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UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Intergovernmental Committee of Experts
for Science and Technology Development
Fifth Meeting

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2-6 November 1987

REPORT ON SETTING UP AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM
FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF NEW
TECHNOLOGIES ON AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2. Serve as a regional data bank or clearing house
3. Surveys, workshops and assessment of training needs for the network
4. Alter policy-makers, planners, researchers and the general public through publications and other means.

B. Subregional Nodes

Will provide the same functions as Focal Points at the subregional level.

C. National Nodes

National nodes will be identified by the Focal Point. Their functions will be:

1. Collection, processing, storage, assessing and dissemination of S and T information.
2. Development of human and physical capabilities in S and T at the national level in order to cope with issues of technological assessment and forecasting.
3. Organization of national workshops and seminars
4. Communication with regional and subregional nodal points
5. Alerting policy-makers, planners, researchers and the general population on these issues.

Recommendation

The meeting strongly recommended that in view of the importance of this project to the economic development of Africa, OAU, ECA, ARCT and African Governments should do everything possible to assure its success.

The finalized project document is attached hereto as Annex I.

Follow-up actions to date

The ATAS-Africa project has been presented to all the subregional Working Group meetings held this year. All the meetings have endorsed the project with each subregion giving its own priority technologies.

The project has been submitted to various donor agencies and government e.g. UNDP, Islamic Development Bank, Japan and their reactions are still to be known.

ECA is exploring with UNCSTD the possibility of holding a regional workshop on materials technology and development. The meeting would be held at the beginning of 1989 and the venue would be either ARCT, Dakar or Nairobi.

Introduction

An African Expert Group Meeting on the Implications of New Technologies for the Lagos Plan of Action was held in Mbabane, Swaziland, from 22 to 26 October 1984. One of the recommendations was the establishment of an African Early Warning System on New Technologies. ECA/OAU prepared a project proposal which was examined in detail by the Fourth Meeting of IGCESTD.

Subsequently, an International Workshop on Advance Technology Alert Systems was held in West Berlin from 15 to 20 December 1985 under the auspices of the German Foundation for International Development (DSE). It was attended by experts from all over the world including representatives of the ECA, OAU, ARCT and a few African experts who had attended the Mbabane meeting. The ECA/OAU, together with the African experts, presented the ATAS-Africa project to the workshop and the latter whole-heartedly endorsed the proposal and passed a special recommendation to that effect.

ECA, in collaboration with OAU sought, and obtained, the financial support of DSE to hold a meeting of African Experts who would give a final form to the ATAS-Africa project.

This meeting was held in Addis Ababa from 8 to 10 December 1986 and was attended by experts from six African countries as well as representatives from UNCSTD, DSE, ARCT and PADIS.

The participants gave particular attention to:

- (a) Working out the structure of the project by delineating the national, regional, subregional and inter-regional nodal points that will form the ATAS network;
- (b) Prescribing the details of the functions and objectives of the project and the programme of activities;
- (c) Drawing up a budget to cover the activities delineated for the two year pilot phase project.

Structure of ATAS-Africa

It was agreed that national S and T nodal points be established in such a way that they would be in communication with one another as well as with the coordinating focal point, and with the UNCSTD in New York. This structure would enable direct contact with UNCSTD which has a global mandate on the organization of ATAS.

The participants agreed that the focal points should be based in Addis Ababa under the joint jurisdiction and management of the OAU, ECA and ARCT.

Functions of the structural organs

A. Focal Point

1. Plan and coordinate current and future activities of ATAS-Africa. This includes the search for funds, manpower development and other assistance as and when necessary for the development of the entire network. Such future planning shall be done through periodic reviews of the goals and activities of the project as well as the preparation of achievable targets on short and long-term bases.