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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**REPORT OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY SESSION OF THE  
CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF TRADE  
ON  
STRATEGIES FOR REVITALIZATION,  
RECOVERY AND GROWTH OF  
AFRICA'S TRADE IN THE 1990s AND BEYOND.**

(14-17 December 1990, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)

1. The Extra-Ordinary Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade was held at Africa Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 14 to 17 December 1990 pursuant to the decision of the tenth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade in November 1989 which deferred consideration of its Agenda item 5 "Consideration of the draft Addis Ababa Strategies for Revitalizing Africa's Trade Recovery and Growth in the 1990s" to a further date. The opening ceremony was chaired by His Excellency Comrade Getachew Habte Selassie, Minister of Foreign Trade.

2. The meeting was opened by His Excellency Comrade Wollie Chekol, Member of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia and Deputy Prime Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia who welcomed delegates to Addis Ababa, and especially to this Extra-Ordinary Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade.

3. He then recalled what was decided at the last conference in Addis Ababa in 1989 regarding some of the challenging decisions that were adopted to encourage and uplift Africa in the field of trade. For instance, the implementation of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery; the launching of campaigns to encourage the consumption of local products; the co-ordination of Africa's industrial promotion policies in order to increase prospects for trade with each other, enhancing intra-African Trade including the establishment of commercial banks and other trade supporting industries, the implementation of a policy that could encourage donor agencies to give appreciable priority to regional and sub-regional groupings, support to infrastructural and industrial developments.

4. Turning to events on the world scene, Comrade Wollie pointed to certain international events that could be regarded as partially advantageous to the African continent since they were only indirectly designed to support developing countries. Among these, he cited the inconclusive Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, the Single Europe by 1992 and the Lome IV Convention. However, a number of them would have negative effects on developing countries trade flows. It was for this reason among others, stated Comrade Wollie that a sound and collective effort had to be undertaken by the African countries regionally as well as by the sub-regional organizations. Such strategies should aim at reducing the effects of protectionism by accelerating technology transfer and attracting development assistance from the industrialized countries and international monetary institutions with a view to encouraging production, domestic and intra-African trade.

5. Comrade Wollie Chekol concluded by stressing urgency of Africa exerting collective effort in order to curtail many of the likely negative effects to Africa's economic well-being. He called upon the Ministers to come out with a comprehensive strategy which could actively engage African countries as well as different regional and sub-regional institutions to embark in practical action. To this end, the meeting had to arrive at a common trade strategy that would aim at attaining the realization of African common market.

6. Welcoming the delegations on behalf of the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Deputy Executive Secretary Mr. Tchouta-Moussa underlined the uncertainty of the time, and conditions under which international trade was taking place. He therefore referred in particular to the dark shadow created among others by the unfolding trends in international trade. For instance the approach towards a unified Europe by 1992, the other emerging regional blocs, changes in East-West relations, the collapse of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations and the adverse effects on growth for most oil-importing countries as a result of the crisis in the Gulf region.

7. As a result of these global developments, Africa was compelled to look for an urgent regional initiative to deal with these crucial issues. That was why the adoption of a holistic medium to long-term strategies was of great importance. The proposed strategies were necessary to ensure the strengthening of regional capacity in dealing with emerging developments, Mr. Tchouta-Moussa stressed.

8. Turning to the document before the conference, Mr. Tchouta-Moussa pointed out that the strategies were neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive with other platforms already initiated. For instance, the strategies were to a large extent in line with the United Nations General Assembly's resolution (S-183) of May 1990 on International Economic Co-operation which stressed the revitalization of economic growth and development of developing countries. Consequently, the strategies when adopted would form an integrated part of the world development programmes for individual countries within the context of global economic interdependence.

9. He also drew attention to a number of critical issues by highlighting those included in the document and the proposals for Africa's share of world trade to reach at least 3 per cent by the year 2000. The solution to resource flows was of great importance for the attainment of such a target. Also, the significance of the strategies put on the enhancement of the role of women in trade

through policy measures designed to remove impediments to women, would not only guarantee justice and reduce inequalities but would also give development great sustainability.

10. He concluded by urging the Ministers to resolve not only to adopt the strategies but also to insure its implementation thereafter.

11. Speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Ahmed Haggag, stated that the meeting was taking place at the threshold of the decade of the 1990s and was therefore apt to review Africa's performance in the trade sector and map out fresh strategies for the further implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos.

12. He informed the meeting that OAU found the document before the Conference to be focused in the right directions against the background of the following facts: (a) the document should be considered as operationalising and placing into sharper focus the implementation of the trade chapter within the context of the Lagos Plan of Action, the relevant parts of APPER and AAF-SAP; (b) the recommendations should have direct bearing on the decisions already taken by Ministers of Foreign Affairs under the directives of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU. He therefore emphasized on a number of activities under way in the secretariat. For instance, the on going meetings on the establishment of the African Economic Community to be preceded by the African Common Market, planned studies in respect of the future relationship between the proposed community and the existing subregional economic groupings since all that activities would be expected to operationalize the clear-cut stages in the process of establishing the Pan-African Free Trade Area, the Pan-African Customs Union and the African Common Market.

13. In conclusion, he stated that Africa was under/going such manifold socio-economic crisis that when viewed against the fundamental changes taking place in the world, the implications of the Single European Act and the persistent trend of emerging powerful economic and trading blocs in the World Economy, the collapse of the commodity negotiations within the International Commodity Agreements and the recent failure of the GATT talks, all pointed to the need for Africa, not to relent in its efforts to establish an African Common Market as prelude to the African Economic Community.

Attendance

14. The Extra-Ordinary Session was attended by the following African countries: Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

15. The following Organizations participated as observers: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Organization of African Unity (OAU), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Trade Centre (ITC) and Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations (AATPO).

Election of the bureau (agenda item 2)

16. Because of the absence of some of the members of the bureau who had served at the Tenth meeting, the meeting elected the following countries to constitute the bureau.

Chairman: Ethiopia

Vice-Chairman: Togo

Malawi

Rapporteur: Sudan

Adoption of the agenda and work programme (Agenda item 3)

17. The agenda and work programme were adopted without amendment with the agenda being as follows:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of the bureau
3. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work
4. Consideration of the report on Strategies for Revitalization, Recovery and Growth of African Trade in the 1990s
5. Any other business

6. Adoption of the Strategies for the Revitalization, Recovery and Growth of African Trade in the 1990s and closure of the meeting.

#### ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

#### Consideration of the draft Strategies for Revitalization, Recovery and Growth of African Trade in the 1990s (agenda item 4)

18. A representative of the secretariat introduced the draft Strategies for Revitalization, Recovery and Growth of African Trade in the 1990s (E/ECA/TRADE/89/25/Rev.3) stressing both its origins and the background to the amendments incorporated therein.

19. The Special Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade then proceeded to consider and adopt the document (E/ECA/TRADE/89/25/Rev.4) paragraph by paragraph as annexed to this report. The title of the document was amended to read as follows: "Strategies for Revitalization, Recovery and Growth of African Trade in the 1990s and Beyond".

#### Any other business (agenda item 5)

20. There were no issues discussed under this agenda item.

#### Adoption of the Strategies and closure of the meeting (agenda item 6)

21. The meeting adopted the Strategies for Revitalization, Recovery and Growth of Africa's Trade in the 1990s and Beyond as amended.

22. Following the adoption of the report and the Strategies for Revitalization, Recovery and Growth of Africa's Trade in the 1990s and Beyond the Chairman concluded by expressing great appreciation to all the delegations for their active participation in the debate and especially their valuable contributions towards improving and strengthening the contents of the Strategies. He also on behalf of the meeting and on his own behalf thanked the secretariat for the preparatory work that had gone into making the work most inspiring enabling the meeting to adopt such a comprehensive document. The Chairman ended his closing remarks by drawing the attention of delegations to the fact that the adoption of the important document only marked the beginning of a strenuous path and therefore required commitment in implementing the recommendations contained

therein. He therefore urged all African countries to exert maximum efforts towards achieving the objectives defined in the Strategies with a view to enabling Africa's trade promotion and expansion to become an engine of growth and development.

23. The delegation of Zambia proposed a vote of thanks to the Government and people of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for its contribution to the successful conclusion of the meeting, to the bureau and its Chairman for ably conducting the meeting and to all the support staff that enabled the delegations to achieve the main objective of the meeting.

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