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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

African Institute for Higher Technical  
Training and Research

Extraordinary Meeting of the Governing Council

Addis Ababa, 15-16 June 1981

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING OF  
MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL  
(Nairobi, 28-29 August 1980)

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AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER TECHNICAL  
TRAINING AND RESEARCH, NAIROBI

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL, NAIROBI, 28-29 AUGUST 1980

Attendance

<u>Present</u>	<u>Country/ Organization</u>	<u>Rank and Address</u>
Hon. J.J. Kamotho (Acting Chairman)	Kenya	Minister for Higher Education, Kenya
Hon. Alhaji B. Usman	Nigeria	Minister of State, Nigeria
Prof. M.O. Chijioke	AIHTTR	Director-General, P.O. Box 53763, Nairobi
P.W. Macharia (Mrs.)	Kenya	Ministry of Higher Education, Nairobi
J.M. Kamunge	Kenya	Director of Higher Education, Nairobi
C.I. Eli	Nigeria	Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos
I. Egalo	Nigeria	Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos
E. Gasana	O.A.U.	Addis Ababa
E.P. Nzekio	UNDP	i/c ECA Affairs, UNDP, Nairobi
S.I. Edokpayi	ECA	Chief of Division, UNECA, Addis Ababa
Dr. P.R. Christensen (on 29.8.80)	Educansult	Technical Consultants, Canada

Absent

Algeria  
Mozambique  
Niger  
Upper Volta  
Zaire

The meeting had been shifted from 10:00 a.m. to the afternoon of 28 August 1980 in the hope that late arrivals from abroad could take place that morning. When the meeting convened at 3:30 p.m. it was particularly remarked and regretted that possibly owing to the usual imperfections of the region's postal communications the substantive Chairman and Vice-Chairman the Honourable Ministers of Education of Niger and Upper Volta respectively, were absent as on the previous occasion of the second Governing Council Meeting of May 1980 despite correspondence sent early and personal messages by the Director-General to the Chairman of Council on the Executive Meeting. It was agreed that the Honourable Minister for Higher Education in Kenya and Acting Chairman of the Governing Council of the Institute, should chair the meeting, but that in view of the absence of a majority of the seven voting members, discussions should be informal and restricted to items of the Agenda that could not be held over to the reconvening of a formal meeting of the Committee in November 1980 or March 1981. In particular the two member delegations present stressed the need to avoid any proceedings that could give the false impression that only Nigeria and Kenya were interested in the establishment of the African Institute for Higher Technical Training and Research.

Thereupon discussion centred on (i) the immediate strategy for ensuring that the Institute opens on schedule; and (ii) that Master Plan presentation by the technical consultants Messrs. Educansult who had sent their representative from Canada for the purpose.

#### Implementation Strategy

It was agreed that a proposal by ECA of a timetable of activities culminating in a Pledging Conference in March 1981 on behalf of the Institute, by friendly countries and donor organizations both developing and developed from outside and from within the region, could be a very effective approach in raising funds for the Institute. It might even replace a conducted tour of potential donor countries which is likely to have much less coverage and actual implementational response. It would also provide more of a dramatic setting for world-wide information dissemination on the Institute, and it was noted here that "the inadequacy" of this information had been a persisting complaint to date from member countries. The timetable might include: (a) the reconvening of the Executive Committee in November this year and again in March 1981 to coincide with the Pledging Conference; (b) preliminary visits (possibly separate) by the Executive Secretary of the ECA and by the Director-General, of key potential donor States, preceded by detailed information by mail, including formal project proposals which the ECA was in course of preparing; (c) diplomatic lobbies privately and publicly at such gatherings as the Belgrade UNESCO General Conference later this September and continuing till the Heads of States Meeting in Nairobi in June 1981, the lobby to be mounted by members of the Executive Committee, and by the ECA and the OAU as founding fathers of the Institute. The strategy might also include an urgent request to African States whose nationals had been short-listed for interview as future staff of the Institute, to second successful ones among them on funding from their national budgets for the first three to six months of the Institute's operations. During this short period that would include the Pledging activities, the effects of a strengthened inflow of facilities and funds should begin to show.

### Institute's Master Plan

Invited to introduce the Master Plan and Technical Feasibility Report on the Institute, the Educansult representative spoke with fervour on the novelty and inspiring nature of the task they had been set to do, the uniqueness "not only in Africa but even in the world" of the Institute's design and operational processes for practically realising the objective of accelerating the production of relevant technical manpower in the region. He pointed out how they have taken great pains to interpret all these in the design of the Master Plan. For example, they have ensured that the best but not necessarily extravagant facilities of the type required to implement the day's technology are available; adequate flexibility is inbuilt in the design, to permit the evolutionary development of its programmes and structures; and the structures themselves are not designed to be very high-rise buildings and can be put up quickly in phases, yet will be built to last and not just for 10 years; the project is quite an expensive project by any standards, he added. He underlined the criticality according to their CPM study, of the date 1983 when the permanent site of the Institute is planned to start up, the interaction principle in their design of the teaching Centres for the optimum utilization of space, and the detailed work they have done on listing the workshops, laboratories and equipment cost estimates for the 1980-85 phase-1 activities. In their opinion programmes before 1983 should be further thinned beyond the current proposals in order to fit the equipment that is immediately available in the Kenya Polytechnic, the Kenya Technical Teachers College, and the University of Nairobi. Finally he informed the meeting that while the generous offer by the Kenya Government of 300 acres of land for the permanent site assures, according to their design, that ample room will be available for the 1980-90 growth of the Institute, more space may be needed after 1980; and on implementation he warned that they have not made any allowances for trial and error and "learning on the job" in the construction phase of a project which is definitely "not cheap"; and this means that to meet time schedules, only those who already understand the philosophy and objectives of the Institute and have extensive experience in technical institution building in Africa and elsewhere should be given the job.

In a brief discussion that followed the ECA representative outlined the process by which Messrs. Educansult won the contract for the Master Plan and indicated his complete satisfaction with the consultations leading up to their report, and with the report itself of which however, some copies of the French version were still to arrive. He concluded by asserting that his yard-stick for assessing the success or failure of the whole project is whether or not in some ten or fifteen years time African countries are seeded by some well-qualified technical personnel and designers able to innovate as effectively as their counterparts in the developed countries currently do. In answer to the question why Messrs. Educansult consider low-level structures a better solution than high-rise buildings, the consultant referred to the former's fittingness to the Institute's 'non-isolationist' philosophy and its speed and indispensability in the case of workshops. It was also agreed that the Institute's plan for future subregional branches will be a likely solution to future space problems.

In closing the discussion the Chairman thanked Messrs. Educansult for their report and hoped that they would co-operate in any way they can in the future execution of the project. He observed that the consideration of a formal adoption of the report would be in future after the Secretariat and Directorate have circularised member States with an aide-memoire on it for comments. The report was thereupon noted.

An important event on the adjournment of the session was the payment by the Nigerian delegation of Nigeria's contribution to the 1979/80 Budget of the Institute, and her signing of the Constitution at the ECA Headquarters in Addis Ababa. Presenting the cheque for US\$156,671 at a special Luncheon given by the Acting Chairman of Council and the Minister of Higher Education for Kenya, Hon. J.J. Kamotho, the Leader of the Nigerian delegation, Hon. Alhaji B. Usman, Minister of State for Nigeria, reiterated that the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria "is committed to the total and unrelenting technological advancement of the continent of Africa" and finds reassuring "the general awareness of the global importance of science and technology".