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**UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

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Distr.: GENERAL

E/ECA/CM.14/27/Summary  
25 March 1988

Original: ENGLISH

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

**Ninth meeting of the Technical  
Preparatory Committee of the  
Whole**

**Niamey, Niger  
5-12 April 1988**

**Item 8 of the provisional agenda\***

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

**Twenty-third session of the Commission/  
fourteenth meeting of the Conference  
of Ministers**

**Niamey, Niger  
14-18 April 1988**

**Item 6 of the provisional agenda\*\***

**BIENNIAL CONSOLIDATED REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES, WORK  
PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET OF ECA-SPONSORED REGIONAL  
AND SUBREGIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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\* E/ECA/TPCW.9/1/Rev.1.

\*\* E/ECA/CM.14/1.

1. The Eighth Conference of Chief Executives of ECA-sponsored regional and subregional institutions was held in Tangiers, Kingdom of Morocco, from 15-17 March 1988, under the chairmanship of Professor Adebayo Adedeji, United Nations UnderSecretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA. The Conference was officially opened by the Governor of the King of Morocco in Tangiers and was attended by seventeen Chief Executives and their senior officials.

2. The programme of work for the Conference was as follows:

(a) Pre-conference seminar on "Programme budgeting as a tool for effective management", 15 March 1988.

(b) Meetings of the Specialized Groups of the ECA-sponsored institutions, 16 March 1988.

(c) The Eighth Conference of Chief Executives, 16-17 March 1988.

3. The Conference deliberated on a 14-item agenda. Recommendations and decisions on major issues are presented hereunder.

#### Group Insurance Scheme

4. This issue has been on the agenda of the Chief Executives for several years. Given the delays in implementing the proposal for Group Insurance Scheme, a number of institutions have taken out individual policies with either ALICO or VAN BREDA companies. The Conference decided that institutions insuring with each company should arrange for a group scheme and the others should decide whether to insure with ALICO or VAN BREDA.

#### ECA-sponsored institutions and the implementation of UN-PAAERD

5. The Conference agreed that the institutions should be seen to be playing an active role in the implementation of UN-PAAERD. Towards this end, it was recommended that they make substantive inputs to the Mid-term Review; their roles in the implementation of UN-PAAERD should be included on the agenda of their policy organs so that member States would be better informed on the subject.

#### Relations between ECA and ECA-sponsored institutions as regards execution of bilateral and multilateral projects

6. The Conference focused on two critical issues: procedures for recruitment of project personnel; procedures for procurement. On the former, the following decisions were reached:

- (i) For recruitment of local General Service Staff, full authority is to be delegated to the Chief Executives. Relevant guidelines prepared by ECA should be carefully followed and ECA informed on completion of the process.

- (ii) For recruitment of National Professional Project Personnel, posts are to be advertised, selection undertaken by a local committee which should include UNDP, and recommendations submitted to ECA for approval.
- (iii) For internationally-recruited staff, regardless of country of origin, present recruitment procedures should remain in force.
- (iv) On renewal of appointments, ECA should be informed three months before the expiration of the contract. If no action is taken by ECA within a reasonable period of time, then the Chief Executive can proceed with action on his recommendation.
- (v) The Division of Administration (ECA) should monitor implementation of the above arrangements and report to the next Conference.

On procurement procedures, the Conference concluded as follows:

- (i) For purchases up to the value of US\$5,000, the request should be considered and approved by a local procurement committee. A signed copy of the minutes as well as copies of quotations received must be submitted to the relevant ECA substantive division and to the Technical Assistance Co-ordination and Operations Office (TACOO) to ensure that the goods procured are in accordance with the provisions of the project document.
- (ii) All single purchases in excess of US\$5,000 should be submitted to the ECA Committee on Contracts for consideration and recommendation to the Executive Secretary. Requests should be submitted through each institution's relevant substantive ECA division which, with TACOO, should confirm that the goods and services required are in full conformity with the project and that funds are available to meet the costs involved.
- (iii) For each purchase over US\$40,000 in value, in addition to the Executive Secretary's endorsement, the case must be submitted to the UN Headquarters Committee on Contracts for review and approval.
- (iv) Given the difficulties experienced in timely procurement, it was strongly recommended that at the time of the signing of a project document a Project Implementation Plan, covering all aspects of the project, should be drawn up, and rigidly adhered to. Procurement must be planned well in advance, given the range of factors outside of the control of the institutions and ECA that impinge on the process.

7. On auditing, the Conference noted that in several institutions, internal auditing is ex post rather than ex ante. Given the fact that the institutions are small, it was not considered necessary to recruit a specialist with specific responsibility for internal auditing; rather, in every institution, a senior official should be designated to perform this function.

### Harmonization and Standardization of Documentation and Information Systems

8. The Conference took the following decisions on the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Harmonization and Standardization of Documentation and Information Systems of ECA-sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions:

- (i) Full-fledged membership of the Standing Committee should be open to all regional and subregional institutions in the region with substantive information activities. With this amendment, the Conference adopted the Terms of Reference, Organization and Functions of the Standing Committee.
- (ii) Chief Executives should ensure that their institutions are represented on the Standing Committee and that their representatives participate regularly in its work.
- (iii) Chief Executives are urged to complete the questionnaire on information systems and services in their institutions so as to enable PADIS to provide an accurate picture of available documentation and information systems in the institutions. The Chairman should be provided with regular reports on the subject.
- (iv) As there is an urgent need to compile the reports of on-going and completed users needs studies, PADIS should approach all the institutions for copies of studies undertaken by them and make these available to all members of the Standing Committee.
- (v) The draft agreement between PADIS and the institutions on modalities for co-operation and efficient exchange of information was adopted with the provision that it should be as flexible as possible in its implementation taking into account the particularities of each institution.
- (vi) PADIS and the institutions should exchange their work programmes on a regular basis.
- (vii) PADIS should make every effort to provide training and technical assistance to the ECA-sponsored institutions.
- (viii) A sub-committee on norms and standards should be established. PADIS should prepare the working documents proposing norms and standards, for consideration by the sub-committee which should meet at the same time as the Standing Committee.
- (ix) While welcoming the publication of the first issue of the Directory of Experts, the Conference noted that the quality and comprehensiveness of future editions would depend on the co-operation of the institutions.

Bulletin of the ECA-sponsored institutions

9. As 1988 marks the 30th anniversary of ECA, it was agreed that the contributions of the institutions to the third issue of the Bulletin should focus on their achievements and plans for the future, in the context of the role of ECA in promoting socio-economic development in Africa. The theme of the Bulletin will be "A System Within a System".

Seminar on Programme Budgeting

10. The Conference strongly recommended that efforts be made by all institutions to introduce programme budgeting, given its usefulness as a tool for efficient management of resources. At the next Conference, Chief Executives would report on actions taken in this regard.

Date and venue of the Ninth Conference

11. The meeting decided to hold the Ninth Conference in ECA Headquarters, Addis Ababa, on a date to be determined later.