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STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON ECA ACTIVITIES SINCE

THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

1. The Sixth session of the Commission examined a review of its activities during the first five years. It noted that the fact-gathering and building-up process had been largely completed and considered that in future there should be increasing emphasis on operational activities, in particular the building of institutions, training, the provision of advisory services and the promotion of concerted action by governments in specific fields.
2. There have been three notable achievements in the building of institutions during the last year: the establishment of the African Development Bank; the final launching of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning; and the first meeting of the Conference of African Planners.
3. Pride of place should perhaps be given to the African Development Bank. The resolution appointing the Committee of Nine was adopted at the Fourth session and the Committee had completed its work before the Fifth session. The Agreement establishing the Bank was opened for signature at the Conference of Finance Ministers in Khartoum in August 1963. Little more than a year later 25 African Governments had ratified the Agreement so that at the Conference held in Lagos in October 1964 the Bank was launched, its President and Board of Directors elected and its site chosen. This is a remarkable achievement for Africa in a period

of 2½ years. Subsequently the distinguished President, Mr. Mamoun Beheiry, has started work with a will. The ECA secretariat is still available to help when requested, but the Bank is now a fully independent institution. Its potentialities for African development are far wider than its still relatively modest capital. It is likely to become a major force both in preparing the ground for investments and in the investment process itself, since it will be able to attract much non-African capital and technical help. It is also likely to be a significant catalyst in the movement towards economic integration, particularly in industry, transport and energy. The ECA secretariat will continue to be at the Bank's disposal when required, particularly in drawing attention to potential new projects emerging from the ECA's own activities.

4. The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning started operations in a modest way with the aid of technical assistance funds in the autumn of 1963. Teething troubles were inevitable, particularly since it has not yet been possible to appoint an African Director of suitable experience and standing. Needless to say there are many Africans who could fill this post, but no government or university has yet been willing to make the necessary sacrifice. The Plan of Operations was opened for signature in November 1964 on the occasion of the first meeting of the Conference of African Planners when the Governing Council was elected. The Council held its first meeting at the same time. Now the second year of the Institute's life, indeed its first official year, is under way and there are reasons for growing optimism. The first task of the Institute is to teach, but it must also be in a position as quickly as possible to carry out research and provide advisory services in the planning field to African Governments. Neither the African Governments who have sponsored the Institute, the ECA secretariat nor the Institute itself can be satisfied until it has built up a reputation comparable with a first class university.

5. The third achievement was the successful first meeting of the Conference of African Planners, a new standing organ of the ECA which will meet every two years. Discussions at the first meeting were of a

high order. The importance of this body lies not only in the nature of the problems which fall within its terms of reference, but also the link it provides between the activities of the ECA and the Dakar Institute.

6. In accordance with the Commission's wishes at the Sixth session the secretariat has been engaged throughout the year in re-shaping its proposals for the work programme in accordance with new priorities. This is reflected in the draft Programme of Work and Priorities for 1965-66 (E/CN.14/313/Rev.1). Attention should be called in particular to the revision. The first version which was circulated at the end of November has been further revised, since the secretariat regards the principle of permanent revolution as applicable to its work programme. However, the framework within which the programme has to be presented, which is laid down by the Economic and Social Council and is binding on all United Nations organs working in this field, does not make it possible to bring out sufficiently clearly the priority areas.

7. The secretariat is giving increasing thought to problems of development. Work already done has amply demonstrated the concrete possibilities of accelerating economic growth in Africa and the way in which the structure of the economies has to be changed. This is being reflected in development plans though in most countries there is still much to do. It is not enough, however, to prepare plans and programmes. These have to be translated into concrete projects. Entrepreneurship and management have to be developed and manpower trained. Without intensive work on these problems schemes for increasing growth rates will remain on paper. Thus the work programme of ECA must increasingly reflect not only intensified efforts in a series of key sectors, but research into the wide-ranging but specific problems of realizing development plans in practice.

In the secretariat's view accordingly the priority areas are:

- (a) The training of manpower of all kinds
- (b) Agriculture
- (c) Industry
- (d) Transport

- (e) Natural resources
- (f) Trade, monetary and fiscal problems
- (g) The realization of development plans.

8. Clearly of course these activities are related and therefore the order suggested should not be taken as being a rigid one. On the other hand the other activities carried out in ECA must be regarded at the present stage of development in Africa as of a lower order of priority for the time being.

9. In accordance with these priorities the organization of the secretariat has been streamlined during the last year and there has been an appropriate re-distribution of the resources available. There are now seven substantive divisions - agriculture, industry, transport and natural resources, trade and monetary problems, research, statistics, technical co-operation and training. Four of these posts of Heads of these Divisions, in addition of course to the Executive Secretary, the Deputy Executive Secretary and the Secretary of the Commission, are now filled by Africans and it is expected that Africans will be appointed to two more of them during the course of 1965.

10. A major effort has been made to develop ECA's training activities. The secretariat is grateful to the Director-General of UNESCO for loaning an experienced official to head the ECA Training Section which is being strengthened. In addition an internal Training Committee has been established to co-ordinate and stimulate the growing activities of the whole secretariat in this field. Many agencies, both multilateral, e.g. UNESCO, ILO and FAO, and bilateral, are playing a part in assisting African Governments to train manpower in many fields and at all levels. The ECA secretariat has no pretensions and indeed could not hope to contribute directly more than a tiny fraction of what is required, but it can and will do much more as a catalyst, initiator and co-ordinator. Its whole relatively modest contribution in the last year is set out in a paper before you (E/CN.14/307) together with some thoughts on training policy. In this paper attention is drawn to the need for each country to appoint

specialized training administrators able to interpret their national manpower requirements and to maintain close links with both multilateral and bilateral organizations capable of assisting Africa.

11. A critical examination of the secretariat's past work in the training field is being undertaken. Outposts are being appointed in different non-African countries to assemble data on training facilities outside Africa and to keep track of the African student intake in different countries. Data is being assembled on training facilities within Africa with a view to assessing how they can better be used, what the gaps are, and how they can be closed.

12. The secretariat is preparing a comprehensive survey of training requirements by fields of activity in the light of development plans or perspectives, but these can be fruitful only if there is close co-operation with African Governments. An examination is being made of ways and means of financing the new institutions and training courses required. An immediate step is to see how more advantage can be taken by African Governments of the training facilities which already exist both within Africa and on other continents.

13. The cornerstone of ECA's efforts in the agricultural field is a joint programme with the FAO. ECA's contribution is now being intensified. Both the secretariat's research work and the sub-regional meetings on economic co-ordination have demonstrated the scope not only for a marked increase in agricultural production, particularly for domestic markets, but also the prospects of increasing agricultural specialization and hence increasing inter-African trade in agricultural products. With the aid of experts provided under bilateral aid by the Polish Government and in co-operation with the FAO a survey is now in progress on the concrete possibilities of increasing meat production in West Africa. Another project planned is to examine the prospect of growing more rice in West Africa. A study is being made of the manufacture of bread flour from kassava with a view to saving imported wheat.

14. In association with the German Foundation for developing countries, an expert meeting will be held on the economic response to different inputs in agriculture. Studies have been made, and more are in progress, by FAO experts, in association with ECA's efforts to promote sub-regionally co-ordinated fertilizer production, showing the tremendous potential for consumption of fertilizers in Africa and the immediate economic response which can be obtained by its application. More and more attention is being devoted to the so-called agro-allied industries, to save imports, and by further processing of raw materials, to increase the yield of exports. The FAO's African Timber Trends Study prepared in co-operation with ECA will be published shortly and will point the way to increased production and trade in both timber and timber products. Lastly in the agricultural field mention should be made of a report which has been prepared at the request of the ECA secretariat by a distinguished consultant, Professor René Dumont, with a wide-ranging approach to agricultural development and stressing in particular the author's imaginative ideas on rural animation.

15. The main focus of attention in the secretariat's activities in industry during the last year has been to follow-up the sub-regional industrial co-ordination missions.

16. The greatest progress has been made in North Africa. It should be recalled that during the Sixth session of the Commission delegates of the Maghreb countries requested the Executive Secretary to take the initiative in convening a ministerial meeting. In April 1964 senior officials from these countries met in Tangier, followed up by intensive contacts between the secretariat of the Tangier office and the four countries, and bilateral discussions between the countries themselves. The ground was finally prepared for a ministerial meeting in Tunis in September 1964. The four ministers and the Executive Secretary met in Tangier at the end of November to lay down the principles of economic co-operation.

17. This ministerial meeting noted that a new era of economic co-operation between the Maghreb countries had emerged. A ministerial council, a standing consultative committee and a permanent secretariat were established; the main lines of permanent co-operation to be carried out through these institutions were established. These new institutions are essentially instruments of the Maghreb countries but substantial assistance from the ECA secretariat has been called for. The main tasks are the co-ordination of development plans, industrial harmonization, co-ordination and co-operation in industry and mining, co-operation in trade, in training and the utilization of manpower and the financing of development projects. Finally, arising out of this meeting a request by the four countries is being addressed to the United Nations Special Fund to establish a Maghreb Industrial Centre with Headquarters in Tripoli and with close relations with the ECA Office at Tangier.

18. A conference on Industrial Co-ordination in West Africa was held in Bamako in October 1964. It was convened jointly by the Executive Secretary and the President of Niger as a culmination of two parallel streams of activity, and was jointly prepared by the ECA secretariat and a group of consultants appointed by the President of Niger. A number of detailed studies were presented to this conference covering iron and steel, engineering, basic chemicals and fertilizers, textiles, cement and the food industries. A number of important decisions were taken which will be followed up by pre-investment studies and other expert surveys. There were particularly intensive discussions on the location of iron and steel industries in West Africa but eventually compromise solutions were arrived at which should give rise before long to the beginnings of iron and steel production in the sub-region. The conference revealed the difficulties of approaching industrial co-ordination even if a comparatively wide range of industries are taken into account, if it is not examined in conjunction with all the major aspects of economic co-ordination.

19. Preparations are now under way for a conference of East and Central African countries to be held in Lusaka towards the middle of 1965. Once

again the main theme is industrial co-ordination and intensive studies are being prepared. However on this occasion it is intended to present papers on the relevant subjects notably the framework for the sub-region; trade; monetary and fiscal problems; transport; energy and in general the co-ordination of development plans in the sub-region.

20. Finally, an intensive study is being made of the prospects of proceeding further from the Equatorial African Customs Union towards closer co-operation among the economies of Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad and possibly Congo (Leopoldville). This may well assist the Governments concerned in the negotiations they have now initiated.

21. The secretariat would like to recall in this connexion the important recommendation made by the Conference of African Planners at its meeting held in Dakar towards the end of this year. This envisaged the setting up on a sub-regional basis of a series of committees to co-ordinate development plans. The secretariat believes that these bodies should be closely linked with the sub-regional co-ordination activities already under way. As has been seen these are well advanced in North Africa and substantial progress can be expected by the end of the year in East and Central Africa and in Central Equatorial Africa. More remains to be done, however, in West Africa as a follow-up to the Bamako Conference. This is important if genuine co-ordination is to be achieved, the maximum impact of the different initiatives attained, and duplication of both meetings and secretariat facilities avoided.

22. Transport is another key factor in the economic integration process and here again the ECA activities during the last year have been concentrated mainly on this aspect of the problem. A preliminary survey of inland transport in West Africa has been completed and it is hoped to present a similar survey on East and Central Africa to the Lusaka conference. The next step is to carry out pre-investment studies of the new links between countries, the need for which has been provisionally demonstrated, with a view subsequently to promoting actual investment.

For this purpose the secretariat made an approach to non-African countries with a view to carrying out surveys of this type on the potential new links between African countries south of the Sahara other than the Republic of South Africa. A German team is already in the field and another from Italy is about to start work. A contribution is being made by the Netherlands on prospects of making navigable the Middle Niger River. Further teams are expected to be contributed by three other European countries. At a later stage it is intended to convene a meeting in Addis Ababa of the leaders of each team with a view to drawing conclusions concerning the next step, which might be recommended to African Governments, and at this stage the secretariat will be assisted by an expert provided by the Government of the United States. In a similar vein much preliminary work has been done on the possibility of establishing a link across the Sahara. Meetings were held in Algiers in May and December. A committee of ministers from Algeria, Tunisia, Niger and Mali has been established and two experts have been contributed by the United Nations with a view to making further surveys so as to prepare the ground for a possible request for a thorough feasibility study by the United Nations Special Fund. Yet another venture of this kind is a project designed to examine the possibility of improving transport facilities in the Great Lakes area. This may lead in due course to the submission of a request to the United Nations Special Fund by the countries concerned for a major pre-investment survey.

23. Attention should be drawn to two other activities in the transport field. One is the Conference on African Air Transport held in November 1964, sponsored and prepared jointly with ICAO. The other is a comprehensive survey just completed on shipping freight rates in West Africa. This is now being supplemented by a similar investigation relating to East Africa. This is being followed up by sub-regional meetings designed to assist negotiations between governments on a sub-regional basis for closer co-operation between national airlines.

24. The joint ITU/ECA plan for the development of the African telecommunications network has now been worked out in considerable detail. It

will be recalled that this is in two phases, short- and long-term. Negotiations are proceeding with non-African governments to assist in the realization of this plan. A request is also be presented to the United Nations Special Fund for a detailed survey which will be the basis of the long-term plan. A comprehensive training plan is also being drawn up.

25. Work has continued steadily on energy and natural resources although it has been somewhat hampered by staff shortages. In the field of water resources arrangements have been made for intensive co-operation with the Specialized Agencies.

26. Much more attention is now being paid to training. The secretariat is taking an active part in the evolution of two international organizations which are taking shape in West Africa, namely the Chad Basin Commission, and the inter-State Organization in respect of the Niger River Basin. Closer contact will be established with the similar arrangements around the Senegal River, and an active interest is being taken in the preliminary work on the Nile River.

27. In mineral resources the secretariat's activities have been concentrated on the provision of advisory services to governments, assisting governments in drawing up applications to the Special Fund and recommendations on technical assistance. Although knowledge of African mineral resources is being steadily built up, there is still much to do particularly in the smaller countries. It is often agreed that African resources are abundant, but they have to be used, and used primarily to meet the continent's own needs. Increasing attention is therefore being paid to research into the solution of the specific problems which have to be faced. In this field also increasing emphasis is being given to manpower and training problems.

28. In surveying and cartography, as a follow-up to the recommendations of the Regional Cartography Conference for Africa, a meeting of experts was held to consider proposals for establishing centres for training in photogrammetry, air-borne geophysical surveying and the interpretation of aerial survey data. Mapping and documentation facilities in Addis Ababa

are being steadily built up and in this context the secretariat wishes to acknowledge gratefully a substantial collection of valuable maps from the United States Government. Arrangements are being made for a further expert meeting to examine proposals for the establishment of special common services in surveying and mapping.

29. In the field of trade and payments the main event has been the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The secretariat contributed a number of papers and in addition a secretariat team, headed by the Deputy Executive Secretary, was assigned to the conference for its duration. This team was able to help to service the Co-ordination Committee of African countries participating in the conference. The recommendations of the conference are now being carefully analyzed from the point of view of African countries and a preliminary paper is before the Commission. African countries are interested in increasing trade with countries in other continents, and there are promising possibilities of major developments in trade between African countries and the planned economies of Eastern Europe and Asian countries and the Far East. Nevertheless a principal pre-occupation in the coming years should be a major drive towards import substitution in a wide range of activity with as a corollary intensified sub-regional and regional co-ordination of development plans and increased intra-African trade. Related to this of course is Africa's vital interest in financial assistance, its volume, the terms on which it is offered and its continuity. Africa is naturally interested in schemes for compensatory financing, but this should be regarded as an aspect, and not the most important aspect, of financial aid generally. African countries are also naturally interested in efforts to break down barriers in the industrialized countries in the way of the entry of their semi-processed and processed goods; but the nature of their interests at this stage are not precisely identical with those of developing countries in other continents. Finally, African countries are also interested in better commodity arrangements but here again their interests are not necessarily identical with those of other developing countries further on the road to development. Africa should aim at a larger share of world markets for certain commodities

in the production of which it is particularly advantageously placed. In the promotion of intra-African trade much progress is being made towards the conversion of tariffs of African countries to the Brussels Nomenclature where this has not been the system employed in the past, and in general progress is being made towards the harmonization of customs régimes. As part of the secretariat's work on economic integration referred to already possibilities are being examined of harmonizing customs régimes and procedures. Work is continuing on the analysis of obstacles to inter-African trade, both tariffs and quantitative restrictions.

30. In the payments field a Conference of African Monetary Authorities was held in Tokyo, the location being chosen to take advantage of the presence there of African delegates to the annual meetings of the IMF and the IBRD. A technical paper on the possibilities of establishing an African Payments Union was presented and a substantial progress report made on the approaches to and the work being done by the secretariat towards African monetary co-operation in its wider aspects. Despite the unanimous desire to examine an African Payments Union expressed by the Sixth session of the Commission and the Organization of African Unity, the secretariat was somewhat disappointed by the limited progress made at the Tokyo Conference. Work on this problem is of course continuing.

31. In this statement comparatively little need be said about the other activities of the secretariat which are reported upon in the reports before the Commission. The work on the Economic Survey of Africa is proceeding and the parts dealing with West and South Africa are about to go to the printer. It is expected to complete the parts dealing with North and East and Central Africa towards the end of this year, and the whole Survey will be completed by a synthesis dealing with Africa as a whole, which it is hoped will be published early in 1966. This is the first basic Economic Survey of Africa and should serve a number of purposes, not least as an essential background to the promotion of economic growth, sub-regional and regional economic integration, and estimates of capital and manpower requirements essential to carry forward the tremendous development possibilities which are now opening up.

32. Another series of estimates now being made arising out of this work relates to the requirements of African countries in foreign financial aid with a view to carrying out their development plans. Steady progress has been made in other fields, notably Housing, Statistics, Demography, Public Administration and Social Development.

33. Another paper before you (E/CN.14/312) gives an account of our activities in the field of technical co-operation. The first part of this document, as in past years, describes the regional programme financed by United Nations Technical Assistance funds. The growing potentialities of the ECA's regional advisory service should be noted and the secretariat would like to remind governments that these services are available for short periods, but only at their request.

34. The secretariat has been able to make an increasing contribution to country programmes under the technical assistance programme by advising on programming, by briefing experts on the way to their country of assignment, and by assisting experts while they are in the field. It has also been able to play an increasing part in helping African Governments to formulate requests to the Special Fund.

35. The second part of the paper gives a summary account of conversations members of the secretariat have had in 12 countries outside Africa with aid programmes. Apart from education and training the discussions covered provision of short-term experts, pre-investment studies, research, and co-operation with the African Development Bank. The response to requests to provide technical assistance and aid to Africa and to share knowledge and skill was most encouraging, and the secretariat would like to take this opportunity of thanking publicly the governments of all the countries visited. The next task is to help African Governments to take full advantage of the wide range of facilities available under bilateral aid programmes.

36. Considerable progress has been made during the last year in the establishment of sub-regional offices. A Director of African nationality has been appointed in the Tangier Office and he has with him a small

nucleus of experienced staff. The work already described towards the economic integration of the Maghreb countries is not the only activity of this office but is in itself evidence of what they have been doing.

37. An experienced African has now been appointed as Director of the West African Sub-Regional Office in Niamey and an energetic programme of work is now underway. Another experienced African has also been appointed to head the East and Central African Sub-Regional Office in Lusaka and here again good progress has now been made. The fourth Sub-Regional Office has now been opened in Leopoldville with a skeleton staff and it is hoped to appoint a qualified African Director at an early date.

38. These offices for the moment will continue to be modestly staffed but they will become increasingly the focal point of ECA's sub-regional activities and officers with specialized qualifications will be sent there for varying periods as occasion demands.

39. At this point reference should be made to the growing working relations between the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Commission for Africa. The secretariat has continued throughout the year to be at the disposal of the Organization of African Unity and its secretariat to assist them in every possible way within the limits of its terms of reference and its resources. Arrangements are now being worked out between the two secretariats, on the one hand to avoid duplication of effort, and on the other more important to provide mutual support in a common task. A draft agreement between the two Organizations will shortly be submitted to the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

40. Practical working relationships with the Specialized Agencies have continued to develop during the last year. The joint division on agriculture with the FAO is a long-standing and fruitful arrangement. The joint programme with ITU has proved to be of major importance. Reference has already been made to the contribution of UNESCO to ECA's training activities. In addition, through a liaison officer, other joint activities are developing. Recently the secretariat has had discussions at the highest level with the secretariat of ILO, the practical results of which

will be seen in the coming year, particularly in manpower planning and training. WHO has also appointed a liason officer to the Commission and contributed a specialist on sanitary problems for the Housing Section. UNICEF has appointed a liason officer and it is expected that WHO will do the same in the course of the coming year. Finally, reference should be made to the fruitful co-operation established with ICAO in preparing for and servicing the Conference on African Air Transport.

41. There is one significant change in the pattern of documentation submitted to the Commission. Contrary to practice in previous years the bulk of the documents on the agenda are relatively short and together give a succinct account of ECA's activities in different fields during the past year. They are supplemented by the reports of the meetings which have been held during the year which are available in the documents office as background documents. However the main conclusions and recommendations of each of these meetings are summarized in the activity reports. This new procedure has been adopted to facilitate the business purpose of the session and to provide delegates in good time with reports of a manageable length.

42. There is a further step in the rationalization of the Commission's procedures to which the secretariat wishes to call attention.

43. A thorough review has been carried out of the Commission's meeting policy starting with an examination of the main reasons for holding meetings. Specifically these are: the Commission's role as an inter-governmental body to take collective decisions for concerted action; expert meetings to resolve specific economic or technical problems; and seminars or courses with a training purpose. It is evident that there has been a tendency in recent years to convene too many meetings, with on the one hand insufficient preparation, and on the other hand too many calls on hard-pressed African ministers and senior officials. The secretariat proposes therefore to convene only a limited number of meetings in 1965. On the other hand, in the total schedule, the proportion devoted to training activities will rise sharply. Finally, the secretariat would wish once more to renew an appeal made at the Fifth and Sixth sessions that the Commission session should in future be held at two-yearly intervals.

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