MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES OF
THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS
OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Bangkok, February 1987

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION
32/197 ON RESTRUCTURING OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECTORS OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
I. INTRODUCTION

Resolution 32/197 adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 1977, now commonly known as the "restructuring resolution" thus far constitutes the clearest step taken by the General Assembly since the establishment of the regional economic commissions to define in precise terms their role and functioning within the United Nations development system. Together with resolution 33/202 of 27 January 1979 by which the commissions were accorded executing agency status in their own right, the "restructuring resolution" not only redefines the original terms of reference of the commissions in clearer terms but also provides them with a comprehensive policy framework for the assumption of greatly-expanded responsibilities to enable them deal more effectively with socio-economic and technological problems in their respective regions within the context of concerted efforts by the United Nations system to promote international economic co-operation and development.

In section IV of the annex to the resolution, eight specific and basic tasks are assigned to the regional commissions in the new orientation adopted by the General Assembly. The commissions are, among other things: (a) to serve as the main general economic and social development centres within the United Nations system for their respective regions; (b) exercise team leadership and responsibility for co-ordination and co-operation at the regional level; (c) provide inputs for global policy-making processes and participate fully in the implementation of policies and decisions taken at the global level; (d) take steps along with other organizations of the United Nations system concerned, to achieve a common definition of regions and subregions and the identical location of regional and subregional offices; (e) strengthen relations with United Nations system organizations especially UNDP in whose operational activities, the Commissions should actively participate; (f) strengthen and enlarge economic co-operation among developing countries at the subregional, regional and interregional levels; (g) strengthen and expand arrangements for inter-Commission exchanges; and (h) rationalize their structures, inter alia by streamlining their subsidiary machinery.

To be able to perform these tasks effectively and efficiently, they were to be delegated the necessary authority and provided adequate budgetary and financial resources.

In 1982, five years after the restructuring resolution was adopted, the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) undertook a comprehensive review of the programming, operational and other issues confronting ECA in the context of its efforts to implement the eight basic tasks outlined above as well as in the other areas covered by resolution 32/197 as they relate to these tasks. 1/ ECA was the first Commission to be so reviewed. Today

another five years after the JIU Report, while substantial progress has been made in the implementation of the restructuring resolution, most of the issues raised in that Report have remained largely unresolved.

II. MAIN GENERAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE ROLE

The restructuring resolution was adopted at a time when ECA was being increasingly criticized not least by its own member States through their own representatives at meetings organized by the Commission, for its inability to carve out a specific and recognizable role for itself. Its activities were in general viewed as too research biased with little orientation towards operational activities and as duplicating the work of the specialized agencies which were judged better placed materially and technically. The resolution therefore came to put into much sharper focus the challenge that was already there for more effective leadership and performance by the Commission in the economic and social development affairs of the region. Events that have taken place since the adoption of the resolution have demonstrated that where action depends solely on the initiative under the control of the Commission, the challenge has been more than met.

In pursuing its activities particularly during the middle of the 1970s, that is, even before the adoption of the restructuring resolution, the Commission had recognized that a basic lacuna was the absence of a specific and recognizable body of ideas to guide and inform the programming of activities and the ordering of priorities aimed at assisting member States in their efforts to tackle the economic and social development problems confronting them. That was why the secretariat concentrated on the redefinition and reclarification of the concepts of economic development and growth for the Africa region, an effort which led to the adoption in the region of the principles of self-reliance and self-sustainment through internally generated processes of development. These principles were treated and progressively developed beginning with the publication in 1976, of the "Revised framework of principles for the implementation of the New International Economic Order" (E/CN.14/ECO/90/Rev.3) through the Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers at Rabat in 1979, which formed the basis of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its sixteenth session held at Monrovia in 1979 and the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos adopted by the same Assembly at its extra-ordinary session held in Lagos, Nigeria in April 1980, which were designed to implement the Monrovia Strategy and which the Commission had prepared at its fifteenth session held in Addis Ababa from 9 to 12 April 1980 in readiness for the Lagos Economic Summit a few days later.

As Africa's short-term and structural problems came to a head during the first five years of the current decade in the form of an unprecedented crisis of economic and social development, the Commission addressed two special memoranda in 1984 and 1985, respectively to ECOSOC drawing the attention of
the international community to the nature and possible solutions to the crisis. Through the recommendations of the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic development and planning 2/ concerning the economic issues on the draft agenda of the twenty-first ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, the Commission played a crucial role in the formulation and adoption of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990 by the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 1985. The ECA played a crucial role along with the OAU in the preparation of the "Africa's Submission to the Special Session of United Nations General Assembly and in all the preparatory activities leading to the special session held from 27 May to 1 June 1986 and on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis" 3/ of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 4/.

To the extent that the principles and strategies underlying all these documents have been widely accepted by Africa's leaders and the international community at large, it can be said that there is now a philosophy of development for Africa which ECA has pioneered. The new approach makes a complete break with the old externally-oriented theories of development. It lays emphasis on the deepening of knowledge of the domestic natural resource base as the basis for determining profiles of development and economic growth and for designing and implementing appropriate strategies for manpower development, industrialization and the promotion of domestic production of goods and services based on intra- and inter-sectoral linkages and the expansion of national and regional markets. The overall objective is to lay a sound foundation for the establishment of a new economic and social order at the national, subregional and regional levels which will contribute to, and benefit from a new international economic order.

This framework now constitutes the programming environment in Africa. For the Commission and its secretariat themselves, it has progressively informed and influenced work programmes and priorities.

Emanating from the general principles of national self-reliance and self-sustainment is the principle of collective self-reliance and self-sustainment. As it is, due to various factors but particularly to the constraining factor of colonial decision to carve out African countries into geographical influences with little consideration for cultural affinity and viable development, many African countries are just too small to undertake and sustain viable, self-sustaining and self-reliant development and economic growth on their own; hence, the Commission's efforts to promote collective self-reliance through institution building.

2/ The Conference of African Ministers responsible for economic development and planning constitutes the Commission when it meets in its annual sessions.

3/ A/AC.229/2.

4/ A/S-13/2 or A/S-13/15 annex.
As a result, the ECA has spearheaded the establishment of new programmes and projects such as the two regional mineral resources development centres, and two regional centres for training in aerial surveys, and services in surveying, mapping and remote sensing which are meant to assist African countries acquire the required knowledge for the exploration and exploitation of their natural resources. The Commission has also established three technology and industrial development centres: the African Regional Centre for Technology, the African Regional Centre for Engineering Design and Manufacturing, and the African Regional Institute for Higher Technical Training and Research. These provide services for the accelerated acquisition of technological and industrial capabilities for development. The African Development Bank, which had been established by the Commission in 1964, the Association of African Central Banks, the various Clearing Houses, the Association of African Trade promotion Organizations, the various port management associations and the different trans-African highway authorities, to name only a few of the institutions in the banking, financial, trade and transport sectors sponsored by ECA, are together working for the progressive restructuring and expansion of the domestic and regional markets and the removal of dysfunctional relationships in socio-economic structures to make them more conducive for, and more responsible to the generation of internal processes of change and development. The question of human resource requirements in the broadest sense of the term, including entrepreneurial resources, skilled workshop operatives, supervisors, middle and high level skills required for systematic management, and a resourceful and progressive farming population, as well as the need to reorient planning concepts and methodologies and to address social issues both as factors and consequences of development are themselves the concern of such ECA-sponsored institutions as the two regional institutes for population studies, the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, and the African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development.

At the subregional level, the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) are meant to serve as the operational arms of the Commission, thus bringing the Commission closer to its constituents, the member States. Created in 1977, the MULPOCs act primarily as catalysts of economic integration in their respective subregions through the identification and implementation of inter-country projects and in promoting measures to strengthen existing subregional institutional integration machineries.

Of course, efforts to promote collective self-reliance went beyond the promotion of the establishment of the type of institutions enumerated above. Thus in 1977 member States through the Commission, established the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD), to which they continually contribute through institutionalized biennial pledging conferences. The establishment of the Fund to support operational activities of the Commission is testimony to the breadth of acceptance by African countries of the Commission's philosophy and actions.
As it is, therefore, the Economic Commission for Africa has, largely by its own actions and those of its secretariat, succeeded in laying the basis for it to function as a multidisciplinary organ of the United Nations system for African development. The breadth of its operations is as all-embracing as its perspective is continental. The Commission is now a generator of ideas and a promoter of activities in all major areas of development of interest to the United Nations system in Africa. The question to ask therefore in the context of a review and appraisal of the restructuring resolution is: To what extent has the Commission been able to carry out its development centre role within the United Nations system effectively?

The answer to this question is closely linked to issues associated with the other tasks defined for the commissions in the restructuring resolution which are raised in the subsequent sections below. The questions of resources and of the delegation of authority will be discussed in section IX of this paper.

III. TEAM LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR CO-ORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

Paragraph 20 of the annex to resolution 32/197 stipulates that the regional commissions, "taking into account the special needs and conditions of their respective regions ... should exercise team leadership and responsibility for co-ordination and co-operation at the regional level. They may convene periodic meetings, as necessary, for the purpose of improving the co-ordination of the relevant economic and social activities of the United Nations system in their respective regions". ECA has made significant inroads in this area but this has not been and still is not without problems.

Team leadership and co-ordination have been a particularly difficult role to play in a planning and programming environment characterized by 50 member States with varying ideological leanings and different sets of economic and social problems and who easily fall prey to the independent practices and offers of the myriad of outside operators including not only United Nations system agencies but also other multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental organizations. The number of these operators and the volume of aid and assistance they provide have been increasing as the diversity and scope of their activities have widened.

As already discussed in section II above, ECA has, through painstaking work in the clarification of the concepts of development as they relate to Africa, and through the judicious exploitation of the potential for collective decision-making and action by its multidisciplinary and broadly representative policy and technical organs, pushed through widely accepted regional development priorities which now should serve as guidelines and a framework for concerted action at all levels and by all concerned. The fact that the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos 5/ as well as Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990, 6/ were adopted by the Assembly

5/ A/40/666.
6/ A/S-11/14 annex I and annex II.
of African Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity have made them the set of "marching orders" not only for ECA and OAU who were entrusted with the central technical co-ordination role for their implementation but also for all development agencies in Africa.

It has however been one thing to get African governments to take decisions collectively at the regional level and quite another for them individually to translate these decisions into practical and meaningful operational terms at the national and subregional levels. Despite continuing efforts on the part of ECA to explain and provide guidelines on how member States should come to grips with the practical realities and implications of the Lagos Plan of Action particularly with respect to the kinds of research and analyses to be undertaken, the kinds of national, subregional, regional and interregional projects to be implemented and the kinds of co-operative programmes to be initiated and pursued within the context of self-reliance and self-sustainment, it is only very slowly that the basic principles and objectives of the Lagos Plan are being coherently and consistently reflected in the national development plans and programmes of member States. It is therefore only gradually that the Plan is being used as basis for directing and controlling the activities of international development institutions and bilateral aid donors towards and within the real needs and requirements of member States.

Moreover, because of the multiplicity of aid donors, the possibilities for distraction and divergent actions have been great. A specific example in point has been that no sooner were the Lagos Plan and the Final Act adopted in 1980 and incorporated in the United Nations International Development Strategy for the Third Development Decade than the World Bank put out in 1981 its own plan of action for Africa in the form of the document entitled "Accelerated development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action". While this document purported to build on the Lagos Plan of Action and was aimed at assisting member States to generate the necessary resources to implement the Plan, the excessive external orientation of the substance of its contents departed significantly from the philosophy of the Plan. It has been only through the combined criticism of the secretariats of ECA, OAU and ADB 7/ and subsequent protracted dialogue and discussion with the Bank that there has been a narrowing of the divergence. Exchanges of views between ECA and the Bank on African development have since become more frequent and ECA now enjoys a great deal of collaborative work with the Bank.

7/ See "Accelerated development in Sub-Saharan Africa" Assessment by the secretariats of the OAU, ECA and ADB, E/ECA/CM.8/16.
Within the rest of the United Nations system, there is no gainsaying the fact that traditional attitudes towards the ECA have continued to complicate and hinder this co-ordination and leadership roles. Some Departments and entities at United Nations Headquarters as well as some specialized agencies, other units of the system have still to give their unbounden support to the Commission as the main centre for general economic and social development within the system for the Africa region. At the frequent inter-agency meetings convened by ECA for co-ordination purposes, agency representations are usually at levels lower than desired for effective decision-making.

The JIU in its report States that, "ECA is well-situated to perform co-ordinative programming role. It has accumulated more than 20 years of experience with African economic and social development problems, and has become the primary source of basic socio-economic data on Africa. Its research, conference and seminar activities, together with its institution-building work throughout Africa, have given it an intimate knowledge of the requirements requirements and potential for African development. Its emphasis on regional co-operation and integration is strengthened by its activity in all major development sectors. It has a predominantly African staff schooled in the problems of the continent". 8/ Yet there is a growing tendency for parts of its work to be replicated in adequately and/or duplicated at Headquarters and elsewhere.

In the discharge of its co-ordinating functions, ECA has forged joint programming and formal working links with a number of specialized agencies and other units of the United Nations system including in particular FAO and UNIDO with which it has established joint divisions 9/ UNESCO with which it undertakes joint programmes harmonized through regular joint concentration meetings between the two secretariats; UNFPA, UNEP, ITC, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the Centre on Transnational corporations which provide funds for some of ECA's activities in their respective areas of interest; ICAO, IMO, ITU and UPU in matters concerning the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade for Africa (UNTACDA); and WHO which like UNDP has a liaison office with ECA located at ECA headquarters. UNDP's special relation with the Commission is discussed in section VI below.

8/ See JIU/REP/82/1, page 5, paragraph 23.

9/ It is to be regretted that the new UNIDO has decided to pull out of the joint Division arrangement.
All these links together with several others established with agencies outside the United Nations system such as OAU, African intergovernmental organizations and other multilateral and bilateral programmes are progressively being deepened and extended through the initiative of the secretariat and sometimes through fiat on the part of the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic development and planning. In many cases however, the secretariat is handicapped by its own resource limitations to throw its full weight effectively in joint programming and programme implementation. Since the required resources are usually in the command of the agencies and since these often dither and side-track, ECA has had to resort very often to extensive exhortation and persuasion. Integrated programme planning and execution in the African region are therefore still on shaky grounds and in the difficult programming environment ECA has had to work and in the light of the complexities mentioned above, the Commission has been constrained to do not much more than careful and diligent nurturing.

At the subregional level, the MULPOCs as already noted, were established to serve as catalysts for subregional integration and development primarily through the identification and implementation of inter-country projects. The core staff of development specialists at each of these centres are now funded by allocations from the regular budget. ECA has also attempted to strengthen the centres through its own measures of decentralization by deploying a few more staff members from its headquarters. With their own separate high level intergovernmental policy-making organs and technical committees, these centres hold the promise of a potent force for the co-ordination and integration of United Nations inter-country activities at the subregional level.

However, the resources available at these centres, strengthened and stabilized though they have been in the recent past, are still far from adequate to make any significant impact on co-ordination work in the midst of the plethora of intergovernmental organizations that exist in most of the subregions, many of which are dealing directly with international organizations and agencies. The centres are consequently increasingly performing basically as outreaches of the secretariat since they often have to fall back on headquarters expertise and skills to implement projects in their respective subregions. Thus, while the centres continue to play a prominent and crucial role in ECA's efforts at providing technical support to the activities of the various subregional, and other intergovernmental groupings, the potential for initiating and implementing inter-country development projects and for harnessing and co-ordinating the participation of system agencies in such activities is far from being realized.
IV. INPUTS INTO GLOBAL POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES AND PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

The Commission is by and large quite satisfied with the way the regional and sectoral strategies it has progressively developed and adopted over the years have been accepted at the intergovernmental global policy-making level and as already pointed out, invariably incorporated in global development strategies. Its inputs at global negotiating conferences especially in the form of the formulation and co-ordination of Africa's positions at such meetings especially at UNCTAD, the General Conference of UNIDO, trade relations negotiations, etc. are also a source of satisfaction. This satisfaction has been particularly enhanced by the various actions taken in the past few years by the ECOSOC and the General Assembly as well as other intergovernmental fora following calls made by the Commission to draw the attention and action of the international community to the unprecedented crisis of economic and social development that has gripped the Africa region since the beginning of the 1980s.

Under Section II above, references have been made to ECA's inputs into global decision-making processes within the United Nations. Its inputs into decision-making processes at other global levels have also been impressive. Thus apart from the continuing participation in the work of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD and of the Industrial Development Board of UNIDO, since the adoption of the restructuring resolution in 1977, ECA has consistently assisted the African groups in their negotiating activities in UNCTAD Conferences, the Vienna Conference on Science and Technology for Development, the Buenos Aires Conference on economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, the meetings of the non-aligned movement, the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) - EEC framework leading to the adoption of the Lomé Conventions, the Mexico Conference on Population and the series of meetings connected with the United Nations Decade for Women.

The same measure of satisfaction cannot however be said of relations at the inter-secretariat level. Much for instance remains still to be desired in interaction between the regional secretariat and Headquarters secretariats and decision-making units. In the fields of programming, monitoring and evaluation for example, while ECA has done much in the way of improving its internal operational and co-ordinating responsibilities in this area, and while there has been increased co-operation and interaction between Headquarters units and the Commission secretariat in the preparation and monitoring of the medium-term plan and the biennial programme budgets, the preparation of the rules and regulations as well as other decisions governing these activities for consideration by the competent global authorities were drafted without consultations with the regional commissions secretariats. Co-ordination units at the regional secretariats often have the onerous task of interpreting and explaining to the Commission such rules and regulations in whose drafting they have never participated. The same point goes for the instructions for the preparations of medium-term plans, the programme
budgets, and programme performance reports. There were encouraging signs with the work on evaluation although much improvement remains. There is therefore a case for greater involvement of the Commission secretariat at the policy and decision-making stages of all aspects of programme planning, budgeting and other management areas at the global level. A periodic meeting of programme officers from the regions and headquarters to discuss such instructions before presentation to the appropriate intergovernmental bodies will be a move in the right direction. It is also regrettable that the Regional Secretariat does not have a seat in the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board that was set up a few years ago — not just to defend its budget but were unfortunately to assist the Board in ensuring that all programmes of the United Nations in Africa are consistent with the development objectives of Africa.

The annual appearances of the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions at ECOSOC are a welcome opportunity for them to bring to the attention of the Council regional concerns, proposed solutions and other issues requiring action by the Council. However, the same opportunity should be accorded them at other bodies whose functions have significant bearing on the regional commissions. Thus, the recommendations of the JIU in its 1982 report on ECA that the Executive Secretaries should appear more regularly before the Second and Fifth Committees of the General Assembly and CPC and participate in the work of the ACC machinery whose activities and decisions have considerable implications for development co-operation at the regional level are as valid today as when they were made.

V. COMMON DEFINITION OF REGIONS AND SUBREGIONS

In paragraph 22 of the annex to resolution 32/197, the Organizations of the United Nations system were urged "... subject to such guidance as may be provided by the governments concerned and without prejudice to membership of the regional bodies concerned", to take "... early steps to achieve a common definition of regions and subregions and the identical location of regional and subregional offices".

Virtually no action has been taken in this area and the Economic Commission for Africa which operates from its headquarters in Addis Ababa for the whole of geographical Africa divided into four subregions (centred around the five NULPOCs) continues to deal, as the JIU found as far back as 1975 (JIU/REP/75/2), with United Nations system organizations whose regional and subregional offices are located in 14 different cities away from ECA headquarters. The issues raised in this connection in document A/35/546 are therefore still valid. ECA's team leadership and co-ordination

functions remain complicated by this dispersion of offices with all the
difficulties this entails in terms of travel and communications costs and
inconveniences. In cases where regional arrangements do not correspond with
ECA's membership as is the case with UNDP, FAO, WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF, the
Commission has been unable to participate fully in the policy-making, programme
formulation, execution and review processes concerning some of its members
in the areas covered by these organizations. The Commission nonetheless
recognizes that decisions on regional structures are the prerogative of the
intergovernmental authorities of the agencies concerned. However, an early
rationalization and harmonization of structures will greatly enhance
operational activities.

VI. OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXECUTING AGENCY STATUS

Paragraph 32 of the annex to resolution 32/197 recommends inter alia
that: "... close co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme
should be established and appropriate arrangements made to enable the regional
commissions to participate actively in operational activities carried out
through the United Nations system, including the preparation of inter-country
programmes, as may be required in their respective regions ..." and calls
for the Commissions to "function expeditiously as executing agencies for
intersectoral, subregional, regional and interregional projects and in areas
which do not fall within the purview of the sectoral responsibilities of
specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies, for other subregional,
regional and interregional projects".

In spite of the various difficulties facing the Commission, some of
which have already been mentioned, ECA co-operation with UNDP within the
framework of the implementation of the restructuring resolution has been
referred to by many as perhaps the closest ECA has with any other agency.
This co-operation has grown and expanded not only in terms of the volume
of project execution ECA undertakes on behalf of UNDP but also, particularly
significant for ECA, in terms of the use UNDP has made of the Commission's
"development centre" and "team leadership" roles in getting intersecretariat
and African intergovernmental agreements on, and support for the determination
of the orientation and priorities for its regional inter-country economic
and technical co-operation programmes.

ECA has been de facto executing agency for UNDP since 1973; but UNDP
contributions to ECA's operational activities have accelerated significantly
since the adoption in 1978 of General Assembly resolution 33/202 which formally
granted the regional commissions executing agency status in their own right
in respect of the intersectoral projects discussed in para 23 of the annex
to resolution 32/197. Project execution for UNDP by ECA amounted to SUS
22 million or about 18.5 per cent of the total regional IPP of UNDP's Second
Regional Programming Cycle - 1978-1981 and about 17.3 per cent of the total
resources available to ECA for that four-year period. The figure rose to
about SUS 27.7 million during the Third Programming Cycle 1982-1986 - thus
making ECA second only to FAO as the largest single executing agency for
UNDP financed regional and subregional projects.
Earlier on, much of the assistance UNDP provided went to support ECA's institution building work in Africa including the MULPCOs. This has however been greatly diversified and UNDP resources now finance activities in diverse fields aimed at promoting collective self-reliance which range by way of an illustration, from transport and communications within the framework of projects in the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa; development issues and policies especially through support for activities of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP); assistance to the ECA programme for the least developed African countries; the development of information systems in Africa; the integration of women in development; natural resources and energy, particularly through assistance to the various mineral resources and survey and mapping centres; training in statistical development; the improvement of management delivery capabilities; the development of intra-African trade through inter alia, assistance to subregional clearing houses; the development of building materials and construction industries; to the promotion of science and technology and industrial development in the form of assistance to the African Regional Centre for Technology and the African Regional Centre for Engineering Design and Manufacturing. Relations with the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States have been formalized and strengthened such that the Bureau now supports activities undertaken within the framework of the North African MULPCC.

Reference has been made above to the use by UNDP of ECA's role as "development centre" and "team leader". While in 1981, ECA had the opportunity for the first time to consider the proposed regional programme for the Programming Cycle, 1982-1986, the preparations for the Fourth Cycle 1987-1991 have entailed even more closer collaborative work between the two organizations. Indeed, the two secretariats worked closely in elaborating the orientation and strategic basis of the proposed regional programme for the Fourth Cycle. The proposed programme was itself approved and adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic development and planning at an extraordinary session specifically convened for that purpose in Addis Ababa from 13 to 16 October, 1986. These have been good signs and symbols of inter-agency co-operative efforts for the economic and social development of Africa which the Commission believes should influence its relations with all other agencies.

On the whole, the Commission believes also that it has taken up its operational responsibilities earnestly, and substantial progress has been made. This confidence is borne out not only by the activities carried out under the United Nations Regular Programme of Technical Co-operation (Section 24 of the United Nations Programme Budget) as well as those with the other United Nations funding agencies, other multilateral organizations and bilateral donors as well as through the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development.

In all these, the Commission has achieved a rate of programme delivery that has progressively improved and now ranks relatively high among executing agencies. This has not been attained without considerable efforts expended
at training programmes in project formulation and execution for programme managers and other project staff, the continuous review of management and administrative procedures and constant review of programme performance in the light of expected resources. In order to continue to perform even more effectively however, and more particularly to operate on the same footing as other executing agencies especially the specialized agencies, the problems of resource shortage and the adequate delegation of authority to be discussed in Section IX would have to be effectively addressed. A greater willingness to co-operate needs also to be more forthcoming from these agencies. These are particularly essential to ECA in view of the need to make its various MULPOCs truly multinational programming and operational centres, playing a catalytic role in the identification and joint execution of inter-country development projects at the subregional level.

VII. REGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

In paragraphs 24 and 25 of the annex to the restructuring resolution, the regional commissions are asked inter alia to "intensify their efforts, with the assistance of the competent organizations of the United Nations system and at the request of the governments concerned, to strengthen and enlarge economic co-operation among the developing countries at the subregional, regional and interregional levels..." and to expand as appropriate, "existing arrangements for the continuous exchange between them of information and experience. Such arrangements may include the holding of periodic intersecretariat meetings, utilizing existing machinery as far as possible".

The provision of the restructuring resolution on economic co-operation among developing countries came to reinforce as well as underline the importance of what was already high on the agenda of the Commission. The Commission by its own decisions and actions has long recognized the imperatives of regional economic co-operation as a factor sine qua non for the process of internally-generated self-sustaining development. This was why the MULPOCs have been created to guide African governments establish regional economic co-operation arrangements and support such arrangements in practical operational terms.

Working in close co-operation with the OAU, the Commission and its MULPOCs have been largely instrumental in the successful establishment of broad-based, multipurpose subregional economic groupings in each of the subregions of the Commission except the North. The Commission continues to provide technical support to enhance and strengthen the capacities and capabilities of these and the many other smaller intergovernmental groupings existing side by side with them as well as the various technical and economic co-operation institutions, all within the framework of the ultimate objectives of the Final Act of Lagos. Relations with the Organization of African Unity have also been strengthened and deepened. Through the ECA/OAU Intersecretariat Committee, the two Organizations undertake joint programming and now act almost in unison in matters of common concern.
One cause of growing concern to the secretariat has been the slowness and now stagnant or diminishing financial and practical support that African governments give to the various regional and subregional institutions which they themselves have been quick to establish invariably with considerable enthusiasm and in whose continuing importance as instruments for promoting collective self-reliance they have expressed no doubt. The secretariat has put in considerable work by way of harmonizing and rationalizing the activities of these institutions directly sponsored by the Commission both in the form of continuous backstopping and through the institutionalized annual meetings of the Chief Executives of these institutions. While it is recognized that these are hard times in Africa, the secretariat has found it difficult to carry out its mandates in respect of these institutions in the absence of sustained support in practical terms on the part of governments.

At the interregional level, the annual meetings of the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions have proved to be a most useful forum not only for the critical review of common administrative, management and operational issues but also for the identification and joint programming of opportunities for economic and technical co-operation among developing countries (ETDC). Within the framework of this machinery as well as through direct contacts with individual countries and organizations in the other regions, significant interregional links have been forged and co-operation activities initiated. However, as far as ECA is concerned, rapid progress in this area has been precluded by the difficulties imposed especially by extrabudgetary resource shortages to build on identified opportunities. Interregional technical and economic co-operation between Africa and the other regions has in fact, mainly for this reason, been at a low ebb in the last few years.

ECA and ECLAC have initiated several joint activities in an attempt to promote co-operation between their two regions. Most of these are however projects still in the pipeline or at the consultation stage. The broad framework for co-operation between the two regions has been laid in the document entitled "Africa and Latin America - Perspectives for intergovernmental co-operation" published for the use of member States of the two regions after the first joint meeting of Governmental Experts from Latin America and Africa on economic and technical co-operation held in Addis Ababa from 1 to 4 June 1982. Interregional trade promotion and expansion, human resources development and utilization, and science and technology for development are the three areas chosen for joint action. An interregional consultative machinery comprising representatives of the ECA and ECLAC secretariats, of representatives from each of the States of Latin America and Africa was to be established to monitor the implementation of proposals in the priority areas. To date however this machinery has not...
been established. The two secretariats have nonetheless been jointly implementing a trade expansion and a mineral resource development project within the framework of which study tours of African businessmen and mineral development specialists to Latin American countries have been organized at various times to identify opportunities and study organizational arrangements for financing and operations. The Government of Brazil is providing technical support for the implementation of the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa and discussions are underway for the participation of the same Government in the Industrial Development Decade for Africa.

Co-operation between the secretariat and ESCAP has been in the fields of trade promotion and multilateral payments arrangements. Within the ESCAP region, India and the People's Republic of China have contributed to the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development. The Government of India provides scholarships through ECA, tenable at Indian institutions for Africans and hosts study tours to India for African experts and ECA staff members in various fields. Similarly, the Government of the People's Republic of China has financed study tours to China for African specialists particularly in natural resources, energy and science and technology development. Agreement has also been reached on the provision, in Chinese institutions, of scholarships for African researchers and technicians especially in the field of new and renewable sources of energy.

With ECWA, ECA has established working links in the problem areas of the brain drain, statistics and regional documentation. The two secretariats have also identified other fields of potentially useful technical co-operation including renewable sources of energy, the creation of centres of excellence for the adaptation of modern science and technology for local uses through joint projects between scientific and research institutions of the two regions, food security which would encompass projects on desertification and soil and water resources management and the expansion of trade in forest industry products. While specific action has been undertaken in some of these areas, most of them as well as others not mentioned here are by and large on the agenda for ongoing negotiations especially within the framework of the Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Co-operation which is composed of the League of Arab States and the Organization of African Unity and in which ECA is represented.

Ways of enhancing co-operation with the ECE especially with respect to the development of ECA member States in the Mediterranean region have long been explored. There are great possibilities for joint action in the spheres of industrial co-operation, transport and communications, energy, water and agriculture. So far however, very few practical steps have been taken by the two commissions to implement joint projects in the region.
The foregoing is a general overview of the economic and technical co-operation activities which are being undertaken within the framework of the regional commissions on bilateral basis in favour of their member States. However, these bilateral activities were consolidated into multilateral approach in February 1985 when the Executive Secretaries approved the list of projects which their experts had drawn up, and approved the sharing arrangements to lead in their implementation. While various problems including shortage of resources have affected the pace of implementation, there is no doubt that that approach has strengthened the cause of technical and economic co-operation among developing countries.

In general, it is clear that there is no dearth of project ideas for effective co-operation among the various regional commissions. Similarly, the facilities available to the Commissions also hold considerable potential for the promotion of interregional co-operation. There are thus substantial grounds for contacts between the commissions to be further extended and intensified so that this potential can be translated into practical and meaningful terms. Hence, the need to establish and/or strengthen existing interregional intergovernmental machinery as well as increase substantially the commissions' resources for this purpose remain essential.

VIII. RATIONALIZATION OF STRUCTURES AND STREAMLINING OF SUBSIDIARY MACHINERY

The present organizational structure of the Commission secretariat is the result of measures taken over the years, at times, on the advice of Administration and Management Services (AMS) to regroup and realign programmes to better utilize available resources for the purpose of tackling regional needs and priorities. Considerable efforts have also been expended on the improvement of internal programming and overall programme co-ordination with the establishment of central programme analysis and co-ordinating units. While significant progress has been made in programme development and supervision, inadequate staff resources both in the co-ordination units and in the substantive divisions as indicated below continue to hamper the development and adoption of new approaches.

At the intergovernmental level, the Commission, in direct pursuance to resolution 32/197 decided at its fourteenth session held in Rabat in 1979, to abolish the Executive Committee and the Technical Committee of Experts, and replaced them by the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole whose responsibility is to prepare for the sessions of the Commission. The separate conferences of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers were also merged in 1979 into the single Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers. This Joint Conference meets on a biennial basis. The joint conference as well as the following sectoral policy-organs and advisory bodies submit their reports to the annual sessions of the Commission: the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning; the Conference of African Ministers of Trade; the Conference of African Ministers of Finance; the Conference of African Ministers of Industry; the Conference of African Ministers of Social Affairs; the Conference
of African Ministers of Human Resources, Planning, Development and Utilization; the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries; the Ministerial Councils of the MULPOCs, the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee on the Integration of Women in Development; the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Science and Technology Development; and the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment.

IX. BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND DELEGATION OF NECESSARY AUTHORITY

Paragraph 26 of the annex to resolution 32/197 called for adequate provision of budgetary and financial resources as well as the necessary authority to enable the regional commissions effectively to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to them. In 1982, the JIU report on ECA referred to this as the "Achilles heel in the implementation of the restructuring mandate" (JIU/REP/82/1, para. 109). The condition of the "heel" has since become progressively much worse.

The total ECA programme budget direct costs including direct allocations for substantive activities and extrabudgetary resources for technical assistance and operational activities rose steadily from $US 26.8 million during the 1976-1977 biennium to $US 75.4 million in 1986-1987 approximating a threefold rise in the ten-year period. However, the regular budget direct costs averaged a rate of increase of only about 1.5 per cent per annum in real terms for the five biennia since the restructuring resolution was adopted.

ECA has through an aggressive policy of resource mobilization for technical assistance and operational activities from the United Nations system as well as other multinational and bilateral donors and the African governments themselves, endeavoured to bridge a resource gap. While this gap has never been satisfactorily bridged, extrabudgetary resources had risen at a substantially faster rate than regular budget allocations such that by 1980-1981 these resources constituted about the same amount of the allocations by the General Assembly under Section 13 of the United Nations Budget - Economic Commission for Africa. This relationship has however since been lost as a result largely of world recession and tight financial policies on the part of donors and inspite of the near zero-growth principle governing the regular budget. Indeed, the significant shrinking in extrabudgetary resources both in terms of themselves and relative to the regular budget from a peak of about $US 31.5 million in 1982-1983 down to about $US 21.9 million estimated for 1986-1987 is, when viewed against the growth in bilateral aid to Governments, a cause of grave concern to the secretariat as it is an unmistakable sign of declining support for multilateralism and preference for bilateralism.

A significant shift has also occurred since the 1980-1981 biennium in the relative position of funding sources of extrabudgetary resources with United Nations agencies especially UNDP assuming greater importance as the
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Regular budget resources (direct costs)</strong> 1/</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct appropriation by the General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 13: Economic Commission for Africa</td>
<td>18,975.5</td>
<td>24,520.6</td>
<td>29,647.0</td>
<td>37,639.6</td>
<td>45,998.0</td>
<td>48,166.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 9: Transnational Corporations</td>
<td>113.0 2/</td>
<td>318.7</td>
<td>387.3</td>
<td>489.2</td>
<td>380.5</td>
<td>547.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 24: United Nations Regional Programme for Technical Co-operation</td>
<td>1,487.3</td>
<td>1,306.2</td>
<td>2,102.0</td>
<td>2,910.6</td>
<td>2,938.9</td>
<td>3,452.0</td>
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<td>Section 28: Administration and Management (translators and language training)</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>196.9</td>
<td>447.9</td>
<td>567.1</td>
<td>201.2</td>
<td>178.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 32: Construction, alterations and improvement and major maintenance</td>
<td>1,418.5</td>
<td>250.9</td>
<td>456.7</td>
<td>339.1</td>
<td>3,421.2</td>
<td>1,164.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>162.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>22,024.9</td>
<td>26,755.5</td>
<td>33,040.9</td>
<td>41,945.6</td>
<td>52,939.8</td>
<td>53,508.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **2. Extrabudgetary resources** 3/ |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| (a) Services in support of |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| (i) Other United Nations organizations | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| (ii) Extrabudgetary programmes | 3,587.9 | 3,866.7 | 3,159.8 | 3,159.8 | 1,836.5 | 1,836.5 |
| **Total** | 3,587.9 | 3,866.7 | 3,159.8 | 3,159.8 | 1,836.5 | 1,836.5 |

| **(b) Substantive activities** |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| - FAO | 798.0 | 795.0 | 927.0 5/ | 1,335.0 4/ | 1,560.0 4/ | 1,400.0 5/ |
| - UNFPA | 1,788.0 | 577.0 | 833.8 | 723.0 | - | - |
| - UNDP | 194.0 | - | - | - | - | - |
| - United Nations Trust Fund for African Development | 1,102.0 | 98.0 | 56.4 | 145.1 | - | - |
| - UNEP | 65.0 | - | 362.6 | 326.8 | 186.7 | 186.7 |
| - Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women | - | - | 142.6 | 373.0 | - | - |
| - Bilateral sources | 1,097.0 | 91.0 | 65.1 | 165.0 | 167.5 | 435.2 |
| - Other | 395.0 | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | 4,785.0 6/ | 2,215.0 6/ | 2,024.9 | 3,103.7 | 2,054.3 | 2,021.9 |
Table 1. Economic Commission for Africa. Budgetary resources

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<td><strong>(c) Operational projects</strong></td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>8,138.0</td>
<td>11,257.0</td>
<td>15,167.1</td>
<td>6,411.3</td>
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<td>United Nations Trust Fund for African Development</td>
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<td>1,815.1</td>
<td>1,036.9</td>
<td>351.3</td>
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<td>UNEP</td>
<td>441.0</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>1,676.0</td>
<td>6,171.8</td>
<td>5,330.2</td>
<td>6,071.8</td>
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<td>Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>955.6</td>
<td>187.4</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
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<td>UNCTAD</td>
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<td>188.6</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>580.0</td>
<td>861.0</td>
<td>482.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>173.0</td>
<td>22.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bilateral sources</td>
<td>1,499.0</td>
<td>3,944.2</td>
<td>2,065.0</td>
<td>2,592.4</td>
<td>4,847.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-governmental organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td>336.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,785.0</td>
<td>16,068.0</td>
<td>25,363.7</td>
<td>24,504.6</td>
<td>15,681.4</td>
<td>18,020.8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total extrabudgetary resources</strong></td>
<td>4,785.0</td>
<td>18,283.0</td>
<td>30,976.5</td>
<td>31,475.0</td>
<td>20,895.5</td>
<td>21,879.2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total all resources</strong></td>
<td>26,809.9</td>
<td>45,038.5</td>
<td>64,017.4</td>
<td>73,420.6</td>
<td>73,835.3</td>
<td>75,387.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Sources:

1/ Regular budget resources. Except where otherwise indicated, the following sources were used:


2/ Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979, Volume 1 (Supplement No. 6(A/32/6)).

3/ Extrabudgetary resources. These are initial estimates. Except where indicated otherwise, the following sources were used:


5/ Estimate, based on internal records.

6/ Extrabudgetary resources for services in support of extrabudgetary programmes and substantive activities.

Symbols

.. Data not available.

- Nil.
Table 1B: ECA Staff resources: Established posts, 1976-1977 to 1986-1987

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<td><strong>Regular budget</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Section 13, ECA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professional</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Local level</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>403</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>534</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>626</td>
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<td>B. Section 9 (TNCs)</td>
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<td>- Professional</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Local level</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Extrabudgetary (Section 13)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Professional</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Local level</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total regular plus extrabudgetary staff resources</strong></td>
<td>620</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>681</td>
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</table>
major provider of extrabudgetary resources. UNDP, through its allocations for the regional programme cycles for Africa, on average now accounts for about 37 per cent of ECA's total extrabudgetary funding. Another 23 per cent comes from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the remaining contributions are almost evenly distributed between bilateral and other sources including UNTFAD. The fervour with which UNTFAD was established and initially supported by the African governments has since been overtaken by their own economic and financial problems. Member States' contributions to the Fund have become progressively smaller and some countries pay up for pledges announced at pledging conferences only slowly. Thus, during the 1982-1983 biennium about $US 2.1 million were still outstanding from the pledges made in 1977, 1979 and 1981. The figure was $US 2.2 million in 1984-1985 biennium.

Developments in staff resources by and large reflect this budgetary performance. Total staff resources have grown only very modestly. Since 1977, regular budget funded staff grew by only a few new posts to accommodate mainly a new programme on the least developed countries and the small core staff at the various MULPOCs. The size of extrabudgetary funded staff, on the other hand, has been declining and fluctuating from biennium to biennium.

What all these developments mean is that, with the imperatives of the restructuring resolution and the rising expectations of the member States and their diverse demands for a much more comprehensive and visible participation by the Commission in their development efforts. ECA has been taking on substantially expanded responsibilities at the same time as resources made available to it were uncertain and progressively dwindling. This has adversely affected the extent of programme coverage as well as the intensity of activities. Already in 1968, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) had observed that ECA's professional staff complement of 137 was far from enough to deal with ECA's research, advisory and planning activities at the time (JIU/REP/68/10). Today, the thinness of the spread of resources is even more glaring when the 236 professional staff available for the 1986-1987 biennium are measured against a programme whose breadth and scope as already stated are almost all embracing.

A major feature of ECA's experience with the restructuring resolution has therefore been a continuous battle to manage grossly inadequate resources in order to deliver effectively in its various programme areas most of which are priority. The JIU, in its 1982 report (JIU/REP/82/1) identified a number of factors which have complicated this battle and hampered ECA's work considerably. Most of those factors are still characteristic of ECA's operations and if anything they have become much worse.

The JIU referred to the "patchwork" nature of ECA staff structure, which has resulted from increases in the professional staff complement inevitably coming predominantly through project and other extrabudgetary-funded posts for consultants, experts, regional advisers and temporary assistance staff who together constitute a significant proportion of total ECA staff. The
short-term nature, the fluidity and the administrative requirements of this category of posts have continued to slow down operations and overburden management generally.

Another factor is the high turnover of staff. On average, annual professional staff turnover is still in the region of about 15 per cent and still higher than the United Nations system average. The "hardship post" status of the duty station coupled with an unattractive grade structure has continued to hinder staff recruitment and retention. ECA's modest grade structure was recognized by the Office of Personnel Services (OPS) in 1979 at which time some 27 posts were recommended for upgrading. Most of these upgradings have still to be funded. The modest grade structure is now a particularly constraining factor at the senior staff level. In its 1982 report, the JIU observed that one Under-Secretary General and one D-2 were not sufficient to manage a programme of ECA's size. It therefore called for the creation of a second D-2 post so that the two areas of "programming" and "administration and management" would be organized and supervised at that level immediately below the Executive Secretary. The need and urgency of such an arrangement has never been so acutely felt as it is now. The demand on the Executive Secretary's time for intellectual leadership and guidance and his need to travel even more extensively in connection with Africa's current pervasive and ever deepening economic and social crisis have precipitated even further the urgency of the need for explicit arrangements and delegation of authority for effective action.

A third factor pertaining to staff resources to which the JIU referred and which still constitutes a serious stumbling block to effective operation is the slow and laborious recruiting process. Largely because of shared responsibilities between New York Headquarters and the Commission secretariat, the average period in which a regular and expert staff can be placed on board is still between six to nine months. Decisions on extensions of contracts, promotion and classifications, etc; still take almost just as long. The result is that the average vacancy rate of ECA's regular budget professional posts of 15 per cent and the average of 6 per cent of staff encumbering posts at a higher grade than their own observed by the JIU inspectors in 1982 have not changed significantly since. This has obviously continued to affect operational flexibility and responsiveness adversely.

It is not however only in staff resources that ECA is extremely deficient in terms of its operational needs. Inadequate financial resources have also meant that technical and equipment support systems are overburdened and relatively ineffective and need substantial modernization. Conference, translation, printing and reproduction services remain understaffed and underequipped and major outputs are increasingly being delivered on time only through ad hoc and crisis management circumstances.

The need to travel on mission to collect data and information, consult with governments, provide technical assistance and advisory services and to implement projects in the field has grown in tandem with the rapid pace with which ECA has become operational. This has happened at a time when
travel in Africa has become much more costly and difficult. While a fairly satisfactory machinery has now been put in place to control mission travels and to ensure their relevance to programme execution and adequate preparation, the demand far outstrips the available travel funds and the secretariat is increasingly unable to meet its travel responsibilities.

It is clear that the lack of adequate resources is a problem enough in itself for the Commission. It is however also obvious that this problem is unnecessarily complicated by the inadequate delegation of authority from Headquarters. Programme delivery at the regional level will continue to be hampered with built-in stresses and strains for as long as certain substantive and administrative responsibilities including especially personnel, finance, procurement and contracting functions are not decentralized to the regional commissions.

The restructuring resolution has, along with various other General Assembly mandates, specifically called for this form of decentralization to strengthen the capabilities of the regional commissions and to render United Nations operations in the respective regions more effective. As it is, despite considerable groundwork, the fear expressed by the JIU inspectors in their report on ECA (JIU/REP/82/1) that the decentralization process may be stopped in its tracks has been confirmed and this largely because Headquarters has been unwilling to divest itself of major responsibilities and, as far as the ECA is concerned, in spite of the fact that the Commission is now well disposed to take on such responsibilities. The abortive efforts to confront the thorny issue of decentralization of activities and resources in 1984 were particularly unfortunate in this case.

The redeployment of resources within the framework of decentralization still has substantial possibility of putting the restructuring mandates into greater effect. In the context of the prevailing financial crisis facing the United Nations, this is as good a time as ever to reactivate the decentralization process, and this time to ensure that the appropriate responsibilities, activities and resources are identified and speedily transferred along with the necessary authority.
X. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In reviewing the implementation of General Assembly resolution 32/197 in this paper, it is clear that sufficient evidence abounds to justify the hopes and confidence of the General Assembly in accepting and adopting in 1977 the recommendations of the ad hoc committee on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations particularly those on the regional structures for regional and interregional co-operation. Indeed, those recommendations confirmed the growing views in the late 1960s and early 1970s that the best approach to development analysis and planning is the "Unified" one. They also confirmed the view that development policies and activities that are likely to succeed are those in which the beneficiaries actively participate. Just last year, Mr. Bertrand, the veteran inspector of the Joint Inspection Unit, in his reflections on the reform of the United Nations came up with the idea of "regional development agencies" or "enterprises" and emphasized the opportunities which such arrangements could give for effective determination and discussion of mutual problems.

Unfortunately in spite of the significant progress that has been made in enabling member States to discuss their mutual problems at the regional level in the framework of the regional commissions and this important recent view, there are now suggestions from certain quarters that the regional commissions should either be abolished or have their activities which have always been determined by their member States reduced considerably. There is no doubt that such suggestions constitute backsliding steps. This is particularly so in respect of the suggestion that the regional commissions should be divested of their executing agency role since both substantive and operational activities emanate from programmes and they are mutually reinforcing.

In saying the foregoing, it is not being suggested that resources particularly financial resources do not matter. On the contrary, it is being said that when the question of resources is being discussed it must be related to the relevance and appropriateness of the activities being carried out and to how best such activities can be carried out.

In that context, it will be noted that throughout this review, the issue of resource limitations as an overriding factor constraining the smooth and successful implementation of the restructuring process has been raised over and over again. Some would say to labour the point in the prevailing difficult and critical financial situation in which the United Nations finds itself is self-delusion. The issue is however real and legitimate for ECA, which over the years has done so much to raise its own profile to such a high level that the expectations and demands of its member States are themselves forever rising. It has been argued and admitted that much can still be done by the secretariat by way of imaginative adjustments and improvements in resource management procedures and by member States themselves in the form of enhanced and additional material support for the activities of the Commission. A lot more can however still be done from within the United Nations system to increase the delivery capacity of the Commission.
This is especially pertinent in the context of the crucial phase at which the Commission finds itself; namely, the need to play a leadership role within the system in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990 within the framework of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990. The rationalization and harmonization of system procedures, structures and activities and the allocation of adequate resources and the granting of requisite authority to ECA and its secretariat will be critical factors in the successful implementation of these programmes in the coming few years.

In concluding this review, the following summary of its major recommendations is pertinent:

(a) The programming environment in Africa has now been given a clearly defined framework and a definite sense of direction with the adoption of widely accepted philosophies and strategies of development. To avoid divergent action, waste of resources and a duplication of efforts and to address the real needs and requirements of member States, all agencies and units of the United Nations system, other international development institutions as well as bilateral aid donors should endeavour to work within this general programming framework with a full and greater recognition of the Commission's "main development centre" "team leadership" and "co-ordinating" roles,

(b) In this connection, existing joint programming links between the Commission and other agencies should be strengthened and deepened and new ones established;

(c) Greater efforts should be made by all agencies to enhance the potential of the Commission's various MULPOCs to serve as catalyst for the co-ordination and integration of United Nations inter-country activities at the subregional level and for providing technical support to the activities of subregional and other intergovernmental groupings;

(d) There should be enhanced interaction between the Commission secretariat and Headquarters units and decision-making centres. The regional secretariats should for instance be more actively involved in the policy and decision-making work of the second and fifth committees of the General Assembly, CPC, PPBB and the ACC machinery;

(e) Recommendations on the common definition of regions and subregions on the identical location of regional and subregional offices should be put into effect so as to enhance operational activities;

(f) The various regional and subregional institutions set up to promote collective self-reliance and self-sustainment need the sustained support of both governments and international agencies and remain instruments of development at their disposal;
(g) Additional resources need to be mobilized and made available to the regional commissions to build on the identified opportunities for economic and technical co-operation that can be carried out within the framework of the commissions;

(h) The existing machinery for interregional co-operation need to be greatly strengthened and commissions' resources for this purpose substantively increased;

(i) The solution to the resource limitation problem should be considered within the framework of a reactivated process of decentralization; this time with due regard given to the "development centre" and "team leadership" roles of the commissions and with programmes and activities now being undertaken by central units but which should legitimately be the responsibility of the commissions to be decentralized along with the existing resources attached to them as well as the required authority.