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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**Executive Committee
Nineteenth meeting
Arusha, 23-25 October 1978**

**NOTE ON THE REPORT OF THE AFRICAN REGIONAL MEETING
OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Opening

1. The African Regional Meeting of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development was held at Cairo (Egypt) from 24 to 29 August 1978. The meeting was opened on 24 August by Mr. Mamdouh Salem, Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Opening statements were made by the Prime Minister, the ECA Executive Secretary, the Deputy-General of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development and the representative of the Administrative Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). An address was also delivered by the United Nations Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation.

Attendance

2. The Meeting, which was well attended by representatives of ECA member States, States Members of the United Nations not members of ECA, United Nations bodies and organizations and non-governmental organizations, adopted the following agenda:

- (1) Opening of the Meeting
- (2) Election of officers
- (3) Adoption of the agenda and programme of work
- (4) Brief statements by heads of delegations from ECA member States on the situation in their respective countries in respect of the application of science and technology to development
- (5) Consideration of the Draft Regional Paper
- (6) Consideration of resolutions submitted by representatives of the least developed countries in Africa
- (7) Other matters
- (8) Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting

Account of proceedings

3. In the conduct of its business, the Meeting held both plenary and working group sessions. The first plenary session heard the brief statements made by heads of delegations on the situation in their respective countries in respect of the application of science and technology to development, after which it decided to establish a Working Group, which agreed to adopt the Draft Regional Paper prepared by ECA as a working document which it would study and modify in the light of country statements made at previous plenary sessions, as well as the contents of national and other papers which were in hand. Consideration would also be made of direct contributions made by members of the Working Group itself.
4. Following the introduction of the Draft Regional Paper by the ECA representative who emphasized that the paper was a draft which could be enriched by recommendations of the Working Group, participants made general remarks on the Paper to the effect that the contents did not fully reflect the situation in respect of science and technology in the region, because of the lack of relevant examples to be drawn from the national papers of ECA member States, most of which were not ready at the time the draft was being prepared.
5. Specific observations were made on the first five chapters, which the meeting agreed to include in the final version of the Regional Paper. The Working Group considered the last chapter, chapter VI, of the Paper in general terms and, because of its crucial importance, agreed to establish a technical committee to study the chapter in detail and make recommendations. Those recommendations are contained in the Draft Programme of Action approved by the meeting (UNCSTD/AFREG/1-PL.42; E/CN.14/ECO/160/Add.1).
6. The Meeting considered and adopted the report of the meeting of least developed countries as contained in annex II to the report of the Meeting.
7. The Meeting adopted several resolutions which are summarized below:
 - (a) Resolution 1, requesting ECA, OAU and the Conference secretariat to continue assisting with preparations at the national and regional levels for the 1979 Conference and inviting aid for this purpose from agencies and organs of the United Nations system;
 - (b) Resolution 2, submitted by the Working Group of the Meeting, calling for an Advisory Committee consisting of representatives of Chad, Egypt, Kenya, Lesotho, the Niger and the Sudan to work with ECA in preparing the final draft of the African Regional Paper and especially the final draft on the Programme of Action (chapter 6 of the African Regional Paper);
 - (c) Resolution 3, requesting the General Assembly at its thirty-third session to consider and adopt decisions on the progress report of the Secretary-General of the Conference regarding the state of preparations for the Conference, and the allocation of funds for the implementation of national, regional and interregional activities foreseen by the Secretary-General. The resolution also urges all States to make positive contributions to the preparations for the Conference;
 - (d) Resolution 4, urging UNCSTD and ECA to pursue the preparations for the Conference beyond the Regional Meeting and to appoint to ECA a "French-speaking African Regional Consultant and Co-ordinator" for the Conference;

(e) Resolution 5, emphasizing the necessity of establishing an effective funding mechanism in order to implement the post-Conference World Programme of Action on the Application of Science and Technology to Development at the national and regional levels, and requesting the Secretary-General of the Conference to study ways in which this might be done and present them for consideration by Member States well before the Conference;

(f) Resolution 6, calling for the upgrading of ECA's Science and Technology Unit to the level of a Division and for its strengthening in terms of structure and finances, due regard being paid to linguistic distribution, in order to enable it to carry out its many and difficult tasks;

(g) Resolutions submitted by the meeting of least developed African countries and contained in annex II to the report of the Meeting. The resolutions contain recommendations of what those countries would like to see in areas which are of great importance to them. Such areas include water, food production, health, housing, transport and communications, scientific and technical manpower, drought and desertification, and international co-operation.

Follow-up activities

8. The Draft Programme of Action is to be submitted to the Conference secretariat in New York for subsequent transmission to the thirty-third session of the General Assembly.

9. The Advisory Committee established by the Meeting to work with ECA in preparing the final versions of the African Regional Paper and Programme of Action is to complete its work before the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee on the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology in January 1979.