

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION

by

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Introduction

1. As usual, almost all the items on the agenda of the twenty-eighth session of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination were of interest to ECA secretariat. They ranged from Cross-organizational Programme Analyses through programme questions covering Medium-term Plan (MTP), programme budgets, programme performance, and evaluation to co-ordination questions. However, in terms of immediate interest and the availability of time and other resources, the regional commissions were able to participate only in the discussions on programme questions except evaluation. Although the discussions on those items that were of interest to the regional commissions were scheduled to be discussed during the period 5 to 24 May 1988, the last item could not be concluded until Friday 27 May 1988.

2. In the context of the areas of interest to the regional commissions mentioned above, the specific issues that were of interest to ECA were: Proposed revisions to the Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989 (covering the period 1990-1991); Programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium, 1986-1987; and proposed budget for the biennium 1988-1989 comprising, among others, (i) revised estimates for the biennium 1988-1989; and (ii) progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213. In view of the prolonged discussions on these subjects, it is not possible in this report to capture all the views expressed. To know those views will require a thorough reading of the report^{1/} of the Committee which will not be available until after some weeks. The purpose of this report is therefore to highlight some of the issues raised and the conclusions arrived at by the Committee on those subjects that are of direct interest to the ECA secretariat.

^{1/} If and when it is available, copies will be made available to Divisions/Offices/Centre.

Proposed revisions to the Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989
(covering the period 1990-1991)

3. It will be recalled that for the preparation of medium-term plans and programme budgets, all the organizational units use the instructions of the Secretary-General as prepared by the relevant unit(s) in New York. And in accordance with the instructions for the preparation of the third revisions to the MTP, 1984-1989, as well as those for past revisions, the proposed revisions were to be organized in three parts: Completely new subprogrammes; substantive revisions of existing programmes or subprogrammes; and small textual revisions. Moreover, in accordance with past practices, only proposals under the categories of completely new subprogrammes and substantive revisions of existing programmes or subprogrammes were to be submitted to the CPC for consideration and recommendation for approval. Accordingly, it was only in two programmes - International Trade and Development Finance in Africa; and Social Development in Africa that ECA made proposals that needed to be brought to the attention of "intergovernmental review bodies". ECE secretariat did not propose anything!

4. Unfortunately, due to various factors, namely, the lack of consistency in the proposals presented to the Committee by New York, the relative inexperience of and non-conversance of quite a number of the members of the Committee with the existing rules and procedures, that approach was not accepted by some members particularly representatives of African countries. As far as the majority of the African member States were concerned, the so-called "small textual revisions" were not revisions. All attempts to explain to them that whether revisions were on completely new subprogrammes or substantive ones to existing programmes or subprogrammes or of small textual type, they would form the basis of preparing the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 proved above. The argument that the Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989 is a fixed-term plan with marginal revisions did not work either. In fact, until I showed them a copy of our proposed revisions for the programme: Transport, Communications and Tourism in Africa, they were not convinced that the ECA secretariat would be implementing APPER, UN-PAAERD and the Forward-Looking Strategies in the 1990-1991 biennium.

5. In the end, the African group decided to upgrade ECA proposals on transport, communications and tourism to the level of "substantive revisions to existing programmes or subprogrammes". That was done by revising the original ECA proposals. A copy of the agreed version which I assisted in finalizing will be provided to the Division of Transport, Communications and Tourism. As it is, quite a number of the original proposals had been left out.^{1/} I inquired from those who were working on the revisions for transport, communications and tourism if they would also look at the "small textual revisions" for the other programmes, they told me that their mandate was to deal with transport, communications and tourism. In effect, all the small textual revisions proposed for the other programmes as basis for preparing the 1990-1991 biennial programme budget remain valid.

6. Document A/43/6 - Proposed Revisions to the Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989 is one of the documents shown in the list at the end of this report.

Programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium, 1986-1987

7. The only report on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium, 1986-1987 which was submitted to and discussed by the CPC was document A/43/326 - Programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium, 1986-1987 - Report of the Secretary-General, which comprises

^{1/} In view of the validity of the regulations and rules governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of the evaluation and the instructions for the preparation of the proposals, all the proposed revisions will be issued for preparing the budget for the 1990-1991 biennium.

introduction, general observations, methodology, summary discussion and overview, and recommendations. Chapter VI of the report which is expected to deal with "Programme performance by budget section" was not available and would later be issued as A/43/326/Add.1.

8. Document A/43/326 - Programme Performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1986-1987 - Report of the Secretary-General is one of the documents shown in the list at the end of this report.

9. As annex I shows, ECA's performance is the lowest among the five regional commissions. Except in a very minor case, the same picture is shown by annex III.

10. As it is, there are some differences between what is shown in A/43/326 and in annex to E/ECA/CM.14/3 - Biennial report of the Executive Secretary for the biennium, 1986-1987. The first difference is that, while in annex to E/ECA/CM.14/3, we tried to deduct outputs which were not implemented as a result of the financial crisis, the Chief, Central Monitoring Unit had decided to discuss the effects of the financial crisis on performance in a general manner. The second difference derives from the fact that the information contained in A/43/326 is only in respect of activities deemed by the Chief, Central Monitoring Unit to be financed from the regular budget. Finally, the Chief, Central Monitoring Unit told me that some outputs which should be regarded as implemented in the transport, communications and tourism programme were wrongly put in wrong columns and that amendments would be made and reflected in the section on programme performance by budget section which would be issued as A/43/326/Add.1. Shortly before I left New York, he did communicate to me the small changes effected as a result of the corrections made. A copy of the revised

calculations for ECA and of the inter-office memorandum with which the Chief, Central Evaluation Unit conveyed them to me are attached for your information.^{1/}

Programme Budget for the biennium 1988-1989

- (i) Revised estimates including plans of the Secretary-General for the implementation of recommendation 15 on the reduction of personnel, as requested by the General Assembly in resolutions 41/213 and 42/211

11. The report on this item of the agenda which was before the Committee was the Secretary-General's report on his proposals after considering the recommendations of the Post Reduction Group (PRG) and those of the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board (PPBB). As expected, the item led to long and sometimes acrimonious debates especially with respect to Namibia, the Department of Public Information, and the Department of Conference Services.

12. As far as ECA was concerned, the representatives of African States, both members and observers, expressed displeasure at the fact that any posts had been proposed for abolition even though the proposed cut is one of the smallest in the organization. However, they indicated that since the decision to reduce staff was taken by the General Assembly, they understood that every unit

^{1/} Copies of these two documents were distributed at the recent meeting of the Executive Secretary with Programme Managers.

had to make some contribution. But to emphasize their concern for the need for adequate resources to ECA, the issue was raised again during the discussion on the implementation of UN-PAAERD as referred to below.

13. The other issue which the members of the Committee emphasized was the imperative need for the Secretary-General to ensure that the serious vacancy situation in the regional commissions was redressed as quickly as possible.

(ii) Measures relating to priority assigned by the Secretary-General to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990

14. It will be recalled that the issue of adequate resources to ECA for the implementation of UN-PAAERD and the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women was of the important issues that dominated the twenty-seventh session of CPC in 1987 and as a result of its discussion, the CPC requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report, for consideration by the General Assembly, reflecting the priority which he indicated to the Committee that he had given to the two important strategies. It will also be recalled that the Fifth Committee was of the opinion that the report submitted by the Secretary-General was not the one that the CPC had requested him to prepare and accordingly requested him to prepare another report in which the distribution of resources by output should be shown. It was this last report that was before the Committee.

15. The general reaction of the Committee was that the report presented contained no new information and it confirmed its concern that not enough resources had been allocated to the implementation of UN-PAAERD particularly from the regular budget. Specifically, the Committee said that what it wanted from the Secretary-General was a strategy paper for the implementation of the Programme from 1986 to 1990 and with detailed

information on what was being done in the 1988-1989 biennium. The Committee was of the opinion that not enough was being done by the UN to implement UN-PAAERD.

16. In view of the negative reaction of the Committee to the report, the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation was invited to participate in the discussion. In his intervention, the Director-General reported on the work of the UN Steering Committee, the Inter-Agency Task Force and the initiative of the Secretary-General in commissioning a study on resource flows to Africa.

..... 17. A copy of the provisional conclusion and recommendations of the Committee on the report is attached for your information and use. The document A/C.5/43/2 is one of the documents shown in the list at the end of this report.

Other items of interest to ECA but in whose discussion I could not participate because of the delay in their consideration by the Committee

18. As indicated at the beginning of this report, there were other items of the agenda of the Committee which were of direct interest to ECA, but in whose discussion I could not participate.

19. These items concerned co-ordination issues such as cross-organizational programme analysis subjects; programme questions such as the report of the Secretary-General on the draft introduction to the medium-term plan, the report of the Secretary-General on the calendar of consultations on the medium-term plan for the period starting in 1992, the report of the Secretary-General containing proposals for provisional procedures

on the use and operation of the contingency fund based on the guidelines annexed to the General Assembly resolution 42/211; and consideration of a comprehensive solution to the problem of all additional expenditures, including those deriving from inflation and currency fluctuations.

20. Since the discussion, conclusion and recommendations of the Committee on these items will be contained in the report of the Committee, arrangement will be made with RCLO to obtain copies of the report for distribution to Programme Managers if and when it is ready.

List of the documents for the twenty-eighth session of CPC distributed to Programme Managers

21. Before leaving New York I had arranged with RCLO (Mr. Magnus P. Mukoko-Mokeba, Senior Liaison Officer) to send to us copies of some of the important documents for the twenty-eighth session of the Committee for distribution. The copies have now arrived and are attached to this report for your information and use:

A/C.5/43/1

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989

Revised estimates including plans of the Secretary-General for the implementation of recommendation 15 on the reduction of personnel, as requested by the General Assembly in resolutions 41/213 and 42/211

Report of the Secretary-General

A/C.5/43/1/Add.1/Corr.1

A/C.5./43/Add.1

A/C.5/43/1/Add.3

A/C.5/43/1/Add.4*

A/C.5/43/1/Add.5

A/C.5/43/1/Add.6

A/C.5/43/1/Add.7*

A/C.5/43/2

Measures relating to priority assigned by the Secretary-General to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990

Report of the Secretary-General

A/C.5/43/2/Add.1

A/43/286

Reform and renewal in the United Nations: second progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213

A/43/286/Corr.1

* Reissued for technical reasons.

A/43/6 PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR
THE PERIOD 1984-1989*

A/43/324 Questions relating to the programme budget: use
and operation of the contingency fund

Note by the Secretary-General

A/43/326 PROGRAMME PLANNING

Programme performance of the United Nations for
the biennium 1986-1987

Report of the Secretary-General

A/43/329 Preparation of the next medium-term plan

Note by the Secretary-General

* The present document is a mimeographed version of the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989. The report will subsequently be issued in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/43/6).