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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
Seventh Meeting of the Council of
Plenipotentiaries of the North
African MULPOC

Tangier (Morocco)
27-28 March 1987

REPORT OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES OF THE NORTH AFRICAN MULPOC

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I. PARTICIPATION AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The Seventh meeting of the Council of Plenipotentiaries of the North African MULPOC was held in Tangier, Morocco, 27-28 March 1987.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following MULPOC member States: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.
3. Also present were the following United Nations specialized organizations and agencies: the International Labour Office (ILO), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
4. The following intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were represented by observers: the Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations (AATPO) and the Centre of Industrial Studies for the Maghreb (CEIM).

II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

5. The meeting unanimously elected the following officers:

Chairman : Morocco

Vice-chairman: Egypt

and the ECA secretariat was asked to make the report of the meeting.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The participants adopted the agenda as follows:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
4. Examination and adoption of the report of the Committee of Experts and the draft resolutions
5. Any other business
6. Adoption of the report
7. Date and venue of the next meeting
8. Closing ceremony.

IV. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening addresses

7. The Tunisian delegate as outgoing chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the Secretary general of Tangier province, who represented H.E. the Governor of Tangier, and on behalf of all the delegates he expressed gratitude to the Moroccan government and to the local authorities for their hospitality and warm welcome.
8. On behalf of the Moroccan minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, Mr. Marchiche Benacher, head of co-operation with african regional organizations and the ECA, welcomed the participants and recalled that North African MULPOC was celebrating its tenth anniversary since the adoption of resolution 311(XIII) of the ECA Council of ministers, 1977, in Kinshasa creating the African MULPOCs. He noted that a year ago the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a priority Programme of Action for economic recovery in Africa 1986-1990 which was to aid and revitalise the promotion of co-operation among the countries of the region. He emphasized the role of the North African MULPOC which since its creation had been working to achieve the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action especially in agriculture, to achieve food self-sufficiency. He underlined the importance for the subregion of setting up a Preferential Trade Area, a priority objective in MULPOC's work programme.
9. Speaking of the international Pavilion to accommodate the international organizations with headquarters in Tangier he noted that His Majesty's Government was continuing its support for intergovernmental organizations stressing that Government of Morocco was doing everything in its power to support these organizations and provide the best conditions for them to carry out their missions: the economic and social development of the African continent.
10. He congratulated the new Director of the MULPOC on his appointment as head of the organization and thanked the acting Director and all members of the Council of Plenipotentiaries.
11. The head of the ECA International Trade Division, Mr. B.W. Mutharika, on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the ECA took the floor to thank His Majesty King of Morocco for the support he had unfailingly given to the MULPOC, noting that the most recent evidence of this was putting the International Pavilion at the disposal of the international organizations in Tangier.

12. He then gave a brief background account of the MULPOCs since their creation, stressing that these instruments were set up following the decision of the ECA Conference of Ministers, March 1977. Since then the five African subregions, including North Africa, possessed bodies for discussion and harmonization in which questions of economic and social development had been debated and whose main role was to promote subregional and regional economic co-operation.

13. He then stressed the UN Programme of Action for economic recovery and development in Africa which should give the necessary impetus to achieve as soon as possible, the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action in the various sectors. He emphasized the priority given in the Experts' recommendations to the trade sector with a view of establishing a Preferential Trade Area in North Africa. He indicated that MULPOC would not achieve its objectives namely promotion of subregional co-operation unless it was assured of member States' support endowing it with greater efficiency to achieve these objectives of economic development and integration in North Africa.

14. The Director of the MULPOC warmly thanked the authorities of Tangier province who had unfailingly shown their support for the MULPOC. He emphasized the importance of the Programme for Women specifying that the meeting of the MULPOC legislative bodies had been preceded by the subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development which had made important decisions for relaunching this programme in the near future.

15. As concerned the meeting of the MULPOC legislative bodies he recalled that these meetings were being held at a time when Africa was facing an economic crisis and that it was indispensable to unite all efforts to surmount this crisis and achieve the development aims set forth in the recommendations of the Lagos Plan of Action.

Study of the report of the Seventh meeting of the Committee of Experts and its draft resolutions (item 4 of the agenda)

16. The Chairman recalled that the question of the representation of the North African subregion in the Committee of Ten of the Conference of Ministers of Planning, Development and Utilization of human resources had been postponed to be examined by the Council of Plenipotentiaries.

17. The debate had not reached a decision, so several delegations felt it preferable to consult their respective countries.

18. Concerning paragraph 18 of the report of the meeting of the Committee of Experts and following a proposal made by one delegation it was decided to add a sentence to the end of the paragraph. The phrase would read as follows: "One delegation also recalled that fisheries could greatly contribute to the solution of food problems in the countries of the subregion and desired that this sector receive more attention as an addition to agriculture".
19. A secretariat representative invited participants to discuss the desirability of modifying the frequency of MULPOC meetings to fit in with the MULPOCs in the other subregions in Africa, which had decided to hold their meetings every two years. He said this question had been raised with other United Nations authorities.
20. The Council of Plenipotentiaries examined the proposal made by the North African MULPOC secretariat to hold meetings of the Experts' Committee and the Council of Plenipotentiaries once every two years. This change according to the MULPOC secretariat should save money and allow the necessary time for MULPOC to implement resolutions, he also indicated that there was at present some harmony in the frequency of the meetings of the five MULPOCs, the ECA legislative bodies and other deliberative organs of the UN family. In view of the importance of this question it was decided that a recommendation made in this sense would need time to enable the delegates to consult with their respective ministries and governments so as to take a decision at ministerial level at the next ECA meetings, a decision which would have to fit in with the other MULPOCs.
21. The representative of the International Trade Centre (ITC), on behalf of his organization, expressed his full support to the aim of creating a Preferential Trade Area for the member countries of the North African MULPOC. He referred to the long experience of the ITC in designing and implementing projects for the expansion of trade co-operation at subregional levels in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and confirmed that his organization would be fully willing to supply MULPOC with many kinds of technical assistance in this area. He also considered that the execution of a preparatory stage, which could be funded by the UNDP would identify the technical basis of a future Preferential Trade Area and would constitute a particularly useful contribution to political decision making by North African MULPOC member States.
22. Having made some changes, the Council of Plenipotentiaries adopted the report and draft resolutions of the Experts' Committee. The text of the resolutions will be found annexed to the report:
- Resolution n°.1: Promotion and strengthening of co-operation in the agricultural sector of North Africa (Annex I);

- Resolution n°.2: Establishment of a Preferential Trade Area in North Africa (annex II);
- Resolution n°.3: Industrial Development Decade in Africa (annex III);
- Resolution n°.4: Creation of a Permanent Institutional Structure for Harmonization of Maritime Transportation in the Subregion (annex IV).

Any other business (item 5 of the agenda)

23. No question was raised under this item.

Adoption of the report (item 6 of the agenda)

24. At its last meeting, 28 March 1987, the Council of Plenipotentiaries adopted the present report of its proceedings.

Date and venue of the next meeting (item 7 of the agenda)

25. It was decided that the MULPOC consult with the member States to decide on the dates and venue of the next meeting.

Closing ceremony (item 8 of the agenda)

26. The meeting proposed a vote of thanks to His Majesty the King of Morocco and his government, to the Moroccan people, and to the local authorities (annex V). It also adopted the text of a letter of thanks addressed to the Executive Secretary of the ECA concerning the return to ECA headquarters of Mr. Fakhfakh (annex VI), and of a letter addressed to the Director General of UNIDO requesting UNIDO to continue and develop its activities in North Africa particularly in the context of the Industrial Development Decade in Africa (annex VII).

27. After the customary expressions of gratitude, the Chairman adjourned the meeting.

Resolution No.1

Promoting and strengthening cooperation
in the agricultural sector in North Africa

The Council of Plenipotentiaries of the North African MULPOC,

Recalling resolution No.2, March 1986, concerning a medium term programme for agriculture and food security,

Having taken cognizance of the Experts' consultancy report on promoting and strengthening cooperation in the North African agricultural sector,

Noting that the Technical Workshop of Agricultural Planning Officials could not be held in March 1987,

1. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to convene the Technical Workshop of Agricultural Planning Officials;

2. Requests all member States to send highest level delegations to this workshop; senior officials in charge of research and development in agriculture and fisheries;

3. Further requests the UNDP and the FAO to continue their support for member States' efforts in developing subregional cooperation in the agricultural sector and launches an urgent appeal to the UNDP to give all its support to the approval of the assistance project to promote and strengthen subregional cooperation in the North African agricultural sector, as prepared and submitted to the UNDP by the ECA in the context of the Fourth regional programming cycle.

Resolution No.2

Commitment for the Establishment of a Preferential Trade Area
in North Africa

The Council of Plenipotentiaries of the North African MULPOC,

Recalling the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos which stipulated the establishment of a Preferential Trade Area for North Africa,

Further recalling resolutions on Trade Promotion in North Africa adopted by the Council of Plenipotentiaries at its meeting held in April 1985 and March 1986,

Reiterating resolution 568(XXI) adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers at its session held in April 1986 inviting member States to accelerate the process of economic integration within existing sub-regional groupings,

1. Reaffirms the acceptance and commitment of our respective Governments to the establishment of a Preferential Trade Area for North African countries;
2. Undertakes to institute negotiations for a Treaty for the Establishment of a Preferential Trade Area and a Payments and Clearing Arrangement;
3. Establishes an Inter-governmental Team of Experts to define steps to be taken to set up the Preferential Trade Area;
4. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to institute measures to convene the first meeting of the Inter-governmental Negotiating Team to discuss the modalities for the establishment of the proposed Preferential Trade Area and to submit a progress report to the next meeting of the Council of Plenipotentiaries of the Tangier-based MULPOC;
5. Further requests that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assists the Inter-governmental Team in its endeavour to establish the Preferential Trade Area.

Resolution No.3

Industrial Development Decade for Africa

The Council of Plenipotentiaries of the North African MULPOC,

Recalling its resolution No.3 and No.6 of April 1985 and March 1986 on the Industrial Development Decade for Africa,

Recalling also the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action, the IDDA Programme, the United Nations Programme for the Economic Recovery of Africa as well as the various resolutions on the industrial development in Africa for enhancing the cooperation and industrial integration at the subregional and regional level,

Aware of the important need to develop and promote the industrial cooperation between North African countries of the subregion, in particular, and Africa in general,

1. Reiterates its appeal to UNIDO for promoting and further intensifying the Technical Assistance Programme in the North African Subregion within the framework of IDDA;

2. Requests UNIDO to convene, as soon as possible, a subregional meeting for the industrial cooperation in accordance with resolution No.3 adopted at the last Council of Plenipotentiaries of the North African MULPOC in April 1986;

3. Urges UNIDO to accord top priority for funding out of its own regular budget and implementing the IDDA programme to which it attaches a particular importance within the framework of general objectives of plans/programmes adopted by the African heads of State.

Resolution No.4

Creation of a Permanent Institutional Structure
for Harmonization of Maritime Transportation in the Subregion

The Council of Plenipotentiaries of the North African MULPOC,

Aware of the numerous economic advantages which orderly and concerted promotion of maritime transportation development can offer to the North African subregion,

Concerned to ensure a heightened performance in the promotion of maritime trade in North Africa, particularly through the full and final mastery of all the components in an overall policy for maritime transport,

Bearing in mind the recommendations contained in the survey "establishment of efficient shipping maritime links between North Africa and Africa South of Sahara",

Recalling the recommendations of the meeting of North African Shipping and External Trade Operators,

Having noted the ECA/MULPOC report of the mission to the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport,

Noting that this mission has still not filled the institutional gap in the area,

Aware of the fact that in creating subregional instruments for co-operation rationalization must be a priority and that in any case budgetary constraints must weigh heavily in the decision-making,

1. Decides to set up a technical sub-committee responsible for examining questions concerning sea links in the subregion and to produce a report on this for the appropriate bodies of MULPOC that is to say: for the experts' sub-committee. The sub-committee shall be composed of maritime experts from the six member States;

2. Requests the ECA to provide the secretariat for this sub-committee especially as concerns providing all necessary basic technical documentation for the discussions;

.../

3. Asks the ECA Secretariat to prepare for the Eight meeting of MULPOC a draft project for the sub-committee and to submit it some days before hand;

4. Requests the MULPOC secretariat to convene the first meeting of this sub-committee some days before the Eighth Meeting of the MULPOC.

MOTION OF THANKS

The MULPOC Council of Plenipotentiaries at the end of its Seventh Meeting in Tangier 28 March 1987;

Expresses its profound gratitude to His Majesty King Hassan II and his government, to the Moroccan people, and to the authorities of the Province of Tangier for the warm welcome extended to the participants and the unfailing support given to the North African MULPOC;

Also expresses gratitude to His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco and his government for having placed the International Pavilion in Tangier at the disposal of the North African MULPOC and the other International Organizations.

LETTER OF THANKS
TO
THE ECA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Council of Plenipotentiaries of the North African MULPOC at its plenary session in Tangier 27-28 March 1987, desires to express to you its thanks and gratitude for the untiring efforts you have unceasingly made to achieve the objectives of economic co-operation and integration among the States of the subregion for promoting the welfare of its people.

On this occasion it invites you to express to Mr. T. Fakhfakh, former acting Director of the North African MULPOC, its highest consideration and esteem for the devoted and selfless service he constantly performed throughout the period he spent with the North African MULPOC, and also its warmest wishes for success in his new duties in the Economic Commission for Africa.

LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNIDO

Tangier, 28 March 1987
TG/2.3.2

Sir,

The Council of Plenipotentiaries of the North African MULPOC countries (which has just been held in Tangier, Morocco, 27-28 March 1987) has the honour to inform you of the following considerations:

The Council of Plenipotentiaries has just adopted resolution n°.3 on the Industrial Development Decade in Africa and we have pleasure in forwarding it to you.

The Council of Plenipotentiaries expresses its profound concern that the subregional IDDA meeting as stipulated in resolutions N°.3 and N°.6, 1985, 1986 did not take place.

The Council of Plenipotentiaries notes with regret the setting aside of the North African Decade activities and desires that this programme be, not only continued, but also reinforced for the subregion. Furthermore it requests the Director General to do all in his power to maintain the integral nature of the IDDA programme to accord with resolution 35/66B of the UN General Assembly, and the different decisions of the meetings concerning industrial development in Africa. In this context, the Council of plenipotentiaries supports the decision to fund the special IDDA Programme out of the regular budget of UNIDO in accordance with the pertinent resolutions of the UN General Assembly.

The Council of Plenipotentiaries reiterates its willingness to co-operate fully with UNIDO in the execution of the IDDA programme and requests the Director General to entire priority to the reinforcing of industrial co-operation within our subregion, and with the other African subregions.

We hereby assure you of our entire willingness to co-operate with UNIDO.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Council of Plenipotentiaries
of the North African MULPOC
countries

Mr. D. Siazon
Director General
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