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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**REPORT OF THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
(Arusha, 10-12 October 1977)**

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Opening and duration of the session

1. The seventeenth meeting of the Executive Committee, meeting in plenary session in accordance with a decision taken by the Conference of Ministers in Kinshasa, was opened by Mr. Lukoji Mulumba, Zairean State Commissioner for Planning, Chairman of the Conference of Ministers at its fourth meeting.
2. The meeting was held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, from 10 to 12 October 1977 under the chairmanship of Mr. Lukoji Mulumba.

Attendance

3. The meeting was attended by the following members of the Committee: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, the United Republic of Cameroon, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire and Zambia.
4. A representative was present from the United Nations Office of Science and Technology.
5. The following United Nations bodies were represented: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Observers were also present from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).
6. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: the Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations (AATPO) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Election of officers

7. In accordance with Commission resolution 188 (IX), which lays down that the Chairman of the Conference of Ministers should be Chairman of the Executive Committee, the post of Chairman fell to Mr. Lukoji Mulumba, Zairean State Commissioner for Planning. The Committee elected Mr. E.I.M. Mtei, Tanzanian Minister of Finance and Planning, as First Vice-Chairman; Mr. Youssouf Sylla, Directeur de Cabinet in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Senegal, as Second Vice-Chairman; and Mr. A. Alaoui Kacimi, Director in the Ministry of Industry of Morocco, as Rapporteur.

B. AGENDA

8. On 10 October 1977 the Committee adopted the following agenda:
 1. Opening of the meeting
 2. Election of officers
 3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

4. Fourth meeting of the Conference of Ministers: Progress report on the implementation of the work programme and resolutions (E/CN.14/ECO/124 and Add.1; E/CN.14/ECO/INF/42 and Add.1-5)
5. Report of the Pledging Conference held in Lagos from 26 to 29 April 1977 (E/CN.14/686/Rev.1; E/CN.14/ECO/117)
6. Co-operation within the United Nations system:
 - (a) Co-operation between ECA and FAO (E/CN.14/ECO/119)
 - (b) Co-operation between ECA and IMCO (E/CN.14/ECO/123)
 - (c) Co-operation between ECA and UNEP (E/CN.14/ECO/125)
 - (d) Co-operation between ECA and UNESCO (E/CN.14/ECO/129)
7. Afro-Arab co-operation (E/CN.14/ECO/120)
8. African Regional Centre for the Transfer, Adaptation and Development of Technology - progress report (E/CN.14/ECO/127)
 - (a) Report of the interagency mission (E/CN.14/ECO/127/Add.1)
 - (b) Report of the intergovernmental meeting of experts (E/CN.14/ECO/127/Add.2)
9. Report on the Regional Conference on the Implementation of Plans of Action for the Integration of Women in Development (E/CN.14/ECO/128)
10. Report on the sixty-third session of the Economic and Social Council (E/CN.14/ECO/126)
11. Enlargement of the Executive Committee and election of members for the period 1977-1979 (E/CN.14/ECO/121)
12. Other matters
13. Date and place of the next meeting
14. Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting.

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening addresses

9. The Chairman of the Committee, after expressing appreciation for the hospitality offered by the host country, urged the participants to discuss the Committee's agenda thoroughly and with dispatch.
10. He pointed out that one of the advantages in rotating the venues of meetings of the Committee was that it provided an opportunity for learning at first hand of the experience of different host countries in their socio-economic development efforts. No doubt the participants would familiarize themselves with the Tanzanian experience with great interest.
11. In his opening address Mr. E.M. Sokoine, Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania, said his Government attached great importance to the meeting because of the relevance of its subject matter to the current and long-term objectives of Africa and to its socio-economic development strategies. His Government hoped that the Committee would make concrete proposals for bringing about a higher degree of self-reliance at the national, subregional and regional levels. Self-reliance could be achieved if the human and material resources of the continent were fully mobilized.

12. The people of developing Africa had learned that sheer political independence was meaningless unless it was accompanied by social, economic and cultural emancipation, which could not be achieved without establishing bases for economic co-operation among African countries. ECA was in a unique position to play a leading role in that regard.
13. In respect of international trade ECA was assisting African countries to evolve a common stand in the negotiations to establish a common fund to finance commodity stocks. It was his hope that at the resumed negotiations to be held in Geneva in November 1977, African countries would be able to press for action at the earliest opportunity.
14. It was encouraging to see some of the activities on the ECA work programme taking shape and to note ECA's efforts to co-operate with other international organizations in the performance of its functions. He congratulated the Commission for making African Governments aware of the need for subregional and regional co-operation in the social and economic fields and for embarking on a programme which made that co-operation real and meaningful.
15. In his opening statement, the ECA Executive Secretary sketched the issues outstanding from the last meeting of the Conference of Ministers, which were covered in the documents submitted to the Committee. Firstly, the Committee would discuss the establishment of an African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development. Secondly, co-operation with various United Nations agencies would be reviewed. Thirdly, in the field of technical co-operation among developing countries, ECA and ECIA were preparing a programme of technical co-operation between the two regions of Africa and Latin America. Indeed, a group of African experts had visited Latin America in the spring of 1977 as part of a study tour on problems of regional co-operation and economic integration. In addition, within Africa the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying and Mapping, the Remote Sensing Centre and the East African Mineral Resources Development Centre were all making encouraging progress.
16. Turning to the programme for the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs), he reported that the Lusaka MULPOC had recently held its first meeting and that a study was being conducted in West Africa of possibilities of co-operation between MULPOCs and existing multinational organizations. In fact, ECA was already engaged in wide-ranging co-operation with both the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Economic Community of West African States.
17. The secretariat attached great importance to Afro-Arab co-operation. The four major projects envisaged under that heading covered trans-African highways, the Pan-African Telecommunications Network, remote sensing and the regional data bank.
18. At its last meeting, in Kinshasa, the ECA Conference of Ministers had called for a conference of plenipotentiaries to pledge contributions to supplement the ECA budget. The Conference had been held in Lagos in April 1977, and as a result 18 African countries had pledged \$US 5,411,669. Of that total, \$US 585,000 had actually been received by the secretariat, and he paid tribute to the member States which had taken a historic step in giving practical expression to the principle of self-reliance. With understanding and support from UNDP, the secretariat had already been able to initiate action on the

establishment of an African Centre for the Transfer, Adaptation and Development of Technology, a report on which was before the Committee. He hoped that further pledges would be made at the present meeting and that every effort would be made by member States to effect payment immediately.

19. A final task facing the Committee was that of electing its members for the period 1977-1979. The secretariat had submitted a number of suggestions concerning the distribution of seats (E/CN.14/ECO/121), and he was sure the Committee would be able to adopt one of the formulas without difficulty.

Progress report on the implementation of the work programme and resolutions (agenda item 4)

20. The Executive Secretary introduced the progress report on the implementation of the work programme and resolutions (E/CN.14/ECO/124 and Add.1).

21. The report was approved as a whole; observations were made on the following sections.

Agriculture

22. The representative of Ethiopia said that his country, which had now undertaken land reform, would like to be considered as one of the countries to be selected in connexion with the paper referred to in paragraph 5 of the document under consideration, and was willing to co-operate in the preparation of that paper for the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

Promotion of economic co-operation and integration

23. The Committee expressed surprise at the fact that many studies carried out by the Commission, particularly the study on the Lake Chad Basin, were unknown in the Ministries concerned.

24. The Executive Secretary replied that the studies carried out by the Commission at the request of subregional organizations were communicated to the secretariats of those organizations. That had been the case, for example, for the studies carried out for the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Club des Amis du Sahel, and it was therefore for the secretariats of those bodies to distribute them to their member States concerned. However, in the case of documents of interest to members of ECA, the ECA secretariat automatically circulated them.

Education and training

25. One representative said that, if substantial results were to be obtained quickly in the field of business education and management, ECA should envisage granting fellowships which could be used at universities both within and, if necessary, outside the region. He also expressed the hope that member States would contribute to the financing of a fellowship fund.

26. The Executive Secretary endorsed that proposal. In order to achieve such results, it was necessary not only to set up new institutions, but also to develop the training capacity of existing ones. On the subject of the resources required, he added that

consultations were under way with a large number of countries for the establishment of a fellowship fund. Each year the secretariat informed member States of fellowships offered by donor countries. However, it was the donors which decided on the areas in which the training would be provided.

27. The secretariat would ensure that the fellowships were used in African institutes and that the choice of the area of training was no longer decided upon by the donors.

Human settlements

28. In reply to a question as to whether a time-table had been drawn up for the human settlements programme and whether ECA had taken account of the results of the first phase for the launching of the second, the Executive Secretary informed the Committee that the results of the seminar which had been organized in Maseru from 30 May to 4 June 1977 would be taken into consideration in the preparations for the other subregional seminars.

29. He also emphasized the need to reduce the cost of building materials. A mission had studied ways and means of achieving such a cost reduction and its report might be submitted for consideration by the forthcoming Conference of Ministers of Industry. Concerning the missions which were to visit various countries within the framework of the regional industrial development programmes relating to building materials, the representative of Zambia assured the Executive Secretary that his Government was willing to receive such a mission.

Industrial development

30. The Committee wondered whether there was not a risk of duplication between the African Association of Industrial and Technological Research Organizations and the African Regional Centre for Technology, and between that Centre and the Centre for Industrial Design. The Executive Secretary gave an assurance concerning the different roles of the Association and the Centres, and pointed out that, when set up, the Centres would be members of the Association.

International trade

31. One representative pointed out that the developed countries set prices both for the raw materials which the developing countries exported and for the goods which the developed countries exported to the developing countries, thus benefiting in two ways. The secretariat should endeavour to set up negotiating machinery whereby the situation could be rectified.

32. The Executive Secretary said that the Commission had only the previous week organized a meeting to discuss the establishment of a common fund under the Integrated Programme for Commodities, and he was sure that the secretariat was prepared to assist member States in preparations for a global meeting on any subject of vital importance to African countries.

33. In response to a question from another representative, he said that the ECA secretariat was in continuous contact with the secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries on matters of mutual interest, and had in fact assisted in the

organization of the ACP secretariat. Concerning trade consultations, a number of countries had discussed trade opportunities at the time of the fourth meeting of the Conference of Ministers in Kinshasa, and the secretariat was planning a report on the effectiveness of such consultations in expanding intra-African trade which would be submitted to the Executive Committee in due course.

Intra-African trade

34. Several representatives felt that such studies as those mentioned in paragraph 68 of the background document should not merely be sent to Ministries of Foreign Affairs, but should be catalogued and distributed to all interested parties. The secretariat was well placed to provide countries with information on what products were available where within the region, and on where individual countries obtained their supplies of certain products which might, if sufficient information was available, be traded within Africa. Intra-African trade was undoubtedly even more important than international trade if African countries were to achieve the objective of collective self-reliance. The secretariat should take the initiative in that field.

35. The Executive Secretary agreed on the importance of intra-African trade, but reminded the Committee that it was hindered by mental as well as physical and legal obstacles. The basic and most important steps had to be taken by Governments.

36. The secretariat had assisted in the establishment of payments arrangements in West Africa, and was planning similar action in the other subregions, as a vital prerequisite to trade. Within its Africa Trade Centre, it had a UNDP-financed project on multilateral trade negotiations, under which ECA staff members had already visited a number of countries. It was also planned to set up a commodity exchange market and an African metal exchange so as to avoid the need for African countries to pass through third parties in Europe or North America. A study was also proposed on national procurement and supply policies, and public bodies in African countries would be encouraged to look for their requirements within Africa rather than from their traditional suppliers. Lastly, a study was to be made on existing trade legislation, which was often inherited from the colonial past, and seminars and symposia were to be organized to examine what changes were necessary.

37. Two participants expressed the view that ECA was not doing enough about the promotion of African trade. Attention was drawn to the existence of the Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations (AATPO), which ECA had been instrumental in establishing. A conference document describing the background and present position of the Association was distributed to the participants later in the meeting.

38. In connexion with the promotion of African trade, attention was also drawn to two symposia which OAU had sponsored in that field and in which ECA had participated. One had been held in Nairobi in 1972, and the other in Algiers in 1976.

Natural resources

39. The Committee was of the view that a single Hydrogeology Expert was insufficient to cope with the continent's vast needs in the area of water resources, and asked whether the secretariat had any plans to recruit other experts. The Executive Secretary replied that the secretariat urgently needed assistance from member States in filling such vacancies for experts.

40. A request was made for wider distribution of the secretariat report on solar energy use in the Sahel, and also for assistance in the field of solar and wind energy projects from the Senior Regional Adviser on Energy.

Public administration and management

41. It was suggested that the poor response to the African Purchasing and Supplies Organization might be due to suspicion on the part of member States concerning its purposes. It was feared that the intention was to bring African countries into a single purchasing block, which might have the same effect as their having been tied to their former colonizers. The secretariat would need to conduct a publicity effort to secure greater support for and participation in APSO.

42. The Executive Secretary drew attention to Commission resolution 307 (XIII), which clearly set out the objectives of APSO as a body devoted to co-operation and harmonization, which would in no way dictate to States.

International monetary and financial affairs

43. It was suggested that documents such as the report on the possibility of establishing a subregional payments system in Central Africa, and the study on "International financial and monetary problems and related matters: implications for African countries and consideration of recent developments in respect of these problems", should be submitted to the Executive Committee as well as to the rather limited audience of the Association of African Central Banks.

44. The Committee felt that the secretariat should make greater efforts to assist the African Executive Directors of IMF. The position of the secretariat was sought concerning the system of floating exchange rates. The Executive Secretary replied that the secretariat favoured stable exchange rates, but that it was more important to seek greater participation by Africa in the relevant international decision-taking bodies, where its voting power so far reflected a peripheral position in world trade.

Social development

45. The Committee sought an assurance that assistance from voluntary agencies, mentioned in paragraph 127 of the background document, did not mean that African consultants would not be used for studies wherever possible. Another representative stressed that social and economic development were two sides of the same coin, and should not be falsely opposed.

46. The Executive Secretary replied that the secretariat would indeed use African experts, and not outsiders who might impose inappropriate ideas. Concerning the second point, he pointed out that the secretariat placed great importance on programmes in such areas as integrated rural development, which incorporated social parameters.

47. In response to a question concerning co-operation in the humanitarian field, the Executive Secretary and the representative of OAU outlined the co-operation between ECA and OAU within the OAU co-ordinating committee on refugees, on which UNHCR was also represented. While OAU played the major role through its Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees, ECA facilities in training were also used.

48. The representative of the Sudan indicated that his Government had great interest and vast experience in rural development. It was willing to put that experience at the disposal of the secretariat.

Statistics

49. The Committee urged all member States to supply statistical data to the secretariat to enable it to carry out its tasks. However, it was also important for the secretariat to release all the data it collected. Thirdly and most crucially, thought should be given to the appropriateness of statistical indicators originated in the West, and to whether Africa could not evolve its own indicators which would be much more useful in its development efforts.

50. The Executive Secretary expressed full agreement, and endorsed the appeal for member States to supply fuller data in good time. Concerning innovations in statistical indicators, he would urge the Conference of African Statisticians at its forthcoming session, with the authority of the Executive Committee, to give careful thought to the matter. The most important hurdle to be overcome was understaffing and reluctance to change in national statistical services, and he looked forward to a new initiative by the Conference.

Transport, communications and tourism

51. The view was expressed that the secretariat should take the initiative in the field of transport, and not wait for Governments to bring matters to its attention. It was also felt that some overlapping might well result if the responsibilities of ECA vis-à-vis those of Governments were not clearly spelt out.

52. The Executive Secretary pointed out that much depended on action at the national level, and that the major constraint was a shortage of funds. In that regard he was most encouraged by the progress of the proposal for the proclamation of a Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, which was now before the General Assembly. The poor state of transport and communications in Africa had now become a global concern, and he hoped that the Decade would provide an opportunity for a break-through in an area which was closely connected with the development of intra-African trade.

53. The representative of Zaire announced in connexion with paragraph 197 of the background paper that an agreement had now been signed for an engineering study of a section to be financed by the Government of Belgium, and that talks had been initiated for the other section with the Japanese Government.

Report of the Pledging Conference held in Lagos from 26 to 29 April 1977 (agenda item 5)

54. The item was introduced by the representative of Nigeria, who welcomed the success of the Pledging Conference in securing acceptance of ECA as an authentically African organ which merited support. The process begun at the Conference was continuing, as the secretariat report (E/CN.14/ECO/117) showed: more pledges had been received and one contribution had been increased substantially. Unfortunately, very little actual money had so far been received by the secretariat, and he urged all States to effect payment of the pledges.

55. The Executive Secretary announced that, since the preparation of the report, Zaire had effected payment of \$US 157,000, bring the total actually received to \$US 742,000.
56. The representative of Zambia said that he wished to point out that the figure of \$US 153,000 indicated in annex II of the report of the Conference (E/CN.14/686/Rev.1) referred not to cash, but to facilities currently being used by the Lusaka MULPOC. As soon as Zambia's financial situation improved, his Government intended to honour its pledge by contributing a sum of money to the ECA budget.
57. The representative of Algeria said that his delegation's silence at the Pledging Conference had been caused by a government reshuffle, which had made it impossible to make a commitment at that time. However, he was now in a position to announce a contribution of \$US 500,000. Arrangements for the use of the funds would be mutually agreed between ECA and the Algerian Government. He also announced his Government's intention of contributing \$US 500,000 starting in 1979/80, provided that the resources were managed effectively.
58. That contribution was intended to demonstrate Algeria's adherence to the view that self-reliance was not a mere slogan, and further that the new international economic order, like charity, should begin at home. The Algerian delegation considered it of the highest importance that all African countries should contribute to the resources of the Commission and that even the least well-off countries should participate, even if only a token amount, thus showing the value they attached to the work programme of ECA.
59. The representative of the Sudan assured the Committee that his Government would remit the \$US 50,000 it had pledged at Lagos to ECA as soon as possible. He also indicated that his country was ready to provide ECA with assistance of a non-monetary nature in all the fields of operation of ECA and to make scholarships, especially in science and technology, available to recipients from other African countries.
60. The representative of Senegal commended ECA on its efforts to further the principle of self-reliance in Africa. The \$US 5,000 his Government had pledged at Lagos was just a token contribution. It had since pledged \$US 150,000 and had just paid its first instalment of \$US 50,000.
61. The representative of the United Republic of Cameroon announced that his Government had decided to pay \$US 40,000 as its contribution. The Executive Secretary was invited to contact the Cameroonian Government as to the way in which that sum would be spent.
62. The representative of Kenya said his Government fully supported the work programme of ECA, and announced that Kenya was pledging the equivalent of KSh 480,000 to be paid in instalments over the next three years. In making that pledge, it had no particular project in mind. He specified that the contribution he had just announced did not close the door on future pledges for specific projects.
63. The representative of the United Republic of Tanzania explained that although the sum his Government had pledged in Lagos was untied, it had three priorities in mind: water resources, mineral resources and human settlements. His Government had instructed its bankers to remit \$US 250,000 to ECA as the first instalment of its pledge.
64. The representative of Somalia said his Government did not want to make a pledge until it was certain it would be in a position to honour it. The matter was now under consideration in Somalia, and the pledge would be communicated to ECA shortly.

65. The representative of Gabon said his Government was greatly interested in the work being done by ECA. However, the budget session of Parliament, which was being held at that moment, would undoubtedly deal with Gabon's contributions to various international organizations, among which ECA had an important place. The announcement would be made directly to the Executive Secretary.

66. The representative of Rwanda commended the secretariat on furthering the principle of self-reliance in Africa. The amount his Government had pledged at Lagos was all it could now afford although that did not mean it might not pledge more in future.

67. The representative of OAU drew attention to the statement in the penultimate paragraph on page 2 of document E/CN.14/ECO/117 to the effect that the Executive Secretary, in compliance with Commission resolution 288 (XIII), had sought contributions from 24 non-African countries for the implementation of the Commission's work programmes. He asked whether the countries contacted had sent replies, whether they had attached conditions to their contributions and how ECA had reacted to any such conditions.

68. The Executive Secretary warmly thanked those delegations which had just made pledges and those which had indicated that their pledges were soon to come. He was glad to see that there was a will to achieve economic integration in Africa. Since all the pledges were made on a purely voluntary basis, Governments wishing to indicate priorities were free to do so, and ECA would enter into consultation with those Governments, on the understanding that the priorities indicated must be in the approved programme of work.

69. In reply to the representative of OAU, he pointed out that ECA had always received support from non-African donor countries. During the past two years, it had tried to negotiate such contributions. In the past donors had identified the projects they wished to support, but the secretariat now felt the time had come for them to stop specifying their priorities. Moreover, to enable ECA to programme the implementation of its projects in advance, it was hoped that non-African contributions would move from ad hoc support to the support of long-term projects. For instance USAID had offered support for a period of three years, payable in instalments of \$US 500,000 a year. Similar agreements were being negotiated with other donors. At the eighteenth meeting he hoped he would be able to present a full picture of both African and non-African contributions.

70. The representative of Sierra Leone pointed out that the Pledging Conference had decided (E/CN.14/686/Rev.1, para.50) that the draft agreement between Governments and ECA for the payment of additional contributions to the ECA budget would be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval. A representative of the secretariat replied that the draft agreement was currently being studied by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs.

Co-operation within the United Nations system (agenda item 6)

71. Introducing agenda item 6, the Executive Secretary explained that ECA had not yet completed the memorandum of understanding with UNESCO, which would be issued later as document E/CN.14/ECO/129. He said he was grateful to FAO, IMCO and UNEP for the efforts they had made to further their co-operation with ECA. The Committee decided not to examine co-operation between ECA and UNESCO at its present meeting.

72. The representative of FAO said that ECA was to co-operate in the organization of the FAO Regional Conference on Food and Agriculture, and would be assisted by FAO in utilizing its enhanced capacity for undertaking feasibility studies of intercountry projects and giving them an investment orientation.
73. The Executive Secretary had indicated ECA's full support for FAO activities in preparing a Regional Food Plan for Africa, as called for in the Freetown Declaration. The first phase of its preparation would involve the analysis of regional and subregional perspectives to 1990. Detailed analysis of country strategies and programmes for achieving the goal of self-sufficiency in food would be undertaken during the second phase, subject to the approval of the Regional Conference. The Joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division had already prepared a useful input in the form of a reference document on some 55 regional and subregional integration groupings. FAO hoped that all African countries would involve themselves in the formulation of the Plan, since only through such involvement would the success of the Plan be assured.
74. The representative of WHO said that since health was an integral part of development, his organization was committed to integrated multisectoral regional collaboration and co-operation as strategies for the attainment of meaningful global socio-economic development. WHO attached increasing importance to its relations with ECA. It had decentralized responsibility for WHO/ECA relations to the Regional Director for Africa in Brazzaville. It also participated in the activities of ECA through the WHO/ECA Liaison Officer in Africa Hall and through its national Representatives or Co-ordinators in the various African countries. It was at ECA's disposal in the execution of a number of programmes and activities, such as IDEP and MULPOCs. He pointed out that the member States of WHO had decided that WHO should aim at the attainment by all citizens of the world by the year 2000 of a level of health that would permit them to lead socially and economically productive lives. That goal called for a social and technological revolution and for the development of national and regional self-reliance.
75. The representative of Sierra Leone said he noted from document E/CN.14/ECO/123 that a series of joint studies was envisaged by ECA and IMCO. He felt that the relationship between the two organizations should extend to technical assistance as well. He was particularly concerned about the question of marine pollution, which was of vital importance to countries trying to build up their tourist industry. Assistance on that and other problems could be provided with the help of UNDP. In that connexion, he appealed to UNDP to be liberal in financing courses of action which would flow from the new arrangements between ECA and IMCO.
76. The representative of Algeria drew attention to the Environmental Co-ordination Unit described in document E/CN.14/ECO/125. He noted that it would be manned by two or three professional staff and said his Government questioned whether that would be enough to carry out the tasks assigned to it effectively. His Government also had misgivings about the additional expenses such a unit might incur and wondered whether its work would not duplicate that performed by some branches in UNEP.
77. The Executive Secretary explained that the proposed unit was not a new concept. Such a unit already existed in the Natural Resources Division, but it was felt that in view of the interdisciplinary nature of its work, it should be part of the co-ordinating mechanism within the secretariat. As for the resources required for its operation, he pointed out that \$US 309,000 of the \$US 471,000 needed would be contributed by UNEP. ECA's contribution would take the form of the value of the staff and services already provided by the present Unit.

78. The Committee took note of the report on meetings between the Director-General of FAO and the Executive Secretary of ECA (E/CN.14/ECO/119) and approved the Memorandum of Understanding with IMCO (E/CN.14/ECO/123) and the document on co-operation between ECA and UNEP (E/CN.14/ECO/125).

Report on the sixty-third session of the Economic and Social Council (agenda item 10)

79. Considering the relationship existing between items 6 and 10 of the agenda the Committee decided to examine item 10 at the same time as item 6.

80. The Executive Secretary drew the Committee's attention to the report on the sixty-third session of the Economic and Social Council (E/CN.14/ECO/126), and in particular to the draft resolution on a transport and communications decade in Africa which was annexed to it. As the Council had recommended to the General Assembly that it should adopt the draft resolution at its current session, the Executive Secretary hoped that the States members of ECA would instruct their delegations in New York to do their best to ensure the adoption of the resolution.

81. The Committee took note of the report on the sixty-third session of the Economic and Social Council.

Afro-Arab co-operation (agenda item 7)

82. The secretariat paper on the subject (E/CN.14/ECO/120) was introduced by the Executive Secretary, who pointed out that, while the Arab donor countries had undertaken to assist in the implementation of the four priority projects, African countries would also have to make a contribution.

83. The Cairo Declaration envisaged technical co-operation by ECA with BADEA, ADB, OAU and the Arab League to ensure the application of the arrangements decided upon in Cairo. The Executive Secretary assured the Committee that it would be kept informed of the follow-up given to the projects by the Arab States.

84. In response to a question concerning the role of ECA in Afro-Arab co-operation, he said that ECA was an African institution which should serve the interests of Africa in its fields of competence. It was within that framework that ECA was called upon to participate in all matters of economic interest.

85. The representative of the Niger pointed out that the Committee contained figures who had followed the work of the Group of 24 which had met in Yaoundé, and asked the representative of the United Republic of Cameroon, who was a member, to provide some information to the Committee.

86. The representative of the United Republic of Cameroon said that, at the Afro-Arab summit, the ECA Executive Secretary had been closely associated with all the discussions. He had also played an active part in the formulation of the African position which had been submitted to the Arab States, and should be invited to attend the meeting of the Standing Committee to be held shortly in Cairo. ECA, like ADB, had been associated with all the stages of the preparations for Afro-Arab co-operation, and each time there was a need for technical information and assistance, he was sure that ECA and ADB would be called upon.

87. In response to a question concerning the *raison d'être* of the item, the Executive Secretary said that he was obliged to report to the Committee on his activities, since they had financial implications.
88. The representative of Egypt pointed out that the Cairo Summit Conference on Afro-Arab Co-operation had established its own institutional organs to implement the programme of action and the declaration adopted by it. While the ECA secretariat had an obligation to report to the Executive Committee on all its activities, the discussions in the Committee should not duplicate the work carried out by the institutions established by the Conference.
89. The Executive Secretary drew attention to the fact that the documents submitted to the Committee under item 7 were provided for purposes of information. It had not been suggested in any of those documents that the functions decided upon at the Afro-Arab summit should be changed.
90. Various representatives then emphasized the priority importance of the four ECA projects and asked that special attention should be given to them. In addition, States should help to facilitate the implementation of those projects and the attainment of the desired results and the secretariat should also do all it could to foster their implementation.
91. In connexion with document E/CN.14/INF/42/Add.1, the Committee stressed the importance of removing non-physical barriers to the flow of traffic along the trans-African highways and of finding a solution to the problem of standardization.
92. One representative drew attention to the fact that document E/CN.14/ECO/INF/42/Add.1 contained no project sheet on the Nouakchott-Cairo highway, and to the need for the construction of a bridge over the Senegal river to carry the Nouakchott-Lagos highway.
93. In response to the observations made, the Executive Secretary drew attention to the foot-note on page 1 of document E/CN.14/ECO/INF/42/Add.5, which made it clear that the document had been prepared for an inter-secretariat meeting in Cairo. It had been submitted to the Executive Committee for information purposes only, and therefore did not call for any decision by the Committee.
94. Concerning the trans-African highways programme, he regretted that the secretariat was rather short-staffed in that area, and said that it was necessary to expand the staff assigned to it. He also pointed out that for each highway project a co-ordinating committee of all the States involved existed which met from time to time to consider progress achieved.
95. Thirdly, he noted that highway development would progress much faster if the ECA secretariat had the capability to carry out the studies required. The time had come, as ADE and BADEA had agreed, for the secretariat to acquire a capability for feasibility and pre-feasibility studies, so that it would no longer be obliged to farm out the work to organizations outside Africa.
96. Lastly, he assured the Committee that the secretariat was fully aware of the projects which ECOWAS had been requested to carry out, and was in fact working closely with the ECOWAS secretariat in that regard. Thus there would be no possibility of duplication of effort.

97. The comments and suggestions made would be noted and taken into consideration by the secretariat, and the necessary changes would be made in the documentation.

98. One representative pointed out that the last sentence of paragraph 36 of document E/CN.14/ECO/124 should be reworded. The ECA secretariat had not in fact organized the consultations referred to, but had participated in them. It was also pointed out that the four projects mentioned in paragraph 34 of the document were not the only projects being envisaged, but merely those which had been assigned top priority.

African Regional Centre for the Transfer, Adaptation and Development of Technology - progress report (agenda item 8)

99. The ECA Executive Secretary reported that in accordance with a request made by the Executive Committee at its fifteenth meeting the secretariat had submitted a number of documents to keep the Committee informed of progress with regard to the establishment of an African regional centre for the transfer, adaptation and development of technology (E/CN.14/ECO/122, 127, 127/Add.1 and 127/Add.2). He pointed out that an intergovernmental meeting of African experts held to consider the question in detail had ended its work on 8 October 1977, and its report (E/CN.14/ECO/127/Add.2) was to be submitted to a meeting of African plenipotentiaries to take place in Kaduna, Nigeria from 10 to 15 November 1977.

100. The meeting took note of the documents and agreed that they should be referred to the Governments of member States for detailed study in preparation for the plenipotentiary meeting at Kaduna. The attention of the participants was drawn to article 14 of the draft constitution of the African Centre for Technology (E/CN.14/ECO/127/Add.2, annex I), which required further study by member States.

101. Finally, the secretariat was requested to provide further clarification concerning article 16 of the draft constitution, which referred to the withdrawal and suspension of member States of the Centre.

102. The secretariat was requested to take into consideration the comments made during the preparation of the document which would be submitted for consideration by member States for the meeting of plenipotentiaries to be held in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Report on the Regional Conference on the Implementation of Plans of Action for the Integration of Women in Development (agenda item 9)

103. The report of the Conference (E/CN.14/ECO/128) was introduced by the Executive Secretary, who observed that it had been submitted to the Committee for information.

104. The Committee took note of the report.

Enlargement of the Executive Committee and election of members for the period 1977-1979 (agenda item 11)

105. In his introduction to document E/CN.14/ECO/121 on this item, the Deputy Executive Secretary gave detailed background information concerning the mandate given to the Committee by the Conference of Ministers to decide on the way in which the seats in the enlarged Executive Committee should be distributed. That decision was to be taken on the

basis of the findings of a study carried out by the Executive Secretary. Accordingly, the secretariat was submitting document E/CN.14/ECO/121, which contained three alternative suggestions by the secretariat. The first suggestion was for a committee of 24 members, the second for a committee of 26 and the third for a plenary committee on which all 49 African States (after the admission of the new State of Djibouti to the Commission) would be represented. The third proposal also provided for the creation of a new subregion in southern Africa. In putting those proposals forward, the secretariat had taken into consideration all the basic texts of the Commission, which were annexed to document E/CN.14/ECO/121. He pointed out that those texts gave the Commission all the latitude it needed to organize itself as it saw fit, and expressed the hope that the participants would exercise the mandate given to them by the Conference of Ministers in the same bold spirit which had moved them in their consideration of the other items on the agenda. He said he knew their decision would be one which would strengthen solidarity among the African States.

106. In the discussion which ensued, one group, which included the representatives of Zambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania, Ghana and Egypt, favoured the adoption of a temporary arrangement in which the Committee would remain a plenary committee until the next meeting of the Conference of Ministers in 1979. That would give the Committee time to see how well it functioned as a Committee of the whole, putting it in a position to make the best final decision possible. Other arguments offered in support of this position were that all African countries would be assured of having adequate representation on the Committee, and that meeting in plenary session enhanced the spirit of co-operation among them. To mitigate any burden that the obligation of sending a delegation to every Executive Committee meeting might impose on some countries, it was suggested that a plenary committee might meet less frequently than twice a year.

107. The other group, which included the representatives of Ethiopia, the Niger and Senegal, supported a solution advanced by the representative of the United Republic of Cameroon, who felt that it might be difficult to obtain a quorum for a plenary committee. He also had misgivings about the financial burden which travel to two meetings a year would impose on some countries, including his own. As for the objection that countries could not be adequately represented in a small committee, he pointed out that Africa was amply represented by a limited number of participants in the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Governing Council of UNDP. Accordingly, he suggested that the Committee should be composed of 26 members distributed among the subregions as follows: North, 4; West, 8; Central, 5; and Eastern and Southern, 9.

108. Other arguments were adduced in support of this proposal and to clarify the issue of representation. Several delegations expressed the view that the promotion of collective solidarity, self-reliance and mutual confidence should be the guiding principle in deciding on the size of the Executive Committee. However, a smaller committee would make it easier for the Commission to function effectively. The representative of Senegal drew attention to the danger of inefficiency in the enlargement of the Committee.

109. The representative of Egypt expressed the view that the suggested increase in the membership of the Executive Committee from 16 to 26 was disproportionate to the increase in the membership of ECA. In her view the Committee should increase by no more than four new seats.

110. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman announced that, as a result of compromise among the different views, it had been agreed that suggestions concerning the decision on the enlargement of the Committee and the distribution of seats should be forwarded to the secretariat, which would submit to the next meeting of the Committee, meeting as a plenary Committee, a detailed report outlining all the suggested alternatives. After taking a decision on the matter, the Committee would then make a recommendation to the Conference of Ministers at its fifth meeting, to be held in Rabat in February 1979. It had also been agreed that the plenary Committee might meet again in February 1978 if there were a sufficient number of important items to be discussed.

111. One representative requested the secretariat to bear in mind the suggestion that it might be sufficient for the Committee to meet only once a year. Another representative suggested that the secretariat should conduct a study of the usefulness or otherwise of the Committee, in view of the fact that there were intergovernmental organizations which managed without such a body. The study could be examined by the plenary Committee at its next session.

112. One representative suggested that, in view of the decision just taken, it might be desirable for the four officers of the Committee to form a standing bureau which could consider important issues which arose between meetings of the Committee, and even of the Conference itself. The Chairman asked the secretariat to take note of the suggestion, study the matter and make recommendations based on its findings to the Committee at its next meeting.

Other matters (agenda item 12)

113. In response to a request from the representative of Mauritius for the secretariat to examine the possibility of providing assistance in the form of training to a bilingual institute in his country, the Deputy Executive Secretary pointed out that the secretariat was aware of the request and had in fact been negotiating for some time with the Government of Mauritius to secure further details of the request, and determine to what extent the secretariat could assist it.

114. One representative observed that, while numerous areas of Africa had been affected in the past five years by drought, it had also been suggested that Africa's deserts were expanding. Accordingly, the secretariat should grant special attention in its research projects to African programmes in the field of afforestation or reafforestation and irrigation, which were essential if more disasters in the near future were to be avoided.

Date and place of the next meeting of the Committee (agenda item 13)

115. The Deputy Executive Secretary reported that the secretariat was in contact with two member States concerning the possibility of their hosting the eighteenth meeting of the Committee. The representative of Madagascar said that his Government's response to the request it had received would be communicated to ECA headquarters shortly.

116. The representative of the United Republic of Tanzania said that his Government would be honoured to host the meeting of the Committee which was scheduled to be held in October 1978. The Committee accepted the offer with gratitude.

Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting

117. The Committee adopted the present report on 12 October 1977. After the Committee had adopted a vote of thanks to the Government and people of the host country (see annex), the Chairman declared the meeting closed.

ANNEX

Vote of thanks to the Government and people of the United
Republic of Tanzania

The Executive Committee,

Deeply grateful to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for its generous hospitality in providing the facilities which have enabled the Economic Commission for Africa, within the past two weeks, to hold three important meetings in Arusha, namely the Intergovernmental Meeting of African Experts on Aspects of Technology Development in Africa, the Africa Regional Meeting on a Common Fund and the seventeenth meeting of the Executive Committee,

1. Addresses its gratitude to His Excellency Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as to the Government and people of Tanzania, for their warm hospitality and for the physical and other facilities generously provided for the conference and its participants;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary to transmit the present resolution to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania.

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