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UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Task Force on the Review and Appraisal of  
The Policy, Programmes and Management Capacity of  
The Economic Commission for Africa

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA IN THE 1990S:  
FACING AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES**

**Priority Area : Strengthening the Social, Cultural and  
Human Dimensions of Development**

## **Introduction**

The mandate of the Commission as conceived originally and as elaborated in the various resolutions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the General Assembly and the Commission itself, can be succinctly summed up as "facilitating concerted action for the economic development of Africa, including its social aspects and maintaining and strengthening economic co-operation in the region and the co-operation of the African countries with other countries of the world". The *raison d'être* of the Commission remains extant and is encapsulated, in particular, in the Commission's six areas of high priority as reflected in the 1992-1997 Medium-Term Plan.

### **1. Programme Orientation and Activities Undertaken by ECA**

In carrying out its mandate, the ECA undertakes a number of activities in this priority area of the social, cultural and human dimensions of development. The main thrust of these activities centres around three areas namely:

- a. Conferences, workshops, symposia, seminars, fellowships and training programmes;
- b. Recurrent and non-recurrent publications; and
- c. Advisory services and technical assistance.

In the priority area, there are a number of important legislative organs: the ECA Conference of Ministers (the legislative body for the Commission); the ECA Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization; the African Regional Coordination Committee on Women; the Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of African Universities, the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, and the Conference of African Ministers of Social Affairs (AMSA). The ECA Conference of Ministers, by a resolution adopted in 1987, requires the Commission to report annually on the African Social Situation while the duty of AMSA is to address the entire spectrum of social issues as may be presented to it by the joint secretariats (ECA and OAU). Equally, the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization set up a Ministerial follow-up Committee of Ten to monitor trends in the human resources sector, draw up an annual balance sheet and present

a report to the Conference every three years. In other ad-hoc fora, important regional positions have been taken on Africa's social and human development. Prominent among these are, the African Charter for Social Action; the Khartoum Declaration; and, the African Charter on Popular Participation.

Comprehensive reports on the human and social situation in the African region are prepared regularly. Such reports have as an objective to: (a) provide member States with information on the performance of social and human development indicators; (b) assist in the formulation of social and human development programmes and strategies and propose modalities of implementing them; and (c) make recommendations to technicians and policy makers on ways of intervening in the critical social and human development areas with a view to inducing long-term structural transformation and development of the African region.

In an attempt to re-orient social and human development policies and programmes towards the developmental mainstream, the Secretariat provides to member States, a wide range of training and advisory services, designed to strengthen social and human development policies and programmes, upgrade skills in human resources planning and social administration and create or reinforce institutions charged with the human resources and social development functions. These activities cover a wide spectrum and range from manpower and employment planning techniques, the development of statistics on women in the informal sector, to the promotion of small-scale food enterprises and training of curriculum development experts. Some of these activities are undertaken at the subregional level by the MULPOCs.

In addition, a number of activities in the priority area are proposed in the 1992-93 Programme Budget. These relate to several technical publications on topical social issues, e.g. health; youth; crime; education; social security schemes; unemployment among the educated; brain-drain; advancement and integration of women in development and housing policies. Similarly, a number of meetings, symposia, workshops, training programmes, etc. have been proposed to cover the different aspects of the social, cultural and human dimensions of development. These efforts will be complemented by advisory and technical assistance activities in the priority area.

Some of the ECA-sponsored institutions play a prominent role in strengthening the social and human dimensions of development in the region. For instance, ACARTSOD plays an important role in promoting and co-ordinating applied research and training

activities in the field of social development at the national, subregional and regional level, and UNAFRI in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

Recently, the ECA created an Inter-Divisional Committee on Development with social concern. One of the objectives of the Committee is "to ensure that the Commission's programme of activities reflects the social concerns in the pursuit of economic development". Five criteria were applied in ascertaining whether a particular activity adequately addressed the social dimension of development. The findings of the preliminary analysis to determine the extent to which the Commission's work incorporated social dimension in its activities indicated that out of 570 outputs, some 232 (or 41 percent) reflected areas of social concern. There is however need to delineate, more rigorously, the boundaries to be used in determining social, cultural and human dimensions of an activity, as there seems to be lack of consensus, especially among Divisional Chiefs as to the precise meaning of these terms.

It must however be noted that in most of the programmes and activities of the Commission the cultural dimension has not featured sufficiently. There is a clear need on the part of programme managers to pay increasing attention in their design of programmes to the possible implications of the cultural dimension.

## **2. Changes and Emerging Challenges in Africa**

### **1. The major changes**

There are a number of changes that have taken or are taking place in Africa in the priority field of social, cultural and human development. Broadly these changes can be grouped under four categories of trends: (i) changes in the orders of magnitude, (ii) changes in perceptions, (iii) changes in the ordering of relative importance of the different components of the priority area and (iv) changes in time frames.

Some of these changes have had devastating consequences on the African social and human situation. Those with the most insidious effects are: (i) increase in levels of illiteracy, marking a reversal of the gains made since independence, (ii) an erosion of the skills base for development through the brain drain, dramatic drop in quality and relevance of higher education, (iii) an erosion of public executive capacity caused by a demotivated public sector work-force, increased incompetence and political interference, (iv) a cheapening of labour caused by persistently negative producer price changes and the decline in real salaries and wages, (v) increased unemployment and underemployment

and a massive growth of the low-productivity informal sector, (vi) dramatic reductions in access to basic social services such as health, education, food, housing, etc. (vii) resurgence of diseases that had been controlled as a result of increasing poor nutrition and unhealthy environments, and (viii) the spread of poverty and a concomitant increase in crime, drug trafficking and drug abuse, prostitution, etc. At the same time, Africa's efforts to move away from this quagmire are thwarted by a debt crisis which currently stands at over US\$270 billion and debt-servicing obligations, which increase pressures for the allocation of meagre resources among the different sectors. Usually, the social and human development sectors are the first to suffer.

On the positive side, pressures for democracy in the continent are gaining momentum. To the extent that this implies an increased role for popular participation, the process of the humanization of development, through the empowerment of the people, may soon underpin our development orientation. This positive trend should already start to influence the design of the Commission's programmes and orientation towards "people-centred" activities directed at the grassroots.

**(a) Changes in the orders of magnitude**

The African social and economic crisis of the 1980s (with early origins in the 1970s) brought to the fore the enormity of the change that social conditions in Africa had undergone in terms of magnitude. By the end of the 1980s, it was mind-boggling to observe the worsening, in magnitude, of almost all basic social indicators relative to the 1960s. To cite but a few: the population faced with hunger and starvation rose to over 150 million; the number of malnourished and undernourished increased dramatically; the ratios of doctors and hospital beds to population worsened; epidemics became more frequent and contagious diseases (meningitis, cholera, malaria, etc) became more rampant. The AIDS plague has exacerbated the social and human situation.

In terms of the human dimension, the very rapid population growth ensured that there was an unmistakable change of magnitude in terms of the numbers of people on the African continent. Between 1960 and the end of the 1980s, Africa's population had more than doubled. The implications of this change in magnitude cannot be over-stressed and a lot has been said about this. On the cultural front, no quantification can be easily made. However, one should point to the degree of alienation, misplacement and underutilisation of the African people as evidenced in the growth of the educated unemployed, illicit income generation activities and the brain drain. While these may be motivated by economic reasons, they nevertheless reflect, to a certain degree, the cultural erosion that is insidiously taking place in African countries.

**(b) Changes in perceptions**

Both inside and outside Africa, there have been changes in perceptions (by especially academicians, policy analysts and, to a lesser extent, politicians) about the important linkages among the social, cultural and human dimensions of development. In many ways, the social, cultural and human dimensions have, at least conceptually, moved from the periphery of development to the centre stage of what is now known as human-centred development. It should be noted that in Africa, consideration of the social dimension has tended to polarise around the issues of structural adjustment. But while such polarisation has helped to dramatise the importance of social factors, it has tended to create the impression that social factors are more or less neutral (or an aside) rather than contributing factors to development. Thus, in the minds of many, it is sufficient to "mitigate" the negative effects of any programme (stabilisation, adjustment or development) rather than to invest in the possible driving force of these social factors. It is common now to associate social factors with the vulnerable, the disadvantaged etc. The real question, however, is to find how all social, cultural and human factors are linked (perhaps dialectically) to the development process. It should also be noted that culture is increasingly being recognised (albeit not adequately) as an important factor in determining, the path, content and rate of development.

Another important change in perception in Africa relates to the role of women in development. There is, in general, continuing pressure to integrate women in decision making and in all processes of social and economic activities, especially with the increasing awareness of how the "development" of women impacts on the development of society. This change in perception is likely to have important implications on the evolution of the labour force and the dynamics of popular participation which have hitherto tended to be monopolised by the male part of the population.

**(c) Changes in the ordering of relative importance**

It is normal that different social and economic factors acquire different degrees of importance at the different stages of development. In Africa, the experience of the post-independence period has led to the realisation that there is need to re-order the different priorities in the development process. While the social, cultural and human dimensions have attained ascendancy over priorities like environment, there are still many other competing priorities. Another aspect of the changing re-ordering of relative importance relates to the different components of the social, cultural and human dimension. While in the 1960s and 1970s nutrition was of relatively low rank as compared to, say, education, the situation in the 1980s has changed due to the perpetual worsening of the food situation in the region as a whole. Maternal and child health issues have also come to the fore in the decade of the 1990s and poverty alleviation has been brought to the top of the agenda. As was demonstrated at Khartoum, the various issues of the social dimension, education, health, women, children, the aged, the disabled, employment

youths, refugees, etc., have all become a priority in Africa's development. This is why their sum total - the social, cultural and human dimension - is itself the priority among all priorities.

**(d) Changes in time-frames**

The change in the time frame of most policy designs in African countries has major implications on the process of development management in the region. As a result of the inevitable focus of most African countries on structural adjustment (a pre-occupation that is likely to remain important for sometime), long-term policy approaches have tended to be ignored or not pursued with vigour. The World Bank's Long term Perspective Study (LTPS) and the planned establishment of national LTPS in conjunction with UNDP might redress this situation. However, given the day-to-day financial concerns of most African countries, policy space is likely to remain with a short-term frame of reference. For the social, cultural and human dimensions, such a change in time-frame will have important ramifications including the issue of whether to mitigate short-term negative effects or to invest in long-term returns of the social, cultural and human dimensions.

**(e) Increasing pressures for democracy**

As pressures for democracy increase in African countries, there is also an increasing awareness of the need for popular participation at all levels. With respect to the social, cultural and human dimensions, this will have implications for education, training, primary health care, improved nutrition, access to production assets etc. This trend should already start to influence the design of the Commission's programme and orientation towards people-centred activities.

**2. The emerging challenges**

**(a) Investing in people**

In the 1991 World Development Report on the theme, "The Challenge of Development", the World Bank has devoted much analysis to the question of investing in people in developing countries. What emerges from the analysis is that there is a strong link between human development and economic growth and development. This is perhaps more true in the African context. Thus, what is pertinent to examine more carefully is the nature of the tasks that African countries have to face to ensure that their investment in people will be both efficient and productive in the shortest time possible. Under the social and economic circumstances prevailing in most African countries such tasks can be generalised to include:

- an appropriate population policy to rationalize population growth within the context of the resource base;

- food security policy to ensure improved nutritional standards;
- investment policy in the social services of health, education and housing;
- poverty reduction programmes especially for the vulnerable groups of the population;
- employment creation to ensure that the developed human resources become actually productive.

**(b) Liberating people's energies**

Much has been said about an enabling environment for development. What is often meant is that the people should be free to exert their energies and use their talents to achieve their goals and meet their needs. Again, Africa seems to have come to terms with the need for such an environment for development. What needs to be done is to more sharply define the tasks that have to be carried out to enable the people to liberate their energies towards their own development. These tasks include, at least, the following:

- increasing access to productive assets such as land and credit, to education and employable skills, and to the requisite fiscal incentives;
- promoting efficiency and growth in the agricultural and informal sectors;
- a greater involvement in political and development decision-making;
- creating an adequate institutional capacity to support or catalyze people's efforts.

**(c) Dynamizing the cultural milieu**

It has become increasingly evident that the development process is inextricably linked to the cultural milieu of a given community since culture is essentially the summation of a people's attitudes, values, beliefs, taboos, and institutionalised norms and practices. In the African context, the wholesale importation of development models that has characterised development approaches in general and economic management in particular have tended to assume (wrongly all along) that the process of economic change is "culture neutral". Unfortunately this assumption is still prevalent among government advisers, government policy makers and the local academicians. The challenge, therefore, is two fold: (a) to establish in both well-studied theory and practice a strong link between culture and development and (b) to ensure that the dynamics of culture in African societies contribute to rather than inhibit the development process. The components of this dual challenge include:



- reduction in cultural dependence on foreign cultural values and creation of cultural confidence;
- formulation of a coherent body of theory that encapsulates the various African cultural dimensions and their relationships to development;
- use of cultural factors to meet social needs;
- identification and mitigation of negative cultural tendencies (e.g. attitudes to women)

### 3. ECA's Future Programme Orientations

In the 1980s, ECA's activities in the field of human resources contributed, in no small measure in bringing to the fore, the centrality of the human dimension in development. The first systematic attempt was made in 1984 at the Second Meeting of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization, at which the concept of human development, as opposed to human resources development, was first propounded and embraced and measures for promoting the development of the various components of human development were agreed upon. The new impetus given to human-centered development was also largely, the result of ECA's efforts in convening the International Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development, Khartoum, Sudan, 1988, which came up with the Khartoum Declaration: Towards a Human-focused approach to Recovery and Development.

These endeavours are examples of the efforts that ECA has, over the years, made to contribute to the building of concepts and ideas on African development. These have heavily influenced both the perceptions, and the policies, programmes and strategies of African development. As such any new orientation should aim at ensuring that ECA maintains, if not increases its relevance in this direction.

It must be admitted that the cultural dimension of Africa's development has, since the inception of the Commission been downplayed, if not ignored outright. This is most unfortunate because, culture as has been convincingly demonstrated in the Japanese development experience, is, in fact, the bedrock of socio-economic development. The preservation and development of the culture of the African people, must therefore surely be an important prong of attack on Africa's underdevelopment. ECA must thus develop a general approach and a programme to meet this need.

### **Responding to the Emerging Challenges**

As has become clear to members of the international community, Africa's greatest development challenge in the 1990s and beyond is how to bolster social and human development. It has been generally accepted that the financial and economic development indicators, by themselves, mean nothing if they cannot be or have not been utilized to promote social and human development. GDP growth, export earnings, debt relief, etc. will be of little use to African countries if they do not have an impact on poverty, ignorance and disease in Africa.

The 1960s and 1970s were decades of maldevelopment during which, inspite of healthy growth rates, "basic needs" strategies did not take root and the "trickle-down" effects never materialised. "Development" was skewed and limited largely to a tiny urban-based middle class, with a marginalization of the rural dwellers who constitute the majority of the population. This type of "development" was, from the start, not sustainable for it failed to build, strengthen and maintain capacity especially within the most important sector of the African economy - the rural sector.

Little wonder, therefore, that within a decade - the 1980s - much of the gains that had been registered in the area of social and human development, were washed away. There are important lessons to be learnt from the socio-economic crisis:

- (i) Development is not the creation of things (roads, buildings, dams, railways etc.) or the availability of money, especially foreign money or "hard currency";
- (ii) People are the only final measure of development;
- (iii) There is no development in the absence of human capacity and capability; and,
- (iv) Development is the existence of capacity and capability to master the economic, social, political and physical environments.

ECA's orientation in response to the emerging challenges must be informed by the lessons of the crisis. The central objective of any programme that seeks to address Africa's problem of social and human development must be to create and strengthen capacity among the African people. This gives priority to the following broad areas:

- (i) Education and training to inculcate relevant developmental skills in science, technology, research, etc.;

- (ii) Confidence-building and attitude development to strengthen the spirit of self-reliance and self-confidence and to foster problem-solving approaches to day-to-day living; and,
- (iii) Improvements in the utilization of human resources so as to raise productivity and efficiency, halt the brain drain and motivate people towards, innovation and inventiveness.

Within these broad priority areas, programmes must target specific problem areas:

(a) Literacy

Literacy training must be an important vehicle for capacity building. A high incidence of illiteracy within society hinders development capability since a good many mothers, heads of household, producers, community leaders etc. are severely hamstrung by illiteracy. By virtue of their illiteracy, these economic operators cannot take full advantage of opportunities presented to them to participate effectively in the social, economic and political life of their communities.

The growth of illiteracy that will take place in the next ten years, if present trends persist, gives cause for alarm<sup>1/</sup>. ECA's programmes should, therefore, address this problem through the provision of assistance to member states to strengthen and expand their literacy, primary and basic education programmes as well as their non-formal and adult education and training programmes.

The present financial resource crunch and the implementation of structural adjustment programmes in the education sector have led to high drop-out and abstention rates which have contributed to the growth of illiteracy. ECA should undertake research in alternative and less painful ways of mobilizing resources for the education sector as well as more effective and less expensive ways of delivering educational services to a wider populace. Training programmes, based on the findings of such research should then be mounted for member States. ECA should also assist in mobilizing funding from the international community to assist member States develop and implement their literacy reduction programmes. In addition to the traditional sources of funding, there have already emerged a number of new sources such as NGOs interested in providing assistance to African education. Close collaboration with UNESCO within the framework of its programme "Priority Africa" will help enhance the attainment of this objective.

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<sup>1/</sup> Some analysts have cautioned that Africa might enter the year 2000 with more illiterates than in the 1960s.

**(b) Strengthening the Skills Base for Development**

The skills base for development in any country is built by institutions of higher learning. As a country's socio-economic development becomes more complex, the need for a more complex mix of skills within that country also becomes more evident. Gigantic strides were made in the 1960s and 1970s to expand higher education and to increase the number of middle and high-level manpower in all disciplines and all areas of specialization required to support a modernizing economy. But, alas, with the crisis, thousands of highly skilled men and women in very specialized fields who are required for the continent's development have left for better working and living environments elsewhere. This has created a vacuum which is becoming more and more difficult and expensive to fill.

Furthermore, the quality and relevance of the education that is being dispensed in the institutions of higher learning is such as to cast serious doubts on the relevance of the products of Africa's universities and polytechnics. The result of these negative developments has been an erosion of the skills base for development. ECA's programme thrust in this area should aim at re-building that base through measures aimed at stopping and reversing the brain-drain and increasing the quality and relevance of Africa's institutions of higher learning. To this end, and as with the literacy reduction programme, research should be conducted in the following areas: (i) more cost effective ways of providing higher education services; (ii) curricula change and development; (iii) causes and effects of the brain-drain. In addition, ECA should assist member States to strengthen existing multinational third-level educational institutions, and develop joint programmes on a sub-regional or regional basis. The Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions of higher learning in Africa should be used as the forum for articulating new policy directions in the field of higher education and for providing a mandate for ECA's assistance in the higher education sector. The development of joint programmes between the Association of African Universities and ECA should be further strengthened.

**(c) Restoring Development Management Capacity**

The business of Government in any developing country is to formulate and implement development policy. Its effectiveness in doing so depends on the expertise it has at its disposal for conceiving ideas, formulating, monitoring and implementing programmes. In recent years, retrenchment of public sector employees has induced a good number of competent public servants to leave the public service. Those remaining are largely demotivated and, hence, uncommitted to service. A problem of quantity and quality thus emerges as a constraint in executing development programmes. For example, poor industrialization policies have led to a process of de-industrialization. The natural resource base has not been integrated into the domestic economy; food production has declined and rural development has been reversed.

ECA's role in this area should be to assist Governments to rebuild their executive capacity; conduct research into wage and salary policy in Africa with a view to utilizing the findings of such research to advise governments on a realistic wage and salary structure for the public service; provide advice and training in staff management and supervision. The Commission should also intensify its training programmes in socio-economic development planning and strengthen IDEP.

**(d) Reducing Unemployment and Underemployment**

The alarming growth of unemployment and underemployment in the African economy has engaged the attention of African Governments at the highest level (see the Declaration of the 27th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the OAU on the Employment Crisis in Africa). ECA has, over the years, assisted member States to formulate policies and strategies to resolve the employment problems of the region. This assistance should be intensified as employment conditions are bound to worsen in the medium- and the long-term.

ECA's programme in this area should aim at increasing the employment creation capacities of the agricultural and informal sectors; significantly expanding medium and small-scale enterprise activities as vehicles of employment creation; promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment schemes; and, assisting member States to strengthen their employment planning capabilities. Research and studies should continue to provide the basis for policy advice to member States. Advisory activities as well as training programmes should also be strengthened.

Co-operation with the ILO especially its Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa and the Southern Africa Team for Employment Promotion should also be strengthened.

**(e) Increasing Access to Social Services**

The social services have been severely strained in African countries as a result of the crisis of the 1980s. Access to basic services such as potable water, housing, health, sanitation, education has been rendered more difficult particularly for the rural population. This has contributed to the incidence of poverty, deprivation, morbidity and mortality. ECA should respond to this problem of social and human development by researching into low-cost but efficient ways of significantly expanding access of the people to the social services, and widely disseminating these strategies to member States through the conduct of seminars and workshops as well as advisory services. Increased cooperation of ECA with NGOs (African and external) working in this area should be encouraged.

**(f) Integrated Rural Development**

Rural development is essential for meeting the social and human development needs of the majority of the African people who are rural dwellers. Rural development means expanding the capacities and capabilities of the rural population through better education, health and good nutrition, and empowering them to be productive, self-reliant and self-sufficient. In the past ECA has tended to regard rural development in the narrow context of agricultural development. A shift should now be made such that rural development is situated centrally within the framework of social, cultural and human development.

ECA should intensify its research activities into sound and innovative rural development strategies, engage in intense policy dialogue with member States and provide them with the requisite training and advisory services.

**(g) Gender Issues**

Although there has been an increased awareness of the important role of women in Africa's socio-economic development, much remains to be done in African countries to raise women's productivity levels, considering that they constitute more than 50 per cent of the labour force and between 70-80 per cent of the region's food producers. There is also need to raise their educational and skill levels, especially in view of their important role in child rearing and as homemakers and to involve them more in development decision-making.

ECA should assist African countries to increase capacity among women by intensifying research on strategies for their stronger integration in development, providing advisory and consultancy services to governments and conducting training activities. More vigorous efforts should be made to solicit the support of the international community, particularly NGOs in efforts to implement the Arusha Forward-looking Strategies, and more resources should be provided within the Commission to ensure greater effectiveness in the delivery of ECA's programmes on all gender issues.

**(h) Youth**

African youths face special problems. They are four times more liable to be unemployed than others in the labour force. They are also more afflicted by skill-deficiencies and have little access to the factors of production. Youth unemployment is particularly high in Africa, which is why they are the main culprits in the rising incidence of crime, drug abuse and prostitution. Africa should not allow such adverse socio-economic conditions to ruin its upcoming workers, producers, thinkers and leaders.

ECA should therefore assist governments by developing a strongly articulated substantive programme on youth. Such a programme should promote youth training and employment schemes, special youth assistance and social outreach projects.

(i) Special Areas of Social Concerns

ECA has traditionally been concerned with problems of drug abuse, crime and juvenile delinquency. It has also been monitoring programmes for the aged, the disabled, refugees and the displaced. These should continue with increased resources so that ECA can play a more substantive role in the delivery of programmes to address these special concerns. Co-operation with the relevant UN agencies that deal with these issues should be greatly strengthened.

(i) Culture

Given ECA's mandate, the elaboration of a separate programme on culture could prove to be elusive. The variations in the African cultures are as many as there are ethnic groups. Nonetheless, there are certain elements of what could be termed "African" culture that are important dimensions of development which ECA should endeavour to strengthen. These include the traditional values of respect and the provision of social protection within the extended family system.

Also, the development of culture should aim at changing tastes and lifestyles in ways that would promote the local production of goods and services; minimize social disequilibria such as crime, violence and drug-abuse; and, foster a sense of self-reliance and self-confidence among the African people.

Most of what the foregoing require could be built into the research, education and public information programmes that ECA should develop. Confidence-building measures and self-reliance should be incorporated into school curricula at all levels. Furthermore, governments could be assisted to mount public education programmes that promote a preference for the consumption of African products.

A programme for the development of culture should be part of the education programme. ECA should work closely with UNESCO and the OAU in the elaboration of such programme. A specific research project on culture should be initiated within the Commission to identify the relevant dimensions of culture and development and to clearly define how ECA should approach cultural issues.

#### **4. Recommendations on How ECA Can Realise Its Programmes**

The activities of ECA in the priority area have been uncoordinated and largely piece-meal. For example, Social Policy Research in the Socio Economic Research and Planning Division (SERPD) should have been better harmonized with the activities of the Social Development Section of PHSD, and rural development (JEFAD) should have been working more closely with SERPD, Human Resources Development and Social Development sections in (PHSD) and Human Settlements section in Industry Division. For greater effectiveness in the future all these activities should be coordinated and harmonized under one programme.

Only very rudimentary activities have been undertaken in the areas of health and nutrition. Similarly, population as an important dimension of development has received inadequate attention in the ECA programme of activities. If ECA's role in these fields should be made more substantive so that the circle on human development is complete, there is need for resources to be made available to undertake health planning and cover issues of nutrition within the Social development programme.

The orientation being proposed cuts across a number of programmes eg. science and technology, agriculture, industry, natural resources, environment. While each programme should endeavour to incorporate as many of the social and human dimension elements in the delivery of services to member States, the ECA-MRAG, should give special focus in its advisory services to the human dimension. The Regional Adviser on Social Concerns and the Human Dimension should provide leadership in this regard.

In view of the above observations, the following recommendations are made:

- (a) For greater effectiveness in the future, the social, cultural and human development activities of the various Divisions of ECA should be coordinated and harmonised under one programme.
- (b) The future programmes and activities of ECA should pay particular attention to areas, such as health, nutrition, population and development, cultural dimensions of development, etc; which have hitherto received inadequate coverage and attention.
- (c) If ECA's role in these fields should be made more substantive so that the circle on human development is complete, there is need for resources (human, technical and financial) to be made available to undertake health planning, cover issues of nutrition, population development etc. within the social development programme.



5. Organisational adjustments

The current approach to the Commission's activities is biased towards economic issues. Greater prominence needs to be given to social, cultural and human dimensions of development. Currently, the cultural aspects of development are missing or are, at best only implicit in the Commission's activities. The social development activities are fragmented and located in the different Divisions in the ECA. In order to enhance the relevance of ECA in the priority area of social, cultural and human dimensions of development, the following recommendations are being made regarding organizational adjustments in the ECA.

- (a) A new Division should be created to coordinate and harmonize all activities related to social, cultural and human development. This new Division should be called:

**Population, Human Resources and Social Development Division.**

It should consist of three sections with the following functions:

<u>Sections</u>	<u>Functions</u>
Social Development:	(i) Social Policy research, (ii) Human settlements, (iii) Rural development (iv) Special social group (youth, aged and disabled) (v) Women and Youth

Population:	(i) Mortality, fertility, (ii) Morbidity, population (iii) Structure (iv) Population projections (v) Health planning (vi) Nutrition
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<u>Human Resources</u>	
<u>Development:</u>	(i) Education and training (ii) Employment (iii) Manpower planning (iv) Culture and popular participation

- (b) In order to ensure that social aspects of development become obvious in the name of the Commission, it is proposed that ECA be re-named Economic and Social Commission for Africa (ESCA)

(c) Resource Implications

In the light of the extended programme and activities of the proposed new Division (Population, Human Resources and social Development), it is extremely important that adequate resources are allocated to the Division to enable it perform its activities effectively. Among the resources needed will be a number of professional staff in the appropriate Divisional programmes, including at least one expert in cultural development. It is premature at this juncture to exactly quantify the number and level of professional staff required for the proposed Division. This should be worked out in collaboration and consultation with the staff of the Divisions in the ECA currently charged with activities in the social, population and human dimensions of development.