

ECA/DMD/ESPD/CHDCS/99/6

25 August 1999

**REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

ADDIS ABABA, 21-23 JUNE 1999



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INTRODUCTION

1. The First Meeting of the ECA Committee on Human Development and Civil Society established in 1997 by the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development, was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 21 to 23 June 1999. This Committee is both a technical body and a legislative organ drawn from governments, private sector and civil society groups and provides a forum for deepening policy dialogue and interface among the three sectors. The three day meeting, which was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was held under the theme "**Popular Participation of Sustainable Social and Human Development**".

2. The objectives of the 1st meeting were as follows:

- ◆ Review recommendations from the consultative meeting between African Civil Society Organizations and the ECA on the operation and management of the African Centre for Civil Society (ACCS) with a view to endorsing them,
- ◆ Review progress made in the follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and recommend further actions based on the outcomes of the just concluded sub-regional follow-up conferences,
- ◆ Provide guidance on the working relationships and modalities for cooperation between ECA and the Committee,
- ◆ Review the proposed work programme of the Development Management Division with a view to providing guidance on implementation modalities to be adopted,
- ◆ Undertake analysis of best practices, emerging trends and approaches to facilitate partnership between the public and private sectors in the development process.

A. PARTICIPATION

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member States of the Commission: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

4. The following civil society organizations and private sector representatives also participated in the meeting: All Africa Conference of Churches (AACH), Association of

African Trade Promotion Organization (AATPO), The African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD), African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (AFWE), Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), Forum of African Voluntary Development Organization (FAVDO), African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET), Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA), Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Inter Press Service (IPS), Development Innovations and Networks (IRED), Mwelekeo Wa NGO (MWENGO), National Trading Pvt. Ltd., Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), The Gambia Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO), Third World Network, Water International Centre, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF).

B. AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Appointment of an interim Bureau

5. The Committee appointed an interim bureau of the following officers to direct the proceedings of the meeting:

Chairperson:	H.E. Masuhla Leteka, Ambassador of Lesotho to Ethiopia
Vice-Chairperson:	Dr. Burang Goree-Ndiaye, TANGO
Rapporteur:	Ms. Lucia Quachey, Secretary-General, AFWE

Agenda

6. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Organizational Matters.
 - (a) Election of Bureau.
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
3. **Session 1:** The Copenhagen Declaration: Issues from the Subregional Follow-up Conferences
4. **Session 2:** Capacity Building of Indigenous African CSOs: Establishment of the African Centre for Civil society (ACCS)
5. **Session 3:** Activities of ECA on Human and Social Development as well as Civil Society: Review of 1997-1998 programme and prospects for 1999-2001

6. **Session 4:** Any Other Business
7. **Session 5:** Adoption of the Report
8. **Session 6:** Closure of the Meeting

Special Event: Guest Lecture on: Promoting Public/Private Partnership for Enhanced and Sustained Economic, Social and Human Development in Africa

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening address

7. In her opening statement, Ms. Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, welcomed participants to Addis Ababa and to the First Meeting of the ECA Committee on Human Development and Civil Society. She recalled that the Committee was established by the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development at its 1997 session with the mandate of strengthening coherence of the Work Programme of the ECA. The Committee will also create a forum to enhance policy dialogue in the member States in the area of sustainable human development and popular participation. In this regard she noted the timeliness of the meeting to bring together representatives from the government, the private sector and civil society to discuss on how to promote human and social development.

8. The Deputy Executive Secretary pointed out that the theme of the meeting was intended to raise fundamental issues and challenges that Africa faces today and needed immediate attention. Critical areas included: enhancement of social integration, income generating, employment creation, partnerships among public/private sectors and civil society, raising competitiveness, good stewardship of environmental resources, mobilization of resources for development financing and building capacity for civil society organizations. She stressed that well designed policies and programmes in these areas could no doubt help to increase African countries efforts to promote sustainable social and human development.

9. She further underlined the need to focus on poverty reduction, given the reasons articulated in ECA's latest Economic Report on Africa (ERA) 1999. The Report – **The Challenge of Poverty Reduction and Sustainability** shows that: "Some 80 per cent of Low human Development countries – i.e. countries with high population growth rates, low income, low literacy, and low life expectancy – are in Africa. Four of every 10 Africans live in conditions of absolute poverty, and recent evidence suggests that poverty on the continent is increasing". She strongly urged therefore, that poverty eradication be given high priority in all development endeavors in Africa and, indeed, it should be seen as the overarching objective. In to achieving this objective, there was a

need to integrate the services of the public sector, the private sector and the civil society organizations through creation of solid partnerships in development.

10. African governments had long realized the role of the private sector as a vehicle for growth. Equally emerging in prominence was the role of civil society organizations in participatory development. It was in recognition of the role of civil society organizations that the ECA facilitated the establishment of the African Centre for Civil Society (ACCS) , as an institutional link between ECA and civil society organizations on the one hand and CSOs on the other. The Centre was intended to become a key actor in developing and strengthening the contribution of African civil society community to development and governance as well as facilitating its interface with governments, private sector, international organizations and the United Nations system.

The Copenhagen Declaration: issues from the sub-regional follow-up conferences: (Session 1)

Overview

11. The Committee considered document entitled "The Copenhagen Declaration: issues from the sub-regional follow-up conferences" (document ECA/DMD/ESPD/CHDCS/99/2).

12. Under this item, a brief background on actions leading to the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) and the recently held sub-regional follow-up conferences was provided. The WSSD itself had been prompted by the unprecedented deterioration in social development around the world in general, and in Third World countries, in particular. African countries in response to this UN initiative called on the ECA and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to work out an African Common Position, which was subsequently presented at the WSSD. The major outcome of the WSSD was the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action a blueprint of policies, programmes and strategies required to address the issues of inequities and extreme poverty.

13. Four years after the WSSD, the Commission convened two sub-regional conferences as follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD). These meetings were held on 15-17 March, and 23-25 March 1999, in Nairobi, Kenya and Marrakech, Morocco, respectively, to monitor progress in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Summit level in 1995. Given the short interval since the Summit, the primary objective of the conferences was to take stock of what has happened in the four key areas of the WSSD: namely poverty reduction; employment creation, social integration and good governance.

14. The sub-regional conferences documented a number of areas in which countries had made progress. These, among others, included programmes for addressing poverty, which in some countries, resulted in the establishment of National Poverty Eradication Programmes and the provision of Social Safety Nets.

15. Regarding the issue of social integration, in particular health and education, various countries have reported tangible progress. For instance, absolute enrolment rates at the primary level had increased while gender gaps had somewhat narrowed. A number of countries reported increased budgetary allocations to education and health sectors. It was important to note that a number of countries placed special attention to addressing the issues of HIV/AIDS pandemic, high maternal mortality rates and major childhood diseases, responsible for high infant and under-five mortality rates (U5MR), among others. It was equally encouraging to note significant progress in a number of the above outlined areas, with some countries achieving almost universal access regarding the provision of basic health services.

16. Countries reported progress on actions geared towards expanding employment opportunities, protecting and creating jobs, especially for the vulnerable groups, and improving the overall environment for employment creation. For example, legal frameworks were being reviewed, with the aim of providing an enabling environment for the promotion of the private sector and self-employment in the informal sector. Many countries were in the process of formulating or putting in place national employment policies with the assistance of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Programmes aimed at increasing the productivity of small-holders in the agricultural sector have also been implemented in a number of countries.

17. Good governance was recognized as one of the fundamentals of socio-political and economic development. All countries present reported significant progress in improving governance structures and modalities, linking it with the imperative of working towards peace, stability and security. To that effect, several initiatives aimed at fostering legitimacy, transparency, participation and accountability were reported as being undertaken by all the countries of the sub-regions. Democracy, human rights and the necessity of establishing adequate institutions are recognized as essential element for good governance.

18. These progress notwithstanding, poverty remains a daunting challenge. In this respect, the need to actively pursue poverty reduction was underscored so also was the need for governments to demonstrate their commitments to the implementation of poverty reduction programmes. Achievements of poverty reduction goals were severely constrained by several factors, most notably: inadequacy of public allocations for poverty eradication programmes and external debt burden. Other constraints equally effecting the attainment of poverty goals included: over-dependence on rain-fed agriculture; inadequacy of economic and social infrastructure in the rural areas; insufficient human capacity for policy formulation, implementation and evaluation; impact of HIV/AIDS and incessant and protracted social instability and civil strife in several countries of the subregions.

19. A major challenge in this regard was the designing of comprehensive, integrated and coherent strategies for dealing with the four identified priority areas. In this

respect, a number of strategies aimed at helping countries of the region overcome constraints and improve implementation of their commitments in the identified priority areas were proposed. Some of the strategies included among others, promotion of the informal sector, and improvements/expansion of the infrastructural support as important ingredients for addressing poverty. Strategies to expand employment opportunities and productivity include government taking a much more pro-active role in providing direction around which civil society and private sector can contribute. The catalytic role of the international community in this area was also outlined. Regarding social integration, strategies proposed included, the formulation of adequate policy response, improved education and health care financing arrangements, increasing access to primary and basic education and making greater use of non-formal and distance education. Good governance, in particular, popular participation strategies should focus on the creation of institutional frameworks and capacities to guarantee accountability and transparency, promote the development of civic of associations and establish cooperative partnership.

General discussions

20. Following presentations by the Secretariat, the following discussions ensued. The Committee underscored the relevance of the Copenhagen Declaration as a broad framework of the global agenda concerning social development issues. African countries, therefore, needed to narrow-down this global agenda to country specifics and realities.

21. The Committee noted with appreciation, the consensus on most issues relating to the Copenhagen Declaration. However, the Committee expressed concerns over the extent to which the lack of Africa's autonomous economic thinking added to Africa's marginalized position in the World Summit for Social Development. There seemed to be a lack of continuity on African intellectual position and consensus. The many African framework for intellectual thinking seem to have been forgotten for example, the Lagos Plan of Action, African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme (AAFSAP). These should continue to provide appropriate guidance in defining the role and involvement of the Civil Society; NGOs and Community-based organizations in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

22. Debt was singled out as one of the most challenging issues affecting the follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration and as such, the issue of debt must be seen and addressed as part of the poverty reduction solution. The intellectual and leadership role of ECA was emphasized particularly as a clearinghouse. While individual African countries face creditors' cartels, the most useful role of ECA would be to serve as a catalyst in defending the interest of the highly indebted African countries and helping them form a debt cartel. This is very much in line with the Pretoria and Lusaka declarations on debt. On the issue of the campaign for debt relief, the Committee noted the need for common position for African countries that would provide a framework for collective negotiations for debt relief. There was need for research by collective groups to identify the types of loans that should be given priority for debt relief.

23. Foreign direct investment and official development assistance including all the debt relief mechanisms will not help African countries very much given their current structural form and diverse policy position and orientation. Improving the collective bargaining position of African countries, enhancing Africa's collective effort with regard to the policy environment and increasing capacity to deal with the world at large are issues African countries should come to terms with. The capacity to constructively engage the international community is often undermined because Africa never has a common position as such many policy recommendations are on the table and remained to be finalized and implemented. Alternately, African countries must move away from over reliance on external resource for financing development. This in most cases results in completely overlooking the potential of domestic sources. In this respect, the Committee reaffirmed the need to focus on domestic resource mobilization for financing development in Africa and in particular, urged for greater participation of the private sector in the agricultural sector.

24. The Committee also noted the general tendency to lump Africa problems into one basket resulting to solution, which were too general to be effective. There was, therefore, the need to develop country- and region-specific actions and solutions to problems. The Committee called on the ECA to play a more pro-active role in articulating Africa's position and in assisting member States in the course of negotiating with the international community.

25. The Committee stressed on the importance of African countries collectively developing a policy environment to enhance their trading capacities in order not to be further marginalized, especially in the context of the rapid pace of liberalization and globalization. In this connection, the Committee noted the need to enhance Africa's capacity to negotiate, and combat external discriminatory policies, and effect changes in international trade rules that impact negatively on Africa's international trading position.

26. Regarding recommendations contained in the paper on Copenhagen Declaration, the Committee expressed concerns about the generality of the recommendations, noting that they were not sufficiently grounded to solve practical problems. There was concern for the need to break down the issues into their specifics (i.e. poverty reduction, issues of privatization which in some cases result unemployment, economic reform programmes that tend to have negative social dimensions and health and education issues). It was felt for example, that in the case of education, to assess achievements required classification of education itself by type and the provision of guidelines for relevant education.

27. The secretariat noted the Committee's concerns regarding the tendency of not recognizing and building on past strategic African thinking in seeking solutions to future concerns. Mention was made of the following African blue prints (Lagos Plan of Action and the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment), that should continue to serve as important reference in defining future policies and strategies. However, it

was pointed out that the document on Africa's position, which was ECA/OAU's input to the World Social Summit for Social Development, drew on the strategic documents referred to above. In that respect, the documents were not, in principle, sidelined.

Strategies for Improving the Implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action for Social Development (Working Group Reports)

28. Two working groups were constituted to consider the strategies proposed in the document ECA/DMD/ESPD/CHDCS/99/2 entitled the "Copenhagen Declaration: Issues from the Sub-regional Follow-up Conferences" with regards to addressing poverty, achieving social integration, expanding employment opportunities and productivity and promoting good governance in particular popular participation. The two working groups reviewed the strategies proposed in terms of their adequacy, defining the modalities for enhancing action in the two priority areas, defining the role of civil society including the private sector, and defining the specific contribution of the international community, especially the ECA.

29. Concerning poverty alleviation strategies, the groups began by reflecting on the definition of poverty and decided that such a definition should be pragmatic, reflective of the concrete conditions of living including food, clothing, sanitation, shelter, etc. In order to avoid generalities and vagueness, participants agreed that we ascertain the extent of poverty and identify its causes. Some of these causes included mismanagement and misappropriation of countries' resources, corruption, conflicts, effects, Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and decline in commodity prices, etc. Given the specificity and diverse nature of countries, there was need to analyze the causes of those programmes designed to fight poverty on country by country basis.

30. Noting that African countries have committed themselves to addressing poverty through the promotion of the informal sector and improvement/expansion of infrastructure support, these were relevant but not sufficient strategies. In addition to these, it was also important to approach the alleviation of poverty by including the gender dimension as well as taking into account the debt problems faced by countries. The groups recounted a number of successful cases in poverty reduction strategies from which lessons and experiences could be drawn. These including those of Tunisia, which had instituted a Solidarity Fund, Burkina Faso with the provision of equipment and training centres for women, and the Gambia's poverty alleviation programme which focused on household food security, enhancing sustainable livelihood and the development and provision of infrastructure in education and health. The groups noted the limitation placed on poverty reduction strategies and programmes due to the persistent gender inequality in access to and control of assets (land, labour, and capital including credit).

31. With regards to the role of civil society including the private sector in strategies addressing poverty, the groups acknowledged the importance of NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) in implementing poverty reduction strategies at all levels (formulation, implementation, evaluation, monitoring and follow-up). It was agreed that the capacities of CSOs and the private sector to participate effectively in poverty

alleviation strategies should be strengthened. Community management of activities must be a fundamental characteristic in the process of designing and implementing appropriate poverty reduction programmes.

32. The groups called upon the international community to support countries in their poverty reduction efforts through the following actions:

- (i) developing techniques of debt swaps for poverty reduction programmes;
- (ii) mobilizing and increasing resources and/or developing a Marshall Plan for the countries experiencing conflicts, emergency and refugee problems;
- (iii) designing SAPs and other development policies that protect the poor and vulnerable groups; and,
- (iv) utilizing resources from donor and aid organizations including foundations to support specific concerns such as gender, the environment, infrastructure development, especially the rural sector.

33. While the groups recommended ECA's increased involvement on the ground in the area of poverty reduction, they recognized the strength of the ECA, which is at the level of advocacy rather than execution. The ECA was called upon to direct its attention to strengthening national capacity for policy analysis and to help countries to design and implement relevant economic development programmes. It was suggested that the ECA act as a think-tank and clearing-house in the area of poverty and debt management.

34. With respect to the strategies for achieving social integration recommended in the document, namely:

- (i) develop policies, relevant educational statistics and indicators;
- (ii) improve education and health care financing arrangements;
- (iii) increase access to primary and basic education; and,
- (iv) make greater use of non-formal education, these were considered necessary but not sufficient to adequately address the problems.

35. With regards to developing policies, relevant education statistics and indicators, the groups emphasized that ECA does not have to invent the wheel again, but to make use of existing data, statistics and other indicators provided by sister agencies of the UN and other institutions. What was needed is to collect and analyze the same data across countries and use as much as possible gender desegregated data in education and other social sectors. Data issues, including the invisibility of women's work limits analysis and understanding of gender/poverty interactions.

36. On the issue of improving education and health care financing arrangements, a number of additions were made. These included:

- (i) cost sharing should be considered only after a thorough examination of other options for financing social services, including tax reform, budget restructuring and expenditure targeting;
- (ii) methods to contain the costs of social services must be considered prior to the introduction of financing arrangements that may hurt the very poor;
- (iii) revenue obtained for the provision of social services must be retained at the local level; and,
- (iv) financial arrangements must be accompanied by special measures that protect the poor.

37. Increasing access to primary and basic education, the groups recommended that compulsory and free primary education be considered as an important strategy towards achieving social integration. A cost-reducing strategy should include a multiple shift system in using the facilities of school systems. The CSOs and the private sector should be encouraged to invest in the education and health sector through the provision of tax holidays and other incentives. Cost sharing and other cost-recovery methods should be considered as a stepping stone towards other financing arrangements and should not substitute for existing budgetary allocations from the public sector. These should, in fact increase during periods when SAPs are being implemented.

38. The groups felt that the use of non-formal and distance education was relevant in so far as there is a link between these and the formal system of education in terms of accreditation, curricula, certification and overall acceptance. While it may be cost-effective to use technology in distance education programmes to resolve the problems of lack of teaching staff, the existence of some basic infrastructures were a pre-requisite, e.g. the availability of electricity, radio and TVs in poor urban slums and rural areas. However, the application of new information technologies should be explored and this area is where the ECA should pursue.

39. Concerning the role of the international community in these areas, particular emphasis was placed on critical contributions that could be played in terms of mobilizing additional resources on a sustainable basis for the social sector. Both the national and international community requires effective partnerships and coordination of actions.

40. With respect to the expansion of employment opportunities and productivity, the groups underscored the central role of government. But just as this role can not be based on the past models of the overwhelming dominance of economic activity by the state, so also can it not be based on the opposite extreme model of the indiscriminate role of the market. Government's primary role is to provide direction through the

development of sound and consistent policies and provide infrastructure around which local and foreign investors can create employment and CSOs encouraged to contribute to national development. A clearly defined vision and a strategy of development derived from the realities must inform such programmes and agendas and imperatives of African economies as currently structured. Based on these, countries will seek the appropriate mix of public sector and market based interventions aimed at strengthening and expanding domestic productive capacity, as well as (domestic) national and regional markets through the mobilization of domestic resources. The strengthening of domestic capital, and better integration of the various sectors of the domestic economy; with foreign sources and foreign oriented interventions, in particular foreign investment and export primarily organized to strengthen the domestic process should form part of the strategic response of countries. The groups strongly advocated for the provision of support to domestic manufacturers against the negative consequences of indiscriminate liberalization but not at the expense of marginalizing competitiveness. Privatization is here with us and should be effectively applied and managed to allow the nurturing of domestic capital accumulation, including private capital accumulation and guard against huge negative impact on human development indices. Strategies should also emphasize the role of small and medium scale industries as locum for employment generation.

41. The groups endorsed the proposals made with respect to the role of the international community in the expansion of employment opportunities and productivity. In addition, the groups underscored the need to situate their role within the context of the international trade regime of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The advanced industrial countries would also be required to uphold their commitments of the special and differential rights of African countries as provided for in the Uruguay Round Agreement. In this respect, the international community should consider the following:

- (i) using their influence to stop the attempts to blackmail African and other developing countries into giving further concessions in exchange of the North meeting their agreed obligations, especially in the so-called new issues like Multilateral Agreements on Investment (MAI);
- (ii) review certain aspects of the Uruguay Round Agreements which pose risks to the basic needs of African economies, example the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) agreement and the way in which it is being used by biotech companies to deprive farmers from having access to seeds; and,
- (iii) for the ECA jointly with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) lead and support African countries to negotiate international trade rules more in tune to their needs with special emphasis on the Patent Law.

42. The ECA as part of the international community should jointly with the OAU and the African Development Bank (ADB) take the lead in promoting a regional African thinking from this thinking, regional framework and programmes can be developed for the expansion of employment opportunities and productivity.

43. With respect to training and human development, while the groups accepted the proposal to make these relevant to labour market requirements and competitiveness, the need for consistency to the identified developmental strategies of African countries should not be overlooked. The groups emphasized the continued relevance of public sector involvement and support for research and development institutions, especially those targeted to the industrial needs of small/medium scale sector operators. A market based approach to research and development (R&D) which can only end up advantaging the large foreign corporations at the expense of the weaker domestic private sector should be minimized.
44. Concerning the brain drain in Africa, the groups felt that the factors contributing to this phenomenon are a complex of issues, which would require an integrated approach to bring about a lasting solution. To capture this complexity, brain drain should be addressed as an integral aspect of the overall economic and social development processes. Furthermore, this issue must be dealt within the context of sustainable human resources development to include related issues of improved productivity, efficient utilization of human resources, innovative incentive programmes and broader development concerns.
45. On the issue of governance the groups having discussed at length the concerns, proposed a number of measures to improve good governance, especially with regard to popular participation. This included among others, having to address the core question of governance within the framework of institutionalization of the process of governance, especially with regard to the question of the accountability and transparency. At one level this can be activated through different context, and specific mechanism of interaction between civil society group and governments, such as policy discussion fora, organized over such issues as debt reduction, etc. A core institution through which this could be done is national parliament. This must be strengthened to exercise supervision over governmental activity, like the conclusion of loans. A contribution to this must be through the activation of parliamentary committees through which civil society can input into the parliamentary process. In this context, attention must be paid to addressing the negative trend of the gradual transfer of decision making from national governments and centres of decision making to international arena and institutions. For example undue influence of the International Financial Institutions- IFIs (the World Bank, and the IMF) over national economic policy especially national budgets through such instruments as the PFP, as well as the increasing cession of developmental strategy to the WTO. Necessary to strengthening of parliaments is also an informed civil society, through civic education. (NB this must be distinguished from the propagandistic rituals used by some African governments to elicit praise singing from sections of the population). A strong and free media is central to freedom of expression, so also is an informed civil society for ensuring governmental accountability. The groups emphasized the importance of the Arusha Declaration on Popular Participation as a relevant guide for the process of implementing popular participation.
46. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee focussed on the specific roles of the CSOs at all levels and proposed a number of strategic measures to enhance popular

participation. These included among others the following: (a) Mobilizing constituencies- CSOs should engage in mass mobilization programmes around particular issues/concerns and to provide relevant information for informing their actions. (b) Addressing information- CSOs should address their information needs from all aspects, covering gathering, analyzing, documenting and disseminating. This should be done around the various interests and concerns of CSOs. (c) Literacy and its effect on the work of CSOs- In addressing this problem, CSOs should provide literacy support in relation to specific issues in order to create awareness/understanding and an appreciation of issues affecting civil society at large. (d) Enhancing advocacy- CSOs should play an advocacy role, particularly in building linkages between the system and the people, especially around specific issues and events. (e) Relationship with the media- CSOs should develop working relationships with the media for promoting the interest and for the articulation of concerns of the civil society community.

Capacity Building of Indigenous African CSOs: Establishment of the African Centre for Civil Society (ACCS) (Session 2)

47. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered document entitled "Establishment of the African Centre for Civil Society" (ECA/DMD/ESPD/CHDCS/99/3).

48. A brief outline of the process leading to the decision to establish the African Centre for Civil Society was provided. The decision to establish the Centre was an outcome of a series of consultation with civil society organizations. Various opportunities were explored to consult with a representative sample of civil society organizations over the establishment of the Centre including soliciting inputs on its conceptualization.

49. The purpose, function, organizational structure and management of the Centre were highlighted. The objectives of ACSS outlined included:

- ◆ Strengthening interactions and co-operation between democratic governments and their citizens through civic organizations to work to enhance the legitimacy and acceptance of civil society and create an enabling and facilitating environment for their work;
- ◆ Strengthening the organizational, management, and programme capacity of indigenous civil society organizations so as to enhance their contribution to sustaining accountability, transparency, suppression of corruption and socio-economic development, the democratization of society, and the evolution of peaceful social order;
- ◆ Helping civil society play an active role in peace building and democratic development; and,

- ◆ Providing a permanent institutional mechanism for linking CSOs with ECA, the African academic community and other United Nations agencies.

50. The report also outlined the programme of work for 2000-2001 for ACCS. Each programme had its objectives specified, its content elaborated and its outputs enumerated. The programmes covered: Enhancing the legitimacy and the capabilities of the civil society Community in Africa; enhancing CSO capacity and effectiveness; enhancing dialogue and collaboration between CSO-State international communities; CSO information and outreach; CSO and conflict resolution and mainstreaming CSOs in ECA programmes. The report also dwelt at length on the governance structure, financing and partnership strategies.

51. At the end of the presentation of the document, participants made comments and observations on a number of issues and raised a number of questions. Among the comments made, concerns expressed and queries raised were the following:

- ◆ As the Council of Ministers had resolved to set up the Centre, the job of the human development and civil society committee would be to pass a resolution to institute the Centre.
- ◆ There was some discrepancy between the report of the ECA-CSO consultation on the operation and management of the African Civil Society of April 1999 and the document on the establishment of the African Centre for Civil Society. For instance, the agreement reached to collapse the six programme areas into two, which is reflected in the report, does not appear in the other document, which the participants are being called upon to endorse.
- ◆ While the document presented to the Committee for endorsement should have reflected the consensus reached during the April meeting, some elements were missing out as in the case of the governance structure. If recommendations made at that meeting are not taken into account, what then is the purpose of having consultative meetings?
- ◆ Because of shortage of time during the consultative meeting, the understanding was that the CSO-ECA group would elaborate the programmes eventually. However, by the look of things now, ECA seems to have elaborated the programme in a way that undermines the collective understanding at the meeting, thereby depreciating the centrality of civil society ownership. It is dangerous to endorse the organization without knowing what happened. Does the committee's authority to endorse the structure also presuppose its authority to reject?

- ◆ Those that were not represented in the previous consultation meeting are confused by the arguments on the floor and time is being wasted. ECA should explain if there are omissions in the report or whether the comments and concerns expressed are irrelevant. It is important that this is clarified and that we proceed with the rest of the agenda instead of wasting more time.
- ◆ It was unfortunate that the selection of the members of the steering committee was gender-blind. Even though there are many regional women associations in Africa, they do not seem to feature in the proposed governance structure. Although there might have been reasons at the time for not selecting women organizations at the time, it should be acknowledged that it would be a mistake to be gender-blind in this respect and the necessary measures should be taken to rectify the situation. One need not wait for two years to correct this serious oversight. It was proposed that the governing body of the Centre be reconstituted. The Chairman took note of the oversight and agreed to look into it.
- ◆ It was reported that the Steering committee would have programme responsibilities, while the Executive Secretary would be accountable for financial propriety of the centre. This reality has necessitated subordinating the executive committee to dual supervision by the steering committee and the Executive Secretary. However, some participants expressed reservation on that proposed arrangement as it appeared like the steering committee was being subordinated to the Executive Secretary.

52. The ECA representative provided clarifications to allay some of the fears and concerns expressed by the participants and was finally resolved to pass the document submitted for discussion and sort out some of the controversies and details at a later date. He explained that the six areas of work fall within the two broad general programme areas agreed during the ECA-CSO consultation. The six programme activities are only elaboration of the two broad programme areas. In terms of governance structure, it was felt that it was important to highlight the financial responsibility of the ECA without the understanding that this in no way changed the governance structures agreed at the ECA-CSO consultation.

53. The Committee on Human Development and Civil Society, in its capacity as the legislative organ of UNECA, was then required to authorize the legal establishment of ACCS. This action was taken through a resolution, which was later presented to the Committee for its adoption.

Activities of ECA on Human and Social Development as well as Civil Society: Review of 1997-1998 programme and Prospects for 1999-2001 (Session 3)

54. ECA presented document ECA/DMD.ESPD.CHDCS/99/4 entitled "Report on Activities of ECA on Human and Social Development as well as Civil Society: Review of 1997-1998 programme and prospects for 1999-2001". The Committee was informed that ECA had embarked on a restructuring programme in 1996 defining strategic directives designed, in particular, to strengthen its activities in the areas of economic and social development and the role of civil society in the development process.

55. The Committee noted the efforts of ECA to launch a number of important initiatives towards the implementation of various programmes concerning, in particular: the formulation of social policies focused on poverty reduction and human development. Other initiatives focussed on capacity building for good governance as well as strengthening organizational and institutional capacities of civil society organizations. These were pursued through the implementation of a project culminating in the establishment of an African Centre for Civil Society.

56. The Committee further noted that during the periods 1997-1998, the ECA secretariat realized a significant number of conferences, symposiums, technical studies, workshops and various publications dealing with social development policies and strategies, economic and administrative aspects of governance, and popular participation in development. The ongoing programme of activities for 1999 focused on social and human development, popular participation in the sustainable development process and the effective establishment of the African Centre for Civil Society (ACCS).

57. Concerning the activities of ECA in 1997 and 1998 in the areas of social policy formulation for poverty reduction and human development, the participants noted with regret that the conclusions contained in the case study were not underpinned by qualitative analyses that would provide a framework for policy perspectives. The informal sector had enabled a section of the African population to survive, and to a certain extent provides a refuge to the poor and to people with modest incomes. ECA should promote studies in this sector with a view to facilitating its transformation as well as poverty reduction. ECA was also urged to systematically analyze the results of such studies with a view to proposing to member States the appropriate policies and strategies to be derived from them.

58. As regards the programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001, the priority areas and orientations identified for the previous programmes would be maintained. However, there would be slight shift in the focus of the activities, to cover policies and strategies for effective partnerships between the public and private sectors. These policies and strategies would address the following: social integration and poverty reduction; reform measures in the education sector and effective participation of civil society organizations in development governance process. The establishment of

databases and information networks and the organization of discussion forums and round tables for the exchange of experiences would constitute major products/outcomes of the 2000-2001 programme.

59. Several representatives urged a review of the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for socio-economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) in order to provide avenues for research on poverty reduction. This document is a frame of reference, which offers alternative solutions to development problems in Africa. ECA was invited to take the document into account in its programme of work, particularly in the formulation of policies for poverty alleviation. The Committee urged ECA to create greater awareness on the AAF-SAP document and in particular; to organize a discussion forum on the programme for governments, civil society actors and development partners.

60. In concluding, the Committee emphasized the need for strong partnership between ECA, member States and civil society to facilitate the implementation of these activities and to enhance the achievement of greater tangible results. Greater partnership should be facilitated through concrete actions on the ground.

Any other business (Session 4)

61. Discussion on the Resolution on the establishment of the African Centre for Civil Society was undertaken during this session. The Committee adopted the Resolution, which is annexed herewith. The Committee decided to set up a small working group to elaborate a work programme for the Centre. The Committee also decided to set up a small working group to consider modalities for its future meeting and consultation mechanisms. Similarly a small group consulted and elected the following Bureau.

Chairperson:	Namibia
First Vice-Chairperson:	FEMNET
Second Vice-Chairperson:	Burkina Faso
Third Vice-Chairperson:	AATPOs
Rapporteur:	AFRODAD

Adoption of the report (Session 5)

62. The Committee discussed and adopted the report of its first meeting along with the constitution and functions of the CHDCS annexed herewith.

Closing ceremony (Session 6)

63. In his closing remarks, Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of ECA, thanked all for participating and deliberating on this important agenda on poverty reduction. He stressed the importance of partnership as a necessary condition for a comprehensive approach to addressing this challenge.

Special Event: Guest Lecture on "Promoting Public/Private Partnership for Enhanced and Sustained Economic, Social and Human Development in Africa"

64. Under this agenda item, Mr. Tekalegn Gedamu, Chairman and Executive Officer, Bank of Abyssinia, on the afternoon of 23 June 1999, Addis Ababa provided a lecture.

65. The lecture provided an opportunity for individuals, private and public institutions to discuss and share experiences on how private and public sectors can come together to formulate implementable policies and strategies for enhanced and sustained economic, social and human development in Africa. The guest speaker captured new developments in public/private partnership and provided his thoughts on innovative strategies for enhancing dialogue and collaboration between public/private sector, specifically in addressing poverty issues.

66. The "Guest Lecture Series" under the Development Management Division serves as a forum for facilitating discussions on topical issues related to development management practices in Africa. The presentation and observations of the guest lecture are contained in document ECA/DMD/PSM/LEC/99/8, June 1999.

Annex I**Resolution On:****The Establishment of the African Centre for Civil Society****The Committee on Human Development and Civil Society**

Recalling The International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa held at Arusha, Tanzania, in February 1990, the recommendations of the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation and those of the Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting on Capacities, Activities and Services required to enhance the effectiveness of indigenous Non Governmental Organizations in Africa held at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 1998,

1. **Endorses** the Commission and African Civil Society Organization's initiative to establish the African Centre for Civil Society;
2. **Takes note** of the preliminary work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa – Civil Society Organizations Consultation on the operation and Management of the African Centre for Civil Society held at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in April 1999;
3. **Invites** member states to give greater consideration to the involvement of Civil Society organizations in development policy formulation and implementation;
4. **Urges** the governments of member states which have not already done so to establish permanent mechanisms for consultation with Civil Society organizations;
5. **Recommends** that the Governments of member states should extend their full cooperation and support to the work of the Centre; and
6. **Commends** the Executive Secretary of United Nations Economic Commission for Africa for the initiative in facilitating the establishment of the African Centre for Civil Society and to continue the commitment to the promotion of popular participation.

First meeting, 23 June 1999

Annex II**Constitution and Functions of the CHDCS****I. BACKGROUND**

The United Nations General Assembly during its Twelfth Ordinary Session adopted Resolution 1155 (XIII) of 26 November 1957, recommending that the Economic and Social Council, at its next session, give prompt and favorable 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 inter-governmental 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 against this background that the Commission's legislative mandate is derived. The Commission^{1/} is the principal policy organ of the secretariat.

The Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic and social development and planning is keeping with its mandate adopted Resolution no. 826 (XXXII) in April 1997, through which the ministers structured ECA's policy organs and introduced new subsidiary bodies to deal with emerging development issues facing the continent. Among these organs and subsidiary bodies, (Pare "B-4") the Ministers established the "Committee on Human Development and Civil Society" as follows:

"The Committee's mission will be to help strengthen the civil society and human development. It will enable ECA to draw on opinions of experts in the public and private sectors and civil society, in its operations. The Committee will conduct development and follow-up activities pertaining to global and regional action programmes such as the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and the African Charter for Popular participation in Development and Transformation. It will review major trends and issues of regional interest regarding human development and the civil society".

It would serve as a forum for reviewing specific issues related to human and social development as well as popular participation and the role of civil society. In these respects, the committee is to strengthen coherence of the ECA work programme in the areas of human and social development and popular participation as well as deepen policy dialogue with member States.^{2/} This committee will meet once every two years. The Terms of Reference of this Committee are as follows.

- (a) Assist member States to promote measures to follow-up the implementation of the regional and globally agreed programmes of action in social and human development and popular participation,
- (b) Provide advice to the Commission in formulating its work programmes in the area of human development and popular participation,
- (c) Encourage the integration of social and human dimensions into development policies, plans and programmes at both macroeconomic and sectoral levels,
- (d) Identify and highlight the major economic and social development issues and concerns with a view to promoting policies and strategies for human development and popular participation in development.

^{1/} The Conference of African Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning constitutes the "Commission" when it is meeting

II. OPERATIONAL GUIDES

The Committee on Human Development and Civil Society (CHDCS) will:

- (i) Undertake in-depth analysis of the pressing issues related to human development and the role of Civil Society,
- (ii) Formulate relevant policy recommendations on these issues to guide actions of African policy makers and other development partners including private sector,
- (iii) Monitor progress made in the implementation of regional and global plans of action namely: the Arusha Declaration on Popular participation and the Copenhagen Declaration and Social Plan of Action and recommend Strategies for enhancing implementation,
- (iv) Provide guidance to the work of ECA by suggesting future directions of ESPD/DMD's programme of work and priorities,
- (v) Monitor activities of member States in the above mentioned areas through reports submitted to ECA.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since it is anticipated that the CHDCS will be working in collaboration with other relevant agencies, the Committee, at its inaugural meeting recommended the following to be considered by the Conference of African Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning:

1. Relationship of the Committee with relevant UN Bodies/Agencies;

- (i) The CHDCS will serve as the regional forum of experts that deals with the issues of human development and Civil Society on activities as mandated by the UN General Assembly,
- (ii) The CHDCS will serve as the regional advisory body of the Commission on issues related to human development, Civil Society and good governance in Africa as well and follow upon actions related to the implementation of the Arusha Declaration on Popular Participation, the Copenhagen Declaration and other relevant programmes.

2. Relationship of CHDCS and Other Institutions

The CHDCS appreciates the value of coordination and experience sharing and will cooperate with other relevant institutions involved in activities related to human, Social, Private Sector development, Civil Society and good governance.

The CHDCS will also collaborate with the other six technical committees under the auspices of the ECA and will promote regular liaison and communication with these committees.

3. Modalities

(a) Membership

The membership of the Committee will be the following:

- (i) Government of ECA member States,
- (ii) Umbrella Organizations of CSOs at national, subregional and regional levels,
- (iii) Umbrella Regional Private Sector Organization,
- (iv) CAU.

ECA will serve as the Secretariat of the CHDCS

(b) The Bureau

The Bureau will be composed of:

Five members representing the Committee's three constituencies, namely: Government, CSOs and private Sector. The Bureau will comprise members recommended by the three constituencies as follows:

- (i) 2 from government,
- (ii) 2 from Civil Society Organizations (1 from women's organization),
- (iii) 1 from Private Sector.

The 5 Bureau members shall elect among themselves, the Chairperson, three vice Chairpersons and a Rapporteur. ECA will serve as the secretariat of the Bureau.

(c) Duration

- (i) The Bureau shall serve for one regular session of the Committee. The Bureau will serve until the election of the new Bureau,
- (ii) The Bureau, in consultation with the ECA Secretariat, may hold inter-sessional meetings as deemed necessary.

(d) Venue of meetings

The meetings of the CHDCS may be held in any member State, upon invitation by the country. In the absence of any offer to host the meeting, it shall be held at ECA Headquarters.

(e) Funding

- (i) Participation of members' at the meetings will be borne by participants. This arrangement does not preclude participants from seeking financial assistance from donors.
- (ii) ECA shall fund the meeting of the Bureau members.

(f) Coordination

Each Member State of ECA shall establish national committee on human development and civil activities. This committee shall comprise:

- (i) Relevant Ministries,
- (ii) Representatives of civil society including academia, media, youth organizations and private sector.

(g) Monitoring and reporting

Reporting shall be in two ways. Annual reports from ECA on its activities in the areas of human development and civil society, including popular participation. Biennial unified country reports (covering government, private sector and civil society components) to be submitted to the Conference of Ministers through ECA secretariat three months before each meeting of the Committee. The report will follow the format that should be designed and agreed upon by ECA and the Bureau. The Committee shall report to the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning through the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW).

(h) Observers

It is recommended that in view of the important role that UN and other international agencies/organizations play in the above areas they should be invited to attend meetings of the CHDCS as observers.

Annex III**FIRST MEETING OF
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