

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



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PROVISIONAL

E/CN.14/P/SR.7(V)

15 February 1963

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
Fifth session
Leopoldville, February-March 1963

COMMITTEE ON THE PROGRAMME OF WORK
AND PRIORITIES
PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTH MEETING

held at Palais de la Nation, Leopoldville,
on Thursday, 14 February 1963, at 3.45 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Doukkali (Morocco)

Secretary: Mr. Chidzero

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Discussion of Programme of Work and Priorities for 1963-1964
(continued)

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II. Economic Surveys and Revisers, Finance and International Trade
(continued).

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider sub-section 13, International Trade.

Mr. CARNEY (Sierra Leone) welcomed the inclusion of the studies referred in item 13-02, Regional and Preferential Trade Arrangements,

(a) Members of the Commission had repeatedly pointed out that regional trade arrangements in Europe had harmful effects on African countries. He was glad to see the fact acknowledged.

Mr. ANYIA (Nigeria) observed, in connexion with item 13-11, Frontier Traffic in West Africa, that customs administration problems and questions of fiscal policy were interrelated, but there was no document on the latter subject.

Mr. EWING (Secretariat) suggested that points of substance on the Programme of Work might be raised in the Commission.

Mr. APPIAH (Ghana) remarked that, since consideration of so many items seemed to have to be deferred, his delegation would be suggesting at the appropriate juncture that the idea of convening the Committee before the session was, perhaps, outmoded.

Mr. EWING (Secretariat) thought that the point made by the representative of Ghana might very usefully be raised in the Commission.

Mr. APPIAH (Ghana) welcomed the initiative the secretariat had taken in the matter of item 13-12, African Trade Fair. In view of the rapid changes taking place in Africa it was time the continent had a trade fair of its own, which would enable those attending it to obtain an idea of what was happening in other parts of Africa. He wondered what the membership of the proposed expert group to assist the secretariat would be. Many African countries would be attending the World Trade Fair in the United States the following year; it might be useful if some of those who had gained experience in that way were members of the group.

Mr. NYPAN (secretariat) said that the members of the expert group had not yet been selected. There would be not more than six to ten members in all; they would meet at the United Nations' expense. Governments and non-governmental organizations with experience in the field in question had been approached, and there would be no objection to any governments who wished to take part sending representatives. They would be invited to do so.

Mr. APPIAH (Ghana) observed that, since Nigeria and some other African countries had already held successful trade fairs, it would be highly desirable for representatives of such countries to be invited to join the expert group. In that way some of the mistakes inevitably made in such enterprises might be avoided.

Mr. ANYIA (Nigeria) referring to item 13-13, Conference of African Businessmen, said that, while the idea of convening such a conference was no doubt excellent, it was perhaps premature. The primary need common to most African countries was to modernize their methods so as to be able to compete better with expatriate firms: it might be more fruitful to channel efforts in that direction. He questioned the usefulness of a meeting of individual African businessmen; it would be better for each country to put its house in order first.

Mr. PARKER (Liberia) reminded the Committee that the idea had originated in 1960 when ECA had been in its infancy. Two preliminary meetings had been held to discuss it, one in Monrovia in 1960 and one at Casablanca in 1961. At that time a need had been felt to draw the attention of business people and governments to the emergent problems of Africa in regard to trade, tariffs, fairs, the raising of capital and a development bank. Since then all those matters had become a major preoccupation not only of ECA but of government agencies. It would seem therefore that the contemplated conference was not essential and might well be given a lower priority; the question might perhaps be left in abeyance for the time being.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of Morocco, agreed that it was more important to concentrate on trade information, for businessmen to use.

Mr. YAKER (Algeria) enquired who had been expected to take the "preparatory steps" referred to in the "comment on the item".

Mr. EWING (Secretariat) explained that Commission resolutions 8(II) and 38(III) had left the initiative in the matter of the conference to the interested parties, i.e. to business circles; the secretariat had merely been asked to assist. In view of the comments which had been made, it might be desirable to delete the item from the Programme of Work.

Mr. PARKER (Liberia) suggested that the item be deleted.

Mr. CARNEY (Sierra Leone) expressed misgivings as to the propriety of deleting an item when the deletion entailed failure to give effect to a resolution of the Commission.

Mr. EWING (Secretariat) pointed out that the Commission, when it met for the session, was free to accept or reject the Committee's recommendations.

The CHAIRMAN said that, while there was agreement in principle, there seemed to be some difference of view as to procedure, i.e. whether the item should be deleted or the question of convening the conference should be left in abeyance. The point would be considered by the Commission.

Mr. WODAJO (Ethiopia) reminded the Committee that at the previous meeting he had expressed the view that the Programme of Work ought to be studied in the context of the provisional agenda for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The main purpose of that Conference was to determine how trade might be used as a catalyst for economic development. That being so, the ECA documentation on trade problems should contain a minimum of descriptive material and concentrate on policy matters. For instance, in the case of item 13.04, Commodity Stabilization Problems, what was needed was a critical study

discussing, say, whether a commodity-by-commodity approach was really appropriate for African conditions or a multi-commodity approach might not be preferable.

The CHAIRMAN observed that general points of that kind could be more suitably brought up in the Commission.

III. Industry, Transport, Natural Resources and Housing

The CHAIRMAN invited the Head of the Division of Industry, Transport and Natural Resources to introduce section III.

Mr. EWING (Secretariat) said that a great deal of progress had been made since the previous year, when the projects had still been at a very early stage. The programme relating to industry and natural resources arose from decisions made by the meeting of the Standing Committee on Industry and Natural Resources in December 1962; that concerning housing had been modified as a result of the Meeting of Experts on Housing which met in January 1963; that concerning transport was based on previous resolutions of the Commission and on Conferences held in 1961 and 1962 dealing respectively, with the West African and with Eastern African transport.

He would confine the rest of his statement to sub-section 21, Industry, leaving it to his subordinates in the Division to introduce the other sub-sections of section III.

Since there was a very large programme under sub-section 21, little work could be done immediately on certain projects. Item 21-02, Industrial Investment, should be regarded as an experimental project of a long-term nature : attention was to be concentrated on the research mentioned in paragraph (b). With regard to item 21-03, Industrial Planning and Programming, while not much more could be done on the question at the moment much might be learned from study of the work of other regional commissions, for instance that of an ECLA seminar to be held at Sao Paolo.

In item 21-04, Industrial Research, the intention was in the first place to make an inventory of the existing facilities, and then to explore the possibility of the secretariat's helping in the formulation of Special Fund projects. Under item 21-05, Technological Education and Typing, the main role of the secretariat was to act as a middleman for the work of the agencies primarily concerned. ECA's own studies would contribute to the evaluation of needs.

Item 21-07, Assistance to Governments in Promoting Sub-Regional Co-operation in the Development of Industries, was a key item. The Standing Committee on Industry and Natural Resources had placed great emphasis on the establishment of strategic modern industries in Africa, and on their being upon a regional basis so that they might supply large markets. It had recognized that there was great scope for the harmonization of industrial development plans. The secretariat, the specialized agencies and the Industrial Development Centre were conducting investigations in West and Eastern Africa through a group representing various specializations.

Item 21-10, Intensive Studies of Individual Industries, the other key area for the immediate future. Preparations were in progress for the convening of a meeting in October on electric power development in Africa, considered within the context of the overall situation.

Item 21-11, Financing of Industries, was ECA's contribution to wider study of the subject by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Plans were under way for a seminar on industrial estates to be held in 1964 (item 21-13); the seminar would be financed, in part, by the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations.

Mr. YAKER (Algeria) suggested that, in view of the importance of energy in Africa, the title of item 21-01 be amended to read "Inventory of African Industries and the Operation of Energy Resources".

Mr. ANYIA (Nigeria) agreed that the title suggested by the representative of Algeria gave a more detailed description of the item,

though the title given by the secretariat had the advantage of conciseness. If the secretariat had no objection he was not opposed to the amendment.

It was agreed that the title of item 21-01 be amended to read:

"Inventory of African Industries and the Operation of Energy Resources".

Mr. ANYIA (Nigeria) said that he hoped that in preparing "for the setting up of institutes for industrial research in Africa on a sub-regional basis" (item 21-04, Industrial Research) the secretariat would consult national research institutes.

Mr. CARNEY (Sierra Leone) asked how the secretariat proposed to execute item 21-05, Technological Education and Training. Did it intend to seek the co-operation of individual governments as well as that of the specialized agencies? In certain countries, such as the Federal Republic of Germany, facilities for technological training were highly developed; his delegation hoped that such facilities would be used.

Mr. APPIAH (Ghana) pointed out that there were in Africa - in Ghana, Senegal and Sierra Leone to name but three countries - universities and institutions of higher learning offering facilities for technological training. He felt that the ECA secretariat should approach those institutions, ascertain what facilities they could offer and, in the light of the information received, suggest ways in which they might co-ordinate their respective programmes. Setting up and running training institutions was expensive; co-ordination would ensure that the best use was made of available resources and the ECA could assist it.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of Morocco, asked whether items 21-05, 21-06, and 21-07 were not connected.

Mr. EWING (secretariat) said that item 21-05 was an ambitious under-taking: it meant endeavouring to estimate and meet further requirements for technological training and education and to evaluate existing resources; ECA, ILG and UNESCO would work together on the project.

While it was clearly right, in assessing needs and availabilities, to take account of facilities available outside Africa, the Standing Committee on Industry and Natural Resources had emphasized the need to develop training facilities within the continent. Such development involved technical assistance from the United Nations and through the Special Fund: item 21-06, Assistance to Governments in Technical Assistance and Special Fund Projects, was a general expression of ECA's role in that connexion. Item 21-07, Assistance to Governments in Promoting Sub-Regional Co-operation in the Development of Industries, should be regarded as a separate, distinct project.

Mr. YAKER (Algeria) emphasized the importance of sub-regional co-operation in the development of industries (item 21-07) and asked whether studies and investigations similar to those to be carried out in West and Eastern Africa were contemplated for North Africa.

Mr. EWING (Secretariat) replied that he and the United Nations Commissioner for Industrial Development intended to visit North Africa immediately after the fifth session of the Commission to assess the feasibility of extending such studies to that region. The extension of the project to North Africa would depend on the success of the undertaking in West and Eastern Africa.

Mr. WODAJO (Ethiopia) wondered whether, in view of the fact that items 21-06 and 21-07 concerned assistance to governments in solving problems of industrial development and in promoting sub-regional co-operation in the development of industries, the secretariat had appointed, or intended to appoint, a team of experts to provide the necessary advisory services; and how the appointment of such a team would affect the technical assistance provided by United Nations Headquarters and the role of Resident Representatives.

Mr. EWING (Secretariat) explained that item 21-06 was concerned primarily with requests from individual governments to the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations on the Special Fund. Such requests wer

always submitted through the Resident Representatives but, in deciding whether or not the projects warranted financing, the Bureau or the Fund were guided by the substantive departments at United Nations Headquarters. Under the decentralization policy, the functions formerly performed by the substantive departments were gradually being transferred to the Regional Commissions. That was why the item had been included in the Programme of Work. Hitherto ECA had not played a direct part in providing advisory services to governments; but it hoped to do so in the future, either by appointing Regional Advisers or by sending members of the secretariat on missions to countries requesting advice.

Item 21-07 represented an essentially ECA activity. It was envisaged that the project would consist partly of studies in depth, and partly of work by missions to promote sub-regional co-operation in the development of industry. It in no way involved an attempt to move into the area of the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations or the Special Fund.

Mr. YAKER (Algeria) said that, in item 21-10, Intensive Studies of Individual Industries, it was regrettable that the processing of agricultural commodities, particularly foodstuffs, had been omitted from the list of industries on which intensive studies were to be made. There was a tendency in industrialization programmes to concentrate on large-scale industries, at the expense of small and medium-scale industries.

Mr. EWING (Secretariat) pointed out that the part played by the United Nations and the specialized agencies in connexion with industrial development had become not only more extensive, but also more closely co-ordinated. It lingered round the Committee for Industrial Development of the Economic and Social Council, and the United Nations Industrial Development Centre. Within that framework there was a clear division of labour between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, in accordance with which FAO was responsible for food and timber processing and for rural industries. Since there was such a great deal of work to be done it was preferable to try and maintain

that division of labour. The processing of agricultural commodities had not been included in the Programme of Work because it formed a major part of the FAO programme.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of Morocco, suggested that in cases such as that under discussion the secretariat might mention in the Programme of Work that certain activities were being undertaken by the specialized agencies.

Mr. EWING (Secretariat) drew attention to sub-section 33, which gave details of joint ECA/FAO projects.

Mr. YAKER (Algeria) said that the processing of agricultural foodstuffs was not mentioned in sub-section 33. Did ECA contemplate studying the question jointly with FAO? If there were major obstacles to a joint study, arising out of the division of labour already referred to, perhaps the Observer for FAO would explain how the matter was being dealt with in his Organization's programme of work.

Mr. TERVER (Observer for FAO), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said it had been agreed that ECA and FAO should join forces in deciding how foodstuff processing and rural and forestry industries might be fitted into a country's overall industrialization programme. The FAO programme of work for 1964-65 included a project on the processing of agricultural commodities, though he could not give details about it because the programme had yet to be finalized. However, budgetary provision had been made for the provision of experts, and he was able to state that FAO would co-operate with ECA in that field.

The CHAIRMAN invited Mr. Lukacs, Chief of the Transport Section of the Division of Industry, Transport and Natural Resources, to introduce sub-section 22, Transport.

Mr. LUKACS (Secretariat) said he hoped that in the year 1963-1964 the work of the Transport Section would progress beyond the descriptive stage and that it would be possible to make analyses and

reach conclusions. One of the general ideas behind the section's programme was that, just as transport served the national economy as a whole, so its studies on transport problems should be of assistance to studies on industrial, agricultural, trade and social development. An illustration of that spirit of co-operation was the fact that it had been suggested that a member of the Transport Section should join each of the missions mentioned under item 21-07.

The Section had a clear and detailed work programme, all the parts of which were closely inter-related. One part of its programme was an assessment of expected demands for transport facilities. It was understood that the growth rate that would be demanded would not be commensurate with the growth rates of industry, agriculture or the national product, and the impact of the development of industrial output and value upon transport demand would have to be determined on the basis of changes in the pattern of industrial output.

Another part of the programme was a study on transport statistics. The Section wanted to collect data on transport activities and available resources. The work would consist of the collection, processing and analysis of statistical data, the establishment of definitions, and the standardization and compilation of an all-African system of transport statistics. It would be carried out in close co-operation with the Statistical Division; governments would only be asked to supply statistics which were absolutely essential.

The third part of the programme was a comparison of the costs of the various modes of transport: both current costs and capital outlays.

The fourth part was an assessment of the investment needed to enable transport supplies to meet demands. An attempt would be made to collect all available information about possible sources of investment funds and when they might be used.

Under the fifth part of its programme the Section would be attempting to determine, in the first place from an economic point of view, what

would be the most advantageous structure for national and sub-regional transport systems. It would be necessary to channel long-term investments into the different branches of transport in such a way that what was considered to be the most advantageous structure would be achieved. Owing to staff limitations, during the next year or so it would be possible to study the problems of only one single sub-region, and West Africa had been selected.

In connection with item 22-01, paragraph (g), dealing with air transport, he informed the Committee that, since the Programme of Work was circulated, it had been found that it would be possible to undertake some preliminary work on training in the technological and economic problems would be so organized in such a way as to contribute to the Section's overall study, and facilitate the establishment of close co-operation between ECA and ICAO.

The studies proposed under item 22-01, paragraph (e), promised swift practical results.

With respect to item 22-01, paragraph (h), it had been found possible to expand the scope of the project to include a larger number of the economic aspects of tourism, thus bringing it more into line with the overall study.

It was hoped that it would be possible to submit the first draft of a report on the overall study, and reports on the other studies, to a meeting on transport to be held not earlier than the spring of 1964. The problems covered by the studies were most diverse and intricate. For that reason the Section could not undertake further work at present. The Section hoped that governments would help it by studying and commenting upon its programme.

The meeting rose at 6:30 p.m.