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Strengthening the role of the
Multinational Programming and
Operational Centres (MULPOCs)
in the renewal and restructuring
of the Commission

Case of the Environment Programme Component of the
West African MULPOC

MISSION REPORT

By

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*Contribution to the implementation of ECA Conference
of Ministers resolutions 809(XXXI) and 810(XXXI) of 8 May 1996*

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"Environment is where we live, development is what we do to change that environment"
Our Common Future, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development,
(1987)

"We, the participants of TICAD, confirm that United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) agreements should be steadfastly implemented with a special emphasis on balanced relationships among agriculture, population and environment policies" "Towards the 21st Century" Tokyo Declaration on African Development from the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, 5-6 October 1993

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ABRIDGED CONCLUSIONS

1. This mission was carried within the context of the present process for the renewal and restructuring of ECA. In this process, serious thought was given to reviewing the role of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) and how to strengthen them, and to assist the OIC/Niamey MULPOC in further developing a programme to enhance the environmental component for member States in that subregion. The conclusions are also guided by resolutions 809(XXXI) and 810(XXXI) adopted by the ECA conference of Ministers on 8 May 1996.

2. Discussions were held with senior government officials in Niamey, Niger and various locally based IGOs. In addition, the various evaluation exercises for the MULPOCs were reviewed including the one for the Niamey MULPOC itself. Many recommendations had been made many of which were not consistent with the initial ideas for the MULPOCs. This may explain why they were never fully implemented. It was also evident that ECA headquarters at the time was not decided on how addressing the bottlenecks and making the MULPOCs the decentralized programme of the Commission and a representational outfit of the main structure, as the initial idea implied.

3. There was an evident situation of impasse where the MULPOCs were nearly brought to a stand still. There is an underlying problem in the structural arrangement between ECA Headquarters and the MULPOCs which has caused inadequate institutional harmony between them. This structural problem has given cause to equally poor programme synergy from ECA to the MULPOCs at the moment. The feedback has, therefore, not been at the level expected. This impasse needed to be broken.

4. Another issue which did not exactly fall within the terms of reference of the mission but which could not be avoided because it would significantly affect the interaction of the environment component of the nexus, the subregional programme profile and impact, was the representational responsibilities of the MULPOCs. The closer ECA gets to the subregional and national levels, interactions become more and more frequent with government officials at the up to the highest level, not only on political issues but also on programme matters. In other words the MULPOCs find two roles imposed on them, that of subregional programme managers and that of the personal representative of the Executive Secretary of ECA. Due to this aspect of interaction, member States expect this dual responsibility to exist and be conspicuous.

5. Discussions with senior officials of the Ministries of Finance and Plan, and of Rural Development, Hydrology and the Environment provided insights into areas of support which were identified as capacity for programme and project formulation and implementation management. Information and data collection and analysis was also an area for support. Most useful period for intervention was indicated as during the second half of the year before the budget year began which for most countries is in January.

6. Consultations with locally based IGOs, notably the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), the Agro-hydrometeorological Centre (AGRHYMET) of CILSS, the International Centre Research in the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the Autorité du Bassin du Niger and HYDRONIGER, were focussed on coordination, joint programming and information sharing with the MULPOC and data and information sharing.

A: Conclusions

(1) General state of the MULPOCs

7. The mission confirmed the conclusions of earlier review exercises that the MULPOCs are still necessary as vital vehicles for the decentralization of ECA to member States. Consequently, the initial objectives of the MULPOCs are still justifiable. However, their structure and programme development and implementation procedures must be reviewed, if they are to serve as a strong impetus for promoting the new programme directions of ECA at the national level.

8. Programme development, implementation, monitoring and follow-up was not adequately coordinated from ECA Headquarters, consequently, there was poor synergy from ECA through the MULPOCs to the IGOs. The trickle-down effect to member States was therefore minimal.

9. To address the above short-falls, subregional institutional structures and programme frameworks of the MULPOCs must be coherent components of the regional structure and programme in which ECA, in the area of its mandate and comparative advantage. This is not so at the moment and ECA is not playing a central role it should be playing in cross-sectoral programmes at the subregional and national level as well as the required delegation of authority.

10. Since by definition, ECA's action at the national level is highly limited to the advisory service activities of the Commission, on request, and that the effectiveness and impact of the other activities depend on what may be called a "trickle-down" process, this has not been well managed in the past. This is the challenge for the ECA Headquarters and the MULPOCs to address.

11. The above concerns have been a dormant aspect of policy and decision making at ECA towards the MULPOCs. They need to be revived and aggressively promoted to settle in the new programme directions of the Commission.

(ii) Environment and sustainable development as a component of the MULPOC programmes: example of the West African MULPOC.

12. Contrary to the impression concerning the environment and sustainable development programme thrust, it is not an aspect of the programmes of any of the MULPOCs, including the West African MULPOC. This is an unfortunate omission, in view of the post-UNCED momentum as a major global driving force for regional and subregional integration for achieving collective self-reliance and sustainable development. Most importantly, nearly all of the subregional IGOs and NGOs are environment oriented. The absence of activities deriving from Agenda 21 contributes in marginalizing the MULPOCs from the IGOs and NGO activities which is the common denominator problem area that can be used to enhance cooperation and integration.

13. At the national level nearly most of the inter-ministerial working groups are environment related either for the country strategic notes (CSN), Minister/Commissions/Committee for sustainable development, Committees for National Environmental Action Plans or Committees for Agenda 21, all include activities of the nexus. This, most likely, provides some of the explanation for the disillusionment of the IGOs with the MULPOCs.

14. Arising from the above, the nexus approach demands a strong central environment and development programme capable of acting as a key motive force in infusing cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach to activities of that group.

(iii) Harnessing information for development: The nexus issues.

15. One of the weakness of member States is clear problem definitions for which the different levels of information could be collected. The relevant capacity to collect and analyze such information could then be build or strengthened. With the new programme area on harnessing information for development, integrated

information generating and analyzing mechanisms could be developed at the level of the MULPOCs for quick reference and use both by ECA and African countries at their different levels.

16. The challenge is to work out a system of programme development information flow from ECA Headquarters to the MULPOC that will be consistent with activities at the national. Since resources do not allow the MULPOCs to be as operational as they were initially intended to be, it is necessary to study the various possibilities of strengthening ECA/MULPOC programme development. In so doing a review of the interaction process between the MULPOCs and the major subregional organizations, particularly those promoting subregional economic integration on the one hand and those specialized in activities of the nexus is pertinent. For the furtherance of the spirit of the nexus, information is therefore vital. This should be a key part of the process of strengthening the MULPOCs.

(iv) ECA environment programme activities as a major component for regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration

17. A distinctive feature of the UNCED preparations in Africa was the active participation of the continent's major groups in the various stages of the preparatory process, in which ECA played the key coordinating role. The IGOs, particularly African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), NGOs, women's organizations, major groups commendably complemented and supported the efforts of African countries in the preparation of Africa's contributions and committal document - Africa's Common Position on Environment and Development - to the Earth Summit. They significantly contributed to the development, in the context of the negotiations for the various conventions, of the continent's common perspectives. They provide a firm basis for promoting regional cooperation and integration through rationalized subregional groupings.

(v) Strengthening and utilization of ECA-sponsored institutions at the MULPOC level

18. The ECA-sponsored institutions which were established and run by member States to enhance their capacities in the different sectors buttress their collective effort for socio-economic development should be fully used by the MULPOCs "as allies in the transmission of ideas collected and generated by ECA", so well put in the Strategic Directions document.

B: Recommendations

CATEGORY I:

Institution strengthening, including representational issues

RECOMMENDATION 1: Programme and representational responsibilities of the MULPOCs.

18. For the MULPOCs to be effective as the outreach arm of ECA and enhance the quality of interaction with senior policy makers in government and the private sector, they must be both programmatic and representational, falling under the direct supervision of the Executive Secretary in the "Executive Management" component of the activities of the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION 2: (a) Programme and institutional arrangements.

19. To promote ECA's visibility at the subregional and national levels, with the MULPOCs being able to respond more rapidly to the needs of various subregional organizations and member States, and overcoming the perception of remoteness at the country level, a new paradigm of structural interaction is recommended. This will involve the ECA-MULPOC-Subregion-member State and "same path return process" in programme action.

20. In this "same path return process," the MULPOCs are central. Apart from the mandatory support from ECA, the MULPOCs should build on the capacities of the ECA-sponsored institutions located in their subregion irrespective of their scope of activities - regional or subregional.

21. The flow of actions under this institution interaction paradigm suggests three levels of action that should, at all times, be under control by the central programme manager, ECA Headquarters. The "return path model" would begin at ECA through the MULPOCs to subregional IGOs and national level. A disfunction of one of the links, it is being postulated will cause a breakdown and hamper deliver and impact.

(b) Harmonization of programme interventions with national programming cycles.

22. For effective joint programming, harmonization and coordination at the IGO and national levels, ECA should intensify its assistance activity services during the last half of the year preceding the next financial year. Flexibility of programme orientation is usually difficult after the general and investment budgets have been approved by the various national structures.

(b) Advisory services

23. Since by definition, ECA's action at the national level is highly limited to the advisory service activities of the Commission, on request, and that the effectiveness and impact of the other activities depend on may be called a "trickle-down" process, this is a critical area to manage in closer harmonization with the substantive activities than before.

24. In view of the partnership drive, to reap its full benefits, partners should be encouraged to be part of this service. Mission teams should include, as much as possible, one from ECA, one from partners in the area concerned, a MULPOC staff, a subregional IGO and a relevant national expert/focal point. The ECA component must be of commensurate experience in the issues of the nexus and level and of the level to act as team-leader.

25. Their draft reports and recommendations must be review by all before they leave the country benefiting from the service to ensure consensus and follow-up.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Reinstatement of the subregional Conferences of Ministers

26. In response to the request to undertake, in concert with regional intergovernmental organizations, the necessary consultations with a view to reinstating the subregional conferences of ministers of the Centres to enable them to focus more on specific subregional priorities and enhance the Commissions presence at the subregional and country levels, it is recommended that the consultations should include MULPOC policy process at two levels, namely,

(a) jointly with that of the regular session of the leading subregional economic grouping, to review and endorse programme priorities;

(b) annual programme development and harmonization expert meetings with the ECA-sponsored institutions based in the subregion, subregional IGOs and NGOs.

CATEGORY II:

The MULPOCs as Centres of programme excellence for the exchange of experience, information and provision of support, particularly for the nexus

RECOMMENDATION 4: Programme harmonization

27. Considering the need for the identification programme gaps between the

central activities and those of the subregions and harmonization with suggested "same return path" paradigm, all programme managers at ECA are requested to carry out the same exercise in order to enhance programme synergy within ECA and between ECA and the MULPOCs.

RECOMMENDATION 5: (a) Environment and sustainable development as an integrative component of the nexus activities at the regional level

28. Within the UNCED global framework and African Environment and Development Agenda as presented in the African Strategies for Agenda 21, three areas are recommended to compose the regional environment and sustainable development framework, namely,

- (i) participation in promoting the regional capacity building implementation of the cross-sectoral aspects of Agenda 21 and other UNCED outcomes;
- (ii) policy and programme coordination and harmonization in-house at ECA, with UN/DPCSD, UNEP and other UN agencies, regional IGOs (the OAU and AMCEN) and NGOs as well as IGOs and NGOs at the subregional level to ensure the significant permeation of ECA ideas and presence to the national level; and
- (iii) environmental geographic information systems (GIS) management.

(b) The regional environment programme framework as a spring board for MULPOC actions within the nexus

29. The environment component of the MULPOC activities within the nexus should be focused on the:

- (a) Establishment of national sustainable development indicators, in collaboration with Headquarters, UNDP and DPCSD focal points at the national level;
- (b) National sustainable development profiles highlighting the contribution of each of the activities, and others as the case may be;
- (c) Needs profiles (subregional and national
- (d) capacity building: the nexus areas

RECOMMENDATION 6: Harnessing information for development: The environment in the nexus issues.

(a) MULPOC Integrated Information System and Database (MIISYSD)

30. In furthering the spirit of the nexus, information is vital as a key aspect of strengthening the MULPOCs and making them more effective as the outreach organs of ECA. The development of a subregional information database, including an environmental geographic information system (GIS) and a MULPOC Integrated Information System and Database (MIISYSD) should be established to support a network linking ECA Headquarters and the MULPOC to subregional organizations and focal national institutions.

(b) ECA-sponsored institutions information database and network

31. The ECA-sponsored institutions should be encouraged and possibilities made for them to establish a database on their area of work. Those that have one should be strengthened. The **ACMAD Meteorological and Environmental Diagnosis System (AMEDIS)** should be strengthened as a key information catalyst for activities of the nexus.

(c) Software development

32. Appropriate integrated development data analysis software should be developed or adapted by ECA.

(c) Information networking with IGOs and national focal points

33. A data base network should be developed with the IGOS and ECA national focal points through the proposed MULPOC Integrated Information System and Database (MIISYSD)

RECOMMENDATION 7: Framework of outputs for the activities of the nexus

34. It is recommended that major programme areas should be agreed upon to provide the framework for activities and outputs so that the areas are familiar to the IGOs at the subregional level and they can also contribute to them. This will facilitate joint programming, programme coordination, harmonization, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Output delivery

35. A study should be carried out on how to integrate the regular MULPOC meetings into those of the major subregional economic grouping so that reports of MULPOC activities are part of the agenda of those meetings at the highest level that they are held. This will enhance ECA's drive for its visibility to reach member States. Programme ideas for the subregional component of ECA regional programmes will be discussed at such meeting. This will mean cost sharing which should be part of the discussion.

Acknowledgments

The Environment and Development in Africa programme component of ECA wishes to express its appreciation to the Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr. K. Y. Amoako for having given it the opportunity to contribute to the challenge of the ECA renewal and restructuring process. At a time when Africa is going through a period sometimes referred to as Africa's multiple transitions of political, economic, social and environmental mutations toward regional integration, there is a need for the Commission to review the functioning of its organs and their institutional relationship with other regional and subregional intergovernmental institutions. With the appropriate equation, this will sharpen the Commission's vision of serving Africa better within its mandates.

Appreciation also goes to the Senior Officials of the Ministries of Finance and Plan, of Rural Development, Hydrology and the Environment as well as those of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), the Agro-hydrometeorological Centre (AGRHYMET) of CILSS and the Autorité du Bassin du Niger and HYDRONIGER, all based in Niamey for having very kindly accepted to have discussions on institutional collaboration and possible joint programming with the MULPOC and ECA for data and information sharing.

To the colleagues of the Niamey-based MULPOCs for the various discussion and arrangements to meet local government officials and IGOs and the logistic support that they provided during the mission, appreciation is also expressed.

So also is acknowledgment made of the, sometimes casual, comments from colleagues, just before the mission, which opened up new insights into how the role of the MULPOCs could be strengthened in the renewal and restructuring of ECA, particularly as concerns its environmental component.

It is hoped that the recommendations of this mission might serve as a useful framework for discussion in enhancing the environment component of the nexus as

well as for improving the role of the MULPOCs as ECA's outreach arms to member States through subregional intergovernmental institutions as the new orientations take the Commission into the 21st century.

May 1996.

Preface

This mission was carried out within the context of the present process for the renewal and restructuring of ECA. It was to examine how to strengthen the role of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) and to assist the OIC/Niamey MULPOC in further developing a programme to enhance the environmental component for member States in that subregion.

The mission lasted from 6 April 1996 to 15 May 1996.

The first task of the mission was to formulate an Issues Paper covering the key questions to be examined. The Issues Paper was submitted on 19 April 1996 for a preliminary review at headquarters. It was developed in three parts. The first part dealt with such issues as:

- (i) a brief description of the ECA renewal process;
- (ii) environmental management: the African perspective;
- (iii) ECA and its environment programme within the nexus with a focus on programme development, regional and subregional priorities.

The second part looked at the concept and the realities of the MULPOCS, their strengths and weaknesses. Third section looked at the Niamey-based MULPOC itself:-

- (a) its peculiarities;
- (b) development of the ECA environment programme within the nexus;
- (c) coordination, harmonization, monitoring, evaluation and reporting;
- (d) the role of information and database; and
- (e) institutional implications.

The fourth section was a work plan to visit a selected number of subregional institutions which could be the MULPOC's potential subregional focal point for developing a comprehensive data base for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress being made in achieving the objectives of the activities of the nexus. These institutions were CILSS, ECOWAS, the Federal Environment Protection Agency of Nigeria and the Environmental Protection Council of Ghana.

The outcome of the mission would help in proposing modalities for the:

- (a) adaptation of the ECA environment programme within the nexus with the major outputs of a joint institutional nature;
- (b) interagency (UN) and inter-institutional coordination, harmonization, monitoring, evaluation and reporting;
- (c) establishment of an information and database and data and information sharing mechanisms in the subregion; and
- (d) modalities for establishing institutional relationships.

Although it was not possible to undertake the proposed consultations with the key IGOs in the subregion, the mission was able to improve on the ideas which were earlier formulated in the Issues Paper through consultation with local government officials and IGOs.

The various evaluation exercises for the MULPOCs were reviewed including the one for the Niamey MULPOC itself. Many recommendations had been made many of which were not consistent with the initial ideas for the MULPOCs. This may explain why they were never fully implemented. It was also evident that ECA headquarters at the time was not decided on how to address the bottlenecks and making the MULPOCs the decentralized components of the Commission and a representational outfit of the main structure, as the initial idea implied.

As regards the environment component of the programme, except for the Central African where there was initially an element of it but later dropped, there was none as an integral part of the MULPOC programme. This was in contradiction to the priorities of nearly all the national programmes and the majority of the subregional IGOs, NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) for whom environmental considerations were an integral part of development programming. Every country has an inter-ministerial mechanism on sustainable development of which the Minister responsible for the Environment is either its Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Secretary.

It became clear that there had been a significant drift in operations from the initial spirit and purpose of the MULPOC concept. There was an evident situation of an impasse where the MULPOCs have nearly been brought to a stand still. There is an underlying problem in the structural arrangement between ECA Headquarters and the MULPOCs which has caused inadequate institutional harmony between them. This structural problem has given cause to a poor programme synergy from ECA to the MULPOCs at the moment. The feedback has, equally, not been at

the level expected.

Another issue which did not exactly fall within the terms of reference of the mission but which could not be avoided because it significantly affects the interaction of the environment component of the nexus, the subregional programme profile and impact, were the representational responsibilities of the MULPOCs. The closer ECA gets to the subregional and national levels, interactions become more and more frequent with government officials at the highest level, not only on policy issues but also on programme matters. In other words the MULPOCs find two roles imposed on them, that of subregional programme managers and that of the personal representative of the Executive Secretary of ECA. Due to this aspect of interaction, member States expect this dual responsibility to exist and be conspicuous.

This is the perspective of programme and institutional relationships between ECA headquarters and the MULPOCs on the one hand and the MULPOCs and the subregional intergovernmental, nongovernmental organization and national governments on the other, that guided the mission.

I. INTRODUCTION

"The strategic narrowing of ECA's agenda is based on clear priorities and on its comparative advantages: its regional focus, its commitment as an organisation in and of Africa; in analysing regional issues, fostering regional cooperation, identifying role models, comparing and harmonising policies, compiling and networking development information and data."¹

"Encourages the Executive Secretary to continue to strengthen the process of renewal and reform of the Commission in consultation with member States." ECA Conference of Minister resolution 809 (XXXI), 8 May 1996.

1. The strengthening of the MULPOCs in the renewal and restructuring process at ECA is an integral part of the revitalization exercise being undertaken by the Secretary-General of the UN in response to the evolving needs and circumstances through which the system is going. Enhancing the environment programme component of any of the MULPOCs imposes a situation where its relationship with the other programmes must be examined since, as it is clear from the nexus, it is cross-sectoral and consequently cross-programme. This presupposes that the structure and functioning of those arms of the Commission, lend themselves to this type of integrated review.

2. A key objective of the MULPOCs is to carry ECA programme presence to its member States. The evaluation report is very explicit that there are serious deficiencies here. Consequently, in proposing the enhancement of a programme activity such as the environment, which in its present spirit and purpose as one of the determining dimensions of sustainable development, its current dynamism as one of the important elements of international development, care must be taken to register this ECA presence in its strong comparative advantage and strength to handle multidimensional programmes.

¹/ Serving Africa better: Strategic directions for the Economic Commission for Africa (Doc. E/ECA/CM.22/2 of March 1996)

3. A number of reviews have been made to see whether the MULPOCs were delivering the good they were set up to deliver. The report and its recommendations were considered by the ECA Conference of Ministers at their Sixteenth and Seventeenth Session in 1990 and 1991.² It is important, in the light of this exercise, to see whether the recommendations were ever carried out, if they were, whether their implementation has improved the lot of the MULPOCs. This is particularly important for assessing their role in the renewal process at ECA so as to ensure that the objectives are effectively achieved.

A: The assumptions:

4. To attempt a conceptual framework that would make for a closer understanding of the processes involved and to enhance a full grasp of the implementation of the new programme directions of ECA, particularly as concerns the environment activities within the **nexus of food security and sustainable development**, a number basic assumptions that guided this study were that:

(a) the initial objectives of the MULPOCs are still justifiable and that structurally and programmatically, as they are, they can serve as a strong impetus for promoting the new programme directions of ECA at the national level;

(b) the recommendations of the earlier evaluations of the MULPOCs are still relevant in the renewal process at ECA;

(c) environment and sustainable development thrust is an aspect of the programmes of the MULPOCs, particularly the West African MULPOC, in view of the fact that the post-UNCED momentum as a major global driving force for promoting sustainable development and the strengthening of regional and subregional integration mechanisms for achieving this through collective self-reliance;

(d) subregional institutional structures and programme frameworks are coherent components of the regional structure or mechanism and programme in which ECA, in the area of its mandate and comparative advantage, is playing a central role;

(e) since by definition, ECA's action at the national level is highly limited to the advisory service activities of the Commission, on request, and that the effectiveness and impact of the other activities depend on

² / Documents E/ECA/CM.16/13 of 19 March 1990 and E/ECA/CM.17/11 of 11 February 1991.

may be called a "trickle-down" ³ process, this has not been well managed in the past; and

(f) the above concerns are also an integral part of policy and decision making at ECA.

5. The environment and development activities of the Commission being cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary and broad-based, in the spirit and purpose of the recommendations of the Earth Summit, provide an ideal medium for testing the above assumptions. It is also one that gives a fairly accurate insight into the dynamism of cross-programme interaction at the level of the Commission, with other UN agencies and African intergovernmental organizations and NGOs.

6. To examine the validity of the above assumptions an institutional structure for the MULPOCs and programme flow paradigm was attempted. The paradigm aimed at identifying the soft spots that will facilitate institutional and programme interaction between ECA and the strengthened MULPOCs and ensure that, what may be referred to as the "trickle-down effect" of ECA-MULPOC activities, got to the national level was effective and had impact.

7. A review was also made of relevant documentation at the Headquarters of ECA and in Niamey, the Headquarters of the West African MULPOC, particularly those related to programme development and the evaluation of the MULPOCs.⁴ Discussions with senior officials of the Ministries of Finance and Plan, and of

3/ By "trickle-down" effect, it is understood to refer to the indirect but necessary benefits from programme activities. Although indirect, they can be programmed and actions taken at the required level to ensure that this effect takes place.

4/ Specifically, Documents NIA/200/89/MULPOC, "Ways and means of strengthening the role and operational activities of the MULPOC (Niamey, April 1989); E/ECA/CM.16/13, "Report of the evaluation team on the structure, organization and operations of the Multinational Programming Operational Centres (MULPOCs) and the implementation of the projects of the Economic Commission for Africa" (March 1990); and E/ECA/CM.17/11, Reorganization of the MULPOCs: Follow-up on the Report of the Evaluation mission to review the achievements of the MULPOCs with a view to strengthening them and making them more effective.

Rural Development, Hydrology and the Environment also provided insights into areas of support which were identified as capacity for programme and project formulation and implementation management. Information and data collection and analysis was also an area for support. Further Consultations with locally based IGOs, notably the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), the Agro-hydrometeorological Centre (AGRHYMET) of CILSS, the Autorité du Bassin du Niger and HYDRONIGER, were focussed on coordination, joint programming and information sharing with the MULPOC and data and information sharing. They are also intending to form a user promotion group in Niamey.

8. A focus was provided by the outcome of the Seventeenth meeting of the TEPICOW held in Addis Ababa from 30 April to 3 May 1996 and Thirty-first Session of the Commission/twenty-second meeting of the Conference of Ministers convened in the same place from 6 to 8 May 1996. Full note was taken of the agenda item on the renewal and restructuring of the Commission and the future role of the MULPOCs.⁵ In a situation where the whole institution of ECA is going through such an important transition, it was evident that, to give a close a picture of the reality as possible and how the environment component of programmes could be developed, an examination of the overall relationship of the MULPOCs with ECA was necessary.

9. In addition, a seminar was held with the government experts that had been seconded to ACMAD in order to have their assessment of the role of ACMAD as a meteorological applications centre and how they could participate in networking and promotion of the Centre and ultimately in responding to the needs of member States. The seminar also carried on the activities of the Centre so far and how they can be the focal points in networking the activities of the Centre if the communications facilities were to be improved at the national level.

10. The report is presented in four Sections. Section I gives the global context of the exercise to situate the MULPOC issues within the ECA and UN system context. Section II gives a brief background to the MULPOC concept and tries to identify some of it's strength and weaknesses based on its past performance. It

5_/ See document E/ECA/CM.22/L Report of the Conference

also examines the situation of the environment programme in the MULPOCs within the context of the UNCED momentum. The West Africa MULPOC is addressed in Section III, giving insights into its peculiarities, its programmes and the nexus issues particularly the environment and development activities. Section IV in trying to review the modalities of integrating the nexus issues into the programmes of the MULPOCs, attempts a programme flow paradigm consistent with the spirit and purpose of the five programme directions. This is particularly important as the issues of environment and development encompass all the activities of these programme areas.

B: Institutional revitalization, a UN system-wide exercise

11. The United Nations system is under serious scrutiny by its members with the aim of adjusting itself to evolutions since it was founded fifty years ago. There is a determined move for a rationalization of its structures and agencies to focus more on development issues and enhancing the enabling environment for peace, democracy and political stability. These are recognized as the foundations of sustainable development, as defined by the first Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 under the banner of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

12. In this spirit, the recommendations of first Earth Summit, besides the sectoral issues, laid emphasis on cross-sectoral activities to be carried out worldwide in the effort toward global sustainability. To play a crucial role were the major groups - nongovernmental organizations, business and industry, women and the youth including the child as well as information and public awareness. In order to facilitate and promote fruitful interaction among these groups, it was recognized that institutional arrangements, capacity building and adequate legislative frameworks needed to be put in place, à priori. Hence, in Chapters 24, 37, 38, 39 and 40 lay strong emphasis on these issues so as to strengthen national institutions and actions toward regional and global sustainability.

13. The themes for the celebration of the UNO, fifty years after 1945, were inspired, among others, by the outcomes of UNCED. The Declaration expresses deep concern that one fifth of the world's 5.7 billion people live in extreme poverty

and calls for extraordinary measures by all countries in response. A consensus had emerged from United Nations development-related conferences held in the last five years, at the global and regional levels, that economic and social development and environmental protection were interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. People must, therefore, be at the centre of actions toward and concerns for sustainable development.

14. The Declaration also reaffirms that "democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, are interdependent and mutually reinforcing." A regional institutional reorganization and renewal would then seek to devolve the function of its regional components to respond to this general spirit.

C: The outcomes of the Earth Summit with Environment as a major sustainable development driving force

15. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development of 1992 went beyond a twenty-year review of progress made in environmental conservation and after Stockholm in 1972 and a medium term evaluation of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development of 1987. It was a major milestone placed at the highest level of government, to chart the path for international dialogue and relationships in activities for sustainability today and for future generations. The environment was, therefore, given a new dimension as a composite development resource that must be an integral part, not only of national expenditure, but also of the gross national product, taking on equal dimensions of equity and justice. Environmental management is, therefore, synonymous with sustainable development.

16. The post-UNCED period has seen tremendous organization at the regional, subregional and national levels of intersectoral sustainable development activities under the umbrella of Agenda 21. In Africa, most, if not all, the national programmes and the majority of the subregional IGOs, NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs), environmental considerations have become deeply embedded as an integral part of development programming. Every country has an inter-ministerial mechanism on sustainable development of which the Minister

responsible for the Environment is either its Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Secretary.

17. This explains why the UNCED spirit was taken on in the celebrations of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. In order to foster regional cooperation, sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice, the world community through the Fiftieth Anniversary Declaration, pledged, among other things, to:

(a) promote an open and equitable, rule-based, predictable and nondiscriminatory multilateral trading system and a framework for investment, transfers of technology and knowledge, as well as enhanced cooperation in the areas of development, finance and debt;

(b) give particular attention to action to enhance the benefits of the process of globalization for all countries and to promote the integration of the least developed countries and countries in Africa into the world economy;

(c) improve the United Nations system for development and strengthen its role in international economic cooperation;

(d) invigorate the dialogue and partnership among all countries to secure a favourable environment for international development cooperation, while recognizing that each country is ultimately responsible for its own development;

(e) promote social development through decisive national and international action aimed at the eradication of poverty as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind, and the promotion of full employment and social integration;

(f) recognize that the empowerment and the full and equal participation of women is central to all efforts to achieve development;

(g) reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies in order to meet the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; and

(h) intensify cooperation on natural disaster reduction and major technological and man-made disasters.

18. These are the issues addressed by the ECA renewal process in the new programme directions, particularly those of the nexus. These are the challenges that the Commission must use its comparative advantage in the area of cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary programme conception and implementation to

contribute in pulling Africa out of the doldrums of poverty and underdevelopment.

D: The Regional Commissions, regional economic cooperation for development and national level actions

19. As one of the UN Regional Economic Commissions ECA was established to foster the regional development aspirations of the Organization. This was a logical follow-up to the establishment of peace after World War II. By their mandate, the activities of the Commissions are primarily focused to the regional and subregional level where multinational collective actions are generated. None-the-less, it has become customary for their level of delivery to be assessed at the national level. Direct national action by the Commissions is, by and large, left to the advisory service of the Commissions. It becomes essential that activities are sharply focused to address those development priorities at the subregional regional levels that emanate from the national level. In turn, mechanisms must be developed by the Commissions, to ensure the flow and measurement of the "trickle-down effect" of their ideas.

20. By the "trickle-down" concept, it is understood, in simple terms, to refer to the indirect but necessary, indeed the determinant, benefits from programme activities. Although indirect, they can be programmed, tele-guided and actions taken at the required level to ensure that this effect takes place.

21. Being evaluated at a level reached only indirectly means that subregional and regional actions cannot mean anything if they do not affect processes at the national level. Advisory services, the only direct access that it has to the national level is conditional "on request." These "requests" have been solicited for on an individual basis and the results are not as visible as they should have been if it was in due recognition of the comparative advantage of the Commission over the other alternatives.

22. With this in mind, the Commission would provide the enabling environment for the UN to contribute in building African multinational institutions for development, to be the articulator of development plans and strategies the advocate of economic and social policy, the promoter and provider of technical

cooperation for the development of the continent. In these areas, ECA has been a key actor in the establishment of subregional institutions important among which are economic integration mechanisms. To support these subregional initiatives, the idea of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) was born.

23. The Commission is then faced with the challenge of "marketing" its programmes through its skills for articulating development plans and strategies, advocating of economic and social policy, promoting and providing technical cooperation for the development. This means that ECA has to generate a demand at the national through its activities at the regional and subregional levels - the MULPOCs.

E: The ECA renewal progress: A regional response to the global process.

24. The renewal process at ECA⁶ and its institutions comes in the full bloom of UNCED when the Regional Commissions are playing the same key role as they did for the preparations of the Summit itself. They are now doing the same for the Special Session of the General Assembly to be held in 1997 to review the progress being made in the implementation of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of Rio. The statements during the celebrations echoed the need for a revitalization and rationalization of the Organization, in this age of technology, to more dependent of technological advances rather than increased human resources to produce more.

25. The role of the MULPOCs and their environment programme component in the renewal and restructuring of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is, therefore, best viewed within the framework of the system-wide institutional review for the revitalization of the United Nations system to better respond to the evolving needs of its members.

26. The present exercise at ECA is also built around a clear vision of Africa's

⁶/ See documents E/ECA/CM.22/2, Serving Africa Better: Strategic Directions for the Economic Commission for Africa and Renewing ECA to serve Africa better: A framework for partnership (Addis Ababa, March 1996)

future in a world of rapid technology and information revolution which it can use in catching up, as much as possible, with the rest of the world given the right strategic investment. In this process, five programme directions have been identified for the focus over the next six years to 2001, namely:

- a) facilitating economic and social policy analysis and implementation;
- b) ensuring food security and sustainable development (the nexus);
- c) strengthening development management;
- d) harnessing information for development; and
- e) promoting regional cooperation.

27. Africa's development concerns have been centred around the debilitating poverty which is manifest in ecological degradation, poor food production and consequent food insecurity, environmental refugees in addition to those from conflicts. These issues revolve around the inability of African countries to ensure food security and sustainable development, individually and collectively.

28. Strengthening the nexus programme issues within the activities of the MULPOCs is essential to make full use of the outreach network of ECA in getting the required trickle-down effect to the national level.

II: THE MULPOCS

"ECA's influence on Africa's development crucially depends on how the ideals it espouses will help to define or influence policy in African countries. It is of utmost importance that the quality of interaction with senior policy makers in government and the private sector be improved. ...

Major changes will be introduced in the MULPOCs and the advisory services, which are key vehicles for interaction with member States."⁷

A: The Concept

29. In the spirit of ECA Conference of Minister resolution 311/XIII of March 1977, the MULPOCs were established as the outreach operational arms of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) through which the activities of the Commission would be brought closer to member States to be more effective and visible impact. The General Assembly of the United Nations, recognized the Commission as the lead agency for multinational and multisectoral programmes, regionally and subregionally and thereby endorsing it as the operational arm of the United Nations at the levels in Africa. The MULPOCs were, therefore, to promote ECA operations as a decentralized network to facilitate the attainment of collective self-reliance by member States in their efforts toward self-sustaining growth and development.⁸

30. An important objective was for ECA to get to the national level alongside with the specialized agencies of the UN system, bilateral and multilateral development partners in catalyzing the development efforts of member States. This demanded a clear definition and understanding of roles and responsibilities in programme and implementation, determined by the comparative advantage of each other. Programmes assistance at this level would then be mutually supportive.

7_/ Doc. E/ECA/CM.22/2 of March 1996, op.cit. p. 48, paras 170 and 171.

8_/ See document E/ECA/CM.16/13, on the evaluation of the MULPOCs.

31. By implication, they were to take activities beyond programme implementation to that of "political" representation of ECA. Consequently, it was justifiable to place them directly under the ECA major programme manager, the Executive Secretary for whom the representational duties were to be carried out.

32. While the MULPOC concept was, therefore, full of practical good intentions, problems abounded in its implementation. The weaknesses were allowed to override the strengths.

B. Strengths and weaknesses

33. Given the above ideals which drove the establishment of the MULPOCs, it is important and legitimate for the present exercise, to identify where things went wrong as a basis for future remedial action. It would be useful to examine the potential strengths and weaknesses of the MULPOCs as ECA outreach institutions and programmes.

(a) The strengths of the MULPOCs: The concept.

34. The strengths of the MULPOCs can be viewed from two angles. Given the support from Headquarters, they are well placed to draw from the wealth subregional and national institutional capacities and the infrastructure on the subregion specific issues to enhance the impact of ECA programmes. They are also in a position to derive the benefits of the mutual support from the MULPOCs and the ECA-sponsored institution network and the subregional IGOs and NGOs.

(i) Support from ECA Headquarters.

35. The greatest strength of the MULPOCs was the resource and institutional support from ECA on which it depends for resources, policy and decision authority. They were directly controlled by the Executive Secretary and his Cabinet. This gave them the institutional leverage and profile that were required at the subregional and national levels. In its initial years the flow of decision and action was very closely monitored by the Chief Executive himself. This gave

them the added advantage of tapping support from the substantive programmes of the Commission without going through the bureaucracies of hierarchy.

(ii) The potential for mutual support between the MULPOCs and the ECA-sponsored institutions network

36. Another strength which the MULPOCs have is that of the mutual support that should exist between them and the ECA-sponsored institutions network, particularly those located in their subregions. An important network that the MULPOCs could have fitted effectively into is that of the ECA-sponsored institutions. These are institutions established and financed by member States under the aegis of ECA. The majority of them serve as institutions for enabling member States to collectively build the science and technology capacity for development. Many of them are regional institutions but there are a few that are subregional in focus.

(iii) The potential to drawing from subregional institutional capacities and infrastructure to enhance the impact of ECA programmes

37. The strength of the MULPOC network could be judged by the reception they initially received from member States themselves. ECA had begun to make inroads into subregions before then seen from afar. Apart from the annual meetings of its legislative bodies. Subregional programme problems and priorities were easier expressed at this level than at the more broad-based regional level.

38. With legislative bodies of their own, they could have developed the necessary network both with the subregional institutions and identified effective national focal point based on the network. Its comparative advantage in matters of social and economic development would have made them to sustain the demand that they initially created.

39. Member States started investing in them through the UNTFAD pledges when countries would pledge contributions to projects that fostered subregional cooperation. They even pledged support to ECA-sponsored institutions based in the subregion through the UNTFAD. Stimulating the subregional economic grouping

and subregional integration programmes were among the greatest strengths of the MULPOCs.

40. The programmes of the MULPOCs, as they were initially developed were largely based on subregional priorities closely related to the development of natural resources and economic cooperation. The existing IGOs and those that were being established could be categorized along these lines. These IGOs should have placed the MULPOCs in a better position to promote ECA programmes for regional integration.

(b) The weaknesses: The reality.

41. The weaknesses that have plagued the MULPOC system can be categorized into the institutional setting and the approach to programme development which has lacked programme synergy to equally reinforce the effectiveness of subregional institutional networks of the MULPOCs with the IGOs and NGOs. The major areas are identified below.

(i) Unclear understanding of the institutional setting

42. Generally, the mandate and functions of the MULPOCs, as the report cited above points out, have not all along been fully understood by its member States and partners. This has, consequently been the source of misinterpretation, not linking it directly with the ECA as was initially expected.

43. A major reason for the apparent misinterpretation⁹ of the role of the MULPOCs, it would appear, is that they were established in isolation of the existing subregional intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations (IGOs and NGOs). Provision was not made for them to be integrated into the programming process of these institutions and the MULPOCs were erroneously regarded by the other subregional counterparts as duplicators of their activities. This was further complicated by the fact that member States make financial contributions to many of these subregional institutions whose legislative mandates are derived

⁹/ See document E/ECA/CM.16/13

from subregional summits of Heads of State and Government. Participation in them takes priority over the activities of the MULPOCs, unless the MULPOCs are seen as an indispensable complementary component contribution from the ECA.

44. Another reason for the apparent misinterpretation of the role of the MULPOCs arose from the process of programme development, monitoring and evaluation. These processes do not seem to have portrayed the pivot role of Headquarters for subregional programmes to strengthen the subregional presence of the Commission. They, by and large, failed to demonstrate the cross-programme synergy that is implicit in their mandate.

45. One more cause for earlier concern about the presence and the inadvertent fear of duplication is the apparent broad seemingly independent executing nature of the programme. In other words, the government looked on their subregional IGOs to develop programmes of a multinational nature for which funding could be sought from the international financing community for the promotion of subregional self-reliance and integration. The MULPOCs did not appear to feature much to them in this connection.

46. The fact that the other sister agencies of the UN system have not expressly been encouraged to have functional links with the MULPOCs has played down inter-agency harmonization and coordination at this level. They operate in isolation of the MULPOCs, thereby increasing the risks of duplication of UN activities.

(ii) Unfocused approach to programme development and implementation synergy

47. The ECA headquarters itself shares in some of the shortcoming and low programme impact of the MULPOCs. In general, programme coordination at headquarters should ensure that all the programme activities are focussed on the objectives of the major programme - **Regional cooperation for development**, with the Executive Secretary as the direct programme manager. With time, decentralization had a backlash effect into the Secretariat and the activities of the MULPOCs, though based in the Cabinet Office of the Executive Secretary,

was delegated to a subprogramme, sometimes managed by someone junior in rank to most of the Directors of the MULPOCs.

48. Conflict of roles and responsibilities, though not expressed were inherent and inevitable. While it could be argued that the programme harmonization responsibility of the Commission lay with the policy and programme coordination office, this anomaly would cause more problems for the one in charge of that office.

49. Furthermore, burdened with the task of implementing his own work programme, the focal point of the MULPOC programme had, in addition, to bear the brunt of the liability. It was this programme manager's responsibility to ensure that their subprogrammes are in consonance with the overall programme thrust and tele-guide the trickle-down effect to the member States. This proved to be an uphill task.

50. The assignment of the MULPOCs to a subprogramme did not, therefore, help the situation. The MULPOCs in the process were, inevitably, caught up in the melee. Also, another uncomfortable feeling exists between the central subprogramme manager at ECA Headquarters and the MULPOCs whereby the Directors regard themselves as the personal representative of the Executive Secretary and that of the subprogramme manager in the Cabinet Office. This situation impinges on central management of MULPOC programmes. The programmes were not in symphony with programmed activities at headquarters. The assertion by the Review report that the MULPOCs should have given autonomy to use their discretion in the performance of a wide range of matters could be rightly argued that this was actually the case and that it was the management of this autonomy that gave rise to the misinterpretations referred to above.

51. To again complicate matters, the focal subprogramme at ECA Headquarters tends to treat the MULPOCs as a subregional office of the Division and its subprogramme. In addition this Division has taken on the role of coordinating other ECA-sponsored institutions in which it has no expertise and those that are regional and subregional economic integration specifics are not adequately integrated into its work programme.

52. It is arguable that there had been a "rather top-heavy functional relationship between ECA headquarters and the MULPOCs has considerably eroded and weakened the spirit behind the establishment of the MULPOCs." It has been the poor facilitation of the flow of devolution responsibilities and programme synergy between headquarters and the MULPOCs. As rightly put, the substantive Divisions of ECA secretariat do not appear to give full recognition to the MULPOCs in their day-to-day interaction with the member States or subregional institutions. This responsibility of coordination within the Secretariat lies with the focal programme at ECA.

(iii) Unsatisfactory programme coordination and management

53. A close examination of the narrative of the orientation of the regional programme does not highlight the participation or partnership with the subregional institutions. Hence, at first sight, it appears as though they will be implemented in isolation although there are many subregional institutions that have far more material resource capability and capacity than any of the MULPOCs. While this also reflects the defects in programming at headquarters failing to adequately take into account these subregional elements. As decentralized bodies of the Commission they should also have been playing the role of the subregional coordinators of ECA activities in the subregion.

54. An example of the 1996/1997 work programme¹⁰ will help illustrate the point. The whole programme presentation will be used to make the point clearer.

Subprogramme 2: Trade, regional economic cooperation and integration

55. The orientation of the subprogramme states that it will:

"This subprogramme will focus on promoting, regional cooperation and integration. In this context, particular emphasis will be placed on the implementation of the Abuja Treaty on the establishment of the African Economic Community which came into force in 1994 and whose first phase, lasting five years, is devoted to strengthening of subregional economic communities, has begun. This sub-

10_ / See Annex II.

programme will undertake measures to expand intra-regional trade, promote tourism, accelerate the process of monetary and financial integration, enhance trade efficiency, facilitate horizontal and vertical diversification of exports and help subregional and regional intergovernmental organizations to rationalize and harmonize their sectoral and inter-sub-regional sectoral development programmes. Further, it will strengthen the institutional and infrastructural capacities of member States as well as the trade negotiating and marketing management skills of their officials to enhance their competitiveness in the world economy."¹¹

56. As the focal programme for the MULPOCs at ECA Headquarters the narrative would have been less ambiguous in bringing in the in-house institutional mechanisms by opening up with a phrase such as, "Using the MULPOCs and the relevant ECA-sponsored institutions and in collaboration with relevant UN agencies, the subprogramme will assist member States" This immediately brings in the ECA institutional network to focus their programmes accordingly and throws the invitation for collaboration to the other sister agencies of the UN. This is important in playing the role of advocacy and assistance "on request."

Activities:

1. International cooperation

External relations

57. Again the narrative for external relations under international cooperation has the limitations arising from the subprogramme presentation when it is stated as follows:

"Liaison and collaboration with national, subregional and international institutions dealing with money, finance, trade, tourism, and investment issues, as well as subregional and regional organizations and associations dealing with regional cooperation and integration."¹²

58. This statement is followed by programme activities that are easily interpreted as if ECA the authority and territory to directly implement

11_/ Approved programme of work for 1996/1997, p. 13, para. 15A.28.

12_/ 1996/1997 work programme document, p. 14, para. 15A.28,1.

interpreted as if ECA the authority and territory to directly implement programmes at subregional and/or country level without going through governments. This places the Commission out of the realms of advocacy into that of executing authority at those levels.

Parliamentary services

59. The reports for the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Trade and Regional Cooperation and Integration can be classified as follows:

Table 1: Central programme activities

Regional (ECO/TDFD)s
1. Trade liberalization within the context of the African Economic Community: proposals for rationalization, harmonization and implementation of existing programmes.
2. Intra-African trade within the context of the emerging international trading system: problems and prospects.
3. River and Lake Basin development schemes as vehicles for regional cooperation and integration in Africa.
4. Enhancing South-South trade, finance and investment: opportunities and prospects.
5. Diversification of Africa's trade: prospects of trade between Africa and the "economies in transition" of Eastern Europe.
6. Marketing commodities: the issue of price and export income stabilization for the African countries.
7. UNCTAD IX and World Tourism Organization (WTO): proposed platform for Africa's participation in the negotiations.
8 Accelerating the process of monetary and financial integration in Africa at the subregional and regional levels: proposals for action.
9. Implications of financial sector liberalization on monetary and financial cooperation within the context of the African Economic Community.
10. The promotion of intra-African Tourism.
11. Tourism development.
12. Five reports to be submitted to the MULPOC policy organs on: Tourism and African integration with specific focus on each subregion concerned.

60. It is evident that there is very little which clearly reflects the umbilical link between the programmes of Headquarters and those of the MULPOCs. At first sight it could be said that there is participation of the other substantive programmes, namely, POP.D, SERPD and TCTD. However, it is important to be sure that

Table 2: Variation of programme activity focus in the MULPOCs: Publications¹³

Programmed activity	Publications
Human & Institutional building	RP: Directory of ECA-sponsored Institutions. NP: Building human, institutional and infrastructural capacities for regional economic integration: review of regional support programmes.
Monetary, financial & trade policies.	RP: Flash on trade opportunities. RP: African Trade Bulletin. NP: Trade development in the context of the current economic reforms. NP: Harmonization of subregional clearing houses. NP: Harmonization of national macro-economic policy frameworks including relevant monetary and fiscal variables. NP: Conditions for free capital movements within the subregional groupings.
Harmonization & rationalization of economic integration programmes	RP: African Tourism. RP: Directory of vocational training facilities for tourism professionals in Africa. NP: Strengthening subregional economic communities: a critical review of sectoral programmes and proposals for action. NP: The development of African tourism with a view to African integration. NP: Tourism consumption and the natural and cultural environments in Africa. NP: Tourism marketing and the possibility of establishing Pan African tourism information networks.

61. The reports and publications of the central subprogramme are focused on monetary and financial issues, trade and tourism as the driving forces for regional integration. While this may be the case, it would have been useful to have an indication of the participation of both the substantive programme at ECA and the subregional, MULPOC inputs. These are issues which have a strong subregional focus and this element must be evident in the work of the central mechanism.

62. Ideally, ECO, as the focal Subprogramme for the MULPOCs, should have

¹³/ RP = Recurrent Publication; NP = Non-recurrent Publication.

62. Ideally, ECO, as the focal Subprogramme for the MULPOCs, should have developed a programme, apart from the trade and regional economic cooperation and integration dimensions of the major programme of the Commission, provide an integrated framework programme from which a regional MULPOC programme would then be formulated. This should then form the basis for subregional specifications since the problems are common but approaches to solutions differ according to the subregion and the socio-cultural milieu. By subregionalizing issues, the "cooperation and integration" concept is not facilitated. The Table that follows helps to explain the case.

Table 3: Substantive servicing of meetings

ECO	MULPOCs
1. Conference of African Ministers responsible for Trade and Regional Cooperation and Integration and its Committee of Experts (1996,1997).	
2. Conference of African Ministers of Trade, Regional cooperation and integration, preparatory to UNCTAD IX and WTO negotiations (1996)	
3. Seventh Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance and its Intergovernmental Group of Experts Preparatory Meeting	
	Five meetings of intergovernmental committee of experts of UNECA regional offices (one in each subregion) ¹⁴

63. As it will be observed, many of the key common regional issues of the nexus have been programmed selectively. This is difficult to explain. All of the areas de-emphasized are issues that constitute a strong common denominator for regional integration. They are:

- (a) **water resources** which is a programmed activity only in one MULPOC;
- (b) **"river and lake basin development schemes as vehicles for regional cooperation and integration in Africa"** is a regional programme activity which is not reflected in the MULPOC programmes; All the MULPOCs are involved in

¹⁴/ No theme identified. It would have been ideal if they were subregional preparatory meeting for the various regional Conferences being serviced directly by Headquarters.

- (c) women;
- (d) environmental management; and
- (e) population.

64. A striking omission, which affected the programme synergy with those of the subregional organizations, is the sustainable development thrust which, as earlier pointed out, has become the nucleus of development action at the subregional and national levels. There is a serious attempt at using the Rio sustainable development drive as a framework of programming, no matter the cycle they follow. Common methodologies are being developed, the most important of which is that of deriving national sustainable development indicators. Ministries responsible for the Environment are the driving forces behind this with the assistance of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the Regional Commissions.

(iv) Unimplementable recommendations of previous evaluation exercise¹⁵

65. The 1988 review exercise, the report of which was discussed by the ECA Conference of Ministers in 1990, had a comprehensive and far reaching terms of reference which could be summed up as, to:

- (a) review the structure, organization and operations of the MULPOCs;
- (b) recommend whether they should be continued, or whether their mandate, structures and numbers be reorganized; and
- (c) work out the resource implications of its recommendations.

66. The review covered, in considerable detail, the institutional evolution of the MULPOCs, their multinational programming functions, management. It then recommended their reorganization giving the human and financial resource implications as well as the strategy for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. However, it was not clear on a number of critical issues affecting the harmonization of actions at ECA Headquarters, between Headquarters and the MULPOCs, down to the national level.

*** Unclear recommendations on distribution of roles and responsibilities**

67. The report highlighted the aching areas of the MULPOCs as operational arms

¹⁵/ See documents E/ECA/CM.16/13 and E/ECA/CM.17/11 of 19 March 1990 and February 1991 respectively.

of ECA. It unearthed the unclear distribution of roles and responsibilities with ECA and as a vehicle of ECA programmes and profile to the subregion and member States. It also underscored the disenchantment of member States with the MULPOCs in pointing out that:

"It is important to stress that there is a strong feeling in some quarters that the MULPOC meetings are generally striking for what appears to be a "ritual" repetition of account of previous proceedings, charting not new perspectives. All this tends to suggest that the MULPOC policy organ has become irrelevant as a decision-making machinery. Despite this apparent disillusionment, the member States in all the five subregions visited by the Review Team, strongly argued in favour of maintaining closer and more effective working relations with the MULPOCs. They also stressed the need for greater decentralization of ECA, with the necessary delegation of authority and adequate resources to enable them respond especially to ad hoc requests of member States."¹⁶

68. While this might be an overstatement, it points to the fact that the MULPOCs, with all the good intentions, were not provided with the resource to respond to the demands of being a subregional ECA secretariat of IGOs and its member States. In other Regional Commissions outside Africa, government experts participate in the preparation of technical documents, particularly those of a multinational nature. This should have been alluded to as a motivation for African country to begin to do the same, with the MULPOC playing the coordinating role.

69. As regards the policy organs, thought was not given, ab initio, to coordination and rationalization of the MULPOC policy organs as a decision-making machinery with those of the major IGOs. The Association of West African IGOs with the West Africa MULPOC had initiatives which were moving in this direction.

70. The fact that, in the final analysis, they "strongly argued in favour of maintaining closer and more effective working relations with the MULPOCs (and) also stressed the need for greater decentralization of ECA, with the necessary delegation of authority and adequate resources" throws the scales of the balance in favour of the MULPOCs. It again underscores the issue of the dichotomy of

16_/ Document E/ECA/CM.16/13, op. cit. para. 64. Emphasis by author.

programmes and "adequate resource" for them and "necessary delegation of authority" for an adequately high representational profile.

*** Other crucial issues not addressed**

71. The review identified some of the most apparent issues. It did not address the underlying problem of operationalizing the MULPOC concept. It was more skewed to the physical structures and geographical distribution than the functioning of a system, the ECA-MULPOC system.

72. The impression is given that some of the MULPOCs were too large for the structure to manage. This is again arguable. No matter the size of a mechanism, if the concept and its management are not consistent with each other, it will not work as conceived. The suggestion for regrouping takes on more crucial dilemmas by proposing geophysical structure not again based on what may be referred to as a systems approach.

73. It is true that "they were made due to the deepening socio-economic crisis in the continent" but that was only one of the reasons. The major one was to get ECA presence to the national level to be able to contribute in mitigating the crisis. Crisis or not, to justify its *raison d'être*, the Commission had to meet these expectations.

74. The recommendations of the review exercise left those who were to take the decision for the reform or revitalization of the MULPOCs in a quandary. The initial grouping of the countries of the MULPOCs followed socio-economic and geographical affiliations, all considered at once. This might have also been driven by the fact of political and environmental considerations. The suggestion to redistribute the countries into six subregions raised the dilemma of breaking up some of the economic groupings. ECOWAS would be assisted by two MULPOCs, PTA now COMESA also by two. The implications of this would be more headaches for ECA that it tried to cure.

75. The conclusions also raise the point that one of the misunderstandings of the MULPOCs was in its name and that it was not usually immediately evident that it was

an ECA outfit but just another IGO, though it fails to say whose IGO. While a name is useful, how well a commodity is marketed will give it its name and association. In other words, if the ECA message was being strongly delivered by MULPOCs and the "trickle-down" impact highly visible and felt at the national level the name and its association would have been without doubt. The concept and capabilities of the institution were not well marketed by word and deed.

76. On the programme side, the proposal to convert the MULPOCs into ECA Subregional Technical Assistance Programmes (ECA-STAPs) also left a lot of room for argument. The programme synergy and representational functions, which is the fulcrum of the MULPOC concept, were not demonstrated in these ECA-STAPs, in fact, they are not demonstrable within the framework.

77. To make the matter more complicated, the institutional framework of the ECA-STAPs sets out a mechanism wherein the only contact of the MULPOCs with the ECA was to be at the ECA Conference of Ministers. It is suggested that:

"The ECA-STAPs, to be more operational and effective, would have the institutional framework as described in figure 2. This would work as follows:

(a) The ECA-STAPs, operating as technical assistance arms of ECA at the subregional level, in coordination with secretariats of major IGOs, would identify, design and prepare multisectoral programmes and projects based on the priorities approved by the **summits of Heads of State and Government of the IGOs;**

(b) The project and programme reports and studies would, where appropriate, be prepared jointly by the ECA-STAPs and the secretariats of IGOs and would simultaneously be **submitted for consideration by the ECA Conference of Ministers** and the Council of Ministers of IGOs;

(c) **The ECA-STAPs would directly report to the ECA Conference of Ministers** taking into account the decisions, proposals and feedback from IGOs. In the same way, the IGOs would continue to submit their reports directly to their respective legislative organs, having duly taken account of the decisions of the ECA Conference of Ministers through ECA-STAPs."¹⁷

78. A number of crucial issues arising from the above were not addressed by this recommendation. Not having addressed the representational issue, the recommendation

¹⁷/ Document E/ECA/CM.16/13, op. cit. para. 89. Emphasis by author.

does not say how the MULPOCs were to have access to the summits of Heads of State and Government of the IGOs. They were to submit projects for consideration by the ECA Conference of Ministers and the ECA-STAPs would be reporting directly to the ECA Conference of Ministers. This process continued through to UN/ECOSOC. The mechanisms and procedures of the supervision of the activities of the MULPOCs by ECA were apparently shelved and a certain degree of seeming irrelevance attributed to ECA.

79. What has preceded is clear that for the MULPOCs to be a vital instrument for the outreach approach outlined in the new direction of ECA, there is a need for reviewing their institutional structure and programming processes. Although their relevance is even greater today than at their inception, the evolution of social and economic circumstances in member States, the present regional institutions, advances in technology and the international environment, all demand a review to enhance the strengths and address the weaknesses of the MULPOCs.

III: THE WEST AFRICAN MULPOC.

"In the context of the West African subregional situation, an additional prerequisite for the achievement of the quantitative and qualitative levels of development, depends on economic cooperation and integration given the dearth of technology, the prevalence of small economies of the individual States, the growth of population outstripping production and the absence of a common monetary policy.

It is difficult to draw a line as to the demarcation of what needs to be done first, since all the issues are interrelated and impinge upon one another. ... Activities in the critical areas of the environment, desertification, rural development, commodity trade and women in development affect all the sectors and cut across all frontiers."¹⁸

A: Special characteristics

80. The West African MULPOC is based in Niamey, Republic of Niger and has a membership of sixteen countries. They are Benin, Cap Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mali Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. It is the only subregion that brings together three powerful colonial heritages, namely, the English, French and Portuguese.

(1) Geography and people

81. Stretching from the south fringes of the Sahara desert to the Atlantic Ocean along the Gulf of Guinea to Biafra and from the eastern shores of the Atlantic from Senegal to Lake Chad, it is influenced by geographical conditions ranging from equatorial rain forests to a hot desert belt. Of the five MULPOCs it is the only one to have such a variety of ecological condition.

82. The member States can be categories, in whole or part, on these geographical lines into the geo-environmental categories indicated below.

18/ Document ECA/MIE/NIA/93/XIII/19, "Provisional work programme of Niamey-MULPOC for the Biennium 1994-1995 (December, 1992), pp. 2-3.

Table 4: Geo-environmental categories of West African MULPOC countries

Zone	Countries	Characteristics
1. Arid (desert)	Mauritania, Mali, Niger.	Hot desert conditions where rain-fed economic activities are seldom and agriculture only in the oasis.
2. Semi-arid	Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.	Rain-fed economic activities are possible for very limited periods of the year; prone to desertification but irrigated agriculture commonly practiced and nomadism and transhumance a way of life.
3. Tropical savanna and woodlands	Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria and Togo.	Rain-fed economic activities for most of the year, prone to desertification & deforestation; irrigated agriculture commonly practiced to support all year crop production reduced nomadism and transhumance; forest products, including timber.
4. Equatorial zone.	Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.	Rain-fed economic activities all year round; plantation agriculture; all year crop production; prone to deforestation and incipient desertification; forest products, including timber.

83. Taking its springs from the Fouta Jallon Mountains in Guinea, the River Niger, and the tributaries that join it down stream, dominate the drainage system of the subregion. Along it there are many River Niger basin inter-country management authorities/agreements. Across the River Niger is the Kainji Dam in Nigeria which supplies hydroelectricity to that country and its close neighbours. The other significant river system is the Volta in Ghana across which is the Akosombo Dam, the energy life-wire of that country's industrial and domestic hydroelectric energy and that of its neighbour, Togo.

84. The River Gambia is also the country's major inland transport system and for which there is the Organization for the Development of the River Gambia (OMVG). Established in 1978, the OMVG has a membership of four countries, namely, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Senegal and meets at the level of Head of State. It has carried out a series of topographic and hydrological studies, socio-economic and environmental surveys/studies of different aspects of the development of the River Basin, out of which maps have been made.

85. The River Senegal, around which is the Organization for the Development of the River Senegal (OMVS), also offers opportunities for promoting intra-country cooperation which is essential for subregional integration. OMVS was established in 1972 with a membership of Mali, Mauritania and Senegal and also meets at the level of Heads of State. Its activities are focused on infrastructure development for hydroelectric energy (Diama and Manantali dams), transportation and irrigation programmes.

86. The subregion has a very wide variety of populations and cultures ranging from the sedentary peoples of the forest and savannah zones to the highly mobile livestock raising populations of the semi-arid and arid belts. Persistent droughts and desertification arising from population pressures on the productive capacities of the natural environment, have resulted in increasing number of displaced populations as environmental refugees in addition to economic and conflict refugees.

(ii) Framework of the economies

87. The mainstay of all the economies is agriculture related and is thereby vulnerable to adverse natural environmental conditions such as droughts. Drought and human activity-imposed desertification have been categorized as one of the subregion's disasters. Petroleum is found in large quantities in Nigeria and there are prospects for some of the countries of the subregion. Gold, diamond, and other precious and strategic minerals are found in some of the countries such as Ghana and Sierra Leone. Processing and manufacturing are being promoted in all the countries but the export of primary raw materials, including timber, for foreign exchange earnings is still the dominant of domestic and international trade.

88. The transport and communications infrastructure of the subregion is still underdeveloped. Internal and intra-national road networks are not adequately developed and the railway network is also poor. The telecommunications network is also under increasing pressure as it does not measure up to the advanced technologies of the present age thereby reducing its capacity for global interaction and interdependence for development.

B: The West African MULPOC and its mandates¹⁹

89. The West African MULPOC was inaugurated at its Headquarters in Niamey, Republic of Niger at its first meeting of the MULPOC Council of Ministers. This was a year after its mandates were assigned by the ECA Conference of Ministers by its resolution 311/XIII of March 1977, adopted in Kinshasa, Zaire. These mandate were for the MULPOC to:

- (a) promote subregional economic cooperation by implementing integration-oriented multinational projects;
- (b) provide assistance to member countries and/or to their intergovernmental organizations with a view to identifying possible avenues of cooperation;
- (c) secure the commitment of the Governments concerned to the implementation of identified projects;
- (d) undertake prefeasibility and feasibility studies on identified projects;
- (e) assist Government and/or IGOs in implementing such projects; and
- (f) facilitate the achievement of collective self-sufficiency at the subregional level.

90. To achieve such collective self-sufficiency, within the context of the characteristics of the subregion with a wide geographical spread and diversity of its member States and high number of IGOs operating within it, the MULPOC was to:

- (a) assist the IGOs by coordinating and harmonizing their work programmes as well as providing technical backstopping and identifying their training needs;
- (b) mobilize human and financial resources from outside the subregion to implement training programmes and development projects for countries and IGOs; and
- (c) serve as a forum for the exchange of substantive information and experiences among IGOs.

(a) Subregional integration mechanisms and achievements

91. The West African subregion present another unique characteristic which should be used as a spring board to the development of subregional multinational programmes around the activities of the nexus. It is the only subregion with an extremely wide spectrum of intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions. It is also a subregion with two very strong colonial cultures integrated into the local ways of life which provide a rich basis for dialogue and alternatives in the rationalization of programmes and institutions.

¹⁹/ See document NIA/200/89/MULPOC of April 1989, op. cit.

92. Two categories of intergovernmental organization and NGOs exist, those grouping mainly English speaking countries on the one side and those that are French speaking countries on the other. Many of them are problems specific and bring together three to five countries which meet at the highest policy level. One of the greatest challenges of the West African MULPOC is, therefore, to tap from the strengths of this duality and foster subregional integration.

93. Most of the IGOs cover more than one area of activity the majority of which are environment related. However, the programme areas that most of them deal with are agriculture, manpower development, natural resources, trade and economic integration, transport and communications.

94. In any case, from the inception of the West African MULPOC, its IGO community of nearly forty members, was very active in the MULPOC programme of work. In 1985 the Association of West African IGOs was established and, within it, six sectoral committees on agriculture and livestock, industrial development, trade and finance, transport coordination, energy and training as well as information. Through these sectoral committees the IGOs were identifying and implementing joint multinational projects with the assistance of the MULPOC.

95. Also in 1988 at its Tenth Session, the Council of Ministers endorsed a reinforcement of the IGOs aspect of the MULPOC's mandate requiring that it be consolidated and strengthened so that the MULPOC could become the coordinator of inter-IGO programme and projects and, information wise, operate an effective data bank of projects initiated by each of the IGOs in order to avoid duplication of effort and wastage of scarce resources. In February 1989 the Association allocated a budget of \$US136,000 to finance, through the MULPOC, the rationalization of its activities. These were important landmarks to subregional integration with the MULPOC in the driver's seat.

96. At the time of its establishment and during the decade that followed, the MULPOC could be said to have been fulfilling its mission by intensifying subregional economic cooperation through assistance with the identification and implementation of multinational economic integration projects and programmes. It also developed and strengthened cooperation among the IGO community by coordinating

their programmes.

(b) Institutional problems and consequent poor performance of the Niamey MULPOC

97. As rightly pointed out elsewhere, the qualitative assessment of the MULPOC's performance cannot be confined to the number of its studies and publications, seminars or meetings. It must be expressed in terms of the effective impact of such activities on the socio-economic development of the countries of the subregion, individually and collectively. This the area in which the achievement of the MULPOC had fallen short of the expectations as set at its inauguration.

98. Three main reasons can be identified for the problems that the MULPOC has had. These problems have resulted in poor performance in a seemingly enabling environment, namely, inadequate operational resources, poor institutional backstopping and deteriorating relations with member States and IGOs.

(1) Inadequate operational resources

99. By implication the mandate of the MULPOC being cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary, the required a team, in mix and numbers, made up of manpower expertise that would also respond to these requirements. The leader of the team, the Director of the MULPOC must also be someone with the required managerial qualities and experience. Manpower deficiencies in quality and numbers have limited the ability of the MULPOC to keep up with the expectations.

100. Financial resources and documentation have been the other areas of inadequacies. Limitations in budget appropriations for implementing the work programme have been worsening with the year and the work of the few experts has been limited to desk work. Documentation has been scant, even of the periodicals that cover and provide information on member States on a regular basis are not subscribed to by the MULPOC.

(ii) Poor programming and institutional backstopping

101. The MULPOC is the operational arm and decentralized organ of the Commission at the subregional level and fully represents ECA as such. Its work programme should reflect subregional priorities and be integrated into that of ECA. In this way, the implementation of the work programme and institutional profile depend on the support and working relations with ECA.

*** Poor programming and programme backstopping**

102. In an attempt to develop a holistic programme thinking and formulation, programme areas were defined according to themes beginning with the 1992/1993 biennium. This made it that, while an activity may be found under one substantive Division, they were reported as part of another one. This explains the dominance of tourism in the activities of the MULPOC focal subprogramme for regional economic cooperation and by default, trade development and finance.

Table 5: Inconsistency of the Niamey-MULPOC activities with those of ECO/TDFD

Regional (ECO)	W.A.MULPOC
1. Trade liberalization within the context of the African Economic Community: proposals for rationalization, harmonization and implementation of existing programmes. (TRADE)	N. A.
2. Intra-African trade within the context of the emerging international trading system: problems and prospects. (TRADE)	N. A.
3. River and Lake Basin development schemes as vehicles for regional cooperation and integration in Africa. (REG.COOP)	N. A.
4. Enhancing South-South trade, finance and investment: opportunities and prospects. (TRADE)	N. A.
5. Diversification of Africa's trade: prospects of trade between Africa and the "economies in transition" of Eastern Europe. (TRADE)	Potential and conditions for export diversification in West Africa

Table 5: continued

Regional (ECO)	W.A. MULPOC
6. Marketing commodities: the issue of price and export income stabilization for the African countries.	N. A.
7. UNCTAD IX and World Tourism Organization (WTO): proposed platform for Africa's participation in the negotiations	N. A.
8 Accelerating the process of monetary and financial integration in Africa at the subregional and regional levels: proposals for action.	N. A.
9. Implications of financial sector liberalization on monetary and financial cooperation within the context of the African Economic Community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Prospects for monetary and financial cooperation in West Africa. * Privatization and productivity in industrial sector in West Africa. * Review of trade liberalization programmes in West Africa.
10. The promotion of intra-African Tourism.	
11. Tourism development.	
12. Five reports to MULPOC policy organs on: Tourism and African integration with specific focus on each subregion concerned. (TOURISM)	Tourism and African integration with specific focus on each subregion concerned.

Table 6: Substantive servicing: unclear linkages of major regional meetings with those of the MULPOCs

ECO	Niamey-MULPOC
1. Conference of African Ministers responsible for Trade and Regional Cooperation and Integration and its Committee of Experts (1996,1997).	MULPOCs inputs not indicated.
2. Conference of African Ministers of Trade, Regional cooperation and integration, preparatory to UNCTAD IX and WTO negotiations (1996).	- ditto -
3. Seventh Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance and its Intergovernmental Group of Experts Preparatory Meeting.	- ditto -
	Five meetings of intergovernmental committee of experts (one in each subregion) ²⁰

20/ No theme identified. It would have been ideal if they were subregional preparatory meeting for the various regional Conferences being serviced directly by Headquarters.

Table 7: Major sector priorities not clear in Niamey MULPOCs programme, 1996/1997

Programmed activity	West
Socio-economic conditions.	Assessment of Socio-economic conditions in West Africa.
Monetary & financial policies	Prospects for monetary and financial cooperation in West Africa
Harm'zation & ration'ation of economic integration programmes	N. A.
Water resources	N. A.
Food security.	Financing the implementation of projects identified within the framework of the regional convention on fishery cooperation among African countries bordering the Atlantic Ocean.
Industry related.	Mid-term evaluation of the Second Industrial Development Decade for West Africa subregion.
Lake and river related.	N. A.
Transit transport corridors, etc.	N. A.
Women	N. A.
Environmental management.	N. A.
Population	Impact of recent population movements on the economies of the MANU River Union (MRU) countries.

Table 8: Programme activity focus in the MULPOCs, 1996/1997: Publications²¹

Programmed activity	West
Monetary, financial & trade policies.	N. A.
Harmonization & rationalization of economic integration programmes	RP:- Directory of West African IGOs.
Food security.	NP:- Evaluation and harmonization of food security programmes with a view to improving their implementation. NP:- Modernization and expansion of the agro-industrial sector in West Africa. NP:- Impact of the Uruguay Round Agreement on West Africa's trade in food production with particular emphasis on tropical beverages (coffee, tea) and cereals.
Industry related.	NP:- Impact of exchange rates fluctuations on the manufacturing sector in West Africa.
Women	NP:- Role of women in informal trade in West Africa.
Environmental management.	NP:- Strengthening of institutional framework in the implementation of the ECOWAS master plan for combatting desertification and for the conservation of natural resources in West Africa.

Table 9: Common areas of environment-sustainable development priorities in West Africa MULPOC

Zone	Countries	Characteristics	Sustainable development issues
1. Arid (desert)	Mauritania, Mali, Niger.	Hot desert conditions where rain-fed economic activities are seldom and agriculture only in the oasis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Food security; * Combating desertification and related environmental degradation; * pollution control and urban waste management
2. Semi arid	Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.	Rain-fed economic activities are possible for very limited periods of the year; prone to desertification but irrigated agriculture commonly practiced and nomadism and transhumance a way of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Food security; * Combating desertification and related environmental degradation. * pollution control and urban waste management
3. Tropical savanna and woodlands	Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria and Togo.	Rain-fed economic activities for most of the year, prone to desertification & deforestation; irrigated agriculture commonly practiced to support all year crop production reduced nomadism and transhumance; forest products, including timber.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Food security; * Mitigating the impact of severe droughts * Combating desertification and related environmental degradation * Deforestation and related environmental degradation; * pollution control and urban waste management
4. Equatorial zone.	Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.	Rain-fed economic activities all year round; plantation agriculture; all year crop production; prone to deforestation and incipient desertification; forest products, including timber.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Food security; * Deforestation and related environmental degradation; * pollution control and urban waste management.

(c) Poor harmonization of MULPOC programmes with the priorities of IGOs and member States

103. As earlier pointed out, the mainstay of all the economies is agriculture related and is thereby vulnerable to adverse natural environmental changes such as droughts. Drought and desertification have been categorized as one of the subregion's disasters. Development management will, therefore, be addressing the basic problem of how to use the natural environment sustainably in order to accelerate economic growth and development. This must be reflected in the activities of the MULPOC (see Table 9).

104. Multinational economic cooperation and integration are based on different levels of comparative advantage in production transformation capacity driven by complementary demand and supply forces. In Africa this is driven by natural and environmental resource, their exploitation and use as well as the interdependence that this generates. It is not an absence of the knowledge of the priorities but in the drive to invest in the comparative advantage concept for interdependence in order to build the capacity to supply and that for satisfying the demand.

105. Experience in the subregion is evident of the situation of mutual needs and common problems in those critical natural and environmental resource areas that drive sustainable development. There is very high similarity of country programmes and implementation structures. The MULPOC programmes must go for these areas and the economic cooperation and integration mechanisms and infrastructure that are in place, promoted accordingly.

106. As can be seen, there is very little that clearly reflects that umbilical link between the programmes of Headquarters and those of the MULPOCs. The absence of programme flow from ECA headquarters through the MULPOC to member States creates problems of coordination and harmonization. Acting as the advocator between ECA and member States this poses a serious problem at the IGO and national levels.

107. The evaluation report referred earlier, makes reference to the subregional specificities which gave the room for independent programme development. This does not

seem to have helped the activity synergy as will be seen from what follows.

*** The Environment and development component of the West African MULPOC**

108. The environmental problems of the West African MULPOC are the same as all the other regions of sub-Saharan Africa - degradation of ecosystems arising from pressure caused mainly by poverty and the consequent inability to afford alternatives. Drought, desertification, pollution, inadequate environmental awareness at the policy level, particularly outside ecosystem management, waste management, particularly urban wastes are all recurrent everywhere in the region.

109. As is the case with the other MULPOCs, there is no environment activity in the 1996/1997 work programme for the West Africa MULPOC as it is believed.²² Yet, the Committee of Experts of the MULPOC had identified at its annual meeting in March 1995, among the five major challenges to tackle at the dawn of the 21st century, the **implementation of Agenda 21 which underlines global environmental development**, the majority of the IGOs with which the MULPOC is supposed to interact are very strongly environment based.

*** Poor institutional backstopping**

110. A problem which unfortunately eludes the literature, particularly the evaluation report is that of representational authority. ECA Headquarters has been silent on this and has created a rather uneasy relationship between the Directors of the MULPOCs and the focal subprogramme manager at ECA which has inevitably spilt into programme performance. If the Directors of the MULPOCs are to play the representational role, being of the same programme managerial rank, they must have direct access to the Executive Secretary and not through another programme manager.

²²/ See document No. ECA/MIE/NIA/XIV/95/19, Final report of the Fourteenth meeting of the Committee of Experts, p. 3, para. 12.

(iii) Deteriorating relations with member States and IGOs.

111. An aspect of the West African MULPOC which also places it in a unique situation to promote subregional and regional integration is that some groupings include countries in the Central African MULPOC making the possibility of inter-MULPOC joint programming a strong feasibility. This having been said, the multiplicity of IGOs, all of them with financial contributions has limited the survival of many of them which have had to liquidate. Two powerful ones still stand out, namely ECOWAS for the subregional group and CILSS as the forefront IGO on environment and related issues.

112. As earlier mentioned, the IGOs of the West African MULPOC established in 1985 the Association of West African IGOs which, with the assistance of the MULPOC, was identifying and implementing joint multinational projects. This was done in order to avoid duplication of effort and wastage of scarce resources. To demonstrate the importance they attached to the role of the MULPOC, it even allocated a budget, through the MULPOC, for the coordination and rationalization of its activities.

113. Unfortunately due the problems that have plagued the functioning of the MULPOC and consequently its inability to sustain those activities, the Association has been abandoned. This has sent the MULPOC and ECA out of sight and, unless remedial actions are taken, out of mind.

114. In conclusion, there is no environment programme orientation in the activities of the West Africa MULPOC. However, it has been undertaking activities of the nexus, namely, in food security and water resources management. In view of the situation where it is dealing with many IGOs and NGOs, the majority of which are deeply involved in the implementation of Agenda 21 and other sustainable development activities, the MULPOC's marginalization by them seems understandable. The MULPOC does not have the capacity to be involved directly in programme execution. Capacity building in development information and database management is a major gap identified by the IGOs and NGOs.

IV: THE ROAD AHEAD:

THE RENEWED ECA AND STRENGTHENED MULPOC SYSTEM

"Building on the positive trends means having a vision of where Africa is headed, being aware of changes: the crucial nexus of food security, population and the environment, the explosion of world trade, and the information revolution, through which Africa can leapfrog ahead, or be pushed aside. Taking these as challenges and opportunities, Africa can achieve a willed future in the span of one generation which has largely eliminated absolute poverty. And the Economic Commission for Africa will help African governments to adopt the right policies to seize these opportunities."²³

"Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to take the necessary steps to strengthen the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres ... and to endow them with sufficient administrative autonomy as appropriate to enable them operate effectively;

Further requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to ensure that the Centres play their role more effectively as centres of excellence for the exchange of experiences and information and provision of support for the implementation of regional economic integration" *ECA Conference of Minister resolution 810(XXXI), 8 May 1996.*

115. A key element of the new strategic directions is to increase interactions with member States to espouse its ideas to help define and influence policy to ensure ECA's participation in shaping Africa's development. This will be done by enhancing the "quality of interaction with senior policy makers in government and the private sector." The MULPOCs, backed by advisory services, provide the beaten path for this. To increase the impact of that rekindling of the MULPOC concept, the activities of the nexus, with the challenges of the environment, should provide the needed impetus for the performance of the five major strategic programme direction areas.

23_/E/ECA/CM.22/2, p. 1

A: For the strengthened MULPOCs:

116. To promote ECA's visibility at the subregional and national levels, with the MULPOCs being able to respond more rapidly to the needs of various subregional organizations and member States, and overcoming the perception of remoteness at the country level, a new paradigm of structural interaction must be worked out. This will involve the ECA-MULPOC-Subregion-member State and "same path return process" in programme action.

117. In this "same path return process," the MULPOCs are central. Apart from the mandatory support from ECA, the MULPOCs should build on the capacities of the ECA-sponsored institutions located in their subregion irrespective of their scope of activities - regional or subregional. The following areas for sustaining synergy, therefore, need attention, namely, between:

- (a) ECA/partners (UN and non-UN) and the MULPOCs, whereby there will be full participation of all concerned at the interagency level with the MULPOCs in devolving subregional programmes from the common denominator regional programme for monitoring and evaluation at ECA;

- (b) MULPOCs and ECA-sponsored institutions in identifying areas of complementary and joint activities with subregional IGOs;

- (c) MULPOCs and ECA-sponsored institutions/IGOs, giving the MULPOCs and the ECA-sponsored institutions the opportunity to work together on one side in providing mutual assistance to IGOs; and

- (d) MULPOCs and ECA-sponsored institutions/IGOs/member States, activating the critical trickle down effects from MULPOCs, ECA-sponsored institutions and subregional IGOs to member States.

118. Schematically, the MULPOCs were supposed to function as indicated below for its intended dynamism to be felt.

Table: 10: A MULPOCs synergy within a revitalized ECA system.

Function	ECA, a regional UN setting	IGO and NGO regional setting
LEVEL I: Regional Policy analysis and decision making framework.	ECA HEADQUARTERS (Development of regional programmes in collaboration with relevant UN agencies - UNEP, FAO, UNFPA, HABITAT) Regional data base	Regional IGOs and NGOs (OAU, AMCEN, NGOs) Coordination and harmonization of activities with ECA.
LEVEL II: Subregional * Data collection from national institutions, IGOs and maintenance of a subregional database; * Monitoring and evaluation; * Joint reports to subregional IGO legislative bodies.	The MULPOCs (with ECA-sponsored institutions located in the subregion) * Adaptation of ECA programmes with UN agencies, promoting subregional cooperation. * Developing institutional links with IGOs and NGOs. - Subregional database -	Subregional - IGOs and NGOs * Coordination and harmonization with the MULPOCs in the relevant areas of priority. * Regularly place joint reports on the agenda of regular meetings.
LEVEL III: National (trickle-down impact) Assistance for developing and strengthening national data and information systems, monitoring and evaluation, joint UN system/subregional IGOs and NGOs to the relevant national instances.	ECA National focal points Minister responsible for Social and Economic Development and Planning, Minister/Commissions/Committee for sustainable development/Agenda 21. MULPOC/national database	Government Ministries and national IGO/NGO focal points. Capacity building for developing and strengthening national data and information systems, monitoring and evaluation - with ECA/MULPOCs and partners.

119. The flow of actions under this institution interaction paradigm suggests three levels of action that should, at all times, be under control by the central programme manager, ECA Headquarters. A disfunction of one of the links, it is being postulated will cause a breakdown and hamper deliver and impact.

(a) Level I: ECA/partners (UN and non-UN) and the MULPOCs;

120. The first level, **LEVEL I**, is the regional. This level provides the policy analysis and decision making framework regarding the regional and subregional programme formulation and implementation as well as enabling the "trickle-down" effect of programmes to the national level. This is where the success or failure of the functioning in the paradigm lies.

121. The programme manager at **ECA Headquarters**, in close consultation, indeed participation of the relevant substantive subprogrammes, is responsible for the development of regional programmes that should be adapted at the subregional level. The programmes should then be formulated in a manner that will lend themselves to a common monitoring and evaluation mechanism. In other words, the evaluation of the level of performance of the central coordination functions of the regional programme must include and depend on the level of effectiveness of the subregional components. The evaluation cannot be reliable if the subregional activities. The subregional offices should not, therefore, be left to develop and implement their activities in semi-isolation.

122. Furthermore, at the regional level joint programming, harmonization and coordination should be carried out with partners and the other lead UN agencies such as UNEP for environment, FAO for food and agriculture related issues, UNFPA for population matters, HABITAT for human settlements aspects, UNIDO for the industrial development aspects and UNCTAD for the trade related ones. The purpose will be to ensure complementarity and use of comparative advantages down to the national level where ECA needs that close partnership with the others in order to ensure the effectiveness of the "trickle-down" impacts of its programmes.

123. To further facilitate interactions from this regional level downwards, the role of the relevant regional intergovernmental organizations need to be acknowledged and used. They too have their networks that are funded by member States, directly addressing issues of immediate subregional priority as they impinge on national development.

124. In view of the importance of a reliable regional information system, a **Regional integrated database** is indispensable. Statistics are not enough. A development problem diagnostic database should be aimed at.

(ii) Level II: MULPOCs, ECA-sponsored institutions and IGOs

125. The next level, **LEVEL II**, is at the subregions where most of the action should be. To provide the basis for regional policy and decision making at headquarters, this level should be active in:

- (a) data collection from subregional IGOs, NGOs, women's associations and community-based organizations (CBOs) and national institutions, IGOs and maintenance of a subregional database;
- (b) adaptation of ECA programmes with UN agencies, promoting subregional cooperation;
- (c) developing institutional links with IGOs and NGOs;
- (d) jointly preparing reports, using as much as possible ECA-sponsored institutions located in the subregion, with key subregional IGOs and presenting them to the legislative bodies of those IGOs; and
- (e) monitoring, evaluation and reporting to ECA Headquarters.

126. Again, a reliable, comprehensive and integrated subregional information system, a **Subregional integrated database** which is development problem diagnostic in nature is dispensable. The countries of the region are lagging behind in information systems and this will be value added investment in reliable material for policy and decision making.

(iii) Level III: MULPOCs and ECA-sponsored institutions/IGOs/member States.

127. The lowest but most important, most difficult to attain but most necessary to access is **LEVEL III**, referred to here as the "trickle-down" level. This is where all the agencies of the UN system, bilateral and multilateral agencies are engaged with government in the development of activities of various types. Each of them tries to carve out a niche for visible impact based on the resources at their disposal. Although ECA may be thought of as being relatively handicapped as compared to the others with greater financial advantage, it has the important advantage of

facilitating cross-sectoral and multi-dimensional thinking for programme development.

128. At this level there is the need for information in an integrated format to orient action. There is the need for assistance to develop and strengthen integrated national data and information systems, monitoring and evaluation, joint ECA-MULPOC/UN system/subregional IGOs, particularly the ECA-sponsored institutions and NGOs to the relevant national instances. ECA must use its national focal points, including Government Ministries particularly the Ministers responsible for Social and Economic Development and Planning, and national IGO/NGO focal points Commissions/Committee for sustainable development and national Agenda 21 mechanisms. This would form a strong basis for capacity building for developing and strengthening national data and information systems, monitoring and evaluation - with ECA/MULPOCs and partners.

Institution	Activity focus
1. African Regional Centre for Engineering Design and Manufacturing (ARCEDEM), Ibadan.	Design and develop agricultural machinery; manufacture spare parts machine components and complete machinery; test and experimentation of materials, components and machines; train and extension services on machine designing, industrial management.
2. African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development (ACARTSOD), Tripoli.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To coordinate research and training in social development programmes; * Provides training to high level personnel; executes programmes, including the promotion of rural development programmes.
3. African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT), Dakar, Senegal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To contribute to the development and use of technology within member States by assisting, through national centres, in the development of indigenous technologies and the negotiation of imported technologies; * Strengthening of information and data base on technology requirements and natural resources and their exploitation.
4. African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), Niamey, Niger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Global products evaluation; * Environmental applications for development; * Transfer of technology to its member countries; * Capacity building for Member Countries; and * Research in climate and tropical meteorology.
5. Community of Eastern and Southern African States (COMESA) - Lusaka, Zambia.	Promotion of intra-subregional trade in commodities originating from the subregion and creating facilitating institutional mechanisms for intercountry cooperation and specialization in the development of basic and strategic industries using agricultural raw materials; intercountry cooperation and specialization in agricultural development with particular emphasis on food security.
6. Organization for the Development of the Kagera River Basin (KBO), Kigali.	To develop hydropower and irrigated agriculture, livestock and forestry resources; to protect the environment, transport and communications; to organize training.
7. Regional Centre for Services in Survey, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS), Nairobi.	To provide services in the field of surveying mapping and remote sensing, including early warning systems for natural resources development.
8. Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), Accra.	To train specialists in population studies; to provide advisory; to undertake research; to publish research results.

24_/ Only activities that are directly related to issues of the nexus are listed.

129. Of the thirty-nine ECA-sponsored institutions, eight are directly involved in activities of the nexus. Four of them are based in West Africa, namely ARCEDEM, ARCT, ACMAD and RIPS. These institutions are well placed to be used by the MULPOCs to maintain institutional linkages and networks to enhance the presence of the Commission.

130. The African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development is a good example of an ECA-sponsored institution that can be used to foster programme harmonization and institution networking of activities within the nexus. It has so far already trained 250 professionals from 43 countries, in the three years of its operation, in meteorological applications.

Table 12: Key Subregional IGO as partners of the MULPOCs

SECTOR	IGOs with related programmes	
1. Agriculture	N. Africa	UMP, League of Arab States
	W. Africa	CILSS (Institut du Sahel, Centre AGRHYMET, Club du Sahel), Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	None
	E. Africa	COMISA, EAC, SADC, IGADD
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC
2. Natural resources and Environment.	N. Africa	UMA, League of Arab States
	W. Africa	CILSS (Institut du Sahel, Centre AGRHYMET, Club du Sahel), Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	None
	E. Africa	COMISA, EAC, SADC, IGADD
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC
3. Industry and energy.	N. Africa	UMA, League of Arab States
	W. Africa	ECOWAS, Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	ECCAS
	E. Africa	COMISA, EAC, SADC, IGADD
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC
4. Transport and communications.	N. Africa	UMA, League of Arab States
	W. Africa	ECOWAS, Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	ECCAS
	E. Africa	COMISA, EAC, SADC, IGADD
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC

Table 12: continued

SECTOR	IGOs with related programmes	
5. Manpower development.	N. Africa	UMA, League of Arab States
	W. Africa	CILSS, ECOWAS, Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	ECCAS
	E. Africa	COMISA, EAC, SADC, IGADD
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC
6. Economic integration.	N. Africa	UMA, League of Arab States
	W. Africa	ECOWAS, Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	ECCAS
	E. Africa	COMISA, EAC, SADC, IGADD
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC

B: The environment/development, the cohesive force of the nexus

131. Environment falls within the second area of programme directions, namely, ensuring food security and sustainable development. This means focusing on the link between food security, population and the environment, known as the nexus. The significance of this nexus is that no cluster of issues has so eluded public policy in Africa where survival and quality of development are threatened by the current and projected grave imbalances of food-environment-population.²⁵

132. Within the above context, the Commission will concentrate on six issues, namely:

(1) enhancing national capacities to manage the issues of the nexus;

²⁵/ See document E/ECA/CM.22/2 of March 1996, op. cit. p. 4.

- (ii) strengthening population policies;
- (iii) increasing water supply for food production;
- (iv) supporting regional efforts to enhance food security;
- (v) furthering the advancement of women; and
- (vi) keeping an overview of science and technology development, particularly relating to the issues of the nexus.

133. The strategies for implementation will be focused on various activities, including:

- (i) organizing workshops to train trainers in the analysis of the nexus issues;
- (ii) convening meetings of riparian countries to foster intercountry cooperation in water sharing through dialogue;
- (iii) helping regional and subregional organizations to design and implement measures to harmonize national food security programmes; and
- (iv) organizing executive seminars to highlight ways in which improved science and technology policies can better address the nexus issues.

134. The impetus for renewal demands, therefore, a narrowing down of ECA's agenda, based on its comparative advantage as regards its regional focus, in analyzing regional issues and fostering regional cooperation, identifying roles and models, comparing and harmonizing policies, compiling and networking development information and data.

135. As regards the issues of the nexus, the driving policy priorities would revolve around poverty eradication, the development of adequate infrastructure, capacity building, "harmonization" of consumption patterns and the promotion of regional economic cooperation. Food security, the environment and population dynamics, including human settlements cannot be discussed individually. As the basis of human sustainability, they are also driven by processes in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the entire economy.

*** Enlargement of focus from ecological conservation and protection to encompass development management**

136. It is customary for environmental issues to be immediately given the ecological meaning and programme development biased accordingly. The same goes for food security

and agriculture. These are issues which are expressive of the true dimensions of the sustainable development of a people. In other words, environmental management is development management with particular emphasis on minimizing the environmental-related negative impacts of the development process to human beings. In the same vein, food security is not only limited to optimum agricultural production in relation to the per capita ratio available at a given time.

137. Besides the environmental carrying capacity, it is the sustained accessibility to food as determined by, the quantity and quality available staples, prices, incomes, condition of the distribution infrastructure, consumption patterns and dietary habits as well as the gamut of enabling conditions that make it possible to have the proverbial "three square meals" in a given day.

138. By its mandate and the focus of the new directions, the spirit and purpose of resolutions 809(XXXI) on the New Directions for the Economic Commission for Africa and 810(XXXI) on Strengthening the MULPOCs,²⁶ programme activities should use the significant and accepted shifts in environmental policy and management.²⁷ This is important because, although the environmental aspects of development have been widely examined, the economic implications are scarcely understood.

139. By the changing character of environmental policy and management it is understood a move away from the anticipatory, precautionary environmental policy that was reactive in approach which prevailed during the 1970s and 1980s. This was oriented toward the compensatory concept of environmental damage, promoting pragmatic, preventive environmental management. The current approach is based on integrated systems for environmental management, protection and control rather than isolated "end-of-pipe" technologies, environmental recovery and/or compensation for suffering

26_/Document E/ECA/CM.22/L OF 8 May 1996.

27_/ Paolo Bifani Service and the Environment, Report prepared for the UNCTAD Secretariat (Geneva, March 1996)

environmental disruptions.

140. This approach also emerges the environment into the service sector and related technologies, whereby environmental management and the implementation of environmental regulations require specific knowledge and technologies,

"Frequently demanded services concern methodologies, practices, routine process, environmental managerial skills, data and the technologies for their processing. Some of these services require human resources to be able to integrate the knowledge pertaining to different disciplines and their translation into practical tools, methods and services. Other services depend on the availability of specific technologies to undertake a specific process ... for the measurement of parameters and associated know-how."

141. The other element of this approach is business oriented. The business sector has been pulled into it because environmental compliance has become, in varying degrees depending on the country and industrial environment, a component of business activity itself. The other reason is that the environment creates attractive business opportunities. For example,

"In 1989 the Western European market for pollution control equipment, including everything from advanced waste disposal technology to catalytic convertors, was estimated at US\$40 billion. More than a million people in the EU were employed in this sector . . . In the same year, the world market for anti-pollution equipment and cleaning products was valued at between US\$200 and US\$300 billion."

142. An increasingly environmentally aware public increases the pressure of the demand on these services, such that,

"The environmental concerns of customers is not only a social mechanism to control the environmental behaviour of Governments, local authorities and companies, but also an important driving force for the environmental market of goods and services."

143. It is important to underscore the difference in the environmental "problematique" between the developed and the developing world. In the latter environmental management is aimed basically at the improvement of the quality of life

styles. In the developing countries the basic problem is how to use the natural environment sustainably in order to accelerate economic growth and development. Service related policy should then be focused on identifying environment related services which can be an integral part of the promotion business in environmental management technologies, since:

- (i) increasing environmental degradation requires new skills, practices, technologies and methodologies that very often are not domestically available;
- (ii) new services are needed for the sustainable use of natural and environmental resources;
- (iii) services are needed in order to comply with new international environmental regulations;
- (iv) services related to the environment can generate new jobs and export-oriented activities;
- (v) new environment-related services can contribute to increased productivity and competitiveness in the primary and export-oriented sectors;
- (vi) efforts are required to save scarce foreign exchange that otherwise may be spent in hiring foreign services to deal with domestic environment-related problems.

144. Given the enabling political environment, the level of economic and social welfare is determined by the interplay of the above conditions with the quality of shelter. In other words, human settlements, their distribution and sustainability constitute an integral element of the sustainable development equation. Within this context, environmental consideration of development activities in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy can meaningfully be discussed and are of paramount relevance to the issues of the nexus.

145. Capacity building becomes the major focus in the development management process. One of the main problems of African countries is the identification of cluster capacity requirements. As of what can rightly be called the old sectoral, mono-discipline approaches, African policy and decision makers have remained mono-sector oriented. School and university curricula have suffered from the same retardedness.

The consequence has been that, at the policy and decision making levels, the issues of sustainable development which are cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary, as the nexus approach advocates, are mainly viewed sectorally. The definition of multi-dimensional and multi-agency strategies to address them is more often than not, missed.

146. A major handicap that has been responsible for this inherent lag in adopting these multi-dimensional approaches has been the unavailability of reliable integrated cross-sectoral information. The analysis of such information would go a long way to demonstrate the various impacts of the mutations within the individual sectors, between the key sectors and among all the sectors put together.

147. There is the old adage that information is power. It could not be more true with the environment and environmental management in the sustainable development package. There is a wealth of documentation on the environment in Africa from a wide variety of sources ranging from government, universities, NGOs, the development Banks and institutions in and outside the United Nations.

148. The latest mass turn out of sustainable development literature began with the release of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development and very rapidly increased during the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and thereafter.

149. Two categories of documentation can be identified, namely research, survey and country report on the one hand and literature that attempts to carve a niche for the key role of environmental consideration as an integral part of the sustainable development nexus.

150. The category that tries to carve that key niche for the environment in the sustainable development nexus gained weight from the environment-development momentum that was triggered by the Brundtland Report and affirmed by UNCED and Agenda 21. Be

it as it may, this discourse will go on for a while but suffice it to say that environmental considerations have become a key element of cooperation both at the regional and the global levels. It is both the carrot and the stick.

C: The ECA environment programme as one of the key vehicles for enhancing the new directions.

151. Up to now, the Environment and Development in Africa activities have been implemented within the subprogramme of poverty alleviation through sustainable development. It has also been taking into account the wider scope of environment activities outside this subprogramme. This component has also been carrying out the regional coordination of the cross-sectoral activities in the implementation of Agenda 21 in the region with the Department of Policy Coordination for Sustainable Development (DPCSD). This encompasses all the activities of the nexus.

(a) Programme development orientation, priorities - regional and subregional²⁸

152. After UNCED, in fact beginning with the Brundtland Report, the environment programme activities of ECA, consistent with those of the other regional commission, cover two areas. First, contributing the regional components of the UNCED outcomes, particularly Agenda 21 into the programmes of the Commission for achieving sustainable development in the region, particularly within the framework of the African Strategies for Agenda 21 adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers and the new policy orientations of AMCEN²⁹. Second, coordination and harmonization within the UN system, particularly the UN Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, in the implementation of the UNCED outcomes.

28_/ This section and most of the references to AMCEN have benefited from documentation for the Sixth Session of AMCEN (Dec. 1995), bearing in mind that, as member of the Joint UNEP-ROA/ECA/OAU Secretariat of AMCEN, ECA took part in the activities and in preparing some of the documents.

29_/ Document E/ECA/CM.19/8. Rev. 1, African Strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21, (Addis Ababa, May 1993.)

153. The Environment programme of ECA is developed within the context of the mandate of the Commission on regional cooperation for social and economic development. In so doing, it draws from the orientations of the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for Social and Economic Development and Planning and the programmes of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). They are then harmonized with those of the African regional programme of UNEP. On emerging environmental issues of regional importance on which for political reasons OAU takes a stand, this would also be reflected, as was the case with the dumping of toxic wastes in Africa, leading to the Bamako Convention on the matter as well as the negotiation for the UN Convention on Combating Desertification.

154. It is important here to underscore the difference and complementary nature between the environment work programme of ECA and that of UNEP, which has been more understood to member States than to the ECA's, indeed the Regional Commissions', partners within and outside the UN system. Understandably, the sectoral government Ministries, specialized agencies of the UN system and non-governmental institutions turn to UNEP for research information to support their activities as well as complement or confirm such research results. The issue of finding the social and economic synergy of that information in a development programme is seldom their concern. This is where the Regional Commissions and ECA come in.

155. The integration of environmental dimensions into social and economic development programmes presupposes a number of issues, key among them being:

- (a) an understanding of the environmental implications of the activities of the different sectors individually and what environmental impacts would result from inter-sector mutations; and
- (b) roles and responsibilities of each actor so that as a team each can cater for problem identification and participate in finding the solutions.

156. It has been customary for the different actors, be they institutions, organizations or individuals to have the "ball in your court" response to environmental problems whose causes might be cross-sectoral. When there are famine, depleted agricultural production, drought, poor soils, and so on, are blamed without

due thought given to the other culprits such as the cross-cutting areas of poverty, poor infrastructure, governance and political accountability with all the related problems of development management. These does might not fall squarely within the purview of the activities of UNEP or FAO as such. They fall within the mandate of ECA and its is where the Commission is expected to demonstrate its comparative advantage.

157. In demonstrating this comparative advantage at handling cross-sectoral issues, particularly as concerns the environment and the areas of the nexus, a regional approach should be adopted. From it institutional interaction, governmental, IGOs and NGOs, at the regional level becomes inbuilt. This interaction could take various forms including coordination, harmonization, joint programming, impact assessment, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. ECA must be active in all this which would then transcend to the subregional level.

158. At the subregional level the action becomes more focused with intergovernmental institutions, including the subregional economic groupings and nongovernmental organizations. The same programme development and implementation process as at the regional level would apply with greater emphasis on field action.

159. It is expected that the actions by ECA at the regional and subregional levels would have significant trickle-down effect to the national level to effectively influence the achievement of sustainable development at the national level and this would in turn have the desired regional impact.

160. Some of ECA's partners operate more at the regional and national levels and most are at the national level only, particularly the bilaterals. It is, therefore, ECA's business to ensure that the trickle-down effects of its actions are visible, full of impact and in demand. If this is not the case, ECA's partners who operate directly at the national level supplant the Commission and the wrong impression is given. It is, therefore, ECA's business to intensify the trickle-down process through the relevant regional and subregional institutions and as required, at the national level.

161. It is in recognition of ECA's mandate and the comparative advantage which this places the Commission in the context of the UN system's assistance to member States that UNEP in 1978 decided, out of its own resources, to strengthen the Regional Economic Commissions. This should enhance their capacities for integrating environmental considerations into development planning and development management. The wisdom of this decision was highlighted during the follow-up of the Brundtland Report, preparations for and follow-up to UNCED, particularly as the regional commissions are being requested to play the key role in the preparations for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly to be held in 1997.

162. The interactions described in the preceding paragraphs has afforded the environment component of the ECA programme the facility with its collaborating agencies, both within the UN system, IGOs and NGOs, than most of the substantive programmes. This is added value in promoting the new directions of ECA, particularly in fostering the:

- (a) in-house coordination and harmonization;
- (b) interagency coordination and harmonization;
- (c) coordination and harmonization with IGOs and NGOs; and
- (d) drive towards region economic cooperation and integration for sustainable development.

163. As earlier indicated, the regional programme framework is that of AMCEN and implemented within the mandates of the Commission and the comparative advantage that this provides. The main focus has been on manpower, institutional and infrastructure capacity building. The philosophy has been that of carving that niche which will enhance ECA's role in facilitating interagency collaboration and harmonization of actions with member States at the regional, subregional levels and ensuring that there is the trickle-down effect to the national level.

164. Direct project execution and management are areas that are duplication prone when many agencies are involved. There is an unhealthy tendency for competition and consequent duplication. The possibilities are far less in capacity building and programme support, particularly in multi-sectoral activities. The focus for the

environment programme has, therefore, been on capacity building for sustainable development.

165. Selected areas of capacity building and enhancement within the framework of the new AMCEN policy orientation, in close collaboration with DPCSD and UNEP, have been:

- a) the promotion of general Agenda 21 regional and subregional priorities, particularly the cross-sectoral issues;
- b) promotion of the development of policy and legislative frameworks within the context of the Montevideo Programme for the Periodic Review of Environmental Law, in particular,
 - i) enhancing the capacity of States to participate in the development and implementation of environmental law;
 - ii) implementation of international legal instruments;
 - iii) legal and administrative mechanisms for the prevention and redress of pollution and other environmental damage;
- c) management of terrestrial ecosystems, particularly issues related to coastal and marine areas, biodiversity, arid lands and desertification; and
- d) environmental considerations in industrial activities, infrastructure development, consumption patterns.

166. Promotion of environmental monitoring skills, also in close collaboration with UNEP, has been focused on:

- (a) environmental impact assessment (EIA);
- (b) environmental awareness, education, information and public participation (major groups);
- (c) conservation, management and sustainable development of soils and forests;
- (d) transport, handling and disposal of hazardous wastes (the Basel and Bamako Conventions) including international trade in potentially harmful chemicals;
- (e) environmental protection and integrated management, development and use of inland water resources as an integral part of combating desertification activities;
- (f) management of coastal areas and protection of the marine environment and aspects of the law of the sea, as an aspect of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme;
- (g) examination of environmental implications of international agreements on subjects which do not relate directly to the environment;
- (h) environmental problems of human settlements, including their growth; and
- (i) transfer of appropriate technology and technical cooperation.

167. One other important area of capacity building is environmental economics for the valuation of environmental resources and the environmental impact of development activities in economic terms. This should provide a basis for placing the environment as a revenue component within the GDP.

Table 13: A proposed MULPOCs level synergy paradigm in an ECA system.

Function	ECA presence	IGO and NGO action
<p>Subregional level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collection from national institutions and maintenance of a subregional database; - Monitoring and evaluation; - Reporting to ECA and MULPOC/UN system joint reports to subregional IGO legislative bodies. 	<p>The MULPOCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Coordination and harmonization with ECA-sponsored institutions located in the subregion. - Adaptation of the harmonized ECA programmes with UN agencies, promoting subregional cooperation accordingly. - Developing institutional links with the relevant IGOs and NGOs. - Subregional database - 	<p>Subregional IGOs and NGOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination and harmonization with the MULPOCs in the relevant areas of priority as determined by the IGOs, NGOs. - Regularly place ECA reports (progress, final and information) on their agenda of regular meetings.
<p>National level (trickle-down impact)</p> <p>Assistance for developing and strengthening national data and information systems, monitoring and evaluation, joint UN system/subregional IGO and NGOs to the relevant national instances.</p>	<p>ECA National focal points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Promotion of critical capacity building and utilization. <p>Minister responsible for Social and Economic Development and Planning, Minister/Commissions/Committee for sustainable development/Agenda 21.</p>	<p>Government Ministries and national IGO/NGO focal points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Capacity building and utilization for policy/decision making, programme/project formulation, implementation, national data and information systems, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, with ECA/MULPOCs inputs. * integrated National database

168. From this paradigm, the modalities for the development of an ECA subregional database, discussed in greater detail later in this report, could be build, focused on data collection and integrated analysis of such information for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation. The results of which would provide a strong basis for policy and decision making.

(b) A regional environment programme framework as a spring board for MULPOC actions within the nexus

169. The main criticism of the MULPOCs has been the poor harmonization of programmes between them and ECA Headquarters. This has been proved to be an important area for review and the challenge that the new strategic directions should address. The effective contribution of the environment component in enhancing the impact of the activities of the nexus from the regional to the "trickle-down" national level will depend on the structure of the activities of the environment component and the built-in information integrated data and information base.

(i) The structure of the activities of the environment component of the nexus activities

170. All activities of the nexus form an integral aspect of the thrust of the UNCED recommendations on sustainable development of which Agenda 21 is the major programme. It is the global point of departure from which attempts are being made to develop indicators for assessing the achievement of sustainable development. Within this global framework, three areas should compose the framework, namely, one area covering participation in promoting the regional capacity building implementation of the cross-sectoral aspects of Agenda 21 and other UNCED outcomes, particularly the conventions and programmes of action with a thrust on the Programme of Action for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS); policy and programme coordination and harmonization in-house at ECA, with UN/DPCSD, UNEP and other UN agencies; policy and programme coordination and harmonization with the OAU and AMCEN at the regional level and the IGOs and NGOs at the subregional level to ensure the significant permeation of ECA ideas and presence to the national level.

171. As earlier indicated the ECA environment programme component, through its joint participation in the Joint AMCEN Secretariat, has made considerable inroads into the subregional UNEP/ROA and IGO institutional networks. The modalities for involving the MULPOCs should then be easy to work out.

172. Because of the acquired presence and comparative advantage of the environment component of ECA programme at the level of member States through the UNCED process, the renewal and restructuring of ECA should provide an opportunity to strengthen this component of its programmes. It will provide an added vehicle for carrying the nexus issues to the national level through the ECA-MULPOC information system suggested later in this report.

173. An added argument for the environment is that it is the focal point of the ECA-sponsored Centre that resulted from the African crisis of the 1980s resulting from severe droughts. While the UN system was developing the African Priority Programme for African Economic Recovery and Development, member States decided to establish the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD). Apart from the support from the limited resources of member States, the Centre has the admiration of Africa's major development partners in the area of climate related development activities.

174. Despite the regional pressures to cope with coordination and participation in global sustainable development actions related to Agenda 21, which it has done with considerable success, this component is the most disadvantaged resource wise, irrespective of the technological backup. It is run by only two professional staff. For the 1996/1997 biennium a P4 post was budgeted for the implementation of the Programme of Action for SIDS. If this is added then this will be the third professional.

175. Apart from the environment programme per se, there are resources in the Commission which could be regrouped into the environment to provide the much needed data base. This will serve in resource management and in enhancing the work of the professional staff of the Commission, particularly the advisory services. They are the remote sensing and geographic information system (GIS) electronic data base which is now being developed. The Commission will be able to go beyond Cartography and Remote sensing into integrated data analysis on the lines of the nexus approach.

176. It is possible to enhance this into a Sustainable Development component of the nexus since the staff of the environment are already involved in coordinating these activities for the implementation of Agenda 21. This outfit will have three major areas of functions in support of the activities of the nexus, namely, environment and sustainable development policy coordination; management of environmental geographic information system (GIS); and Agenda 21 related programmes of action and conventions, particularly the SIDS programme.

(c) Environment and sustainable development policy coordination

177. The environment and sustainable development policy coordination aspect will have the responsibility of coordinating;

- (i) within the Commission, including the MULPOCs, to ensure that environmental dimensions are integrated into the different activities;
- (ii) with other agencies of the UN system, partners, regional IGOs, particularly AMCEN and subregional IGOs, through the MULPOCs, to ensure that ECA environment programme orientations are integrated into their activities; and
- (iii) with the Department of Policy Coordination for Sustainable Development (DPCSD) and the CSD on the regional aspects of Agenda 21 follow-up activities.

(d) Agenda 21 related programmes of action and conventions, particularly the SIDS programme.

178. Using the new post provided under the SIDS programme this component will concentrate on Agenda 21 related programmes of action and conventions, particularly the fourteen programme areas of the SIDS Programme of Action.

(d) Nature of Outputs

179. Member States have found many of the ECA reports and publications useful source material in preparing policy or project proposals for decision-making and offer an opportunity for member States to keep abreast of what is happening in

other countries. However, they have expressed the need for the capacity to generate and analyse information and for information sharing. This will be an area to complement the data and information of member States.

180. The environmental geographic information systems database will make it possible to publish integrated analyses of development information at the different levels. Interaction with member States will also be enhanced for purposes of information updates.

D: ECA environment programme activities as a major component for regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration: Institutional interaction.

181. The programme orientation of ECA is **regional cooperation in Africa**. By definition of its mandates and the orientations of the various policy pronouncements at different intergovernmental fora and crystallized in the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, this orientation should respond to the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable development in the region, individually and collectively. This is underscored in the 1995 Cairo Agenda of the OAU Council of Ministers through strategies that include:

- (i) governance, peace, stability and development;
 - (ii) food security;
 - (iii) human resource development and capacity building;
 - (iv) resource mobilization; and
- regional economic cooperation and integration.

182. Given this framework and the respond to the needs of the users of ECA's outputs, and equally bearing in mind that ECA is on the "demand generating" end of the process, programme narratives must be evident of this environment. Programme narratives should, therefore, highlight ECA as:

- (i) a builder of African institutions of development;
- (ii) an articulator of plans and strategies;
- (iii) an advocate of economic and social policy; and
- (iv) promoter and provider of technical cooperation for the

development of African countries."³⁰

183. Since regional cooperation is explicit of team work, narratives should also be explicit of this. It must be evident that there is a call for partnership and "ECA is less the self-contained producer of work and far more the networker, helping to put forward the best possible thinking . . . The main goal of strengthening cooperation in these ways is to respond to the need of ECA's main client, the governments and people of Africa."³¹

184. Accelerating regional and sub-regional integration provides new scope and opportunities for moving toward sustainable development both nationally and regionally. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) have moved toward greater cooperation and integration for a decade or more.

185. Southern African countries, after a decade of increasingly closer coordination on economic and sectoral policies, decided in 1992 to create the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which includes "achieving sustainable utilization of natural resources and effective protection of the environment" among the main objectives. Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda recently agreed to re-establish an East African Community and, together with the SADC countries, a new Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) whose mandate includes specific commitments on "Cooperation in the Development of Natural Resources, Environment and Wildlife."

186. Other sub-regional organizations such as the Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGADD) have also become increasingly active and effective in the 1990's.

30_/ See Strategic Directions document, op. cit p. 13, para. 14.

31_/ See Strategic Direction document, p. 7.

the 1990's.

187. The Environment programme activities are, therefore, a strong vehicle for regional and subregional cooperation because the problems manifest themselves in virtually the same manner and the solutions are also similar. This provides common areas of comparison, monitoring and evaluation.

188. In using the environment and development dimension as an added tool for promoting regional cooperation through two important institutional settings both of which have support programme implications. These two important institutional settings are the ECA-sponsored institutions and the subregional IGOs that are active in the nexus issues.

E: Harnessing information for development: The nexus issues.

189. As earlier pointed out, the renewal process at ECA is built around a clear vision of Africa's future in a world of rapid technology and information revolution which it can use to catching, as much as possible, with the rest of the world given the right strategic investment. In pursuit of this vision it will be necessary, indeed crucial, to harness this information at the MULPOC level with a strong coordinating base at headquarters.

(a) At the MULPOC level

190. One of the weaknesses of member States is clearly the problem of definitions of the purposes for which the different levels of information could be collected. The relevant capacity to collect and analyze such information could then be build or strengthened. With the new programme area on **harnessing information for development**, integrated information generating and analyzing mechanisms could be developed at the level of the MULPOCs for quick reference and use both by ECA and African countries at their different levels.

191. Once again, in furthering the spirit of the nexus, information is therefore vital as a key aspect of strengthening the MULPOCs and making them more effective as the outreach organs of ECA. One sees the development of a subregional information database and a support network as crucial.

192. The MULPOCs should be equipped with the information technology and the mechanism to be an information hub for their subregions. The MULPOCs should become the subregional data bank on regional cooperation and integration for development. This will ECA would have created another niche to enhance its comparative advantage not only in social and economic development matters in the region, but also in backing this up with standardized and reliable information.

193. Such an information mechanism would be aimed at strengthening ECA/MULPOC programme development, increasing the interaction process between the MULPOCs and the major subregional organizations, particularly those for promoting subregional economic integration on the one hand and those specialized in activities of the nexus. This should also be aimed at using subregional cooperation to promote sustained growth and self-reliance in managing the issues of the nexus.

194. The modalities for the development of an ECA integrated subregional database facility focused on data collection and integrated analysis for the purposes of monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The results of which would provide a strong basis for policy and decision making for ECA, African governments and development partners alike.

195. The facility should preferably be managed by someone experienced in integrated database management, particularly of data related to social, economic and developmental issues which are, by definition multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral.

196. If this is workable, it will be necessary to work out a system of programme development flow from ECA Headquarters to the MULPOC that will be consistent with

to the fullest to achieve greater impact.

197. A major environmental problem which is also common and needs immediate attention is that of environmental information. As Katere puts it,

"It is not possible to move towards environmentally sustainable development unless information on the fundamental issues surrounding natural resources management is understood. The role of the State, science, tenure, communities, macro-economic policies, the private sector, NGOs and markets need to be understood"³²

198. Katere again underscores that:

"Despite the wealth of documentation on the environment there are concerns about the accuracy and validity of the data and hence the use to which it can be put. This means that questionable information is used to legitimize certain myths about the environment and at times to influence important investment and management decisions."

199. For the furtherance of the spirit of the nexus, information is therefore vital. This should be a key part of the process of strengthening the MULPOCs. The challenge is to work out a system of programme development flow from ECA Headquarters to the MULPOC that will be consistent with activities at the national. Since resources do not allow the MULPOCs to be as operational as they were initially intended to be, it is necessary to study the various possibilities of strengthening ECA/MULPOC programme development, a review of the interaction process between the MULPOCs and the major subregional organizations, particularly those promoting subregional economic integration on the one hand and those specialized in activities of the nexus.

³²/ Yemi Katere (1996) in **Regional economic integration and development: the power of environmental information**, paper presented to the Conference on the Application of Remotely Sensed Geographic Information Systems in environment and Natural Resource Assessment in Africa, Harare, 18 March 1996.

(b) An built-in integrated environment and development database: management of environmental geographic information system (GIS)

200. In close collaboration of the central information data base at ECA and the proposed MULPOC information system, the management of environmental geographic information system (GIS) activities include,

- (i) initiating related capacity building programmes with ECA-sponsored institutions, IGOs and member States on thematic cartography on the environment, social and economic processes as they affect the nexus issues and sustainable development;
- (ii) liaising with similar programmes in UNEP, FAO, UNESCO, the World Bank and other bilateral and multilateral agencies active in Africa;
- (iii) enhancing in-house preparation of meetings and advisory services requiring an aspect of GIS data base.

201. At the moment ECA has a geographic information system (GIS) facility base which is a gold mine for the activities of the nexus issues. Apart from being the time-space information backbone of the activities of the nexus, it should also be enhanced to support the other five programme direction areas, namely:

- a) facilitating economic and social policy analysis and implementation;
- b) ensuring food security and sustainable development (the nexus);
- c) strengthening development management;
- d) harnessing information for development; and
- e) promoting regional cooperation.

202. This is a strong collaboration basis with UNEP's **Global Resource Information Database (GRID)**, based on environmental geographic information systems which can be used to study local, national and regional issues. Fortunately, many African countries are acquiring GIS facilities bilaterally and through UNEP and should, sooner or later, be in a good position to interact with ECA on this basis.

203. The other invaluable information network is UNEP's Environment Information Exchange Network (INFOTERRA). It does not only make information available but also focuses on providing guidance on where information can be found and how it can be used most effectively. It provides on-line access to data banks and support for the

development of country institutional capacities.

F: ECA-sponsored institutions and the activities of the nexus

204. As earlier indicated, of the nearly forty ECA-sponsored institutions, eight are directly involved in activities of the nexus. Four of them are based in West Africa, namely, the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT), Regional Centre for Services in Survey, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS) and Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS). They carry out different types of research into adaptable technologies for application in the various areas of the nexus. These institutions are, therefore, well placed to be used by the MULPOCs to maintain institutional linkages and networks to enhance the presence of the Commission.

(i) African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD)

205. The African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) is a good example of an ECA-sponsored institution that can be used to foster programme harmonization and institution networking of activities within the nexus.

206. ACMAD, the African Centre for the Applications of Meteorology to Development³³, was founded in 1987 by Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) with the objectives of ensuring a weather and climate watch for Africa, promoting new methods adapted for sustainable development in Africa, and becoming progressively a "Centre of Excellence" for Africa in meteorology and climatology applications to all areas of development that are weather and climate related.

207. The programmes and projects of the Centre are tailored to address:

³³/ See documentation for ACMAD Eighth Session of the Board of Governors held from 28-30 March 1996 at its headquarters in Niamey, Niger.

- (a) local/regional interest;
- (b) complementarity with other projects/institutions;
- (c) sustainability of the project;
- (d) monitoring and evaluation dispositions; and
- (e) global interest of the project.

208. Key issues of the nexus which is being addressed by the activities of the Centre is that of improved subregional and regional agro-meteorological forecast capability including related water resources management. It is building on its achievement of having brought to a central facility global meteorological and climatological technologies for continental adaptation, transfer and implementation. ACMAD has established helpful relationships with AGRHYMET and ICRISAT which are institutions with complementary interests, expertise and African agricultural problem solving mandates, based in Niamey.

209. Beyond meteorology, ACMAD is now targeting its efforts on sustainable agriculture development, emphasizing water resource management and drought and pest mitigation, through,

- (a) growing season rainfall forecast and agricultural advisory services;
- (b) seasonal drought condition assessment and early warnings; and
- (c) climate record computerization and applications.

210. To facilitate its various activities that are highly dependent on communications technology the Centre has developed what it calls the **ACMAD Meteorological and Environmental Diagnosis System (AMEDIS)**. The system has the following capabilities:

- (a) data reception by which it receives data and products through the WMO Global Telecommunication System (GTS) and Meteorological Satellite;
- (b) data manipulation and display through which data can be retrieved from its database, the ACMAD Message Switching System (AMSS) computer, combined and analysed by an operator at a workstation to produce products which can be displayed, animated, superimposed, plotted and printed as required;
- (c) message preparation and transmission by which alpha numeric messages can be prepared directly in the AMSS directly into GTS through the Toulouse Up-link with the possibility of future expansion;
- (d) maintenance which enables software and hardware that are readily available on the market to be used with the possibility of maintenance, even remotely by telecommunication messages, any where in Africa; and
- (e) data storage where alpha numeric, graphic and satellite information for

at least one week and up to one month can be stored on the hard disk of the computer for operational activities.

211. In this way, the Centre should be able to disseminate at subregional and regional levels, meteorological and climatological information that is directly useful for agriculture and water resource management. Since the implementation of the ACMAD programme is based on the complementarity between it and other regional user institutions, the mobilization of local African expertise will therefore be facilitated.

212. To ensure that the advancement of the scientific aspect of the ACMAD programme are sustained a Scientific Advisory Committee (SACOM) of the Board of Governors has been established. Its function will be, among other scientific matters, to:

a) ensure that scientific content of programmes and products of the Centre meet the regional requirements and standards for achieving the medium and long term objectives of ACMAD by:

(i) reviewing and evaluating ACMAD's products and services taking into account the set objectives of the Centre and the expressed requirements of users;

(ii) advising the Board on the type of Scientific and Technical infrastructure required to produce and disseminate the Centre's products to users;

(iii) making period scientific reviews with the Director-General to help him/her keep within the objectives which may be presented to it by the Director-General of the Centre or any of the members;

b) review the objectives of ACMAD in light of emerging economic and scientific developments or any other new scientific issues that are likely to contribute enhancing the activities of the Centre.

c) review the responses of the principal users of ACMAD's products and services with a view to better satisfy their needs and review the list of users periodically.

d) develop mechanisms for determining users needs and for assessing benefits realized through the use of ACMAD's products and services.

e) follow-up scientific developments in the areas relevant to ACMAD's activities.

(ii) African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT)

213. The African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT) contributes to the development and use of technology within member States by assisting, through national centres, in the development of indigenous technologies and the negotiation of imported technologies. It also contributes in strengthening of information and data base on technology requirements and natural resources and their exploitation. All of these are vital to the activities of the nexus.

(iii) Regional Centre for Services in Survey, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS)

214. The Regional Centre for Services in Survey, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS) provides services in the field of surveying mapping and remote sensing, including early warning systems for natural resources development. Important among its activities are the development of early warning systems for its member States and the IGOs based in that subregion.

(iv) Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS).

215. Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) trains specialists in population studies; to provide advisory services on request; to undertake research; to publish research results in population studies and related fields. It is in the position to fill the environment-population-sustainable development relation information needed for policy and decision making.

G: Subregional IGOs, active in the nexus issues

216. Regarding cooperation with, it is the general consensus that one of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision making. In the more specific context of environment and development, the need for these forms of participation has become more and more pertinent. This includes the need for individuals, groups and

organizations to participate in the management of the environment. The African Common Position on Environment and Development as well as Agenda 21 did call for the participation of major groups in sustainable development initiatives. The Conference should review the status of performance with regard to cooperation between AMCEN and the continent's various major groups.

217. A distinctive feature of the UNCED preparations in Africa was the active participation of the continent's major groups in the various stages of the preparatory process. The NGOs/major groups commendably complemented and supported the efforts of African countries in the preparation of Africa's contributions and committal document - Africa's Common Position on Environment and Development - to the Earth Summit. They lobbied for Africa's interests and concerns and were in the forefront in raising public awareness of the regions' stakes and expectations. They significantly contributed to the development, in the context of the negotiations for the various conventions, of the continent's common perspectives.

218. The subregional IGOs participated actively in the preparations and follow-up to UNCED and are aware of ECA's role in the UNCED process. They will be most likely to respond to the nexus approach of the new

directions and since the role ECA is well appreciated.

Table 14: Key IGOs with related programmes of the strategic directions

Programme direction	MULPOC	Key IGOs with related programmes
* Facilitating economic and social policy analysis and implementation.	N. Africa	UMA, League of Arab States
	W. Africa	ECOWAS, CILSS, Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	ECCAS
	E. Africa	COMISA, E.A. Community
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC
* Ensuring food security and sustainable development (the nexus);	N. Africa	UMA
	W. Africa	CILSS, Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	ECCAS
	E. Africa	COMISA, E.A. Community
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC
*Strengthening development management;	N. Africa	UMA, League of Arab States
	W. Africa	ECOWAS, CILSS, Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	ECCAS
	E. Africa	COMISA, E.A. Community, IGADD
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC
* Harnessing information for development; and	N. Africa	UMA, League of Arab States
	W. Africa	ECOWAS, CILSS, Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	ECCAS
	E. Africa	COMISA, E.A. Community, IGADD
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC
* Promoting regional cooperation.	N. Africa	UMA, League of Arab States
	W. Africa	ECOWAS, CILSS, Lake and River Basin Authorities.
	C. Africa	ECCAS
	E. Africa	COMISA, E.A. Community, IGADD
	S. Africa	COMISA, SADC

219. The decision of AMCEN at its Sixth Session is testimony of this, when it was decided to:

" ... to support the initiative of ECA, in collaboration with OAU, UNEP, ADB, UNDP and other relevant organizations for the preparation and organization of a meeting in 1996/1997 to harmonize Africa's position for the United Nations Special Session of the General Assembly Scheduled in 1997 to assess the implementation of the decisions taken at the Earth Summit. (and)

... again expresses appreciation to the Executive Director of UNEP, the Executive Secretary of ECA and the Secretary-General of the OAU for their consistent support to AMCEN."³⁴

220. All the IGOs with an environment bias participate actively in the activities of AMCEN and are, therefore, potentials in promoting regional cooperation, with the momentum of the new directions.

221. The MULPOCs can play an important supportive role in close collaboration with the subregional counterparts and national focal points in the implementation of the above-mentioned programmes and the necessary initiatives are needed. The MULPOCs must be given the necessary support to be involved in actively collaborating with the continent's major groups (grassroots and community-based organizations, youth and women groups, industry and private sector, scientists, representatives of relevant major groups, etc.) through key interactions with the subregional and national focal points, particularly promoting and/or strengthening of sub-regional or regional African NGO networks on the environment. The Conference should also consider closely involving the African NGOs in the implementation of its new policy and programme.

H: MULPOCs and institutional arrangement within the UN system

222. Cooperation with UN Agencies should be aimed at promoting the programme objectives of AMCEN. In general, the objectives and main aim of UN strategies for environmental protection and natural resource management in Africa can be build around:

- (a) strengthening national and local action for renewed growth, which is

³⁴/ Decision of the Sixth session of AMCEN, December 1995.

economically, socially and environmentally sustainable;

- (b) building assessments of economic, environmental and equity impacts into the approval processes for all national and regional programmes and projects involving the UN system;
- (c) making more effective use of the comparative advantage and combined expertise and resources of the UN system through joint programmes focussed on national and regional priorities for sustainable development;
- (d) strengthening national participation in regional and global programmes for environmental protection and improvement, especially for managing shared natural resources and the implementation of Agenda 21 and major international conventions.

223. In 1993 African governments, through AMCEN, defined a new role for the inter-agency working group of the Conference, taking into account the implications of the UNCED agreements. It also decided that the UN agencies active in the Africa region will be invited to, through the IAWG itself, brief the AMCEN Sessions on their various activities including their support to the implementation of sustainable development programmes in Africa, particularly Agenda 21. It is important that AMCEN is kept fully informed of the contributions of the various UN agencies in Africa to the environmental management efforts of African countries and organizations.

224. AMCEN was institutionalized by Resolution 1/1 adopted by its first session which was held in Cairo, Egypt from 16-18 December 1985. It was to implement its activities on the basis of self-reliance with the complementary support of Africa's partners. The Conference also had other organizational and operational arrangements, that is, the Conference Committees on ecosystems; Regional technical cooperation networks; Advisory group of experts (consisting of Directors/senior officials of the environment in the respective African countries) to the ministerial segments; Bureau consisting of seven ministers; inter-agency working group with membership drawn from the UN agencies.

225. Since its inception in December 1985, the Secretariat has been located in the Regional Office for Africa of UNEP and is run in close cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The three

institutions also work together in supporting the implementation of the decisions of the Conference as embodied in the biennial programmes. At its first session in December 1985, AMCEN requested UNEP to provide, on temporary basis, the Conference Secretariat, in cooperation with the OAU and ECA. It was in response to that 1985 the Conference requested that UNEP continues providing the necessary resources for the running of the AMCEN Secretariat, ECA continues to provide technical support and similarly with the OAU continues to provide technical support.

226. Although since its inception in 1985, the Conference had functioned as intergovernmental institution, with rules of procedure for its meetings, there were no agreed upon institutionally binding instruments for its existence as such. It became evident, with time and various experiences, that circumstances necessitated the formalization of its institutionalization as it was envisaged in Resolution 1/1 of December 1985.

227. At its 6th session held in Nairobi in December 1995, the Conference carefully consider the measures needed to formalize it as an intergovernmental body. It thereby reconfirmed itself as the forum for:

(a) identifying environmental priorities for action by African countries around which it would:

- (i) facilitate the development of Common African Perspectives and Positions on major environmental issues; reviewing;
- (ii) monitor and coordinate environmental management efforts of the continent; and
- (iii) provide leadership in advancing the cause of environmental management;

(b) critically examining measures to be taken by African countries for funding AMCEN Programme, particularly their contributions to the AMCEN Trust Fund and improving Africa's contribution to the UNEP Environment Fund.

228. At the 5th Session of AMCEN (1993) the Conference underscored the fact that existing arrangements have so far been satisfactory and have served AMCEN well. There was general agreement that in view of Africa's present multiple transitions (political, economic, social and environmental) towards regional integration, there is a need to keep under review, periodically the institutional relationship between AMCEN and institutions such

as the OAU as well as the institutions earlier mentioned.

229. As concerns relationship with ECA, AMCEN's work programme would continue to provide the framework for the Commission's biennial programme of work. The necessary coordination will continue to be carried out between the Secretariat of AMCEN and ECA. Relation between AMCEN and the relevant legislative bodies of ECA will be strengthened, particularly with the Conference of Ministers responsible for Sustainable Development and Environment.

230. On the basis of the above the Joint Secretariat is:

- (a) considering appropriate modalities for enhancing the existing institutional framework i.e. the inter-agency working group;
- (b) working with the AMCEN Bureau to renew consultations with UN agencies active in Africa with a view to enlisting their active support in the implementation of the 1996-97 Conference Programme and their possible financial contributions to the AMCEN Trust Fund.

231. As earlier indicated, the Environment programme of ECA is developed within the context of the mandate of the Commission on regional cooperation for social and economic development as guided by the Conference of Ministers responsible for Social and Economic Development and Planning. In so doing, it draws from the orientations of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN).

232. It is therefore important that programmes that will be an integral part of those promoting regional and subregional cooperation the AMCEN framework be used *a priori*. The present 1996-1997 AMCEN programme focuses on eight major issues which involve the ECA work programme as a whole and out of which its present environment programme is carved. They are:

- (a) Sustainable Industrial Production, Consumption and Industrial Development including aspects relating to the Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- (b) Environmentally Sound Management of all types of wastes, including hazardous and potentially hazardous and toxic chemicals;
- (c) Strengthen the African Common Perspective and Position on the Convention on Biological Diversity through sensitization and awareness raising;

- (d) The rational management of African forests;
- (e) Support to the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification;
- (f) New and Emerging Issues: Implications for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment of Major International Events;
- (g) Capacity building, environmental education and public awareness through sensitization and organization, within available financial resources of seminars and workshops on conventions; support to the drawing up of national action plans and national Agenda 21; support to the integration of environmental impact assessment in development projects; and
- (h) Strengthening subregional cooperation in the area of the environment.

233. In 1993 AMCEN brought about a new sense of direction and priorities for its new policy and programme removing it from a concrete and implementive institution as initially conceived in 1985 in Cairo, to on providing continent-wide political and policy leadership on environmental matter. It therefore became a revitalized Conference which would respond, through a refocused strategy and policy to the environment and sustainable development challenges launched by the Kampala (1989), Bamako (1991), Cairo and Abidjan (1991) and Rio Conferences. In this new capacity the Conference would be in a stronger position to provide policy guidance and facilitating regional and subregional coordination between African countries and their partners. It would also be in a more effective position to motivate action at the national level.

234. As can be seen, at the level of the major African regional intergovernmental institution, there is the institutional enabling environment for developing and strengthening interdependent and complementary networks.

V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"The main conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing review is that many of ECA's modalities require an overhaul while expanding ECA's outreach to governments, private sector and NGOs and Africa's growing intellectual community. And there is need to consider how best to offer technical support to member States."³⁵

"Bearing in mind the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in its Report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, particularly the recommendation related to the decentralization of resources to the Multinational Programming Operational Centres to make them more effective," *ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 810(XXXI) of 8 May 1996.*

A: Conclusions

235. A major thrust in the five areas of the strategic directions is for improving capacities of member State to analyse and manage the policies needed to address the nexus issues in order to ensure that there is the locally based analytical capacity for national policy making and implementation in the interrelated areas of food security population growth, and the environment. This is implicit of the determination to guarantee and enhance, indeed supervise, the trickle-down effect of ECA's programmes and presence to the national level.

236. This report, in the spirit of ECA resolutions 809(XXXI) and 810(XXXI) of 8 May 1996, began with a number of assumptions regarding the strengthening of the MULPOCs in the renewal and restructuring process at ECA, enhancing the environment programme component of any of the MULPOCs and the West African MULPOC in particular. The aim being to ensure that the new programme directions of ECA are given a strong spring board, particularly as concerns the environment activities within the **nexus of food security and sustainable development.**

237. Two categories of conclusions can be drawn, namely those of a general nature into

35_/ See document E/ECA/CM.22/2, op. cit. para. 160.

which an environment programme would be in a strong position to play a value added role in the renewal process and those that are specific to an environment programme framework and the modus operandi of delivery. Recommendations are then made on how to operationalize the findings of the mission.

(a) General conclusions

238. The mission confirmed the conclusions of earlier review exercises that the MULPOCs are vital vehicles for the decentralization of ECA to member States. Consequently, the initial objectives of the MULPOCs are still justifiable. However, their structure and programme development and implementation procedures must be reviewed, if they are to serve as a strong impetus for promoting the new programme directions of ECA at the national level.

239. The preceding conclusion underscores the point that the MULPOCs were still facing difficulties the way they are, despite the various reviews and evaluations, because their recommendations were not practicable on the ground. They would have isolated the MULPOCs and caused more coordination difficulties than it tried to resolve.

240. The proposal to convert the MULPOCs into ECA Subregional Technical Assistance Programmes (ECA-STAPs) reduced the MULPOCs to programme functions without tagging this to a programme flow path from ECA to member States. The apparent existence of two "independent" programme managers for the MULPOCs still remained and the inherent conflict was not addressed.

241. To complicate matters, the institutional framework of the ECA-STAPs as recommended in the evaluation report, sets out a mechanism wherein the only contact of the MULPOCs with the ECA is at the ECA Conference of Ministers. The programme synergy and representational functions, which are the fulcrums of the MULPOC idea, were not demonstrated in these ECA-STAPs. The opinion of this mission, they are not demonstrable within that framework.

242. Mention was made regarding the policy organs, and that thought was not given, ab

initio, to coordination and rationalization of the MULPOC policy organ as a decision-making machinery with those of the major IGOs. Placing the policy organs at the level of Experts was also one of the reasons why attendance has been so fluctuating. It would be necessary to work out modalities of joint meetings with the IGOs at all levels to the Summit.

243. To address the above shortfalls, subregional institutional structures and programme frameworks of the MULPOCs must be coherent components of the regional structure and programme in which ECA, in the area of its mandate and comparative advantage. This is not so at the moment and ECA is not playing a central role it should be playing in cross-sectoral programmes at the subregional and national level.

244. Since by definition, ECA's action at the national level is highly limited to the advisory service activities of the Commission, on request, and that the effectiveness and impact of the other activities depend on what may be called a "trickle-down" process, this has not been well managed in the past. This is the challenge for the ECA Headquarters and the MULPOCs to address.

245. The above concerns have been a dormant aspect of policy and decision making at ECA towards the MULPOCs. They need to be revived and aggressively promoted to settle in the new programme directions of the Commission.

(ii) Environment and sustainable development as a component of the MULPOC programmes: the example of the West African MULPOC.

246. The environment and sustainable development thrust is not an aspect of the programmes of any of the MULPOCs, including the West African MULPOC. It has always been taken for granted that the mention of environment in a statement or programme framework denotes an environment programme. This is serious because, in view of the post-UNCED momentum as a major global driving force for regional and subregional integration for achieving collective self-reliance and sustainable development, most of the subregional IGOs and NGOs are environment oriented. The absence of activities deriving from Agenda 21 contributes in marginalizing the MULPOCs from the IGOs and NGOs.

247. At the national level nearly most of the inter-ministerial working groups are environment related either for the country strategic notes (CSN)³⁶, Minister/Commissions/Committee for sustainable development, Committees for National Environmental Action Plans or Committees for Agenda 21 all include activities of the nexus.

248. The case the West African MULPOC explains the disillusionment of the IGOs, possibly because of this. Its IGO community of nearly forty members, was very active in the MULPOC programme of work. An Association of West African IGOs was established to help in identifying and implementing joint multinational projects with the assistance of the MULPOC. Unfortunately due the problems that have plagued the functioning of the MULPOC and consequently its inability to sustain those activities, the Association has been abandoned. This has sent the MULPOC and ECA out of sight and, unless remedial actions are taken, out of mind.

(iii) Harnessing information for development: The nexus issues.

249. The renewal process at ECA is built around a clear vision of Africa's future in a world of rapid technology and information revolution which it can use to catching, as much as possible, with the rest of the world given the right strategic investment. In pursuit of this vision it will be necessary, indeed crucial, to harness this information at the MULPOC level with a strong coordinating base at headquarters.

250. One of the weaknesses of member States is that of clear problem definitions for which the different levels of information could be collected. The relevant capacity to collect and analyze such information could then be build or strengthened. With the new programme area on **harnessing information for development**, integrated information generating and analyzing mechanisms could be developed at the level of the MULPOCs for quick reference and use both by ECA and African countries at their different levels.

36_/ See mention in document E/ECA/CM.22/2, op. cit. para. 173.

251. This is even more evident for the environment. A major environmental problem which is also common and needs immediate attention is that of environmental information, to be able to move towards environmentally sustainable development. This cannot be done unless information on the fundamental issues surrounding natural resource management and other environmental issues are understood. The role of the State, science, tenure, communities, macro-economic policies, the private sector, NGOs and markets must be understood.

252. The challenge is to work out a system of programme development flow from ECA Headquarters to the MULPOC that will be consistent with activities at the national. Since resources do not allow the MULPOCs to be as operational as they were initially intended to be, it is necessary to study the various possibilities of strengthening ECA/MULPOC programme development, a review of the interaction process between the MULPOCs and the major subregional organizations, particularly those promoting subregional economic integration on the one hand and those specialized in activities of the nexus. For the furtherance of the spirit of the nexus, information is therefore vital. This should be a key part of the process of strengthening the MULPOCs.

(iv) Strengthening and utilization of ECA-sponsored institutions at the MULPOC level

253. The ECA-sponsored institutions which were established and run by member States to enhance their capacities in the different sectors buttress their collective effort for socio-economic development should be fully used by the MULPOCs "as allies in the transmission of ideas collected and generated by ECA," so well put in the Strategic Directions document.

254. Of the many ECA-sponsored institutions, the one which best captures cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary Aspects of the nexus issues is the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD). Through the Centre with the support of a well developed GIS database at ECA and its Regional Database and Service Centre, a regular short and medium-term period monitoring can be established. This will enhance ECA database for cost-effectiveness in integrative thinking in contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in Africa.

(v) ECA environment programme activities as a major component for regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration

255. A distinctive feature of the UNCED preparations in Africa was the active participation of the continent's major groups in the various stages of the preparatory process, in which ECA played the key coordinating role. The IGOs, particularly African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), NGOs, women's organizations, major groups commendably complemented and supported the efforts of African countries in the preparation of Africa's contributions and committal document - Africa's Common Position on Environment and Development - to the Earth Summit. They lobbied for Africa's interests and concerns and were in the forefront in raising public awareness of the regions' stakes and expectations. They significantly contributed to the development, in the context of the negotiations for the various conventions, of the continent's common perspectives.

256. The main criticism of the MULPOCs has been the poor harmonization of programmes between them and ECA Headquarters. This is an important area for review and the challenge that the managers of the new strategic directions will have to face. The effective contribution of the environment component in enhancing the impact of the activities of the nexus from the regional to the "trickle-down" national level will depend on the structure of the activities of the environment component and the built-in information integrated data and information base. The subregional IGOs participated actively in the preparations and follow-up to UNCED and are aware of ECA's role in the UNCED process. They will respond to the nexus approach of the new directions and since the role ECA is well appreciated in this area. This will be added value for programme orientation of ECA in **regional cooperation in Africa**.

(v) Nature of Outputs: quality and quantity

257. Member States have found many ECA reports and publications useful source material. They are useful in preparing policy or project proposals for decision-making and offer an opportunity for member States to keep abreast of what is happening in other countries.

258. However, many have also complained of their being thin on the ground. They are not in-depth studies applicable to local conditions. Some of them tend to press through preconceived or generalized notions of problems rather than on country specific analysis.

259. This calls for a very comprehensive, and integrated development oriented database at both the MULPOC and ECA levels. For the activities of the nexus, a geographic information systems database is of utmost necessity.

B: Recommendations

260. ECA Conference of Ministers resolutions 810(XXXI) makes four direct requests to the Executive Secretary of the Commission, namely, to:

- (a) strengthen the MULPOCs;
- (b) take necessary measures to ensure that the Centres play their role more efficiently as Centres of excellence for the exchange of experience and information and provision of support for the implementation of regional economic integration;
- (c) undertake, in concert with regional intergovernmental organizations, the necessary consultations with a view to reinstating the subregional conferences of ministers of the Centres to enable them to focus more on specific subregional priorities and enhance the Commissions presence at the subregional and country levels; and
- (d) undertake a study on the rationalization of the membership of the different Centres and make appropriate recommendations.

261. These requests emphasize the fact that the initial objectives of the MULPOCs are still justifiable and that they should serve as a strong impetus for promoting the new programme directions of ECA at the national level, two categories of recommendations are made, namely, those pertaining to institution strengthening, including representational issues, on the one hand and those for programmes to ensure that an effective synergy system is established in the new spirit, and the MULPOCs strengthened accordingly.

CATEGORY I:
Institution strengthening, including representational issues

RECOMMENDATION 1: Programme and representational responsibilities of the MULPOCs.

262. For the MULPOCs to be effective as the outreach arm of ECA and enhance the quality of interaction with senior policy makers in government and the private sector, they must be both programmatic and representational, falling under the direct supervision of the Executive Secretary in the "Executive Management" component of the activities of the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Programme and institutional arrangements

(a) Institutional arrangements.

263. To promote ECA's visibility at the subregional and national levels, with the MULPOCs being able to respond more rapidly to the needs of various subregional organizations and member States, and overcoming the perception of remoteness at the country level, a new paradigm of structural interaction is recommended. This will involve the ECA-MULPOC-Subregion-member State and "same path return process" in programme action.

264. In this "same path return process," the MULPOCs are central. Apart from the mandatory support from ECA, the MULPOCs should build on the capacities of the ECA-sponsored institutions located in their subregion irrespective of their scope of activities - regional or subregional. The following areas for sustaining synergy, therefore, need attention, namely, between:

- (a) ECA/partners (UN and non-UN) and the MULPOCs, whereby there will be full participation of all concerned at the interagency level with the MULPOCs in devolving subregional programmes from the common denominator regional programme for monitoring and evaluation at ECA;
- (b) MULPOCs and ECA-sponsored institutions in identifying areas of complementary and joint activities with subregional IGOs;
- (c) MULPOCs and ECA-sponsored institutions/IGOs, giving the MULPOCs and the ECA-sponsored institutions the opportunity to work together on one side in providing mutual assistance to IGOs; and
- (d) MULPOCs and ECA-sponsored institutions/IGOs/member States, activating the

critical trickle down effects from MULPOCs, ECA-sponsored institutions and subregional IGOs to member States.

265. The flow of actions under this institution interaction paradigm will facilitate three levels of action that should, at all times, be under control by the central programme manager, ECA Headquarters. A disfunction of one of the links, it is being postulated will cause a breakdown and hamper deliver and impact.

(a) Level I: ECA/partners (UN and non-UN) and the MULPOCs;

266. The first level, **LEVEL I**, is the regional. This level provides the policy analysis and decision making framework regarding the regional and subregional programme formulation and implementation as well as enabling the "trickle-down" effect of programmes to the national level. This is where the success or failure of the functioning in the paradigm lies.

267. The programme manager at **ECA Headquarters**, in close consultation, indeed participation of the relevant substantive subprogrammes, is responsible for the development of regional programmes that should be adapted at the subregional level. The programmes should then be formulated in a manner that will lend themselves to a common monitoring and evaluation mechanism. In other words, the evaluation of the level of performance of the central coordination functions of the regional programme must include and depend on the level of effectiveness of the subregional components. The evaluation cannot be reliable if the subregional activities. The subregional offices should not, therefore, be left to develop and implement their activities in semi-isolation.

268. Furthermore, at the regional level joint programming, harmonization and coordination should be carried out with partners and the other lead UN agencies such as UNEP for environment, FAO for food and agriculture related issues, UNFPA for population matters, HABITAT for human settlements aspects, UNIDO for the industrial development aspects and UNCTAD for the trade related ones. The purpose will be to ensure complementarity and use of comparative advantages down to the national level where ECA needs that close partnership

with the others to ensure the effectiveness of the "trickle-down" impacts of its programmes.

269. To further facilitate interactions from this regional level downwards, the role of the relevant regional intergovernmental organizations need to be acknowledged and used. They too have their networks that are funded by member States, directly addressing issues of immediate subregional priority as they impinge on national development.

270. In view of the importance of a reliable regional information system, a **Regional integrated database** is indispensable. Statistics are not enough. A development problem diagnostic database should be aimed at.

(ii) Level II: MULPOCs, ECA-sponsored institutions and IGOs

271. The next level, **LEVEL II**, is at the subregions where most of the action should be. To provide the basis for regional policy and decision making at headquarters, this level should be active in:

- (a) data collection from subregional IGOs, NGOs, women's associations and community-based organizations (CBOs) and national institutions, IGOs and maintenance of a subregional database;
- (b) harmonization of ECA programmes with those of other UN agencies in promoting subregional cooperation;
- (c) developing institutional links with IGOs and NGOs;
- (d) jointly preparing reports, using as much as possible ECA-sponsored institutions located in the subregion, with key subregional IGOs and presenting them to the legislative bodies of those IGOs; and
- (e) monitoring, evaluation and reporting to ECA Headquarters.

272. Again, a reliable, comprehensive and integrated subregional information system, a **Subregional integrated database** which is development problem diagnostic in nature is dispensable. The countries of the region are lagging behind in information systems and this will be value added investment in reliable material for policy and decision making.

(iii) Level III: MULPOCs and ECA-sponsored institutions/IGOs/member States.

273. The lowest but most important, most difficult to attain but most necessary to reach

is **LEVEL III**, referred to here as the "trickle-down" level. This is where all the agencies of the UN system, bilateral and multilateral agencies are engaged with government in the development of activities of various types. Each of them tries to carve out a niche for visible impact based on the resources at their disposal. Although ECA may be thought of as being relatively handicapped as compared to the others with greater financial advantage, it has the important privilege of facilitating cross-sectoral and multidimensional thinking for programme development.

274. At this level there is the need for information in an integrated format to orient action. There is the need for assistance to develop and strengthen integrated national data and information systems, monitoring and evaluation, joint ECA-MULPOC/UN system/subregional IGOs and NGOs to the relevant national instances. The information network initiated by ACMAD through its AMEDIS should be strengthened and integrated into the ECA-MULPOC system and its use intensified at this level.

275. ECA must use its **national focal points**, including **Government Ministries** particularly the **Ministers responsible for Social and Economic Development and Planning**, and **national IGO/NGO focal points** Commissions/Committee for sustainable development and national Agenda 21 mechanisms. This would form a strong basis for capacity building for developing and strengthening national data and information systems, monitoring and evaluation - with ECA/MULPOCs and partners.

(b) Advisory services

276. Since by definition, ECA's action at the national level is highly limited to the advisory service activities of the Commission, on request, and that the effectiveness and impact of the other activities depend on may be called a "trickle-down" ³⁷ process, this is a critical area to manage in closer harmonization with the substantive activities than

37/ By "trickle-down" effect, it is understood to refer to the indirect but necessary benefits from programme activities. Although indirect, they can be programmed and actions taken at the required level to ensure that this effect takes place.

before.

277. Advisory services must be tailored to respond to the multifaceted nature of the issues being addressed. Their mix and quality must also be addressed. Many member States are still very critical of the way ECA advisory missions are organized in view of the difficulty in communications. Mission programmes and itineraries <Spelling> are sometimes changed without notifying the country concerned. This disrupts the activities of member States. Since other agencies are more reliable some of them do not want to get involved with ECA advisory services; they turn to the other agencies.

278. In view of the partnership drive, to reap its full benefits, partners should be encouraged to be part of this service. Mission teams should include, as much as possible, one from ECA, one from partners in the area concerned, a MULPOC staff, a subregional IGO and a relevant national expert/focal point. The ECA component must be of commensurate experience in the issues of the nexus and level and of the level to act as team-leader.

279. Their draft reports and recommendations must be reviewed by all before they leave the country benefiting from the service to ensure consensus and follow-up.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Reinstatement of the subregional Conferences of Ministers

280. In response to the request to undertake, in concert with regional intergovernmental organizations, the necessary consultations with a view to reinstating the subregional conferences of ministers of the Centres to enable them to focus more on specific subregional priorities and enhance the Commissions presence at the subregional and country levels, it is recommended that the consultations should include MULPOC policy process at two levels, namely,

- (a) jointly with that of the regular session of the leading subregional economic grouping, to review and endorse programme priorities;
- (b) annual programme development and harmonization expert meetings with the ECA-sponsored institutions based in the subregion, subregional IGOs and NGOs.

CATEGORY II:

The MULPOCs as Centres of programme excellence for the exchange of experience, information and provision of support, particularly for the nexus

281. Considering the request for necessary measures to be taken to ensure that the Centres play their role more efficiently as Centres of excellence for the exchange of experience and information and provision of support for the implementation of regional economic integration, it is recommended that:

RECOMMENDATION 4: Programme harmonization

282. Considering the need for the identification programme gaps between the central activities and those of the subregions and harmonization with suggested "same return path" paradigm, all programme managers at ECA are requested to carry out the same exercise in order to enhance programme synergy within ECA and between ECA and the MULPOCs.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Environment component within the nexus

(a) Environment and sustainable development as an integrative component of the nexus activities at the regional level

283. Within the UNCED global framework and African Environment and Development Agenda as presented in the African Strategies for Agenda 21³⁸, three areas are recommended to compose the regional environment and sustainable development framework, namely,

(a) an area covering participation in promoting the regional capacity building implementation of the cross-sectoral aspects of Agenda 21 and other UNCED outcomes, particularly the conventions and programmes of action with a thrust on the Programme of Action for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS);

(b) policy and programme coordination and harmonization in-house at ECA, with UN/DPCSD, UNEP and other UN agencies, regional IGOs (the OAU and AMCEN) and NGOs as well as IGOs and NGOs at the subregional level to ensure the significant permeation of ECA ideas and presence to the national level; and

(c) environmental geographic information systems (GIS) management.

(b) The regional environment programme framework as a spring board for MULPOC actions

38/ See document E/ECA/CM.19/8. Rev. 1 of 1993, op. cit.

(b) The regional environment programme framework as a spring board for MULPOC actions within the nexus

284. The environment component of the MULPOC activities within the nexus should be focused on the:

- (a) Establishment of national sustainable development indicators, in collaboration with Headquarters, UNDP and DPCSD focal points at the national level;
- (b) Subregional and national databases
- (c) Establishment of subregional sustainable indicators and denominators as the case may be;
- (d) National sustainable development profiles highlighting the contribution of each of the activities, and others as the case may be;
- (e) Needs profiles (subregional and national
- (f) capacity building: the nexus areas

RECOMMENDATION 6: Harnessing information for development: The environment in the nexus issues.

285. Once again, in furthering the spirit of the nexus, information is therefore vital as a key aspect of strengthening the MULPOCs and making them more effective as the outreach organs of ECA. One sees the development of a subregional information database and a support network as crucial.

(a) At the level of ECA Headquarters

(i) Central integrated development issues data base: Environmental geographic information systems (GIS)

286. At the moment ECA has a geographic information system (GIS) facility base which is a gold mine for the activities of the nexus issues. Apart from being the time-space information backbone of the activities of the nexus, it should also be enhanced to support the other five programme direction areas, namely:

- a) facilitating economic and social policy analysis and implementation;
- b) ensuring food security and sustainable development (the nexus);
- c) strengthening development management;

- d) harnessing information for development; and
- e) promoting regional cooperation.

287. This is a strong collaboration basis with UNEP's Global Resource Information Database (GRID), based on environmental geographic information systems which can be used to study local, national and regional issues. Fortunately, many African countries are acquiring GIS facilities bilaterally and through UNEP and should, eventually, be in a good position to interact with ECA on this basis.

288. The other invaluable information network is UNEP's Environment Information Exchange Network (INFOTERRA). It does not only make information available but also focuses on providing guidance on where information can be found and how it can be used most effectively. It provides on-line access to data banks and support for the development of country institutional capacities.

(ii) At the level of the MULPOCs: Establishment of a MULPOC Integrated Information System and Data-base (MIISYSD)

289. The ECA should study the feasibility of establishing a MULPOC Integrated Information System and Data-base (MISYSD). This system should serve the needs of the IGOs and national level too. During the seminars and workshops planned for the MULPOCs capacity building for their development and management at the national level should be covered.

290. Appropriate integrated development data analysis software should be developed or adapted by ECA.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Framework of outputs for the activities of the nexus

291. It is recommended that major African policy documents should provide the framework for activities and outputs so that the areas are familiar to the IGOs at the subregional level and they can also contribute to them. For the environment four major documents should provide the framework besides the various global Plans of Action particularly the SIDS programme, namely, the:

- (a) Framework Agenda for Building and Utilizing Critical Capacities in Africa;

- (b) African Strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21;
- (c) New policy orientation of AMCEN; and
- (d) Guidelines for monitoring the progress made in building critical capacities for environment and sustainable development.

292. Based on the above and using the proposed information and data base, the major outputs of the nexus, besides case specific analytical reports, should be:

- (a) Annual State of the environment and sustainable development reports;
- (b) Annual status reports of progress made in achieving food security based on country specific examples;
- (c) Annual status reports on population issues emanating from activities of the nexus; and
- (d) Annual status reports on the implementation of sustainable human settlement programmes and their impact on the issues of the nexus.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Output delivery

293. A study should be carried out on how to integrate the regular MULPOC meetings into those of the major subregional economic grouping so that reports of MULPOC activities are part of the agenda of those meetings at the highest level that they are held. This will enhance ECA's drive for its visibility to reach member States. Programme ideas for the subregional component of ECA regional programmes will be discussed at such meeting. This will mean cost sharing which should be part of the discussion.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

Variation of programme activity focus in the MULPOCs

Programmed activity	North	West	Central	Eastern	Southern
Socio-economic conditions.	Same	Same	Same	Same	Same
Monetary & financial policies	Coordination and harmonization of trade, monetary and financial policies in N. Africa	Prospects for monetary and financial cooperation in West Africa	N.A	Study on the harmonization of the monetary and financial policies for a better integration of the economies of Eastern Africa	N. A.
Harmonization & rationalization of economic integration programmes	1. Economic reforms in N. Africa and their impact on regional cooperation and integration. 2. Regional cooperation in transport and communications and other infrastructural development.	N. A.	1. Arrangement and regional integration; 2. Proposals for the development of intra-subregional products as an approach to food security and regional integration in Central Africa		
Water resources	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	Water resources and agricultural development in the Eastern African subregion: prospects for intra-subregional cooperation.	N. A.

Variation of programme activity focus in the MULPOCs (cont'd)

Area	North	West	Central	Eastern	Southern
Food security.	Coordination and harmonization of food and agriculture policies, strategies and production in North Africa.	Financing the implementation of projects identified within the framework of the regional convention on fishery cooperation among African countries bordering the Atlantic Ocean.		Study on post harvest losses in East Africa.	Coordination, harmonization and rationalization of food security programmes in Southern Africa
Industry related.	N. A.	Mid-term evaluation of the Second Industrial Development Decade for West Africa subregion.	Women and promotion of small scale industry in Central Africa.	Development and application of common industrial product standards in the Eastern Africa subregion	N. A.
Lake and river related.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	Development of river and lake transport in Eastern Africa.	
Transit transport corridors, etc.	N. A.	N. A.	Study on transport facilitation along the corridor from coastal ports of Douala, Pointe-Noire, Libreville to landlocked countries.	Review of the transit corridor between landlocked and coastal countries of Eastern Africa.	

Variation of programme activity focus in the MULPOCs (cont'd)

Programmed activity	North	West	Central	Eastern	Southern
Env'mental management.	Monitoring and follow-up of progress in desertification control in North Africa.	N. A.	Proposals for the establishment of a subregional mechanism for environmental management and protection.		
Population	N. A.	Impact of recent population movements on the economies of the MANU River Union (MRU) countries.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.
Women	N. A.	N. A.	Women and promotion of small-scale industry in Central Africa.	N. A.	1. Promotion of Women entrepreneurship in Southern Africa. 2. Follow-up on selected resolutions of the Fourth UN Conference on Women.

ANNEX III

Variation of programme activity focus in the MULPOCs: Publications³⁹

Programmed activity	North	West	Central	Eastern	Southern
Socio-economic conditions.	N.A.	RP:- Directory of West African IGOs.	N. A.	N. A.	RP:- Activities of the UNECA regional office for Southern Africa
Monetary, financial & trade policies.	NP:- Export Insurance in North Africa: Assessment and improvements. NP:- Private investment in N. Africa including foreign direct investments.	N. A.	NP:- The CEA Franc inconvertibility and its implications for the monetary cooperation between CEMAC and the UEMOA.	N. A.	NP:- Assessment of the impact of current economic, monetary and financial reforms on selected economic sectors of Southern African countries.
Harmonization & rationalization of economic integration programmes	NP:- Implementation of the UMA convention and development strategies for regional economic cooperation. NP:- Prospects for cooperation between N. Africa and the European Union.	N. A.	NP:- Establishment of a priority programme related to the promotion of small scale enterprises in the subregion and its impact on subregional economic integration.	N. A.	NP:- Review of economic cooperation and integration efforts in Southern Africa

40 / RP = Recurrent Publication; NP = Non-recurrent Publication

Variation of programme activity focus in the MULPOCs: Publications (cont'd)

Programmed activity	North	West	Central	Eastern	Southern
Food security.	NP:- Evaluation and development of fishery resources in N. Africa.	NP:- Evaluation and harmonization of food security programmes with a view to improving their implementation. NP:- Modernization and expansion of the agro-industrial sector in West Africa. NP:- Impact of the Uruguay Round Agreement on West Africa's trade in food production with particular emphasis on tropical beverages (coffee, tea) and cereals.	N. A.	NP:- Annual Bulletin: "Basic statistics on agriculture forestry, natural resources and livestock in the countries of Eastern Africa." NP:- Compendium of agricultural and livestock research programmes. NP:- Border trade in horticultural produce in East Africa.	N. A.

Variation of programme activity focus in the MULPOCs: Publications (cont'd)

Programmed activity	North	West	Central	Eastern	Southern
Industry related.	N. A.	NP:- Impact of exchange rates fluctuations on the manufacturing sector in West Africa.	NP:- Industrial food processing and marketing in Central Africa.	RP:- Small scale food processing technologies and their use in the rural areas of Eastern Africa.	N. A.
Transit, transport corridors, etc.	N. A.	N. A.	NP:- Proposals for the establishment of a pooling system to enhance subregional air links in Central Africa.	N. A.	N. A.
Women	NP:- Measures and mechanisms to enhance the role of women in the economic development process of N. Africa.	NP:- Role of women in informal trade in West Africa.	N. A.	RP:- Bulletin: "Women and Development" in East Africa.	N. A.
Env'mental management.	N. A.	NP:- Strengthening of institutional framework in the implementation of the ECOWAS master plan for combatting desertification and for the conservation of natural resources in West Africa.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.