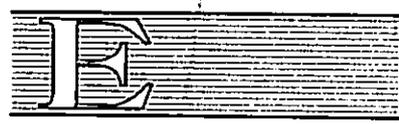


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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**SUREGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
(SRDC) FOR WEST AFRICA**

Participation in the meeting of member States and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) on the
rationalization of West African IGOs

And

Mission for programme harmonization with ECOWAS

Abuja, Nigeria, 8 - 12 June 1998

HIGHLIGHTS

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HIGHLIGHTS

MEETING OF MEMBER STATES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (IGOs) ON THE RATIONALIZATION OF WEST AFRICAN IGOs

Abuja, Nigeria, 8-10 June 1998
and

Mission for programme harmonization with ECOWAS

I: INTRODUCTION

1. A mission was undertaken by Mr. Henri G. Soumah Officer-in-Charge of SRDC/WA and Mr. Lucas T. Tandap, Programme Officer SRDC/WA to Abuja, Nigeria from 8-11 June 1998. The purpose of the mission was to participate in a meeting of member states and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) on the rationalization of West African IGOs and carry out programme harmonization with ECOWAS.

II: HIGHLIGHTS

A: Meeting of member States and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) on the rationalization of West African IGOs

2. The meeting of member states and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) on the rationalization of West African IGOs was attended by Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.

3. The following IGOs participated in the meeting, the West African Health Community (WAHC), African Groundnut Council, (AGC), West African Monetary Agency (WAMA), Permanent committee for Combating Drought in the Sahel (CILSS).

4. The subregional Development Centre (SRDC) for West Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa also participated.

(a) Organization of the meeting

5. The meeting was guided by a Bureau composed of:

Chairman:	Nigeria
1 st Rapporteur:	Ghana
2 nd Rapporteur:	Mali

6. The following agenda was adopted:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of the Bureau.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Discussion of the IDEP report on the rationalization of West African inter-governmental organizations (IGOs).
5. Formulation of proposals on the Plan of rationalization of West African IGOs.
6. Any other matters.
7. Adoption of report.
8. Closing ceremony.

(b) Highlights of the meeting

(b) Discussion of the IDEP report on the rationalization of West African inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) (Agenda item 4)

7. IDEP had prepared a report on this subject which made two categories of recommendations for the rationalisation exercise, namely, that there should be the rationalisation of economic communities and then the rationalisation of other IGOs. As regards the rationalization of economic communities, the report identified three organisations in West Africa with a mandate for promoting regional integration, in the strict sense of the term. These were ECOWAS, the Mano River Union (MRU) and UEMOA. The MRU had been moribund for a decade now mainly because of the civil wars in Liberia and then in Sierra Leone. The disappearance of MRU would serve the

cause of the rationalization exercise since there would only be ECOWAS and UEMOA to consider.

8. The report also proposed that their policies and instruments should be harmonized. In this regard, three areas should be focused upon in the first instance on the harmonization of their trade liberalization programmes, the provisions governing the compensations for loss of Customs revenue arising from trade liberalization and the establishment of a regional mechanism for monetary cooperation based on the ECOWAS monetary programme. The harmonization of the policies of the two communities should take due account of the actual achievements of either institution.

Rationalization of other IGOs

9. Concerning those IGOs which were not economic communities, the report suggests a strategy of rationalization by sector. The sectors proposed for consideration are the following:

(i) Agriculture and livestock:

10. The report recommended that WARDA should absorb the activities of African Groundnut Council (AGC), CEBV and all programmes relating to food and agriculture run by the Niger Basin Authority (NBA), Lake Chad Commission (LCBC) and the Authority of Liptako-Gourma (ALG).

(ii) Development of water resources:

11. It recommended that the OMVG should be fused with OMVS. The ALG should limit its mandate to the development of water resources and the NBA should become a specialised agency of ECOWAS.

(iii) Health:

12. The report suggested that the on-going fusion of the West African Health Community and OCCGE into the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) should be encouraged. In this regard, and taking into account the fact that the fusion had taken so long, the report urged for the implementation of the WAHO protocol should be accelerated.

(iv) Environmental and natural resources protection:

13. CILSS is recommended to be the parent organisation for regional cooperation in this area, and should cover all issues relating to the protection of nature and the environment. In addition to its own programmes, CILSS should take over the environmental protection activities of ALG and NBA. It is further suggested that OCLALAV should become an ECOWAS specialized institution.

(v) Money and finance:

14. The report also suggested that BCEAO should eventually become the Central bank of all West African countries, responsible for the single monetary zone. It proposes that the ECOWAS Fund should be transformed into a West African investment bank. BOAD, FAGACE and the Entente Fund, it is recommended, are to be fused and transformed eventually into a West African development bank.

(vi) Restructuring and strengthening of ECOWAS:

15. The report proposed the restructuring of ECOWAS Secretariat based on the modification of the 1990 organizational chart of the Executive Secretariat. The rationalization exercise should be completed by December 2007. The new departments would be made up as indicated below.

- (i) The present External and Military Affairs to become Politics and Security, under the supervision of the third Deputy Executive Secretary, with two departments for: Political Affairs and Regional Security and Immigration. The report suggest that if this proposal is not acceptable and the two existing Deputy Executive Secretary posts were to be retained, the department for political affairs and regional security should be under the Executive Secretary; then it suggested further that the immigration section should be returned to the Trade Department under the supervision of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Economic Affairs and Community Programmes.

- (ii) Administration and Finance should be reformed into four departments: Administration, Finance, Legal Affairs, and Information. The title appearing in the 1990 organizational chart as Economic Affairs should become Economic Affairs and Community Programmes with seven departments, namely: Economic Research; Trade, Customs, Statistics, Money and Finance; Transport, Communications and Tourism; Food and Agriculture; Natural Resources and Environment; Industry, Energy, Science and Technology; and Human Resources, Social and Cultural Affairs and Health. The Community Computer Centre is to be attached to the organizational chart.

- (iii) A special unit within the Research Department to be responsible for IGO matters, but answering directly to the Deputy Executive Secretary for Economic Affairs and Community Programmes.

(b) Formulation of proposals on the Plan of rationalization of West African IGOs (Agenda item 5)

16. The participants reiterated their commitment to the rationalization of the IGOs with a view to accelerating the development process in the sub-region. The meeting also

noted that the study did not take into account the recommendations of the meeting held in Accra in September 1 994 relating to the financial implications of the rationalization exercise, and more particularly the assets and liabilities of the IGOs and the real benefits Member States could derive from the rationalization process.

17. The rationalization exercise should take into account the contribution of donor countries to the financing of activities undertaken by IGOs and the contribution of the IGOs to the pursuit of development objectives in the sub-region. Everything should be done to ensure that rationalization does not result in a reduction in the volume of external financing. The meeting took note of the revitalization of MRU by a recent meeting of the Heads of State of the the three countries concerned and the exercise would take this into account. These observations not withstanding, the meeting agreed that the two-phase strategy presented by IDEP for rationalizing the other IGOs is acceptable, the two phases being:

- i) harmonization of pollicies and instruments of the three economic communities (ECOWAS, MRU, and UEMOA); and
- ii) sectoral rationalization of IGOs which are not economic communities.

18. The meeting took note of the information by the Executive Secretariat that ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS had decided to harmonize their work programmes. To this end, there had been a first meeting between the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, the Chairman of the UEMOA Commission, and a representative of CILSS which took place in Abuja on 10 February 1998. The meeting was also informed of a study by ECA on the restructuring of the ECOWAS Secretariat which was still in draft for comments before its finalization.

B. Programme coordination with ECOWAS

19. The second aspect of the mission was that of programme coordination and harmonization with ECOWAS. In this light, discussions were held with the Principal

Officer, Research Division who was acting for the Deputy Executive Secretary for Economic Affairs as well as with the Chief of the Statistics Division. This was a follow-up to earlier initiatives, which had not been as successful as expected due to the lack of the identification of concrete areas of collaboration.

20. The attention of ECOWAS was drawn to the Executive Secretary's circular of 13 January 1998 with regards to the links with regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations, calling for close coordination between them and each SRDC in programme formulation and implementation so as to avoid competition or duplication in programme delivery. Areas covered included programme harmonization, collaboration and joint programming.

21. The relevant framework of the SRDC's programme of work was that which emphasized on close collaboration on key development issues with the regional economic communities and IGOs. The other was in the delivery of advisory services on issues related to macroeconomic coordination and harmonization in the areas of:

- (a) regional integration of production and economic infrastructure;
- (b) food security;
- (c) the environment;
- (d) population;
- (e) gender;
- (f) rural and urban development
- (g) social welfare; and
- (h) governance, peace building, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

22. Another area of collaboration, which was earlier requested by the SRDC, was in publication on the economic and social conditions of West Africa. The idea was to have the participation of ECOWAS in this publication. Modalities would be worked out for the product to be a joint output for the two organisations. In this light, an option was for the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of the SRDC would review the draft,

which would then be finalized for submission to the ECOWAS council of Ministers and its Summit.

23. ECOWAS recognized the importance of the exercise not only for the implementation of subregional programmes but also in participating in global commitments of relevance to the subregion. Important among these global actions were the Tokyo Convention on Africa and the United Nations Initiative for Africa. The Community also reminded the SRDC of an earlier request it had made to ECA for assistance in collaborative programme development in five areas and action was still awaited. These five programme areas included:

- (a) economic development and finance;
- (b) environment and desertification;
- (c) physical infrastructure, transport and communications;
- (d) human resources development; and
- (e) capacity building.

24. An area, which was initiated by the SRDC and had received the ECOWAS Secretariat's immediate attention, was that of harmonizing the generation of economic and social data in member States. ECOWAS had a comparative advantage in terms of the logistics in that the Community maintained paid focal point that completed their questionnaires at the national level. The Community had made a critical review of the SRDC's questionnaire relating to the social and economic conditions of the subregion and identified areas which were covered by its data collecting system, questions to which answers had to be derived from other data and those which were not covered by the Community. The need was expressed for a harmonization meeting to reexamine the situation.

III: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A: Rationalization of West African IGOs

(i) General conclusions

25. There was no question as to the need for the rationalization of West African IGOs. However, the orientation of study was not based on a systems approach and the goal that each IGO was supposed to achieve. From this commonalties would easily be identified as the basis for an objective rationalization into an operational West African IGO system. Furthermore, an attempt would have been made at an analysis of the cost-benefits of rationalization. The absence of this approach made it difficult for the IGOs themselves to objectively decide on the streamlining of themselves. Emphasis was inadvertently directed towards staff and other considerations rather than the work programmes.

(ii) The role of the SRDC

26. Discussion pointed to the fact that, in the rationalization process, particularly as this would entail decisions on streamlining activities and responsibilities, a neutral body would be needed for arbitrate at consultative meetings. The Joint ECA/OAU/ADB Secretariat was the consensus with the understanding that the SRDC would be the focal point since it is based in the subregion and interacts on a regular basis with the IGOs.

B: Programme harmonization with ECOWAS

27. This being a long standing issues and in view of the strengthening of ECA's subregional presence, serious consideration should be given to raising the level of collaboration to include joint delivery of actions and outputs to member States. It was clear from the discussion with ECOWAS that the complementarity of the two organizations was now recognized more than ever before. It was now left for the modalities of concrete collaboration to be worked out.

28. There was consensus in the need for the two organizations to have complementary programme activities since they were covering the same number of member States. To formalize this collaboration, there was the idea of a memorandum of understanding between the SRDC and ECOWAS in which the areas of collaboration would be detailed.

C: Recommendations

(a) The role of the SRDC in the rationalization exercise

29. The SRDC should be seen to play the guiding role in the exercise since the need for an arbiter was expressed at the meeting and the Centre was specifically mentioned. In this light, it should be prepared to organize, with the collaboration of ECOWAS, the necessary meetings when requested as well.

(b) Programme coordination and harmonization with ECOWAS

30. A consultation meeting should be convened by the SRDC to work out the modalities of collaboration, not only in the five areas earlier identified by ECOWAS to ECA, namely:

- (a) economic development and finance;
- (b) environment and desertification;
- (c) physical infrastructure, transport and communications;
- (d) human resources development; and
- (e) capacity building.

31. Two more areas, the reporting on the economic and social conditions of the sub region and information exchange and networking should be added. A draft memorandum of understanding between the two organizations which would detail out the areas would be part of the agenda of the consultative meeting referred to in paragraph 30.

(c) The role of ECA

32. In view of the fact that the exercise for the rationalization of West African IGOs is in line with the new strategic directions of the Commission, ECA should increase its resources support to the SRDC to enable it cope with the increasing requests from the IGO community for assistance in programme development and institutional reorganization.