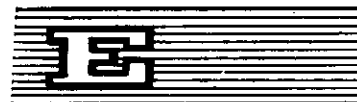




**UNITED NATIONS**  
**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**



Distr.  
LIMITED

E/CN.14/ECO/80  
14 November 1975

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Executive Committee  
Thirteenth meeting

Addis Ababa, 17-21 November 1975

**REPORT REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

In many ways this meeting of the Executive Committee comes at a time when conventional approaches to development and economic growth, strategies and policies and to the reform of the international economic order are being called into question and far-reaching changes in the economic order of the world are being contemplated. The International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, on which African Strategy for the Development adopted at Tunis in 1971 was based, was formulated before the full dimensions of the weaknesses of the international economic order had become evident. The adoption of major resolutions and declarations at the global and regional levels since 1973 can no longer be accommodated by mere modifications of our work programme; nor can they be implemented within the existing United Nations structure or in terms of existing relations among States. It is for this reason that the United Nations as a whole has embarked on an appraisal of the practical implications of proposals for restructuring the world economy, collected together under the title of the new international economic order, and of the capabilities and role of the United Nations system in contributing towards their implementation. It is for the same reason that we have, during the past few months, been considering a restructuring of our work programme and of the secretariat. In doing so, we have come to realize that for effective action in establishing the new international economic order, Governments in Africa will face the challenge of playing many roles and, therefore, of appraising their structures and procedures and gearing these to the purposes of self-reliant and dynamic growth which underlies both the purpose of the new international economic order and the decisions taken by African States since the meeting of Heads of State at Addis Ababa in May 1973.

The challenge is, of course, broader, since it will require a major effort in overcoming obstacles to economic co-operation within the region as well as establishing economic relations with other regions and the Socialist countries in ways which will be mutually beneficial.

As regards the role of the secretariat it has become more and more apparent that if the region is to exploit its comparative advantages fully there is no alternative to close economic co-operation among States. In a region in which, on the basis of recent population estimates, 26 of the 46 independent African States have a population of less than 5 million, 9 a population of between 5 and 10 million, 9 countries with a population of between 10 and 30 million and only 2 a population of over 30 million in which incomes per capita are low and in which the bulk of output is made up of subsistence production, co-operation among States to provide certain goods and services essential for the achievement of national socio-economic goals, is inevitable. Accordingly, the Secretariat is being urged repeatedly in resolutions of ECOSOC and the General Assembly as well as of the Commission itself, intensify its efforts in promoting economic co-operation within the region. As to the value of such co-operation at present I need only refer to the practical and useful role which institutions for economic co-operation are already playing in certain parts of the region: these include the Intergovernmental Regional Centre for Training in Aerial Surveys at Ile-Ife; the Lake and River Basin Commissions, and organizations for economic co-operation such as the East African Community, UDEAC and the Permanent Consultative Committee of the Maghreb. Mention ought to be made also of the network of the Trans-African Highways, the newly established Intergovernmental Regional Centre for Services in Surveying and Mapping in Nairobi, the Pan-African Telecommunications Network, and the Economic Community of West African States which is in process of taking shape. It is significant that the UNDP has agreed to consider financing multinational projects submitted by the ECA up to a value of 10 million dollars and for which the ECA will be the executing agency.

The secretariat has been criticized, not always justly, for its preoccupation with research and studies and for lack of concreteness in its programmes and activities. This has been due, in part, to the very terms of reference of the Commission and in part to the financial constraints to which, like all other United Nations bodies, it has been subject. Nevertheless, there have been faults on our side. The work programme of the secretariat needs clarity and coherence; it has not been easy to find a striking

and integrated strategy for the economic and social development of the region on the basis of which the projects of the various divisions of the secretariat can be seen as related to each other; too much appears to have been attempted on the basis of limited resources, so that the impact of the secretariat on major problems of development and economic growth in the region has tended to seem peripheral. It is for this reason that my colleagues and I have, after intensive reviews, placed before you a revised framework of priority for the design of our future work programme. I need not emphasize that the proposals put forward in document E/CN.14/ECO/90 are draft proposals for discussion and improvement in the light of your own practical experience in the field. As was suggested earlier, the rewriting of work programmes remains a mere intellectual exercise without the realignment of policies and instruments both on the side of the secretariat and of member States for its implementation. For example, we have formulated a project for the establishment, within ECA, of a Data Base consisting of a regional information and documentation centre with sub-regional networks which will be responsible for operating an efficiently organized and up-to-date collection, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in the economic and social fields, mainly in developing Africa. This project, if approved by the UNDP, will work only as the result of a commitment by the secretariat and the Governments to make it work.

I should now like to draw attention to two major projects which the secretariat has embarked upon. As members well know one of the major propositions of the New International Economic Order concerns the extent to which sovereign States exercise control over the exploitation of their natural resources and to which they derive benefit from the extraction, processing and export of such resources. The secretariat has, therefore, begun studies on a limited number of specific raw materials to test these two aspects and to determine how far co-operation among States, in the form of producers' associations can improve control and the accrual of benefits. This programme of studies is, of course, consistent with other programmes being carried out within the United Nations system.

The signing of the Lomé Convention marks an important milestone in co-operation and development, not only between the developed and developing countries but also among the developing countries themselves, and we consider it our responsibility to assist the African members of the ACP countries in deriving the maximum benefit from the Convention which was so laboriously negotiated and concluded. It is intended,

as part of the secretariat's activities, to make African members of the ACP countries fully aware of the implications of the Lomé Convention. The secretariat intends, in co-operation with the OAU, ADB, IDEP, the ACP secretariat, the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation and the Caribbean Community, SPCC and CARICOM, to convene and organize early in 1976, somewhere in the region, a conference of the ACP countries to consider proposals for the implementation of the Lomé Convention. Such a conference will be mainly concerned with the ways in which the Lomé Convention can best be implemented to the advantage of members of the ACP countries. To this end, the secretariat has begun an examination of the Lomé Convention with a view to raising critical issues and to making proposals on regional and interregional projects of priority which could be financed under the Lomé Convention. A Preparatory Committee consisting of representatives of the ECA, OAU, ADB, IDEP, the ACP secretariat and UNDP met early this month in Addis Ababa to prepare for the work of the conference. The recommendations of this Committee are to be submitted for consideration at the meeting of the ACP Council of Ministers which is to be held in Malawi in December this year.

As regards co-operation within the United Nations system the recent formulation of the New International Economic Order in resolution 3362(S-VII) adopted at the seventh special session is considered so important that the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in New York is now organizing a Task Force composed of representatives of organizations of the United Nations system which have major responsibility for implementing measures embodied in that resolution to examine the resolution in detail and to identify what individual, joint and collective action was required by the organizations of the system. In the meantime, proposals are being considered for the establishment of a Joint Human Resources Development Division within the secretariat in which UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and WHO will participate. The growing importance of regional economic commissions is fully brought out in recent resolutions and decisions adopted by ECOSOC which, inter alia, charged these bodies with responsibilities for the promotion of interregional as well as intraregional co-operation, inter-country programmes to be financed by the UNDP for which regional commissions will be executing agencies; the establishment of liaison and support units in the commissions to co-operate with the Information and Research Centre on Transnational Corporations; the problems of availability and supply of natural resources and the co-ordination of programmes within the United Nations system in the field of natural resources;

technical co-operation among developing countries; co-operation with the ILO in the preparation for the Tripartite World Conference on Problems of Employment; Income Distribution; Social Progress and the International Division of Labour; support for the implementation of programmes for sea and coastal area development as a joint endeavour; the holding of regional meetings in 1976, preparatory to the United Nations Water Conference to be held in March 1977; and follow-up action on the decisions taken by the Seventh Special Session of the General Assembly.

In my address to the OAU Council of Ministers in Kampala last August, I reaffirmed ECA's commitment to work in close co-operation with OAU. The ECA and the OAU, as you may be aware, continue to provide joint support to the Biennial Conference of African Ministers of Industry and its follow-up Committee on Industrialization in Africa; to the Biennial Conference of African Ministers of Trade; to provide secretariat support to the Group of 77. Indeed, the Joint Meeting is now considered by African Governments as the main technical body for examining issues relating to, and making preparations for, multilateral negotiations on trade and related monetary issues. Recommendations of the Joint Meeting have now crystallized into a concrete project which is to be financed by UNDP and implemented by ECA and UNCTAD, aimed at assisting African countries in the multilateral trade negotiations. As part of the preparations to assist African governments at UNCTAD IV, the Joint PANAFTEL meeting is currently being held in Algiers.

The OAU and ECA in co-operation with ITU and ADB have mobilized 80 per cent of the \$US 140 million capital investment required for the 20,000 Kilometers Pan-African Telecommunications Network. Progress in the implementation of this project and plans for further development are to be examined in a meeting to be held in Kinshasa in December this year, sponsored by the four organizations.

In an area which is crucial to African development, namely increased food production, ECA is collaborating with the OAU in the establishment, under the aegis of the latter, of an African Inter-Ministerial Committee on Food with authority to raise funds and implement programmes for increasing food production in Africa. The Committee is to be serviced jointly by OAU, ECA, and FAO.

Mr. Chairman, I have been told, and quite rightly, that the member States of the African region cannot, after 15 years of independence, blame others for their mistakes nor should they allow others to lay claim to their achievements. In spite

of the universal belief in global economic and social security we cannot simply rely on the broad flow of historical decisions taken at the international level to decide our destiny. Singly and collectively we must fashion our destiny out of the resources at our disposal taking advantage of opportunities as they arise and as we perceive them.