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UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
FIFTH MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL FOLLOW-UP  
COMMITTEE OF TEN THE ECA CONFERENCE OF  
MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES  
PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION  
TRIPOLI, LIBYA ARAB JAMAHIRIYA  
9-11 MAY 1990

REPORT  
OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE  
ON HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION IN AFRICA

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

It will be recalled that at its Third Meeting in Khartoum, Sudan in 1988, the ECA Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization endorsed the recommendation made by the International Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development for the creation of a United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Human Resources Development and Utilization. Following informal consultations among the Agencies, the terms of reference and initial composition of the Task Force were agreed upon. The Task Force met twice between January 1989 and January 1990, to work out its broad guidelines, objectives, priorities and modus operandi. This Third Meeting was convened primarily to finalize its main working instruments and consider proposals on ways of testing them. It also prepared itself to respond to an invitation extended to it by the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Ten of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization, for a joint meeting to be held prior to the regular meeting of the Committee.

## 2. OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed participants to the meeting and apologised for the slight changes in schedule which, he explained, were due to unforeseen circumstances. He then declared the meeting open.

## 3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The meeting adopted the following agenda:

### 1. Opening remarks

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
  3. Consideration of Document E/ECA/PHSD/HRP/MFC/90/2  
"A Regional Framework for Human Resources Development and Utilization in Africa": Presentation by ECA
  4. Consideration of UNDP submission "Pilot Programme for Integrated Human Resources Development": Presentation by UNDP
  5. Proposals for enlarging the membership of the Task Force: A note by UNDP
  6. Agenda for the Joint meeting of the Task Force and the ECA Human Resources Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Ten
  7. Any other business
  8. Adoption of the Report
  9. Closure of the meeting
4. CONSIDERATION OF DOCUMENT E/ECA/PHSD/HRP/MFC/90/2 "A REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION IN AFRICA"

The Chairman introduced the agenda item. He recalled that the document under consideration had been examined in its draft form during the second Meeting of the Task Force in Addis Ababa, in January 1990. This second draft had endeavoured to incorporate, as faithfully as possible, all the views of the Task Force members as had been expressed during the Second Meeting. Although no member had submitted any written comments on it, he hoped that they would make any such comments known during this meeting for incorporation into the final version of the document.

Members found but few point of substance in the document on which they could disagree; it was felt that substantively, the revised text proved to be faithful to the views expressed at the Second Meeting. However, they pointed out a number of changes that needed to be made to improve on the style, language and presentation of the document without altering the substance. Those changes were recorded and would appear in the final revision of the document.

The Task Force agreed that the main concerns with which it had been preoccupied during the examination of the first draft in Addis Ababa, had been adequately accommodated in the revised text. Among these, were the concerns of clarity of concepts and definitions, adequate emphasis on elements of "conservation" of human resources; an integrated multi-sectoral, cross-agency approach to the search for solutions; and the need to express priorities in a manner that would leave room for choice at the national level.

It was agreed that the comments of the Task Force as well as any additional comments made thereon by the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Ten, would be reflected in the final revision of the document. It was decided further, that the main elements of the Framework should be introduced early in the document and that the language and style should be improved to render the Framework more "catchy" and thus more saleable to donors and other interested parties.

The meeting then adopted the Framework as amended, for submission for endorsement, to the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Ten of the ECA Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization.

#### 5. CONSIDERATION OF A UNDP SUBMISSION: "PILOT PROGRAMME FOR INTEGRATED HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT"

The representative of UNDP introduced this agenda item. The document, he said, proposed a modest programme aimed at assessing the present situation in respect of human resources development and utilization at the country level; determining requirements for an effective national, inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral framework for human resources development and utilization; defining areas of priority for action and testing these with interventions

He said that the programme aimed at involving a wide array of actors: public and private institutions and bodies, NGOs, etc. The objective would be to review existing systems for human resources development and utilization, relying on the use of national expertise for the conduct of such reviews, with a view to promoting the build-up of capacities. Also, in the process, an inter-agency structure and function would hopefully be built to facilitate co-ordination and joint actions on a more continuous basis. After testing the programme over an 18-month period, an evaluation would be conducted to determine its degree of success.

In the discussions that followed, the Task Force commended UNDP for this initiative to put the Framework into operation on a pilot basis. However, members suggested a few points that needed to be highlighted in the finalization of the proposal. First, the proposal should more clearly address the priorities and objectives of the Framework and should, if possible restrict itself to the core areas identified in the Framework, acknowledging, however, the possibility of identifying key priority areas as yet unidentified among the core areas. Second, all interventions envisaged, should aim at national capacity-building. Third, the programme should explicitly aim at making the Framework operational on the ground. Fourth, IATF participation, both in the selection of participating countries and in the various phases of implementation, monitoring and evaluation, should be ensured.

Other comments made were that training should be emphasised more in the proposal because, often, training acts as a link between education and employment. Where appropriate, local community groups should be involved to facilitate the local aspects of community activities. Finally, it was recommended that the pilot programme should be off the ground by the end of 1990.

6. PROPOSAL FOR ENLARGING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE

The Co-Chairman recalled that the second meeting of the Task Force had proposed that the membership of the Task Force should be enlarged to include IGOs, NGOs and other specialized agencies of the United Nations. He invited comments from members on this proposal.

A number of views on the matter were expressed. It was decided that the Task Force would continue in its present composition until the completion of the pilot phase of the programme for integrated human resources development. Thereafter, it should bring up this agenda item for consideration.

7. AGENDA FOR THE JOINT MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE AND THE ECA HUMAN RESOURCES MINISTERIAL FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE OF TEN

The Task Force was informed that the agenda of the joint meeting of the Task Force and the ECA Human Resources Ministerial Committee of Ten which was to be held on 11 May 1990, was as follows:

- (a) Report of the second and third meetings of the Task Force;
- (b) Consideration of a Regional Framework for Human Resources Development and Utilization in Africa;
- (c) Any other Business

The Task Force took note.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Questions were raised concerning future activities and the previously proposed meeting of the Task Force on co-ordination between the United Nations agencies, IGOs and NGOs in the design and delivery of human resources development and utilization programmes. It was agreed that the Task Force still had an important role of monitoring, co-ordinating and evaluating interventions in the area of human resources, as well as initiating new joint programmes which could strengthen national efforts in the human resources sector. It was decided that the details on the meeting on co-ordination which was planned to be held at the ILO Turin Centre should be finalized at the next meeting of the Task Force, which should be convened in early 1991, before the Fourth Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization.

9. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The meeting considered its report and adopted it.

10. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman thanked members of the Task Force for their invaluable contributions and declared the meeting closed.

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