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**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

Distr.: GENERAL

E/ECA/CM.13/50

3 April 1987

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Eighth meeting of the Technical
Preparatory Committee of the
Whole

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
13-20 April 1987

Item 11 of the provisional agenda*

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-second session of the Commission/
thirteenth meeting of the Conference
of Ministers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
23-27 April 1987

Item 6 of the provisional agenda**

CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

* E/ECA/TPCW.8/1.

** E/ECA/CM.13/1.

Introduction

1. The Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa (1980-2000) and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (1986-1990) indicate a number of urgent measures to enable the African continent to overcome the critical economic situation it is facing.
2. They clearly show that Africa is determined to formulate and implement its own development strategy.
3. The Monrovia Declaration of Commitment of African Heads of State and the special session of the United Nations General Assembly of May 1986 devoted to Africa's critical economic situation demonstrated to the international community Africa's firm commitment to self-sustaining development. The adoption of a United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development at the special session was a timely supplement to the action already taken by African States. Africa's survival depends on all the above mentioned strategies and commitments.
4. That is why there has been an ever-increasing number of meetings and activities, discussions and consultations to better consider, in a comprehensive and integrated manner, the problems and tasks involved in bringing about the medium and long-term recovery and development of African countries.
5. Thus, for the first time, a Conference of African Ministers of Culture was held in April 1986 at Port Louis, Mauritius; it is the latest addition to various meetings such as the Council of Ministers of OAU, the meetings of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Development and Education. The cultural approach was used to try to understand the African problem, identify its causes and promote those aspects of African culture that could promote a genuine African development policy centered on man.
6. Indeed, a thorough analysis of various national plans and the realization that the development strategies adopted by most of the industrialized countries have failed demonstrate clearly that the primary aim of development should be to create a material and cultural environment that promotes human development and creativity.
7. The Conference of African Ministers of Culture has suggested a fresh approach to the set of changes recommended by the Monrovia Symposium. The changes endorse, emphasize and place in Africa's current economic context, the position of the Organization of African Unity on cultural issues as stated in: the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (Addis Ababa, 1963), the Pan-African Cultural Manifesto (Algeria, 1969), the final report of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa (Accra, 1975), the Cultural Charter for Africa (Port Louis, 1976), the Monrovia Declaration (1979), the Statutes of the Inter-African Cultural Fund adopted in Freetown (1980), the final report of the Conference of Ministers of Education (Harare

1980), and the report of the Symposium that OAU held in Libreville, Gabon in January 1981 on "Science and Culture as the foundations for African development."

8. In that approach, the African Ministers of Culture endeavored to give substance to the declaration on the cultural aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action adopted by the 21st Assembly of Heads of States and Government of the Organization of African Unity held in Addis Ababa in November 1984.

9. In that declaration, OAU recognized that:

(a) Culture should be promoted as one of the key aspects of overall development whose real aim is not economic growth and that it is vital and urgent to include social and cultural factors in development strategies to bring about balanced and indigenous development;

(b) Development should thus be rooted in the culture of the people, reflect their systems of values in order to free them from any form of economic, social, political and cultural dependence;

(c) Cultural identities as dynamic processes for continuity, creativity and attitudes in the face of innovations should be the basis and final aim of development which should promote them and also guarantee the structural stability and cohesiveness and the social development of the people.

10. Such guidelines will obviously make it possible to rapidly:

(a) Improve the standard of living of people and bring about social development by developing the creativity of the people particularly through their participation in such activities;

(b) Use the feeling that Africans have of a common identity for creating an African consciousness and strengthen such consciousness by jointly seeking to attain African unity and backing up such unity with a determined political will to achieve this under an African cultural community;

(c) Assert that member States have cultural identities and enhance such identities and the collective cultural identity fusion of African unity in international exchange by developing more balanced bilateral and international cultural co-operation.

11. The declaration stresses the following areas: Scientific research on humanities, education and literacy, cultural industries, handicrafts, cultural exchange and the development of tourism and cultural co-operation.

12. It would be helpful for the current session of the Commission and Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic Planning and Development to be informed about the fresh facts which would enable them:

(a) To bring Africa's development into focus by reflecting the cultural identities of Africans in projects and programmes; this implies that economists and policy makers would need to prepare technical specifications that will make it easy to include cultural issues in programming and planning;

(b) To be convinced that if some aspects of African cultural heritage are properly developed, they generate income.

I. PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

13. It is all the more timely to bring the new facts to the attention of the Commission and the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic Planning and Development especially since UNESCO is preparing to implement the United Nations Programme of Action for the World Cultural Development Decade. OAU supported at initiative (declaration AHG/DECL.2 (XXI)).

14. In view of the above, the Commission and the Conference are requested to ensure that:

In preparing development programmes and projects, the needs, potential and social and cultural status of the people are seriously evaluated for them to benefit from development. Such an evaluation requires participatory research (grassroots level) and an interdisciplinary approach involving sociologists, anthropologists, psychiatrists and specialists in religious and spiritual wisdom.

- A policy with respect to information and sensitization should be adopted in the member States with regard to the role of culture in development.

- ECA is requested to support and to provide financial assistance if required to take action in that respect taken by universities, non-governmental organizations, schools, and so on. ECA is also requested to establish a follow-up network comprising personalities involved in this problem and which would:

- (i) Consider tangible measures for mobilizing public opinion;
- (ii) Publicize projects and studies on culturally-based development;
- (iii) Ensure that the provisions of the Lome III Convention regarding culture are implemented;

- ECA, in co-operation with OAU is requested to:

- (i) Lay down procedures for organizing seminars or research workshops on the inclusion of the cultural aspects of development in development plans, programmes and strategies at the national level and under the Lagos Plan of Action. Two seminars could be organized for each geographical subregion of OAU to ensure the participation

of a significant number of administrators from each country;

- (ii) Prepare programmes for these seminars that would match the national and subregional administrative characteristics with the continental options of the Lagos Plan of Action;
- (iii) Prepare a schedule for implementing the programme over the next two years;
- (iv) Identify African subregional and regional organizations and training centres likely to assist in preparing and implementing the programme;
- (v) Identify additional sources of financing willing to support the programme. UNDP, the African Development Bank, the World Bank and UNICEF may be interested in funding all or part of the programme in addition to the European Economic Community, UNESCO, ECA and OAU.