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

3-12 March 1986  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

ASSOCIATION OF COMPUTER SCIENTISTS IN AFRICA

## Association of Computer Scientists in Africa

### Introduction

1. At the third session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa was requested to include in the agenda for the fourth session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers an item on the establishment of the Association of Computer Scientists in Africa.
2. The secretariat, having no mandate to establish the Association, sought the assistance of the Intergovernmental Bureau of Information (IBI), which as an intergovernmental body specializing in information science was in a position to prepare full documentation and specific proposals on the subject. The Association Africaine des professionnels de l'Informatique are also contacted. The President of this Association, whose Headquarters at Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) has moreover been invited to the Conference to address us about the experience of the Association, which seems to have been established on the initiative of West African Computer Scientists.
3. The secretariat considers that it would be in the interests of African computer scientists to establish like their colleagues in the field of statistics, a region-wide association. Whatever form this association might take - transformation of an existing subregional body into a region-wide association or creation of a new association - it should pursue the attainment of the following objectives:
  - A. To promote the development and application of computer science disciplines for Africa's socio-economic development
4. The African countries should become fully aware of the general problem of the computer science phenomenon in their socio-economic development. Information science offers enormous opportunities for application in almost all spheres of human activity, and constitutes a powerful tool of development. It has vast data acquisition and processing capacity, and can establish management, planning and administrative infrastructures.
5. The Association, once established, should promote the development and application of computer science disciplines by promoting awareness of the importance of computer science in the development process;
  - B. To promote the exchange of experience and the transfer of technology in the computer science field
6. This objective will enable the association to organize conferences and seminars in order to bring about awareness, dialogue and a broad and profitable exchange of views on subjects which today are the province of the experts in the African region, but tomorrow will be of concern to all Africans, and to lay the foundations for harmonization;

C. To encourage the establishment of national computer science associations

7. The Association should also allow national computer science associations to join it as institutional members. National associations have an important role to play in the development of computer science and its integration into the process of national socio-economic development;

D. To disseminate knowledge, information and experience in the field of computer science

E. To promote and encourage research, studies and development programmes consistent with the Association's objectives

8. Encourage investigations of the progress made in the computer science field and disseminate the results of scientific work undertaken by industry and academic institutions.

F. To establish and maintain relations with international associations

9. The establishment of relations with other international associations pursuing similar objectives, such as the Association internationale des Informaticiens du Tiers Monde, should be encouraged. It cannot but result in fruitful dialogue and exchange between the associations.

G. To enhance the professional status of computer scientists

10. The association should promote integrity on the part of people working in the computer science field and increase their competence, promote and protect the professional interests of its members, and advise Governments and other competent authorities on problems relating to the computer science profession.

11. Where the composition of the association is concerned, the secretariat proposes that it should comprise two classes of members, those who are and are not active in the profession, categorized as regular, honorary or institutional:

Regular members

Any African computer science professional may be admitted as a regular member.

Honorary member

Any individual distinguished in the computer science field who has rendered appreciable service to Africa may be admitted as an honorary member.

Institutional member

12. Any institution such as a national or international computer science association or institution active in Africa may be admitted as an institutional member.

13. The charter and rules of procedure of the association can be drawn up once it has been constituted.

14. In conclusion, the secretariat hopes the Conference will be able, in the light of the documents and proposals submitted by IBI and of the comments and views which will certainly be expressed, to make a commitment to the establishment of a strong and active African association.