ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Nineteenth meeting of the Technical
Preparatory Committee of the
Whole/Seventh Intergovernmental
Group of Experts

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
30 April-4 May 1999

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Thirty-third session of the Commission/
Twenty-fourth meeting of the Conference
of Ministers/Seventh session of the
Conference of African Ministers of Finance

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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ISSUES FROM THE SUBSIDIARY AND SECTORAL BODIES OF THE COMMISSION REQUIRING A DECISION OF THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS

S. Tilson
UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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ISSUES FROM THE SUBSIDIARY AND SECTORAL BODIES OF THE COMMISSION REQUIRING A DECISION OF THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS
The present document contains resolutions, decisions and recommendations brought before the Commission for consideration and adoption and for information. The resolutions, decisions and recommendations have been adopted by subsidiary bodies of the Commission since its last session. The reports of these meetings are available as information documents.

It will be recalled that during the thirty-second session of the Commission/twenty third meeting of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning, held in Addis Ababa from 5-8 May 1997, the Conference adopted resolution 826 (XXXII) to reform the intergovernmental machinery of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), as follows:

1. **Organs dealing with overall development issues**

   (a) Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning (the Commission) and its Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW). The Conference convenes once every two years; between the two sessions, the Follow-up Committee meets;

   (b) Intergovernmental Committees of Experts of the Subregional Development Centres (SRDCs). The Intergovernmental Committees of Experts meets annually and reports to the Commission through the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole. In the years when the Commission does not meet, the reports of these committees are presented to the Follow-up Committee of the Bureau;

   (c) Conference of African Ministers of Finance: This Conference is convened biennially in alternate years to the meetings of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning.

2. **Subsidiary bodies**

   (a) The Committee on Women and Development meets on a biennial basis. (i.e. once every two years);

   (b) The Committee on Development Information meets on a biennial basis;

   (c) The Committee on Sustainable Development meets on a biennial basis;

   (d) The Committee on Human Development and Civil Society meets on a biennial basis;

   (e) The Committee on Industry and Private Sector Development meets biennially;

   (f) The Committee on Natural Resources and Science and Technology meets on a biennial basis; and

   (g) The Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration meets on a biennial basis.
Since the reform of the intergovernmental machinery of the Commission, the following bodies have met:

(a) Eleventh meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications: Cairo, Egypt on 25-27 November 1997;

(b) First meeting of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 27 April 1998;

(c) Fourteenth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Subregional Development Centre for North Africa, Tangier, Morocco, 26-30 June 1998;

(d) First meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Subregional Development Centre for West Africa: Niamey, Niger, 25-29 May 1998;

(e) Fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Subregional Development Centre for Eastern Africa: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 26-28 May 1998;

(f) Fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Subregional Development Centre for Southern Africa: Lusaka, Zambia, 5-8 October 1998;

(g) First meeting of the Committee of Sustainable Development: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25-29 January 1999;

(h) Second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Subregional Development Centre from West Africa: Conakry, Guinea, 1-6 March 1999;

(i) First meeting of the Committee on Women and Development: Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 2-5 April 1999.

I. RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS REQUIRING ACTION

Resolutions, recommendations and decisions adopted by subsidiary bodies, brought to the attention of the Conference of Ministers for consideration and adoption.


RESOLUTION 97/97

Accelerating the implementation of UNTACDA II and building strong and efficient transport and communications systems in Africa for the twenty-first century

It should be noted that this Conference will be dissolved at the end of the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (UNTACDA II) and replaced by the Committee on Transport, Communications and Tourism of the Economic Commission for Africa.
which shall be the regional focus for consideration of these issues; during the eleventh meeting held in Cairo from 25-27 November 1997, it was decided that the twelfth meeting of the Conference would be held in 2000, at the end of UNTACDA II.

The Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications, meeting at its eleventh session in Cairo, Egypt from 25 to 27 November 1997

Recalling its resolution ECA/UNTACDA/Res. 91/84 of February 1991 by which it adopted the programmes for the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, 1991-2000 (UNTACDA II),

Referring to United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/456 of 20 December 1991 launching the implementation of the Decade Programme and decision 48/456 of 20 December 1993 on additional resources for the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa,

Recalling also its resolution ECA/UNTACDA/Res. 95/92 of 21 March 1995 on the implementation of Phase II of the UNTACDA II programme,

Having considered the second mid-term evaluation of the Decade, and the Framework for Action therefrom,

Reaffirming the importance and continued relevance and initial importance of UNTACDA II especially toward the goals of the Abuja Treaty (1991) establishing the African Economic Community,

Conscious of the deep commitment of African Governments to the successful implementation of the final phase (1998-2000) of the Decade programme,

Concerned about challenges to the transport and communications sector in the twenty-first century,

Conscious of the importance of infrastructure in Africa’s development and of the twenty-first century challenges in this domain,

Noting the decision of the ECA Conference of Ministers Res. 826 (XXXII) which decided to dissolve, by the year 2000, the conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications as the Transport and Communications and Tourism Committee of the African Economic Community will be the regional body expected to consider issues hitherto dealt with by the Conference,

Noting further with concern the low level of implementation of the programme due to lack of resources,

1. Adopts the framework for action for accelerating the implementation of UNTACDA II - Building strong and efficient transport and communications in Africa for the twenty-first century for the period 1998-2000 and beyond;
2. **Urges** the member States to make every effort to implement the Framework for Action for the implementation of the Decade programme during the period and beyond, by:

   (a) **Adopting** and/or **entrenching** economic reforms in general and reforms of transport and communications sectors in particular, and promoting the development of a relevant database for policy formulation, planning and monitoring;

   (b) **Building** **maintenance capacities** in ensuring implementation of maintenance projects and programmes and securing efficient management of facilities;

   (c) **Building critical human, institutional and entrepreneurial capacities** with emphasis on small- and medium-scale enterprises and public- and private-sector partnership in the area of transport and communications by training trainers and using existing subregional and regional institutions in Africa and working out synergies between them;

   (d) **Improving management and conditions** for sustainable development of transport and communications;

3. **Further urges** member States and all partners involved in the implementation of the Decade programme to carry out their activities within the framework of approved areas of immediate subsectoral concentration as spelled out in Section III of the Framework for Action for implementation of the Decade programme (1998-2000);

4. **Invites** all partners for the implementation of the programme to direct all their efforts towards the harmonious and coordinated development of the transport and communication sectors;

5. **Recommends** that due to difficulties faced in financing the programme, strategies for mobilization of resources by the States and agencies piloting the Decade programme should be centred around:

   (a) Joint efforts by the States and agencies to identify and formulate viable projects supported by all partners;

   (b) Collection and dissemination of information on projects, their implementation and financing sources as well as procedures for the latter through all possible means, including the electronic channel;

   (c) **Diversification of funding sources** to include the non-traditional partners (bilateral, private, etc.); and

   (d) **More aggressive resource mobilization**, including project marketing and promotion through the establishment of mechanisms hitherto unused within the framework of the Decade (round tables, opening of trust funds, acquisition of overall commitments of donor agencies etc.); and
6. **Further recommends** the following framework for coordination and monitoring of the Decade after the year 2000 through:

   (a) A Ministerial Follow-up Committee designated by the various subregions on a two-year rotating basis;

   (b) A Coordinating Committee composed of ECA (lead agency and secretariat), OAU and ADB for the coordination and monitoring of programmes in transport and communications and for spearheading efforts for the mobilization of resources for funding relevant programmes;

   (c) The Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (IACC) as the technical organ of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee;

   (d) The subregional coordinating committees placed under the auspices of the subregional economic groupings whose role would be strengthened to give them increased responsibilities in the coordination of the Decade and in particular programmes related to the framework for action including the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and best practices;

   (e) Strengthening national coordinating mechanisms for the development of transport and communications under the thrust of subregional economic cooperation organizations;

7. **Requests** all donors to contribute further to the implementation of the Framework for Action approved by the eleventh Meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications;

8. **Further requests** the United Nations General Assembly to provide additional resources within the regular budget of ECA to enable it to pursue the major activities of the Decade action programme;

9. **Further requests** the ACP "Ordonnateurs" Ministers of the EDF, to give the appropriate priority to the Decade projects and programmes in the preparation of their national and regional indicative programmes under the second financial protocol of the Lomé IV Convention;

10. **Further calls upon** the development banks and participating financial institutions to continue to support the UNTACDA II programme and its mechanism for coordinated and efficient development of transport and communications in Africa;

11. **Especially requests** African financial institutions to provide further support to the UNTACDA II programme, particularly by taking systematically into account the guidelines and priorities of the Decade in the implementation of the Framework for Action for accelerating the implementation of the Decade;

12. **Requests** intergovernmental organizations to take active part in the UNTACDA II programme by including in their regular work programme activities listed in the Framework for Action with priority given to those that make for regional integration;
13. Requests the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa:

(a) To disseminate systematically among all UNTACDA II partners information on the implementation of the Decade through workshops, seminars, symposia and information bulletins;

(b) To play a far more active role in coordinating the UNTACDA II programme and strengthen its own capacity to provide the necessary technical backstopping in support of programme implementation;

(c) To ensure that the third and final evaluation of the implementation of UNTACDA II in the year 2000 deals with the overall impact of the programme in terms of achievement of qualitative and quantitative development objectives of the programme;

(d) To prepare a consolidated report on the status of implementation of all UNTACDA II projects using reports drafted by member States and intergovernmental organizations on the situation with regard to the status of their projects and activities undertaken in the implementation of the Framework for Action for the Decade;

14. Requests the subsectoral groups to assist in the evaluation of projects falling within their area of competence and in the coordination and integration of the regional work programmes for Africa the United Nations specialized agencies with those of UNTACDA II.

II. RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE FOR INFORMATION

1. Resolution 839 (MFC.1) on the reform of the regional commissions, adopted by the first meeting of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning (doc. E/ECACM.24/CRP.12)

(a) Relationships between the Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations agencies, and regional and subregional organizations in Africa

The Ministerial Follow-up Committee

Recalling the terms of reference of the Commission as adopted by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 671A(XV) of 29 April 1958 and amended by its resolutions 974 D.1 (XXXVI) of 5 July 1963, 1343 (XLV) of 18 July 1968 and 1978/68 of 4 August 1978,

Recalling further the various resolutions that have implications for the mandate and operations of the Commission, including, in particular, General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, 33/202 of 29 January 1979, 44/211 of 21 December 1989 and 50/120 of 20 December 1995,
Noting with appreciation the endorsement by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 718 (XXVI) of 12 May 1991 on the revitalization of the mandate and operational framework of the regional economic commissions, Commission resolution 726 (XXVII) of 22 April 1992 on strengthening the Economic Commission for Africa to face Africa’s development challenges in the 1990s, 779 (XXIX) of 4 May 1994 on strengthening the operational capacity of the Economic Commission for Africa, and 809 (XXX!) of 8 May 1996 on the new directions for the Economic Commission for Africa,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 44/177 of 19 December 1990, 45/264 of 13 May 1991 and 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, in which the call was made for the regional commissions to be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and for those located in developing countries to be strengthened in the context of the overall objectives of the ongoing restructuring and revitalization process,

Taking into account General Assembly resolution 52/12B of 19 December 1997, "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform", which invited the Economic and Social Council, in consultation with Member States and appropriate intergovernmental regional bodies, to conduct a general review of the regional commissions at its substantive session of 1998, bearing in mind the relevant provisions of resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996 and the individual reviews each commission has already carried out, in order to consider the competencies of the regional commissions, taking into account the competencies of global bodies and other regional and subregional intergovernmental bodies,

Having examined indepth document E/ECA/MFC.1/2 entitled "Reforms of the regional commissions: Relationships between the economic Commission for Africa, United Nations agencies, regional and subregional organizations in Africa -- A note by the secretariat",

1. Welcomes the note by the secretariat;

2. Expresses its appreciation for the observations and analyses contained in the note;

3. Decides to recommend as follows:

Recommendation 1: Reaffirm and support existing coordination mechanisms at the regional level

An important first step in enhancing collaboration between the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations agencies is to reaffirm and support the team leadership role assigned to the regional commissions in General Assembly resolution 32/197. The agencies should use the mechanism of a regional administrative committee on coordination first suggested by the Secretary-General in 1994. The Economic and Social Council should consider providing a legislative directive to this effect. The regional administrative committee on coordination would be useful in addressing several regional issues, including questions such as follow-up to the global conferences, and various programmes on post-conflict reconstruction developments in Africa. In this regard, the next meeting of the Conference of Ministers to be held in 1999 should consider in-depth coordination and collaboration among United Nations agencies operating at the subregional and regional levels in Africa.
Recommendation 2: Adopt some principles for regional coordination

The United Nations agencies in Africa should adopt some principles for regional coordination. The agencies should endeavour to foster regional coordination on the basis of promoting greater exchange of information on planned and ongoing work; improve complementarities among the programmes; draw on each other’s competencies; and bring the pool of resources - financial and human - at their disposal to bear on policy issues of common interest.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen coordination at subregional level

Coordination or collaboration among United Nations agencies in Africa should also be enhanced at the subregional level. At this level, this should take the form of development of joint ventures to support the specific activities of countries in a subregional framework. In this way, the complementarities and harmony sought at the regional level will be given greater impact and impetus. The Commission’s Subregional Development Centres should be used as important vehicles for coordination at the subregional level.

Recommendation 4: The role of the Economic Commission for Africa in normative and operational functions

The Economic Commission for Africa, as a United Nations regional commission and as part of the landscape of regional institutions in the service of Africa’s development, has carried out valuable normative (analysis, advocacy, norm-setting) and operational activities which have been mutually complementary and supportive to the member States of the region. It should continue to undertake both categories of activities, it being recognized that its technical assistance plays a catalytic role in translating its normative work into concrete support for the development efforts of member States.

Recommendation 5: Enhanced cooperation among African organizations

At the regional level, there is already an implicit specialization and division of labour among Africa’s three premier intergovernmental organizations: the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank. Still, there remains a need to promote a more clear-cut division of responsibilities, and to rationalize and strengthen complementarities among the three organizations more strictly according to their mandates and competencies as a means of increasing their combined effectiveness, impact and efficiency in their collective mandate - to oversee the overall development of Africa at the regional level. This calls for these African organizations to strengthen their Joint Secretariat by implementing among themselves similar strategies as outlined above for the United Nations system. In particular, they should:

(a) Strengthen coordination, including collaboration in programme development, planning of activities, monitoring and evaluation, geared to building upon and exploiting complementarities;

(b) Improve networking and communications at all staff levels, and not only at the level of the chief executives;
(c) Work to establish a common ethos among their staff, based on a common perspective of Africa's political, social and economic development challenges and opportunities, and a common zeal to move Africa forward; and

(d) Streamline and coordinate their intergovernmental machineries: the governing bodies of all African organizations could be required to summarize, in a joint report, their main decisions for submission to the Summit of the African Heads of State and Government, which is the supreme organ of the African Economic Community.

(b) **Revision of the Economic Commission for Africa's Medium-term Plan, 1998-2001**

The Ministerial Follow-up Committee,

Having considered document E/ECA/MFC.1/3 entitled "First revision to the Medium-term Plan, 1998-2001: Note by the secretariat",

Recalling Commission resolution 809 (XXI) of 8 May 1996 in which the Commission endorsed the Medium-term Plan, 1998-2001 in the context of new directions for the Economic Commission for Africa,

Further recalling Commission resolutions 810 (XXXI) of 8 May 1996 and 828 (XXXII) of 8 May 1997 which respectively called for the strengthening of the former Multinational Programming and Operational Centres and their transformation to Subregional Development Centres with an extended programme and policy orientation, as well as Commission resolution 824 (XXXI) of 8 May 1996 on the Follow-up to the Dakar and Beijing Conferences: Implementation of the Global and Regional Platforms of Action for the Advancement of Women,

Endorses the revision to the Medium-term Plan, 1998-2001 involving the establishment of two new subprogrammes: Promoting the advancement of women, and supporting subregional activities for development.

2. **First meeting of the Committee on sustainable development**

(doc. E/ECA/CM.24/CRP.2)

Proposal of the Committee on Sustainable Development on its Constitution and Functions

I. **Background**

The United Nations General Assembly during its twelfth Ordinary Session adopted Resolution 1155 (XII) of 26 November, 1957, recommending that the Economic and Social Council, at its next session, give prompt and favourable consideration to the establishment of an Economic Commission for Africa.
The Economic and Social Council, having considered General Assembly resolution 1155 (XII) of November 1957, recommending the need to give effective aid to the countries and territories of Africa in accordance with Article 68 of the Charter of the United Nations, established the Economic Commission for Africa by its resolution 671 (XXV) adopted on 29 April, 1958.

Among the major terms of reference of the Commission are:

(a) The Commission may establish such liaison as it deems appropriate with intergovernmental organizations in Africa operating in the same field;

(b) The Commission shall adopt its own rules of procedure, including the method of selecting its chairman and other officers;

(c) The administrative budget of the Commission shall be financed from the funds of the United Nations;

(d) The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall appoint the Executive Secretary of the Commission;

(e) The Commission shall submit to the Economic and Social Council once a year, a full report on its activities and plans, including those of any subsidiary bodies;

(f) The headquarters of the Commission and its secretariat shall be located in Africa. The Commission may in due course also establish such subregional offices as it may find necessary;

(g) The first session of the Commission shall be called by the Secretary General as soon as practicable, but not later than the end of 1958;

(h) The Economic and Social Council shall, from time to time, make special reviews of the work of the Commission.

It is from these two foregoing pertinent resolutions that the Commission's legislative mandate is derived.

The Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning adopted resolution no. 826 (XXXII) in April 1996, through which the Ministers structured new organs to deal with overall development issues facing the continent. Among these organs and subsidiary bodies (para. "B-3") the Ministers established the "Committee on Sustainable Development" as follows:

"This Committee would serve as a forum of experts that will provide advice to ECA in the interlinked areas of food security, population, environment and human settlements. In this regard, it will provide a platform for advocacy and the assessment of follow-up activities by African Governments to regional and global plans of action, namely the African Common Position on Environment and Development, the African Common Position for Habitat II, the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development, Agenda 21, the Habitat Agenda, the Cairo Programme of Action on Population and Development and the Programme of action of the World Food Summit and their implementation".
It would address specific measures to promote the protection and regeneration of the environment, enhance food security in Africa, sustainable human settlements and issues arising from increased population growth. This Committee will meet once every two years. The Terms of Reference of this Committee are as follows:

(a) Undertake periodic review of the implementation of regional and global programmes of action such as Agenda 21, the Cairo Programme of action on Population and Development, the Habitat Agenda and Food Security;

(b) Consider and make recommendations on a multidisciplinary approach to the implementation of the relevant programmes of action;

(c) Promote the formulation of policies and measures for environment protection, food security, improved human settlements and integration of population variables in development planning;

(d) Provide advice to the Commission in the formulation of activities for supporting member States in the interrelated areas of food security, population, environment and human settlements.

II. Operational guidelines

The Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD) will:

(a) Undertake in-depth analysis of the burning issues on sustainable development particularly from the perspectives of ECA’s new approach of the nexus of population, agriculture, and environment;

(b) Make related policy recommendations on these issues for use by African policy makers and their counterparts in the development cooperation community;

(c) Review progress made in the implementation of the global plans of action mentioned above and recommend further actions based on the experiences of member States;

(d) Provide guidance to the work of ECA by reviewing the Division’s existing programme of work and examining proposed programmes and priorities;

(e) Monitor activities of member States in the above-mentioned area through national reports submitted to the ECA secretariat;

(f) Consider special sustainable development concerns of member States in all sectors and recommend measures to be undertaken in this regard.
III. Recommendations

Since CSD will work in collaboration with other relevant agencies, the Committee, at its first meeting recommended the following, to be considered by the Conference of Ministers:

1. Relationship of the Committee with the Commission on Sustainable Development of the United Nations

   (a) The African Committee on Sustainable Development would serve as Africa’s regional forum of experts that deals with all the fields mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development;

   (b) It would also serve as the regional advisory arm of the Commission on Sustainable Development on cross-sectoral activities in Africa as well as on proposed activities and follow-up actions in the implementation of international programmes;

   (c) The periodic reporting of the Committee on Sustainable Development follows the established procedures and practices of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development;

2. Relationship between the Committee on Sustainable Development and other institutions

   The Committee on Sustainable Development recognizes the existence of similar sustainable development committees in the other regional commissions falling under the Economic and Social Council and will liaise with them to enhance cooperation in the global field of sustainable development.

   The Committee on Sustainable Development also recognizes the need to collaborate with the other six technical committees under the auspices of ECA and will promote regular liaison and communication with these committees.

3. Modalities

   (a) Membership

   All Governments of member States of ECA shall be members of the Committee on Sustainable Development. ECA will serve as the secretariat of the Committee on Sustainable Development.

   (b) The Bureau

   The Bureau will be composed of:

   Five members representing the five subregions. The Bureau will comprise members nominated by each respective subregion and will be elected by the Committee at the first session of each biennial Committee on Sustainable Development meeting;
The five Bureau members shall elect, from among themselves, the Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur.

A Bureau was elected in accordance with this proposal and the Committee seeks retrospective approval for the following countries to serve the next Committee on Sustainable Development meeting. These are the United Republic of Tanzania as Chairperson, Côte d'Ivoire as first Vice-Chairman, South Africa as second Vice-Chairman, Egypt as third Vice-Chairman and Cameroon as Rapporteur.

(c) Duration

The Bureau shall serve for one regular session of the Committee. The Bureau will serve until the election of the new Bureau.

The Bureau, in consultation with the ECA secretariat, may hold intercessional meetings as deemed necessary.

(d) Venue of meetings

The meetings of the Committee on Sustainable Development may be held in any member State, upon invitation by the Government. In the absence of any offer to host the meeting, the meeting shall be held at ECA Headquarters.

(e) Funding

Funding of all Committee on Sustainable Development activities will be secured by the Food Security and Sustainable Development Division through the other existing structures of ECA. However, participation of members at subsequent meetings will be borne by member States. This arrangement does not preclude member countries from seeking financial assistance of donor country.

(f) Coordination at the national level

Each member State shall establish a National Committee on Sustainable Development as called for in the Agenda 21 and shall identify a national focal point.

(g) Monitoring and reporting

Each member State shall submit a progress report of its activities to the secretariat two months before the next meeting of the Committee. The reports will follow the ECA format.

(h) Observers

It is recommended that in view of the important role that the United Nations and other international bodies play in the process of sustainable development, they should be invited to attend meetings of the Committee on Sustainable Development as observers.

The Centre was requested to carry out the following studies:

(a) Draft a long-term forward-looking study identified as a priority area for the subregion;

(b) Seek additional funding for the seminar on irrigation in Egypt;

(c) The study on economic and social conditions should be more analytical and should comprise concrete proposals, particularly in the areas of agriculture and debt;

(d) The ECA study on debt in North Africa should be completed and a seminar organized on the subject in 1999.

4. First meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Subregional Development Centre for West Africa (doc. E/ECA/CM.24/CRP.4)

The following decisions were made during the meeting:

(a) Revive the institutional mechanisms for regular consultations with the intergovernmental organizations of the subregion;

(b) Establishment of an advisory committee on gender.

5. Fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Subregional Development Centre for Eastern Africa (doc. E/ECA/CM.24/CRP.5)

The decision was made to establish an advisory committee on gender.

6. Fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Subregional Development Centre for Southern Africa (doc. E/ECA/CM.24/CRP.7)

The meeting requested the Centre to strengthen coordination of its activities with those of the regional economic communities of the subregion.
7. **Second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Subregional Development Centre for West Africa**  
(doc. E/ECA/CM.24/CRP.6)

The Centre was requested to carry out the following studies, considered of great importance:

(a) Study on obstacles to the development of composite farinaceous foods;

(b) Study on the experiences of African countries with pilot programmes and projects focused on limiting the spread of diseases and on the use of various types of traditional medicine and their curative properties;

(c) Study on the performance of agricultural projects in West Africa;

In addition, nine recommendations were adopted, covering most areas of economic and social development, and in particular, economic performance; health; water; waste management; social development; employment; population; and refugees.

8. **First meeting of the Committee on Women and Development**  
(doc. E/ECA/CM.24/CRP.10)

The following decisions were made:

A. **Modalities of renewal of the membership of the Committee on Women and Development**

(a) Increasing the number of governmental representatives owing to their political weight and in view of the intergovernmental character of the Committee;

(b) Increasing the number of governmental members of the Committee to 19, distributed as follows:

- North Africa: 3
- Eastern Africa: 4
- West Africa: 5
- Central Africa: 3
- Southern Africa: 4

(c) Expanded participation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the proceedings of the Committee while maintaining the balance between the governmental and the non-governmental membership. In that connection, the Committee wished to see a higher level of organization on the part of women's groups and hoped that the databank would become a reality in order to maximize the effectiveness of those groups;

(d) The Ministerial Committee took the view that the designation of the Committee on Women and Development should not be affected by concerns about what was fashionable or otherwise. The term "women and development" would be retained because women were the focus of endeavours in this area, and the concept of "gender" subsumed the term "women";
(e) Experience should be among the criteria on the basis of which NGOs and women's groups were selected.

B. Update on the preparatory process for the sixth African Regional Conference on Women

(a) Introduction of a registration fee of $US 50 per participant (governmental) and $US 200 per institution;

(b) Commitment to seek the support of partners in order to increase the level of participation at the Conference;

(c) Harmonization of the preparation of national reports;

(d) The size of the delegations would be fixed at 20 persons for each country, the principle being that participation in the Conference need not be limited for financial or logistical reasons. ACW was requested to negotiate with ECA with a view to limiting expenditure in other aspects of the Conference, and if need be, removing some altogether, so that more countries may be able to participate in the Conference;

(e) Commitment to carry on advocacy efforts with United Nations agencies, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the African Development Bank (ADB), in order to engage their participation in the follow-up process of the Beijing Platform for Action.