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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTIETH MEETING  
held at Africa Hall, Addis Ababa,  
on Monday, 3 February 1969, at 3.30 p.m.

Acting Chairman:

Mr. Ayida (Nigeria)

Executive Secretary:

Mr. R.K.A. Gardiner

Secretary:

Mr. H.L. Senghor

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ADDRESS BY HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAILE SELASSIE I

His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia, said that it was fitting, on the tenth anniversary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), to take stock of the Commission's ten years of efforts to promote the economic, technological and social development of Africa and for Members to dedicate themselves anew to the progressive and rapid development of the region's human and material resources.

At the Commission's first session full membership had been open to only eight developing countries; now more than forty African Governments were fully supporting ECA's work. Nevertheless, there were still African peoples living under the yoke of colonialism and unable to be represented in the Commission. Ethiopia would continue to work for the complete liberation of the continent so that all Africans could in the nearest possible future be represented in ECA.

It was a particular pleasure to welcome U Thant, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, whose presence was evidence of the interest he had always taken in the work of the Commission. It was also satisfactory to note that representatives of Member States of the United Nations, Inter-governmental Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations and Foundations from the developed countries had come to participate in the work of the session. A warm welcome should be extended, too, to the representatives of the other members of the United Nations family, upon whose support the Commission had always been able to count.

Africa had made great strides towards achieving self-reliance and African Governments had become more proficient at organizing themselves to fulfil their major task, that of raising the standard of living of African peoples and bringing them as quickly as possible within the orbit of twentieth century technology. The Economic Commission for Africa had rendered valuable assistance towards achievement of that goal and the work done by its secretariat had served to increase considerably the stock of knowledge about the African region. The Executive Secretary was to be thanked for the personal interest he had taken, and the assistance he had made available, in the preparation of Ethiopia's recently launched Third Development Plan.

By virtue of its mandate from the United Nations General Assembly, ECA was concerned mainly with technical assistance in economic and social development. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), on the other hand, exercised major responsibility in the political sphere. It was gratifying to note that close working relationships were being established between the two Organizations and to observe that OAU was attempting to give political support to the Commission's technical studies and proposals. The two Organizations were making it possible for the voice of Africa to be heard as one voice in international debates, notably in trade negotiations conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It was to be hoped that UNCTAD's efforts to rationalize the world's trading system would meet with greater success in the second Development Decade than they had in the first. To that end, the developed world should heed the Charter of Algiers.

Although Africa's problems had not been solved by the concerted action of her regional organizations, the lines of action to be taken had become increasingly clear. The African nations must continue to co-operate to break down the barriers currently restricting an integrated approach to regional development. They must, individually and collectively, endeavour to strengthen existing institutions and organize new ones to facilitate economic co-operation and they must strive to develop the continent's abundant human resources, its real wealth.

The importance of co-operation in economic development could not be too highly stressed. The sub-regions had already established inter-governmental machinery for the discussion and solution of co-operative enterprise problems, and the work done by the Senegal River States and the economic co-operation institutions of the Maghreb countries, the efforts to secure industrial co-ordination in West Africa and the growing co-operation among the countries of Eastern Africa were particularly encouraging. Through its work, ECA had demonstrated that the African sub-regions could become viable economic units within which economic, and particularly industrial, development could be planned and implemented. It was satisfactory to note, therefore, that the secretariat's work lay in the preparation of studies and the lending of technical support to sub-regional development programmes.

Realizing that industry required economies of scale, Ethiopia had been among the founding members of the Economic Community of Eastern Africa. He himself had been present at Arusha in December 1967 when he had expressed his country's willingness to join the Community, and his Government was currently engaged in negotiations the results of which would, he hoped, prove satisfactory to all concerned.

It was essential, in order to foster economic and cultural contacts, to improve transport and communications facilities within and among African sub-regions. During the period of its Third Plan, Ethiopia would develop its all-weather road system, open up feeder and service-to-traffic roads and continue the construction of international high-ways. It looked forward, therefore, to continuing co-operation within the sub-region which would lead to the development of an integrated road system for Eastern Africa.

The development of air transport was also of vital importance and rapid progress had been made in that sphere. Ethiopian Airlines served seventeen international centres in Africa, Europe and Asia and would endeavour to establish closer co-operation with the air transport carriers of other African nations. It was to be hoped, too, that rail and water transport would be studied on an integrated basis so that viable projects for improving existing systems and formulating new ones could be worked out. The opening of the telecommunications link between Addis Ababa and Abidjan marked an important step forward in providing direct connexions between African nations.

Efforts to achieve economic co-operation must be backed by national and multinational machinery capable of coping with the complex problems of integration and of preparing and implementing national, sub-regional and regional plans. It would be very useful if the region as a whole and its sub-regional organizations pooled their experience in plan formulation and implementation with a view to improving planning and implementation methods. In that way it would be possible to avoid duplication and waste and to achieve a more efficient exploitation of Africa's natural resources.

Efficiency demanded a sustained supply of trained manpower and in the forthcoming decade the level of development of its manpower might well be a major determinant of the speed and competence with which Africa organized itself to meet the demands and aspirations of its peoples. Urgent steps must therefore be taken to strengthen and extend national and regional training institutions and so to re-construct educational systems that they became efficient units to meet African needs. The Commission had done much to develop human resources and it was to be hoped that the other international bodies also active in that sphere would co-operate further with ECA in developing more comprehensive and far-sighted programmes within which Africa's youth could be trained for effective participation in the development process.

It was fitting, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Economic Commission for Africa, to call upon the developed countries to give urgent and sympathetic attention to Africa's development projects and programmes and to urge them to come forward with larger and more imaginative proposals for assistance to the African region.

In the previous decade Africa had identified what needed to be done to speed up development and ECA had begun to play an effective role in facilitating economic co-operation and solving intra-African problems. While the new decade held great promise it also demanded the utmost in courage, effort and resolution from all Africa and those who would assist it. He hoped that the deliberations of the Ninth Session would contribute towards realization of that goal so ardently desired - a free, happy and prosperous Africa.

STATEMENT BY U THANT, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

U Thant (Secretary-General, United Nations) expressed his satisfaction at being able to attend the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Economic Commission for Africa. He was deeply grateful to His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I for the keen interest he had taken in the work of ECA since its establishment ten years previously.

In the ten years of its existence ECA had seen its membership grow from nine to forty-one States, a growth to which the efforts of the United Nations in decolonization had made a substantial contribution. Through their own efforts, as well as through ECA, African countries had prepared the ground for achieving rapid economic and social progress; the process of development would, however, gain momentum as the vestiges of colonialism and the racial policies still afflicting the continent were wiped out and as African Governments increased their economic co-operation.

Africa was beset with economic and social problems. African economies were based heavily on agriculture and, in some cases, mineral production; there was, however, very little industrialization or demand for services. Like other less-developed areas, the continent suffered from the lack of skilled human resources, the slowness of growth in total output and low incomes. In that rather gloomy picture ECA's activities offered more than a glimmer of hope because they were directed towards the building of infrastructures for regional and sub-regional co-operation and the collection of economic and social information without which the African States would be unable to plan for their development. ECA had also been able, with the co-operation of such United Nations bodies as UNDP, UNCTAD and UNIDO and the specialized agencies, to establish vital institutions like the African Development Bank, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning and a number of programmes which would help to promote economic and social development.

Africa's liberation from the chains of underdevelopment could be accelerated only through the political will and team-work of African Governments and the members of the United Nations as a whole. Having sown the seeds of purposeful co-operation and team-work, ECA would be able, in the second Development Decade, to serve as the focal point for the initiatives which could

be reflected in sub-regional, regional and global efforts to promote economic and social development Africa. It was worth remembering in that connexion that the United Nations system of regional economic commissions not only provided governments within a region with the means of dealing with specific problems of concern to them but also encouraged broader co-operation through links with United Nations bodies in a more universal setting. Thus, ECA was the United Nations window for seeing African economic and social problems through African eyes and for seeing them in relation to the overall international economic structure. Obviously, only Africans could achieve Africa's destiny but the nations of Africa must realize that they had a vital role to play as members of the international community. The OAU should not only help to solve some of the problems that had arisen in regard to relations between African States but should also act as an instrument through which its members could contribute more effectively to international co-operation, particularly in the work of the United Nations and its agencies. It was satisfactory to note the growing co-operation between OAU and ECA in economic and social matters; a further strengthening of their relationships would enable the two organizations better to service the African nations at the country, sub-regional, regional and international levels.

It was through ECA that African countries would be able to bring about the economic and social changes necessary for development. Under the leadership of its Executive Secretaries, Mr. Mekki Abbas and Mr. Robert Gardiner, the Commission had proved its ability to assist its members. He reiterated his interest in the Commission's work and pledged his support of its activities. All nations should rededicate themselves to the principle of international co-operation and spare neither effort nor sacrifice to promote the economic and social advancement of the developing countries in their endeavours to build peace in the world as required by the Charter of the United Nations.

OPENING ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EIGHTH SESSION

The ACTING CHAIRMAN welcomed representatives to the Commission's tenth anniversary session.

He recalled that in 1958, at the time of ECA's inaugural session, the Commission had counted as full members only nine independent African countries, excluding South Africa, and six European countries having colonial responsibilities in Africa. The picture had since changed significantly: 41 independent African countries were now full members of the Commission and the former metropolitan powers participated as associate members without voting rights. He was pleased to welcome as new members to the current session Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius and Swaziland.

Many of those who had witnessed ECA's humble beginnings felt that, despite the inevitable disappointments, their initial hopes had been justified in the ten years since ECA's creation.

During that period ECA's evolution had covered three phases. In the first phase - the formative years - the Commission had been concerned mainly with the teething problems associated with its establishment as a major international institution. Its sessions then had been devoted largely to procedural questions and general statements, and little time remained for consideration of substantive matters.

The Commission had then progressed to the second phase when it had been in a position to compile statistics on African countries, conduct studies on their economic and social problems and convene various meetings. Although the desire of member States to meet the practical challenges in regard to rapid economic growth might not have been satisfied at that time, it was a period that had provided African officials with an opportunity of meeting one another and of acquainting themselves with conditions in other African countries - a valuable ingredient in inter-African co-operation. Now, however, when the Commission was not in session, its only institutional link with the secretariat was through its Chairman; member countries, having little knowledge of the secretariat



or its activities, rarely had recourse to its assistance and, in fact, as a result of United Nations efforts to increase the opportunities for Africans to meet one another in non-African forums, actually tended to be better acquainted with other institutions such as ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNIDO. He therefore considered that the question of continuing inter-sessional machinery for ECA might usefully be discussed at the current session.

Though, at the time, some people had felt - and certain of them still did - that ECA had been conceived as a research organization, he considered that it would be a mistake to continue to regard it as such. Indeed, if research were to be the Commission's only role, it would be difficult, in the light of prevailing economic conditions in Africa, to justify its current annual budget of some US\$5 million. Instead, the Commission should be provided with the necessary resources to enable it to play a dynamic role in fostering economic development, and the session, after examining the whole matter in detail, should provide the Executive Secretary with guidelines for achieving that objective.

The third phase in ECA's evolution had been marked by the secretariat's recent attempts to make African leaders more fully aware of the vital need for effective economic co-operation between the Commission's member States. Though economic co-operation had been recognized as an objective by all African countries, the necessary operational arrangements had still to be implemented. Africa's progress in regard to economic co-operation was not very encouraging when compared with that of Europe and Latin America.

Referring to developments in the two years since the Commission's eighth session, he noted that there had still been no break-through in the African region in regard to accelerated development. One significant event during that period had been the Second UNCTAD Conference and the main lesson to be drawn from its failure was that Africa's economic destiny lay, for the most part, with itself. African countries, while pursuing a policy of self-reliance and national economic independence, would above all have to learn to pull together if they were not to be

engulfed in an increasingly competitive world. Their poor performance in the past two years should act as a spur to greater achievements in the second Development Decade and the current session provided the opportunity for planning the strategy and determining the targets in that connexion.

Directing attention to two tables he had prepared containing comparative figures on the per capita GDP and the level of development in developing countries throughout the world (attached to the printed version of his statement), he pointed out that Africa stood at the bottom rung of the ladder, even taking account of structural changes in the economies of the third world. However, in determining the performance of African economies in the First Development Decade, account also had to be taken of the degree of dependence on the former metropolitan power and of the amount of wealth produced and actually retained for the benefit of the African population.

While he agreed on the need for a substantial increase in external aid to Africa and an improvement in the terms on which it was granted, he nevertheless considered that African countries should rely less on such aid, concentrating rather on self-help, expansion of mutual trading opportunities, modernization of agricultural production and on a programme of rapid industrialization. Any foreign aid rendered in that connexion should be regarded as supplementary to their own efforts.

Looking back over the past ten years, he felt that a master development plan for Africa, prepared by ECA, was needed for the future - a plan outlining the framework, priorities and policies for member States' national development plans, and focussing attention on the objectives appropriate to the African context and on the need for mutual co-operation. Such a plan would not only provide the world with a better understanding of the development process in Africa but would also serve to evolve an African philosophy in regard to economic growth and social change and help to tackle the problems of Africa in a rapidly changing world.

Referring to the role that ECA should play in the second Development Decade, he said that there were four important questions he wished to raise for the Commission's consideration. First, what was the Commission's right place in the United Nations family, with particular reference to the latter's operational activities in Africa? To what extent could the Commission project the United Nations "economic presence" in Africa? Secondly, how could the Commission satisfy member States' development needs, particularly in the next Development Decade when the period of immediate post-independence disenchantment was likely to give way to renewed attempts to grapple more realistically with development needs? Thirdly, to what extent could the Commission promote economic co-operation and self-reliance among African countries within the four sub-regions? In that context, a decision was perhaps required on whether the four sub-regions still provided the most practical basis for achieving those ends. Lastly, how could the secretariat be further developed with a view to increasing member States' confidence in its ability to help them? To what extent should its terms of reference be modified to enable it to play a more effective role in the development of African economies?

In his own view, one major problem facing ECA was staffing and the vexed question of Africanization of the secretariat; and another, the Commission's lack of influence in formulating and directing United Nations operations in Africa and its consequent inability to command member States' full respect.

With regard to the first of those problems, he had found that while many representatives on the Staff Recruitment and Training Committee, of which he was Chairman, pressed for Africanization of the secretariat, their governments were not prepared, or were unable, to release competent nationals to serve with ECA. He reiterated his appeal to member States to second or transfer some of their experienced officers to ECA: such service should in fact be encouraged by member States since it would provide valuable experience for the officials concerned and, on their return, for their countries.

On behalf of the Commission, he expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General for his understanding of ECA's special needs and his pledge of support for its activities. If the Commission could be assured of the provision of adequate staff through the understanding of United Nations headquarters, then it would be enabled to equip itself for its vital role in the second Development Decade.

ECA, in his view, should become the prime institution for projecting the United Nations presence in Africa, which meant that United Nations operational activities in the economic and social field would require greater decentralization. If the Commission were to make an impact in regard to technical assistance, co-ordination of development activities and harmonization of trade and industry, the UNDP and the specialized agencies would have to channel some of their resources for African development through ECA which was undoubtedly the best agency for co-ordinating United Nations operational activities in Africa. United Nations resources could not be adequately channelled to meet African development and technical assistance needs solely from New York. Moreover, UNDP representatives were not in a position to deal with the multinational projects so necessary to African economic co-operation. The United Nations, through ECA, was in a strong position to promote such projects. Obviously, several member States would have to accept the secretariat's activities with less hesitation but his plea was that ECA should be recognized as an African institution, like OAU.

In the sphere of economic co-operation, the Commission could only render such assistance as member States themselves desired and, thus far, the secretariat's efforts in favour of the new sub-regional economic groupings had not been very rewarding. Member States determined their own priorities and programmes of economic co-operation; the Commission's staff could assist in the technical work without in any way interfering with the sovereignty of member States. For that reason, he considered it would be better to rely on experts from the Commission, rather than from bilateral sources of technical assistance in the former colonial powers with possible vested economic interests to protect.

As for how the Commission could satisfy member States' development needs, the answer was simple: member States merely had to tell the secretariat what to do and to provide it with the tools. In that connexion, he stressed the need for member States to provide the Commission with the necessary support and leadership as it entered the second Development Decade.

In conclusion, he expressed deep appreciation to the Executive Secretary and all his staff for their co-operation during his term of office. With the full support of member States, the ECA could help Africa to sustain rapid economic progress in a spirit of HARAMBEE (togetherness).

Mr. LISSOUBA (Congo-Brazzaville) said that the task of speaking on behalf of the French-speaking delegations was both pleasant and delicate. It was pleasant because it gave him the opportunity of thanking His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I for having once more demonstrated his devotion to the cause of African unity by sparing time from his many pressing duties to address the ECA on the tenth anniversary of its foundation.

Member States would always appreciate the Ethiopian people for their patience, courtesy and sense of hospitality.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, whose opinion was given the highest consideration throughout the world because of his courageous statements on decolonization, disarmament and other vitally important questions, had again proved his devotion to the cause of humanity by attending the anniversary of an institution the aim of which was to promote the economic, social and scientific development of Africa. He, who was better qualified than anyone else to appreciate the problems of the developing countries, had said that the processes of African development would achieve greater momentum as the remaining vestiges of colonialism were wiped out and as the African Governments consciously strengthened their efforts at economic co-operation, using all the natural and human resources of their countries.

The more delicate aspect of his task was to summarize the sequels to the commemoration of the Commission's tenth anniversary. Two main issues were involved: trade between African States and aid. As the Secretary-General has said, Africa could only shed the bonds of under-development by increasing its internal trade and exchanges at all levels of economic, social and political life.

Industrialization would obviously be the decisive weapon in that effort and the Commission should pay greater attention to that question than it had done in the past.

With regard to aid, cultural and technical aid, even at its present level, had been effective and had enabled the African countries to make real progress. Financial and trade aid, however, was not worthy of the name. It was either nonexistent or negative, if not actually harmful. Without prejudice to the

results of the Pearson Mission, it appeared realistic for the Commission to work towards the normalization of trade with the industrialized countries, in order that remunerative prices should be paid for African products taking into account the constant rise in the price of commodities. By its own efforts, Africa would create the conditions necessary to its development, so that external contributions would in fact be true aid, which would speed up the development process.

In that process, the ECA had played an important part and would perhaps play an even more decisive one, thanks to the Executive Secretary's devotion to the cause of Africa.

In a spirit of optimism, therefore, the delegations present proposed the adoption of a resolution of commemoration emphasizing not only their hopes but also their continued total support for the Economic Commission for Africa and their desire that it should prosper and meet with increasing success.

Mr. MBOYA (Kenya) expressed the gratitude of the English-speaking delegations for the special honour done to the Economic Commission for Africa by His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I in giving the inaugural address on the tenth anniversary of its foundation. It was fitting that the Commission's ninth session should be held, like its first, in Addis Ababa.

The reference in His Imperial Majesty's speech at that first session to the fact that African people were at last able to discuss their own problems and future had heralded a new era for that continent. The ECA had made great progress during the past ten years; its original nine member States had now become 41 and the beginnings of an African economy had emerged.

By devoting so much of his time to the promotion of African unity, His Imperial Majesty had given the Commission encouragement and inspiration. His speech was full of concrete ideas and wise counsel for the next decade. The delegations present were deeply grateful for his stirring address and prayed that he might continue in good health to serve the peoples of Africa.

The presence of its Secretary-General was an encouraging expression of the commitment of the United Nations and its specialized agencies to share the burden of the challenge of African development, some of the most important elements of which had been mentioned in his speech. Although the decolonization of Africa had been rapid, some of the most critical aspects of that problem still remained and might not be solved for many years. The continuing colonial rule in defiance of United Nations resolutions and world public opinion was detrimental to the cause of African development. The forces which should be mobilized in the fight against poverty, disease and ignorance were often divided over the problem of existing colonial territories. That division also threatened African unity and regional co-operation. One of the most developed countries in Africa continued to foster racialism instead of attending the present session to contribute to solving the serious human problems facing the continent.

The contributions of the United Nations specialized agencies to the development of Africa was greatly appreciated, but the next ten years would require a fresh strategy and a deliberate plan of operation. The first ten years of



ECA's existence had been a period of study, research and infrastructural organization. At the current session, the Commission would determine the role of the ECA, the attitude of the African States towards it and the activities of the United Nations agencies in Africa - all crucial questions for the next decade.

The African nations realized that they must develop through self-help and regional co-operation but their efforts could only be meaningful in the context of the overall interdependence of the nations forming the world community. They welcomed the efforts of the United Nations to educate and mobilize the world to face the many crises confronting mankind.

The existing contacts between the ECA and the Organization of African Unity, two African organizations committed to the same goal, must be broadened and strengthened.

It was regrettable that, despite the general realization of the importance of agriculture in Africa, which had been referred to by the Secretary-General, it received a very small proportion of the aid flowing into that continent. During the next decade, African agriculture was threatened not only by the development of synthetics but also by the efforts of the rich nations to increase their agricultural production. The present problem of access to markets would increase during the next development decade and the apparent failure of the second UNCTAD had made the situation even more difficult. There should be some international arrangement to handle the problem of the increase in surplus food crops which would be produced by African countries.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.