional classes of the society and the majority of them were found in the Sudan, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zaire, Djibouti, and Namibia.

He stressed that a country which drove its citizens beyond the national borders committed an aggression against itself as it deprived itself of a large proportion of the manpower indispensable for economic development. Moreover, such countries provoked a lot of problems in the receiving countries whose infrastructure such as health centres, schools, markets, roads, etc. were unable to cater for the needs of the additional population.

He also stressed that UNHCR provided refugees with the basic necessities of life. The cost to the Organization in 1991 was estimated at \$US 2.5 million. He indicated that the twenty-second ordinary session of the OAU Committee for the Coordination of Assistance to Refugees in Africa had afforded the opportunity to reaffirm the need for all parties (governments, organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, etc.) to close ranks and mobilize all available resources to institute viable projects for refugees in the receiving countries and on return to their countries of origin.