

**MISSION REPORT ON THE 34th MEETING OF THE GOVERNING
COUNCIL OF THE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR TRAINING
IN AEROSPACE SURVEYS (RECTAS)**

Premier Hotel, Ibadan, Nigeria
23-27 May 2000

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**MISSION REPORT ON THE 34th MEETING OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF
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Introduction

1. The 34th meeting of the Governing Council (GC) of the Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys (RECTAS) was held on 25th, 26th and 27th May 2000 at the Premier Hotel in Ibadan, Nigeria. It was preceded the 11th meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on 24th May 2000. The meetings of the Appointments and Promotions Committees were held on 22nd and 23rd May for Professional Staff and on 19th May for General Service Staff.
2. RECTAS is an intergovernmental organization established in 1972 under the auspices of ECA, to provide training in aerial surveying and geophysics through the organization of courses in photogrammetry, photo-interpretation and cartography, as well as to provide consultancy services in resource mapping and project implementation. The normal evolution of the Centre has expanded the above original areas to remote sensing and geographic information systems. The current member States are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, and Senegal. The Centre has its headquarters in Ile-Ife, Nigeria and is located within the premises of Obafemi Awolowo University.
3. RECTAS was classified in early 2000 among the first category of institutions with which it would develop close partnership cooperation. . In this regard, ECA will only serve, in addition to its membership to the Technical Advisory Committee, as an *ex-officio* member of the Governing Council.
4. The 34th meeting of Council had been overdue. Although the Governing Council holds its ordinary meetings yearly, the last meeting of Council was held in October 1997. Efforts to convene the meeting in 1998 and 1999 were in vain mainly because of financial limitations.
5. All member States attended. Nigeria, the host country, is represented by two members at the Council. ECA was represented by Ms. Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive-Secretary of ECA, who represented the Executive-Secretary and Chairman of the Council, and by Mr. O. Nino-Fluck, Senior Cartographic Officer, DISD, as special advisor to the Governing Council and member of TAC. Chief Cooker, Life Patron, Nigerian Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, member of the Chairman's Advisory Committee on RECTAS, participated as observer. Representatives of the European Union, France and the Netherlands also attended.

Opening

6. The opening ceremony included the commissioning of three new buildings and other facilities. The opening ceremony started at 10:45 on Thursday 25 May 2000 with a welcome address by the Director, followed by speeches by the Surveyor-General of the Federation and first representative of Nigeria to RECTAS, by the Deputy-Executive Secretary of ECA and Chairperson of the 34th meeting of the Governing Council, and by brief statements by the representatives of the development Partners, namely the European Union, the Dutch Government and the French Government. The Permanent Secretary of Works and Housing of Nigeria opened the meeting on behalf of the Minister.

7. In her speech, the Deputy-Executive Secretary of ECA stressed the huge potential that the Centre has to contribute to the socio-economic development of the region and informed the audience that, following the harmonization exercise of ECA's sponsored institutions, the secretariat has recently classified it among the "first class institutions" or class A. She indicated that capacity building is a permanent process and that institution must maintain its status as a Centre of Excellence and persevere in continuously improving the services it provides in order to meet more effectively the current and future needs of the region. She said that for this, the institution requires the full support of its member States reflected in the regular payment of contributions and the use they make of its services. She recognized the exceptional support given by the host country and its development partners. The Deputy Executive Secretary then referred to the major issues that the Council would be considering, mentioning the selection and appointment of a new Director and Deputy Director, as well as the modifications of the Constitution in order to reflect the new statutory relationship with the ECA. She finally expressed tribute to the outgoing Director for the manner he conducted the Centre during his tenure.

8. Subsequently the representative of the Minister of Works and Housing commissioned three new buildings recently completed with a grant provided by Nigeria to a capital investment fund aimed at the physical development of the Centre: the Post-graduate Student's Hostel, Wing B of the Students Hostel and the new Academic/Administrative Wing.

9. Work of the Council

10. The 33rd meeting of the Governing Council started its work in the afternoon of 25th May. The representative of the Executive Secretary of ECA, Ms. Lalla Ben Barka, chaired the sessions of this day. However, due to a pressing official assignment in Abuja the following day, 26th May 2000, she asked the first representative of Nigeria to RECTAS to take over the Chair and preside over the rest of the sessions on behalf of ECA.

11. All member States representatives delivered a country statement on contributions. The representative of Benin commended the Director for his dynamism in ensuring that member

countries pay their arrears and contributions, and declared that his country had paid a substantial amount of her arrears and that as at the time of the 34th meeting of the Council, Benin was not owing any amount to RECTAS. The representatives of Cameroon said that his country's contributions were a priority and that since 1990 she had regularly been paying \$66,800 on annual basis. He added that the Director's visit to Yaoundé was instrumental in his country payment of CFA 100 million and that Cameroon would pay her arrears. He assured that in the future CFA 100 million would be paid annually. Niger admitted that since joining the Centre in 1984 she had not made any payment, however, current measures being taken gave cause for optimism. The representative of Niger said that on his return to Niger he would ensure that his Minister understood the issues involved. He pleaded another mission to be undertaken by the director to Niger. Burkina Faso noted that they have been making efforts to pay arrears piecemeal since 1997, and that there would be an increase in Burkina's contribution in the year 2000. Mali referred to the CFA 3 million she has paid but was never received by RECTAS. In 1996-99, Mali had more problems with regard to the principles governing the relationship with international institutions; however, in the current year she planned to pay CFA 18 million. The representative of Senegal said he could not explain his country's failure in the past to settle arrears. He added that he would like to limit himself to the period 1997-2000 and announced that Senegal had decided to make every effort to settle her arrears. Towards this end, Senegal paid CFA 100 million last year and would do the same this year. Ghana explained that following a change of Government here was a review of the country's relationships with regional/international organizations. The budget of the Survey Department vis-à-vis RECTAs was always being reduced. The Economic Adviser to the President wrote to the presidency to state that Ghana's not contribution was very embarrassing. The representative of Ghana assured that action was in progress to pay about US\$ 60,000 as part of the arrears. Nigeria reported that she had paid and continued to pay her contributions, as and when due, in addition to payment for capital development projects.

12. The Council considered the new statutory relations between the Centre and the Economic Commission for Africa, noting that: (i) the Centre has been classified among the first category of institutions or Class A, with which ECA would maintain close co-operation and statutory links, and (ii) that ECA would only serve, in addition to be a member of the TAC, as an ex-officio member of the Governing Council. In discussing the above issue, the members expressed their appreciation and gratitude to ECA for guiding RECTAS to its current level of development. They requested ECA, through its legal department, to propose the necessary amendments for consideration and adoption at the next meeting of the Council.

13. The Council then received the report of the Appointments and Promotions Committee and adopted its recommendations for promotion of staff and recruitment of new staff.

14. The report of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was received and debated at length. It addressed the following matters: (a) minutes of the 10th meeting and matters arising, (b) report of the Economic Commission for Africa, which highlighted, among other matters, the continued and

technical support provided to the Centre, among which the short-listing of the candidates for the posts of Director and Deputy Director; the successful realization of the first meeting of the Committee on Development information (CODI) whose Sub-Committee on Geoinformation had subsumed the functions of the UN Regional Cartographic Conferences for Africa; and various studies carried out by the Commission concerning mapping, remote sensing and geographic information systems activities in Africa, (c) Report of the Director General, which covered, *inter alia*, academic and administrative issues, consultancy activities and revenue generation, technical cooperation, financial matters, planning activities, achievements and constraints, proposed budget-programme for 2000-2001.

15. In discussing the report, the Council noted:

(a) The satisfactory number of members of staff (nine) from the academic, technical and administrative cadres who had been trained overseas and locally in various fields.

(b) The high number of meetings held by the Advisory Committee on RECTAS.

(c) The automatic 30% increase in general service staff salaries over and above the salaries of workers of the host country, in line with directives of the Council on this matter. This increase should be reviewed in order to avert a financial crisis.

(d) Highly commended the Government of Nigeria for its tremendous financial support to RECTAS through regular payments both for recurrent expenditure and capital development. It also noted and commended the five member States reported to have made contributions since the last meeting of the Council, namely: Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Senegal. Nigeria and Benin were singled out for clearing all their arrears.

(e) That a total number of 124 trainees graduated during the reporting period and that the total number of enrolment stood at 225.

(f) The launching of the 12 month course in Geoinformation Production and Management.

(g) That International Workshop scheduled to follow the meeting of the Council from 29th to 31st May 2000, where technical cooperation would be discussed involving all three on-going projects.

16. The Council received the External Auditors report covering the years 1994 to 1997 noting that the Team of auditors was composed of members of three member countries, Benin (1), Burkina (1) and Nigeria (2). The Council adopted the Auditors' report and made decisions, which are attached to this report.

17. The proposed Biennial Budget for the years 2000 and 2001, was discussed and unanimously adopted with the limitations recommended by TAC, where it had been previously submitted.

18. The Council established an Interview Panel composed by all members of Council to select and recommend the candidates for the post of Director and Deputy Director from the shortlist of candidates prepared by ECA. The Interview Panel conducted its work on 26 May from 15:00 to 22:15 and presented its report to the Council at the first session of 27 May. The Council accepted the recommendation of the Panel to appoint Dr. Olajide Kufoniya of Nigeria as Director. However, concerning the recommendation for the post of Deputy-Director, the Council observed substantive variances in the assessments of the candidates and decided to set up a sub-panel to review the assessments and report back to Council. After due consideration of the report of the sub-panel, it approved the appointment of Mr. Massaer Nbaye of Senegal as Deputy Director.

19. No resolutions were adopted. A set of the final decisions of the Council on the above issues, namely: academic, consultancy and technical cooperation, administrative issues, appointment and promotion, financial matters and legislative issues, are attached to this report.

Closing

20. The meeting of the Governing Council was closed in evening of 27 May 2000, with final remarks delivered by the Surveyor General of Nigeria who acted as interim Chairperson of the Council by designation of Ms Lalla Ben Barka.

Remarks

21. In spite of some shortcomings, we can conclude that the meeting of Council was successful and fruitful. The discussions on the various matters were both vivid and deep. Interventions by members indicate that they found the services of the Centre useful and needed, that they are committed to the Centre and are highly concerned by its future. The general attitude perceived is of satisfaction and acceptance of the results of the classification of the Centre among the first category of Institutions and of the new statutory relationship with the ECA.

22. The Centre proves to be a buoyant institution that is effectively providing to the region needed services in the field of geoinformation. It has been improving notably its physical facilities as well as structuring its curriculum to adopt to changes of the technology and the management of spatial data for decision making. In doing so, it continues to receive the support of its development partners.

23. ECA has the task to propose the necessary amendments of the Centre's Constitution that reflects the new statutory relationships between the two institutions for consideration and adoption at the next meeting of Council. These amendments should be circulated ahead of time to the

members States and to the management.