ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-first session of the Commission/
Twelfth meeting of the Conference of Ministers

Yaounde, Cameroon, 17-21 April 1986

DRAFT REPORT
A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The twenty-first session of the Commission/twelfth meeting of the Conference of Ministers was held in Yaounde, Republic of Cameroon, from 17 to 21 April 1986. The meeting was formally opened by H.E. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon. Statements were also made at the opening ceremony by the outgoing Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Bernard Chidzero, Minister of Finance and Economic Development and Planning of Zimbabwe, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity and the Executive Secretary of ECA (see section C below).

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following States members of the Commission: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire and Zimbabwe.

3. Observers from the following States Members of the United Nations not members of the Commission were present: China, Czechoslovakia, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and Venezuela.

4. Observers from the following States not Members of the United Nations were also present: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Holy See and Switzerland.

5. In accordance with rule 72 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) was represented.

6. The United Nations Council for Namibia was also represented.


8. Observers were present from the following intergovernmental organizations in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Commission's terms of reference: African Association of Trade Promotion Organizations (AATPO), African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development (ACARTSOD), African Development Bank (ADB), African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (AIDEP), African Institute for Higher Technical Training and Research (AITHTR), African Intellectual Property Organization (AIPO), African Regional Centre for Engineering Design and Manufacturing (ARCEDEM), African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT), African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO), Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC), Central African Mineral Resources Development Centre (CAMRDC), Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI), Eastern and Southern African Mineral Resources Development Centre (ESAHRDC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of the Great Lakes countries (CEPGL), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques (IFORD), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), League of Arab States (LAS), Organization of African Unity (OAU), Pan-African Development Institute (IPD), Pan-African Postal Union (PAPU), and Regional Centre for Training in Aerial Surveys (RECTAS).

9. Observers were also present from the following non-governmental organizations: Baha'i International Community, Conseil international des femmes (CIF), Grand répertoire économique de l'Afrique centrale (GREAC), International Centre for Public Enterprises (ICPE), International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Pan-African Women's Organization (PAWO), and the Hunger Project.
10. The Commission unanimously elected the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Sadou Hayatou (Cameroun)
First Vice-Chairman: Mr. Yaovi Adodo (Togo)
Second Vice-Chairman: Mr. Abdel Khalifa (the Sudan)
Rapporteur: Mr. Louis J. Chimango (Malawi)

B. AGENDA

11. On 18 April 1986, the Commission adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Minute of silent prayer or meditation.
3. Election of officers.
4. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
5. General debate on:
   (a) Biennial report of the Executive Secretary on ECA activities, 1984-1985;
   (b) Review and appraisal of economic situation in 1984-1985 and perspectives for 1986;
      (i) Survey of economic and social conditions in Africa 1984-1985;
      (ii) ECA/ADB economic report on Africa 1986;
   (c) The situation of food and agriculture in Africa.
7. Report and recommendations of the seventh meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole on:
   (i) Preparations for the international conference on Africa's external indebtedness;
(ii) Progress on the implementation of ongoing special programmes:

(a) United Nations Transport and Communications Decade for Africa: Progress report on the second phase programme and consideration for future action;

(b) United Nations Industrial Development Decade for Africa: Joint progress report by ECA, UNIDO and OAU and consideration for future action;

(c) Review and appraisal of the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women in Africa;

(iii) Promotion of economic co-operation and integration:

(a) Reports from the MULPOCs Councils of Ministers;

(b) Biennial report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of ECA-sponsored specialized institutions, 1984-1985;

(c) Biennial consolidated programme of work and priorities including budgets of ECA-sponsored specialized institutions, 1986-1987;

(d) Regional and interregional economic and technical co-operation: issues for consideration;

(iv) Institutional development: Establishment of the African Centre for Meteorological Applications for Development: Progress report and required further action;
(v) Special issues:

(a) The importance of coal in Africa: Basic proposals for its development;

(b) Report of the Regional Expert Group Meeting in Preparation for the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy;

(c) Report to the ECA Conference of Ministers on the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

(d) Computer applications and development;

(vi) Reports from the subsidiary organs of the Commission:

(a) Report of the fourth session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers;

(b) Report of the fifth meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the African Least Developed Countries;

(c) Report of the fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for Science and Technology Development;

(d) Report of the seventh meeting of the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development;
(e) Report of the eighth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade;

(f) Report of the third meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts from the Ministries of Finance, Central Banks and Legal Departments on the Establishment of an African Monetary Fund;

(g) Report of the third meeting of the ECA Joint Intergovernmental Committee on Human Settlements and Environment;

(h) Report of the second meeting of the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS;

(i) Report of the sixth meeting of the Conference of chief executives of ECA specialized regional and subregional institutions.

(vii) Follow-up on resolutions of the Commission and resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly that are of interest to Africa:

(a) Follow-up action on other relevant resolutions adopted by the twentieth session of the Commission/eleventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers;

(b) Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1985
and by the General Assembly at its fortieth session in the economic and social sectors that are of interest to Africa;

(c) Proposals for updating the 1986-1987 programme budget in the light of General Assembly approved appropriations and availability of extrabudgetary resources;


8. Draft resolutions submitted by the seventh meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole for consideration by the twenty-first session of the Commission/twelfth meeting of the Conference of Ministers.

9. Any other business.

10. Date, venue and other matters relating to the twenty-second session of the Commission/thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers.

11. Consideration and adoption of the report and resolutions of the meeting.

12. Closure of the meeting.
C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening addresses

12. In his opening address H.E. Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, welcomed all participants and wished them a pleasant stay in Cameroon.

13. Africa, he said, required the participation of every African in order to make progress and attain food self-sufficiency. Africa's recovery was a long-term undertaking, and the Commission should take specific measures to get Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990 under way. The continent should not wait for outside assistance, but should seek to resolve its problems on its own. In so doing, however, the African countries would have to face many difficulties. It was essential for them to pool their efforts and act in a spirit of greater co-operation among member States in order to develop the food and agriculture sector, combat desertification, reduce the external debt and develop trade and industry. Success in that undertaking would require increased solidarity among African States.

14. The Commission was meeting to strengthen the will to unify the African countries, draw up a specific programme, and adopt resolutions. Africa would have to formulate concrete proposals during the forthcoming special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's critical economic situation, and to ensure credibility, the African countries must be firm in their commitments and demonstrate their will to remedy the situation by working together as responsible States whose future belonged to them.

15. He then declared the meeting open.

16. In a message read by the Executive Secretary, the Secretary-General of the United Nations said that the central issue for the meeting was how to restore and accelerate the pace of economic and social development in Africa. The individual and collective efforts of member States would be of utmost importance at the present critical period for Africa.

17. Just a year ago, Africa had been in the grip of a human tragedy of unprecedented proportions, with famine and related scourges of malnutrition and disease threatening millions of people and the survival of countries. While there were still areas of need, especially of people who remained
displaced and destitute, and an estimated $US 1 billion was needed to cover emergency requirements, it was safe to say that the worst of the drought-related emergency was over. In addition to the return of the rains, the massive relief operation mounted over the past two years by the international community, in support of the determined efforts of the African Governments and peoples, had also contributed to the dramatic change in the situation.

18. He was pleased that the United Nations had been able to play a central role in sensitizing the world to the problem and in mobilizing and facilitating the co-ordination of assistance, thus demonstrating that it was possible to forge a world-wide partnership to face a common cause. That convincing expression of human solidarity must now be put at the service of Africa's long-term development needs.

19. The recent drought-related crisis was only an extreme manifestation of a much more fundamental structural problem. On the initiative of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the General Assembly had to convene a special session in May 1986 to consider in depth the critical economic situation in Africa, and had established a preparatory committee to ensure that session's success. That session would focus, in a comprehensive and integrated manner, on the rehabilitation and medium- and long-term development problems and challenges facing African countries with a view to promoting and adopting action-oriented and concerted measures.

20. It had always been recognized that Africa should define its own future, and the African document formulated under the aegis of the Organization of African Unity, with the valuable assistance of the ECA Conference of Ministers at the first extraordinary session of the Commission, for submission to the special session, was thus essential to the preparatory process for the special session. The document made clear once again the resolve and determination of African Governments to relaunch the initiative for medium- and long-term development and growth, and outlined areas in which action was required pursuant to Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery. The international community must now indicate the nature and extent of support it intended to give to the African countries' efforts. On the basis of discussions in the preparatory committee as well as informal contacts, it
should be possible to fashion a political agreement at the special session involving clear commitments by members of the international community to assist in the restoration and acceleration of the pace of economic and social development in Africa.

21. To that end, significant improvements in the international climate were required. An increased flow of well-coordinated and generous development assistance relevant to the domestic needs and priorities established by African countries themselves was needed. In that context, the recent initiatives taken by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were encouraging.

22. For many countries in Africa, the external debt problem had become intolerable. Similarly, the problems of commodity prices and easier access for African exports into the markets of developing countries also required urgent attention.

23. The special session of the General Assembly would be neither the beginning nor the end of a process. A continuing and diligent effort by all was required if the programme agreed upon was to be realized, and serious consideration must be given to appropriate follow-up arrangements at both the national and global levels.

24. The Conference's deliberations and the decisions would be of critical importance, and he wished its meeting success. The United Nations would spare no effort to mobilize additional resources for African development and support co-ordinated national and international actions.

25. In concluding his statement, he extended sincere thanks to His Excellency President Paul Biya, and through him to the people of Cameroon, for hosting the Commission's session. That generous gesture was clear testimony to their continued devotion to the goals not only of ECA but also of the United Nations in general.

26. Dr. Bernard Chidzero, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development of Zimbabwe and Chairman of the twentieth session of the Commission and eleventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers and the first extraordinary session of the Commission and the ECA Conference
of Ministers welcomed participants and, on their behalf, thanked H.E. President Paul Biya for having agreed to address the opening meeting, as well as the Government and people of Cameroon for the excellent facilities placed at the disposal of the Conference and for the hospitality extended to all participants.

27. He reviewed the socio-economic conditions in which the twentieth session of the Commission and eleventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers had taken place. The region had been experiencing at that time an economic crisis of unprecedented proportions which were magnified by a particularly unfavourable world economic environment, resulting in a decline in the quantity and value of African exports, high real interest rates in industrialized countries, increased prices of imports of developing countries, deteriorating terms of trade, and sharp reduction in capital inflows to Africa, all exacerbated by the alarming increase in Africa's external indebtedness. In 1986 as in 1985, moreover, the lower income developing countries, and mainly the African countries had derived almost no benefits from the general upturn in the economies of the industrialized and newly industrialized countries.

28. For Southern Africa, that situation was still compounded by the destabilization activities of the racist regime of South Africa, the infiltration of bandits into majority-ruled democracies, overt and covert support of counter-revolutionary groups in some of the front-line States, economic sabotage and blackmail, as well as direct military intervention.

29. Consequently, the eleventh meeting of the Conference had focused on how to reverse the trend towards economic decline and create the basis for lasting peace, economic rehabilitation, development and structural transformation in Africa on the basis of collective self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

30. He drew attention to resolutions 555 (XX) and 556 (XX) out of the 20 resolutions adopted by the Conference. The first had adopted the Second Special Memorandum on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis and requested the Executive Secretary to transmit it to the Economic and Social Council. The second was the Conference's recommendations on the economic issues to be considered by the twenty-first ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU formulated in response to the request of the Council.
of Ministers of OAU contained in its resolution CM/Res.963 (XLI), and which the Executive Secretary was requested to make available to the OAU Permanent Steering Committee for use in finalizing the documentation for the twenty-first ordinary session of the Assembly and for transmission to the OAU Council of Ministers at its forty-second session. The provisions of those two resolutions, aimed at assisting in oriented programme for dealing with the worst economic crisis Africa had ever known and mobilizing maximum assistance from the international community to supplement African countries' own efforts to deal with the crisis, had been fully implemented, and the intended objectives were well on the way to being realized.

31. Two very important events had occurred since the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers. The first was the submission of the Second Special Memorandum to the Economic and Social Council, at its second regular session in 1985. The Council had examined the Memorandum in depth, focusing on the structural causes of Africa's economic and social crisis and the need for fundamental and comprehensive measures, at both the national and international levels, to meet it. Second, the twenty-first ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, held at Addis Ababa from 18 to 20 July 1985, had adopted, on the basis of the Conference's recommendations, Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990, whose implementation, he said, would require determined and sustained efforts at the national, subregional, regional and international levels.

32. Accordingly, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU had adopted resolution AHG/Dec. 1,1 (XXI) which urged member States to establish or strengthen national mechanisms designed to effect follow-up measures to implement the Priority Programme, invited regional economic groupings to reinforce cooperation in all economic and social sectors and decided to establish an OAU Permanent Steering Committee to monitor the implementation of the Priority Programme. The OAU resolution further called for the convening of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa, and requested the Secretary-General of OAU and the Executive Secretary of ECA to provide all possible assistance to the Steering Committee and to undertake all necessary preparations for the special session.
33. ECA member States were greatly indebted to H.E. Abdou Diouf, President of Senegal and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, for his dedicated leadership and untiring effort which had led to the decision by the General Assembly at its fortieth session to convene from 27 to 31 May 1986 in New York a special session at the ministerial level to consider in depth the critical economic situation in Africa. To ensure the success of that session, the General Assembly had established a Preparatory Committee of the Whole. That session would be the first occasion in the history of the United Nations that the General Assembly had convened to focus on the economic problems of a single region. It was no exaggeration to say that its outcome could decisively affect the direction, pace and pattern of Africa's economic growth and development, and indeed structural transformation, for decades to come. It was thus vital that Africa should be adequately prepared for the session.

34. The present twenty-first session of the Commission and twelfth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers constituted, by virtue of the clear relation between its agenda and the continuing problems afflicting Africa and some of the key issues to be considered at the special session, an integral element in a whole series of preparatory meetings, variously involving the current Chairman of OAU, the executive heads, secretariats and subsidiary bodies of ECA and OAU, representatives of the United Nations system and the African group at the United Nations Headquarters.

35. The ECA secretariat had contributed immensely to the preparatory process, for instance through the joint ECA/OAU field missions sent to help all African States elaborate their priority programmes for the period 1986-1990, in the light of the requirements of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, identify and estimate the cost of their priority activities, specify the resources secured or expected to be mobilized from both domestic and external sources, and determine the investment gap for which the assistance of the international community would be required. In that whole exercise, the priority areas continued to be food and agriculture, industries in support of agriculture, human resources and the fight against drought and desertification.
36. Through those numerous preparatory efforts, African Governments had clearly articulated their needs and expressed their hopes with respect to the outcome of the special session. They must do their best to impress upon the international community that theirs was an honourable and serious cause requiring immediate remedies, or commitment to remedies, to prevent Africa continuing along the path of economic regression. Positive responses would mean a new start on the path of efficacious collective, self-reliant and self-sustaining economic growth and development.

37. The twelfth meeting of the Conference of Ministers was taking place barely six weeks before the special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the critical economic situation in Africa, whose outcome could decisively affect the direction, pace, pattern and structure of Africa's economic growth and development. The special session offered a unique opportunity to Africa and the international community as a whole to demonstrate solidarity and launch co-ordinated and effective measures which should help Africa get out of its development problems and on to a new era of sustained growth. Africa's credibility was at stake. Their efforts had to succeed; they dared not fail.

38. Within Africa itself, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the general economic situation in most countries remained bleak despite the improvements in food production. The problems thus remained real and stubborn, and the challenge relentless. Yet with African countries' own national and collective self-reliant efforts, effectively complemented by international support, the problems could, and must be solved. The twelfth meeting of the Conference offered an opportunity to review and appraise the economic and social conditions in Africa and to situate them in the context of the generally inhospitable world economic environment.

39. In concluding, he reiterated participants' gratitude to the President, Government and People of Cameroon, and expressed his own gratitude for the support he had received during his term of office as Chairman of the ECA Conference of Ministers. He would continue to do all in his power to advance and strengthen the work of the Commission, for the greater good of Africa and in the cause of greater international understanding and co-operation.
40. Mr. Idé Oumarou, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, thanked the President, Party, Government and people of Cameroon for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to the Conference, and paid tribute to the role Cameroon, as a founder member of the Organization, had played in OAU over the years including the provision of two of the former Secretaries-General of the Organization.

41. Three weeks previously, the first extraordinary session of the Conference of Ministers and of the Commission had reviewed Africa's submission to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the critical economic and social situation in Africa, to be submitted a few hours later to the OAU Foreign Ministers, also in an extraordinary session, and in so doing had made an invaluable contribution to the document and its credibility. In that connection, he paid tribute to the ECA secretariat, which had worked with OAU to enable the Permanent Steering Committee to produce a full, detailed and credible document for submission to the General Assembly. The joint work of OAU and ECA secretariats was the beginning of a new era of cooperation between the two secretariats which must be strengthened and extended to all their activities, particularly those on implementing the expected outcome of the General Assembly's special session.

42. The Ministers were meeting to discuss the problems of an Africa suffering from underdevelopment, malnutrition, external debt, mistakes in management and lack of structures capable of relaunching and promoting its development. But discussion and diagnosis could not be prolonged indefinitely; the time had come to apply the remedies so often prescribed. The OAU Heads of State and Government had clearly defined the problems, and their decisions had to be implemented not only by working for the full success of the forthcoming special session, but above all by preparing for the follow-up to it; in other words, by making available the resources, of all kinds, which African Governments had undertaken to mobilize for Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990, so that their peoples could become the true agents of their own development.
43. To that end, OAU had recently held a meeting of African Ministers of Labour (Addis Ababa, 7-9 April 1986) and the first OAU Conference of Ministers of Culture (Port Louis, Mauritius, 13-15 April 1986). The need for those sectors to participate in the recovery programme was self-evident in view of the commitment in Africa's submission to the General Assembly to mobilize human resources, revise structures, review management methods, question political options, rationalize the participation of women, young people and farmers in development activities and bring cultural values to bear on the achievement of indigenous and self-sustaining development.

44. For how could development succeed if the labour force was not organized to provide suitable employment for the young and avoid underemployment of the qualified? And how could adaptability and creativity be encouraged without freeing the population from socio-cultural constraints and anachronisms? At a time when the African continent was afflicted by famine, and when development was increasingly being seen in terms of matching production with consumption, it was disturbing that traditional beliefs constituted one of the main constraints to agricultural development. Hence, the organization of cultural life was an essential prerequisite for development and the release of Africa's creative genius. The OAU Heads of State and Government had, by adopting a declaration on the cultural aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action, demonstrated their concern to incorporate human factors and value systems into development strategies. Work on such fields as scientific research, education, and the role of women and youth now took their inspiration from African culture, and the time had come to develop administrative and technical measures for the integration of African culture into planning and programming.

45. Despite its lack of resources, Africa seemed to the world to be the continent where the most and longest meetings were held. The Conference should demonstrate that all those meetings were a sign of renewal, not by adding resolutions to resolutions, and plans to plans, but by ensuring that each new resolution marked a step forward, that each new plan aimed at consolidating the achievements of; and filling the gaps left by, its predecessor. That was the only way of disarming Africa's many detractors and escaping from the humiliating and untenable position of a continent in continual need of assistance.
46. He was therefore pleased to note that the Conference's agenda comprised a consistent set of topics all aimed at such a reordering of Africa's affairs in areas which, given collective priority, could ward off the emergency and lay the foundations for lasting economic recovery. He hoped the work of the Conference would mark such a starting point.

47. The Executive Secretary thanked H.E. President Paul Eiya and the people of Cameroon for their generous hospitality which had made it possible for the Economic Commission for Africa to have successfully concluded the series of intergovernmental meetings which culminated in the twenty-first session of the Commission/twelfth meeting of the Conference of Ministers. Cameroon had demonstrated its total commitment to African economic co-operation, integration and unity. The Commission had even more reasons to be thankful since two of ECA-sponsored institutions namely, IFOPD and the Yaounde-based MULPOC were located in that country and had continued to enjoy the material and political support of the Government.

48. The fact that both the OAU and ECA Ministerial Councils had to meet in extraordinary sessions a few weeks earlier and the fact that a special session of the United Nations General Assembly was to be convened the following month to consider Africa's economic and social crisis reflected the profound crisis that had gripped Africa. The drought-induced emergency situation in a large number of African countries from 1983 to 1985 with the attendant famine, malnutrition and loss of lives and the international publicity which it had brought in its trail had deepened the apprehension of many people, particularly members of the international community, about the unenviable future of the African economies.

49. With vicious interaction between excruciating poverty and abysmally low levels of productivity in an environment marked by serious deficiencies in basic economic and social infrastructures, the persistent poor performance of the dominant agricultural sector, the heavy dependence of domestic production on imports of factor-inputs, the failure to diversify and the absence of domestic linkages and the paralysis of multiple and persistent debilitating crisis which typified African economies, that gloomy view of Africa's development perspective seemed inevitable. All the major economic and social indicators supported that pervasive gloom and despair.
50. At the heart of Africa's continued underdevelopment was the failure to achieve a significant structural transformation and necessary economic diversification that were required to move the continent away from inherited colonial economic structures. The principal reason for that failure was the pervasiveness of structural disequilibria in the agricultural sector which itself was characterized by subsistence production, antiquated technology, and a pervasive dualistic and fragmented economic system with cleavages between the export enclaves and the subsistence sector, between the rural sector and the parasitic urban areas and between industry and agriculture. The major challenge in the years ahead was therefore to achieve a major and sustained structural transformation of that sector as well as the supportive sectors and to raise the general level of productivity.

51. Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990, adopted in July 1985 by the African Heads of State and Government, provided the basis for facing the future and meeting its challenge. Derived as it was from the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos, the Priority Programme was sharply focused, time-bound and highly selective in its objectives and targets. Its adoption represented Africa's collective determination to give a frontal attack to the problems of economic rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and development. The capacity to translate that determination into operational terms at national, subregional and continental levels and to pursue with single-minded purpose their implementation would be a practical manifestation of the degree of seriousness with which the future was viewed and faced.

52. The African economies were at a crossroads. Deliberate and calculated decisions had to be made as to the turning to make. It was a time not only for introspection, general reappraisal and crucial decision-making as to the desirable or imperative change in direction, but also for making a choice and pursuing that choice to its logical conclusion. The year 1986 was Africa's year of destiny for three principal reasons. First, 1986 marked the beginning of the second half of the first decade of the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action. Secondly, it was the first year of the implementation of the Priority Programme, and thirdly, it was the year that Africa had convened the international community to present its case for support and understanding and for solidarity and assistance.
53. It was accordingly in that year 1986 that African Governments and people must put into effect the following commitments. First, to give the highest priority in their rehabilitation and recovery programme to the rural sector in general and agricultural development in particular. Secondly, to continue to make genuine efforts to improve the management of their economies, rationalize public investment policies and promote the most efficient utilization of resources. Thirdly, to impose greater sacrifices on themselves by adopting appropriate austerity measures and through greater mobilization of resources. And fourthly, to continue the process of undertaking essential policy reforms and adjustments, difficult and painful as they were.

54. As far as the international community was concerned, Africa expected first a full commitment by that community to the full implementation of the Priority Programme by reordering their assistance and co-operation programmes to ensure their consistency and complementarity with Africa's Priority Programme. Secondly, the international community must agree to improve the environment and structures for international co-operation with Africa so as to achieve a shift from project support to programme support, and from ad hoc short-term assistance to medium-term support. Thirdly, there was an urgent need to bring about an improvement in the external environment, including the adoption of policies in the rest of the world that were conducive to growth rather than contraction of the world economy. Finally, the international community would need to take urgent measures to alleviate the debt burden of African countries.

55. The direction in which Africa should move and the role the international community could be expected to play in enabling Africa to move along the desired path was therefore crystal clear. The Executive Secretary hoped that the special session of the General Assembly would be remembered as the session during which the world joined hands with Africa to get the continent out of the quagmire of poverty, and that 1986 would come to be regarded as the turning point in Africa's economic development - as the year when the African people, finding themselves at the economic crossroads, took the path of honour and integrity to will an economic future of recovery and growth for themselves.
56. On behalf of the delegations, Mr. Abdou Rahim Mikidache, Minister of Planning and Supply of the Comoros read a vote of thanks addressed to His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, the Government and People of Cameroon for the warm and fraternal hospitality extended to all participants. He asked President Paul Biya to kindly transmit to the Government and people of Cameroon the heartfelt and profound gratitude of all the delegations.

General debate (agenda item 5)

(a) Biennial report of the Executive Secretary on ECA activities, 1984-1985

(b) Review and appraisal of economic situation in 1984-1985 and perspectives for 1986
   (i) Survey of economic and social conditions in Africa 1984-1985
   (ii) ECA/ADB economic report on Africa 1986

(c) The situation of food and agriculture in Africa

57. The representative of Nigeria said that Africa's economic and social problems had been well analysed in the report of the seventh meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole. Despite the fact that overall growth had been about the same as population growth rate, the growth attained was more encouraging than in the past. However, structural problems had yet to be tackled. Where problems of drought and desertification were concerned, and since there was no assurance that nature would continue to be generous, African Governments should continue to design and implement realistic and practical programmes intended to sustain achievements attained so far and free African economies from the devastating effects of the vagaries of the weather. They must also pursue concrete programmes to achieve reduced food losses and wastage and ensure optimal utilization of resources, and strengthen the linkage between agriculture and other economic sectors such as the industrial sector.
58. He then drew attention to Africa's external debt problem and the compounded effects of low foreign exchange earnings from low prices for Africa's exported commodities, unsuccessful attempts to reschedule loans and tightening of credit lines, as a result of which it was almost impossible for most African countries to import essential industrial raw materials, machinery and spare parts, leading to an inevitable drastic reduction of capacity utilization and unemployment. The proposed conference on Africa's external indebtedness was therefore most timely.

59. Notwithstanding the austerity measures adopted by African countries, meaningful structural adjustments of economies had not been achieved. He hoped that the adoption of the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPFR) and the African submission to the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly would greatly assist African countries to strengthen the external sector, provided an understanding was reached with external creditors and donors.

60. Lastly, he stressed that it was necessary for member States to honour their financial commitments to the ECA-sponsored institutions so that with their assistance, the pace of economic development in Africa could be accelerated.

61. The representative of Egypt recalled the continued economic deterioration in Africa, with low production and productivity, a decline in the prices of export commodities, and losses in export earnings suffered by African countries including oil exporting countries. The terms of trade and purchasing power had equally deteriorated leading to increases in balance-of-payment deficits and the debt burden. It was only through integrated policies at national, regional, subregional and international levels in the short, medium and long term that those problems could be solved.

62. If Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990 was to translate aspirations of mutual interdependence and self-reliance into practical realities; a strong African position in support of the African submission to the General Assembly special session was essential, and agreement must be reached on a single African strategy for collectiveness and solidarity.
63. He endorsed the report of the Technical Preparatory Committee. Food and agricultural problems, as well as their supporting sectors, had been dealt with extensively and the recommendations it contained represented useful contributions to the implementation of the Priority Programme. In that context, the experience of Cameroon with its plan for the implementation of food self-sufficiency projects up to the year 2000 was a clear example to be followed in implementing that Programme at the national level.

64. The external and internal environments affecting Africa's economies were extremely significant. More value could be obtained from exports only if measures were taken to increase the capacity of processing, marketing, distribution, and transportation of African exported raw materials.

65. He requested the Executive Secretary to speed up the implementation of the resolution of the African Ministers of Trade (E/ECA/OAU/Trade 29) concerning the formulation of an African position particularly in the new round of multilateral trade negotiations within GATT and the Global System of Trade Preferences (GSTP) among developing countries within South-South trade relations, to convene a meeting of a group of experts as soon as possible for that purpose, and to inform member States of the proposed date for such a meeting.

66. The representative of the Congo said that in almost all African countries, economic growth was irregular, and showing a steep downward trend. The deterioration in external balances had led to a deficit in the current account balances and a deterioration in the terms of trade. Because of the worsening of the disequilibrium in internal finances, African countries had had to resort to external sources of financing. That situation, also marked by a drop in official development assistance and increased procurement of loans from the private sector, had led to an increase in the external debt and its service.

67. The effects of the world economic crisis were particularly felt in the food and agriculture sector, and the consequences were famine, food dependence and explosive socio-economic situations. In general, the economic crisis had forced African Governments to negotiate and sign agreements with international agencies which had harmful consequences both socially and economically. Such
agreements could bring investments and growth to a near standstill, slow down the production machinery and accentuate the inequalities between the various social groups. The Conference must therefore examine concrete ways of implementing the guidelines of the Priority Programme, with a view to surmounting the crisis and putting the Lagos Plan of Action into effect. In that respect, it was encouraging to note the increased co-operation between ECA, OAU and other African development institutions. Special attention should also be paid to assistance in the field of agricultural and technological research and the training of senior staff.

68. In conclusion, he emphasized the need for African countries to set aside petty nationalism and cultivate a common consciousness so as to solve the political and technical problems related to economic co-operation and integration in the continent. Active solidarity and a spirit of complementarity were a basic pre-condition for translating the principles of collective autonomy and self-sufficiency into reality, in accordance with the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos.

69. The representative of Tunisia, after recalling the alarming economic crisis which Africa had been facing for the past several years, emphasized that Africa's future depended primarily upon the capacity of African States themselves to mobilize their energy and potential to take up the double challenge of survival and development while emphasizing intra-African co-operation, particularly technical co-operation.

70. African States must come to the General Assembly's special session on African economic crisis as serious, credible and responsible partners motivated above all by a spirit of partnership, and respecting each other's freedom of choice of development policies and their mutual interests. Otherwise, attitudes or policies might be imposed on them which did not meet Africa's preoccupations, economic and social realities or fundamental and sovereign rights where development was concerned. In that connection, there was an increasing trend for sources of funding to tie their support to what were known as adjustment measures, which in most cases delayed and made still more difficult the solution of certain problems which in fact called for collective action.
71. Where the ECA-sponsored institutions were concerned, the measures specified by the Ad Hoc Committee, calling for the control and harmonization of some institutions' activities, and the merger of certain others in order to avoid duplication and any risk of the scarce resources allocated to them being wasted, should be put into effect.

72. In order to ensure a favourable response to the special session of the General Assembly, he suggested that the President of that session should submit to the forthcoming meeting of the most industrialized countries, in Tokyo, a communication highlighting the search for a commitment to the settlement of the external debt problem and the implementation of a plan for the real and appropriate transfer of technology for purposes of a well-balanced development of agriculture leading to food self-sufficiency.

73. The representative of Ethiopia said that in analysing Africa's development issues, a distinction must be made between the causes and the symptoms of the problems encountered. A wider and more optimistic outlook on the range of policy options was also needed. The current socio-economic crisis had emanated from external factors such as the collapse in the prices of primary commodities, fluctuations in interest rates, protectionism and the non-implementation of commitments on international co-operation, including the Substantial New Programme of Action for LDCs, and internal factors such as the low level and rate of mobilization of domestic human, financial, and material resources, inappropriate strategies, policies and priorities and a colonial heritage of an externally-oriented pattern of production.

74. Although the Lagos Plan of Action and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990 had analyzed the problems mentioned above as largely symptoms of underdevelopment characterized by structural weaknesses and low productivity, the Survey of economic and social conditions in Africa, 1984-1985 which was before the meeting had departed from that perception. The section in chapter III, part D dealing with development policy issues wrongly made public enterprises, government intervention and planning responsible for the current economic crisis, while upholding non-interference and free markets as the panacea. The Survey also criticized as outmoded the traditional grassroots approaches to development aimed at mobilizing the investible surplus concealed in rural labour, which were in accord with the basic needs approach advocated by ILO and the widely accepted Nurksian thesis of savings mobilization.
75. Ethiopia's long-term development plan would enable mobilization of its human and natural resources, land-use planning, generation of surplus from the agricultural sector, settlement and resettlement of rural populations to facilitate the provision of essential economic and social services, and implementation of measures to combat drought and desertification. He objected to what he considered to be the biased assessment of Ethiopia's villagization process in paragraph 140 of the Survey, and criticized the analysis contained in paragraph 57, where it was stated that the decline in primary commodity prices would bring about more aid flows from donors; that view was contrary to the position of developing countries, which opposed ever-falling commodity prices. More aid was not, and could not be, a substitute for more trade. Moreover, the paragraph took the same position as the World Bank report on sub-Saharan Africa, which had been rejected by the eighth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers held in Tripoli, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in 1982.

76. Finally, he acknowledged that the analysis in the Survey of the food and agriculture sector had placed appropriate emphasis on the need for strong backward and forward linkages between agriculture and industry. The greatest need was to increase the rate and level of investment to enable the inherent structural problems of Africa to be tackled. In that regard, member States should call for a substantial inflow of resources at the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the critical economic situation in Africa.

77. The representative of Zaire said that the Biennial report of the Executive Secretary 1984-1985, and all the other major background documents should, in conformity with article 10 of the rules of procedure of the Commission, have been sent to member States at least six weeks before the meeting to enable member States to analyse them thoroughly at the national level.

78. He called upon African States to be more active in the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly so as to ensure that ECA was provided with the resources it required to implement its mandate. Africa should increasingly make use of its own technical expertise. In that respect, and contrary to the relevant draft resolution proposed by the Technical Preparatory Committee, ECA should be called upon not to consider the problem
caused by the use of foreign expertise within the sole framework of indebtedness but rather to evaluate the general impact of technical assistance on all African economies and to promote the use of African experts who, apart from their individual expertise, had the advantage of being more conversant with conditions in Africa.

79. With respect to the assessment of the role of ECA since its creation which had been proposed by the Technical Preparatory Committee, member States, which were the most directly concerned, should be requested to transmit their own assessments of the role of ECA in their respective countries to the secretariat, which would then summarize them.

80. He criticized the negative attitude of developed countries to the development of transport in Africa and said that subregional integration could accelerate industrialization in Africa. The costs of setting up industrial production plants, and of maintenance and the capacity to market production were fundamental factors which warranted such an approach. With respect to intra-African trade promotion, he confirmed the offer made by his country at the eighth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade to host the Fifth All-Africa Trade Fair.

81. In conclusion, he said that the meetings of the ECA Conference of Ministers should be held every two years because the problems of development were such that a long lead time was required to implement the programmes and decisions adopted. Sectoral meetings would be held between two meetings of the Conference of Ministers. Zaire supported the institutionalization of meetings on some sectors of African economies such as tourism which was a source of considerable foreign exchange earnings.

82. The representative of Lesotho said that his country had hosted the 1986 meeting of the Lusaka-based MULPOC and had participated fully in the meetings of PTA and SADCC as a demonstration of its commitment to subregional economic co-operation and integration, despite its geographic position. He welcomed the recommendations of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole on rationalizing the activities of ECA-sponsored institutions. SADCC had been established with the objective of reducing economic dependence on apartheid South Africa through collective action and despite economic damage resulting from the political, economic and military destabilization of the subregion by South Africa. The member States of SADCC were counting on the support of the international community to reduce the effects. He noted with satisfaction the co-operation and understanding between SADCC and the ECA-sponsored institutions in the subregion.
83. It was to be hoped that the special session of the General Assembly on Africa's economic crisis would mark a turning point for Africa's economic development, through the implementation of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990. The representative of Lesotho stressed his country's determination and preparedness to support subregional collective efforts, and urged the co-operation of the international community.

84. In conclusion, he informed the Conference that Lesotho would be hosting a high-level United Nations Volunteers intergovernmental meeting from 16 to 21 November 1986, and extended an open invitation to all representatives.

85. The representative of Angola acknowledged the positive trends reported by ECA in some sectors, particularly agriculture, during 1984-1985. Nevertheless, member States should still give greater emphasis to policies which increased agricultural production, since the situation was still critical in some countries; surplus foodstuff from one region could be used to supplement deficits in other regions. Deep-rooted government policies and economic structures hampered the increased production of food, in that they encouraged production for export, not consumption. In effect, Africa had accepted external dependence as a way of life.

86. In Angola, the disadvantages of external dependence were particularly aggravated by South Africa's destabilization and destruction of vital economic and social infrastructure, with the encouragement and assistance of the United States of America, whose "constructive engagement" policy she deplored. The United States was providing weapons to the Angolan opposition to fight communism where it did not exist. Angola faced many financial problems, due partly to the high defence expenditures and other external factors. What Africa needed was development assistance, not weapons.

87. In conclusion, she expressed the hope that during the next stage of the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action, serious efforts would be directed not only at rational economic issues, but also at implementing projects that foster growth and co-operation.

88. The representative of Morocco proposed that the Conference should consider the policy address delivered by President Paul Biya as setting guidelines for the work of the current session. Everyone was well aware of the thrust of the President's appeal that solutions must be sought to the problems on the basis of the principles that must govern all action at the African level.
89. Morocco, which had witnessed the emergence of ECA, had spared no effort to ensure that the mandate of the Commission was broadened and decentralized, and that its activities were realistic and produced immediate results for the benefit of the African countries. Morocco was always ready to participate resolutely in furthering the development and prosperity of Africa.

90. The food crisis, the internal and external economic and financial disequilibria, the burden of external indebtedness, drought and desertification were all obstacles that could be overcome through joint efforts and Africa's own ingenuity. To achieve collective self-sufficiency, it was more than ever necessary to harmonize Africa's action and plans at the sectoral, subregional and regional levels, with the emphasis on complementarity.

91. The internal effort to generate investment for reviving the African economies also involved enlisting the contribution of the international community. However, that contribution must be viewed only in terms of support because Africa itself had to muster sufficient strength to overcome its problems by improving economic options and management and by giving full rein to the creative energies of the African peoples which were indispensable for development.

92. The representative of the Sudan said that the critical economic and social conditions confronting his country needed not only determined efforts on the part of the Sudanese people but also complementary support from the international community. The Sudan had experienced in the last three years severe deterioration in its economy, institutions, and productive and service facilities, and the crisis had been greatly aggravated by chronic desertification, drought, famine, steady influxes of refugees and displaced persons and external debt problems. The situation had been further complicated by the recent deterioration in the country's relations with IMF following the Fund's declaration that the Sudan was not qualified to benefit from new resources. The Government was currently negotiating with the Fund and hoped for a satisfactory solution which would take account of its special conditions.
93. As part of its efforts to find solutions to the crisis, the Government had convened a national economic conference in March 1986 that had analysed the causes of the Sudan's economic deterioration, identified medium- and long-term strategies and adopted a three-year emergency recovery programme which corresponded completely with Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990. The programme stressed food security, increased agricultural and industrial production and infrastructural development which would eliminate the conflicting economic policies, mismanagement, subjugation and oppressive methods of the previous regime.

94. He appealed to the international community as a whole and donor countries in particular to do their utmost to co-operate with Africa in order to achieve the objective of the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa. Since external indebtedness was one of the major problems hindering Africa's development and progress, including a particularly heavy burden on the continent's LDCs, he urged that every effort should be made to convene the international conference on Africa's external debt in 1987. Creditor nations and institutions should have the necessary political will to co-operate with African countries with a view to finding a realistic and reasonable solution which would allow the continent to adjust its economies and increase its productivity.

95. The representative of Algeria said that the present session was taking place against an extremely serious background, and asked how it was possible to conceive of Africa's economic and social development under the constant threat of and resort to force. Some African countries were compelled to apply readjustment measures, often counter to the interests of society, imposed on them by multilateral institutions or bilateral donors who took no account of the weakness of the economic base in African countries, 26 of which were classified as LDCs. Given that situation, every effort must be made to implement Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery.

96. The forthcoming special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa would, he hoped, result in specific measures capable of
backing up the efforts the African countries had committed themselves to making for the implementation of the Priority Programme. ECA would have an important role to play, as an essential tool for the promotion of the continent's integrated economic and social development, in the implementation of that Programme. Accordingly, the decrease in the resources allocated to ECA remained a cause of concern and should, he felt, induce the secretariat to rationalize its operational mechanisms to make them more effective. In that context, the institutionalization of new ministeral conferences did not seem desirable; rather, such meetings should be convened on an ad hoc basis whenever the situation so required.

97. While regretting that most of the ECA-sponsored institutions had not implemented the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations regarding mergers, he welcomed the merger of the African Cartography Association and the African Remote Sensing Council. Lastly, he welcomed the invaluable co-operation between the ECA and OAU secretariats for the benefit of Africa.

98. The representative of Ghana said that the modest achievements of his country's recovery programme were attributable, in the main, to a 14 per cent increase in food production in 1984, when maize production increased by 223 per cent over that for 1983. The programme had concentrated initially on addressing the structural weaknesses in the economy through macro-economic management within a framework of rigorous fiscal and monetary discipline, but now sought to build upon the foundation created by improving sectoral programmes and programme implementation.

99. The significant improvement in food production had created problems of localized and seasonal glut in Ghana. Massive financing was required to purchase the crop so that the peasant farmer could concentrate on production and provide adequate storage in order to reduce the extent of post-harvest losses and even out supplies throughout the year. In designing a programme for Africa's economic recovery, such problems must be anticipated and addressed so that promising developments did not flounder.

100. He concluded by commending ECA and ADB for the joint economic report on Africa; such joint efforts by African economic institutions must be encouraged in order to ensure a more efficient use of their resources in the solution of the economic and social problems of Africa. With the major
problem areas for each subregion identified through such a report, the lending programmes of ADB would find practical expression in the solution of the problems.

101. The representative of Sao Tome and Principe emphasized that the meeting was being held at a time when the African continent, despite a slight recovery of agriculture, was hard hit by economic crisis. The increase in production was far from meeting the food needs of African populations. The African countries' debt and debt service burden was a serious threat to the continent's development.

102. That difficult situation was the result, among other things, of the international economic environment, the deterioration in the terms of trade and the stiffening of loan terms. He welcomed the adoption, by the twenty-first ordinary session of OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990.

103. The development of his own country, whose isolation was compounded by the weakness of its infrastructures and the vulnerability of its economy, could not be achieved without subregional, regional and international cooperation. The Government, with UNDP assistance, had just held a conference of development partners in order to mobilize external resources for the financing of its development plan, 1986-1990, which placed particular emphasis on the rehabilitation of agriculture, energy, water resources, transport and communications.

104. The representative of the Gambia said that the worsening food and agricultural situation in Africa called for greater collective efforts to arrest the declining trend. Although there were signs of recovery, Africa could not afford complacency.

105. Noting the preoccupation with agricultural rehabilitation by provision of essential inputs, price incentives and extension services, he stressed that such measures alone could not transform African agricultural stagnation without a strong research capability. Research into improved drought-resistant, high-yielding seeds was lacking. He underlined the importance of agricultural productivity and appealed to ECA and other relevant regional institutions to give more attention to the improvement of agricultural research both at the national and regional levels.

106. In conclusion, he stated that the success or failure of African economies would depend on the degree and level of commitment to Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery.
107. The observer for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that neither the arms race nor the nuclear war could be won by any one side, and informed the meeting of his country's plan to rid the world of nuclear weapons before the end of the century. Elimination of nuclear weapons and the arms race would release massive resources which could be used for development.

108. The critical situation of African economies could only be overcome in a world of equal and equitable economic relations. In that respect, he pointed out the financial pressures on the African countries and the need to end exploitation by foreign transnational corporations. In reference to privatization of African economies, he warned against abandoning social programmes.

109. He referred to the destabilization activities of the South African Government and condemned apartheid, drawing attention in that connection to the decision of the forty-third OAU Council of Ministers on the convocation of an international conference on apartheid.

110. Finally, he mentioned his country's proposals for the creation of an international economic security system, and expressed the hope that the conference would take decisive action in that direction.

111. Speaking on the co-operation between his country and African countries, the observer for the Federal Republic of Germany said that the Lome III Convention demonstrated the political will of Europeans and Africans to find joint answers to problems and challenges in the field of trade, economic co-operation and development. He reiterated the importance his Government attached to multilateral development co-operation in Africa, particularly in the areas of communications, food security, energy and development planning, and expressed the hope that the long-standing close co-operation between his country and ECA would continue, and drew attention to his Government's initiatives with respect to the implementation of the regional programme to
improve post-harvest protection in Africa adopted at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers. Emphasizing the problem of Africa's commodity markets and the need to find solutions thereof, his Government had presented a proposal to UNCTAD on export earnings stabilization and hoped that the Conference would be supportive.

112. He welcomed the fact that the forthcoming special session of the United Nations General Assembly would deal with food security and the revitalization of the agricultural sector in Africa. Equally, the debt situation in Africa and its implications for the continent's economic development would have to be dealt with. Measures were required that would increase export earnings, and he commended African countries for the realistic and constructive attitude they had taken during the recent GATT negotiations.

113. The observer for France said that the present meeting was of particular importance, because it was being held at a time when Africa's economic situation was at the centre of the debates taking place in the highest international forum. Development assistance was now more than ever a priority, and should serve to support the reforms carried out by African Governments, taking into account the severe handicap which the debt burden placed on their countries. France devoted almost 70 per cent of its bilateral aid to Africa, and gave priority to the least developed countries, the majority of which were in Africa.

114. The observer for India said that the twelfth session of the Commission was taking place at a time of renewed hope for Africa's economic recovery, and high expectations of a better future. The document prepared by the extraordinary sessions of ECA and of OAU in Addis Ababa for submission to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the economic crisis in Africa was a concrete plan of action, and constituted a pragmatic approach to solving Africa's problems. Its emphasis on self-reliance was correct; the international community should appreciate the basic concept and extend to Africa the assistance required for achieving the target.

115. The African strategy underlined the need for agricultural development and the establishment of agriculture-related industries. Africa had vast unutilized potential for food production. In that connection, he outlined various activities and programmes of his Government in favour of African countries; called on African countries to utilize the experience of several
Asian countries in agriculture and water resources management, and informed the meeting of India's participation in and contribution to SADCC. The activities included a workshop held from 5 to 10 May 1986 to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experience between Indian and African food and agricultural experts, focusing on planning, agricultural research and training, irrigation and water management, drought management and extension services; and a planned exhibition of Indian machinery for small-scale industries to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, later in the year.

116. He called for concerted efforts to promote South-South dialogue, and suggested that the planned Centre for Science and Technology for Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries to be established in India, as well as the agreement reached on the Global System of Trade Preferences (GSTP) among non-aligned and developing countries, could provide possible areas for immediate co-operation. The Government of India was willing to continue its commitment to the economic development of Africa, particularly in areas and ways which might be identified as a result of the deliberations at the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly.

117. The representative of Czechoslovakia said that the issues pertaining to the critical economic situation in Africa such as drought, famine and external debt were very difficult ones. His country was also concerned with those issues and would, within available means and possibilities, assist in solving them.

118. The problems facing Africa and all mankind could only be solved in circumstances of lasting peace, as the question of economic safety of States and of economic and social development could not be separated from the great role of safeguarding peace, disarmament measures and the related decrease in military spending. The solution to Africa's economic problems had also to be linked with the restructuring of economic relations through the struggle to achieve a new and just international economic order.

119. The solution to Africa's problems could not be postponed any longer, and Czechoslovakia could contribute as much as possible to the success of the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly on Africa.
120. The UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa welcomed the general support of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole for the paper on UNDP-assisted regional programme for Africa - fourth programming cycle 1987-1981, on the basis of which a draft resolution on the UNDP-assisted regional programme for Africa during the fourth cycle had been prepared for submission to the Conference.

121. While national problems often required national solutions, inter-country and regional programmes could play a very significant role in contributing to their solution. Some $US 135 million had been allocated for the last cycle, and about $US 200 million were estimated to be made available for the fourth programming cycle. The principal objective of the UNDP-assisted regional programme was to assist member States in identifying, preparing and implementing subregional or multinational projects of benefit to several countries and which also supplemented national programmes.

122. Regional co-operation in Africa over the past 20 years had been manifested by the establishment of several intergovernmental organizations/institutions. UNDP-assisted regional programmes during the past 10 years had been associated with those institutions and he expected that such collaboration in the identification, elaboration, design and implementation of regional programmes and projects would continue during the fourth programming cycle. The three areas on which the UNDP-assisted regional programme for Africa, during the fourth cycle, would concentrate were: (i) research and development for food production; (ii) productivity and management for the production of goods and services; and (iii) energy, water, communications and transport.

123. While acknowledging that other critical areas could have been included in the programme, he pointed out that, given the limited amount of $US 200 million over a five-year period, the programme was to be seen as a series of activities that could attract additional resources, not only from sources outside African countries but also from African Governments themselves. He emphasized that the objectives of the regional programme-supported projects were people - the ultimate objective of all development.

124. Proposals had been invited within the framework of the orientation paper from African Governments, United Nations executing agencies and intergovernmental organizations and selected NGOs. Close consultations would be held before submission of the regional programme to the UNDP Governing Council in June 1987, prior to which an extraordinary session of the ECA Conference of Ministers in October 1986 would have considered and endorsed the regional programme.

125. With respect to the proposed orientation paper expected from the Regional Bureau for Arab States, the UNDP Regional Director for Africa Bureau said that his colleague in charge of the Arab Bureau regretted his inability to participate personally in the meeting. However, he had requested him to inform the Conference that as a result of
consultations previously conducted through field visits, seminars, symposia, and visits to governments over the past two years, the Regional Bureau for Arab States had defined the following priorities for the fourth programming cycle: food security; human resources development; introduction of advanced technology; and TCDC between the Arab region and Africa.

126. The Director of UNSO said that since its establishment in 1973, the Office had drawn up and implemented nearly 300 national and regional drought and desert control projects, with a total cost of some $US 1 billion, in 22 African countries. It was anxious to extend its activities to those countries of Southern Africa which were suffering from the disastrous effects of drought and desertification in addition to the results of South Africa's subversive activities.

127. Drought and desertification were at present factors which the African continent must take into account in its development strategies and programmes. The recommendations of the inter-agency meeting held in Addis Ababa on 17 and 18 March 1986, co-sponsored by OAU, ECA and UNSO, focused on the need for a global and multisectoral approach, for each African country concerned to draw up and integrate into its development strategies and programmes a plan to combat drought and desertification, and for increased regional and subregional co-operation in the light of the fact that drought and desertification, transhumance and population movements went beyond territorial boundaries.

128. Where South-South co-operation with regard to drought and desertification control was concerned, the countries of North Africa could be of great assistance to those south of the Sahara by sharing their experience in the fields of sand-dune fixation, reforestation, management of lakes in elevated areas, and training of managerial staff. He called upon the OAU and ECA secretariats to ensure that African Heads of State and Government made such co-operation a major tool for the implementation of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990.

129. The observer for ITU said that the basic activity of his organization was to regulate, standardize and co-ordinate the development of telecommunications and to contribute to the development of that sector by providing advisory
services and exchanging all kinds of information. As early as 1963, ECA and ITU had signed a memorandum of understanding whose aim was to accelerate the development of communications in Africa and to establish a modern and autonomous regional telecommunications network covering the whole continent so as to meet the immediate and long-term requirements of African countries. As a result of steadfast support from members of the Co-ordinating Committee and African Governments, the African continent could now pride itself on having a modern continent-wide communications network. The PANAFTEL network had already eliminated, to a large extent, situations in which telephone calls between neighbouring African countries had had to be routed through European capitals. However, much still remained to be done and the PANAFTEL network should be considered as a continuously developing project. As a result of advances in technology, some links should be modernized and their capacities increased; others had still not been connected or were in a disastrous state of disrepair.

130. So far, the PANAFTEL network had mainly used land-based micro-wave links, but other possibilities should be explored, such as submarine cables or satellite systems and all types of appropriate technology, particularly those that could improve the establishment of telecommunications services in the rural areas where the largest and most productive part of Africa's population lived.

131. ITU would continue to provide assistance to African countries in increasingly close cooperation with ECA; that should help to further the aim of bringing communications within the reach of all by the first half of the next century.

132. The observer for FAO stated that only a year ago, the existence of some 30 million people had been threatened by drought, but that the recent good rains had brought about renewed hope and vitality. Both food and agricultural production in Africa had increased by about 4 per cent in 1985.
133. During those difficult years, FAO had alerted the international community and mobilized the necessary aid for Africa's relief. The need now was to restore African agriculture fully and meet the basic requirements, including seeds, tools, fertilizers and infrastructural support such as pricing policies, improved market access, research and development, post-harvest loss prevention measures and land and water development and control mechanisms - issues which had already been examined by the Technical Preparatory Committee. FAO continued to play its part in that effort and had, in co-operation with the countries, prepared the African Regional Programme for Agriculture (ARPA).

134. An in-depth study of long-term problems and the potential of food production in the different agro-ecological areas of the continent had been completed, and it was hoped that it would assist in the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990.

135. Reviewing the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, he stated that the need was still great and pledged to continue and intensify FAO's activities in assisting the liberation of African women from institutions and processes that institutionalized their poverty.

136. Finally, he expressed the hope that the proposed arrangements for the institutionalization of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment would take fully into account the competence and ongoing activities of FAO.

137. The observer for ILO noted the convergence of the objectives of ILO, ECA and OAU, namely, to combat injustice, poverty, unemployment, and the struggle to create better economic, social and living conditions for African peoples confronted with natural disasters and the effects of the international economic crisis, and said that ILO was sensitive to the economic and social crisis affecting the African least developed countries.

138. The analysis made in the orientation paper on the UNDP-supported regional programme for Africa, 1987-1991, of the need to improve agriculture and human resources tied in with ILO concerns. The Organization had supported technical
co-operation projects particularly in the sectors of rural development infrastructures, labour-intensive works, co-operative activities, employment in rural areas and the promotion of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

139. In view of the serious problems facing some African countries, ILO had tried to adopt a new multi-faceted approach which took a global and coherent view of those problems. It was willing to co-operate with ECA and OAU within its sphere of competence, and to strengthen its co-operation with African countries.

140. The observer for IMF said that when the Conference of Ministers had last met a year ago, the outlook for African economies had been very uncertain. Since then, notable progress had been made, including a reduction (from $US 15 billion to $US 13 billion) in the external current account deficit of African countries during 1985 despite a deterioration of about 23 per cent in the terms of trade. That improvement was a credit to the effort of African Governments under the difficult circumstances facing them. The IMF had played a role in those collaborative endeavours. In addition to regular financial assistance, the technical and general policy assistance given on request by the Fund to its member countries was broadly similar to that of the World Bank. The Fund had participated actively in the work of international forums dealing with Africa's economic development, such as the preparatory work for the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa.

141. Looking ahead, it was clear that the outlook remained difficult. Africa's external debt service payments had been estimated at $US 15 billion to 35 billion annually over the next five years, averaging roughly about half of annual export earnings. The co-operative efforts of the past gave grounds for confidence about the prospects for tackling these problems. In that connection, he informed the Conference that the Fund had recently established a Structural Adjustment Facility, designed to recycle repayments of Trust Fund resources for providing financial assistance to eligible member countries facing serious and protracted balance-of-payments problems and adopted medium-term growth-oriented adjustment programmes.
142. The Director-General of UNESCO, in a special message to the Conference, highlighted the close and intensifying co-operation between ECA and UNESCO in various sectoral activities of common interest to the African continent, and referred to the annual joint concertation meetings as a model forum and framework for co-operation at the grass-root levels. He wished the Conference every success.

143. In a document distributed to the Conference, the meeting was informed of the objectives and activities of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and its scope to participate in regional projects including those executed by other agencies. The multisectoral involvement of UNV in Africa's development efforts had, in the past, focused on human resources development, agriculture, health and transport.

144. Within the framework of the UNDP-assisted fourth regional programme for Africa, the UNV programme would be aimed at strengthening existing, and encouraging the creation of, new domestic development service organizations. The programme's technical assistance in the area of participatory development at the grass-roots level would be channelled through these development service organizations. Consequently, a regional umbrella project was to be designed that would provide skilled personnel to African Governments whenever they identified the needs for such requirements in relation to the assistance provided under the fourth regional programme.

145. The representative of the World Bank expressed his organization's concurrence with the emphasis given by ECA and OAU to food and agriculture in the African submission to the General Assembly special session on Africa's critical economic situation. Appreciating African efforts in the development of the region, he hoped that donors would match the required resources gap.

146. He underlined the need, already expressed, for dedicated and disciplined self-reliance and highlighted the importance of training. African problems were partly managerial, but they also raised doubts on past ideas and discussions concerning economic management. Hence, there was need for training and the exchange of experience in management and economic development. He then highlighted the role and activities of the Economic Development Institute (EDI), whose programmes involved in-service training and provided an opportunity for exchange of mutual experience in the development process. So far, EDI emphasis had been on macro-economic sectoral adjustment.
147. In conclusion, he stressed the importance of proper selection of candidates for in-service training programmes and the need for proper rewards after training. He appealed for the establishment of an African institution with responsibility for training in macro-economic management, and added that where there was also a need for a training in project analysis, that need could best be met by national institutions.

148. The representative of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) recalled that his organization's purpose was to promote, by uniting and coordinating the efforts of its members, the further extension and improvement of co-operation, the development of economic integration, the gradual improvement of the economies and industries of member countries, an increase in labour productivity, the gradual equalization of the economic development levels of member countries, and the improvement of their peoples' well-being. The CMEA member countries believed that peace and disarmament were essential for the restructuring of international economic relations.

149. The national incomes of the CMEA member countries had increased by 18 per cent in five years. In order to consolidate economic integration, those countries had in December 1985 approved a comprehensive programme of scientific and technological progress up to the year 2000. The implementation of that programme would broaden the areas for mutually-beneficial co-operation with all countries, including developing countries.

150. The CMEA member countries shared the views expressed at the twenty-first ordinary session of the CMO Assembly of Heads of State and Government that Africa's economic problems could be solved not through short-term emergency measures, such as food aid, but through the restructuring of African countries' economies, with emphasis on the training of managerial staff and the mobilization and rational utilization of the financial resources required for the development of agriculture, transport and communications, energy, mines and building.

151. The observer for the Economic Community of the Great Lakes countries (CEPGL) said that the difficult situation most African countries were experiencing was due largely to the decline of agriculture. Hence a plan for the rehabilitation of agriculture was needed, based on specific measures and in-depth knowledge of each country's exact situation, and allocating the scarce resources available to integrative projects which would promote the development of the sector. Among the
priority sectors identified by CEPGL to which all available technical, human and financial resources would be channelled in the years to come, first place was assigned to the food and agriculture sector. CEPGL welcomed the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development.

152. In the industry sector, CEPGL's efforts were concentrated on the development of agro-industry, the chemical, metallurgical, mechanical, forestry and building materials industries, and small-scale industry. The transport and communications sector had always been one of CEPGL's main concerns, because of the land-locked situation of the countries of the Community and of vast tourism potential. To promote trade, the Community's member countries had recently signed a convention on the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital and on the right of establishment.

153. In conclusion, he appealed to international organizations and friendly countries to promote more intensive consultation at the regional and subregional levels in order to accelerate the exchange of experience and assess the efforts made in the pursuit of common objectives.

154. In a document distributed to the meeting, the Bahá'í International Community said that little progress had so far been achieved in realizing many of the goals and objectives of the Third United Nations Development Decade. The African food crisis and the gross disparities in living standards were some of the examples.

155. Successful development efforts required co-operation among all participants in the development process. That co-operation should, inter alia, be aimed at ensuring for every individual the fulfilment of his/her basic needs; enhancing the creative energies, potential and initiative of each individual; fulfilling the participation of women in the development process; and enabling countries, in relating to each other, to eradicate the gross inequalities among nations as those inequalities continued to destabilize the world.

156. The development of an attitude of co-operation at all levels required universal education in the truth of human unity, and that education was already being offered in a number of countries.

157. The organization applauded ECA's efforts to co-ordinate and facilitate the implementation of sound development strategies. Bahá'í Communities would continue to give high priority to the goals of those strategies as they worked to enhance co-operative and development efforts at every level.
Report of the sixth meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries (agenda item 6)

158. The Chairman of the sixth meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries introduced the report of that meeting (E/ECA/CM.12/38) and highlighted the main points of the opening statements, discussions and conclusions. The meeting had discussed: (i) the economic and social conditions in the African LDCs, 1984-1985; (ii) progress made in the implementation of the SNPA in the countries in 1984-1986; (iii) assessment of food strategies; and (iv) examination of ECA activities 1984-1985 and work programme for 1986-1987. It had concluded that the growth rate of the countries' economies had continued to decline due to the poor performance of agriculture and that efforts made by the States and international community to implement SNPA had been inadequate to meet the needs. It had recommended that: (a) resources for development in the LDCs should not be used up in debt servicing; (b) as regards modalities of technical assistance, countries should make better use of national experts and, where necessary, South-South co-operation; and (c) the ECA secretariat should undertake a study to assess the structural adjustments undertaken by various countries.

159. The Chairman stated that the meeting had discussed the possibility of presenting a separate document on the problems of the LDCs to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa, and had concluded that there should be only one African document which, however, should emphasize the particular situation of the LDCs.

160. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of the Comoros drew attention to the fact that some of the difficulties encountered in carrying out studies and projects were due to lack of human resources and capabilities. In that regard, his country had benefited from the technical assistance of United Nations Volunteers, and he suggested that the possibilities of that assistance should be explored at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

161. The Conference took note of the report.
Report and recommendations of the seventh meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (agenda item 7)

162. The Chairman of the seventh meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole introduced the Committee's report (E/ECA/CM.12/44), which also contained the draft resolutions recommended for adoption by the Conference of Ministers. He said that the Committee's debates had resulted in consensus on all items discussed with the exception of the report of the fifth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, held in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 3 to 11 March 1986, on which lively discussion had taken place following a Moroccan statement questioning the decision not to reinstate the Lagos-Tangiers highway, taken by that Conference. The Committee's conclusion on that subject appeared in paragraph 92 of its report.

163. The representative of Morocco welcomed the quality and accuracy of the Committee's report, and said he had no objection to the Conference taking note of it. However, his delegation reserved the right to comment when draft resolution 2, concerning the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, was considered by the Conference.

164. The Conference took note of the report of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole.

Draft resolutions submitted by the seventh meeting of TEPCOW for consideration by the twenty-first session of the Commission/twelfth meeting of the Conference of Ministers (agenda item 8)

165. The 26 draft resolutions submitted by the seventh meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole for consideration by the Conference of Ministers were adopted subject to the amendments, decision and reservation indicated below:

Draft resolution 2: United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa

166. The representative of Morocco proposed an amendment to this draft resolution.
167. He stated that the amendment concerned the principle of complying on one hand, with the decisions set forth in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, adopted at the fortieth session of the General Assembly, and, on the other, with the resolutions previously adopted by one of the sectoral meetings and the Conference of Ministers of ECA.

168. The amendment comprised the addition of the following phrase at the end of operative paragraph 7(c):

"On the understanding that ECA will strictly abide by the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Decade and by the resolutions previously adopted;".

169. The amendment was endorsed by several delegations.

170. The delegation of Algeria, in accordance with rules 56 and 62 of the Commission's rules of procedure, requested a vote on the amendment proposed by Morocco.

171. The Chairman suspended the proceedings for the purpose of holding consultations among the countries concerned and all others present at the meeting. Following the consultations and on the Chairman's proposal, the Conference decided to adopt the draft resolution as submitted. However, the Moroccan position, which had been supported by several delegations, would be fully reflected in the report of the Conference of Ministers.

Draft resolution 4: Improvement of Food Situation and Rehabilitation of Agriculture in Africa

172. In preambular paragraph 2, after "1936-1990", insert "adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU at its twenty-first ordinary session".

Draft resolution 6: Development of Tourism in Africa

173. In operative paragraph 4, second line, insert between "the" and "organization" the word "Secretary-General of the" and in the third line, insert "the Executive Heads of the" before the word "relevant".

174. Algeria withdrew its reservation regarding this resolution.
Draft resolution 20: Pan-African Documentation and Information System

175. In the English version, insert the word "PAN-" before the word "AFRICAN" in the title.

176. With reference to operative paragraph 7, the representative of Zaire informed the meeting that his country would like to host the proposed Central African Documentation and Information System (CADIS).

Any other business (agenda item 9)

177. The representative of Zaire drew the attention of the Conference to the observations he had made during the meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole on the issue of the frequency of the meetings of the ECA Conference of Ministers. He suggested that delegations should consider the matter very seriously and that it should be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Conference.

178. The Executive Secretary informed the Conference that the 1979 meeting of the Conference of Ministers in Rabat, Morocco, had decided to change the period from two years to one year with a provision to review the decision after four years; that review had been carried out in 1983, and it had been decided that in view of Africa's economic crisis, the Conference should continue to meet annually.

Date and venue of the twenty-second session of the Commission and thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers (agenda item 10)

179. The Executive Secretary informed the Conference that Cameroon and the Congo had both offered to host the twenty-first session of the Commission/twelfth meeting of the Conference and it had been decided that Cameroon was to host the 1986, and the Congo the 1987, session/meeting. He understood that consultations with the Government of the Congo indicated that due to other commitments, the Congo could not host the 1987 meeting. If there was no other offers, the Conference would be held at ECA headquarters at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in April 1987.
180. The representative of the Congo confirmed his country's inability to host the 1987 meeting.

181. The Conference then agreed to meet at Addis Ababa as suggested by the Executive Secretary.