



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.:  
LIMITED

21840

E/ECA/PSD.5/57  
21 March 1988

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Fifth session of the Joint Conference  
of African Planners, Statisticians  
and Demographers

Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), 21-28 March 1988

The International Conference on the Human Dimension  
of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development

THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION

TOWARDS A HUMAN-FOCUSED APPROACH TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Khartoum 8 March 1988

## PREAMBLE

1. Under the auspices of the United Nations, an International Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development took place in Khartoum, Sudan from 5 to 8 March 1988 as part of the follow-up to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UN-PAAERD) and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 (APPER) and as a sequel to the International Conference on Africa: The Challenge of Economic Recovery and Accelerated Development held in Abuja, Nigeria in June 1987. The Conference brought together a gathering of about 200 policy- and decision-makers, government officials, professional and technical experts in the field of development and other related fields mostly from various African countries, as well as representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations, agencies of the United Nations system, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, bilateral and multilateral donor organisations and other resource personnel.

2. The Conference was organized with the whole-hearted support of the government and people of Sudan and participants enjoyed the warm hospitality of the Sudanese people. His Excellency Mr. El Sadik El Mahdi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Sudan, addressed the opening of the Conference. The proceedings were conducted in seven plenary sessions and six working groups. The Conference made a deep and detailed analysis of the African situation, particularly the current economic crisis and all its ramifications on the people of Africa. The Conference is unanimous in its conviction that the crisis that confronts the African

continent is one that affects the total human condition of the continent and its people, men and women alike. It is a crisis that challenges the very survival of the African people. It is a crisis of Africa's environment as the desert rapidly overcomes the fertility of the land and the coastlines also recede. It is a crisis of the continent's natural resources exploited more for the benefit of external interests than to meet Africa's dire needs. It is a crisis of the rich cultures of the African people and the cohesion of families broken up by the desperate circumstances of the African reality. It is a crisis that threatens to overwhelm Africa and her people and, in extremis, to reduce them to the helpless gaze depicted in the starving faces of Africa's children in the international media. But it is a crisis that can and must be overcome through the concerted and determined action of the African people and their societies and States, as they develop a clearer understanding of the implications of the current predicament and fashion a decisive and coherent plan of action, with the assistance and understanding of the international community.

3. We are encouraged in this view by the fact that although Africa has been sorely squeezed by the pressures of recent years and millions of Africans have suffered severely, no objective observer can fail to be impressed by the vitality, and human creativity which strive and flourish in spite of everything. The large cutbacks and constraints of government and urban production have stimulated communities to devise their own solutions to the problem of meeting their own basic human needs. Self-help groups abound in every country; the extended family, though strained, has often provided the means of survival of many of its members; examples of community action can be found in almost every

village. It is important to recognize the enormous potential of the human energy and creativity and find ways to harness it rather than ignore it in the total process of national recovery and development. For these and other reasons we repeat that Africa's crisis, though dire, **CAN AND MUST BE OVERCOME**

4. As participants in this event, the overwhelming majority of whom come from the African continent, we are moved to place on record our collective voice on the issues we discussed and we accordingly make this **KHARTOUM DECLARATION**.

## A. OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE HUMAN CONDITION IN AFRICA

5. Since the human being is the centre of all development, the human condition is the only final measure of development. Improving that condition is essential for the poor and vulnerable human beings who comprise the majority of our peoples in Africa. Africa's men and women are the main factors and the ends for whom and by whom any programme and implementation of development must be justified.

6. Regrettably, over the past decade the human condition of most Africans has deteriorated calamitously. Real incomes of almost all households and families declined sharply. Malnutrition has risen massively, food production has fallen relative to population, the quality and quantity of health and education services have deteriorated. Famine and war have made tens of millions of human beings refugees and displaced persons. In many cases, the slow decline of infant mortality and of death from preventable, epidemic diseases has been reversed. Meanwhile the unemployment and underemployment situation has worsened markedly.

7. Acts of destabilization and aggression, being perpetrated against the countries of Southern Africa by the South Africa regime, have also imposed massive human and economic costs, greatly in excess of military budgets or battle casualties. Of the approximately one million human beings dead in Southern Africa as a result of South African aggression over 1980-86 about one hundred thousand were war-dead, narrowly defined. Of the approximately thirty billion dollars in lost production, most relates to the creation of chaos and the loss of peasants' crops and national production.

8. Production and other economic aspects of development - especially distribution - are of crucial importance. Production by the poor is vital if they are to become more able to meet at least their basic needs. But it is just as important who produces what. Production of food, of basic consumer goods, of agricultural inputs and construction materials, of basic services such as health, education, and pure water, as well as of exports are central to improving the human condition. Unsustainable imbalances do matter.

9. Nutrition imbalances are as crucial as trade imbalances. High infant mortality requires just as immediate and as serious an attention as high rates of inflation or huge budget deficits. Ultimately the trade, inflation and budget imbalances are serious obstacles to development because they are barriers to enabling the poor to produce more; to the vulnerable to surviving and rehabilitating themselves; and to the state and the society achieving universal access to basic services.

10. Therefore, a basic test for all stabilization, adjustment and development programmes is whether they will improve the human condition from their inception or, on the contrary, worsen it. Social services and human resources development programmes have high short-, medium- and long-term payoffs on economic as well as on broader development criteria.

11. They are relevant to the reversal of unsustainable imbalances since survival and rehabilitation assistance to the most vulnerable groups - international refugees and displaced persons, disabled persons, youth, women and children - is an important element in reversing production losses.

Similarly, the engagement of Africa's most basic resource - its approximately 250 million economically active people - in production, is essential to restoring growth as well as development.

12. The human-centred strategy to the implementing of the Lagos Plan of Action, APPER and UN-PAAERD is vital for reaching out to the aspirations and needs of Africa's peoples and especially their poor and vulnerable majorities. It is deliverable through the appropriate mobilization, allocation and use of resources. To bring this about it will be essential to restore the strained and torn fabrics of our societies, make popular participation in decision-making processes effective, ensure the preservation of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms and eliminate policies that discriminate against minorities and vulnerable groups.

13. Progress in advancing the human condition in Africa depends on the structure, pattern and political context of socio-economic development. The problems and weaknesses in these areas must therefore be recognized and attempts must be made to tackle them in order to achieve the objectives of social and human development. This is also necessary because the economic crisis which Africa faced from the late 1970s found fertile ground in the structural and political weaknesses that bred the germs that hastened the intolerable deterioration in the human condition.

14. A fundamental problem is the fast rate of population growth and the uneven and uneconomic distribution of the population in the different age groups. The youthful population makes high demands on educational, medical and other social services while the large number of college graduates and school leavers that enter the labour market each year creates an imbalance between labour supply and demand.

15. A further structural factor is the urban bias and socially unequal distribution of critical factors and resources for human development such as employment, income, food and nutrition and health and education. As is well known, this distribution is biased against the majority of the population living mainly in the rural areas and in favour of the politically vocal minority in the urban enclaves. Economic issues have overshadowed social concerns and have prevented African countries from according the needed centrality to the human dimension and the human factor.

16. Finally, the political context for promoting healthy human development has been marred, for more than two decades, by instability, war, intolerance, restrictions on the freedom and human rights of individuals and groups as well as overcentralization of power with attendant restrictions on popular participation in decision-making. In such a context, the motivation of many Africans to achieve their best in productivity and the enhancement of their own and society's well-being has been severely constrained. In times of economic crisis, the politically stronger social groups and individuals survive while the weaker ones go under in increasing deprivation, social dislocation, hunger, ill-health or death.



## **B. THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES**

17. From the causes mentioned so far flow the consequences of wretched misery, marginalization and - for millions - very literally premature death. The severity of the African crisis is such that country after country has been putting in place structural adjustment programmes in their effort to halt their economic degradation and achieve a turn-around. Unfortunately, far too many of these programmes - whether nationally conceived or in collaboration with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the donor community - are rending the fabric of the African society. Rather than improve the human condition, some Structural Adjustment Programmes have aggravated it because they are incomplete, mechanistic and of too short a time perspective.

18. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) are incomplete because they are often implemented as if fiscal, trade and price balances are ends in themselves and are virtually complete sets of means to production increases. Human condition imbalances as related to employment, incomes, nutrition, health and education do not receive equal priority in attention to macro-economic imbalances. Unless and until they make the elimination of these human condition imbalances central targets, stabilization and adjustment programmes cannot provide Africa's growth and development dynamic.

19. They are too mechanistic in being inadequately grounded in, or sensitive to specific national economic, human and cultural realities. This is aggravated by an incomplete articulation which allows the gaps between macro models and contextual realities to remain largely unobserved. Nor

can we evaluate how rapidly production can be expanded; where, by whom and of what. Thus their human condition impact remains inadequately projected instead of being at the centre of target-setting, policy formulation and programme or project choice.

20. They are in too short a time perspective. Africa cannot wait for the attainment of external equilibrium and fiscal balance before seeking to improve the human condition, nor can long-term human investment to strengthen the institutional, scientific, technical and productive capacity operating in environmental balance be postponed. That is essential to attaining the more stable and less vulnerable economic position that we aspire to for the African continent.

21. Further, we must place squarely on record that the external context confronting Africa continues to deteriorate. The terms of trade losses of 1986 vastly exceeded net resource transfers to Africa. APPER is not receiving either the new concessional transfer support or the debt burden relief it projects as essential, or which UN-PAAERD committed the international community to providing. This is not simply an African view - the World Bank has repeatedly said the same thing as has the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Financial Flows for Africa, a majority of whom are paractising bankers.

22. We welcome the increased concern for the human dimension in stabilisation and adjustment programmes, broadly expressed within the international community. But this is far from being enough. The gap between the expression of concern and actual programme implementation remains wide. Human dimension elements are additions, often long after programme initiation, rather than integral parts of their overall

design. Those poor and vulnerable groups to be served are often narrowed down to those who are the victims of the stabilization programme, rather than addressing the human condition of all the absolutely poor and vulnerable people.

23. In the light of all of the foregoing, we do not hesitate to reiterate the central position that the human dimension should be accorded in the stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes, for we are convinced beyond doubt that no nation can be great and prosperous if the majority of its people are poor, malnourished, illiterate, miserable and perpetually vulnerable.

24. Overall, we identify five distinct areas on which greater awareness and action must be focused by the African governments, the international financial institutions and the international community at large. Firstly, all structural adjustment programmes in Africa must be designed, implemented and monitored as part of the long-term framework of Africa's development. These programmes must, therefore, be incontrovertibly compatible with the objectives and aspirations of the African people as outlined in the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos. Secondly, the human dimension must be the fulcrum of the adjustment programmes. Thirdly, the structural adjustment policies must incorporate the relevant adjustments of the social sector. Fourthly, considerations must be made of the consequences of macro-policies on the poor and vulnerable not only so as to design temporary and independent compensatory additional programmes but to make the alleviation of absolute and relative poverty and the elimination of gender biases integral parts and factors of the adjustment

programmes. Lastly, the entire process of monitoring the stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes must incorporate the social aspects and criteria.

25. We regard it as the primary responsibility of African Governments to develop a richer articulation of the total macro-framework within which to reorientate these programmes.

26. Structural adjustment programmes must be made to complement the efforts of African Governments to attain their long-term development objectives. Consequently, they should, through their effects on the economy and the African social fabric, contribute to the preservation of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms and help to eliminate policies that discriminate against minority and vulnerable groups. Above all, the application of structural adjustment measures should restore, not corrode the dignity of the African as a human being.

27. It is with these concerns in mind that we set forth in the pages that follow our conclusions and detailed recommendations.

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

28. In the light of the foregoing analysis, the following conclusions and recommendations are proposed for the most careful consideration of African countries and the international community. It is our earnest hope that these recommendations will be taken into account when the mid-term review of UN-PAAERD is undertaken by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its 43rd session in 1988. Even before that, we hope that individual governments, international agencies and non-governmental organisations will take them fully into account and implement these recommendations in whatever way they may find appropriate, given their respective mandates.

#### I. INCORPORATING THE HUMAN FACTOR IN THE RECOVERY AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

29. Since structural adjustment is intended to improve prospects for longer-term development, the design and context of structural adjustment programmes should incorporate the goals and objectives of long-term development. As the improvement of human condition and welfare is the ultimate objective of development, structural adjustment programmes need to incorporate the human factor into their design and implementation. Towards the achievement of this goal, we call for the following actions at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels.

#### Action at the National Level

- (i) There is an urgent need to restore the centrality in Africa of long-term development goals and actions.

- (ii) To this end, there is a need for African countries to design their structural adjustment programmes as part and parcel of their long-term development goals. These indigenous programmes should serve as the basis for discussion with the donor community, multilateral as well as bilateral.
- (iii) In this process, the human dimension needs to be brought out both in the definition of the long-term goals and in the priorities and components of the structural adjustment process.
- (iv) Each African Government should translate its pronouncements - regarding the centrality of the social sectors in the process of economic recovery and development, as expressed in APPER and UN-PAAERD - into concrete action. In particular, a special appeal is to be made to the governments to speedily carry out their pledge to commit 20-25% of their annual budgets to the agricultural sector.
- (v) In designing adjustment programmes, a careful analysis should be made of what categories of the population are most severely affected during the adjustment period, of the magnitude of their needs and of the ways and means that these needs, especially of the poor, can be met during the process of adjustment and beyond.
- (vi) In making the protection of the poor an integral part of adjustment, the primary strategy should be that of enhancing their productive capacity through better access to productive resources and assets.

- (vii) In the design of adjustment and development programmes, explicit attention must be paid to gender issues so as to accelerate the integration of women in the whole development process. With the clear awareness of women's major contribution to development, there is a new opportunity for making major progress in this direction.
- (viii) Special attention should be paid to the vulnerable groups, particularly children, the aged, the disabled and refugees and displaced persons. The design of adjustment programmes should incorporate aspects of support of the retrenched employees to enable them become viable entrepreneurs. Such support should include provision of loans and extension and advisory services.
- (ix) In making policy decisions on the question of subsidies, a thorough analysis of the impact of such decisions on the most affected groups should be made and, if possible, alternative approaches should be found, especially as regards the poor and vulnerable.
- (x) Food security and its indispensable adjunct of food self-sufficiency should be treated with the utmost priority in the design of adjustment, recovery and development policies.
- (xi) There should be greater openness in the process of designing the adjustment package, both within government and beyond. In particular, employers, trade unions and other relevant groups should

be closely associated with the process both to improve the design of the programmes and to ensure their fuller understanding and support.

Action at the Regional and Sub-regional Levels

- (i) National actions will be greatly helped or hindered to the extent that regional and subregional environments are conducive. To this end, African countries need to take more positive steps toward peace, stability, human rights and African solidarity.
- (ii) Subregional and regional data banks, such as PADIS, should strengthen their programmes in order to generate and disseminate current information and data on the social and human conditions in Africa, in order inter alia to facilitate the monitoring and implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes.
- (iii) Exchange of experience and in-depth studies should be undertaken by African countries and institutions as well as international organizations about structural adjustment options that would, inter alia, take fully into account:
  - the human dimension.
  - compatibility with long-term development.
  - full participation of the people in the design and implementing of the alternative.



- (iv) Subregional and regional institutions should take appropriate action to strengthen and improve the capabilities and skills of African countries in their negotiations with their development partners, especially on issues related to structural adjustment.
- (v) In the long-term, greater sub-regional and regional co-operation is needed to ensure the acceleration and sustainability of long-term African development. In this context, African governments should also try to harmonise the activities of their various institutions in the field of human resources development.

#### Action at the International Level

- (i) Having due regard to the high social costs of structural adjustment programmes, the IMF and the World Bank should endeavour to ensure that adequate and comprehensive safeguards for the protection of vulnerable groups and the human dimension are built into such programmes from the beginning. In this connection, we welcome the recent undertaking by the Bank and IMF to this effect and we urge its rapid implementation.
- (ii) International organizations should intensify their efforts in the development and use of appropriate indicators for closely monitoring the human and social dimensions of the adjustment process.

- (iii) The World Bank and the UNDP, in their various roles as co-ordinators of Consultative Groups and Round Tables, should pay full attention to the human dimension of adjustment in the preparation and documentation for and the discussion at these meetings.

## **II. PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE SOCIAL SECTOR AND THE VULNERABLE GROUPS**

30. Africa's people are her most valuable asset. Their healthy social development is a sine qua non for achieving a productive and sustainable transformation in the continent. Yet, for far too long, the vast majority of the African people, especially women and youth, have been locked into poverty and vulnerability, along with the traditionally disadvantaged, the disabled, refugees and displaced persons. Where the most-affected groups inhabit the neglected rural and peri-urban areas, their living conditions have often become intolerable in recent years as a result of the economic crisis and structural adjustment measures. The fundamental problem is that of late official policies have paid only scant attention and have given very low priority to the social sector and the vulnerable groups in society.

31. Therefore, we strongly recommend the following urgent actions:

### **Action at the National Level**

- (i) Measures should be adopted to promote equitable patterns of development based on the democratization and decentralization of the decision-making process.
- (ii) Even in times of severe resource constraints, such as experienced during periods of economic adjustment, attempts should be made to ensure acceptable minimum levels of and access to food and social services, particularly for the vulnerable groups. Furthermore, food aid, being an important

portion of ODA to Africa, must be used in direct support of food security, particularly to ensure access to food by the vulnerable groups in times of structural adjustment.

- (iii) Investment priorities should be focused on the rural sector so as to raise rural employment, productivity and incomes and to reduce rural poverty.
- (iv) Governments that have not already done so, should formulate and implement national population policies as stipulated by the 1984 Kilimanjaro Programme of Action.
- (v) To arrest the current drought and desertification, resulting from long-continuing misuse of renewable natural resources and endangering mostly the vulnerable persons in the rural areas, sustainable development and long-term considerations, rather than immediate, quick benefits should be made the over-riding principle governing all development plans, programmes and projects. In each and every socio-economic development plan, programme and project, conservation of nature and natural resources and maintenance of ecosystems and environmental balances should be in-built primary component.
- (vi) Opportunities should be given to women for greater participation in the nation's political and decision-making processes at all levels, especially at the national centres of power. Where necessary, appropriate training should be given to them to ensure this.

- (viii) Accelerated child development and survival strategies (for example, low-cost immunization and oral re-hydration therapy) should be implemented so as to reduce the very high levels of infant and child mortality and morbidity.
- (ix) Greater efforts should be made to provide the youth with productive employment opportunities and to integrate them more effectively in the development process.
- (x) Concerted efforts should be made to change prevailing attitudes towards the disabled so as to rehabilitate them and bring them into the mainstream of development.

**Action at the Subregional and Regional Levels**

- (i) Subregional and regional development, research and training and financing institutions should give priority attention in their work programmes to the issues of African women, children, youth and vulnerable groups, particularly the aged, disabled, refugees and displaced persons.
- (ii) Governments of each subregion should device policies and plans for collectively dealing with the root causes of the problems of refugees and displaced persons. Where possible arrangements should be made to facilitate the voluntary return of refugees to their home countries.

**Action at the International Level**

32. International organizations should intensify their efforts, in cooperation with African countries, in the development and use of appropriate indicators for closely monitoring and measuring progress in the improvement of conditions of human well-being. Instruments should also be developed to provide early warning on deteriorating human conditions.

### **III. MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION FOR THE LONG-TERM**

33. Africa's long-term development prospects depend on its human resources, and for African countries to achieve the goals of APPER, UN-PAAERD, and the Lagos Plan of Action a significant strengthening of their capabilities to develop and adequately utilize their human resources is called for. These efforts should be aimed at reinforcing, expanding and making more relevant, the human resources base, avoiding wastage through underutilization of manpower, or loss through the brain drain, and raising productivity levels, particularly in agriculture, through various support policies and programmes and public sector interventions.

34. In the light of the foregoing observations, the following are recommended:

#### **Action at the National Level**

- (i) Efforts should be intensified to expand primary and basic education, especially in the urban peripheries and in the rural areas;
- (ii) Higher and technical education must, of urgent necessity, be significantly strengthened and re-oriented so as to build within them those capabilities that would enable African countries to produce the required middle- and high-level manpower.
- (iii) Governments should strive to seek greater relevance in education and training so that the outputs of education and training systems are more readily employable and can function better as job-creators

rather than as job-seekers, particularly in the rural areas and the agricultural sector.

(iv) Greater emphasis should be placed on improvements in the teaching of science and technology in African countries, and more effective mechanisms should be evolved for the dissemination of the results of scientific and technological research for purposes of application and development.

(v) Governments should review education expenditure policies with a view to maximizing effectiveness in all areas of education.

35. In view of the seriousness of the unemployment and under-employment problems in African countries and the bleak prognosis for the future in this domain, it is strongly recommended that:

- (i) Every development plan should have, as major expressed objectives, the generation of employment and incomes and the reduction of absolute poverty and income inequality among the people and to this end effective monitoring and implementation mechanisms should be established to ensure the achievement of these objectives.
- (ii) Investment priorities should be focused on the rural sector so as to raise rural employment, productivity and incomes and to reduce rural poverty.
- (iii) Opportunities should be increased for women to have a greater access to education and training



in order to increase their skill levels and enable them to raise their efficiency as a significant group in the African workforce.

- (iv) Greater efforts should be made to provide youth with productive employment opportunities and to integrate them more effectively in the development process.
- (v) Governments should provide a more congenial environment for the development of the informal sector which has a high potential for employment creation in African countries and is a rich and fertile ground for the development of indigenous entrepreneurship.

#### **Action at the Sub-regional and Regional Levels**

36. Governments of the various sub-regions and of the region as a whole are urged to strengthen their bonds of co-operation in the area of manpower development and utilization. Accordingly, they are urged to:

- (i) intensify their efforts to create, maintain and strengthen regional and sub-regional institutions with specialization in specific fields of learning and research for the common use of member States.
- (ii) develop joint research programmes among groups of countries at the sub-regional and regional levels to focus on common problems of development in fields such as science and technology, medicine, engineering, agriculture, management etc.

- (iii) strive to expand employment markets within a sub-regional context by embarking upon joint employment-generation investment programmes accompanied by an opening-up of sub-regional employment markets and the promotion of the free movement of people in order to reduce the unemployment problems facing African countries.
- (iv) enter into agreement among themselves within a sub-regional context to promote the exchange of experts and to make it easier for skilled manpower from countries within their sub-regions to find employment in other countries as a means of reducing the brain drain from Africa.
- (v) participate as fully as possible in ECA's Return of Skills Programme for Africa by exploiting this Programme for the identification and recruitment of high-level manpower to fill vacancies in their public and private sectors, higher learning institutions as well as technical assistance posts within their countries.

#### **IV. THE ROLE OF REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS**

##### **(a) Bilateral Donors**

37. The Conference calls upon the industrialized countries, particularly OECD and CEMA, to report on the reforms and resource allocations they are making and will undertake in support of their commitments under UN-PAAERD.

##### **(b) Role of Regional and Subregional Organizations**

38. One cannot overstate the fact that international actions and support are vital to the success of the whole programme of African recovery and development. In the sub-regional and regional levels several actions are vital:

- (i) African countries should rationalise the structure of their regional organisations and make better use of key organisations vital to the co-ordination of African development.
- (ii) Regional organizations should accord the highest priority to the human dimension in the design and implementation of the recovery and development programmes of the continent, including the resolution of regional conflicts so that scarce resources are further saved to protect the human dimension.
- (iii) Co-operation at the regional and subregional levels should focus on collective self-reliance to protect the human dimension during the recovery period and beyond.

- (iv) African governments are at a disadvantage in international negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. This disadvantage must be overcome. African governments should turn, for assistance, to regional organizations, like the ECA, ADB and OAU, which have the capacity to provide technical and political expertise. In particular, the comparative information provided by the ECA on the nature, details and constraints of structural adjustment programmes should be exploited to the maximum in order to improve the negotiating position of the African Governments.

(c) The Role of International Organizations

39. International organizations can and should play a more positive role in Africa's recovery. The major preoccupation of the Conference is the fact that such organisations should be more sensitive and more responsive to the realities of the African countries and societies since political, social, and cultural realities condition the dynamics of adjustment, recovery and development. Accordingly, it is proposed that:

- (i) International organizations involved in Africa should undertake high priority actions aimed at supporting and enhancing the human dimension in the recovery and development programmes of Africa.
- (ii) The Conference endorses the proposal of the UNDP for the establishment of an Inter-Agency Task Force for the assessment of Africa's human resources needs and the development of an appropriate UN System-wide programme of Action in the field of human resources development. This task force

could inter alia establish the modalities and mechanisms for improving coordination in the delivery of mutual cooperation in the field of human resources, public sector resource management, use of resources for human resources development and for the creation of information systems and an integrated data base for human resources development and management. Regional monitoring and information exchange will be conducted by ECA. To this end, the Task Force should in consultation with national governments, draw up a detailed Human Resources Development Plan for submission to and approved by a Special ECA meeting of ministers.

- (iii) The international financial institutions should make prompt and urgent efforts to catalyse the implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Advisory Group on Financial Flows for Africa; and to bring the attention of the international community to the fact that additional resources and debt reductions are urgently required for Africa's adjustment efforts to succeed.
- (iv) International agencies should strengthen their regional and national units by decentralizing power, responsibilities and resources to the regional offices. Increasingly, decision-making on resource allocation should be decentralized to the regional, sub-regional and field offices.
- (v) International organizations ought to ensure that their priorities are in line with the aspirations of African countries. In this context, their

priorities should be compatible with the stated objectives, priorities and strategies of APPER and UN-PAAERD and the Lagos Plan of Action.

- (vi) United Nations organizations should make every effort to collaborate, and coordinate their programmes in order to conserve resources and avoid waste.

(d) The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations

40. There is increasing evidence that non-governmental organizations can make an effective contribution, at the grass-root level, to the process of recovery and development. The NGOs present a number of advantages which must be built upon and strengthened, especially in the context of improving the human condition in Africa. The proposals below are made with the conviction that, if they are adopted, there is a lot to be gained by Africa's poor and vulnerable during the recovery period and by the African people at large during the process of development:

- (i) NGOs should always respect Africa's own priorities and sectoral choices as this is the most sure way of contributing to the overall national efforts.
- (ii) NGOs based in donor countries should review their technical assistance with a view to using as much as possible national expertise and to the extent possible, transferring power to local NGOs.
- (iii) African governments should give due recognition to African NGOs and create the legal and fiscal framework for their activities. NGOs should improve

their policy analysis so as to incorporate longer-term perspectives and commitments.

- (iv) NGOs should have an important role at the international level in monitoring the implementation of international commitments and improving public awareness among their nationals, of the realities of the African countries and societies. African NGOs should be encouraged, as appropriate, to respond to the human and social needs of the poor, especially in rural areas where structural adjustment programmes have resulted in the reduction of social services.

#### D. CONCLUSION AND FOLLOW-UP

41. This **DECLARATION**, then, affirms and asserts that the human dimension is the sine qua non of economic recovery. We, the delegates here assembled, will not abide economic rationale, will not tolerate economic formulas, will not apply economic indices, will not legitimize economic policies which fail to assert the primacy of the human condition. That means, quite simply, that no structural adjustment programme or economic recovery programme should be formulated or can be implemented without having, at its heart, detailed social and human priorities. There can be no real structural adjustment or economic recovery in the absence of the human imperative.

42. And how is that imperative defined?

43. Fundamentally, it means that the vulnerable and the impoverished, the uprooted and the ravaged, women, children, youth, disabled, aged, the rural poor and the urban poor, every group and individual in society who is in some way disadvantaged, must be given paramount consideration in the socio-economic development process. That is a sacrosanct principle. And in the service of that principle, health, education, welfare and all related social sectors become indispensable components of every national policy, every national programme, every national plan, and every regional or sub-regional collaboration.

44. So should Africa conduct itself. But Africa cannot do it alone. The centre - piece of UN-PAAERD, 1986-1990 - of which this **DECLARATION** is an organic part of the follow-up - enshrines a shared partnership between Africa and the rest of the international community.



45. The understanding is explicit: Africa acts and the international community commensurately responds through its own donor reforms and increased levels of assistance. Fidelity begets fidelity. It is a mutual pact. Both sides have binding obligations.

46. Alas, the international community has not yet fulfilled its part of the bargain. African economic recovery continues to be threatened on every front by catastrophic debt, collapsed commodity prices, stagnating concessional flows, and crippling terms of trade. Because the front-line of recovery is the human dimension, the human dimension is at greatest risk. If structural adjustment with a human face does not succeed, then the failure, in considerable measure, will be laid at the feet of the international community.

47. It is this sense of urgency which has animated this Conference and suffuses this DECLARATION. We are nearly two years from the UN Special Session. We are on the eve of the Secretary-General's Mid-Term Review. The UN Programme ends in 1990. We are in a desperate race with time. No one pretends that African economic recovery is a short-term proposition, but the prospects for the human dimension of recovery will be writ in the actions of the next two years.

48. It is therefore our collective recommendation that this DECLARATION be endorsed by the Third ECA Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization, which follows immediately. It is then our hope that the Ministers will transmit this DECLARATION to the 30th Anniversary Session of the ECA Conference of Ministers scheduled for Niamey, Niger in Mid-

April of 1988. If, then, as we would wish, the **DECLARATION** is again embraced, it can be transmitted directly to the General Assembly of the United Nations to be considered by the whole international community of sovereign States, in the highest of forums, as an integral part of the follow-up to the UN Programme.

49. When the Prime Minister of the Sudan opened this Conference, to which this **DECLARATION** stands as an enduring testament, he called for the restoration of the dignity of the African person, for peaceful relations among peoples and States, and for the pursuit of fundamental human rights rooted in the consent of the governed.

50. In so speaking, he mirrors the principles of the United Nations Charter. This Declaration, with its total focus on the human dimension, is a challenge to Africa and to the world to turn yearning into reality.

Done at Khartoum,  
The Republic of the Sudan,  
8 March 1988

## Annex I

### RESOLUTION NO. 1

#### **THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION: TOWARDS A HUMAN-FOCUSED APPROACH TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Conference of Ministers responsible for Human  
Resources Planning, Development and Utilization,

HAVING EXAMINED in depth THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION:  
TOWARDS A HUMAN-FOCUSED APPROACH TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY  
AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA adopted by the INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF AFRICA'S ECONOMIC  
RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT which convened in Khartoum, Sudan  
from 5 to 8 March 1988,

HAVING NOTED that the issues raised and the concerns  
expressed by the International Conference with regard to  
the human condition and human resources development in Africa  
are consistent with and do reinforce the mandate of this  
Conference,

MINDFUL of the need for concerted action to harness support  
from every quarter to promote human development within Africa,

APPRECIATIVE OF the initiative taken by the International  
Conference, which represents one major contribution to  
national, regional and international efforts to improve  
the human condition in Africa,

1. CONGRATULATES the organizers of the Conference,  
the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Follow-  
up on the Implementation of the UN-PAAERD at the Regional

Level under the leadership of ECA, for this commendable initiative to assess the impact of the socio-economic crisis and the related aggravating effects of structural adjustment measures on human development and the development of human resources in Africa, as well as the International Conference for recommending a set of comprehensive measures whose implementation at the national, subregional, regional and international levels would reverse the decline and significantly improve conditions of human well-being in Africa;

2. EXPRESSES its appreciation to the Government of the Republic of the Sudan for hosting the Conference so generously and in particular to His Excellency the Honourable Prime Minister of the Sudan for his leadership role in ensuring that the Conference was a success;

3. FURTHER EXPRESSES its deep appreciation to the United Nations, particularly UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNFPA, ILO, FAO, WFP as well as the ADB and the Government of Canada for the generous contributions which they made to the organization of the International Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development, which gave birth to THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION;

4. ENDORSES the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the International Conference as set forth in THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION: TOWARDS A HUMAN-FOCUSED APPROACH TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA;

5. DECIDES to submit THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION to the 30th anniversary meeting of ECA's Conference of Ministers for adoption by the Conference;

6. URGES member States to fully implement the recommendations of THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION by making the human dimension the central objective of their recovery and long-term development programmes;

7. FURTHER urges international financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral donors, organizations of the UN system and NGOs to implement urgently the recommendations contained in THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION, with a view to ensuring that concern for the human dimension is adequately reflected in their programmes of assistance to African countries;

8. REQUESTS the ECA Conference of Ministers to transmit THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION to the Ad-hoc Committee of the Whole, set up by the General Assembly of the United Nations to undertake the mid-term review of the implementation of the UN-PAAERD and through it to the 43rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly;

9. FURTHER REQUESTS the ECA Conference of Ministers and the General Assembly to ensure that the appropriate follow-up actions for the implementation of the recommendations of THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION are set in motion with minimum delay;

10. URGES the Secretary-General of the United Nations to institute the necessary actions required for mobilizing the entire United Nations system and the international community in support of the implementation of the recommendations of THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION;

11. CALLS UPON the United Nations Inter Agency Task Force to intensify its efforts aimed at the further

strengthening of co-operation between agencies of the United Nations system in search for solutions to Africa's problem of human development within the context of recovery and long-term development;

12. REQUESTS the Executive Secretary of ECA to disseminate **THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION** as widely as possible, particularly to member States, all United Nations agencies and organizations, donor countries and organizations, regional and sub-regional organizations and NGOs, institutions of higher learning and manpower development institutions in Africa;

13. FURTHER REQUESTS the Executive Secretary of ECA and Chairman of the IATF to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of **THE KHARTOUM DECLARATION** and to present comprehensive reports thereon to the annual meetings of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Ten as well as to the Fourth Session of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization.