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Seventh meeting of the Technical
Preparatory Committee of the
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Yaounde, Republic of Cameroon
7 to 14 April 1986

Item 12 of the provisional agenda*

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

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

Yaounde, Republic of Cameroon
17 to 21 April 1986

Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE ECA JOINT INTERGOVERNMENTAL
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND ENVIRONMENT

* E/ECA/TPCW.7/1
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1. The third meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment was held at ECA, Addis Ababa in July 1985, and it was attended by representatives of the following States members of ECA: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, the Comoros, the Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
2. Most of the work of the Joint Committee was carried out in plenary sessions. However, all the documents were presented at plenary for general comments whilst the detailed technical discussions on each document were done at the two sub-committees of human settlements and of environment.
3. At the plenary, the ECA representative gave an overview of the main activities undertaken by the secretariat of the Commission during the period February 1984 to June 1985 with regard to the resolutions on human settlements adopted by the Joint Committee at its second meeting and approved by the ECA Conference of Ministers at its tenth meeting. These activities were discussed under four subheadings, namely physical planning, building materials and construction industries development, public participation in housing development and co-operation between ECA and other international organizations within or outside the United Nations system.
4. In the discussion that followed, questions were raised on the present status of some resolutions adopted at the previous meeting of the Joint Committee, action by the secretariat in preparation for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, the shortage of resources available to the Human Settlements Section at ECA for carrying out its assigned tasks, and co-operation among United Nations bodies to bring about the better development of human settlements.
5. Regarding environmental matters, the ECA representative presented documents on the environment in Africa work programmes. He pointed out that during the past (1982-1983) and the current (1984-1985) biennium, the main emphasis on the environment in Africa work programmes has been on activities to implement ECA resolutions 446 (XVII) on combating desertification in Africa, 473 (XVIII) calling for a scientific round table on the climatic situation and drought in Africa, 474 (XVIII) on the development of environmental education and training programme for Africa, as well as the familiarization of member States with the UNEP Guidelines for Industrial Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and environmental criteria for the siting of industries, and follow-up action on the development of environmental protection legislation in the ECA region.
6. Following this presentation, activities carried out by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to combat drought and desertification, by the International Labour Office (ILO) in collaboration with the United Nations

Environment Programme (UNEP) were also discussed. Then, delegates from the following countries - Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia, Benin, Botswana, the Comoros, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mauritania, Togo, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire - presented reports on activities related to human settlements and environmental matters, which were carried out in their respective countries in contribution to the preparation of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYHS), 1987.

7. The Human Settlements Sub-Committee discussed the technical papers presented by the secretariat including (a) thoughts on human settlements policy in Africa: the land problem in urban areas and housing programme for the masses; (b) The development of decentralized systems of building materials production in African countries; (c) Indicators for revised building codes and regulations in Africa; (d) Guidelines and indicators for the production of co-operative housing, self-help housing and other forms of public participation.

8. During the discussions that followed the presentation of these papers, many issues were raised by the participants in contribution to the final recommendations.

9. The Environment Sub-Committee discussed the following reports and technical papers presented by the secretariat: (a) Progress report on environmental matters including long-term measures for combating drought and desertification; (b) Progress report on the establishment of an African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD); (c) Report of the ECA/UNEP training workshop for the incorporation of environmental components into the training programmes of ECA-sponsored institutions; (d) Report of ECA/ARSO experts group meeting on the establishment and/or improvement of national standards for the protection of the African environment; (e) Review of national environmental legislation and ECA/OAU technical co-operation for the implementation of conventions and protocols on the environment; (f) ECA environment in Africa work programme for the 1986-1987 biennium.

10. The third meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment, having considered the documents submitted by the the ECA Secretariat, of ECA, made the following recommendations on human settlements:

(a) Action, at the national level, on: (i) the constitution of public land reserves; (ii) tax policy; (iii) credit policy; (iv) involvement of the private sector in the supply of land for housing; (v) security of tenure for squatters; (vi) government intervention in land prices; (vii) increasing government involvement in land development;

(b) Action, at the international level, on: (i) the establishment of a data bank on human settlements; (ii) the pooling of information and experience; (iii) the training of manpower; (iv) the implementation of pilot projects;

(c) Building codes and regulations.

11. The Joint Committee also made recommendations dealing with the following environmental matters:

(a) Establishment of an African Centre for Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD);

(b) Establishment and/or improvement of national standards for the protection of the African environment;

(c) Review of national environmental legislation and ECA/OAU technical co-operation for the implementation of conventions and protocols on the environment.