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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
ON THE WORK PROGRAMME AND PRIORITIES TO THE
THIRD SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR AFRICA

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. Paragraph 6.4 of the report of the First Session of the Economic Commission for Africa provides that : "The Executive Secretary should convene, in advance of the next session of the Commission, a meeting of representatives of all members and associate members to consider proposals for the work programme which Governments would be requested to submit to the Executive Secretary. The Committee should also receive a report from the Executive Secretary on the progress of work since the last session. It would be the task of the Committee to prepare a draft work programme. While the Commission did not specifically request the convening of a similar meeting before the third session, the Executive Secretary believed that such a meeting could usefully be held at this time.
2. The Committee met on Wednesday, 1 February 1961 in the Parliament Buildings in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Committee held five meetings from 1 February to 3 February 1961. The meeting was attended by representatives of members and associate members of the Commission and by observers from three members of the United Nations not members of the Commission. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Heurtematte, the United Nations Commissioner for Technical Assistance and representatives of TAB and FAO. A list of these representatives and observers is provided in an annex to this report.
3. The Chairman of the ^{three} first meetings was Mr. ~~Marison~~^{Mansour} Fahny (UAR), and of the remaining meetings Mr. Ali Skalli (Morocco).

B. ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

4. The Committee on the Programme of Work and Priorities considered the draft programme submitted by the Secretariat in Document E/CN.14/87/Rev.1. In a brief general debate on Part A of the document "Observations on the Programme of Work and Priorities" delegations sought clarification on a number of issues. These included the availability of advisory services particularly in the field of development planning ; another point was the channelling of requests for technical assistance.

5. Several delegates requested clarification of the meaning of paragraph 9. The Secretariat has, therefore, reworded the paragraph as follows :

The resolution of the Second Conference of the Independent African States recommending the establishing of a Council for African Economic Cooperation authorized its expert committee, when it was established, to seek through the ECA the assistance of the appropriate international bodies to implement certain provisions laid down in the resolution.

6. It was suggested that the Secretariat should examine the possibility of bringing out more clearly the relationship between various items in the programme of work and between continuing and ad hoc studies on a given subject. In this connexion, mention was made of the possibility of regrouping various items or indicating by means of annotation the nature of their inter-relationship. It was also suggested that there should be an additional head under each item showing briefly whether it was new, or alternatively what progress had been made.

7. When dealing with Part B "Annotated list of projects for 1961-62", the procedure was adopted of considering the draft programme item by item. The discussion was conducted on general lines and did not result in specific amendments. Each item was introduced by the Secretariat. Subsequent discussion took three main forms:

- (a) In some cases there was no subsequent discussion and the item was accepted as drafted;
- (b) In other cases, discussion took the form of general or descriptive remarks regarding experience in the various countries and did not call for clarification or extension of the project statement as drafted;
- (c) In other cases there were questions and suggestions aimed at securing greater clarity, at changes in the content or emphasis of the project, or at adding aspects not covered in the draft.

8. It was left to the Secretariat to formulate and incorporate the views of the Committee.

9. This report confines itself, therefore, to those projects covered by sub-paragraph 7 (c) above, i.e. those projects that required modification in the light of the comments of the Committee. No attempt is made here to summarize the debate in general. Summary records are available of the full proceedings.

Development policies and programming (project 01-01)

10. The committee welcomed the proposal to conduct a working party on economic and social development in the second half of 1961. This working party would discuss economic, social and technical problems of development policies and programming and advise on directions of future work. In this connexion it was suggested that the Secretariat should study methods of keeping inflationary pressures under control and measures to promote domestic saving for the financing of economic development.

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Commercial legislation (project 01-02)

11. There was a consensus of opinion that, as formulated, the project was too limited in scope. Several aspects of law and legislation outside commercial law in its strict sense were thought to be of great immediate importance.

The project was therefore reworded as follows:--

01-02 Legal and legislative aspects of economic and social development

Description : Studies of law and legislation in African countries and territories bearing on aspects of economic and social development and assistance to Governments at their request in adjusting such legislation to the needs of an expanding economy.

Social aspects of economic development (Project 01-15)

12. The Secretariat was asked to keep in mind the following points in carrying out this project:

- a) The need for studies of migrations across national boundary lines.
- b) The importance of rural as well as urban communities in relation to economic development.
- c) The advisability of studying the social consequences of industrialization at an early stage in order to avoid social hardship and other undesirable effects.

Development Banks (Project 01-03)

13. Several delegations stated that a study of the organization and the functions of development banks would be of great interest to their governments. It was suggested that countries which already had well-established development banks should make their experience available to other members of the Commission.

The Executive Secretary was asked to consider the possibility of completing a preliminary report on development banks in the course of 1961. It was agreed that this report should deal with regional as well as national development banks.

14. Educational Requirements of Development Programmes (Project 01-06)

It was suggested that countries be selected for the study, insofar as possible, on the basis of the urgency of their needs in the field of educational planning ; moreover, civil servants in the country selected should be associated with the research work so that they learn the research techniques employed in the study.

15. Community development and economic development (Project 01-07)

It was generally agreed that community development is an excellent method of enlisting popular participation in the Government's efforts for economic development and for increasing capital formation and domestic savings. Attention was drawn to the need for adjusting the taxation burden both to ensure proper maintenance of projects resulting from community action, and to avoid discouraging further effort.

16. Workshop on problems of Urbanization (Project 01-10)

It was suggested that North African countries which had been included in the Mediterranean Urbanization Survey Mission, should not be overlooked in technical assistance programmes related to problems of urbanization.

17. International Trade (Projects 02-01 and 02-03)

The meeting took note of the two projects introduced by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Impact of Western European Trade groupings in the work programme of the Secretariat. It was suggested that the description of project 02-01 (a) on trade problems of various African areas should include cross references to the studies in the fields of industry and transport (projects 11-02, 11-05 and 12-01). Several delegates expressed the hope that the Secretariat would be able to complete its studies of areas at a comparatively early date. It was noted, however, that the timing of the various projects

and activities in the field of international trade would depend on the decisions taken by the Third Session on the suggested organization of a West African trade conference (E/CN.14/72, para 167) and on the Note of the Executive Secretary concerning the possible establishment of a Standing Trade Committee and related matters.

18. Statistics (Project 04-01, 04-03 and 04-04)

It was pointed out that emphasis was rightly put on development of statistics in African countries rather than on collection of statistics by the Secretariat which should be given second priority at the initial stage of the programme. Meetings of statisticians, moreover, were considered an essential feature of the statistical activities of the Secretariat. In this connexion, the delegation of Tunisia confirmed the offer of its Government to act as host country for the Second Conference of African statisticians to be held in Tunis in June 1961.

19. Industrial Planning (Project 11-01)

It was suggested that in carrying out this project, the Secretariat should take into account the fact that different countries have different economic and social structures and may adopt different approaches to development planning.

20. Studies of individual industries and feasibility studies of industries for selected African countries (Projects 11-02 and 11-05)

Several delegates referred to particular industries which in their view should be studied at an early stage. It was also suggested that in undertaking studies of actual and potential markets for the products of manufacturing industries, account should be taken of markets outside the particular country concerned.

21. Transport (Project 12-01)

The delegates took note of the proposals made by the Secretariat (E/CN.14/94) for the organization of working parties and expert groups on transport problems in East Africa and in West Africa. The question of establishing a transport committee was also discussed. It was agreed that this question should be further considered at the 4th session of the Commission in the light of the experience gained in the course of the work of the secretariat on transport problems on a sub-regional basis.

22. Agriculture (Projects 21-01, 21-02, 21-03, 22-02 and 23-02)

Discussion centred round the relationship between work which the Secretariat should undertake in the agricultural field and that coming within the work programme of FAO. The Executive Secretary pointed out that ECA is primarily concerned with promoting agricultural growth as a factor in general economic development. Technical aspects of agriculture come within the scope of FAO's programme, but the Executive Secretary is in a position to transmit to the Director General of that Organization, requests on technical matters raised by the Commission. The draft programme of work had been prepared in cooperation with FAO. No specific suggestions were agreed upon which affect the formulation or content of projects proposed in this field but the need for a practical approach was emphasized.

23. Community Development and Related Activities in the Social Field
(Projects 31-01 to 31-09)

In the provision of direct assistance to governments under project 31-01 advisers could be provided for varying periods. A recent tendency to supply regional consultants to advise a number of countries was emphasized by the Secretariat. It was agreed that additional pilot projects on the applicability

of community development techniques to urban areas (Project 31-07) could be conducted in North Africa and elsewhere in the Continent, in response to invitations by governments and the provision of adequate facilities. Interest was also expressed in the inclusion of more participants in future study tours for senior officers engaged in community development work (Project 31-09).

24. Training (Projects 41-01 to 41-05)

The wish was expressed that African universities give more emphasis in their curricula to economic organizations of African countries than at present. In this connexion, close cooperation between lecturers in African universities and the Secretariat would be most profitable. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the best way for the Secretariat to accumulate experience on practical problems referring to African economies would be to engage in case studies done on the spot. Young African economists could be associated with such research work and thereby given a useful type of "in-service" training. Finally, it was stressed that middle grade statistical officers should be trained in training centres in their own environment, i.e. in their own country or in their sub-regions rather than at a central point.

25. Following a recommendation of the Conference of Heads of African Universities and University Colleges held in Khartoum in December 1960, it was suggested that the following project be added :

Project 41-06: Summer courses for African university students of economics
Origin : Commission resolution 16 (II)
Recommendations of the Khartoum Conference and ECOSOC 757 (XXX)
Description : Summer courses for students entering their final year at the university.

The purpose of these courses is to bring practical problems of African countries and territories to the attention of university students who might, within a period of 12 months, become officials in government economic departments. It is understood that coordination between the activities of ECA and UNESCO in this field will be ensured.