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ECONOMIC COMMISSION  
FOR AFRICA**



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**NATIONS UNIES  
COMMISSION ECONOMIQUE  
POUR L'AFRIQUE**

**REPORT ON INTRA-SECRETARIAT POLICY MEETINGS IN THE  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECTOR HELD AT UN HEADQUARTERS  
FROM 17 TO 23 FEBRUARY 1995**

**03 March 1995**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The regional commissions were invited to participate in a series of intra-secretariat policy meetings at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 17 to 23 February 1995. These meetings can be classified into two categories. The first category were senior policy meetings, which, in the order they were held, included: the Regional Commissions - UNDP Task Force Meeting, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1995; the Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) in the Economic and Social Field 21 22 February, 1995; and the Management Board of UN Technical Cooperation Programme in Natural Resources and Energy, 23 February 1995.
2. The second category consisted of briefings of the Executive Secretaries of regional commissions by Ambassador Juan Somavia, Permanent Representative of Chile to the UN and Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the Social Summit; Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of UNFPA; and Dr. Wally N'dow, Executive Director of UNHCS (HABITAT).
3. The Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions held a meeting among themselves to examine issues of common concern and also articulate common understanding on issues slated for discussion at meetings to which they have been invited to participate. This meeting was held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1995. The Executive Secretaries also held discussions with Mr. Carlos Fortin, Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD regarding the TNCs programme, on the 23rd February 1995.
4. Each regional commission was represented at these meetings either by the Executive Secretary or an official or both, depending upon the level and nature of the meeting. The meeting of the RECs-UNDP Task Force was at the level of officials. Because of his previous commitments, the Executive-Secretary-designate of ECA, Mr. Kingsley Y. Amoako was only able to participate at the Senior Official Meetings, on 21-22 February 1995 and the breakfast meeting between the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions on 21 February 1995. ECA was, thus, represented at the other meetings and the briefings sessions by Mr. Ejeviome Eloho Otobo, PPCO.

## MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS - UNDP TASK FORCE

5. This meeting was held at UNDP headquarters on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1995 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Raffeeuddin Ahmed, Associate Administrator of UNDP. The meeting reviewed a set of proposals for implementing the work plan of the Task Force. The work plan of the Task Force agreed at its first meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1994, consist of: Mechanisms for regional level coordination; policy analysis and identification of specific areas for collaboration; regional dimensions in strategy notes; two-way exchange of information; participation of RECs in operational activities and collaboration in resources mobilization.

6. The discussion at this meeting of the Task Force produced a set of recommendations aimed at facilitating the implementation of the six objectives of the Task Force work plan. The main highlights of the recommendations agreed at the meeting were that:

- o UNDP and RECs will cooperate in the preparation of the UNDP sixth programming cycle and, in this connection, UNDP and RECs will jointly convene intergovernmental regional fora for consultation on regional programmes. The implication of this decision is that UNDP has agreed in principle to revive the active consultative process between RECs and UNDP that marked the fourth programming cycle as contrasted with the fifth cycle where these were scant consultations.
- o UNDP and the RECs are to cooperate in mobilizing resources with a view to finding ways for the Regional Commissions to gain access to more resources. Specifically, UNDP indicated that it would propose to the next meeting of its Executive Board, in April 1995 that the RECs should participate in TSS-1 and TSS-2 mechanisms. If this recommendation is approved by the Executive Board it will represent a breakthrough for the RECs which hitherto had been excluded from TSS mechanisms.

- o In the context of the need to extend the frontiers of cooperation between the RECs and UNDP, it was agreed that the RECs will be called upon to help in identifying strategic issues which UNDP should consider within its thematic focus; and that the RECs and UNDP should jointly sponsor major regional conferences and follow-up to the international conferences/seminars.

7. With regard to follow-up mechanisms for implementing the various recommendations; it was agreed that depending on who had responsibility for a particular initiative, the RECs and UNDP were invited to correspond with each other no later than 21 March 1995 on the time frame for implementation of their respective initiative. It is expected that the current Coordinator (ECE) will take the initiative on behalf of the regional commissions.

8. The recommendations that emanated from the meeting of RECs-UNDP Task Force was approved by the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Secretaries at a breakfast meeting on 21 February 1995. The full report appears as Annex I to this report. Progress in implementation of recommendations would be reviewed at the next meeting of the Task Force which is tentatively scheduled for end of May 1995, to coincide with the next Senior officials Meeting in the economic and social field in New York.

### **MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS**

9. The Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions held a one-day meeting on 20 February 1995 devoted to exchanging views on issues of common concerns/interests listed for discussion at various meetings they were in New York to attend. In particular, they discussed the three main items on the agenda of the Senior officials Meetings scheduled for 21-22 February 1995. These were the role of the regional commissions and their cooperation with other UN Bodies and Agencies; Review of Follow-up to ACC, with particular reference to African Economic Recovery and Development; and Framework for Follow-up of UN Global Conferences/Summits. In addition, they discussed cooperation between the regional commissions and non-UN regional and subregional organizations; relations with the Centre for Human Rights, and migration issues.

10. The discussion on the role of the regional commissions and their cooperation with other UN bodies centered around the paper which the regional commissions had been requested to prepare and present to the Senior Officials Meeting. The paper which was jointly prepared by all five regional Commissions is attached as annex II. It was decided that, Mr. Yves Berthelot, current Coordinator of the regional commissions, should emphasize four key points during his presentation of the paper to the SOM, the next day, 21 February 1995. These were that the regional commissions had comparative advantages in many areas than the global entities did not have; that the functions of regional commissions can be conceived in two ways - those with region-specific thrust and orientation and those that respond to global agenda, and their strength lies more in the former than the later; that geographic proximity can provide a basis for conflict or cooperation and that the raison d'être of RECs is to foster cooperation; and that support for the regional commission - in particular, financial outlay for the regional commissions should, if it cannot be increased, not suffer a decrease.

11. The Executive Secretaries pondered briefly on the implications of the recommendation relating to the regional commission in **Our Global Neighborhood**: the report of the Commission on Global Governance. The report recommended "that objectives [of regional collaboration and integration] could be helped if resources now expended on the UN regional commissions were diverted to the support of the [non-UN regional] organizations and their activities. The continuing utility of the regional commissions now needs to be closely examined and their future determined in consultation with governments in their regions" (Page 290-291).

12. The Executive Secretaries took the view that the recommendation of the Commission on Global Governance need not be a cause for anxiety about the fate of the regional commissions. However, they agreed to impress on the Secretary-General during the SOM, the need for the current coordinator of the regional commissions to be present at the Forum on the Future of the United Nations system to be held on 1st March 1995 at Vienna, Austria at which the report of the Commission on Global Governance will be discussed.

13. During the exchange of views on the follow-up to the ACC Fall 1994 on African Economic Recovery and Development, a copy of letter written by the Secretary-General to members of the ACC outlining proposals for giving practical effect to the decisions of ACC on African Economic Recovery and Development was brought to the attention of the Executive Secretaries, see Annex III. The Executive Secretaries observed that the letter represented an important step forward in reviving UN system wide support for Africa. At the suggestion of ECA, they agreed to underline the need to closely involve ECA in any framework launched under the auspices of ACC.

14. As regards the follow-up to global conferences/summits (ICPD, WSSD, International Women Conference and HABITAT II), the Executive Secretaries emphasized the need for strong role for the regional commissions in monitoring and implementation of the programmes that will emerge from press conferences. In this context, some regional commissions (ECA, ECLAC and ESCAP) noted with concern that the regional commissions had not been given any operational role in the implementation of the WSSD, in the document negotiated at Prepcom III. ECE, however, took the view that the role assigned the regional commissions in policy monitoring - through regional conferences to be convened by RECs, regional development banks and other intergovernmental organizations - was sufficient. The Executive Secretary of ECE reminded his colleagues that RECs did not have resources to play any significant operational role. He also said that ECE did not have a mandate for social programmes, as such it will be difficult for him to convince his member States give an operational role to ECE. At this point, it became clear there was no consensus among the regional commissions in assigning an operational role to them the follow-up to WSSD. As a result, the suggestion by ECA supported by ECLAC and ESCAP, that the regional commissions make a joint *demarche* to the Chairman of Group 77 to press for an operational role for RECs was not pressed further.

15. The discussion on the issue of cooperation between the RECs and non-UN regional and subregional organizations was held in the context of the suggestion by the Secretary-General that the regional commissions should prepare a paper for him on the topic. The Executive Secretaries agreed, to present a joint paper to be drawn from the individual experiences of each regional commission. The paper should discuss two categories of cooperation: at the level of policy and at the level of joint programmes and projects. The deadline for submission of this paper to the current Coordinator is the first - second week of April, 1995.

16. The item on relations between the RECs and the UN Centre for Human Rights was inscribed on the agenda of the meeting of the Executive Secretaries at the request of ESCAP, which wanted to benefit from the experience of other RECs in responding to queries from the Centre. Some RECs indicated that they responded to only queries that related to economic and social rights, refraining from those concerning civil and political rights. This was because not only did civil and political rights issues fall outside the mandate of RECs but also because member States were sensitive to comments on civil and political rights by UN agencies.

17. The Executive Secretaries also discussed the issue of migration. In this context, they reaffirmed their decision to present to ECOSOC 1995 under the item interregional cooperation - the project on Impact of International Migration in countries of destination and countries of origin. Mr. Jean-Claude Milleron, USG for Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis came to brief the meeting of the Executive Secretaries on the activities for the International Conference on Migration and Development which the UN Secretariat has been asked to prepare.

18. Mr. Milleron said that the preparatory process will consist of a three phases. The first phase will involve consultations at the secretariat level, with first round scheduled for 3 March 1995. He said that he had written to relevant UN departments and agencies including the RECs to ask for their views on certain issues. The second stage will involve technical preparation with much latitude for regional action. And third the phase will be mainly at the international political level, at which international commitments will be codified into agreements. He said that the preparatory process will allow for "decentralized negotiations" on a multitude of issues. He explained that decentralized negotiations would basically involve interested parties from various regions - a sort of intermediate stage between global and regional stages. He appealed to the RECs to play a major role in providing analytical support for issues involved in migration - which were economic and social but also political in many respects.

19. The Executive Secretaries agreed that their next meeting will be during ECOSOC in Geneva in July 1995 and the Coordinator for the next year, beginning July 1995, will be ESCAP.



## **SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FIELD**

20. This meeting was held over a two-day period on 21-22 February 1995. The meeting was chaired on the first day by Mr. James Gustave Speth, Administrator of UNDP, in his capacity as "Coordinator of Development" and on the second day by the Secretary-General. This format was designed to permit an in-depth discussion of the issues of on the agenda by the Senior officials on the first day, with a view to presenting their recommendations to the Secretary-General on the second day.

21. The Secretary-General made a few brief remarks before the highlights of the discussions during the previous day were presented to him. He observed that several problems have emerged since the end of the cold war which had not been foreseen previously. Conflicts have broken out in many regions which appeared to have been suppressed during the cold war. UN operations in the areas of humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping have increased in response to the multiplicity of these crises. But this has created the misperception that the UN plays no major role in the field of development. This is clearly wrong.

22. The UN has an impressive record of accomplishments in the development field. But, because progress in the development field is long, complicated and slow, the results take time to show. By contrast, the problems of war and peace attract much media headlines because their consequences are readily more visible and dramatic, and as such easily excited international public opinion. As a result there was more support among the public and political figures in the countries for UN work in humanitarian and peace-keeping operations. He noted that resources devoted to peace-keeping had witnessed a tenfold increase in the past ten years, rising from US\$350 million to US\$3,600 million. As resources devoted to peace-keeping have increased, the amount allocated to development assistance appears to have stagnated or even declined. At the same time, development assistance is threatened by donor fatigue and aid pessimism.

23. The Secretary-General said the Senior Official Meeting in the economic and social sector was the forum to develop an integrated UN response to stimulate enhanced international support for the UN in general, and, for its development work, in particular. He identified five elements for

UN collective response to meet this task. First, there should an integrated and coherent approach to UN work particularly in the development field. Second, duplication in programme activities of agencies, departments and regional commissions should be eliminated. Third, the UN must show that it can produce more results with less resources - which means increased efficiency. Fourth, the UN has to prove to the world that the international conferences/summits it has organized recently are worthy endeavours and that there are good prospects for their implementation. And fifth, that the UN is uniquely suited to help the poor people and disadvantaged countries in the world. He described these as people and countries whose plight attract little international interest, but whom the UN has a mission to support.

24. To promote a better public and political appreciation of the role of the UN in the development field, it was agreed that, the UN should publish a booklet explaining its mission and accomplishments in the development field. In this regard, it was decided that the RECs, departments, funds and programmes of the UN in the economic and social sector should provide one-to-two pages of statements of mission and accomplishments to be included in the booklet. The note should also show what has been done to increase efficiency, save money, and restructure each organization. It should be submitted to Office of UN system c/o UNDP.

25. There were eight items on the agenda of the meeting, consisting of three main substantive issues namely: review of follow-up to Fall 1994 session of ACC with particular reference to African Economic Recovery and Development; Cooperation with Regional Economic Commission; and Framework for follow-up of UN Conferences. The other five items on the agenda of the meeting included: an integrated approach in supporting the intergovernmental working Group on the Agenda for Development; Senior Officials information system; Triennial Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development; Forwards to Reports and Publications to be signed by the Secretary-General; and Senior officials' Meetings Calendar for 1995. This report presents the main conclusions and recommendations in relation to each of these items.

**26. Review of follow-up to Fall 1994 session of ACC, with particular reference to African Economic Recovery and Development:** The meeting decided that:

- There will be established a time-bound Steering Group under ACC to be co-chaired by the Administrator of UNDP and Executive Secretary of ECA. The main task of this

Steering Group is to present concrete proposals to ACC at the Fall 1995 session on how to reactivate and strengthen UN system wide support for African's Economic Recovery and Development.

- Establishment of seven working groups on priority areas which lend themselves to inter-agency initiatives. The purpose of the working groups is to provide concrete recommendations with clear targets. Four working groups proposed in the Secretary-General letter of 9 February 1995 to ACC members. These were on availability of management of water; sustainable food security; human development and capacity building; and Social Summit issues in particular poverty alleviation. To these were added three others: resource flows and external debt; management and resolution of conflicts in Africa; and encouraging private investments in Africa. The working groups are to be established in March and are to complete assignments by July. An agency or department of the UN system will be designated to coordinate the activities of each working group.
- Establish a High Level Political Advocacy Group to mobilize international support for Africa. This group will consist of mostly political leaders from Africa and the industrialized countries.
- Use the High level Segment of 1995 ECOSOC devoted to Africa's economic recovery and development to raise the profile of policy debate on Africa by encouraging high level political participation from African countries.
- Identify one issue around which to build international consensus for action in the ECOSOC high level segment on Africa's economic recovery and development. It was decided that the Executive Secretary designate, the Administrator of UNDP and USG, DPCSD and UNICEF will consult on what this issue should be. The consultations will also advise on whether the ECOSOC 1995 should adopt a declaration or resolution at the end of the discussions High Level at Segment on African Economic Recovery and Development.

- The Steering Group should, in preparing its report to Fall 1995 ACC session, draw on the outcome of ECOSOC high level segment and working group.

27. **Relations with the regional commissions:** The importance of the regional commissions in coordinating UN activities in the economic and social fields, at the regional level was emphasized. The regional commissions are the expressions of the UN's pioneering role in regional approach to development. It was important to strengthen the regional commissions, given that they have adapted very well to the changing circumstances in their regions. For example, some regional commissions had played major roles in preventive diplomacy because they were the only institutions with region-wide participation.

28. The need for better division of labour between the regional commissions and certain global entities was underlined. This will enable the designation of the regional commissions as centres of excellence in some areas. This, however, should not preclude the identification of areas for common action with agencies and programmes the economic and social sector of the United Nations.

29. **Follow-up to the global conferences:** Three issues were identified as key to the follow-up to the global conferences. There are intergovernmental monitoring, reports and reporting mechanisms, and resources to finance of agreed commitments. The last element would particularly be crucial in the least developed and low-income countries.

30. It was noted that much of the follow-up for implementing commitments made in the global conferences will be at the country level. As a corollary, much of UN effort in support of follow-up will take the form of upstream policy advice rather than down-stream operational activities.

31. As regards reporting requirements demanded by governments in the follow-up, it was agreed that the global entities will be unable to cope with the reports to be submitted by the 185 member States of the UN. Consequently, the regional commissions will be assigned a role in analyzing the reports that emanate from countries in their region. The RECs might, then, submit consolidated regional reports to the global entities. This proposal is still under consideration.

32. Given the overlap in the objectives or sub-themes established or envisaged from many of the global conferences, there is great merit for the UN secretariat to develop its follow-process on objective-by-objective (or priority area) rather than global conference-by-global conferences basis. This recognition has already stimulated the process of synthesizing of UN global conference agendas with a view to identifying some common or overlapping objectives. This will be followed by the formation of Task Force for each objective or priority area, which will be convened by the Administrator of UNDP, on behalf of the Secretary-General. Chairmanship of these Task Forces will be widely shared and can rotate among the various agencies executive secretaries of the regional commissions and resident coordinators will convene analogous interagency teams.

33. **An integrated approach in supporting the intergovernmental working group on agenda for development:** The Administrator of UNDP informed the meeting that he will be establishing a small ad hoc secretariat support group to assist the intergovernmental working group on Agenda for Development which began its work on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1995. He suggested that each department, programme and fund of the UN in the economic and social sector nominate an officer to join the ad hoc secretariat support group. The purpose of the working group is to maintain consultative, exchange of information and provide necessary support to the intergovernmental working group on the Agenda for Development.

34. **Senior officials information system:** This information network system is being established to improve exchange of information among the 21 Under-Secretaries-General that comprise that Senior Official Meeting. It is envisaged that an electronic conferencing facility for senior officials will be established with three levels of interest namely:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Level one:   | Agendas for meetings and conferences, travel schedules of the Senior Officials   |
| Level two:   | Information to be brought to the attention of the Secretary-General, and/or the UNDP Administrator in his coordination role      |
| Level three: | Information of general interest including relevant information from level two and current activity reports by each organization. |

35. There was a brief demonstration of the new system. When the system is fully installed, it will hoped to facilitate communication among the Senior Officials. ECA has already designated TSS as its focal point for the Senior officials information system.

36. **Triennial Review of Operational Activities:** The meeting was informed by Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development that work has begun to prepare the Secretary-General's report on the Triennial policy review of operational activities for presentation to the 50<sup>th</sup> session of UN General Assembly. In this connection, in-depth country studies by teams of UN system specialists and a consultant are being carried out in fourteen countries from the developing regions of the world. Three African countries namely: Eritrea, Niger and Zambia are among the fourteen countries in the country studies. The draft report on the triennial review will be ready by May 1995 and every department, fund, programmes and RECs will be given an opportunity to provide comments on the report.

37. **Forewords to Reports and Publication to be signed by the Secretary-General:** Mr. P. Civili of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General provided clarifications to the memorandum on the above-subject issued by Secretary-General's Office on 14 December, 1994. He said that the memorandum did not envisage that the Secretary-General will sign the forewords to **all reports and publications** published by the programmes, funds and RECs. Rather, the intention is that the Secretary-General will sign the forewords to **only** the major reports and surveys. In the case of the RECs, and ECA in particular, these will be: the Economic and Social Survey, the Biennial Report and the Human Development in Africa Report.

38. **Senior Officials' Meeting Calendar for 1995:** It was agreed in principle that the SOM will be held four times a year: February, May/June, in July during ECOSOC, and during the Fall. The next meeting of SOM is scheduled for 1-2 June 1995.

**BRIEFING SESSION BY DR. NAFIS SADIK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNFPA  
FOR THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS**

39. This meeting was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1995 at the initiative of Dr. Sadik to brief the Executive Secretaries on the process that has been set in motion to follow-up on the implementation of Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

40. Dr. Sadik said at the request of the Secretary-General, she convened on 20 January 1995 a High Level Consultation Meeting to discuss with various bodies of the UN system and international financial institutions and bilateral aid organizations and agencies, as stipulated in paragraph 16.28 of the Programme Action of ICPD. The purpose of that consultative meeting was to promote an exchange of information among the aid and donor agencies on the requirements for international assistance, review the specific needs of countries in population and development, and maximize the availability of resources and their most effective utilization. She said that the meeting was well attended and the discussions were useful. It was clear, from her explanation, that regional commissions were not invited to that meeting because they are not funding agencies.

41. Nonetheless, Dr. Sadik assured that there are many opportunities for collaborative effort between the RECs and UNFPA in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. She noted, for instance, that five reports are required to be prepared every year on the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. These were:

- ◆ An Overview on Population and Development to be prepared by DESIPA
- ◆ Trends and issues on population focussing on specific theme each year - by DESIPA
- ◆ Experiences in programme implementation - by UNFPA
- ◆ Financial flows for population programmes - by UNFPA and financial institutions
- ◆ A report by an inter-agency task force describing what UN agencies are doing to implement the Programme of Action of ICPD.

42. She said that the regional commissions can possibly be represented by their Coordinator at meetings of IATF on the ICPD Programme of Action. She said that the regional commission can also make an input to the quinquennial report on the ICPD. The regional commissions can also play the major role in monitoring the provisions relating to migration of ICPD.

43. Dr. Sadik reiterated UNFPA's willingness to give assistance to the projects formulated by the regional commissions to promote implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. She indicated that UNFPA has received project proposals from the RECs and was reviewing them carefully. She commented on the status on each of these project proposals. As regards ECA's proposals, she gave the impression that not much progress has been made in its review because there were still certain elements that needed to be clarified.

44. At the end of the meeting, I met informally with Dr. Joep Van Arendonk, Deputy Executive Director (Programme) and expressed surprise that the UNFPA had yet to approve the ECA project which was submitted as far back as early 1993 and refined several times since. I drew attention to the fact that the former Executive Secretary of ECA and Executive Director of UNFPA had two meetings in 1994 in New York and agreed on the need for the project to be finalized. When Mr. Lamine Ndiaye ex-Director of African Bureau of UNFPA made a pre-retirement visit to ECA in 1994, the issue of providing funds for ECA project was also discussed. I emphasized the need for UNFPA to complete rapidly the review of ECA project proposals and approve them.

#### **MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME IN NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY**

45. This second meeting of the Management Board was held on 23 February 1995 at the Department of Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS) in New York. The discussion at the meeting centered around five issues: These were: Update on ongoing activities; mobilization of funding for joint programming exercise; joint activities which include several or all parties inclusion of UNCTAD and UNEP in the Management Board; and status of Database.



46. In reviewing the ongoing activities and initiatives between DDSMS and the regional commissions since the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Board in June, 1994 it was agreed that some progress has been made in areas such as establishing joint database and other activities. For example, DDSMS sent its list of projects and staff in natural resources and energy areas to the regional commissions in September 1994. DDSMS has, in turn, received similar detailed information from ECA, ESCWA, ESCAP and ECLAC, while ECE has provided some information.

47. DDSMS was in the early stages of jointly organizing pilot projects or other cooperative activities with each of the regional commissions. DDSMS indicated that it has received four project proposals from ECA, but has not yet responded fully to them. The Department has now prepared a proposal (which could be submitted for TSS or bilateral funding) based on one of the ECA initiatives entitled **Policy Development for Small-scale Mining in Africa: Contribution to the improvement of Small-scale mining production in Africa**. The other ECA proposal that has merit is one on **Assistance to African Transboundary river organizations**. Another possibility would be collaboration on strategies for promoting renewable energy sources in Africa, especially small hydro-power developments, and solar and wind energy applications. There was need for ECA and DDSMS to discuss these further in joint working groups to be established for each project.

48. Indeed, DDSMS emphasized that establishing working groups between it and RECs for purposes of exchanging views on each project was the next logical step in promoting the concept of joint programming. The working group will bring together the experts from both sides in a particular project area to examine in details the proposals concerning project execution and funding. It was agreed that each REC would inform DDSMS (and vice versa) of the staff member who would be directly responsible for each pilot project. The team leader for a particular project will participate in the meetings of the working group, while the designated focal point - in the case of ECA, the Chief of NRD - will monitor overall cooperation between DDSMS and RECs. Member of each working groups may keep in touch through fax, phone and E-mail and arrange to meet when they are in the same city for other meetings (e.g Committee on Natural Resources).

49. As regards mobilization of funding for the joint programming exercise, three possibilities were considered. These were earmarking some resources from the regular budget, TSS mechanism, and bilateral funding. The RECs said that it would be difficult for them to obtain an increase in section 20, resources from regular budget for joint programming, although DDSMS

indicated that it has requested for such resources in its 1996-1997 budget proposals. The problem of how to finance travel was discussed. There was broad agreement that financing travel will be on case-by-case basis, with flexibility as suits each member of the Board.

50. Both DDSMS and RECs also agreed that the TSS mechanisms and bilateral sources offer promising avenues for prospecting for resources for their joint projects. They noted that success in mobilization of resources will depend crucially on the soundness of the projects.

51. Concerning the proposal by DDSMS to include UNCTAD and UNEP in the Management Board, it was agreed that DDSMS should write to two organizations to invite them to join. The need to invite these organizations stems from the recognition that they have programmes in water and energy. Copies of the letters by DDSMS as well as responses received will be sent to all members of the Management Board for their information.

52. As regards the database being created to service the joint programming activities of the Board, it was suggested that the RECs should provide a diskette containing information already sent on staff, projects and activities in natural resources and energy, preferably on World Perfect 5.1 and Quattropro to facilitate their inputting into the database. The date and venue of the next meeting of the Board will be communicated by DDSMS.

#### **MEETING BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS AND THE OFFICER-IN-CHARGE OF UNCTAD**

53. This meeting was held at Regional Commissions New York Office on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1995. Its purpose was twofold: to examine areas of collaboration between UNCTAD and the RECs and to discuss the issue of sharing of resources of the TNCs programme between the RECs and UNCTAD.

54. With regard to the first issue, it was noted that there were significant overlaps in the programme activities of UNCTAD and RECs. This argues for streamlining, especially in the light of the financial constraints that the UN continues to confront. Consequently, it was decided that a review should be conducted of areas of duplication and overlap between UNCTAD and RECs

to provide basis for further discussions of this matter with UNCTAD in July 1995. The OIC, UNCTAD indicated that he would instruct his Chiefs of Division to conduct the review of areas of overlap - or what he euphemistically called "related work".

55. Concerning collaboration between UNCTAD and RECs, it was noted that three distinct approaches has emerged:

- ◆ **the global approach** - favoured by ECA, in which there shall be established a joint UNCTAD/RECs to cover all areas of cooperation. ECA and UNCTAD have began discussion on this approach since 1994.
- ◆ **the joint TNC/RCs approach** - favoured by ESCAP and ECLAC in which joint units will continue to be limited to TNCs programme only.
- ◆ **No joint unit** - this is the situation as regards ECE which arises from the unique historical circumstances of ECE and UNCTAD being located in the same venues - UN Office, Geneva.

56. In reviewing the situation regarding the sharing of resources for programme on TNCs between UNCTAD and RECs, the OIC of UNCTAD assured that UNCTAD had no intention to take unilateral action on budgetary allocation, notwithstanding the indications to the contrary in the letter earlier in year, from Roger Lawrence to Halbwachs, Director of Budget. Mr. Lawrence had proposed in his letter that UNCTAD should be given a higher share of the 1995 allotment of the TNCs programme for travel and consultancy since UNCTAD has 77 per cent of the professional staff of the TNC programme compared to 23 per cent for the RECs. This proposal was not accepted by the Director of Budget. So the arrangement in 1994 in which the RECs were allocated more resources for consultancy and travel remains.

57. UNCTAD is dissatisfied with the 1994 arrangement. Hence, the main objective of UNCTAD at this meeting was to negotiate a modification of the resource sharing in its favour, and reflect the new agreement in 1996-1997 budget. Instead, the discussions widened to encompass the very existence of the programme on TNCs. Five options emerged from the discussions:

- (a) Eliminate the TNCs programme;
- (b) Transfer the human and financial resources of the joint units permanently to the RECs;
- (c) Abolish the joint units and send the human and financial resources back to UNCTAD;
- (d) Allow the 1994 arrangement to apply for the 1996-1997 budget;
- (e) Apply cuts to RECs and UNCTAD share of resources proportionate to the resources allocated to them before the reduction of budgetary outlay in 1993.

58. There was no agreement on any of these options. For example, UNCTAD made clear that option (a) was out of the question. UNCTAD emphasized that the TNCs programme had to be maintained. ECLAC, on the other hand, hinted at the possibility of embracing the option, if that would preserve funding units core programmes. In the end, decided that UNCTAD develop a paper examining the implications of all these options and submit it for consideration by the RECs before the July 1995 meeting.

**BRIEFING SESSION BY AMBASSADOR JUAN SOMAVIA, CHAIRMAN  
OF PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL SUMMIT FOR  
THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES**

59. This meeting was arranged at the request of the Executive Secretaries to be briefed by Ambassador Somavia on the outcome of the third precom meeting of the Social Summit - the last before the Social Summit was held in Copenhagen. The briefing focussed specifically on the role envisaged for the regional commission in the follow-up to the Summit.

60. Ambassador Somavia said that the draft document that has emerged from Prepcom III should be viewed with satisfaction by the regional commissions because they had been assigned a major role in monitoring the progress in implementation through periodic regional conferences. He explained, however, that the regional commissions could not be assigned an operational role in implementation, largely due to the resistance of some OECD countries.

61. Nonetheless, Ambassador Somavia believed that the regional commissions had an important role to play in the follow-up, especially in the assessment of performance of their respective regions in fulfilling agreed commitments made at the Social Summit and other recent and forthcoming international conferences. In this regard, he drew attention to the decision of the UN General Assembly to devote the 55<sup>th</sup> session (2000 A.D.) to assessing the results of all international conferences/summits held between 1990-1996.

62. As the Executive Secretaries could not agree at their meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1995 to press for operational role for the RECs in implementation of programme WSSD, they thanked Ambassador Somavia for his effort and the meeting adjourned.

**BRIEFING SESSION BY DR. WALLY N'DOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (UNCHS)  
FOR THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS**

63. This meeting was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1995 at the initiative of the Executive Director of UNCHS to brief the Executive Secretaries on the preparation for HABITAT II Conference to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, June 1996.

64. Dr. N'dow explained that preparations for HABITAT II were progressing very well. He expressed satisfaction with the arrangements for various regional preparatory meetings. He hoped that he could count on the support of the regional commissions for the preparatory meetings but also in the follow-up to HABITAT II. Responding to the concern by the regional commissions that, unlike other international conferences, the UN General Assembly had not made provisions to finance regional preparatory activities, Mr. N'dow said that he had already obtained pledges of financial assistance from various donors for that purpose. He indicated that he had obtained promise from the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington to finance the preparatory process for Latin American and Caribbean; from Australia for the Asia-Pacific preparatory process; and from the Netherlands and possibly South Africa for the Africa region. Incidentally, South Africa will host the African Ministerial Preparatory Meeting of HABITAT II.

65. Though the Executive Secretaries were impressed with the fund raising efforts by Dr. N'dow for the regional preparatory meetings, they were surprised that the regional commissions had not been kept informed. Nonetheless, they expressed their willingness to cooperate fully with UNCHS in assuring the success of HABITAT II and its follow-up.

## **CONCLUSION: FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

66. The outcome of the foregoing meetings require a range of follow-up actions. These are indicated below:

<b>Issues for action</b>	<b>Responsible Division</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1. Paper on experience of regional commission in cooperation with non-UN Organizations in policy and project matters.	PPCO coordinating (inputs from all substantive Divisions)	Submit to ECE, Coordinator 1 <sup>st</sup> week of April 1995
2. One-to-two pages of mission statement and accomplishments by ECA.	COES	Submit to OUNS c/o. UNDP 1 <sup>st</sup> week of April 1995
3. Transmit information on staff, projects and activities to DDSMS Data base in Word Perfect/Quattropro	Natural Resource Division	Submit to DDSMS as soon as possible.

## LIST OF DOCUMENTS ATTACHED AS ANNEXES TO THE REPORT

<u>ANNEX NO.</u>	<u>Title of documents</u>
Annex I:	The Role of the Regional Commissions and their cooperation with other UN Bodies and Agencies (Paper jointly prepared by the RECs for the Senior Officials Meeting).
Annex II:	Report of RECs-UNDP Task Force meeting on 17 February 1995.
Annex III:	Letter dated 9 February 1995 from the Secretary-General to the members of ACC concerning new initiatives for African Economic Recovery and Development.
Annex IV:	Agenda and background document for the Management Board for UN Programme in Energy.  Minutes of the second meeting of the Management Board.