

**REPORT OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON AFRICAN  
ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT  
(UN-IATF)**

**(Addis-Ababa, 4 May 1996)**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Sixth meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-IATF) was held at ECA Headquarters, Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, on 4 May. The meeting was convened to consider the implications for the Task Force of the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and define the modalities of the contributions of members of the Task Force to the conduct of the Mid-term review of UN-NADAF by the General Assembly.

**II. ATTENDANCE**

2. The following member organizations were represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS-HABITAT); the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD); the World Health Organization (WHO); the World Bank (IBRD); the World Meteorological Organization (WMO); the International Civil Aviation Organization; the Regional Commission New York Office; and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The list of participants is annexed to the report.

**III. OPENING**

3. The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the UN-IATF, Mr. K. Y. Amoako, United Nations Under Secretary-General, Executive Secretary of ECA.

4. The Chairman welcomed participants to the Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa and expressed appreciation to member agencies that responded to the invitation to participate at the meeting.

5. The Chairman noted that since the Fifth Meeting of the IATF which was held here at Addis-Ababa in November 1994, many developments have taken place within the United Nations, in relation to African development, including the consideration of the issue by the High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in June 1995; the launching, by the Secretary-General, of the System-wide Initiative on Africa in March 1996; and the adoption of resolution A/50/160 by the 50th session of the General Assembly, defining the modalities of the conduct of the Mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF).

6. The Chairman also noted that since the last meeting, he has been appointed Executive Secretary of the ECA, and consequently, Chairman of the IATF. He indicated that, in conformity with its mandate and in line with the Strategic Directions for the renewal of the ECA which has been endorsed by the Seventeenth Meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole of the ECA Conference of Ministers.

7. Regarding the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa the Chairman referred to the work of a Steering Committee established by the ACC that he co-chairs with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He stressed that the Special Initiative is an unprecedented undertaking of the UN system and is innovative in many respects. The Executive Secretary also emphasized the fact that the Special Initiative neither conflicts with nor duplicates the objectives of UN-NADAF. The latter remains the political framework for maintaining the momentum for African development during the 1990s and the former forms the system-wide operational programme of action, focusing on areas which would contribute to consolidate the basis for Africa's sustained and sustainable development.

8. The Chairman informed participants that the Mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF will be conducted in 1996, as scheduled and for this purpose, the General Assembly has established an Ad-Hoc Committee of the Whole, which will prepare for the review by the General Assembly, based on a report of the Secretary-General to be prepared by the ECA with the contributions of African countries, African inter-governmental organizations and chiefly the OAU, and organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. He invited members of the Task Force to provide the secretariat with their specific inputs to the report of the Secretary-General.

9. The Executive Secretary thanked members of the UN-IATF for the support and encouragements for the renewal of the Economic Commission for Africa, a process that he initiated to bring the Commission to serve Africa better and to play a major role at the African regional level, in partnership with sister organizations of the UN family at large, the Organization of African Unity, the African Development Bank and Non-Governmental Organizations.

10. The Chairman concluded his statement by noting that the immediate concern of the Sixth Meeting of the UN-IATF is for members to become familiar with the orientation and salient features of the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and to suggest the best ideas on how to coordinate various contributions to its implementation and monitoring.

11. On behalf of members of the UN-IATF, Mr. Musa, Director, UNESCO Office in Ethiopia, and Vice-Chairman welcomed Mr. Amoako as Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and new Chairman of the Task Force. He congratulated him for his appointment and for the strategic directions for the renewal of ECA which was endorsed by African member States at the Seventeenth Meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW). He wished him every success and assured him of the cooperation of sister organizations.

12. The Vice-Chairman mentioned that since the Fourth Meeting of the Working Group of the UN-IATF, held in New York in March 1995, members get the news on the preparation of a new initiative on Africa and asked themselves what would be the role of the UN-IATF. He expressed the view that the Steering Committee will bring about more visibility of the objectives of the Special Initiative at the Highest level while the Task Force will endeavour to efficiently implement its decisions.

#### IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

13. The meeting adopted its agenda with the following items:

1. Welcome address by the Chairman of the UN-IATF
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Matters arising from the Fifth meeting of the UN-IATF
4. Chairman's Briefing on the implementation of the System-wide Initiative on Africa
5. Consideration of possible ways of harmonizing the implementation of the implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.
6. Definition of modalities of and planning for the conduct of the mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF

7. Any other business.
8. Adoption of Report.
9. Closure of the meeting.

## V. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

### A. Matters arising from the Fifth meeting of the UN-IATF

14. The Secretary to the UN-IATF recalled that the 5th Meeting of the UN-IATF was rich of thoughts on matters directly related to the concern of today's meeting.

15. These included:

- (i) the appreciation of the work of the Task Force, in relation to the process for improving system-wide harmonization and coordination that have been taken place within the ACC, since 1992, particularly in relation to the contribution of the United Nations system to the implementation of UN-NADAF;
- (ii) the identification of major constraints that the Task Force has faced in promoting cooperation in support of African development.

16. Regarding the first issue, the Task Force was of the opinion that it performed well and met the purpose for which it was established. It also established that the congruence of its work with the process initiated by ACC is twofold:

- (i) The membership of the UN-IATF is related to that of the ACC, in addition to the two African regional institutions, namely the OAU and the ADB;
- (ii) Although the elaboration of the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, was recommended by CPC, its first version was compiled in the framework of the CCPOQ, an ACC subcommittee, before it was revised by the UN-IATF.

17. Based on these facts the 5th Meeting had welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General who is the overall responsible for the implementation of UN-NADAF, to devote the 1994 Fall session on African development issues. It is worth noting that the UN-IATF contributed to the preparation of the background documentation for the ACC meeting.

18. The Secretary indicated that matters which arose from the discussion related to:

- (i) how the Task Force could foster system-wide policy harmonization;
- (ii) how to operationalize the System-wide Plan of Action. The meeting supported that country specific programmes based on the Country Strategy Notes and the Un Resident Coordinator system was the most appropriate approach.

19. The Secretary concluded by pointing out that major shortcomings identified by the Fifth Meeting of the Task Force included the slow progress in policy harmonization and coordination at the field level and the difficulty in bringing the System-wide Plan of Action at an operational stage, because it was too inclusive and not associated with a clear strategy for mobilizing resources for its implementation.

**B. Chairman's Briefing on the implementation of the System-wide Initiative on Africa.**

20. The Executive Secretary, in introducing the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa explained that it is a response to the long-term need for the UN Agencies to develop implementable framework of Joint operations, involving African Governments and Civil organizations as well as bilateral international partners. He pointed out that the Special Initiative provides targets and goals and focuses on a few issues of the highest priority and, as such, cannot encompass all programmes of the UN system. He also informed participants on the seven clusters and 24 components of the initiative with the prominence of basic education and health.

21. With respect to the articulation of national components of the Special Initiative, the Executive Secretary emphasized the critical necessity for African government to pitch in related action programmes with their national development plans and for United Nations agencies to adapt some of their on-going programmes. At country level too, the Resident Coordinator will have an important role to play in assigning groups in galvanizing national efforts in some areas needing aggressive actions and in liaising with national mechanisms for sensitization, follow-up and monitoring. He pointed out that for credibility the Special Initiative also will need to show some success schemes rather quickly. In this respect, there is a plan to make Ethiopia one of the model countries by using basic health and education as example priorities to be tackled.

22. The Executive Secretary referred to the recently concluded meetings of the ACC and Steering Committee, especially discussions on issues still needing clarification, including:

- the need for better articulation of population and gender issues.
- the resource levels remain estimates at this stage, based on available country data and information in the main clusters of education and health.
- the issue of food security which has not yet been given prominence will be translated by FAO into a comprehensive programme of action with a strategy for human mobilization.
- the issue of information technology which should encompass not only the connection to Internet but also several other components.

23. The Executive Secretary stressed the fact that, though resource mobilization is not an essential factor for success, it should not divert the UN system from the real issues. He noted that with the launching of the Special Initiative, African development has been put back on the international agenda. He said to have the impression from the meetings of the ACC and Steering Committee, recently held at Nairobi, that all Executing Heads of UN agencies are very enthusiastic to develop the synergy necessary for the successful implementation of the Special Initiative.

24. The Chairman also briefed participants on the mechanisms so far established to support the Special Initiative. At the high-level, the Steering Committee will continue to oversee the process of making the Initiative real. The Committee which was initially composed of few agencies has become open-ended to all member agencies of the ACC. Its mandate was extended for one year and will be reviewed in 1997. He also indicated that for each of the clusters, the designated Lead agencies have been entrusted with the task of devising, in consultation with cooperative agencies, specific programmes of action, including the desired targets and performance indicators. The Executive Secretary also mentioned that the established Directorate of African Ministers of Education and Donors could be a support to mobilizing national and international support for programmes in the cluster of basic education. He also anticipates a strong international advocacy for support to the Special Initiative during the meeting to be held in Geneva, and sponsored by the Dutch Government.

25. In dealing with the congruence between the Special Initiative and UN-NADAF, the Executive Secretary stressed the fact that the objectives of UN-NADAF and the Cairo Agenda are very relevant to those of the Special Initiative which, to a great extent, incorporates them. He made it clear that UN-NADAF should be viewed as a political compact between African countries and the international community and the Special Initiative as the vehicle to

operationalize some of the actions it recommended. The Executive Secretary concluded the briefing by mentioning that the primary purpose of both UN-NADAF and the System-wide Special Initiative is to address African development. Therefore, the real question is not on what has happened to UN-NADAF but rather on how to make the Initiative work.

26. Following the briefing and background information on the System-wide Plan of Action provided by Headquarters Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), the meeting appreciated the good understanding of the link between UN-NADAF and the Special Initiative. It strongly supported the view that the real task ahead is to define the best strategies, at the global, regional and national levels, to achieve results.

27. The briefing also stimulated good ideas, especially in respect of political mobilization which needs to closely involve the OAU; resource mobilization which should break the donor fatigue syndrome; and the modalities for further strengthening coordination at all levels and demonstrate that the end goal is to get Africa to move ahead.

**C. Consideration of ways of harmonizing the implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and the Special Initiative on Africa.**

28. The meeting unanimously agreed that the System-wide Plan of Action for African economic recovery and development and the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa cannot be implemented concurrently. It therefore endorsed the view that the Special Initiative supersedes the System-wide Plan of Action. Consequently, it recommended that the report to the forthcoming session of the CPC, to be prepared by DPCSD, stresses this fact.

29. The meeting then discussed the relevance of the UN-IATF in the new context and how its potential for forging coordination, monitoring efficiently the implementation of the New Initiative and substantially reporting to legislative organs could be tapped.

30. The Chairman took stock of the past achievements of the UN-IATF and concluded that it should be maintained to support the implementation of the Special Initiative and UN-NADAF. However its functions need to be adjusted, taking into account some of the new requirements. In this respect, he has requested the Task Force to come up with ideas and suggestions which could help highlight some important issues, including responses to the questions on

- how to tie in the coordination functions at Headquarters, regional and national levels;
- how to link up the work of the UN-IATF with that of the Lead agencies for the various clusters of the Special Initiative;

- how best the monitoring mechanism can be linked with the Resident Coordinator system and Governments' follow-up system at the national level;
- what should be the appropriate mechanism for the UN system to interact and implement joint actions with the OAU, especially for political mobilization;
- what should be the role of the ECA; and
- what should be the role of other members of the UN-IATF, besides their contributions to the preparation of progress reports.

31. The Chairman noted that the capacities of ECA should be strengthened for it to play a leading role and the secretariat of the UN-IATF to be in a position to help galvanize the efforts of agencies in undertaking inter-agency activities and preparing reports of good quality.

32. The meeting supported the view that the UN-IATF has the potential to support the implementation of the Special Initiative on Africa, especially with respect to sensitization, follow-up and monitoring. It also noted that the Task Force could assist the Steering Committee in highlighting some of the issues that are not explicitly addressed by the Special Initiative such as diversification, informal sector development, etc...

33. The meeting recommended that the Terms of Reference of the UN-IATF be reexamined to reflect the functions that it may play in the implementation of the Special Initiative. It decided on the establishment of a small group of selected Addis-Ababa-based organizations including the ECA, UNESCO, UNDP, WHO, FAO, the World Bank and the OAU, to further consider the issues put before the Task Force by the Chairman and with a view to establishing its Terms of reference.

34. The meeting also recommended that the work of the Group, under the chairmanship of UNESCO, should be completed within the next 15 days and circulated among all members for comments and possible amendments, and that the final report is submitted to the Executive Secretary of the ECA within one month.

**D. Definition of modalities of and planning for the conduct of the mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF**

35. Based on briefings by the Secretariat and DPCSD, the meeting recommended the following:



- (i) the secretariat should send reminders to members for their comments on the draft outline of the report of the Secretary-General to the Ad-Hoc Committee of the Whole;
- (ii) all members are urged to provide the secretariat with their contributions and the secretariat should circulate, like in the past, the draft report to all members, before it is finalized and submitted to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General;
- (iii) members of the UN-IATF should participate in the meetings in preparation of the Mid-term review of UN-NADAF by the General Assembly.

36. The meeting welcomed the offer of UNICEF to contribute, together with ECA, DPCSD and UNDP, in the finalization, in New York, of the report of the Secretary-General.

**E     Any other business.**

37. The issue of communication was brought to the attention of the meeting. It recommended that future correspondence be addressed to Headquarters with copy to the focal points for the UN-IATF.

**H.     Closure of the meeting**

38. The secretariat was requested to submit to participants, as soon as possible and possibly before the conclusion of the Twenty-second meeting of ECA Conference of Ministers, the draft report of the Sixth Meeting of the UN-IATF to participants. The meeting was closed at 13 hours 30, on the day of 4 May 1996.

**SIXTH MEETING OF THE UN-IATF**

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