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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Report of the Third Ordinary Meeting of the Executive Board of the
African Regional Centre for Solar Energy
Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)
24-25 September 1990

A. Attendance and organization of work

1. The Third Ordinary Meeting of the Executive Board of the African Regional Centre for Solar Energy (ARCSE) was held at the Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 24-25 September 1990.

2. The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Executive Board Professor Adebayo Adedeji, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and the Executive Secretary of ECA.

3. The meeting was attended by representative of the following states: Burundi, Gabon, Sudan and Uganda.

4. The Executive Secretary of ECA attended the meeting in his official capacity at the ex-officio Chairman of the Executive Board.

5. The following African countries, but not members of the Executive Board, attended the meeting as observers: Angola, Congo, Egypt, Ghana and Guinea. The full list of participants is contained in Annex I.

B. Agenda

a. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

3. Matters arising

4. Report of the Executive Director

5. Evaluation of the Centre and issues related to the management of the Centre

6. Staffing situation of the Centre

7. Financial situation of the Centre

8. Outstanding issues

9. Any other business

10. Date of the next meeting of the Executive Board

11. Adoption of the report of the meeting

C. Account of proceedings

Opening (agenda item i)

7. In his opening statement, the Chairman of the Executive Board welcomed the Board members to the Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa and to the Third Ordinary Meeting of the Executive Board of ARCSE.

8. He informed the Board that although the African Regional Centre for Solar Energy was officially established on May 12, 1982, the launching of its activities was delayed until January 1989 due to non-payment of the assessed contributions to the budget by the member States and the indecision of their part to select the host country of the Centre. He informed the Board that the financial situation of the Centre was characterized as critical; the funds contributed have been fully utilized in 1989 and no other funds have been contributed. He, however, thanked the Government of the Republic of Burundi for the recent gracious contribution of USD 29,500 to enable the Centre to meet its commitments in terms of salaries for staff and other services.

9. The Chairman then informed the Board that the main purpose for convening this meeting was to chart a new course for the Centre. He pointed out that despite the poor financial situation and inadequate staffing the Centre has made some achievements like preparing a comprehensive work programme and budget, establishing the secretariat and demonstration site in the temporary premises and preparing for training workshops in China and Libya.

10. He also made specific reference to the approved programme and budget for 1990-1991 and requested the Board to evaluate their volume in relation of the financial resources to be available and to make necessary adjustments to the level which may be considered commensurate with the available resources.

11. The Chairman concluded his statement by making an appeal to the member States of the Centre to pay their contributions and he called on all present to make every effort to supplement and strengthen all available human and financial resources of the Centre to enable it to continue to serve Africa. The new attempt should be made to relaunch the Centre and make it strong and a viable organization. He wished the Board good deliberations on the issues before them.

12. In his statement to the meeting, His Excellency Dr. Glibert Midende, Minister of Energy and Mines of the Republic of Burundi and current Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Centre, thanked the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, for the kind welcome extended to the Board. He reminded the Board members that the meeting had been convened at a time when major geo-political changes and new economic upheavals were taking place in the world.

13. Those changes and upheavals required African leaders to seriously consider appropriate solutions to the development problems specific to Africa and ways of gaining control over its destiny. In that regard, the recommendations of the Lagos Plan of Action were still relevant and the Centre should be able to play a major role in the research for solutions to the energy problems in Africa.

14. Unfortunately, the Centre was undergoing a critical period at the technical, financial and administrative management levels. In that regard, an evaluation report on the Centre was to be submitted to the meeting for consideration and appropriate recommendations. He deplored the low level of contribution by member States, which hampered effective operation and, indeed, the very existence of the Centre.

15. Concluding his statement, he reiterated that the Government of Burundi was convinced of the importance of the Centre and was committed to support it, within the limits of its meagre resources, and to continue hosting the Centre.

Matters arising and Report of the Executive Director (agenda items 3 and 4)

16. The Executive Director of the Centre presented an outline of the activities which took place since last meeting of the Governing Board in Burundi in December 1989. On the matters arising he elaborated on the number of activities undertaken by the Centre in implementation of the directives and recommendations of the Governing Council.

17. In his report he informed the Board of projects on training of African experts in China and Libya and outlined the efforts of the Centre in mobilizing the financial resources for these activities. The cost of the fourweek seminar and study tour in China was estimated at 400,000 USD and international travel of the participants will be supported by UNDP which agreed to provide up to 100,000 USD. The US Department of Energy agreed to consider providing the Centre with solar and wind energy systems as well as computers.

18. The Executive Director further reported on the status of the project in Uganda on assisting the Ministry of energy to establish community size biogas digesters in the districts. He also told the meeting that he had proposed a tripartite joint project with ARCT and ARCEDEM in production of inexpensive renewable energy systems for use in low and average income families. Ad Hoc activities of the Centre included revising the budget and assessed contributions, preparation of documents and job descriptions of the most needed posts as well as presentation of ARCSE at various international fora on NPSE.

19. He concluded his statement by making the recommendation for the future which included inter alia possibility of payment of contributions to the Centre in kind and/or in the local currencies, recruitment of UN volunteers and/or UN Associate to reduce the burden on the budget of the Centre. In order to simplify travel of the senior staff of ARCSE in Africa and outside the continent he recommended that each member State issues a diplomatic passport for its senior national serving with ARCSE. In discussing the issues presented the Executive Board recommended that in order to solicit contributions from member States the members of the Executive Board who represent the different subregions should carry out sensitization mission in the other member States of the subregion. The cost of their mission should be borne by the respective member States but would be credited as their contribution to the Centre's budget.

20. In taking note of the report of the Executive Director the Executive Board agreed that payment of contributions in local currencies with a view to asking UNDP offices to assist in conversion to convertible currencies, should be utilized as much as possible.

Evaluation of the Centre and Issues relating to the Management of the Centre
(agenda item 5*)

21. The representative of Burundi presented a report entitled "Evaluation of the African Regional Centre for Solar Energy (ARCSE)". The report was an appraisal carried out by the Burundi Government, focussing on the administrative, financial and technical management of the Centre and its relationship with the Ministry of Energy and Mines of the Republic of Burundi. The report stated that the Executive Director had managed the Centre in a manner that had led to the deterioration of the administrative, financial and technical situation of the Centre as well as the deterioration of the relationship between the Government of Burundi and the Centre, on the one hand and Executive Director and staff, on the other. The Burundi Government informed the member States that the Executive Director had been found wanting in the management of the Centre and gave indications that he had been working towards the closure of the Centre and moving it to another country. For those reasons, the Government of Burundi was requesting the immediate separation of the Executive Director and the appointment by the Executive Secretary of ECA, of an interim Executive Director until a replacement could be found.

*The agenda item was discussed in camera. Only the Chairman of the Executive Board, the Executive Director of ARCSE and representative of member States of ARCSE were present. Later on when the Executive Board was to make its conclusions, the Executive Director was asked to leave the room.

22. In his defence, the Executive Director presented a report entitled "Response by the Executive Director to the note by the Government of Burundi on the evaluation of the Centre". In the report, the Executive Director said that all the accusations were false and provided evidence with exhibits, against each of the charges made.

23. The members of the Executive Board and observers were given the opportunity to ask questions on matters which needed further clarification by the Executive Director who responded to the questions, providing more information.

Conclusions:

24. After a lengthy discussion during which all members expressed their views on the poor performance of the Executive Director, the Executive Board reached the following conclusions:

(i) The Executive Board expressed its total dissatisfaction over the manner in which Mr. Essam Mitvally has performed his duties as Executive Director of the African Regional Centre for Solar Energy.

(ii) In the light of this dissatisfaction the Executive Board recommends that special ad hoc Committee comprising one representative of ECA, one representative of OAU and two representatives of member States be set up to investigate the allegations.

(iii) The Executive Board also recommends that the Executive Director be suspended from office until the special Ad Hoc Committee has submitted its report to the Governing Council and a final decision has been taken by the latter.

(iv) The report of the special Ad Hoc Committee should be transmitted through the Executive Board by its Chairman to the Governing Council for its decision.

(v) The Executive Board finally expressed its gratitude to the Government of Burundi for having brought to their knowledge the deteriorating situation at the Centre.

Special ad Hoc Committee to investigate Allegations made against the Executive Director of the African Regional Centre for Solar Energy.

25. At its meeting held on 24/25 September 1990 the Executive Board called for an establishment of special Ad Hoc Committee to look into the following allegations made against the Executive Director of the Centre:

- (a) Poor financial management;
- (b) Bad administration and personnel management of the Centre;
- (c) Poor performance at the technical level and lack of delivery of expected outputs;
- (d) Poor relations with the host government.

26. The terms of reference of the Ad Hoc Committee will be mainly to satisfy themselves that the allegations made against the Executive Director are well-founded and that they are proved beyond any shadow of a doubt.

27. Upon completion of their investigation, the Committee should make a recommendation whether or not to apply disciplinary sanctions against the Executive Director, including separation.

28. In the course of the investigation the Special Ad Hoc Committee should adhere to the following procedures:

(i) That the allegations made against the Executive Director of the Centre documented in the report presented by the host country and the reaction of the Executive Director should be the basic documents for conducting the investigation.

(ii) In addition, the Special Ad Hoc Committee should interview the Executive Director of the Centre, the staff of the Centre, representatives of the member States and any other persons they deem necessary to complete the review.

(iii) The Special Ad Hoc Committee will be required to provide a comprehensive report of its findings. This report will be submitted to the Chairman of the Executive Board, who in turn, will send it to the Executive Director for his comments. The report and the Executive Director's comments will be submitted to the Governing Council, through the Executive Board, for a decision.

29. It is advisable that the Special Ad Hoc Committee should comprise the following:

- A representative of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
- A representative of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)
- Two representatives of member States.

30. Report of the Special Ad Hoc Committee should be ready by mid-November 1990.

Staffing Situation of the Centre (agenda item 6)

31. The Executive Director of the Centre informed the Board that since the launching of the Centre only three professional staff, namely the Executive Director, Chief Technical Advisor and the Director of Administration Division, had been on board.

He told the meeting that the Chief Technical Advisor resigned from his post in May 1990 leaving the Executive Director as the only substantive staff in the Centre. He said such a situation where the Centre has no professional staff in the essential fields to implement the work programme, will leave the Centre without any achievement and without capacity to implement the approved work programme. The Executive Director then informed the Board that the Governing Council in approving the work programme for 1989, 1990 and 1991 had approved a limited number of posts (Annex D of the work programme) for implementing the programme. The Executive Director presented the job descriptions of the approved posts but recruitment could not be undertaken due to lack of financial resources. He suggested that in the light of the critical financial situation of the Centre, the Board should consider reducing the number of required staff to the following:

1. Director of Research and Development, Applications and Training or CTA
2. Director of Documentation and Information
3. Chief of Solar Energy
4. Chief of Wind Energy
5. Chief of Biogas Production and Applications
6. Chief of Training
7. Finance Officer

32. The posts of Director of Research and Development, Applications and Training and Chief Technical Advisor could be utilized interchangeably, i.e. only one of the two could be filled. Later on, when the financial situation of the Centre improves, both could be filled in such a way that one is English speaking and the other French-speaking.

33. The Executive Board, agreed that the Centre needed a minimum number of staff to implement its programme and to have such minimum number resources need to be made available. It recommended the job descriptions of the posts and the recruitment of the staff to the Governing Council.

The Financial Situation of the Centre (agenda item 7)

34. The Executive Director, told the Board that the financial situation of the Centre was to say the least, critical. The Centre had a Work Programme whose activities in 1990 had to be curtailed due to lack of funds. Originally, the available funds, which were largely due to a generous grant by the Government of Burundi, were supposed to cover the activities during the first year of operation of the Centre following its inauguration in January 1989. The understanding among member States, was once the Centre prepared a viable Work Programme then member States would start sending their assessed contributions. However the funds did not come.

35. By August 1, 1990, the Centre was in the red by about US\$130,000. Once again the Government of Burundi responded to the Centre's call for support and advanced FBu 5 million (around US\$29,500) to help pay for some of the local costs and salaries. He took that opportunity to add his thanks to those of Professor Adedeji to the Government of Burundi. The sacrifices offered by the host government to keep the Centre afloat were made while the economic conditions there dictate other priorities and therefore such contributions are doubly appreciated.

36. He knew that there was a difficult situation in each African State, but he also knew that it will get worse if dependence on imported oil continued, resulting in social services in the rural areas worsening if some supplies of energy are not made available there, especially that fuelwood was becoming scarce every day unless an alternative fuel is found. Answers to those problems would readily be made available to all member States through the Centre. He said African countries did not have to wait to take the lead from the industrialized countries who, following the Gulf crisis, are putting more stress on the development of their indigenous sources of energy, although the contribution to their energy scene does not exceed 2 to 5% while in some parts of Africa it is 90%.

37. He then informed the Board that if no funds were made available, the two Workshops scheduled in China for late October 1990 and that in Libya in December 1990 would be canceled. Those Workshops were worth more US\$500,000 which was more than all the contributions given the Centre since its inception. Their loss will render the Centre ineffective.

38. The Executive Director then presented revised budget for the 1990/1991 biennium. Members of the Board asked questions on the rationale and levels of certain figures to which the Executive Director responded. Finally the board agreed that:

(i) the figure for contingency was too high and in any case contingency budget line should be removed from the budget in the future;

(ii) there should be a more rigorous planning and budgeting on the basis of a programme budget where activities are costed more accurately. Each mission, for instance, should be costed so that the total for the travel budget line is derived from the sum total of the missions;

(iii) An account of extra-budgetary resources, indicating sources, should be provided in the programme budget;

(iv) the budget should be presented to show income and expenditure figures;

(v) The figures for the previous years should also be provided;

(vi) Efforts should be continued to publicize the Centre in all the countries and international organizations and information on the proposed workshop and study tour to China, for instance, should be communicated to all countries more effectively.

39. The Chairman of the Executive Board appealed to the member States to pay their contributions for the implementation of the programme. He pointed out that without resources being provided the Centre cannot implement any of the outputs that Council has approved in the work programme. The Board agreed that it was not fair at this stage to demand results first from the Centre before paying contributions. The Board also welcomed the information that contributions could be paid in local currency and UNDP office in the country could assist in converting into US dollars.

Outstanding issues (agenda item 6)

40. Under this item of the agenda the Executive Director informed the Board that there were three issues namely the Headquarter/Host agreement, the Staff rules and regulations and the Financial rules and regulations which had been considered by the Executive Board and recommended to the Governing Council meeting held from 6-8 December 1989. The Governing Council however

deferred their consideration because the members wanted to consult their governments as there were financial and policy implications. The Executive Director said that no comments had been received from member States.

(i) Headquarters/Host Agreement

41. On the Headquarters/Host agreement the Executive Director informed the Executive Board that one of the problems on this issue was that although the Executive Board had recommended a draft Headquarters/Host agreement to the Governing Council, the host country presented its own version of a draft agreement which was different from the one submitted by the Executive Board.

42. The Chairman of the Executive Board explained that the draft the Executive Board submitted to the Council was a standard version that is utilized in all the international organizations including the ECA and OAU sponsored institutions. He said provision of adequate premises and facilities without time limit by a host country is a standard requirement and practice. This principle has been observed by the member States that have offered to host international organization. He quoted examples such as ARCEDEM and UNAFRI in Nigeria and Uganda respectively where the host countries have provided all the buildings and facilities as well as land on which to have extensions of the buildings. The representative of Congo confirmed that the principle of a host country providing premises without time limit was a standard requirement for hosting an institution. He further said, in compliance with that requirement, Congo had provided premises for the Central African Mineral Resources Development Centre (CAMRDC) and the Pan African Union for Science and Technology and (PUST) at no cost to these institutions.

43. Finally, the Executive Board appealed to the representative of the Burundi Government to observe these requirements for hosting ARCSE and that he should go and clarify this to the Government of Burundi to accept the recommendation of the Executive Board.

(ii) Staff rules and regulations of the Centre

(iii) Financial rules and regulations of the Centre

44. The Executive Director informed the Executive Board that financial and staff rules and regulations of the Centre had been considered by the Executive Board in July 1989 and recommended them to the Governing Council which deferred adoption on the grounds that the members wanted to consult legal opinion with the governments in the respective members States. He

further said that apart from those submitted by the ECA he had not received any comments from the member States. The Executive Board agreed that the ECA and the Centre should continue to revise the rules and regulations taking into account any comments that may come from the member States.

Any other business (agenda item 9)

45. A question was raised on what ECA was doing on the issue of rationalization of institutions that was discussed at the Sixteenth meeting ECA conference of Ministers in view of the financial problems the institutions are facing.

46. The Chairman explained that a suggestion had been made for the former 11-man Ad Hoc Committee to be revived to re-study the problem and revise their recommendation. However the Committee had not been re-constituted yet. The cost of the travel and subsistence allowance was to be borne, as was the case in 1983/1984, by the member States.

47. The Executive Board noted that the Agenda of the forth coming Governing Council meeting will include the election of members of the Executive Board according to Article 9 of the Constitution.

Date and venue of the next meeting (agenda item 10)

48. The Executive Board agreed to meet immediately before the meeting of the Governing Council whose dates would be determined after consultation between the Chairman of the Executive Board and the Chairman of the Governing Council.

Adoption of the report of the meeting (agenda item 11)

49. The Executive Board adopted the report of agenda item 5 whose discussion was held in Camera. Due to time constraint, the Executive Board agreed to adopt the report of the rest of the agenda items at its next meeting.

