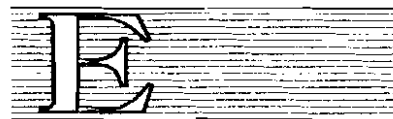




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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Eighteenth meeting of the Africa
Regional Coordinating Committee
for the Integration of Women in
Development (ARCC)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
24-26 April 1997

R E P O R T

**THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL COORDINATING
COMMITTEE FOR INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (ARCC)**

1. The Eighteenth Meeting of the Africa Regional Coordination Committee for Integration of Women in Development was held at ECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 24 to 26 April 1997.

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

2. The following member countries of ARCC attended the meeting: Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
3. The following ECA member States also attended as observers: Angola, Botswana, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia and the Niger.
4. Observers from the following member States of the United Nations were present: the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Austria and Canada.
5. The Organization of African Unity was represented.
6. There were observers from the following NGOs: Ethiopian Women Entrepreneurs Association; Hope for Women in Ethiopia.
7. Also present were the following United Nations Agencies: ILO, WFP, UNDP, UNHCR,

B. AGENDA

8. The meeting adopted the following Agenda:
 1. Opening of the meeting
 2. Election of Officers
 3. Adoption of the provisional agenda and provisional programme of work
 4. Report on ECA activities on the Women in Development programme during the period April 1996 - April 1997.
 5. Technical discussion on National Action Plans
 6. Follow-up to the implementation of the Platforms for Action
Progress report on:
 - Economic empowerment
 - Women in the peace process
 7. Report on the Forty-First Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

8. Assessment of ARCC
9. Any other matters
10. Adoption of the Report and Closure of the meeting.

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening Addresses (agenda item 1)

9. The meeting was opened by His Excellency Tadelech Haile Michael, Minister in Charge of Women's Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, who welcomed everyone to Addis Ababa. She stated that the holding of regular sessions of ARCC was important as a way for African countries to share their experiences and work out a comprehensive strategy for addressing the pressing social, cultural, economic and political problems facing African women.

10. She noted that conflicts had been bleeding the economies of African States for three decades resulting in a social and economic crisis. There were fears that the debt burden and decreasing value of commodities would seriously hamper economic recovery. Ethiopia, along with several other African States, had adopted free-market oriented policies and introduced pluralist political systems which allowed for transparency and accountability based on democratic electoral processes and peace building. This, she said, had restored a momentum of economic regeneration in Ethiopia and several other African States.

11. She commented on the difficulty in absorbing women and young people into the labour force. She stated that ARCC had the task of deliberating on measures to strengthen inter-African cooperation on the economic empowerment of women, women in the peace process and other areas of concern as follow-up to the Platforms for Action. Exchange of experiences in the areas of human resources development, employment creation and programmes to tackle social, economic and cultural problems should be given utmost attention, she said.

12. The Minister urged the meeting to examine the role of ARCC with a view to making it more effective in implementing the Platforms and its role in ECA's renewal process. She reminded the meeting that the OAU had endorsed the African Platform for Action although political commitment and resources had not been forthcoming. She said that much was expected from the OAU and ECA as well as member States and commended the strengthening of the African Centre for Women.

13. She commented on Ethiopia's commitment, over the last five years, to achieving self-sufficiency in food and rapid economic growth through its focus on rural development. She attributed positive signs of socio-economic development to peace, stability and the establishment of women departments in sectoral ministries and regional bureaux and to the support of the National Policy on Women. The Minister explained that Ethiopia was implementing the African Platform for Action through its five-year strategic plan.

14. Regarding legislation, she informed the meeting that the Constitution of Ethiopia had enshrined Article 35 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Ministry of Justice was also working on the codification of laws, in particular, family law, to eliminate those sections which were in contradiction with the Constitution and were discriminatory.

15. She concluded by saying that the cooperation of the Government of Ethiopia was assured and that she hoped the items on the Agenda would receive serious consideration. She wished the meeting success in its deliberations and the delegates a pleasant stay in Addis Ababa.

16. In his opening statement the Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr. K.Y. Amoako, welcomed all participants to the Eighteenth meeting of ARCC and said he was convinced that ARCC could take the lead in ensuring that gender is given adequate attention at all levels both within their countries and in the continent.

17. The Executive Secretary observed that the meeting was taking place at a time when ECA was fully engaged in the implementation of its new strategic directions. ECA's vision included the promotion of women through governments, NGOs, and civil society as they took into account the role, rights, and interests of women in all development sectors of our society. As part of the new strategic directions, the five substantive Divisions, which operate under the five thematic areas of ECA's work (social and economic policy analysis, food security and sustainable development, development management, development information, and regional cooperation) have gender as a cross-cutting theme in their programmes.

18. The Executive Secretary further informed the meeting that the status of the African Centre for Women (ACW) had been upgraded by strengthening its staffing and placing it in the cabinet. As part of ACW's overall staffing plan, and in order to ensure the mainstreaming of gender in-house, two Regional Gender Advisers had been hired to handle women's economic empowerment and legal and human rights as they affect women; and staff members in each of the five substantive divisions had also been appointed to ensure that gender concerns were fully integrated in the analytic and policy work of each division. The Executive Secretary had also appointed gender Focal Points for the five Sub-Regional Development Centres (SRDC), to promote gender issues and assist in the implementation of ECA's strategies for mainstreaming gender in the sub-regions.

19. The Executive Secretary also informed the meeting that Mrs. Gertrude Mongella had agreed to serve the Commission as a special adviser on a part-time basis. The Executive Secretary introduced the new chief of ACW Ms. Josephine Ouedraogo, a national of Burkina Faso. He stated that ECA would benefit from her vast development expertise and well-grounded experience in research and training in the areas of rural development strategies, management of environmental resources, empowerment of rural organizations, and national decentralization planning.

20. Recalling last year's commitment to assess and review the role of ARCC in the light of ECA's renewed work programme, the Executive Secretary called upon the meeting to look candidly and critically at the past achievements of ARCC. He emphasized that ARCC should be more involved in assessing strategies and activities of all actors involved in the analysis of gender mainstreaming and provide feedback where weaknesses were found. He highlighted the need for a new way to look at women's role in development and the impact of development efforts on women. He stressed the need for a contemporary strategic vision which could guide ARCC into the next century.

21. In this connection, the Executive Secretary proposed that ARCC direct its attention to: planning and implementing advocacy activities in support of gender-sensitive policy and institutional change at the national level; undertaking periodic review of progress in the implementation of the Platforms at the regional and subregional levels; and advising ECA on its programme for implementing the Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action in Africa and on the operation of the Leadership and Empowerment Fund for African Women.

22. The Executive Secretary concluded by inviting the meeting to consider how best ARCC could accomplish these tasks including examining the types of activities, resource requirements and modalities needed for ARCC to influence policy makers to incorporate women's concerns in their national development plans and ensure that the Platforms are accorded the right level of importance within national governments.

23. Taking the floor, Ambassador Pascal Gayama, Assistant Secretary-General of OAU welcomed participants and stressed the importance of evaluating the progress made in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action. He reviewed the activities conducted by OAU as part of its follow-up of the regional and global platforms.

24. His organization had taken particular care to promote the role of African women in peace building processes and mechanisms. Jointly with ECA, OAU had organized in November 1996, at Johannesburg in South Africa, a Women Leadership Forum on Peace with a view to securing the participation of women in the OAU mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. A Pan-African Conference on Peace, Gender and Development had also been organized at Kigali, Rwanda, in March 1997, by the women of Rwanda, under the auspices of OAU and ECA.

25. He went on to inform the meeting that in line with the decision taken in Beijing by African First Ladies to become further involved in humanitarian and conflict management issues in Africa, the First Lady of Nigeria would be organizing in May 1997, a peace summit of African First Ladies with the assistance of OAU and ECA. All these initiatives would be brought to the attention of the forthcoming Summit of OAU Heads of State and Government.

26. Another issue to which OAU was giving particular attention was the participation of women in economic activities, particularly export activities. OAU was convinced that women had an important role to play in Africa's economic integration. The main activity conducted in this sector had been the workshop organized jointly with the African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs and ECA as part of the All-Africa Trade Fair which had recently taken place in Kaduna, Nigeria.

27. In conclusion, he expressed his satisfaction at the spirit of cooperation between the Women's Unit of OAU and the ECA African Centre for Women which augured well for improving the socio-economic and political conditions of African women. Reaffirming his firm belief that all these initiatives would be accorded the necessary attention, he wished the meeting every success in its deliberations.

28. In a message read on her behalf by Madam Zakia, Mrs. Neziha Zarouk, Tunisian Minister responsible for Women and Family Affairs and current Chairperson of ARCC, she stated that Africa was at the crossroads. At the dawn of the third millennium and half a century after the achievement of independence, African countries were still searching for socio-economic, political and demographic equilibrium. While democracy was making significant headway everywhere,

peace was often not forthcoming and the hotbeds of tension which continued to simmer jeopardized the efforts that member States were making to educate, train and improve the living standards of their people. Nevertheless, the economic recovery achieved in a number of African countries opened new vistas for progress and heralded a better future.

29. In the post-Beijing era, African women should take advantage of the ferment for democratization in Africa, the better to secure their rights and to exercise them fully as citizens who have gained respect as credible and viable partners in development. The challenges facing Africa could not be met without a strategy for mobilizing every human resource, most particularly that of women.

30. From the Earth Summit in Rio to the Women's Conference in Beijing, all United Nations Conferences, more specifically the latter, had provided the opportunity for embarking on such a process, hence the importance for each country to prepare national plans of action, appropriate the necessary funds and set up the ideal machinery for following-up the process. Such plans of action would play a key role in laying the groundwork for the achievement of sustainable development.

31. African women had demonstrated great ingenuity and initiative and the post-Beijing era provided a platform for their advancement and engagement in the new civil society that the United Nations and the whole of humanity wished to usher in at the close of the 20th century.

32. She described Tunisia's experience in the emancipation of women and their integration in development as a process which had taken her country from the enactment of laws protecting the rights of women to the institution of a bold policy that guaranteed the welfare of women and the incorporation of the post-Beijing recommendations in national development planning. She informed the meeting of all the specific and positive measures taken by Tunisia to empower its women so that they themselves could fill the gap between the laws enacted and their daily life experience and thus improve their degree of integration.

33. In conclusion, the Chairperson of ARCC expressed her appreciation to Mrs. M. Mwaniki for the quality of the work she had accomplished at the helm of ACW and congratulated Mrs. Josephine Ouedraogo on her appointment as the new Chief of ACW.

34. The opening ceremony was presided over by the representative of Tunisia, Madame Zakia Bouaziz, President Directeur Général du Centre de Recherche d'Etude de Documentation et d'Information sur la Femme (CREDIF) from Tunisia.

2. Election of officers (agenda item 2)

35. The meeting unanimously approved that the current Bureau of ARCC should run the eighteenth meeting of ARCC as follows:

Chairperson	- Tunisia
First Vice Chairperson	- Rwanda
Second Vice Chairperson	- Ethiopia
First Rapporteur	- Côte d'Ivoire
Second Rapporteur	- Cameroon

3. Report on the activities of the Women in Development programme during the period April 1996 - April 1997 (agenda item 4)

36. In introducing agenda item 4, the secretariat presented document E/ECA/ACW/ARCC.XVIII/97/3, which outlined the activities undertaken by ECA with regard to gender and the advancement of women during the period beginning April 1996 through April 1997. The activities were presented in three parts.

37. Part one reviewed actions taken to implement Resolution 824(XXXI) adopted and Decisions taken at the twenty-second meeting of the Conference Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Planning. Pursuant to Resolution 824 (XXXI) on "Follow-up to Dakar and Beijing Conferences: Implementation of the Global and Regional Platforms for Action for the Advancement of women", ECA/ACW organized amongst other activities, two subregional committee meetings of ARCC which were held at the ECA MULPOCs in Lusaka (July 1996) and Yaounde, Cameroon in April 1997, respectively. The meetings were organized to facilitate the renewal of the members of ARCC. It *inter alia* also provided an opportunity for exchange of information and ideas vis-a-vis the implementation of the Global and Regional Platforms for Action. Other activities included the organization of an Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting/Women Leadership Forum on Peace which was held in Johannesburg in November 1996. The major outcome was the recommendation to form the African Women Committee on Peace. Its institutional status, terms of reference, composition, modalities for selecting members and terms of office were also recommended.

38. A training seminar on Leadership Skills Development was also organized in Addis Ababa in September 1996 for senior executive women and managers.

39. With regard to research and publications on gender and women-related issues, the presenter highlighted a number of technical publications that had been prepared by ACW and other ECA Divisions. The publications were focused on various sectors identified as critical in the Regional and Global Platforms for Action. In addition to publications, eight missions were undertaken during the period under review. The missions had been requested by various institutions, member States and NGOs for the purpose of provision of technical assistance.

40. Concerning the orientation and projections for the 1997-1998 ECA gender programme, the Chief of the Centre informed the Committee that the framework had been defined and that it was influenced by three main elements namely: The Leadership Fund established to promote gender activities by strengthening African women's economic role, fostering the leadership role of women, and the promotion of women's human and legal rights; ECA's role in the monitoring and promotion of the implementation of the Regional and Global Platforms for Action; and by defining and implementing strategies for mainstreaming gender in ECA's programme. As a cross-cutting theme, gender issues will be integrated into ECA's five Sub-programmes by elaborating issues to be implemented.

41. The Chief of ACW also informed ARCC of the Gender Networking Meeting which was scheduled to be held in June 1997 in Addis Ababa. This technical meeting would define the work of ACW, launch the activities of ECA's gender programme and focus on ECA's partnership with member States, NGOs and other actors. All these objectives would be centered on implementation of the Platforms through the activities of the Leadership Fund on Women in Africa. The Bureau of ARCC would be invited to the meeting which would provide an opportunity to assess the new role of ARCC in the above context.

42. In the discussion that followed, a number of issues were raised by several member States. Issues raised included the need to give priority to "peace" in the Leadership Fund activities; the need for ECA/ACW to work jointly and coordinate activities together with OAU in order to minimize waste of time and energy and avoid duplication; and the importance of sending documents for the June meeting well in advance to member States. Participants also sought and obtained clarification on the rationale for the choice of the components of the Leadership Fund, especially in the light of varying priorities in the subregions.

43. In response to the latter issue, the secretariat assured the Committee that ECA/ACW would consider the possibility of implementing its work programme within the context of subregional realities and priorities.

4. Technical discussion on National Action Plans (agenda item 5)

44. Under this agenda item, several member States made brief presentations of their National Action Plans and/or National Gender Policy. The presentations included the strategies and processes followed in the preparation of the National Action Plans along the guidelines proposed by ECA. The following paragraphs highlight the main elements of the National Action Plans with respect to Zambia, Tanzania, Tunisia and Morocco. Given time constraint, plans were submitted to the Secretariat.

Zambia on National Gender Policy

45. The representative of Zambia gave a brief description of Zambia's Strategic Plan of Action, the intended Gender Policy yet to be adopted by the Government. Zambia had chosen five Critical Areas of Concern on which to focus: poverty, education and training, health, the girl-child and power-sharing. The Plan of Action laid emphasis on activities with a multiple effect; drawing broad-based participation; giving attention to the rural areas; and incorporating indicators for evaluating success. The representative explained that each of the priority areas had well-defined objectives, strategies, activities and implementers for a period of five years. In drawing-up the strategic Plan of Action, Zambia had involved many stake-holders. There had been an effort at moving away from an elitist approach and, as such, inputs were solicited from villages, districts and provinces. The plan was to launch the Gender Policy on the anniversary of the Beijing Conference, but, there was a slight delay. In the 1997 budget, ministerial activities would be given budget line for gender activity.

46. The Gender and Development structure had been upgraded from a Section to a Division, and had been placed in the Cabinet Office. Its head had been upgraded to the position of a Permanent Secretary. The representative of Zambia concluded by pointing out that there had been considerable positive change towards gender issues as was evidenced by the fact that in 1997 budget resources would be allocated to gender activities in sectoral ministries. Nonetheless, there was need for stronger political as well as financial will.

Tanzania

47. The Minister for Community Development, Women and Children of Tanzania informed the meeting that the obligation to implement the Platforms for Action rested with that Ministry; however, civil society and other actors were also involved. Tanzania had chosen to focus on four Critical Areas of Concern in its National Plan of Action: women and legal rights; economic empowerment and poverty eradication; education, training and employment and; women in decision-

making. The choice of these areas reflected a human development approach on the part of the Government, while the last area was selected to enhance equity in resource allocation.

48. The Minister explained that seminars had been held at the village, district and regional levels to solicit input into the National Plan of Action. Support from NGOs was also sought out because they often have more resources and time for grassroots level work.

49. The Government had designed a matrix for implementation of the Platforms for Action which included identification of actors, Critical Areas of Concern and a time-frame for monitoring purposes. A comprehensive programme for implementation was being worked out with assistance from UNDP.

50. The Minister explained that resources were limited but that political will was very important. Local governments were to allocate ten per cent of their income to the implementation. The Ministry of Community, Women and Children coordinates with all the ministries which have gender units. The National Plan of Action had already been presented to parliament in order to elicit the commitment of Ministers in all sectors and enable the Cabinet to give directives for the implementation. A Commission was in the process of being established to monitor and follow-up on the implementation process.

Morocco

51. The representative of Morocco informed the meeting that mainstreaming women in development was an essential component of social and economic development in Morocco. After Dakar, a National Follow-up Committee had been established composed of the NGOs and Government representatives who prepared the report for Beijing. Since the 1996 Meeting of ARCC, action had been taken on the African and Global Platforms for Action mainly in the areas of legal rights, education, health, communications, economic empowerment and decision-making. There was a Ministerial Committee of Government bodies, a Technical Committee and a recommended Supreme Council for Women. Reform of discriminatory laws was in progress as was communication and sensitization for behaviour change and elimination of obstacles to the advancement of women.

Tunisia: Centre de recherche, d'études des documentation et d'information sur la femme de Tunisie

52. In her statement, the representative of Tunisia first indicated that the women's advancement programme in her country was highly supported by Government authorities, particularly at the highest policy level. She informed participants about the role played by the Centre de Recherche, d'Etudes de documentation et d'information sur la Femme de Tunisie (CREDIF) in the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women and the formulation of the post-Beijing national programme of action.

53. She then described CREDIF's programme activities in the areas of information, communications, training and research.

54. After stating the main objectives of the various programme components, she highlighted the role of the machinery set up to monitor the image of women, the organization of regional women and media workshops, the establishment of a gender networking facility and of a media data bank which would enable the publication of a directory of women journalists and media

professionals.

55. In terms of research and training, CREDIF accorded priority to rural women and to combating the feminisation of poverty. CREDIF was considered a centre of excellence on issues related to gender, population and development and an organized programmes tailored to the needs of various African countries. One of its research priorities was to set up an observatory for collecting gender desegregated data and widely disseminating such data.

56. She then described programmes mounted to eradicate female illiteracy, deal with the issue of young girls failing at or dropping out of school and problems of reproductive health. CREDIF also considered important projects offering support to women agricultural entrepreneurs and to women managers in the public and private sectors.

57. The representative of Tunisia concluded by explaining that with regard to poverty alleviation, a voluntary National Solidarity Fund had been established. Contributions to the Fund could come from individuals or groups. Both contributions and projects funded were made public. This Fund had contributed significantly towards the alleviation of poverty.

Rwanda

58. The representative of Rwanda said that a National Advisory Committee on Women set up during the preparation for the Beijing Conference was entrusted with follow-up on the Dakar, Beijing and Kigali platforms. The Committee was currently preparing a follow-up action plan and could draw on the proposed framework. She suggested that countries encountering difficulties in preparing action plans could well draw on the said proposed framework in order to facilitate the Expert Group's follow-up work.

5. Follow-up to the Regional and Global Platforms for Action: Economic Empowerment of Women (agenda item 6(a))

59. Under this agenda item, the representative of ECA introduced document E/ECA/ACW/ARCC.XVIII/97/4A and first drew attention to the main economic concerns of women, namely: their relative absence from economic decision-making and from national economic and financial policy making positions as well as their limited access to resources and opportunities. She then briefly described ECA's programme for strengthening African women's leadership capabilities with particular reference to the Dakar and Beijing recommendations. The economic component of that programme had to do with:

- (a) Analyzing economic policies and their impact on women;
- (b) Promoting dialogue with decision-makers and economic operators;
- (c) Promoting the sharing and dissemination of positive experiences that would serve as a model for potential entrepreneurs; and
- (d) Supporting women entrepreneurs particularly by improving their technical and managerial skills so as to make them more competitive;
Strengthening existing women's networks and providing them with useful information.

60. Turning to the promotion of women's entrepreneurship, she recalled that a Global Women Entrepreneurs Trade Fair and Investment Forum had been organized in June 1996 in Accra. The main objectives of the Trade Fair had been to promote trade and to draw the attention of women

to the need for taking appropriate measures to face the challenges of regional economic integration and the globalization of the world economy.

61. Referring to the Accra Declaration, she highlighted the critical areas identified such as transport, communications and tax treatment. She pointed out the importance of networking to share information and technology, the need to form coalitions for lobbying decision-makers to adopt policies which take women's concerns into account, the participation of women in trade missions and commercial negotiations, the institution of legal and regulatory reforms for promoting trade liberalization and providing access to information technologies that facilitate business growth.

62. In her conclusion, she appealed to participants to impress upon their respective Governments the need to incorporate elements of the Declaration in national programmes for building the capacity of women entrepreneurs and women business.

63. The meeting took note of the information contained in the background document.

6. Follow-up to the implementation of the Platforms for Action: Women in the Peace Process (agenda item 6b)

64. Introducing this agenda item, the representative of the secretariat stated that peace was a major priority of the Regional Platform for Action. ECA had accordingly made tremendous efforts to follow-up on the implementation of the Regional Platform for peace. A number of activities conducted in that area included assistance to Rwanda in the preparation and organization of the Pan-African Conference on Peace, Gender and Development which was held in Kigali, Rwanda in March 1997 and the Women Leadership Forum on Peace which had been organized in Johannesburg in November 1996. She requested participants to ensure that their respective countries translated into action the recommendations of both conferences.

65. The representative of Rwanda introduced the Kigali Declaration and Plan of Action. She was happy to note that the people of Africa had become aware of the fact that human progress and development could not be achieved without peace and gender equality.

66. The Conference of the Declaration of Kigali had adopted a Plan of Action of the Pan African Conference which aimed at further involving governmental and non-governmental organizations, peace movements, civil society and the international community in the promotion of lasting peace.

67. The representative of Rwanda placed particular emphasis on building justice and a culture of peace, practising good governance and establishing early-warning mechanisms for preventing the outbreak of conflicts, rehabilitating those affected by conflict and extraditing the perpetrators of crimes against humanity. In that regard, the women of Rwanda were firmly determined to rebuild their country in a spirit of tolerance, justice and national reconciliation.

68. She further insisted on the imperative need to implement the recommendations for improving the operation of the International Tribunal, empowering women economically for the sake of lasting peace and cancelling the national debt of Rwanda in favour of programmes designed to assist women victims of conflict and genocide.

69. Peace concerned everyone in the world and it behoved each African country to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the peace conference. She also requested ARCC to endorse the recommendations of the Plan of Action and concluded by thanking ECA and OAU for their support which had enabled the Conference to be a success.

70. The secretariat also presented a brief report on the Women Leadership Forum on Peace which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in November 1996. The meeting was convened to study and propose Terms of Reference for an African Women Committee on Peace as recommended by the Kampala Action Plan. The participants included experts in the area of peace and conflict resolution from various governments, NGO's and some United Nations Agencies. The Forum recommended the establishment of the African Women Committee on Peace which would be autonomous and comprising 16 countries from the five OAU sub-regions. It would consist of six government experts, five members from NGO's and five members nominated in their personal capacity. Government representatives would serve for a year while the rest would serve for two years for continuity. All members would be selected from the countries that constitute the OAU central organ.

71. The functions of the African Women Committee on Peace would include ensuring women's participation at all levels in all matters related to peace; advocating appointment of women to decision-making positions in government, the armed forces, international organizations and the bodies concerned with peace; promoting a culture of peace through peace education; and cooperating with other peace initiatives in the region including the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The secretariat of the Committee would be assumed by ECA and OAU jointly.

72. The meeting was informed that the process of nomination into the Committee had already started at the invitation of the OAU Secretariat and an appeal was made to the participants to urge authorities in their own countries to speed up the process.

73. Participants welcomed the initiative to establish the African Women Committee on Peace and sought information on its financing. They were informed that the responsibility for mobilizing operational resources would be the Committee's. The Forum had recommended the creation, by the Committee, of a Special Trust Fund for African Women's Peace Initiatives as one strategy for resource mobilization. Besides, the Committee could also tap the OAU fund in the Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Division when it is involved in joint activities with the Organization.

7. Proposal by Tunisia of a mid-term review of the Implementation of the Platforms for Action (Agenda item 6c)

74. Under this Agenda item, Tunisia made a proposal that a regional symposium on progress achieved in the advancement of African women in the context of the global and regional recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women should be organized in Tunis. It was further proposed that five subregional seminars should be organized during the second half of 1997 to prepare detailed evaluation reports on progress made for submission to the symposium.

75. Participants who reacted, expressed their interest, yet pointed out that it seemed that the time needed to prepare was inadequate, as was time to evaluate the impact of steps taken. Some participants therefore suggested that the symposium should perhaps be planned closer to the designated time for a general review -- the year 2000. Tunisia responded being under pressure to

go through a process of review soon might be an incentive to countries to move forward more quickly. The idea of organizing subregional meetings towards the end of 1998 was acceptable to her delegation. A symposium would follow.

76. The Secretariat suggested that incentives to push countries into action were needed and that expert group meetings could be held at the subregional level. The exercise would therefore entail a review of constraints encountered rather than an evaluation of the implementation process.

77. The Tunisian representative responded that a symposium would be planned to look at issues raised at the sub-regions. It was then agreed that a symposium would be organised in Tunisia and would have as objective the monitoring and not evaluation of the implementation of the Platforms.

8. Presentation of a Report on the Forty-First Session of the Commission on the Status of Women and Discussion (agenda item 7)

78. In presenting this agenda item, the secretariat informed the Committee that the Forty-first Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was held in March 1997 in New York. During the session, the CSW considered the implementation of four of the twelve critical areas identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. The four critical areas included: women and the environment; women in power and decision-making; women and the economy; and education and training of women.

79. She further informed the Committee that a Working Group on the preparation of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) met parallel with the Commission for the second consecutive year.

80. The presenter highlighted the agenda of the meeting which included amongst other items: follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and review of gender mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system.

81. On follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on women, the Commission held panel discussions under each of the four critical areas. The panel discussions, in which participated representatives from governments, experts, civil society and the United Nations system, identified emerging issues, successful strategies and practices, and postulated ways to move forward. Discussion on each of the said four critical areas came up with recommendations and agreed conclusions.

82. On the Optional Protocol, it was emphasized that adopting an Optional Protocol would bring CEDAW in line with other United Nations human rights instruments and would increase the effectiveness of CEDAW. It was also reported that the Protocol would contain both an inquiry procedure which would allow the Committee to investigate systematic abuses of States obligations to protect women from discrimination as well as an individual complaint procedure.

83. Concerning mainstreaming, the secretariat highlighted institutional requirements for mainstreaming a gender perspective, including policies, institutional cultures, incentive systems, operating procedures and gender training. The overall responsibility for gender mainstreaming was recognized as an institutional responsibility of all staff with programme managers giving their active and demonstrable support.

84. In conclusion, the presenter outlined, as agreed during the CSW, a tentative schedule containing critical areas of concern to be discussed at each of the coming sessions, from 1998 to 2000, as follows:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1998 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Violence against women- Women and armed conflict- Human rights of women- The girl child |
| 1999 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Women and Health- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women- Initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action. |
| 2000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Comprehensive 5-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action. |

85. Before the year 2000, the year for the comprehensive 5-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action, ECA intends to organize, in 1999, the 6th Regional Conference to assess the implementation of the Regional and Global Platforms for Action. This is a concrete activity in which ARCC members will be expected to assist. They should be involved in the overall review and appraisal as well as in the organization of the meeting.

86. Following the presentation, some delegates commented on the four critical areas giving emphasis to the importance of environment and the need for African countries to decide on priorities and alternative sources of energy. The need for affirmative action with a view to promoting and increasing the participation of women in decision-making positions was also emphasized. It was also pointed out that there was need to move beyond recommendations to concrete action plans.

9. Assessment of ARCC (agenda item 8)

87. The Chief of ACW introduced the agenda item and provided some background information on ARCC. She reminded the Committee that ARCC was established in 1979 by Resolution 365(XIV) adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers. The mandate of ARCC was amended by the ECA Conference of Ministers in April 1993 to reflect its broader role in gender and women's issues. In May 1996, the same ECA Conference of Ministers increased the membership of ARCC from fifteen to twenty. It also decided that ECA should periodically assess the activities of ARCC and their impact.

88. Following the decision of the ECA Conference of Ministers, ECA began to reflect on how the evaluation could be made to result in realistic proposals. ECA was of the opinion that it was important to review the strategies, procedures and objectives of ARCC in the context of its mandate to coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Platforms for Action. Besides, it would also be useful to focus on the constraints that had hampered the effective implementation of the role of ARCC.

89. The Chief of ACW explained that there were three sets of questions which each working group should address: (a) what the terms of reference of ARCC should be, who should give ARCC its mandate, and to whom ARCC should report; (b) what role ARCC should play in follow-up to the implementation of the Platforms and the objectives that ARCC should aim to meet in relation

to the Platforms for Action vis-a-vis ECA, SRDCs, Governments, intergovernmental institutions, NGOs, donors and other stake-holders, and what it should do to fulfil them; (c) the level at which ARCC should make genuine changes on the basis of which it should be evaluated by the year 2000.

90. In conclusion, the Chief of ACW reminded the meeting of the opening statement of the Executive Secretary in which he had suggested that ARCC's role should comprise advocacy and advisory work as well as assistance in the mainstreaming of gender issues. He had also suggested that the Committee should focus on its new role in the context of the new ECA directions.

91. The meeting divided itself into two groups for an in-depth assessment of ARCC. Following the work in groups, the following recommendations were made and approved by the participants:

(a) Mandate of ARCC

The mandate should include the following:

- To play an advocacy and policy guidance role with a view to promoting gender-sensitive policies and institutional changes at national, subregional and regional levels
- To undertake periodic review of progress in the implementation of strategies for the advancement of women at the subregional and regional levels.
- To consult and advise ECA on the formulation and implementation of regional and subregional programmes for the advancement of women in order to ensure incorporation of the priorities set into the Platforms and other similar instruments.

(b) Role of ARCC in the Implementation of the Platforms

- The Conference of Ministers which established ARCC and defined its mandate was the organ which gave ARCC its mandate. Subsequently, ARCC should report to the ECA Conference of Ministers;
- ARCC should be a Committee of Experts which meets every two years in line with the proposed reforms concerning inter-governmental bodies governing the Commission.

ARCC should play:

- **at the level of the operational arms of ECA:** the role of coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the dissemination of information;
- **at the level of governments:** an advocacy and advisory role;
- **at the level of subregional IGOs:** an advocacy and consultative role.

ARCC should:

work in cooperation with NGOs and other civil society associations while safeguarding the sovereignty of States;

Work with donor agencies to ensure the optimum use of development assistance and have the human resources to express all gender, advocacy and resource mobilization concerns together with the subregional development centres (SRDCs);

At the subregional level

Advocate decentralization, restructuring and revitalization of the subregional offices and secure the active participation of countries. To this end, the SRDCs should become more operational and be provided with adequate human and financial resources.

Formulate terms of reference and guidelines for the SRDC offices;

(c) To achieve these goals:

The SRDCs should become more operational and be provided with adequate financial and human resources;

(d) Areas of focus for change:

Both ARCC and ACW should strengthen their regional and subregional machinery by publishing an information bulletin, setting up a gender watch observatory and preparing indicators for the evaluation of ARCC as well as organizing visits at which experiences can be shared.

92. During the discussion on the role of ARCC, the Executive Secretary said that in the light of the ECA's renewal process it had become necessary to change the whole approach towards ECA's intergovernmental machineries and process. Too many meetings were being held and not adequately prepared.

93. He informed the meeting that he intended to propose to the forthcoming ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Planning and Development that the ECA Conference of Ministers and the meeting of Finance Ministers be held every two years while all other sectoral meetings would be abolished. However, depending on the theme or issues before the ECA Conference of Ministers, sectoral Ministers would be invited to participate in the ECA Conference. The ECA conference would convene special ministerial conferences on any issue as and when circumstances demand.

94. ARCC as a Committee of experts should be retained and the name should be changed to reflect its new role. The Ministers responsible for Women Affairs should have an important role to play and, as such, would be invited to attend the ECA Conference of Ministers when there were relevant issues to be discussed.

95. ECA would be celebrating its 40 years anniversary in 1998 and the Executive Secretary intended to have as a theme of the next ECA Conference of Ministers "women in economic development". The meeting would be organized jointly with UNFPA which would be evaluating the implementation of the Cairo Conference on Population, focusing particularly on women's reproductive rights.

96. In order to allow for better preparation, the 19th Meeting of ARCC should not be held before 1999. In the meantime, a meeting of the Bureau could be organized.

10. Any other business (agenda item 9)

97. No issue was raised under this item.

11. Adoption of the report and closing of the Meeting (agenda item 10)

98. The draft report and resolutions were reviewed and adopted with a few amendments.

12. Closure of the meeting (agenda item 11)

99. In his closing statement, the Executive Secretary congratulated participants on the seriousness of the deliberations and the excellent work carried out during the meeting.

100. He said that the attendance of seventeen Member countries of ARCC out of eighteen, of NGO's, donors and United Nations Agencies showed the importance attached to the ARCC.

101. He went on to say that he was delighted to see the decisions taken by the meeting.

102. He also said that he hoped the participation of the ARCC Bureau members in the Gender Networking meeting scheduled to take place from 16 to 18 June 1997 in Addis Ababa would provide more effective and practical approaches to the implementation of the Beijing and Dakar Platforms of Action. He concluded by praising the staff of ECA/ACW for their dedication and hard work in servicing the meeting.

103. On behalf of participants, the Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President of Zambia thanked the Executive Secretary for making gender a cross-cutting theme, for strengthening the African Centre for Women and for appointing gender focal points for each ECA programme and SRDCs. She welcomed Ms. Mebo Mwaniki to Lusaka. She also congratulated the Chairperson on the way she conducted the meeting and commended the secretariat for the excellent support given to the meeting.

104. In her closing statement, the Chairperson stressed that the destiny of Tunisian woman had been transformed by two men, namely, the first and the current Presidents of Tunisia.

105. She thanked the Executive Secretary of ECA for the interest shown in the condition of women and urged him to continue in the same vein, inviting him to establish an active centre of intelligence for women which will be a forum for discussing, communicating and disseminating information for women.

106. The Chairperson then praised the zeal and diligence of participants throughout the session. She concluded by thanking the interpreters and all the secretariat staff for having facilitated the work of the meeting.

107. The Chairperson finally declared the 18th meeting of ARCC closed.

RESOLUTION

The mandate, role and structure of the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC)

The Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development at the eighteenth meeting:

Recalling Resolution 365 (XIV) of the ECA Conference of Ministers which established ARCC in 1979 and provided the mandate of ARCC;

Recalling further the nineteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers held in April 1993 whose decision called for the amendment of the constitution and terms of reference to reflect ARCC's broader role in gender and women's issues;

Recalling also the decision made by the ECA Conference of Ministers in May 1996 to increase the membership of ARCC from 15 to 19 and to periodically assess the activities of ARCC and their impact;

Considering that the Fifth Regional Conference on Women extended to ARCC responsibilities to include coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the African Platform for Action at the regional level;

Considering also the renewal process at ECA and its strategic objectives on gender programmes as a cross-cutting theme;

Noting with satisfaction the strengthening of the ECA gender programme, particularly the appointment of gender focal points at the MULPOCs level for promoting gender issues and assisting in the implementation of ECA strategies for mainstreaming gender in the Subregions;

Conscious of the need for ARCC to adapt itself to the new trends in gender and development and to have a more focused and integrated approach in order to be more effective and have a greater impact in the region;

1. **Recommends** the following:

(a) **Mandate of ARCC:**

The mandate of ARCC should be revised as follows:

- To play an advocacy and policy guidance role with a view to promoting gender-sensitive policies and necessary institutional changes at national, subregional and regional levels;
- To undertake periodic review of progress in the implementation of strategies for advancement of women at subregional and regional levels;
- To consult and advise ECA in the formulation and implementation of regional and subregional programmes for the advancement of women in order to ensure the incorporation of priorities set in the Platforms and other similar instruments;
- To harmonize and coordinate the subregional programmes on women in development in ECA Development Centres (MULPOCs);
- To facilitate the exchange of information and experiences;
- To **participate** in the activities and meetings of the United Nations and other relevant organizations;
- To **convene**, every three years, the African Regional Conference on Women and Development;
- To **report** to the deliberative organs of the Economic Commission for Africa on the activities and programmes carried out in the subregion.

(b) **Role of ARCC in the implementation of the Platforms:**

- ARCC bureau in cooperation with the ECA secretariat should redefine the role, function and structure of ARCC to reflect the above mandate and the ECA institutional changes and strategic direction, taking into account its advisory role to ECA for full implementation of the Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action.
-

(c) **Membership of ARCC**

- ARCC in future should function as a committee of experts which would meet once every two years. The Committee should be made up of policy-makers representing member States and experts as well as the civil society. In the meantime it will continue to function with the current membership;

2. **Requests the following:**

- i) ECA should re-establish the meetings of the subregional Committees of ARCC and provide them with adequate human and financial resources;
- ii) ECA and ARCC should make every effort to ensure full and effective implementation of the Kampala and Kigali Plans of Action on Women in the Peace Process;
- iii) The bureau of ARCC should work closely with the ECA/African Centre for Women in the preparation of ARCC meetings;
- iv) ARCC should cooperate with NGOs and other actors in the implementation of the Platforms for Action in conformity with member States' priorities.

3. **Calls upon** the ECA Conference of Ministers for Economic and Social Planning to endorse these recommendations.

**Resolution on Follow-up to the Kampala Action Plan on Peace and Development
and the African Platform for Action:
Establishment of the African Women Committee on Peace**

The Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development at its eighteenth meeting:

Considering the request by the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women on the Joint Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Organization of African Unity and the African Development Bank "to initiate and implement measures in support of the African Platform for Action";

Considering further the Addis Ababa Declaration on the Dakar Platform for Action on Women in which the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in its Thirty-first Session endorsed the African Platform for Action;

Recalling the Kampala Action Plan adopted by the Regional Conference on Women, Peace and Development in November 1993, which called for the setting-up of a Committee of Women Ministers and/or Plenipotentiaries "to be included at all levels in the new institutions and mechanisms being created by the Organization of African Unity for conflict prevention, management and resolution and in all other policy organs of ECA and OAU";

Recalling further the recommendation of the African Platform for Action adopted by the Fifth African Conference on Women in November 1994 that called for the immediate implementation of the Kampala Action Plan ;

Noting with concern the escalating state of conflicts in several African States that have been the cause of much suffering and destruction;

Aware that women and children are the major victims of conflict and war;

Reaffirming that peace is a necessary condition for sustainable development;

Taking note of the various peace initiatives that have been taken by women at the national, subregional and regional levels;

Conscious of the fact that women are virtually absent at the level of decision-making in matters of war and peace;

Noting with satisfaction the recommendations of the Women Leadership Forum on Peace held in Johannesburg in November 1996 at the initiative of ECA and OAU:

- 1. Requests** the ECA Conference of Ministers of Economic and Social Planning to approve the establishment of the African Women Committee on Peace which will work closely with the OAU Central Organ in an advisory capacity in matters relating to the peace process;
- 2. Invites** the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity to speed up the process of nomination by member States and NGOs for the African Women Committee on Peace;
- 3. Requests** ECA to cooperate with OAU in providing a joint Secretariat to the African Women Committee on Peace until such time that the Committee is able to establish its own Secretariat;
- 4. Further requests** the ECA Conference of Ministers of Economic and Social Planning to submit this resolution to the OAU Council of Ministers and the African Heads of State at the forthcoming Summit for endorsement;

18TH MEETING OF ARCC, 24-26 APRIL 1997

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