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**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**Seventeenth meeting of the Technical Preparatory
Committee of the Whole**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
30 April - 3 May 1996**

D R A F T R E P O R T

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The seventeenth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW) was held in the new United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 30 April to 3 May 1996. The meeting was formally opened by H.E. Mr. Girma Birru, Minister of Economic Development and Cooperation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Mr. K. Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, also delivered a statement at the opening ceremony of the meeting. The representative of Madagascar moved a motion of appreciation on behalf of the participants.

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member States of the Commission: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Sudan, Swaziland, 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: Belgium, China, France, Russian Federation, Spain and the United Kingdom.

4. The following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were represented: United Nations Secretariat (DPCS), Regional Commissions New York Office (RCNYO), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).

5. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Development Bank (ADB) were represented.

6. Observers were present from the following intergovernmental organizations: African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (AIEDP), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS), Regional Centre for Training in Aero-space Surveys (RECTAS), Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Apostolic Nunciature and Home and Environment Development Association (HEDA).

7. The Committee elected the following officers:

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| Chairman: | Malawi |
| First Vice-Chairman: | Ghana |
| Second Vice-Chairman: | Cameroon |
| Rapporteur: | Algeria |

8. The Committee established an open-ended subcommittee on resolutions which was chaired by the First Vice-Chairman. The following were the core members of the resolutions subcommittee:

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| West Africa: | Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Nigeria |
| North Africa: | Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia |
| East Africa: | Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania |
| Southern Africa: | Namibia, Zimbabwe |
| Central Africa: | Congo, Gabon, Rwanda |

B. AGENDA

9. On 30 April 1996, the Committee adopted the following agenda:

Conference theme: Meeting the challenges of Africa's development in the twenty-first century: The role of the Economic Commission for Africa

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

PART I. Conference theme: Meeting the challenges of Africa's development in the twenty-first century: The role of the Economic Commission for Africa

4. (a) The renewal programme at ECA: Strategic directions for the Economic Commission for Africa;
- (b) Medium-term Plan for the period 1998-2001.

PART II. Perspectives of Africa's socio-economic development

5. (a) Report on the economic and social situation in Africa, 1996;
- (b) United Nations System-wide Initiative on Africa;
- (c) Exploiting information technology to accelerate socio-economic development in Africa: An action plan.

PART III. Special issues

6. (a) Progress reports, preparation and follow-up of international and regional conferences and programmes;
 - (i) Fourth World Conference on Women;
 - (ii) Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT-II);
 - (iii) Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the 1990s;
 - (iv) United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF);
 - (v) Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (UNTACDA-II);
 - (vi) Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA-II);
 - (vii) Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development;
 - (viii) Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s.

- (b) Joint OAU/ECA progress report on the implementation of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community.

PART IV. Statutory issues

- 7. (a) Biennial report of the Executive Secretary on the work of the Commission;
 - (b) Progress report on programme evaluation at ECA (1994-1995 biennium);
 - (c) Issues from subsidiary organs and sectoral bodies of the Commission calling for action by the Conference of Ministers.
- 8. Any other business.
- 9. Date and venue of the eighteenth meeting of TEPCOW.

PART V. Other matters

- 10. **Special event: Panel discussion on the Framework Agenda for Building and Utilizing Critical Capacities in Africa.**
- 11. Adoption of the report.
- 12. Closure of the meeting.

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening addresses

10. In his opening statement, H.E. Mr. Girma Birru, Minister of Economic Development and Cooperation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, welcomed participants to the meeting. He said it was in his capacity as the representative of Ethiopia as well as the outgoing Chairman of the Conference of Ministers that he also welcomed the new Executive Secretary, Mr. K.Y. Amoako, to the Commission. He said that he had worked closely with the Executive Secretary in the last ten months particularly on the renewal of the Commission to serve Africa better.

11. The theme of the conference, "Meeting the challenges of African Development in the Twenty-first Century: The role of the Economic Commission for Africa", was of great significance to the future of the continent and to all the people of Africa. He said that ECA was an important tool for galvanizing African States to overcome various challenges, broaden and accelerate development on a sustainable basis, end poverty, and reverse Africa's marginalization from the world political and economic system. No other institution was better placed than ECA to deliver to member States such development services. Therefore, the renewal of ECA and its re-orientation articulated in the new strategic directions document was a most compelling item on the agenda. On behalf of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, he commended Mr. Amoako for having placed ECA at the forefront of the renewal process in the United Nations system.

12. The Minister noted that the remaining agenda items, notably, the economic and social situation in Africa, an Action Plan to harness information technology, the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa, and the panel discussion on a Framework Agenda for Building and Utilizing Critical Capacities in Africa, added meaning and urgency to the renewal of the Commission. Ethiopia fully endorsed ECA's renewal and its guiding principles of excellence, cost-effectiveness, and effective partnership. His Government was satisfied with the Commission's analysis of the development challenges facing the continent, which underlines not only the strategic directions but also ECA's refocused programme structure emphasizing five areas of concentration plus the two cross-cutting issues of gender and capacity building. He, however, underscored the need for putting in place an effective implementation mechanism which would ensure an acceptable degree of success in achieving Africa's development goals.

13. The Minister informed the meeting of political and economic measures adopted by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to consolidate political transition and stimulate economic recovery and growth. Ethiopia's first general election had been held in 1995. Local governments had now been formed on the basis of the country's new Federal Constitution which devolved powers of decision-making to elected regional councils on matters relating to the economic and social activities of the regions. On the economic front, the implementation of the Emergency, Recovery and Reconstruction Programme, the declaration of the New Economic Policy, the implementation of the Economic Reform Programme, and the formulation of a long-term development strategy had been among the most important measures taken to reverse two decades of continuous decline and bring about sustained growth and development.

14. In his statement, Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of ECA said that this was an important day. It was the first official meeting in the New United Nations Conference Centre at Addis Ababa. It was the first official continent-wide discussion of a different ECA. And it was his first appearance before TEPCOW. He noted that both the present meetings of TEPCOW and the forthcoming Conference of Ministers were the culmination of very hard thinking and hard work. He thanked Mr Girma Birru, the Chairman of the outgoing Bureau of the Conference, and each of the Bureau members for aiding his smooth transition and for their full support in playing leading roles in events such as the major consultation on strategic directions for ECA with the Group of African High-Level Experts held in January 1996.

15. He observed that Africa's economic performance has witnessed some improvement after a record of negative development which had continued up to the early 1990s. However, there were seven basic challenges still facing Africa, namely: the need to improve economic and social policies for securing growth and combating poverty; the promotion of sustainable development through the interplay of food security, population and environment; the strengthening of development management; the harnessing of information technology; the promotion of regional cooperation and integration as a way of forestalling marginalization in the global economy; and the advancement of women.

16. ECA had embarked on a major reform with the aim of serving Africa better in the years ahead. This renewal of ECA was on a scale not seen in the organization's history. Excellence, cost-effectiveness and partnership were the guiding principles of this process of renewal. Highly expert diagnostic and prescriptive work had been done on existing programmes and management, utilizing the best resources around the world and the best of ECA's

staff. Participatory in-house reviews had been carried out, eliciting an extraordinary level of commitment from the entire ECA professional workforce. The secretariat had also held a major consultation on ECA's proposed programmes in January 1996 with an impressive group of forty African leaders including government ministers, academics, and NGO and private sector representatives from throughout Africa. The full membership of the Bureau of the ECA Conference of Ministers participated in the consultations.

17. The Executive Secretary then reviewed the components of ECA's renewal. First, on institutional strengthening, he said that over the next two years, steps would be taken to upgrade skills, augment staff and institutionalize ways of operating more productively and with greater impact. The second component was programmes. These would be consolidated and refocused. The existing 9 programmes in 21 different areas would be consolidated into five core themes and two cross-cutting ones. This choice of programme concentration responded to clear mandates from the member States. It was also inspired by the Cairo Agenda for Action on Relaunching Africa's Economic and Social Development adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers in March 1995 and endorsed by the Assembly of the African Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa in June 1995. The five programme areas were facilitating economic and social policy analysis, ensuring food security and sustainable development; strengthening development management; harnessing information for development; and promoting regional cooperation and integration, while the two cross-cutting issues were gender and capacity building.

18. The third component was about modalities. Here ECA would henceforth strive for impact not for more output. ECA would strive to reinforce its comparative advantage as a respected centre for discussion on policy issues and as a place where thinking and action were brokered. The secretariat would make more use of electronic products, overhaul its dissemination practices, designate national focal points and strengthen relationships with ambassadors in Addis Ababa. He proposed that fewer meetings should be held with sharper focus on more implementable results.

19. The fourth component, partnership, was basic to the renewal. ECA would become a less self-contained producer of work and far more a networker. Partnership was desired within Africa with key intellectual networks. Partnership was desired to promote South-South Cooperation. Partnership was also desired with the donor community.

20. He referred to the proposed Medium-term Plan for the period 1998-2001 which was before the meeting for consideration. The endorsement of the Plan will greatly facilitate the rationalization of the work programme of the Commission.

21. Reviewing the other key agenda items of the meeting, he underscored the importance of the review of Africa's socio-economic development, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and the exploitation of information technology. He particularly invited TEPCOW to help the Conference of Ministers and African Governments to build interest in the Special Initiative so as to ensure that Africa derived full benefit from the Initiative. He also referred to the special events to be held during the current session of the Commission. There would be a panel discussion in TEPCOW on the Framework Agenda for Building and Utilizing Critical Capacities in Africa. During the meeting of the Conference another panel including leading experts would focus on the important topic of Poverty and Public Expenditures.

22. The representative of Madagascar moved a vote of thanks on behalf of participants. He thanked H.E. Mr. Girma Birru for his statement which had provided constructive and useful proposals to the meeting, as well as acquainting participants with the efforts of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia towards establishing a conducive political and economic environment for accelerated development in Ethiopia. He also congratulated the Executive Secretary for his efforts to renew ECA and expressed his full support to the process.

PART I
CONFERENCE THEME: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF AFRICA'S
DEVELOPMENT IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: THE ROLE
OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

The renewal programme at ECA: Strategic Directions for the Economic Commission for Africa [agenda item 4(a)] and

Medium-Term Plan, 1998-2001 [agenda item 4(b)]

23. The Committee considered together the two documents entitled "Serving Africa Better: Strategic Directions for ECA" document E/ECA/CM.22/2 and Medium-Term Plan, 1998-2001, document E/ECA/CM.22/3.

24. In presenting this item, the Executive Secretary outlined the process through which the proposals for ECA's renewal were elicited. He indicated that after his appointment in February 1995, he had made familiarization visits to ECA, prior to assuming office in July 1995, during which he had held preliminary discussions with ECA staff and programme managers to find out, from their perspective, the challenges, issues of importance, and their hopes for the Commission. The Executive Secretary reported that ECA staff had expressed the view that whereas ECA had made important contributions to Africa's development in the past, time had come for a change in the way it planned and carried out its work as well as in the quality of its products. Staff had also expressed their frustration with lack of mobility and training opportunities, and their dissatisfaction with personnel management and administration systems. The Committee noted that it was these discussions which led the Executive Secretary to assign a high priority to the restructuring of ECA's personnel and administration structures as a first stage in the renewal of the Commission.

25. Following the early consultations with staff, in the second stage of the process, the Executive Secretary commissioned specific diagnostic studies making use of the best minds that he could find. These included :

(a) A team of management experts from the World Bank : to examine ECA's budgeting and planning process and its financial control system;

(b) A team of human resources experts : to study ECA's personnel system, i.e., hiring, human resources management, training, performance assessment, promotion and motivation;

(c) A team of information experts : to examine ECA's communications strategy; and

(d) A team of experts from Oxford University Centre for the Study of African Economies: to assess the technical quality of ECA's products, diagnose weaknesses, pinpoint strengths, and indicate improvements that needed to be made.

26. The Executive Secretary pointed out to the Committee that, in making use of expert resources from the World Bank, ECA was following the example of other notable institutions, including the African Development Bank (ADB). Regarding the study on ECA's communications strategy, it was noted that this was of utmost importance, since ECA is a knowledge-based institution whose value to member States is as a source of ideas which, therefore, had to be disseminated promptly.

27. He said that in the third stage of the process, he had organized further consultations with ECA staff. In a series of town-hall meetings in which all ECA staff had participated, candid views were expressed about ECA's past and present performance and how this could be strengthened. This process had received the endorsement of the Staff Union. The Executive Secretary had solicited written submissions from programme managers and held meetings with them and their staff to discuss programme directions and their vision for the Commission. This process had culminated in a three-day 'Open Space' staff conference where all ECA staff participated and themselves set the agenda for discussions on elements of the theme : **"Sharpening our focus, Strengthening our partnerships, and Increasing our impact"**.

28. The Executive Secretary informed the Committee that the overall report prepared by the staff after the "Open House" exercise had identified numerous issues that were crucial to the renewal of the Commission. The report had a number of key recommendations including, for example, that MULPOCs should be used more effectively in ECA's outreach to member States; that there must be more internal transparency and better communications, and that an enabling environment should be maintained in the Commission; and that more effective partnerships should be forged, based on relative comparative advantages, identification of strategic issues for

collaboration, while paying special attention to the long-standing cooperation with OAU and ADB, with which ECA shares membership in the Joint Secretariat for the implementation of the Abuja Treaty.

29. The Executive Secretary emphasized that strategic focus was a matter of necessity. To achieve strategic focus, it was necessary to re-organize the programme of work which was now spread over a large number of unconnected activities. This would still leave plenty of scope to address Africa's development problems, and with selectivity and flexibility. There were too many meetings, and there were too many reports which were not even well disseminated to the member States, universities, or civil society organizations which might have made use of them. It was imperative to end ECA's remoteness from member States, and for ECA to assume greater relevance in finding practical solutions to the problems faced by member States.

30. He said that to achieve cost-effectiveness, greater impact, and excellence in its work, there was need for institutional strengthening at ECA. Staff capacity needed to be built through training and exposure to how other institutions work, through in-house training, staff exchanges and study sabbaticals. It was also necessary to inject new thinking into ECA from outside -- for example, through fellowships to bring brilliant young African scholars to work at ECA on specific problems, etc.

31. The Executive Secretary underlined the need for ECA to seek enhanced partnerships in view of the enormous scope of Africa's development problems, and the range of actors involved in the search for solutions. He observed that, as a centre for development, dialogue between the actors in Africa's development, ECA had a vital role to play. It could set or, at least, influence Africa's development agenda; and it could pool its resources with other partners to tackle difficult problems that no organization could tackle on its own. Furthermore, as a regional arm of the United Nations, ECA had important coordinating functions in on-going as well new UN system-wide programmes for Africa's development -- such as UN-NADAF and the new UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, both of which emphasized partnership among agencies of the United Nations system.

32. Referring to the Medium-Term Plan, the Executive Secretary said that it was desired from the Strategic Directions. The Plan represents a framework of support to member States. The conference was required to review and endorse it to the General Assembly through the Secretary-General for approval. Thereafter, it will define the work programme of the Commission in the period.

33. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee commended and expressed strong support for the proposals presented by the Executive Secretary for the renewal of ECA. It was noted that the programme focus in the Strategic Directions document were consistent with member States priorities as reflected in such programmes as the Cairo Agenda. The new orientation should strengthen the structures of the Commission and render it better able to assist countries to meet the challenges of development. It would help ECA to concentrate on few, selected areas which will enable it to use its scarce resources to achieve greater impact.

34. The Committee encouraged the Executive Secretary to continue the reform and renewal process of the Commission. In this regard, it expressed the view that a renewed ECA could serve as an active and credible voice as well as a facilitator for Africa's development. Africa has a vast pool of technical expertise abroad which ECA could help mobilize in support of the region's development.

35. In order for ECA to be a credible partner in African development, the Committee recommended that the ECA should implement people-centred programmes; assist in capacity and institution building as well as in negotiation concerning external debt; provide policy support; assist in the analysis of specific conditions in countries under which privatization is taking place; enhance the sharing of best practices and experiences; and, devising development strategies that would minimize dependence on aid. To ensure that the ECA priorities reflect the needs of the member States, the committee was of the view that the ECA should be actively involved in the formulation of National Development Plans from inception through implementation.

36. Some delegates felt that ECA was too remote from its principal constituency -- the member States. ECA needed to increase the frequency of its consultations with member States. In this regard, the Committee welcomed the Executive Secretary's proposal to establish a group of senior regional advisers on economic reforms at ECA, networking with eminent African experts on issues of economic reforms and structural adjustment, who would respond to requests for assistance from member States. It was further suggested that ECA should put increased emphasis on holding discussions of specific development issues at the ministerial level in the subregions.

37. Emphasizing the importance of regional integration in Africa's development, the Committee stressed that the MULPOCs should be strengthened to support the subregional intergovernmental organizations which were the building blocs of the Treaty establishing the AEC. Accordingly, the MULPOCs needed to be given sufficient resources and authority to execute their work programmes and respond creatively to the specificities of each

subregion, given the variations in subregional needs. The Committee urged ECA to institute meetings of Conference of Ministers at the level of the subregions to decide on subregional development priorities. Concern was expressed, however, that the MULPOCs had not always been staffed with competent professionals. At the same time, the Committee cautioned against the proposal indicated in the Strategic Directions to relocate the MULPOCs to the same capital cities as the headquarters of the subregional organizations. It was observed that in some subregions, there were several intergovernmental organizations. In those cases, what was important was to strengthen the MULPOCs to be of better service to their subregions than relocating them.

38. To address many of the problems relating to the MULPOCs, it was explained that a Task Force had been established within ECA to review all previous reports on the functioning of the MULPOCs and make recommendations for improving their operational performance. The recommendations of the Task Force would be the basis of consultations with member States.

39. Some delegates urged that in the renewal process due regard should be paid to subregional balance in the staffing of the secretariat of the Commission. It was specifically noted that the Southern African subregion was underrepresented in ECA.

40. The Committee advised that the activities of regional and international organizations operating in Africa should be coordinated to avoid duplication and waste of scarce resources. The Committee stressed, in particular, the need to avoid duplication between the ECA and OAU especially in view of the impending launching of the Economic and Social Commission of the African Economic Community as provided for under the Abuja Treaty. The Committee welcomed the efforts being made by the Chief Executives of the two organizations as well as that of the ADB to further harmonize and coordinate the activities of their organizations through the ECA/OAU/ADB Secretariat.

41. The Committee stressed that African countries should place more emphasis on food security through increased domestic production rather than dependence on imports. Equally, the approach to regional integration should stress the harmonization of production systems rather than overdependence on market integration.

42. The Committee observed that ECA had important roles to play at the continental, subregional and national levels, and it was noted that meeting these three roles would pose a formidable challenge to the Commission. The

key to successful performance lay in selectivity and priority setting. At the continental level, ECA was already involved in issues of trade and investment, and the implementation of global and regional programmes of action in favour of Africa. At the subregional level, ECA saw plenty of opportunities to work with member States to strengthen the building blocks for continental integration. The Committee noted that it was at the national level that ECA would encounter the most difficulties, and yet the Commission could not afford not to be involved in assisting the member States to meet their development challenges -- both in the short term and the medium to long term.

43. The Committee took note of document E/ECA/CM.22/2, and endorsed the proposed Medium-term Plan for the period 1998-2001 as contained in document E/ECA/CM.22/3 in the light of the foregoing discussions.

Report on the economic and social situation in Africa, 1996 : [agenda item 5(a)]

44. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered the document E/ECA/CM.22/4) entitled "Report on the Economic and Social situation in Africa, 1996". The Committee noted that in 1995, Africa experienced, for the second consecutive year, a modest economic growth. The gross domestic product (GDP) of the region increased by 2.3 per cent, compared with a revised figure of 2.1 per cent in 1994 and 1.8 per cent in 1993. It further noted that despite this modest recovery of the GDP in 1995, many of the factors responsible for a weak economic performance in Africa over the years, both internal and external, were still at work and GDP growth was yet to keep pace with population growth, as a consequence of which per capita income declined by 0.6 per cent in 1995.

45. The Committee noted the differences in performance among subregions and individual countries. The West and Eastern and Southern African subregions registered growth rates in excess of the regional average in 1995, owing to the improved performance in their agricultural and mining sectors. In West Africa, GDP grew by 4.1 per cent in 1995, compared to an increase of only 1.0 per cent in 1994; while in Eastern and Southern Africa it grew respectively by 4.8 per cent and 2.9 per cent as against 4.2 per cent and 2.6 per cent in 1994. GDP growth has been limited to a mere 1.1 per cent in Central Africa. The countries of Southern and Eastern Africa have in general performed better than those in other subregions.

46. The Committee noted a number of internal and external explanatory factors for the modest recovery in the African economy in 1995. On the domestic front, the growth of regional output was mostly associated with the good performance in the manufacturing and the mining sectors. The improvement in the mining sector was

attributed to reform in the sector and increased investment. On the other hand, growth in manufacturing was due mainly to better supply of inputs and improvement in the importation of raw materials. The Committee was, however, concerned by the fact that African agriculture, the mainstay of the African economy, did not perform well in 1995; its value added growth rate decelerated from 4.2 per cent in 1994 to 1.5 per cent in 1995.

47. On the external front, the Committee noted that although there were some improvements in exports earnings as shown by the increase of 11.1 per cent in 1995 as against 4.9 per cent only in 1994, Africa's share in world trade continued to decline from 3.1 per cent in 1990 to 2.2 per cent in 1995. The loss in market share as a whole, was due to the extremely low level of competitiveness of Africa's exportable products. Most countries continued to rely on the same primary commodities they did in the 60s and 70s. The failure to transform the nature and content of their exportable commodities have had detrimental impact on their foreign exchange earnings as well as on their market share.

48. The Committee noted that the problem of Africa's external indebtedness grew worse in 1995, with the total stock of debt increasing by 4.1 per cent to reach \$US322.4 billion in 1995. The unbearable debt overhang was due to rising stock of external debt and the accumulation of debt service arrears, capitalization of interests and the general hardening in lending terms.

49. The Committee noted that the crisis in the social sector remains severe in most African countries in 1995, not only because of rapid increase in population relative to economic growth, but also because of increasing unemployment, severe cutbacks in public expenditures in real terms, particularly in education, health and social welfare. The problem of unemployment remains critical in Africa particularly among educated people. The implications of large numbers of unemployed educated youth and university graduates are serious for Africa's social and political stability. Public expenditure on education in sub-Saharan Africa is the lowest in the world. The most severe cuts on education have been made in capital and recurrent expenditures for new construction, supplies, furniture, equipment for science laboratories and for repair and maintenance. The number of refugees and displaced persons in Africa remains extremely high. About 7 million are directly categorized as refugees in Africa.

50. The Committee observed that in 1996 and beyond, the economic prospects of Africa would once again be determined not only by the weather situation but also by the extent to which African governments persist with domestic policy reforms, sound economic management, maintenance of stable political systems and a positive,

people-oriented political climate, coupled with favourable developments in the international economic environment. Should these conditions prevail, the regional output will likely grow by 2.9 per cent in 1996.

51. The Committee underscored the importance of the allocation and delivery mechanisms of the funds that have to be mobilized, particularly by improving access to rural credit. It further emphasized the need to strike a balance between rationalization of government expenditures with a view to reducing existing deficit and making adequate public investment in productive sectors. It was stressed that governments needed to broaden their revenue base and promote inflow of foreign capital as a means of boosting financial resources for development.

52. The Committee wondered why foreign direct investment to Africa has not increased in spite of the fact that the rate of return on FDI in Africa was the highest in the world and asked what ECA could do to improve Africa's low credit rating. It was explained that ECA was doing a lot to promote investment in Africa. For example, it had held a workshop on stimulating investment in Africa two years ago. The report of that workshop was available for distribution to interested delegates. ECA was also organizing an international conference on Reviving private investment in Africa to be held in Accra in June 1996. All these efforts should encourage flows of FDI to Africa.

53. The Committee noted that the data on refugees in the report were based on 1994 statistics that were released in 1995. More recent data for 1995 were available and could be supplied by UNHCR on request. It was stressed that reintegration rather than resettlement of refugees was the appropriate description of the activities undertaken to support returnees.

54. Emphasizing the need to overcome Africa's external debt, the Committee suggested that ECA undertake a study on the link between Africa's external debt and external trade. In this regard, it also observed that particular attention should be paid to the potential impact on CFA countries of the adoption of a common currency by European Union and decline of ODA.

55. The Committee also underscored the need for ECA to pay due regard to the role of informal sector as source growth as well as the effect of natural disasters, such as drought and locust in economic performance of affected countries. There was also need for ECA to promote the sharing of experience on how some countries had achieved high contraceptive prevalence rates. At the same time, it was stressed that high fertility should be viewed

in a critical but positive light. It was emphasized that Africa's political leadership should address the issue of fertility with courage.

56. The Committee expressed the view that political conflicts did not always have negative effects on production in some countries. Instead conflicts and strife tended to deter foreign investment.

57. The Committee was of the view that African industrial products should meet international standards of quality, if they are to be world competitive. The new standards of quality also had environmental component, and it was of crucial importance for African countries to meet industrial and environment standards of quality.

58. Some representatives pointed out certain inaccuracies in the data provided in the Report. This related for example to GDP growth rate and other country's macroeconomic indicators as well as figures for AIDS in various African countries. Some of the participants indicated that they would provide the Secretariat with correct and more recent data as it concerned their countries.

59. The Committee took note of the report in the light of the above observations.

United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa [agenda item 5(b)]

60. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered document E/ECA/CM.22/5 entitled: "The United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa".

61. The Committee noted that the Special Initiative on Africa was launched on 15 March 1996 by the Secretary-General, Dr. Boutros-Boutros Ghali, with the participation of the Executive heads of all the agencies and organizations of the United Nations System represented in the United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). The current Chairman and a representative of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity also took part in the launch at Addis Ababa via satellite. The Special Initiative is the United Nations system's most significant and largest coordinated action in support for Africa's development. Its aim was to mobilize international support for Africa's development through practical actions, focusing on development priorities identified by the African countries themselves.

62. The Special Initiative focuses on 14 key areas, grouped together in four themes, namely: Giving Development a Chance; New Hope for Upcoming Generation; Strengthening the Capacity for Governance; and Urgency on Survival Issues. The theme of **"Giving Development a Chance"**, identified the following as key elements: peace-building, conflict resolution and national reconciliation through strengthening the Organization of African Unity's capacity for peace-building, strengthening civil society for peace-building, and strengthening communications for peace building; external support for Africa's economic transition, including, substantial debt relief, expanding Africa's trade access and opportunities, partnership with Africa through South-South cooperation; internal resource mobilization, domestic savings and investment; and harnessing information technology for development.

63. The issues covered under the theme :**"New Hope for the Upcoming Generation"** include: promoting basic education for all African children; improving access to health services by the African population; promoting employment and sustainable livelihoods, especially through programmes aimed at poverty-reduction through the promotion of the informal sector and employment-generating opportunities, and promoting sustainable livelihoods in environmentally marginal areas. In the area of **"Strengthening the Capacity for Governance"**, focus is on: expanding the capacities for transparent, responsible and effective governance, especially through, the Africa leadership forum, developing governance strategy for Africa, promoting security, stability, development and cooperation in Africa; and strengthening civil society for development, including peace-building. The theme on **"Urgency on Survival Issues"** covers food security and drought management, with particular emphasis on land degradation and desertification control, soil quality improvement, food security, with special emphasis on the role of women; assuring sustainable use of and equitable access to freshwater; improving household water security; freshwater assessments; and improving availability of water for food production.

64. The Special Initiative would mobilize an estimated sum of \$US25 billion over a ten-year period to finance the 14 identified priority areas. Financing for the Initiative was expected to partially come from the redirection of existing resources at national and international levels and partly from new resources. The Special Initiative proposes three avenues for resource mobilization, namely; multilateral and bilateral donors are to create goal-oriented regional forums to raise resources for key sectors; African governments are to prepare goal-oriented country investment programmes and projects to maximize the impact of internal and external resources mobilized; participation in consultative group and roundtable meetings was to be broadened to encourage involvement and participation of non-traditional partners, such as business and civil society.

65. The Special Initiative also recommended other ways of mobilizing resources, including deeper debt relief, an expansion of Africa's trade opportunities and enhancing South-South cooperation. Activities relating to mobilizing domestic and external effort and resources for the support and implementation of the Special Initiative would center around: building partnership innovations for more effective development cooperation, especially through promoting goal-oriented regional forums; promoting preparation of goal-oriented country programmes and projects; broadening participation in Consultative Groups and Roundtable meetings of African countries; and analysis of the financial implications of the Special Initiative and the resources that would be needed for its successful implementation, including ODA flows, debt relief and domestic resource mobilization and utilization. Implementation of the Special Initiative calls for mobilization of political commitment and support for the Initiative, putting in place implementation arrangements, including coordination among United Nations agencies, focus on country-level actions, and putting in place monitoring and reporting arrangements on the implementation of the Initiative.

66. The Committee welcomed the Special Initiative on Africa and considered it timely and opportune for Africa at this point in time. Many delegates expressed support for the Initiative and indicated that they were looking forward to the implementation of the activities indicated in the Initiative. There was concern, however, that the international community appeared to have lost interest in issues of peace-keeping in Africa, as exemplified by the Liberian and Somali situations. They further expressed concern that the resources earmarked for implementation of the Initiative appeared inadequate in view of the serious socio-economic situation prevailing in Africa. The Committee expressed concern that many countries do not as yet know about the Special Initiative and hence the need to popularize it. In this respect, the Committee recommended that national focal points for the implementation of the Initiative be established.

67. The Committee noted that the modalities for financial resource mobilization in support of the Special Initiative had not been clearly defined and wished to be informed as to how agencies were to share this task. The Committee also called for enhanced cooperation and collaboration among United Nations agencies in order to avoid duplication of effort, including at the country level.

68. The Committee called for maximum networking among United Nations agencies at the country level in the implementation of the Initiative. It also called for intensive collaboration among the members of the Joint Secretariat of the OAU/ECA/ADB. Furthermore, the Committee called for the involvement of the subregional groupings in the formulation, design and implementation of programmes and projects under the Initiative. The Committee

underlined the need to make use of country experts in various elements of its implementation. The Committee requested that due balance be given between national and subregional concerns in the Initiative.

69. The Committee emphasized the need for fine tuning of educational programmes, with special emphasis on youth education and technical training to enable them to effectively participate in the development process. The Committee called for special emphasis under the Initiative in promoting the development of the informal sector, particularly access to bank credit, and improving absorptive capacity. The Committee underscored the need to reduce local counterpart funding for resources to be provided under the Initiative. The Committee recommended that mechanisms be put in place for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation. The Committee wanted to be assured that the resources needed to support the Initiative would be mobilized, particularly at this stage when the United Nations system as a whole is facing financial difficulties and there would appear to be donor fatigue. The Committee insisted that programmes under the Initiative should be demand-driven.

70. The Committee took note of the involvement of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in the launching of the Initiative, its role as lead agency on water issues, and its offer of cooperation with ECA and other agencies in the implementation of the Initiative in this area. The Committee further noted the participation of UNIDO in the Special Initiative, and in particular the commitment of UNIDO to collaborate with OAU and ECA in developing an alliance on industrialization of Africa. The Committee also noted that the International Labour Organization (ILO) had assisted many African countries in developing labour and social development programmes designed to generate employment and reduce poverty. These issues which occupy center stage in African countries should be given due priority in the Special Initiative.

71. The Committee took note of observation by UNHCR that the issues of humanitarian assistance should also be given due attention in the Special Initiative in view of the large number of refugees and displaced persons in Africa that need immediate assistance. It further noted the emphases of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) attached much importance to achieving a balance between population and natural resources endowment in order to promote sustainable development and protection of the environment.

72. Several delegations posed a number of questions relating to the Special Initiative. For example, a question was asked why was a new Initiative for Africa needed given the numerous existing programmes for African development? How did this Special Initiative differ from previous United Nations Initiatives on Africa, such as the

UN-NADAF? What was the link between United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative and ECA's New Strategic Directions? What were the modalities for the implementation of the Initiative? What was the link between the 20:20 formula adopted under the World Social Summit in Copenhagen and the resources to be earmarked to these sectors under the Special Initiative? Why were no resources earmarked for implementation of the priorities under "food security with special emphasis on women" and "poverty reduction and employment"?

73. It was clarified that the Special Initiative was designed to maintain international support for Africa. It was new because for the first time the agencies of United Nations System were really committed to coordinating action at national level.

74. As regards the relationship between the special Initiative and other United Nations Agendas on Africa, it was explained that the priorities in the Special Initiative corresponded with those articulated by African countries in various programmes such as the Cairo Agenda and UN-NADAF and accordingly the Special Initiative complements rather than competing with other United Nations Initiatives on Africa. Indeed the Special Initiative was a contribution of United Nations agencies to the implementation of UN-NADAF.

75. It was further explained that huge financial outlay for social sectors in the Special Initiative reflected the 20:20 principle of the Copenhagen Summit. It was noted that investing in education is one of the best investments for catalyzing development. Accordingly, investment in the social sectors has become an imperative for Africa. The resource requirements for poverty reduction and employment are currently being quantified.

76. The Executive Secretary informed the Committee that he had just returned from a meeting in Nairobi where he had chaired the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Special Initiative. He explained that the Steering Committee would be the main mechanism for coordinating implementation of the Special Initiative. He stated that many of the issues raised by the Committee had also been raised in other forums. He gave the background to the Special Initiative and informed the Committee that the Initiative was not necessarily the sum total of all United Nations programmes and initiatives in Africa. He said that the role of the various United Nations agencies will need to be defined further. With regards to whether the resources under the Initiative would be additional, he said that this would depend on the country programmes. The Executive Secretary stated that the Special Initiative will initially be tested on a few countries to determine whether it could yield results. He said that the Special Initiative will be presented to the Group of Seven (G7) by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

77. The secretariat called on member States to take advantage of the opportunities to be provided by the Special Initiative to accelerate the development process in their countries.

78. The Committee took note of the report.

Exploiting information technology to accelerate socio-economic development in Africa [agenda Item 5 (c)]

79. The Committee considered document E/ECA/CM.22/6 entitled "Exploiting Information Technology to Accelerate Socio-Economic Development in Africa an Action Plan". The Action Plan had been prepared in response to ECA resolution 795 (XXX) of 3 May 1995 which had requested the Executive Secretary of ECA to appoint a High-Level Working Group of African Experts in Information and Communication Technologies, to prepare a proposal for an African Information and Communication Initiative, an Action Plan to accelerate African Socio-Economic Development through the application of information technology to all social and economic sectors.

80. The Action Plan was presented by the Chairman of the High-Level Working Group.

81. In considering the Action Plan, the Committee observed that the move toward the information age offered great potential to improve the quality of life of every person in Africa. The Committee further observed that, the relentless competition, innovation and convergence in technologies, which have led elsewhere to massive drops in the price of communications and information systems and fundamentally altered the nature of the global economy, mean that Africa had a window of opportunity to use these tools to accelerate its own socio-economic development.

82. The Committee noted that the proposed initiative called for the formulation and development of a national information and communication infrastructure (NICI) plan in every African country. The Committee stressed that this plan should respond to national development challenges such as debt management, food security, health education, population, unemployment, job creation, industrialization, land reclamation, water, tourism, trade etc. The Committee further noted that the emphasis was on the need to support decision-making at all levels and would provide information and communication infrastructure for government, business and society to enlighten the process of development. Secondly, the initiative proposed cooperation, linkage and partnership between African countries

to share the success of accumulated implementation experiences and stimulate regional development in various information and communication fields.

83. The Committee underscored the importance of African countries to implement the plan so as to ensure that they are not left behind by the developed countries, which are already on the information superhighway. However, the Committee noted that in implementing the Action Plan due attention should be given to the development of the information infrastructure of the African countries, which at this point in time is not yet fully developed. The Committee further observed that, the Plan as it has been put together seems to be too ambitious, and that the African countries have to approach it on pilot basis or in phases. A suggestion was made to ECA to develop an ethic for Information Science and Telematic in general.

84. In conclusion, the Committee underlined the benefits African countries can get from the implementation of the Africa Plan, and emphasized the need for Africa not to be marginalized. The Committee further stated that information technology was playing a big role in job creation and investment in developed countries. However, it was noted that it should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a means and way to development. The Action Plan had to take into consideration the differences in technological level in each African country.

85. However, emphasis was placed on the need for African countries to develop their information infrastructure, to be able to have the information to be exchanged, develop the capacity to manage information and information systems, and that ECA should play a leading role in sensitizing member States to implement the Action Plan.

86. The Committee further noted that the Action Plan was in line within the ECA's new strategic directions and the implementation of the UN-Special Initiative for Africa, in which harnessing information technology for development of Africa has been given much emphasis.

87. The Committee took note of the Action Plan in light of the observations made.

PART III
SPECIAL ISSUES

Progress report on preparation and follow-up to international and regional conferences and programmes

[agenda item 6 (a)]

88. Under this agenda item, the Committee examined document E/ECA/CM.22/7/Add.1 and E/ECA/CM.22/7/Add.2 entitled "Progress Report on preparations and follow-up to International and Regional Conferences and Programmes" which constituted the working documents for agenda items 6 (a)(i) to (viii).

Fourth World Conference on Women [agenda item 6(a)(i)]

89. The Committee noted that ECA in its preparatory process held several meetings which culminated in the Regional Conference on Women held in Dakar, Senegal in 1994. That Regional Conference adopted the Regional Common Position which was taken to the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, China in September 1995 which, in turn, adopted the Global Platform of Action which provides guidelines on social, economic and political empowerment of women. The Global Platform identified 12 critical areas of concern and spelled out actions which would enable full participation of women in political, social and economic life of their countries, with special emphasis on the rights of the girl-child.

90. The Committee also noted that the primary responsibility for the follow-up and implementation of the Global Platform of Action lay with the governments, intergovernmental organizations and the United Nations Agencies. The follow-up would include establishment of development plans and mobilization of resources for the programmes especially in the eradication of poverty. Noting with satisfaction that ECA was on the forefront in the support of gender issues, it underscored the need to give special attention to the gender issues while formulating development programmes and priorities.

91. The Committee recommended that there should be at least one staff at each MULPOC to cover women issues at the subregional level. This should be done during the implementation of ECA's new structure. The Committee also recommended that the Bureaux of African Regional Conference and the Africa Regional

Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) should be amalgamated and work together since they have the same objectives. The need to strengthen the African Centre for Women was also emphasized.

92. The Committee noted with satisfaction the progress made in various African countries in the follow-up to the fourth World Conference on women. Several delegations reported that their countries now have Ministries for women Affairs, while others had started programmes on peace initiative and others are supporting women issues practically with resources.

93. The Committee wanted to know the measures taken to sensitize United Nations to support ECA member States on gender issues; how gender issues would be incorporated in the African New Initiative; who was responsible in the subregion for the coordination of the follow-up to the fourth World Conference on Women in Africa and; what was the role of UNDP in this regard.

94. In his response, the Executive Secretary of ECA reassured the Committee that he was personally committed to the engendering of ECA. For example, he would be strengthening the African Centre for Women. The Centre would be attached to his Office. A sum of \$US1.5 million had already been mobilized to help establish an African women leadership fund. The objective was to raise the sum of \$US5 million. He further reassured the Committee that the secretariat was taking seriously the responsibility of coordinating the region activities in the follow-up to the Beijing Conference. Moreover, programme managers and their staff would be trained in gender advocacy and gender policy analysis. Gender balance, would also be ensured throughout the secretariat.

Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements [agenda item 6(a)(ii)]

95. The Committee was informed that the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) would be held in Istanbul, Turkey from 2 to 14 June 1996. Habitat II was expected to come up with the statement of Principles and Commitment and the Global Plan of Action - Habitat Agenda.

96. The Committee noted with satisfaction that ECA had played a central role in Africa in the preparatory process. Several meetings had been convened in collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements UNCHS-Habitat and the OAU. The purpose of those meetings was to prepare an African common

position on human settlements for Istanbul. ECA was also finalizing the Regional Report on the State of Human Settlements and the Continental Shelter Atlas for Africa. Those two documents would be the Commission's contribution to the Conference.

97. The Committee was informed that the Executive Secretary of ECA had been designated coordinator of all regional commissions in the Habitat II preparatory process, during and after the conference. The Committee urged African countries to participate effectively at Istanbul, support the regional position and ensure its incorporation in the Global Platform of Action (Habitat Agenda).

98. With regard to the future of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS-Habitat), the Committee requested that the African governments should support the strengthening of the centre as it was based in Africa. It further requested the Executive Secretary of ECA to use his position as coordinator of the regional commissions to mobilize political and diplomatic support for the future existence of the Centre. The Committee noted with satisfaction the support given by the Group of 77 and China for the strengthening and continued existence of the UNCHS-Habitat based at Nairobi.

Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

[agenda item 6(a)(iii)]

99. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat reported on developments which had occurred following the high-level intergovernmental meeting on the mid-term global review of the SNPA which had been conducted in New York in 1995 and issues relating to the special measures adopted with regard to the land-locked countries.

100. Despite the intensive efforts made by the LDCs to undertake the economic reforms prescribed in the SNPA, they had not been able to achieve a number of the programme objectives and their general economic situation had continued to deteriorate as a result of several domestic and external factors.

101. With regard to African LDCs, the Committee noted that the intergovernmental meeting had adopted a declaration and made recommendations for boosting the implementation of the SNPA.

102. Finally, the Committee was informed of activities undertaken by the secretariat and others planned for the LDC group of countries within the 1996-1997 programme budget. The Committee took note of all this information and requested ECA to give the LDCs every necessary assistance and to help them find solutions, including the problem of refugees.

United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF)

[agenda item 6(a)(iv)]

103. Under this agenda item, the Committee noted that since the last Conference of Ministers, two major developments related to the implementation of UN-NADAF had taken place within the United Nations system, namely: the evaluation of the UN-NADAF conducted in 1995 by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) at the request of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa, launched in response to a recommendation of CPC, the United Nations organizations, specialized agencies and funds (including the international financial institutions) under the aegis of the Inter-Agency Task Force (UN-IATF)

104. The Committee noted that ECA had been assigned the task of coordinating the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly, on the Mid-term Review of the implementation of UN-NADAF. For that purpose, the secretariat had prepared a questionnaire which had been sent to the Ministers of Economic Planning and Development of member countries. The Committee urged member States to send the completed questionnaire to the secretariat as soon as possible.

105. The Committee decided to postpone discussions on this item and to consider it in conjunction with the agenda item on programme evaluation, since the JIU report on UN-NADAF was included in the report on that item.

Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (UNTACDA-II)

[agenda item 6(a)(v)]

106. The Committee noted the six initial primary objectives of the UNTACDA II programme which were designed to establish an integrated transport and communications system in Africa. It also outlined the mechanisms

at national and subregional levels set up for the implementation of the Decade programme, the difficulties encountered and the need to strengthen the national coordinating committees and improve resource mobilization.

107. The Committee reaffirmed the importance and relevance of the objectives of the UNTACDA II programme for regional integration. In that regard, several delegates observed that they had used the programme as a framework for developing their national and regional infrastructure.

108. However, concern was expressed regarding ECA's role in mobilizing resources for the Decade programme which was viewed as crucial to the integration of the continent. In this regard, the Committee expressed doubt about the usefulness of the decades if there were no resources to implement them. The Committee emphasized the need for strengthening the national and the subregional mechanisms for the implementation of the programme.

109. The Committee advised that efforts should be made to study and adopt alternative approaches for stimulating the development of the transport, communications and industrial sectors given the inefficacy of other decade programmes.

110. The Committee noted that the mid-term review of the Decade would take place in 1997. In that regard, the Committee recommended that the next evaluation should take into account such special issues as private sector participation and regional integration.

111. Noting that the tenth Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications had called for harmonizing the World Bank's sub-Saharan African Transport Programme (SSATP) and the UNTACDA II programme, the Committee emphasized the need for the secretariat to take an active part in the evaluation of the SSATP programme.

Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA-II) [agenda item 6(a)(vi)]

112. Under this agenda item, the Committee noted that the twelfth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry, held in Gaborone, Botswana from 29 May to 8 June 1995, had adopted resolution 1 (XII) on the implementation of the IDDA-II, resolution 2 (XII) on mobilization of resources for industrialization in Africa, resolution 3 (XII) on the development of the private sector for industrialization in Africa, resolution 4 (XII) on the

enhancement of women's contribution to the implementation of the programme for the IDDA-II and resolution 5 (XII) on the African common position for the sixth session of the General Conference of UNIDO.

113. The Committee observed that since IDDA-II had been launched by the African States and for the African States, efforts should be made to mobilize internal and external resources for the implementation of the programme. ECA and ADB should find a new approach for the mobilization of financial resources.

114. The Committee stressed the importance of adopting a more global approach to industrialization programmes in Africa, instead of launching Decades which failed to set goals.

115. The Committee further observed that industrialization could be achieved not only through the establishment of large enterprises but also through micro, small and medium enterprises. In that line, Africa should learn from the experience of the newly industrialized countries which had developed through the promotion of the private sector, especially the micro, small and medium enterprises. It particularly underscored women's participation in the development process through the establishment of informal and micro enterprises and the nurturing of an indigenous African entrepreneurship culture.

116. Noting the various activities undertaken by ECA and UNIDO to implement IDDA II, the Committee urged ECA to work closely with UNIDO, which is allocating 40 per cent of its programme budget to African industrialization. The Committee noted with satisfaction the close working relations between ECA and the World Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME) in the promotion of micro, small and medium enterprises in Africa.

117. The Committee took note of the efforts made by ECA to foster South-South cooperation, especially with Asia and Latin American countries as well as regional and subregional cooperation in its new programme.

Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development

[agenda item 6(a)(vii)]

118. The Committee noted that the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development adopted by the third African Population Conference held in Dakar in 1992 had been the African common position submitted to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

119. It further noted that the outcome of ICPD was reported to the thirtieth session of the Commission/twenty-first meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning in 1995. Upon the request of the Follow-up Committee for the implementation of ICPD, a workshop on the implementation of the Declaration and of the ICPD Programme of Action had been organized jointly by OAU, ECA and ADB in Abidjan. The results of the workshop had been communicated to the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Sustainable Development and Environment and to the ninth session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Population and Information Specialists which had both been held in 1996.

120. The Committee was informed of the difficulties encountered in implementing the Declaration and the ICPD Programme of Action despite every effort being made by the member States concerned.

121. The Committee took note of all this information and requested OAU, ECA and ADB to intensify their cooperation and to assist ECA member States to implement both the Declaration and the ICPD Programme of Action.

Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s [agenda item 6(a)(viii)]

122. The Committee took note of the progress report on the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, which gave an update of the needs assessment exercise and strategy development (NASD) programme. The Committee also noted that 11 countries had already conducted NASD exercises, and that another 15 were planning to do likewise.

123. The Committee took note of the progress reports on preparation and follow-up of international and regional conferences and programmes.

Joint OAU/ECA Progress Report on the Implementation of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community [agenda item 6(b)]

124. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered document E/ECA/CM.22/8 entitled "Joint OAU/ECA Progress Report on the Implementation of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community".

125. The Committee noted the progress made in the implementation of the Treaty but deplored the slow pace of progress on the drafting of the protocols, the preparation of the organizational chart of the Community secretariat and of the revised version of the Treaty. Regarding the protocols, the Committee emphasized the need to speed up the process particularly, the protocol on relationships between the Community and the regional economic communities so that the Chief Executives of those communities could finally adopt them at their forthcoming meeting in June 1996. For that to happen, it would be necessary to harmonize and coordinate the activities of the regional economic communities with a view to avoiding duplication. Furthermore, the Committee urged the secretariat of OAU to submit the proposed organizational chart to the Committee of 14 and to finalize in all the OAU working languages, the abridged version of the Treaty, so that it could be translated into the vernacular languages of member States.

126. The Committee emphasized the role of the Joint OAU/ECA/ADB Secretariat in the implementation of the Abuja Treaty and urged a review of the most recent activities undertaken by that Secretariat in preparation for the meeting of Chief Executives which would be held in June 1996.

127. The Committee also took note of the discussion on the relationship between the Community and ECA conducted within the Joint Secretariat and on which proposals would be submitted to the upcoming meeting of ECOSOC. The Committee felt that it would be necessary to take into consideration the new strategic directions of ECA.

128. It would also be useful to redefine the powers of the Permanent Steering Committee and those of ECOSOC.

129. The Committee took note of this report in light of these comments.

Biennial Report of the Executive Secretary 1994-1995 [agenda item 7(a)]

130. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered document E/ECA/CM.22/9 entitled "Biennial Report of the Executive Secretary" which provided an overview of the activities undertaken by the Commission in implementing its programme of work and priorities during the biennium 1994-1995 and of the availability and utilization of resources within ECA.

131. The Committee noted that these activities included advocating economic and social policies, articulating plans and strategies, strengthening institutions for development and providing technical assistance to member States and their intergovernmental organizations. It also noted that modalities of the implementation of these activities encompassed meetings, training programmes, publications, establishment of data bases and some operational activities, all focused around nine subprogrammes.

132. The Committee was informed that financial resources made available to the Commission had declined due to the United Nations budget crisis and to the withdrawal of some traditional partners.

133. The Committee expressed its concern about the multitude of activities carried out by the Commission, resulting in a very broad spread of efforts and resources among these activities, which minimized the impact of the Commission's work. It called for the need to be more focused and concentrate on fewer activities such as poverty alleviation and capacity building which would have greater impact at country level, especially considering the decline of financial resources within the secretariat.

134. In response, the Executive Secretary observed that, as reflected in the new strategic directions, reforms were guided by three principles, namely, excellence, greater cost effectiveness and more effective partnership and that given the resources constraints, the limits to the staff size, and the vast diversity of the Commission mandate and functions, narrowing the ECA's agenda was essential for an increased impact.

135. He also informed the Committee that the next biennial reports would also reflect views and comments of member States and other beneficiaries of ECA activities on the impact of the Commission's work and on the areas where improvement would be needed.

136. The Committee also took note of clarifications provided by some partners with regard to their financial assistance to the Commission, which over the past years had declined, due to their own restructuring processes. That assistance, in the future, may resume, especially given the new strategic directions adopted by ECA.

Progress Report on Programme Evaluation, at ECA (1994-1995 biennium) [agenda item 7(b)]

137. The Committee considered document E/ECA/CM.22/10, entitled "Progress Report on programme evaluation (Biennium 1994-1995) which provided details of programme evaluation carried out during the biennium 1994-1995 and together with its two addendum reports, namely E/ECA/CM.22/10 Add.1 entitled "In-depth evaluation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Natural Resources and Energy subprogramme" and E/ECA/CM.22/10 Add.2 entitled "Evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF): towards a more operational approach" which was undertaken by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).

138. The Committee noted that, in 1993, the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted a schedule for programme evaluation of the Medium-term Plan (MTP) for 1992-1997 in ECA. In line with the United Nations policies on programme monitoring and evaluation and on the basis of that schedule, five subprogrammes for the biennium 1994-1995 were evaluated. The five subprogrammes were: (a) trade, regional economic cooperation and integration; (b) poverty alleviation through sustainable development; (c) human resources development and social transformation; (d) natural resources and energy development; and (e) women in development.

139. The Committee also noted that all the evaluation studies were undertaken in the form of self-evaluation by the programme managers. However, the evaluation of few subprogrammes, namely natural resources and energy development was based on an in-depth evaluation approach.

140. The Committee observed that documents provided under the item were very important and their findings required further study, because the recommendations needed careful consideration in line with ECA's strategic vision.

141. The Committee observed that member States were going through very difficult economic problems which hindered the implementation of UN-NADAF. The Committee, therefore, recommended that a resolution be adopted urging the United Nations Headquarters to allocate more funds to the Secretariat of the UN-NADAF Inter-Agency Task Force located at ECA headquarters, for the implementation of UN-NADAF activities in Africa.

142. The Committee further recommended that the MULPOCs should be strengthened in order to carry out more effectively activities for implementation of UN-NADAF in Africa. In this regard, ECA should mobilize more extrabudgetary resources.

143. With regards to the report of JIU, the Committee noted that the report was prepared at the request of United Nations Headquarters Committee on Programme and Coordination to evaluate progress of UN-NADAF. It commended JIU for an objective and comprehensive evaluation of the UN-NADAF. The report contained recommendations which were in line with the ECA's strategic vision.

144. Reflecting on the problem of overlap and duplication, the Committee underscored the importance of ECA conducting joint meetings with OAU. In this regard, it suggested that the ECA's Conference of Ministers responsible for planning and social development and the OAU's planned ECOSOC meeting could be held jointly and should be attended by the same ministers who attend the ECA's Conference of Ministers. It was suggested that these two meetings should be merged into an African Development Conference or some other joint body.

145. The Committee took note of the reports in the light of this document.

Issues from the Subsidiary Organs and Sectoral Bodies Calling for Action by the Conference of Ministers

[agenda item 7(c)]

146. The Committee considered document E/ECA/CM.22/11 and Add 1, entitled "Issues from the Subsidiary Organs and Sectoral Bodies Calling for Action by the Conference of Ministers". The document described issues calling for action by the Commission as well as those brought to the attention of the Conference and relating to the following subsidiary organs: The Conference of African Ministers of Industry; the African Regional Conference on Science and Technology; the Regional Conference of African Ministers Responsible for the Development and Utilization of Mineral Resources and Energy; the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Trade, Regional

Cooperation, Integration and Tourism; the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Sustainable Development and Environment; the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Population and Information Specialists; the Governing Board of the African Centre for Meteorological Applications to Development (ACMAD); and the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC). These were issues concerning meetings organized by ECA since the Commission last met in May 1995.

147. Operative paragraph 1.c of the decisions adopted by the seventeenth meeting of ARCC had been modified to state that the Chairperson of the Africa Regional Conference on Women and Development would become a member of ARCC.

148. The Committee referred the resolutions to the subcommittee on resolutions it had established.

149. The Executive Secretary informed the Committee of the work ECA was doing by way of a critical review of the resolutions adopted over the past five years, with a view to assessing their implementability, and in particular to see whether there had been follow-up actions. He further informed the Committee of consultations he had held with OAU, UNEP and AMCEN, with a view to resolving the legal issues raised by the adoption of Commission Resolution 757 (XXVII) of 4 May 1994 establishing the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Sustainable Development and Environment (CAMSDE). He explained that there were two main problems posed by the establishment of CAMSDE. First, the ECA Conference of Ministers, in creating CAMSDE in 1993, abolished AMCEN, which the Conference apparently had no authority to do. Second, there appeared to be considerable overlap in the mandates of AMCEN and CAMSDE. He said that the purpose of his consultations with OAU and UNEP was to deal with these two issues and the outcome was contained in document E/ECA/CM.22/11/Add.2.

Any other business [agenda item 8]

150. Under this agenda item, one delegation commented on the late availability of documents and insisted that, in future, documents should be sent well in advance to member States so that they can study them and make meaningful contributions to meetings. The Executive Secretary assured the Committee that communications with member States was already being accorded priority within the framework of ECA renewal and reform.

Date and venue of the eighteenth meeting of TEPCOW [agenda item 9]

151. Under this agenda item, the meeting was informed that the date and venue of the conference are established on the basis of consultations between the Executive Secretary and the Chairman of the Conference of Ministers.

Special Event: Panel Discussion on the Framework Agenda for Building and Utilizing Critical Capacities in Africa (agenda item 10)

152. Under this agenda item, a panel discussion on the Framework Agenda for Building and Utilizing Critical Capacities in Africa based on the draft document E/ECA/CM.22/12, was held on 2 May 1996.

153. The Framework Agenda had been discussed at the annual sessions of the ECA Conference of Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning, beginning in 1994. In that year, a preliminary report on the Framework Agenda was presented to the Conference, which endorsed and directed the secretariat of the Commission to continue work on the initiative. Subsequently, an elaborate progress report on the Framework Agenda was presented to the Conference at its meeting in May 1995. The process of finalizing the Framework Agenda led to the convening of a high-level expert group meeting which brought together over 40 senior experts from government, academia and the international community to contribute their insights and perspectives to the initiative.

154. The meeting of the panel constituted another step towards finalizing this Framework. The report of the panel is contained in Document E/ECA/CM.22/CRP.3.