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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**Twenty-seventh session of the Commission/
eighteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
20-23 April 1992

DRAFT REPORT

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The twenty-seventh session of the Commission/eighteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers responsible for economic development and planning was held at Addis Ababa, from 20 to 24 April 1992. The meeting was formally opened by His Excellency Ato Tamrat Layne, Prime Minister and Representative of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia. The Secretary-General of the United Nations sent a message which was read to the Conference. Statements were also delivered at the opening ceremony by Mr. Issa B.Y. Diallo, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, by Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by Honourable Mr. D. Mung'Omba, Deputy Minister of National Commission Development of Planning of Zambia and the outgoing Chairman of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission. His Excellency Mr. El Rhezouani, Minister of Planning of Morocco read out a vote of thanks on behalf of participants.

*check correct
spelling of
name*

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member States of the Commission: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burundi, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3. Observers from the following Member States of the United Nations were present: Bulgaria, Canada, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Finland, France, Germany, Holy See, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, Yugoslavia and Venezuela.

4. The following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were represented: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development (UN-DESD), United Nations Regional Commissions New York Office (RCNYO), United Nations African

Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Food Council (WFC), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/HABITAT), United Nations University (UNU) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

5. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was represented.

6. Observers were present from the following intergovernmental organizations: African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), African, Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP), African Development Bank (ADB), African Institute for Higher Technical Training and Research (AIHTTR), Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC), African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT), African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO), Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Banque de Développement des Etats des Grands Lacs (BDEGL), Economic Community of West Africa (CEAO), Centre for Integrated Rural Development in Africa (CIRDAFRICA), Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), Common Fund for Commodities, Commonwealth Secretariat, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques (IFORD), International Parliament for Safety and Peace (IPSP), Kagera Basin Organization (KBO), Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA), Organisation Panafricaine des Femmes, Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys

(RECTAS), Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) and West African Clearing House (WACH).

7. An observer was also present from the Lutheran World Federation, a non-governmental organization.

8. The Conference elected the following officers:

Chairman:	Senegal
First Vice-Chairman:	Cameroon
Second Vice-Chairman:	Algeria
Rapporteur:	Lesotho

9. The Conference established an open-ended sub-Committee chaired by the Second Vice-Chairman to consider a draft declaration and related resolutions for adoption by the Conference.

B. AGENDA

10. On 20 April 1992, the Conference adopted the following agenda:

Conference Theme: New directions for the Economic Commission for Africa

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. One minute of silent prayer or meditation.
3. Election of officers.
4. Adoption of the agenda.

5. General debate on: Preliminary review of Africa's economic and social performance in 1991 and prospects for 1992, and transformation, recovery and adjustment:

- (a) Economic Report on Africa 1992;
- (b) Biennial report of the Executive Secretary;
- (c) New directions for the Economic Commission for Africa in the 1990s;
- (d) Implementation of regional development strategies: Update:

Progress report on the implementation of regional development strategies (the Lagos Plan of Action, the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-economic Recovery and Development, and the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation).

6. Consideration of the report and recommendations of the thirteenth meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Whole on:

- (a) Issues, studies and reports on regional cooperation for development in Africa:
 - (i) Criteria for the identification of inter-subregional projects;
 - (ii) Economic integration in North Africa within the context of the African Economic Community;
 - (iii) Agriculture and environment:

The effectiveness of subregional and regional development projects in the agriculture and rural sector with special emphasis on environment and sustainable development;

(iv) Population issues in Africa:

Analysis of the current strategy for the population programme in Africa and the implications of the recent developments, including funding policies, for its scope and prospects;

(v) Information for development:

a. Information needs in the light of the emerging African Economic Community and policy implications in the acquisition and utilization of information technology in Africa;

b. The overall strategy for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s as adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers at its sixteenth meeting in May 1990;

(vi) Transport and communications in Africa:

Progress report on the implementation of the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa;

(vii) Industrial development in Africa:

Programme for the United Nations second Industrial Development Decade for Africa;

(viii) Natural resources and environment in Africa:

Report of the African Regional Preparatory Conference on Environment and Development;

(ix) Trade and development finance in Africa:

Report on Africa's preparation and participation in UNCTAD VIII;

(b) Issues from subsidiary organs and sectoral bodies of the Commission calling for action by the Conference of Ministers;

(c) Statutory issues:

Follow-up action on relevant resolutions adopted by the twenty-sixth session of the Commission and decisions adopted by the General Assembly and ECOSOC that are of interest to Africa:

(i) Follow-up action on relevant resolutions adopted by the twenty-sixth session of the Commission/seventeenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers;

(ii) Resolutions adopted by ECOSOC at its second regular session of 1991 and by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session in the economic and social sectors that are of interest to Africa;

(d) Programme of work and priorities of the Commission:

(i) Proposals for updating the 1992-1993 programme of work;

(ii) Progress report on ECA Regional Advisory Services;

- (iii) Revision of the Medium-term Plan 1992-1997.
 - (e) Extrabudgetary resources and operational activities in ECA:
A review of the critical situation of the extrabudgetary resources needed for operational activities in ECA.
 - (f) Any other business
 - (g) Date and venue of the fourteenth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole
 - (h) Adoption of the report
 - (i) Closure of the meeting.
- 7. Report of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the African Least Developed Countries.
- 8. Any other business.
- 9. Date and venue and other matters related to the twenty-eighth session of the Commission/nineteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers.
- 10. Consideration and adoption of the report and resolutions of the meeting.
- 11. Closure of the meeting.

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening addresses

11. In his opening statement to the twenty-seventh session/eighteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa, His Excellency Ato Tamrat Layne, Prime Minister of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia welcomed the participants and assured them that Ethiopia would do its best to make their stay a most congenial and fruitful one.

12. The Prime Minister observed that the global changes of the late 1980s and early 1990s strongly indicated that the world was moving from a state of frequent, wide-spread armed conflicts toward an atmosphere of mutual tolerance, cooperation and peaceful dialogue in solving problems. Countries that to date had overly-centralized economic systems were moving to a democratic, decentralized administration that, above all, demanded effective grassroots participation. He further observed that Africa had achieved positive outcomes with the liberation wars in Southern Africa. In Ethiopia itself, peace and stability fostered fast growth of democracy. In accordance with the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, adopted in Arusha in 1990, African countries had recognized that the development crisis had complex economic, social and political dimensions. He asserted that the effective resolution of the crisis therefore needed the contribution, creativity, popular commitment and democratic participation of the vast majority of Africans, with due account being taken of the role of women. To alleviate poverty, previously large military budgets should be greatly reduced, so that with the new mood of mutual cooperation and concern, the world could better help Africa to tackle its basic external problems of soaring debt and debt-servicing, deterioration in the terms of trade and the reductions in the flow of external resources.

13. The Prime Minister affirmed that Ethiopia supported the changes taking place in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe but believed that their growing demands on the developed world need not reduce aid and technical cooperation in Africa if appropriate strategies and modalities were worked out to enhance mutual development. Much depended on the rate at which traditional agriculture was transformed. Moreover, the pursuit of basic aims would be helped by accelerating regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration, introducing sound population policies and identifying priorities in health, education and the environment. In this regard, the Lagos Plan of Action, the African Economic Community and the New Economic Agenda offered useful guidance for the short, medium and long terms.

14. The Prime Minister asserted that it was important to distinguish implementation from intention and to lay more emphasis than ever before on specific African conditions, particularly those affecting human resources development, the participation of women in

development and the securing of adequate external resources. The scope and content of education had to be congruent with sound economic policy if educated unemployment was to be avoided and enabled to make their full contribution to economic growth.

15. Turning to economic cooperation and integration in Africa, he mentioned that those issues had been adequately addressed in the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community which placed unique emphasis on the evolution of such regional economic communities as a basis for regional integration. In that context OAU, ADB, the United Nations specialized agencies and ECA, as well as the UNDP inter-country programme, were indispensable tools for the growth and development of the subregional economic communities. He urged all African member States and the international community to take appropriate measures to speed up the development of subregional communities as a prelude to continental economic integration. However, he reminded the Conference that Africa had the ultimate responsibility for its own destiny and development and should mainly rely on its own resources and effort for sustainable development.

16. In conclusion, the Prime Minister informed the Conference that Ethiopia was pleased that its internal conflict had come to an end and that the National Charter and the Economic Policy for the Transitional Period both confirmed Ethiopia's transition from war to peace, from totalitarianism to democracy and from a command to a market-oriented economy. The political changes in Ethiopia, especially the emergence of a peaceful and democratic society, were positive indications that socio-economic development would be achieved. Ethiopia looked forward to the world's understanding and support for the success of its pioneering endeavour.

17. In a message read on his behalf, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations stated that African economies had, in the past decade, suffered dramatic deterioration characterized by disproportionate population growth, serious declines in standards of living, worsening terms of trade and debt-servicing burdens. The struggle to revitalize and strengthen Africa's national economies reflected his own global perspective for international economic development. One of his major priorities would be to narrow

the gap between the rich North and poor South through solutions to the debt problem and strategies for development within a sustainable environment.

18. He said he was encouraged by the imaginative and realistic strategies that Africa had devised for meeting development challenges. The principles and objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action, the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, the Khartoum Declaration on Human-centred Development, and the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation were all useful instruments for the recovery and transformation of the African economies. The New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), adopted by the General Assembly in December 1991 as a successor arrangement to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) could be used to build upon all those past initiatives. He was confident that Africa would succeed in moving ahead with its recovery and in improving the socio-economic conditions of its people. He went on to maintain that development and democracy were inseparable. The Charter of the United Nations held that "better standards of life in larger freedom" depended alike on human rights, justice and economic and social progress. This principle was gaining ground with the end of the cold war and the acceptance of democratic principles in the Eastern European countries, the increasing advocacy for and adoption of political pluralism in Africa and the dismantling of the system of apartheid in South Africa. Unfortunately, some countries were unable to concentrate on economic development as they were still plagued with civil strife, border disputes and were suffering from environmental degradation, famine and refugee problems.

19. A pressing priority of the United Nations was to strengthen democratic institutions and to support the democratization of all aspects of international relations. The regional commissions had been major forces in promoting cooperation and integration for development. To create a climate of sustainable peace and security that would further their efforts, he intended to give priority to an active prevention diplomacy, in support of all aspects of United Nations peace-building and peace-keeping.

20. The challenges ahead required that the United Nations machinery should function with maximum effectiveness. To that end, he pledged his support to streamline operations by following through with the restructuring of the Organization. He urged all Member States to join hands with the United Nations system to revitalize the Organization. He was particularly gratified to note that the Economic Commission for Africa had already completed the first phase of a stock-taking that would keep it at the forefront of African development and cooperation. He indicated that confident that African Ministers responsible for Economic Planning and Development would continue to support the Commission in that effort.

21. In his statement, Mr. Issa B.Y. Diallo United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa expressed his appreciation to His Excellency Ato Tamrat Layne for presiding over the opening ceremony. His presence demonstrated the commitment of the Ethiopian people and of its Government, most particularly His Excellency President Meles Zenawi, to strengthening intra-African cooperation and accordingly supporting the Commission's effort in that direction. His appreciation and gratitude also went to the chief executives of the Organization of African Unity and the African Development Bank for their cooperation with ECA. He paid a special tribute to his predecessors, Mr. Mekki Abbas of the Sudan, Dr. Robert Gardiner of Ghana, and Professor Adebayo Adedeji of Nigeria. All of them had championed the socio-economic transformation of African economies and the strengthening of intra-African cooperation. He affirmed that he would endeavour to build upon the heritage of their achievement.

22. The Acting Executive Secretary observed that the world was visibly changing. Many conflicts had died out and the transition into democratic systems of government was being driven by the will of the people. One significant sign of the resurgence of democracy was the Convention on a Democratic South Africa which should lead to the speedy abolition of apartheid. There was also increasing recognition of the need to step up intra-African cooperation in order to accelerate economic integration, as evidenced by the signing of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community.

23. Africa continued, however, to face many economic difficulties. Indeed, regional GDP had grown by a mere 2.3 per cent in 1991 while the population growth rate had reached about 3 per cent. The paucity of domestic savings had combined with the decline in export earnings, the dwindling of external resource inflows and the debt overhang leave scant resources available for development.

24. He cautioned that ECA's task of promoting Africa's economic and social transformation along with regional economic cooperation in the 1990s would become difficult in a constantly changing political, economic and social landscape as the attention of Africa's major development partners shifted increasingly towards other regions, particularly Eastern Europe. He was gratified, therefore, to note that African countries were becoming increasingly aware that economic integration at the subregional and regional levels would avoid longer term marginalization of the continent as trading blocs emerged in other regions of the world.

25. The Acting Executive Secretary informed the participants that in order to improve ECA, he had commissioned a Task Force to review its general policy direction, programming and delivery capacity. The report of the Task Force, together with the inputs of the ECA secretariat substantive staff, the OAU, and eminent persons experienced in African development, had been used to prepare document E/ECA/CM.18/4 entitled "The Economic Commission for Africa in the 1990s: A Policy and Management Framework for Facing Africa's Development Challenges". ECA would endeavour to make the 1990s the decade of practical pursuit of priorities. The Commission would continue to take the lead in the design and articulation of solutions to Africa's socio-economic development problems, but its focus would be aimed more specifically at the problems of member countries within the context of the various subregional economic groupings.

26. ECA would have to pay greater attention to the quality of its outputs. That would mean fewer Conferences which would be better prepared and action-oriented, more effective support by ECA to member countries for international negotiations, and greater relevance in ECA research activities and technical publications. Efforts would be made to achieve better marketing of ECA products so that they would be helpful to member States.

ECA should work more closely with OAU, ADB and the subregional economic organizations. The need to lay more emphasis on operational activities would require more dynamic cooperation with other United Nations agencies, the Bretton Woods Institutions, and the non-governmental and professional organizations in Africa. Areas of focus for programme delivery would cut across a large number of on-going subprogrammes in agriculture, industry, transport and communications, human resources development and others, and would provide indicators by which the Commission's achievements could be measured.

27. Africa's vast potential in human and natural resources, the growing commitment of African governments to economic and political reform, the high entrepreneurial zeal and the general determination of the people to participate fully in the development process, affirmed that Africa's case was far from hopeless. ECA saw positive developments in the promotion of development policies that ensured growth with equity; the vibrancy of indigenous non-governmental organizations in economic, social and political empowerment; the growing awareness among African countries that democratic policies must go hand-in-hand with sound economic management; and in the realization by Africans that Africa must not merely survive but develop through cooperative effort.

28. He recalled the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF-SAP) which had been adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers in 1989 and subsequently endorsed, both by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU and by the General Assembly of the United Nations. That had helped to institute a three way dialogue between African countries implementing Structural Adjustment Programmes, the Bretton Woods Institutions and ECA. In that dialogue, all the partners had recognized that: short-term adjustment measures had to be embedded in long-term transformation; Africa's development had to be human-centred; there had to be more efficient and effective mobilization and utilization of all domestic resources; and good governance and accountability were vital for the sustainability of reforms. Those areas of agreement provided a solid basis for enhancing cooperation and expanding consensus with the Bretton Woods Institutions. They were also consistent with the areas of focus around which ECA's work programme should now be implemented, reflecting as they did the

concerns of African Governments and peoples. He counted on the support of each member State, African IGOs, United Nations agencies and development partners, in the changes which were planned.

29. In his statement, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of OAU, outlined the major events in Africa and elsewhere, which had had far-reaching repercussions on the future development of African countries. The signing of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community was a demonstration of the commitment of African leaders to work more assiduously towards the total economic independence of the region. There was an irreversible tide towards involving more integrally the entire African society in the socio-economic development of the region and ensuring an effective popular participation.

30. The Secretary-General observed that African leaders had stepped up efforts towards finding effective solutions to conflicts in the region. South Africa might ultimately break loose from the shackles of racism and re-emerge as a positive force in the human and material development of the region. He then emphasized that only Africa could marginalize itself. Its interests had never tallied with those of the countries it looked up to for assistance and support. The global geopolitical changes, as well as shifts in alliances and emphasis meant that a new strategy had to be drawn for Africa's survival. The region's fate laid entirely in its own hands.

31. The Secretary-General pointed out that African countries had to mobilize and commit their national resources to this end. External resources, which would be required to complement Africa's own effort, should be directed to programmes and projects that promoted economic integration on the basis of the priorities established by the countries. He appealed to the international community to supplement such efforts.

32. In the light of Africa's total outstanding debt of over US 275 billion dollars and Africa's clear inability to meet the huge debt service of US 26 billion dollars annually, the Secretary-General observed that the countries had seemingly lost interest and enthusiasm in discussing this problem, and that all solutions proposed so far had had minimal impact. He suggested that since commodity prices could not be restored to the levels of the 1960s,

and Africa's total export earnings could not be commensurate with its requirement for accelerated socio-economic transformation, the region had to rethink its future strategy.

33. He added that Africa should, nonetheless, attach importance to international cooperation for development and to the enhanced role of the United Nations, and that the international community should remember its responsibility and commitment so that the the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s did not suffer the same fate as its predecessor UN-PAAERD.

34. With regard to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, he urged that environmental issues should be seen within the context of Africa's lack of food and energy security, the need for improvement in the quality of life, and for sustainable economic growth with transformation that would guarantee productive employment.

35. His Excellency Mr. El Rhezouani, Minister of Planning of Morocco moved a vote of thanks on behalf of all the participants to His Excellency, Ato Tamrat Layne, Prime Minister and Representative of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, for having found time to open the twenty-seventh meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, and for his inspiring statement. He expressed appreciation to the Prime Minister for sharing with the Conference information on the major activities undertaken by his Government towards the economic and social development of Ethiopia and the well-being of its people. He then expressed heartfelt appreciation to the people and Government of Ethiopia, for the hospitality accorded the participants since their arrival in Addis Ababa.

36. The representative of Morocco also expressed sincere gratitude to Mr. Issa B.Y. Diallo, Acting Executive Secretary of ECA for his lucid statement, which had underlined the current changes in the world, and their economic impact on African countries.

37. Special tribute was paid to the secretariat for the high quality of documents which had facilitated a fruitful exchange of views and led to sound recommendations to the Conference of Ministers by the Technical Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW). In conclusion, the Honourable Minister congratulated TEPCOW for the excellent work done

at its thirteenth meeting and expressed the wish that its report and recommendations would be endorsed by the Conference.

38. In his statement, the outgoing Chairman thanked participants for having entrusted his bureau with the responsibility of conducting the work of the Conference. He expressed hope that openness and cooperation would continue to guide the deliberations of the current session of the Commission and appealed to all delegates and observers to cooperate with the incoming Bureau. He went on to introduce the Acting Executive Secretary of the Commission and appealed to participants to give him their unreserved cooperation so that he could discharge his new responsibilities.

39. He reported on the initiative taken by the Conference at its previous meeting to propose a New Agenda for cooperation between Africa and the international community and paid tribute to His Excellency General Babangida, the President of Nigeria, for despatching one of his most dedicated and talented diplomats to lead the African Group at the negotiations for the New Agenda in the General Assembly. His tribute also went to the rest of the African delegations that had supported the Nigerian Minister.

40. He referred to the lack of democracy and absence of accountability in African political systems as real problems facing Africa. He pointed out that one-party political systems and corrupt institutions had hampered competition in the economic life and the private sector had played a very limited role in African economies. African countries had to position themselves to compete for dwindling external resources. He advised that external financial assistance should only supplement Africa's efforts; for that to happen, Zambia had to opt for a new political and economic culture, based on transparency, accountability, honest hard work, economic realism and respect for human rights.

41. The outgoing Chairman reported to the Conference that the third extraordinary session of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic Development and Planning met in Windhoek, Namibia in November 1991, and considered the UNDP Fifth Inter-country Programme for Africa. Resources for the Fifth Inter-country Programme would be lower than expected because money had been borrowed from it to fund part of

the Fourth Inter-country Programme. He hoped that UNDP would provide extra funds so that regional development would not be weakened by reduced funding.

42. With regard to internal conflicts, the outgoing Chairman expressed deep concern that they were destroying lives and institutions that Africa could not afford to lose. He appealed to all leaders to cooperate by using dialogue to resolve internal conflicts. He asserted that Africa needed internal peace to achieve meaningful cooperation.

43. The outgoing Chairman regretted that the Eastern and Southern African subregion was currently afflicted by the worst drought in living memory and as a result, crop losses from 50 to 100 per cent were being recorded and emergency food assistance of unprecedented magnitude would be required to alleviate suffering. He informed the Conference that rivers and bore holes were drying up, affecting livestock and the supply of hydroelectric energy. He further mentioned that most of the countries affected were least developed and the importation and distribution of food implied a massive logistical operation that required cooperation between the countries of the subregion on a scale never before experienced. He expressed his confidence that the Conference would address the problem and thanked the external donor community for its response to the plight of the subregion.

General debate on: Preliminary review of Africa's economic and social performance in 1991 and prospects for 1992, and transformation, recovery and adjustment (agenda item 5)

44. Several delegates and observers including representatives of United Nations agencies, regional and international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the general debate, inspired by the Conference theme: New Directions for the Economic Commission for Africa in the 1990s.

45. Participants underscored the profound geopolitical changes which have been taking place in the world at large, and in the Africa region, in particular. There was general agreement that Africa faced new challenges of major proportions which must be overcome if the region were to achieve socio-economic recovery in the 1990s. The new international

environment was likely to be characterized by the emergence of regional economic blocs, and increased competition for the world's scarce financial resources. It was also possible that Africa's traditional partners-in-development might be distracted by aid requests from other regions. It was the general consensus that, in order to meet the above challenges and be able to achieve the goals for socio-economic recovery ^{shelt} spelled out in the United Nations' New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, it was necessary to forge ahead with the process of democratization, the enforcement of the respect for human rights and the enhancement of popular participation in the developmental process. It was also necessary to pursue sound and pragmatic economic and social policies, and to implement the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community.

46. Participants congratulated the secretariat for the documents it provided to the meeting having regard especially to their reduced number, shortened length and the quality of their substantive contents. They encouraged the secretariat to continue its efforts to make the annual sessions even more effective.

47. Several delegations dwelt on the need to further enhance the efficiency of the ECA secretariat. In this connection, they called for the adoption of multidisciplinary approach for effective programme implementation; the rationalization of the programmes; structure and functions of the secretariat; and increased accountability to the Conference of Ministers with regard to programme and project performance. The vital importance of investing in human resources development both for member States and the ECA secretariat was underscored. ECA was requested to play a coordinating role by collecting and disseminating to governments all information on fellowships and training, with emphasis on opportunities offered in the context of African inter-country cooperation. It was suggested that ECA should be an "African think-tank", which would attempt to read the future in order to provide its member States with advance warning of problems that they have to face.

48. The proposed new directions for the Economic Commission for Africa in the 1990s were considered to be an appropriate and timely response to the challenges facing the region. The Acting Executive Secretary of ECA was commended for having initiated the process of re-orienting the commission in order to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness.

49. Delegates expressed satisfaction with the spirit of cooperation that was being strengthened between the secretariats of institutions, the OAU, ADB and ECA and urged the Executive heads of the three institutions to maintain the momentum already generated in this regard through the joint OAU/ECA/ADB secretariat. The ultimate goal of the joint secretariat was to assist member States in the concrete implementation of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. The three institutions should clearly define their respective roles in this regard. They should seek complementarity in their objectives.

50. The Conference noted with appreciation the General Assembly's continuing support for the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) of ECA. There was an urgent need to enable the MULPOCs to play an effective role in the promotion of subregional cooperation and integration. The Conference agreed that the MULPOCs could provide technical advice to the subregional economic groupings and intergovernmental organizations, and participate more actively in the collection and dissemination of information among member States and IGOs if they were revitalized. Special reference was made to the economic cooperation and integration process in the North African subregion, and the need to support efforts currently underway there.

51. With respect to the rationalization of ECA-sponsored institutions, the Conference considered that an in-depth evaluation of their viability should be prepared by the ECA secretariat, bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication of functions and waste of scarce resources. Concern was also expressed with regard to other subregional and regional intergovernmental organizations, which presently placed heavy burdens through duplications of activities and their multiplicity on the financial resources of the member States.

52. Special interest was expressed by member States on a proposal for the reduction and rationalization of the meetings organized by the Commission. The Conference urged the secretariat to ensure that such meetings were better programmed, and were focused on precise themes and issues. Delegations also requested the OAU, ADB and ECA to harmonize their respective meetings. The Conference suggested that an Advisory Committee might be organized within existing resources to assist the secretariat in that regard.

53. It was also stressed that ECA should endeavour to promote complementarity with regional activities being carried out by other organizations such as the Bretton Woods Institutions or those of the United Nations system.

54. The overriding importance of agriculture was underlined. Agricultural development was indeed central to all efforts for achieving the objectives of socio-economic development. In this regard, the view was expressed that the sustainment of agricultural development would require projects which took into consideration the need for food security; appropriately scaled irrigation projects for arid and semi-arid lands; agricultural research projects, especially those designed to promote maximum use of local inputs; field extension services to promote the application of high-yield crop and improved livestock breeds; and adequate investment in rural areas in order to curb the current migration to the cities.

55. Industrial development was also an area which was to be given due attention, especially with respect to human resources development, technological development, environment, integration of women in industrial development and promotion of the role of the private sector. The Conference noted that these were issues which would offer the opportunity for ECA and UNIDO to enhance their fruitful cooperation through the joint implementation of IDDA II. It also requested that this cooperation be extended to the other two regional institutions, i.e. the OAU and ADB. *see addition (Kenya)*

56. Other specific issues were considered by the Conference, including the environment, youth, public health, refugees, debt and commodities. On the question of the environment, participants endorsed the African Common Position which is to be presented in June 1992 at the Rio de Janeiro World Conference on the Environment and Development. Many delegations drew attention to the grave socio-economic crisis in the Eastern and Southern Africa subregion arising from the prolonged, most devastating drought in the area's recorded history.

57. With respect to the question of youth, the Conference took note of the proposal for the establishment of an African Youth Development Fund. It also expressed concern on the AIDS pandemic and the problem of the region's refugees. On the issue of external

debt, the Conference took note of the approach being adopted by the secretariat to strengthen the region's repayment capacity and the management of its external debt. Efforts should also be made to negotiate debt cancellation and conversion. The ECA, in collaboration with ADB was requested to coordinate the region's position on external debt along these lines.

58. The Conference stressed the importance it attached to the issue of commodity prices, and expressed appreciation for the work of the Common Fund for Commodities. It took note in particular of the results achieved since the entry into force of the Agreement establishing the Common Fund over two years ago.

59. In his reaction to the debate, the Acting Executive Secretary provided the Conference with clarifications on a number of questions that had been addressed to the secretariat. He also expressed further insights on the wide range of issues raised by the speakers.

60. In his summation, the Chairman observed that the questions of the youth, the role of women in development, demographic pressure, and the environment were all intricately linked. He noted with satisfaction the prominence that was accorded to these questions by ECA in seeking new directions for the 1990s. The Chairman cautioned, however, that when devising concrete solutions, such as the proposed fund for youth or the African Women's Bank, careful attention should be paid to all practical constraints, e.g., fiscal budgetary limitations, the external debt burden, and macroeconomic stability. He exhorted Africans themselves to be ready to shoulder the primary responsibility to resolve the problems that face their region. He appealed to Africa's partners-in-development to continue to lend support, particularly on the question of the region's excessive external debt burden.

61. The Chairman expressed his gratitude to all participants, for their attendance and constructive contributions to the proceedings, which demonstrated their continuing commitment to the region.

Consideration of the Report of the thirteenth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (agenda item 6)

62. The Chairman of the thirteenth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole presented the report of the Committee as contained in document E/ECA/CM.18/22, for the consideration of the Conference. Discussion took place on the following items:

PART I: Preliminary review of Africa's economic and social performance in 1991 and prospects for 1992

63. In considering paragraph 39 of the Report, the Conference decided that the last sentence of the paragraph should be deleted.

PART II: Transformation, recovery and adjustment

64. In considering paragraph 52, the Conference decided that the last sentence should also reflect the need to revitalize the MULPOCs.

PART III: Issues, studies and reports on regional cooperation for development in Africa

65. Paragraph 71 was amended to read. "The Committee considered document E/ECA/CM.18/8, entitled "Population issues in Africa: Recent developments and their implications for the African Regional Population Programme".

66. In paragraph 91 (b) of the French text, the Conference observed that the correct date for the African Statistics Day was the eighteenth day of November.

67. In paragraph 111 line one, the Conference inserted the word "joint" between "the" and "secretariat".

68. Under paragraph 113 line three, the Conference replaced the word "frame" by "adopt" and added the following: "Moreover, the Conference will review other important issues on environment and development. There are issues which are highly important to Africa, and have not yet been finalized. These are: financial resources, the international economic environment, conventions on climatic change and on biodiversity. Negotiations on those items would be finalized in Rio de Janeiro. African experts/delegations would meet on 1 and 2 June 1992 in order to harmonize their position on the issues pending. The Conference itself will be held from 3 to 14 June, 1992."

69. In considering paragraph 115 of the French text of the report, the Conference directed that the last sentence should be aligned with the English text.

PART IV: Issues from the subsidiary organs and sectoral bodies of the Commission calling for action by the Conference of Ministers

70. In paragraph 123, Namibia confirmed its acceptance to be a member of the Board of Governors of IDEP.

PART VII: Extrabudgetary resources and operational activities in ECA

71. In considering paragraph 142, the Conference reformulated the last sentence of the paragraph as follows: "Member States were also invited to allocate, where possible, a certain percentage of their UNDP national IPFs for the execution of the fifth intercountry programme for regional projects which had linkages with national projects".

72. Under paragraph 143, the Conference reformulated the last sentence as follows: "It reiterated its appeal for closer financial cooperation between both the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab and European States (RBAES) and the Regional Bureau for Africa for financing of multinational programmes for Africa".

ANNEX I: Draft resolutions and decisions recommended for the adoption by the ECA Conference of Ministers

73. The Conference noted the withdrawal of reservations on preambular paragraphs ~~7~~^{1, 2, and} and operative paragraph ~~12~~¹² in resolution 1 (XIII).

74. The Conference adopted the report including the resolutions and decisions as amended.

Date and venue of the fourteenth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole

75. In considering this item, the Conference accepted by acclamation the generous invitation extended to it by the representative of Zambia to host the twenty-eighth session of the Commission in 1993 in Lusaka, Zambia.

Report of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the African Least Developed Countries (agenda item 7)

76. The Conference of Ministers took note of the report and resolutions of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the African Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as contained in document E/ECA/CM.18/23.

Any other business (agenda item 8)

77. The representative of Morocco referred to proposals made by his delegation during the general debate, namely:

(a) That an African Ministerial Committee should meet between annual sessions of the Conference to provide guidance and directives to the secretariat on major issues affecting the continent;

(b) That a scientific seminar on the revival of planning for the subregion of North Africa be organized with the assistance of UNDP;

(c) That strategic management in Africa be promoted;

(d) That a brain storming group on the problems confronting the IGOs be set up to explore new mechanisms for the payment of assessed contributions, redirection of the objectives and mandates of those organizations in the light of changes taking place in Africa and elsewhere, and

(e) That an African Fund for Youth be established at ADB and managed jointly by ECA, OAU and ADB.

78. He offered the assistance of his country in the implementation of these proposals.

79. The Conference discussed the various proposals and welcomed them in principle. It was noted that some of the proposals had already been accepted by the Conference in the preceding discussions. The Conference recognized the usefulness of intersessional meetings as one annual meeting was not sufficient to adequately deal with the burning issues that the region was confronted with in a rapidly changing world. However, the Conference cautioned against the hasty adoption of proposals which might have far-reaching implications. The secretariat was requested to study the said proposals and make recommendations for the consideration of the Ministers at the next session of the Commission. In that regard the secretariat could be assisted by a consultative committee of Ambassadors residing in Addis Ababa.

80. The Conference also requested the secretariat, in collaboration with ADB and OAU, to undertake a feasibility study on the creation of a Fund for Youth.

81. In referring to the planned meeting of the Conference in Lusaka in 1993, the Conference agreed that attempts be made to limit the duration of the Ministerial session to three days.

82. On the issue of refugees, the Acting Executive Secretary noted that African governments were becoming more conscious of the magnitude of the problems of refugees, and their impacts on inter alia population and the environment. He suggested that it would be useful for the United Nations and OAU secretariats to attack the root causes of the problems of refugees, as they affected the economic and social development of the region.

Date and venue and other matters to the twenty-eighth session of the Commission/nineteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers (agenda item 9)

83. The Conference decided that the next session of the Commission would take place during the month of April, in 1993. The precise dates of the meeting will be established following consultations between the Executive Secretary and the host country. The Conference reconfirmed its acceptance of the invitation of the Government of Zambia to hold the next session in Lusaka, Zambia.

**TWENTY SEVENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR AFRICA AND EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND PLANNING**

Final Declaration

1. We, the African Ministers responsible for Economic Development and Planning, held the Twenty-seventh session of the Commission and Eighteenth meeting of our Conference from 20 ^{Connect} to 23 April 1992 in Addis Ababa. Against the backdrop of the recent dramatic changes that have taken place and continue to evolve in Africa and the rest of the world, we chose as the theme of our conference New Directions for the Commission in the 1990s. This theme was intended to signify new and emerging challenges confronting African countries. The Economic Commission for Africa, whose main mission is to promote socio-economic development and transformation of African countries, has an important role to play in assisting African member States to adapt to these changes. This was the setting in which we conducted an in-depth debate on both the current economic and social situation in Africa and the policy paper on new orientation titled ECA in the 1990s: A policy and management framework for facing Africa's Development Challenges. ^{See French}

2. We commend the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa for his initiative and efforts in charting new directions for the activities of the Commission. We are convinced that the changes that have taken place in Africa and the rest of the world in the past few years and the accompanying challenges justify adjustment in ECA's orientation, programmes and management capacity with a view to ensuring greater impact of its activities. We consider such a re-orientation to be consistent with the reforms already underway in the rest of the United Nations system.

3. We underline the need for vigorous efforts to be made in implementing the reforms needed to make ECA adapt to the changes. We further invite the Executive Secretary of ECA

to involve member States actively in the reform process, especially using the informal consultative mechanism between ECA secretariat and African diplomatic missions resident in Addis Ababa.

4. We endorse the areas of focus for ECA's programme delivery in the new orientation, which are in accordance with existing priorities. These are namely strengthening ECA's advocacy role on socio-economic questions; promoting regional cooperation and integration; enhancing the efficiency of the public sector; promoting of private initiatives and entrepreneurship; development, dissemination and utilization of science and technology; ensuring a desirable balance between food supply, population, human settlements and environment; fostering human-centred development; promoting structural transformation and diversification of African economies; and promotion of women in development. We call upon ECA to take due account of the role of youths in development of member States.

5. We are aware of the need for ECA to stimulate increased participation at its meetings and conferences by reducing their number and frequency and concentrating such meetings on specific themes. We, therefore, entrust the Executive Secretary to make an in-depth study of these matters including the possibility of establishing a steering ministerial committee to meet inter-sessionally. This study should be submitted to the next session of the Conference for consideration.

6. We emphasize the need for the MULPOCs to be revitalized to enable them to play their role which will consist essentially of promoting integration and socio-economic development in the subregions. We call on ECA to make action-oriented and innovative proposals on this issue. We also invite ECA to conduct an in-depth study in consultation with OAU on the rationalization and re-organization of its sponsored institutions and submit a report to us at our Twenty-eighth Session.

7. We encourage intensified multi-faceted collaboration among ECA, OAU and ADB consistent with the need to ensure that the full potentials of all African institutions and organizations are mobilized for the promotion of Africa's socio-economic development and integration. In particular, we urge them to strengthen their present joint secretariat arrangement to make it an important vehicle for implementation of the Treaty establishing African Economic Community.
8. We recognize that extrabudgetary resources have played and will continue to play an important role in ECA's implementation of its work programmes in accordance with its priorities. At the same time, we note with concern that these resources which accounted for approximately 40 per cent of total ECA financial resources in 1985-1991; are projected to decline to 25 per cent of total resources in the 1992-1993 biennium. We underscore ECA's role as an executing agency for programmes and projects in the area of regional cooperation and integration and urge that financial contributions of United Nations reflect the importance of regional dimension in operational activities for development. We encourage ECA to intensify efforts at mobilizing of extrabudgetary resources both by cultivating new donors and strengthening relations with current ones. At the same time, we urge member States and other countries to make or increase their contribution to the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD).
9. We recognize that there are strong linkages between the UNTACDA II and IDDA II programmes. We stress the need for coordination of the activities of the two programmes so as to accelerate socio-economic transformation and promote economic integration in Africa. We invite the ECA secretariat to prepare and submit proposals for harmonization of the activities of both programmes for review at the next meetings of Conference of Ministers for Transport, Communications and Planning, and Ministers of Industries respectively, before they are sent to our next meeting.

10. We consider the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the development of Africa in the 1990's (UN-NADAF) by General Assembly at its forth-sixth session (GA Resolution 46/151) as an important step for addressing Africa's development, as it contains detailed and concrete commitments by both African countries and their partners of the international community. We therefore urge all African member States and their development partners to live up to those respective commitments. We request the Executive Secretary to fully cooperate with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development as well as the United Nations System at large, in the preparation of the evaluation reports as provided for in paragraph 43 of the UN-NADAF, and to ensure prior submission of such reports to the ECA Conference of Ministers.

11. We are deeply concerned about the severe and unprecedented drought currently affecting the entire eastern and southern African subregion. We earnestly appeal to other African countries and the international community to provide the necessary assistance to the affected countries.

12. We welcome the holding of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992. This "Earth Summit" '92 represents an important milestone in the international recognition given to environment as a common heritage of mankind. Environment is, thus, an issue around which a sense of interdependence and mutual interest has emerged between developed and developing nations. The African Common Position on the African Agenda for Environment and Development is consistent with this trend. We believe that the Rio Earth Summit is an important occasion for all the countries of the world to affirm a new partnership for development. African countries will participate in the Rio Summit in that spirit.

MESSAGE TO H.E. DR. BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI, SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

We, the African Ministers responsible for economic development and planning meeting at the twenty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Africa/eighteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 20 to 23 April 1992, the first time we are gathering under the aegis of the Commission since your election as Secretary-General of the United Nations, take this opportunity to express to you our warmest congratulations for your election to this high Office. Africa is proud to have one of its sons entrusted with the executive stewardship of the United Nations.

We have received with appreciation the message you kindly addressed to us on the occasion of our present session.

We are gratified by your ardent commitment to the strengthening of democratic institutions and supporting the democratization of all aspects of international relationships through the promotion of ^{durable} (long lasting) peace and security and ^{5060-economic} development in all regions of the world.

We are, in particular, encouraged by your declared intention to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of the regional commissions to play their rightful role in this regard.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to thank you and reassure you of our continued support in the discharge of your noble mission in service of the international community.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Headquarters of the Economic Commission
for Africa
23 April 1992

- include statement
on elimination
of poverty and
elimination solution of
debt problem.

13. We re-affirm the continuing validity of the Regional Commissions as important organs of the United Nations for promoting socio-economic development in various regions of the world. It is vital, therefore, that in the context of ongoing restructuring and revitalization of the UN in the economic and social fields, the Economic Commission for Africa be strengthened to enable it fully perform its mission.

Done at Addis Ababa Headquarters of the
U.N. Economic Commission for Africa
23 April 1992