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**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

**REPORT ON MRAG ACTIVITIES
IN
THE NIAMEY MULPOC
SUBREGION
IN
1991-1992**

March 1993

ECA-MRAG's Activities in Niamey-MULPOC

Introduction

The last meeting of the Committee of Officials of the Niamey MULPOC in which ECA-Multidisciplinary Regional Advisory Group (ECA-MRAG) participated was held from 27 to 30 March 1991 in Niamey.

As will be recalled it was at that meeting that member States were informed of the creation of ECA-MRAG whose mission is to apply multi-disciplinary, multisectoral and cross-country approaches to the solution of the socio-economic development problems with which African countries are confronted. To this end, MRAG carries out its activities with coherence and flexibility of response within a framework that takes into account the interlocking requirements for strategy at the national, subregional and regional levels.

ECA-MRAG is composed of ten senior experts, charged with the tasks of strengthening the links between ECA's research and analysis and their effects on Africa's development. The ten experts cover the following areas:

- Economic Cooperation and Integration (2 experts)
- Agricultural and Rural Development
- Public Administration and Management
- Environment and Development
- Energy and Development
- Statistical Development
- Policies and Instruments for Structural Adjustment and Transformation (Macro-economist)
- Social Concerns and Human Resources
- Development Finance and Debt Management

The group should be viewed as an important complement to the resources available at ECA-MULPOCs. The group also works closely

with specialized agencies of the United Nations operating in the subregion as well as with national experts.

During MRAG's participation at the last meeting of the Committee of Officials in 1991, discussions were held with members of the Committee, staff of the Niamey MULPOC Secretariat, IGO representatives as well as UN agencies. The objective of the mission was for the MRAG group to familiarize the participants with the aims and objectives of the group as well as jointly identify problem areas within the subregion for possible future intervention by ECA-MRAG.

**Highlights of Major Problem Areas Raised by the Meeting
of the Committee of Officials of Niamey MULPOC as well
as Other Groups With Whom ECA-MRAG Held Discussions**

Agriculture

In the agricultural sector, the establishment of protected cereal production areas in the subregion was considered. It was noted that cereal importation in the subregion had distorted the cereal market and that there was need to protect cereal production areas through harmonization of monetary as well as agricultural policies. One group interviewed suggested the desirability of looking into small scale irrigation schemes as a means of securing self-sufficiency in cereal production. The need to organize subregional cereal markets as well as encouragement of the people to consume locally produced products was also addressed. It was further stressed that poverty, the main cause of natural resources depletion urgently needed to be eradicated.

The formulation of a food policy for the subregion, restoration of the environment, seed production and distribution as well as preparation of a forest master plan were also reviewed. The FAO in collaboration with CILSS had carried out studies with a view to producing the national plan for food

security which had taken into account other related issues such as energy, environment as well as subregional and international trade.

Industry

In the field of industrial development, emphasis was placed on the following:

- (i) harmonization and coordination in the manufacture of farm implements;
- (ii) strengthening of cooperation towards utilization of capacity to manufacture inputs such as fertilizers;
- (iii) rational use of existing training institutions;
- (iv) cooperation in the exchange of raw materials as well as information on manufactured products;
- (v) optimizing the capacity of production of various public industries;
- (vi) environmental consequences of industrial development particularly with respect to effluent discharge as well as emission of poisonous gases into the atmosphere.

Trade and Finance

Regarding trade and finance, the following were identified as the major constraints:

- (i) redefining the role of monetary and financial institutions particularly with respect to

availability of credit facilities for entrepreneurs;

- (ii) building of transportation and communication structures to facilitate trade within the subregion;
- (iii) implementation of measures and policies aimed at reversing the externally oriented economies;
- (iv) establishment of information system on markets for various products.

Development of Human Resources

The following were noted with respect to human resources development:

- (i) training and improvement of agricultural techniques for achievement of food self-sufficiency and security;
- (ii) solving unemployment of University graduates before considering other training programmes;
- (iii) better use of existing institutions.

Economic Integration

There was need to create legal structures and mechanisms at the national level as well as rationalize activities of the individual IGOs in order to create a larger and more viable economic grouping rather than encouraging the multiplicity of IGOs in the subregion. Taxation problems needed to be addressed and particularly in view of the fact that richer countries were reluctant to trade with poorer ones. Liberalization of trade should go hand in hand with production.

Statistics

There was need to strengthen statistics departments of the Ministry of Planning, particularly in the areas of data collection as well as dissemination. In addition, it was desirable to train staff who would undertake various types of surveys such as household survey, agricultural survey as well as compilation of external trade data.

Possible Areas of Intervention by ECA-MRAG

After a careful review of the major problem areas of the subregion, ECA-MRAG suggested that the following areas required further appraisal and possible intervention by the group:

Promotion of Sustainable Management of Land and Water Resources for Agricultural Production

- (i) Range and livestock development
- (ii) Reclamation of degraded land including sand dune stabilization
- (iii) Cereal production and marketing
- (iv) Development of vegetable and horticultural crops
- (v) Management of shared water resources (international lakes and river basins)
- (vi) Development of marine and coastal resources
- (vii) Formulation of agricultural policies and programmes
- (viii) Development of early warning systems for drought

Harnessing of Indigenous technologies

- (i) Development and improvement of indigenous technologies
- (ii) Promotion of women activities in the subregion

- (iii) Control of pollution including dumping of hazardous industrial and agricultural chemicals

Promotion of Marketing and Transportation within the Subregion

- (i) Liberalization of trade in the subregion
- (ii) Formulation of transportation master plan

Promotion of Economic Integration

Harmonization and rationalization of functions of IGOs.

The Niamey MULPOC on receipt of the ECA-MRAG Report suggested the need for a joint mission to be undertaken in the subregion in order to consult further with member States, IGOs and UN agencies with a view to ascertaining some areas of special concern and interest to individual member States thereby assisting to rank priorities in a coherent and cohesive manner. However, for a variety of reasons, this proposal could not be acted upon. The Niamey MULPOC further pointed out that the main priority programme would be in the area of food production encompassing, inter alia

- (i) Strategies for improving the role of women in food production and marketing;
- (ii) Rationalization and effective utilization of existing agricultural research and training institutions;
- (iii) Rationalization of fertilizer production in the subregion;
- (iv) Enhancing indigenous technologies;
- (v) Assistance to member States to incorporate environmental concerns in their national development plans;

- (vi) Promotion of afforestation and reafforestation programmes using fast-growing trees for provision of fuelwood;
- (vii) Assessment of coastal soil erosion;

**Activities Undertaken by ECA-MRAG in the Subregion
in 1991-1992**

IDEP Training Programmes

Several missions have been undertaken to or on behalf of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) based in Dakar to assist the organisation in the preparation of course programmes as well as participate in training programmes.

A mission undertaken to IDEP in April 1991 by the Regional Advisors on Environment and Energy reviewed the three-month specialization programme in the area of energy, environment and development in Africa and suggested a new course structure which takes into account the interaction and complementarity among energy-environment-development. It is targeted at decision or policy makers and management staff in energy, environment and development planning, government organisations, agencies or parastatals as well as researchers and lecturers in these fields.

The new course programme consists of lectures, case studies, exercises, group discussions and field visits with respect to the subject matter of the various modules.

A training course held at the Institute in May 1992 on manpower and employment planning for 17 public servants from 11 countries saw the participation of the Regional Adviser on Social Concerns and Human Resources as a resource person. The advisor prepared a background paper entitled "Manpower and Employment

within an African Context" which formed the basis of lectures and discussions at the training sessions.

The course content included the evolution of human capital theory in development economics, manpower planning as well as employment planning.

In November 1992, the Regional Adviser on Policies and Instruments for Structural Adjustment and Transformation in Africa (macro-economist) provided lectures at IDEP on a course module in the basic Diploma Programme on Macro-economic Policy Analysis, Management and Planning in Africa. The series of lectures covered broad areas on "Development Economics: Theories and Strategies" including: study of economic development, political economy of Africa, theories of development and under-development, towards a strategy of African development as well as prospects for African development in the long-term.

The course placed emphasis on development of analytical and technical skills required to help planners and policy makers design, implement and monitor macro-economic development plans and programmes.

Similarly, the Regional Adviser on Public Administration and Management participated in an IDEP-organized training seminar on policy analysis and development for ten ECOWAS senior officials in Abuja, Nigeria. He presented lectures on policy analysis as well as a case study focusing on the application of policy analytical techniques to economic cooperation and integration problems.

**UNDESD and AAPAM Seminar on Decentralization/Strengthening
of Local Government (UNDESD)**

The Regional Adviser on Policy Management and Institutional Reform participated in, and served as, Rapporteur-General at the

senior policy seminar on Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Government which was held in Banjul in July 1992.

The seminar provided a forum for the exchange of views and experiences on local government issues as well as explored avenues for further study and research on policies in local government administration. An additional objective of the seminar was to lay the foundation for the preparation and development of training packages for improvement of skills and techniques among senior and middle level officials in local government administration.

**Mission to Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon on Measures for
Promoting Subregional Cooperation in Livestock Production
and Development**

The mission was undertaken in April 1991 by the Regional Adviser on Food and Agriculture at the invitation of the Chad Government for the promotion of subregional cooperation in livestock production and development. Three countries namely Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon which are in close proximity to one another and which also possess common features in their livestock development were visited. Livestock movement across the common borders in search of water, pasture and livestock services and markets is a frequent occurrence. The main objective of the mission was to identify possible areas of cooperation in the development of livestock for increased production.

The mission recommended the need for development of research in the subregion for improvement of livestock breeds which are adapted to the region. The specific areas of research recommended include: animal productivity, genetics and breeding of livestock adapted to savanna conditions, animal physiology, marketing livestock and livestock products. A project proposal for the development of small ruminants in the lake Chad basin for US\$1 million was also formulated.

Missions to ECOWAS to Review the ECOWAS Treaty

The regional Advisers on Economic Cooperation and on Integration and Structural Adjustment Programmes and Transformation (macro-economist) have on several occasions undertaken missions to the ECOWAS Headquarters to provide technical advisory services to the Intergovernmental Committee Reviewing the ECOWAS Treaty which was established in 1990 by the Summit meeting of the Heads of State and Government held in Banjul. At the Intergovernmental Committee Meeting held in January-February 1991, MRAG's contributions were in two areas namely (i) the study on the private sector (formal and informal) in the evolution of ECOWAS and (ii) evaluation of the studies on the service sector and joint production enterprises.

At another meeting held in April 1992, the Regional Advisor on Economic Cooperation and Integration served as a resource person to the Intergovernmental Committee. This was the fourth mission to be undertaken by this Regional Adviser to ECOWAS.

Mission to SAFGRAD on Development of a Research-Extension-Farmer Linkage Project

The mission was undertaken by the Regional Advisers in Food and Agricultural, Policy and Planning and in Environment and Development in May-June 1992 at the invitation of SAFGRAD. The purpose of the mission was to assist in the conceptualization and development of a "research-extension-farmers linkage network". This request necessitated the MRAG team to undertake missions to Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria. The team held discussion with farmers, researchers, NGOs, government administrators, etc. The report presents the major findings and recommendations as well as a US\$2.5 million project proposal for the development of village-based sustainable land use management plans in the semi-arid regions of West and Central Africa.

Advisory Services to CILSS

The mission was undertaken by two Regional Advisers (Economic Cooperation and Integration, and Social Concerns and Human Resources Development) and the Chief of the Environment Unit in the Natural Resources Division. CILSS had requested MRAG to identify the training needs in the areas of development policy and management of subregional projects as well as provide advice on the restructuring of CILSS within the context of long term recovery plan.

The mission report made a number of recommendations including one on the need for CILSS to reduce its donor-dependence by having itself transformed into a specialized agency for environment and development issues under ECOWAS.

Mission to the Association of African Universities

The Association of African Universities (AAU) requested the Services of MRAG to prepare a project for strengthening the capacities of African Universities. The Adviser in Social Concerns and Human Resources undertook the assignment. In consultation with the senior staff of the AAU, the project was put together and provides for five final outputs over a four-year period, viz:

- (a) one undergraduate textbook in African agriculture;
- (b) one undergraduate textbook in pharmacology for African students;
- (c) Three hundred post-graduate research grants for problem-solving research in the basic and applied sciences, the medical sciences and the food and agricultural sciences;
- (d) The establishment of a Regional Universities Consultancy Bureau (RUCOB)
- (e) The creation of Centre for the Exchange of Information on University Research (CEXIN)

The total cost of the project is US\$3,806.000.

The project is submitted to the African Capacity-Building Foundation (ACBF) for funding. The West Africa subregion, which has a heavy concentration of universities, should most profitably be served by this project.