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**NATIONS UNIES  
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POUR L'AFRIQUE**

**FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE  
TECHNICAL PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

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**Layashi YAKER  
United Nations Under-Secretary-General,  
Executive Secretary of the Economic  
Commission for Africa**

**Addis Ababa, 26 April 1993.**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you all to the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa and to the fourteenth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW), whose work will set the stage for the twenty-eighth session of the Commission/nineteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers responsible for economic development and planning which itself will open in this very Hall a week from today.

I should like, at the outset, to express on behalf of all of you, on behalf of the UNECA secretariat, and on my own behalf, my sincere appreciation to His Excellency, Dr. Duri Mohammed, Minister of Planning and Economic Development of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia for his presence here and for officiating at this opening session of our meeting. Mr. Minister, your presence at this meeting is a reaffirmation of the support that the United Nations and UNECA in particular, continue to enjoy from the people and the Government of Ethiopia.

This is the first meeting of TEPCOW I am participating in since assuming the stewardship of the Commission in August last year. I should like, therefore, to underline the importance of TEPCOW as a key organ in the intergovernmental machinery of the Commission and to take this opportunity to emphasize my commitment to working closely with the members of the Committee to continue the proud record that it has established for itself in the generation of ideas and innovation, and in challenging orthodoxy in defence of Africa's economic interests and integrity.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates

The theme under which the nineteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers is convening, "Taking Africa into the

twenty-first Century: Implementation of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community; and Agenda 21" responds to two major imperatives of our time - regional integration, and environmentally sustainable development. The objectives are interrelated. African countries can only achieve sustained growth and development through economic integration that expands their production possibilities and market opportunities. In doing so, African countries will exploit and trade in many of their abundant resources. Thus, the two elements of this year's theme embody important components for dealing with our central challenge: breaking the vicious cycle of Africa's economic stagnation, and setting Africa on the path of rapid and sustained growth and development. To be sure, several regional programmes, strategies and international initiatives undertaken in the past, particularly in the 1980s, were designed to address this challenge. However, evidence abound to show that there has been a mismatch between declarations of intent and commitment to action. The reasons for this lacuna have been examined and explained in several of UNECA's reports. Many of the issues on the crowded agenda before you at this meeting are intended, precisely, to find new approaches and to reinforce our collective commitment to implement policy measures and actions to promote growth and socio-economic transformation.

Mr Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,

This year's Economic Report underscores the urgency with which the task of economic development has to be pursued. The high hopes and expectations that Africa might witness resumption of growth in the 1990s have yet to materialize. Africa's socio-economic performance in the first three years of the 1990s has left much to be desired. UNECA's latest estimates of overall economic in 1992 for the region as a whole stands at 1.5%; a significant drop from the projections of December 1992, and a decline from the 1991 performance of 2.3%. The regional average annual rate of population growth? on the other hand, is estimated at 3%, implying a continuing decline in per capita income.

The aggregate unit value of all exports was virtually stagnant between 1991 and 1992. The prices of non-oil commodities fell, as did the aggregate volume of exports. At the same time, Africa's share of world exports fell by 2% compared to 2.2% in 1991. Africa's external debt increased slightly from US\$281 billion in 1991 to US\$282 billion in 1992 which was equal to about 350% of Africa's aggregate export revenues. Debt servicing consumed about 24% of export revenues in 1992, a drop of 2% from 1991 which was mostly due to debt rescheduling. Africa has now acquired the unenviable status of being the most debt -distressed region in the world.

Many factors are responsible for this unsatisfactory economic situation. The most important among them are the deeply entrenched structural imbalances in the African economies. The level of Africa's industrialisation remains low as does the level of intra-African trade which currently stands at only 5% of the entire trade of the region. Africa's exports also continue to be dominated by primary commodities with fluctuating prices while the terms of trade are on the decline. Natural calamities continued to plague the region as exemplified by the unprecedented drought experienced by most countries in Eastern and Southern Africa and to a lesser extent, in the North African subregion, which derailed the socio-economic recovery process in 1992. The ongoing process of democratization had, at times, adverse consequences on economic activity. The structural adjustment programmes being implemented in most countries imposed various austerity measures that resulted in continued human suffering as social services deteriorated.

Destructive and disruptive social and political conflicts inflicted incalculable damage on the existing fragile infrastructure, while economic activity virtually came to a stop in many conflict-ridden countries. It is a matter of satisfaction, therefore, that progress, however slow and patchy, is being made to restore relative calm in the countries concerned. It is our hope that these efforts will be consolidated during this year to pave the way for reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation in the

Mr Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,

The context of Africa's socio-economic development in the 1990s will be very much different from that of the past decade. It will be shaped by the changes - both political and economic - which have been set in motion in Africa and the world since the end of the Cold War. How to adapt to these changes and manage them to realize our development goal is a compelling issue. It is for this reason that a policy paper entitled "Strategic Objectives for Africa's Development in the 1990s" has been prepared for this session of the conference. This paper does not proclaim another new plan of action for Africa's development. Indeed, the paper undertakes an in-depth analysis of some of the previous plans and strategies with a view to distilling the lessons to be learnt from them. The paper also endeavours to sensitize member States to the implications that the epochal changes in Africa and the world pose for Africa's socio-economic development. It identifies the adjustments which African countries need to make in their development strategies in response.

More importantly, based upon present and future concerns, the paper recommends ten strategic objectives on which the people, governments and African institutions should focus with renewed vigour. These are:

- A negotiated continental framework for regional security, stability and peace as a foundation for cooperation, integration and development in Africa;
- Establishment of the African Economic Community through prompt implementation of the stages set out in the Abuja Treaty;
- Effective participation in all ongoing global processes that are charting the future course of world development and the future international division of labour;
- A comprehensive programme for building human capacities, including entrepreneurial skills, coupled with the indigenisation of science and technology and

their application to agriculture, industry and other walks of life;

- Re-defining the role of the State in Africa with a view to strengthening its capacity to implement political and economic reforms and safeguard good governance;
- Sustainable development of the continent's agricultural potential to achieve food security and sufficiency by the middle of the next decade;
- Sustainable development of the industrial base based on increasing the value added to Africa's natural resources and generating employment;
- Upgrading the continental transport, communications, and energy infrastructures - which is a sine qua non for the creation of a single African market;
- A new pragmatic approach to Africa's external cooperation with countries in the developing world, as well as with industrially-advanced countries, based on tangible and balanced mutual benefits; and
- Mobilisation of the required capital resources to launch Africa onto the path of sustainable development.

I have not listed the objectives in any order of priority; although their possible ranking can be a subject of legitimate discussion. There can, in any case, be little doubt as to the relative importance of each of them to Africa's development. Implementing the strategic objectives of Africa's development in the 1990s will require political commitment, sacrifice and conducive international economic environment, as well as financial resources. Indeed, one of the constant reasons for the poor implementation of past development strategies in Africa is the inadequacy and inefficiency of financial resources devoted to these plans.

To face this challenge, African countries will need to increase their efforts to mobilize domestic resources and boost the efficiency and productivity of their utilization. It is only by doing that international financial flow can be further attracted. To assist member States grapple with the challenge in this area, the secretariat has prepared a paper

entitled "Strategies for financial resource mobilization for Africa's development in the 1990s". A major conclusion of the paper is that Africa's 51 member States will require total external financial resources in the order of US\$950 billion during the period 1993-2005. This estimate is predicated on the 6% growth target set in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The task of mobilizing these resources is a shared one: between Africa's people and governments, on one hand, and its development partners, on the other.

Mr Chairman,  
Honourable Delegates,

Almost two years have elapsed since the historic signing of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. During this period, Africa's three major regional organisations -OAU, UNECA, and ADB- have, within the framework of the Joint Secretariat mechanism, collaborated closely to implement the Treaty. However, as the implementation process gathers momentum, the scope of effort required on the part of each institution of the Joint Secretariat will increase vastly. As such, there is a clear need to reinforce the individual institutional arrangements for implementation. This is the purpose of the report entitled "Regional institution-wide plan for the implementation of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community" presented to this meeting. This report proposes enhanced cooperation through the rational distribution of responsibilities among the various organisations involved in the implementation of the Treaty including OAU, UNECA, and ADB. This meeting should provide guidance on this issue so as to ensure that whatever decisions are made on the matter are fully consistent with the expressed views of member States.

Closely related to the objectives and goals of the Abuja Treaty are the implications for the implementation of Agenda 21 and the African Common Position on Environment and Development. This is the first meeting of TEPCOW since UNCED 92 in Brazil. It is an excellent opportunity for the collective review of the implications and follow-up on the Rio

Earth Summit. The provisions of Agenda 21 require that economic recovery, growth and transformation and development as well as the improvement of standards of living be attained in a sound environment and in a sustainable manner. This is indeed a challenge for African policy-makers, leaders, scientists and all people who have a stake and an interest in the direction of Africa's socio-economic development. To facilitate this process, the secretariat has prepared a report entitled Africa Post Rio: Implications of Agenda 21 and the African Common Position on environment and Development. The document examines the policy, resource and capacity building implications for the implementation of Agenda 21 and the African Common Position. It identifies seven major environment and development programme goals as well as strategies for attaining them. They include the challenge of food self-sufficiency; population dynamics and sustainable development; the exploitation of water resources; energy efficiency and self-sufficiency; environmentally sustainable industrialization; stabilization of ecosystems; and reversing desertification. The importance of the participation of all institutions involved in development at all levels within and outside Africa is strongly suggested. Your recommendations, honourable delegates, for a plan of action for the implementation of Agenda 21, as well as for Africa's negotiating position with regard to the convention against desertification will be an important step towards the march into the twenty-first century.

Mr Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,

As we strive to strike a balance between economic integration for the effective exploitation and sustainable utilization of the region's resources, we must simultaneously ensure the existence of an adequate supply of appropriately skilled human and institutional resources to steer the desired type of development. Human resources development must be coupled with accelerated development of indigenous capacity in science and technology which are central to economic transformation. In this connection, you will at this meeting



namely: Programme for the implementation of the regional framework for human resources development and utilization in Africa and Progress report on the establishment of an African fund for youth. You will also consider a proposal by the African Academy of Sciences for an African Foundation for Research and Development (AFRAND) that aims at promoting research and the exploitation of its results in the field of the sciences. I have no doubt that you will treat these issues with the importance they deserve and make appropriate recommendations to the Ministers.

The advancement of women and their full integration into the mainstream of the socio-economic development process is a crucial aspect of our development efforts. The sheer number of women in our countries, their potential and actual contribution in economic activities make it imperative that appropriate strategies for achieving this objective should be identified and implemented. The Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s is an important framework for accelerating activities in support of women. Increasing women's access to credit is vital to their economic and political empowerment. In this regard, you will review a progress report on the establishment of the Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs and the African Bank for Women both of which were requested by the last meeting as strategies for increasing women's access to credit.

In all the policy issues that African countries will have to grapple with in the coming years - whether forging regional integration, promoting environmentally sustainable development; mobilizing financial resources; developing infrastructures- there is a critical need for managerial capacity in the public and private sector. This recognition inspired the convening by UNECA of a regional Conference on Development in Africa: Thirty years of experience, emerging challenges and future priorities, last month. The Conference adopted a Strategic agenda for development management in Africa in the 1990s which has been presented to you. The strategic Agenda identifies ten priority areas for improving development management in Africa in the 1990s. It also

specifies the roles that the public, private, and voluntary sectors as well as regional and international institutions will be required to play. The strategic Agenda is an important initiative which member States are called up to implement.

The development of regional infrastructure and the accompanying industrial development to facilitate regional economic integration as advocated by the Abuja Treaty is a strategic objective that has continued to be of concern to the Commission as witnessed by the call of the eighteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers for the harmonization of the implementation of IDDA II and UNTACDA II. Distinguished delegates will, therefore, review proposals for the harmonization of the two Decades which have already been put before the Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications and are now before you for consideration.

Mr. Chairman,  
Honourable Delegates,

After the significant achievements of the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, other up-coming world conferences are likely to draw keen interest and participation. The Commission is encouraging African member States to use the opportunity offered to forge a consensus around regional issues of importance to them and to put them on the global agenda. In this connection, you will review the Commission's involvement in the preparations of a number of global conferences on issues that have significant implications to Africa's socio-economic development and to which Africa should participate at the highest level from a common position. Among such issues is the problem of the continuing incongruence between the rate of economic growth and population increase which lies at the heart of the persistence of mass poverty and environmental degradation in the region. This issue was the focus of in-depth analysis at the Third African Population Conference (APC 3) held at Dakar, Senegal, in December 1992, and which was convened in preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in Egypt in 1994. You will examine the Dakar/Ngor

Declaration on population, family and sustainable development which emanated from that Conference and is proposed for submission to the International Conference as the African position on issues before the Conference. The recommendations of the ECA Conference of Ministers on the Declaration which focuses on the interrelatedness between demographic issues and the state of socio-economic development and possible ways of breaking the cycle of the deterioration of the human condition, will be forwarded to the OAU Summit of the African Heads of African State and Government in June 1993 for their final endorsement before the global meeting. The Committee will similarly review progress in the preparations of the World Social Summit to be held in 1995 and the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in 1995.

With regard to the ongoing talks on the liberalisation of the world trade through the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations, their possible outcome signals a mixed bag for developing countries and Africa in particular. While the suggested liberalisation of trade in textiles and agricultural commodities may be of benefit to them, liberalisation in the service sector and in the foreign registered firms would present unfair competition for developing countries who are still at infant stage in these areas. As delegates review the report on the implications of the current Uruguay Round of Negotiations on Africa's Trade, they might wish to consider registering Africa's reservation on these possible outcomes and suggest alternatives to the suggested provisions of the talks.

As members of the Committee are already aware, an International Conference on African Development is scheduled to be held in Tokyo, Japan in October 1993. This Conference which has been convened at the initiative of the Government of Japan is co-sponsored by the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa. Its purpose is to sustain international support for Africa's development. I believe that from our deliberations at this meeting a strong message will be sent to that Conference underlining Africa's need for debt reduction, increased official development assistance and

access to the markets of industrialized nations on improved terms and conditions.

Mr Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,

At the eighteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers in 1992, Ministers were keenly aware of the importance of UNECA to remain at the forefront of strategic thinking and policy innovations with regard to Africa's socio-economic development in the context of the emerging world order. Subsequently, by resolution 726 (XVII), the Conference had called for the strengthening of the Commission to face the challenges of the 1990s. This year, the honourable delegates will review a progress report on the measures that the secretariat has initiated in response to this resolution entitled "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nation: Strengthening the Economic Commission for Africa to face the challenges of the 1990s".

In response to a provision of the same resolution, the secretariat has examined the grouping of conferences along specific themes with a view to rationalizing them to minimize duplication, consolidate resources and encourage participation at the highest level. The secretariat has prepared a report entitled "Proposed new structure of the inter-governmental machinery of the Commission". Similarly, a study by the secretariat on the strengthening and rationalization of the ECA-sponsored institutions prepared in response to the same resolution is before delegates for review and appraisal.

Yet another area in which the secretariat has invested efforts in an attempt to strengthen its capacity is in the improvement of the quality of its products including its publications, communication with its constituencies, as well as in the professional development of its staff. The existing mechanism for the preparation of publication programmes, calendars of conferences and meetings and the organization of conferences and meetings is being improved and strengthened. Efforts will be made in future to build in mechanisms for quality control of documents both internally and externally.

in the production and distribution process. Attempts will also be made to improve the existing information network within the framework of a comprehensive communication strategy for reaching the Commission's constituencies.

Since the eighteenth meeting, we have organized our programme activities into nine sub-programmes. A key consideration being to exercise maximum impact in support of the efforts of the member States to foster socio-economic transformation. Another consideration has been to strengthen desired synergy among sub-programmes. The Programme of Work for the 1994-1995 biennium has, in turn, attempted to operationalize the revised Medium-term Plan by strengthening joint programming and formal working links with relevant entities in Africa's development. Both the revised Medium-term Plan 1992-1997 and the Programme of Work 1994-1995 which are now before you, for review, reflect this new orientation

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,

I have spoken at some length about the need for mobilizing resources for the development of member States. I must now speak to UNECA's resource needs. The regular budget of the United Nations -the Commission's principal source of funding- remains on zero growth basis. On the other hand, the extrabudgetary resources which have played a significant complimentary role in the past is declining rapidly. Something has to be done.

UNECA has embarked on a dynamic new strategy for not only strengthening its relations with its traditional funding partners of extrabudgetary activities, but also in establishing new relations with potential donors along the same lines. We count on the member States, through their representatives in this Conference, to come forward with their support, thus demonstrating to the international community that in spite of their persistent economic woes, they are first and foremost committed to the wholesome principle of self-reliance in addition to the principle of cooperation.

The ninth biennial pledging conference of the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD) will take place during the nineteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers. It will provide an excellent opportunity for the member States to show support for the activities of the Commission by pledging generously to its programme of technical cooperation which, as mentioned earlier, has suffered drastically from the shrinking of its resource base.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,

The challenges ahead are enormous. The road to progress is not paved with only rewards. Quite often, risks may be many. But, if we can show the resolve and collectively rededicate ourselves to Africa's development, we can triumph. UNECA stands ready to play its part in this process of Africa's self renewal and collective commitment to progress. It is an endeavour in which we must all join hands.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.