

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Third Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of the Subregional Development Centre (SRDC) for West Africa, was held in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria from 7 to 10 June 2000.

### **A. Attendance and organization of work**

2. The meeting was attended by the following member States :

**Benin**  
**Burkina Faso**  
**Cote d'Ivoire**  
**Guinea**  
**Guinea Bissau**  
**Mali**  
**Niger**  
**Nigeria**  
**Senegal**  
**Togo**

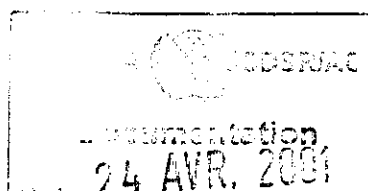
3. The following intergovernmental organizations and institutions also participated in the meeting: the African Solidarity Fund (FSA), the Niger Basin Authority (NBA), the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), and the African Centre for Meteorological Applications to Development (ACMAD).

4. A list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

### **B. Election of the Bureau**

5. The meeting elected a Bureau composed of:

- **Chairman :** Nigeria  
- **Vice-Chairman :** Senegal  
- **Rapporteur:** Niger



**C. Agenda of the meeting**

6. The following agenda was adopted:

**1. Opening Session**

**2. Organization of the meeting**

- a) Election of the Bureau.
- b) Adoption of the Agenda and the Programme of Work.

**3. Report of the Director of the SRDC-WA on the implementation of the 1998-1999 and planning for 2000-2001  
(doc. SRDC-WA/5.4.2a(1)a .5/00)**

**4. Facilitating networking and information exchange between governments, civil society, and the private sector in West Africa:**

- 4.1. Report on economic and social conditions in West Africa  
(doc. SRDC-WA/5.4.2(B)0.2/99)
- 4.2. Report on food security and sustainable development  
(population, agriculture and environment): Incorporation of population and environmental dimensions in sustainable agricultural development plans, projects and programmes.  
(doc. SRDC-WA/5.4.2a(1)a.1/00)
- 4.3. Report on promoting sub-regional integration through regional and global gender mainstreaming initiatives.  
(doc. SRDC-WA/5.4.2.a(1)a/99)
- 4.4. Report on self-financing mechanisms of sub-regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations.  
(doc. SRDC-WA/5.4.2d.i)

- 4.5. Report on progress in establishing a West African web site on sustainable development (doc. SRDC-WA/5.4.2a(1)a.2/00).
  - 4.6 Report of the seminar on physical integration in West Africa: Agenda for development of infrastructures (doc. SRDC-WA/ECA/5.4.2b/3Sem./99).
  - 5. **Date and venue for the next meeting.**
  - 6. **Any other business.**
  - 7. **Review and adoption of the Draft report of the Third Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts.**  
(SRDC-WA/5.4.2a(1)a.6/00)
  - 8. **Closing session**
- D. **Opening Session (Agenda Item 1)**

7. In his opening statement, His Excellency Mr. Dapo Sarumi, Minister of Cooperation and Integration in Africa in the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria expressed satisfaction that Nigeria was again hosting another ECA meeting, as exactly four weeks earlier the second session of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning was held at this same venue. He indicated that as Chair of the Conference Nigeria continues to play an important role in the work of the ECA at ministerial, experts, and subregional levels.

8.. The Minister recalled that at the level of ECOWAS Nigeria had recently hosted the 23<sup>rd</sup> Summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government which commemorated the 25 anniversary of the organization. Among the activities organized was a meeting of Chief Executives of subregional integration and a

forum on the involvement of civil society and the private sector in the acceleration of integration in West Africa. These events offered opportunities for dialogue and

exchange of information and experiences with other subregional institutions and multilateral organizations, and thus paving the way for further collaboration among them.

9. The Minister noted that the outcome of the Summit demonstrated again the commitment of the Heads of State and Government to the integration process. There is expectation that the enthusiasm generated by the adoption of a fast track approach to the integration process will be sustained, leading to substantial improvement in the rate of programme implementation and to the attainment of the long-term objectives of monetary integration, a common market and a virile economic community for the sub-region.

10. The Honourable Minister underscored the fact that the Third Meeting of the ICE is another occasion for national experts to deliberate on specific issues of relevance to the overall integration process in West Africa. For instance, the ICE has on its agenda the issue of financing integration which constitutes a critical factor determining the fate of integration schemes. The institutionalization of the Community Levy in the form of a solidarity fund, to meet the financial requirements of ECOWAS, needs be examined in all its ramifications because to a great extent the success of ECOWAS integration depends on its effective implementation.

11. The Minister drew the attention of the meeting to the decision of the Summit to establish a regional compensation and stabilization mechanism to accommodate the monetary and fiscal pressures which the macro-economic harmonization programme will exert on individual national economies under the monetary integration programme. These two financial provisions, i.e., the transformation of the levy into a solidarity fund and the establishment of the compensation and stabilization mechanism, are designed to guarantee adequate resources for the organization, thus freeing it from over dependence on member States' contributions.

12. The Minister observed that the implementation of concrete physical infrastructural programmes, which is also on the agenda of this ICE meeting, is another new dimension to the integration process which needs to be thoroughly studied. In this context, the meeting should review the implementation

strategies and as well as sourcing of funds for financing programmes such as the trans-coastal highways, the railway network, the subregional airline, the power pool, the telecommunication programme and the gas pipeline projects,

bearing in mind that these are all capital intensive with long gestation periods. He added that the meeting should come up with proposals on how to secure easy access to the international capital markets on terms that are favourable to the Community.

13. The Minister indicated that the agenda item on economic and social conditions in the sub-region requires extensive debate given that the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century demand that West Africa, and indeed the whole of Africa, moves in the same direction as other continents. Appropriate measures must be taken to improve on the socio-economic conditions of the peoples of the continent and to provide them with the basic necessities of life. Reduction of poverty and deprivation and, in particular, food security, housing, education and health, must be tackled head-on if the living standards of the peoples are to be improved. He urged the meeting to critically examine these and related issues and propose appropriate recommendations to assist in shaping development policies and programmes in the member States.

14. The Minister recalled that the decentralization of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) some three years ago, involving the reform and strengthening of the Sub-regional Development Centres (SRDCs), was designed to increase the impact of ECA in the promotion of social and economic development in the African countries. The Minister noted with satisfaction that the Centres have worked reasonably well. However, much is still expected of them as catalyst for development. There is need to improve upon the capacities of the Centres and their skill-base. There is need to improve on their interactions with member States. There is need to define relationships with the Regional Economic Communities and major Intergovernmental Organizations in the subregion.

15. Finally, the Minister urged the Sub-regional Development Centre for West Africa to revitalize its operations so as to effectively meet the needs and aspirations of ECOWAS member countries. The developmental problems facing the subregion are many and varied and require the collaboration of all the development partners and the mobilization of all available human and material resources.

16. In his address, Mr. Sangaré Ibrahima Sory, the Representative of the Republic of Guinea and out-going Chairman, thanked the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for agreeing to host the meeting. He took the opportunity to thank members of ICE for their invaluable support during the Second Meeting of the Committee which was held in Conakry in March 1999. As at that meeting, participants should critically examine the documents which have been submitted with a view to identifying ways in which their national reform programmes can benefit from the experiences of others.

17. The outgoing chairman briefly reviewed the major documents before the meeting and stressed the importance of full debate of each of them.

18. In conclusion, Mr. Sangare recalled that after forty years of independence, West Africa is very much confronted with numerous obstacles in its march towards effective economic integration. One of these obstacles is a common currency for the whole subregion. He appealed to all of the sub-region's development institutions, the SRDC- WA and ECOWAS, in particular, to give high priority to the adoption of a common currency.

19. In his statement, Jeggan C. SENGHOR, Director of the Sub-regional Development Centre for West Africa and the Representative of the Executive Secretary of the ECA, paid tribute to the people and Government of Nigeria who had created the proper environment for a successful meeting. He expressed the profound gratitude of the Executive Secretary of the ECA, Dr. Y. K. AMOAKO, to His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo and his Government for the special interest they have always shown in the affairs of the ECA and the Sub-regional Development Centre for West Africa, based in Niamey, Republic of Niger.

20. The Director summarized the important changes that have taken place at the ECA since 1995, which changes have brought about a complete reorientation of the organization to enhance its capacity to meet the numerous challenges facing Africa. In order to better serve Africa, the ECA had redefined its mission around very clear objectives which take into account, among other things, the fact that the world is becoming more and more

interdependent and propelled by dramatic advances in information and communication technology.

21. In this new configuration, the Sub-regional Development Centres, as operational organs of the ECA, must become more catalytic and pay particular attention to the harmonization of the Commission's regional and sub-regional programmes. The redefined mandate of the SRDCs also demands that they be much more directly involved in the promotion of economic cooperation and integration in their respective subregions.

22. On the overall situation of the economies of the sub-region period, the Director noted that the fact that 11 out of the 16 countries are classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) reflects unfavourably on the situation vis-à-vis other countries within and outside the continent. There were, of course, variations, such as for countries in conflict, those that are net exporters or net importers of crude oil, and land-locked countries. Social development indicators are still more depressing, mainly due to civil conflicts, increasing poverty and rising unemployment.

23. At the same-time, the major indicators of integration reveal that the sub-region must do everything to become more competitive at this time of globalization and trade liberalization. In order to face the challenges of global partnership without sacrificing their interests, countries of the sub-region must not only promote production integration but also stimulate the process of change.

24. West African countries must also re-examine their approach to the implementation of economic reforms in order to make them more compatible with integration programmes. Any strategy for integration must be anchored on real political will and an effective mechanism for ending internal conflicts.

25. The Director of SRDC -WA thanked the authorities of ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS, and ADB for their substantive inputs to the Report on the Economic and Social Conditions in West Africa. He expressed the hope that the present meeting will contribute to the debate on possible solutions to the myriad development problems confronting the countries of the subregion.

## II PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING

### **1. Report of the Director of the SRDC-WA on the implementation of the 1998-1999 and planning for 2000-2001 (SRDC-WA/5.4.2a(1)a.5/00) (Agenda item 3)**

26. The Committee examined the above-mentioned report which was in two parts, namely, the implementation of the 1998-1999 work programme, and (b) planning for 2000-2001. Before doing so, it warmly welcomed the new Director, Jeggan C. Senghor, and extended its appreciations to Mr. Henri Soumah who had served as Officer-in-Charge for many years. The Committee hoped that Mr. Senghor would bring to the Centre the dynamism and leadership which he had demonstrated in his previous position of Director of IDEP.

27. With respect to the implementation of the 1998-1999 work programme, the Committee noted that there were four categories of activities : substantive servicing of legislative meetings; substantive servicing of ad hoc expert group meetings; publications and operational activities.

28. With reference to substantive servicing of legislative meetings the Committee noted that six reports were completed and submitted to the 1998 ICE meeting, as follows:

- Report of the Director.
- Report on the Economic and Social Conditions in West Africa in 1997.
- Report on the Technological Policy Options for improving Food Security in West Africa.
- Report on Progress made in Developing Data Bases for Sustainable Development Management in West Africa
- Report on Promoting Gender Perspectives in Sustainable Development Management in the West African Subregion





3rd ICE Meeting

- Report on Assessment of the Implementation of the Dakar/Ngor
- Declaration and Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in the SRDC-WA subregion

29. Eight reports were completed and presented at the 1999 ICE meeting, as follows :

- Report of the Director.
- Report on Economic and Social Conditions in the West Africa SRDC Subregion
- Report on the Progress made in Promoting Gender Perspectives in Sustainable Development in the West African Subregion
- Report on the Techno-Economic Study of a Pilot Laboratory Prospect for the Production and Utilisation of Xanthan Gum in Bread-making of tropical flours
- Report on Progress made in Promoting Sustainable Data bases Networking in West Africa
- Report on the Experiences of River and Lake Basin Development Organizations in West Africa.
- Report on the Prevalence, Causes and Consequences of HIV/AIDS in West Africa

30. In 1999 one activity was undertaken in the area of servicing the ad hoc group of experts.

31. The Committee observed that three technical publications were produced during the biennium 1998-1999 and a number of operational activities were undertaken, including the Xanthan Gum Project and training workshops.

32. During the current biennium 2000-2001 the Committee noted that the Centre is concerned with outputs that have impact. In this context, four priority areas have been identified as follows:

- Promoting subregional economic cooperation and integration.
- Post-conflict reconstruction at the subregional level.
- Enhancing information exchange and networking in the subregion.
- Combating drought and desertification.

33. Specifically for the year 2000, the meeting noted that the Centre has

prepared a Business Plan for the implementation of two core activities: Substantive Technical Support to Sub-Regional Economic Community (ECOWAS) and to UEMOA, and CILSS; and Revitalization of Cooperation among the Mano River Union (MRU) countries.

34. At the request of the Director, the meeting devoted time to a critical assessment of the Centre with a view assisting it in determining new directions for the future. The Committee proposed that the Center do everything to improve its current image, its procedures for programme development and delivery and, most consequential, the impact of its activities in countries of the sub-region. In this regard, it should establish closer working relationships with ECOWAS as the subregional economic community, UEMOA, Mano River Union and CILSS.

35. The Committee identified the following subject-areas in which the Centre should undertake activities in order to increased its impact and value-added in the promotion of sub-regional development:

- Poverty reduction;
- Trade liberalization and common external tariff;
- Introduction of a single currency;
- Macro-economic convergence indicators;
- Harmonization of macro-economic data generation;
- Harmonization of TOFE instruments;
- National accounting procedures;
- Capacity building at national level, especially by encouraging the return of expatriate nationals.

36. The Centre should also undertake comparative studies on contributions of IGOs in the subregion to capacity building at the national level and to economic cooperation and integration.

37. Concerning assistance to member States, the Committee took note of the suggestion that opportunities be provided for attachment of civil servants at the Centre and for greater use of national structures in the formulation and implementation of programmes.

38. Given the many important and pertinent tasks the Centre should undertake, the meeting advised that consideration be given to further strengthening its resource base.

39. The meeting endorsed the core activities proposed for the year 2000. It welcomed, in particular, the planned activity on post-conflict reconstruction in the countries of the Mano River Basin

40. The Committee stressed that the Centre was not known in the subregion and strongly recommended that outreach activities, such as wider dissemination of its publications, should be seriously and systematically pursued.

41. With reference to quality assurance of the outputs of the Centre, the Committee found the peer review mechanisms proposed in the Business Plan very innovative. It was the expectation of the Committee that the new review process would result in studies that are more practical and less academic.

42. The Committee took note, with appreciations, of the report of the Director .

**4. Facilitating networking and information exchange between governments, civil society, and the private sector in West Africa (Agenda item 4)**

**4.1 Report on Economic and Social Conditions in West Africa ( Doc. SRDC-WA/5.4.2(B)0.2/99)  
( Agenda item 4.1)**

43. The Committee examined document No. CDSR-AO/5.4.2(B)0.2:99 on the Economic and Social Conditions in West Africa in 1999.

44. The Committee noted that the 1999 report was a joint effort between the SRDC and the major organizations in the subregion, namely, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA), the Permanent Secretariat for Combating Drought in the Sahel (CILSS) and the African Development Bank (ADB). The Committee commended this degree of cooperation and expressed the hope that this would become institutionalized.

45. It was noted that the document not only analyses the economic and social conditions at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century but also attempts to chart a vision, a way forward, into the 21st Century. The last quarter of the century had been quite traumatic as regards the foreign debt situation, imposition of external conditional ties, collapse of commodity trade, increasingly hostile global economic environment, and domestic conflicts in some countries. The

Committee noted that the major achievements in the subregion were in the trans-border free movement of people, goods and capital; growing intra-regional trade; multinational infrastructure projects; and closer monetary cooperation.

46. The Committee noted that the report indicated approaches to accelerating cooperation and integration in the subregion in the next millennium. On several fronts, new philosophies, strategies, policies and programmes are required, both to draw the countries closer together and to enhance their competitiveness in the global economy. It was imperative to map out a subregional vision for West Africa to challenge the creative energies and resources of its leaders and people at all levels of society. This required revisiting the vision of the founding fathers of subregional integration, whenever necessary. It also involved updating that vision in order to create the enabling environment for its implementation.

47. Regarding the reliability of data, the meeting noted that it was evident that much of the data quoted in the report was from sources in the subregion but that, in many cases, they were outdated. This pointed to the need for a reliable database supplied with a steady flow of information from member States. Member States, IGOs and the Centre were urged to exert greater effort to deal with this problem of a reliable database. The Secretariat was encouraged to liaise more closely with ECOWAS and UEMOA in this respect.

48. The Committee recommended a number of substantive and factual changes in the text of the report.

**4.2. Food security and sustainable development (environment, population and agriculture): incorporation of population and environmental dimensions in sustainable agricultural-development plans, projects and programmes in West Africa ( Doc. SRDC-WA/5.4.2a(1)a.1/00. (Agenda item 4.2)**

49. Under this agenda item the Committee reviewed the report entitled Food security and sustainable development (environment, population and agriculture): incorporation of population and environmental dimensions in sustainable agricultural development plans, projects and programmes in West Africa. The main objective of the study was to come up with proposals for fostering the incorporation of population and environmental variables in sustainable agricultural development

plans, projects and programmes. For this purpose, relevant instruments and methods include an inventory of natural resources, environmental impact assessments, national environmental action plans, and a system of information and monitoring.

50. As regards country experiences, the Committee observed that all the countries covered in the study – Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Niger, and Senegal – had adopted national population and environmental policies and national environmental action plans, which contained the main instruments and methods for fostering integration. However, the major shortcoming of these sets of policies was the lack of evaluation of their impact which would serve as a basis for assessing their efficiency.

51. The Committee reviewed two innovative national experiences. The first, from Gambia, related to the process leading to the passing of the National Environment Management Act, 1994, and the scope of the Act, and the Environmental Information System for the application of the geographic information system (GIS) technique. The second was the pioneering sustainable development activities of the Keita Project in Niger, encompassing the systematic integration of environmental and population dimensions in development projects and programmes, massive mobilization of the population through grass roots associations, and recognition of the pivotal role of women in the development process and better management of natural resources.

52. With reference to sub-regional experiences, the Committee noted that the majority of organizations at this level had concentrated on sectoral implementation of projects. Among the exceptional cases were the development by CILSS of a population and development model and planning and implementation of a GIS project in conjunction with the Niger Government, and NESDA's advocacy, networking and project activities directly related to the integration of the nexus issues.

#### **The PEDA Model as an Advocacy Tool on Population, Environment, Development And Agriculture**

53. A presentation on the PEDA Model was made by a staff member from the Food Security and Sustainable Development Division (FSSDD), ECA. It was first explained that the fundamental purpose was to develop a long-term vision on the issues of poverty reduction and food security, by looking for solutions to Africa's development problems arising from the lack of co-relation between food

security, population and the environment.

54 Promotional activities constitute an area of particular interest for the Commission and FSSDD. Accordingly, analytical studies have been prepared on population, environment, and food security issues bringing out the linkages. Derived from this are a programme for launching the promotional activities, the formulation of a PEDDA model as a promotional tool, and the publication of a serie of promotional plaques.

55. The presenter explained that the name PEDDA derives from P (Population), E (Environment), D (Development), and A (Agriculture); and that it is :

- An interactive computer model demonstrating the impact of policies on food security;
- A scientific model for demonstrating interactions between population, the environment, development and agriculture; and
- A population based model distinguishing eight different population sub-groups by rural/urban residence, literacy status and food security status by age and sex.

56. The model facilitates the study of whether the proportion of food ensured people- increase or decreases; utilizes multi-states population projection methods; and determines the food secure and food insecure groups by food production and food distribution. An increase in the size of the food insecure, illiterate rural population increases the probability of land degradation. Land degradation leads to more food insecure people who in turn increase the pressure on diminishing resources. Hence the need to carefully look at a mix of policies which take care of the welfare of the population, increased agricultural productivity, and environmental protection in an inter-sectoral, interactive and reinforcing manner.

57. As a way of demonstrating how the setting of scenarios is affected by changing the inputs to these variables as a result of changes in policy options regarding increases or decreases in the food insecure population, the cases of Zambia and Uganda were examined. Zambia was used to reflect the utility of the model prototypes that were developed before a variable on HIV/AIDS was introduced in the model, and Uganda was used as the first case study with the

HIV/AIDS variable incorporated in the model. The more mix of policies there were, considered in an inter-sectoral manner, the more food secure people there would be as time passed.

58. The way forward as proposed by the presenter was as follows:

- Developed PEDA models with one common approach for all the countries;
- Carry out sub-regional training activities;
- Initiate PEDA models for all African countries; and
- Identify and mobilize resources for priority countries for which the prototype should include simulations that take into account the impact of HIV/AIDS.

59. The Committee was of the view that the PEDA model is a useful advocacy tool. It fully endorsed the proposal that FSSDD and SDRC-WA should organize a series of sub-regional workshop on the model and related issues to stimulate further discussion and propose approaches to integration of the nexus in development plans, programmes and projects.

#### **ACMAD (Point 4.2 of the Agenda)**

60. The Director-General of the African Centre for Meteorological Applications to Development (ACMAD) made a presentation on his institution. He first explained that ACMAD, based in Niamey, Niger, is regional in membership and is jointly sponsored by ECA and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). ACMAD has gone through three development phases, viz:

- Phase I, 1992-1996 - The establishment of infrastructure and modalities for the mobilization of support from member countries;
- Phase II, 1997-1999 - Demonstration of the ability of the Centre to satisfy the needs of member countries in its fields of operation;
- Phase III, 2000-2002 - Consolidation of the Centre's achievements.

61. The major product of interest for the countries of the subregion comprises, essentially, seasonal climatic forecasts (PRESAO) through the process of individual and institutional capacity building. Its products have been specifically used in dealing with problems related to food security, water

resource management and communicating climatic information to rural communities. It organizes training programmes before dissemination of any of its products and usually provides trained professionals with soft wares and computer accessories necessary for effective performance on the job.

62. More recently, the Centre has been working on a technique for using and adapting new information and communication technologies (NTIC) through the "RANET" project on the transformation of climatic information into a tool for development at the disposal of producers who are most vulnerable to climatic changes. The comprehensive successful experiment carried out for the rural community of Bankilare (Niger) is now a household name in Niger. It will be extended to 8 other African countries, two of which are in West Africa.

63. Following the presentation of the Director of ACMAD, the representative of the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) also briefed the Committee on the work of his organization and the close cooperation existing with the SRDC-WA.

64. The Committee welcomed the opportunity offered to these organizations to inform on their work, particularly on how member States can benefit from the services they provide. The Committee decided that in future this should feature permanently on its agenda.

**4.3. Report on promoting sub-regional integration through regional and global gender mainstreaming initiatives.**  
( Doc. SRDC- WA/5.4.2.a(1)a/99) (Agenda item 4.3)

65. The Committee of Experts considered the report SRDC-WA/5.4.2 a (I) a/99 entitled "Promoting sub-regional Integration through regional and global gender mainstreaming initiatives." The report was prepared in fulfillment of the recommendation of the Second Meeting of the ICE (Conakry, Guinea).

66. The Committee noted that the report identified policy initiatives on gender mainstreaming that have global and regional dimensions and that have fostered gender integration in national plans of action and the implementation of the 12 priorities of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA). The Committee also recognised BPA as a benchmark for assessing the performances of member states in mainstreaming gender issues in social and economic programmes.

67. The meeting observed that some progress had been achieved in implementing the global and regional policy instruments, through the



collaboration of agencies at the national and subregional levels. Comments were made on the strengths and weakness encountered in the process of gender mainstreaming.

68. The Committee took note of the importance of mainstreaming gender issues in sub-regional integration processes, and of the mechanisms that would link the commitments made at the international level to national policies and programmes for the advancement of women. It was agreed that the real challenge on gender and women's issues is how to empower women to move into higher socio-economic status in society. The Committee observed that various programmes and mechanisms were already in place for gender mainstreaming but they would be more effective if an integrated and multifaceted approach were adopted.

69. The Committee was equally aware of how difficult gender mainstreaming in the integrated multifaceted approach could be because of the inevitable differences in goals, resources, and strategies which exist between countries within the sub-region and between sub-regions within regions. Similar differences could exist among the donors, international organizations, NGO's, etc.

70. With a view to reconciling these differences, the Committee endorsed the following recommendations:

- gender mainstreaming should be institutionalized in all government institutions;
- the technical and managerial capacities and capabilities of key national institutions involved in gender and women programmes should be strengthened;
- ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS should be requested to create gender units in their secretariats in order to monitor gender mainstreaming at the subregional level;

71. More generally, the Committee made the following recommendations :

- that the SRDC should organize sensitization workshops to increase men's interest in gender issues;
- that awareness should be created among professionals and decision makers about the importance of issues such as girls education;
- that ECOWAS should make extra effort to establish a gender unit in the secretariat and provide more substantive support to WAWA;

- that ECOWAS and SRDC-WA to collaborate in preparing a study on approaches to assisting women in rural and urban areas, focusing on identifying the areas for capacity building;
- that the major IGOs and the SRDC-WA should undertake research and other activities in areas of particular interest to women such as :
  - access to health services
  - access to landed property
  - access to credit
  - social protection, in particular for women who have contracted HIV/AIDS,
  - access to inputs for agricultural production
  - formulation of a more gender sensitive methods of data collection and information dissemination
  - reduction/elimination of violence against women in both public and private life
  - promotion of peace in the sub-region
  - elimination of prostitution and trafficking of women and girls
  - advocacy on the challenges confronted in the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

#### **4.4 Report on Self-Financing Mechanisms of Sub-Regional Economic Communities and Intergovernmental Organisations. (SRDC-WA/5.4.2.d.i) (Agenda item 4.4)**

72. The Committee examined the report on self-financing mechanisms of the sub-regional communities and the major intergovernmental organisations (SRDC-WA/5.4.2d.i). The main thrust of the report was to evaluate self-financing mechanisms for funding ECOWAS/UEMOA in West Africa and CEEAC/UDEAC in Central Africa, partly for purposes of comparison.

73. The Committee noted that the mechanisms are anchored on the “Community Solidarity Levy (CSL)” the principle of which was adopted by member States as a way of increasing resources available for promoting economic integration. Its assessment is based on the total volume of goods imported from a third country and the rate of levy is 0.5% of CIF value. Revenue from the CSL goes into four

main areas: compensation for losses arising from the implementation of a preferential regime; funding of the Community institutions ; a structural endowment fund ; and a reserve fund. In the case of UEMOA, the efficiency of the system is undoubtedly the result of penalties in the form of automatic

deductions of the amount due from the BCEAO accounts of defaulting States, and possibility of temporary suspension from access to financial privileges offered by the Union's financial institutions, especially the BCEAO and BOAD.

74. The Committee also reviewed the proposed own-resource mechanism of CEMA/UDEAC, in the form of the Integration Community Tax which, unfortunately, could not materialise because of a lack of consensus among member states. The formula currently in place in UDEAC is based on: a direct contribution from the treasury of each member state; an excise duty on alcohol, tobacco, cosmetics and perfumes; a community integration tax of 0.5 % on luxury goods; and a fraction of the existing para-fiscal taxes. Member countries have the liberty to choose the tax base and level of tax they prefer and this is formalized in an agreement signed with the UDEAC Secretariat. The funds generated are used solely for the running of the Unions institutions.

75. The Committee further observed that the tax base in the UDEAC system has been broadened to cover some locally-produced goods. However, in practice, the system is more difficult to implement because it does not have a regional character. Besides this, each state may adopt an intermediary system which is different from the agreement signed with the Secretariat...

76. The Committee recommended that for ECOWAS there is need to study (i) the weaknesses of existing mechanisms in order to endow the institutions with sustainable funding, and (ii) to use the resources to support a broader range of purposes.

#### **4.5 Report on progress made in establishing a West African Website on sustainable development, SRDC-WA/5.2.2a(1)a.99 (Agenda item 4.5)**

77. The Committee examined the document on the proposed establishment of a West African Website. The aim of the project is to enhance information exchange among member States, sub-regional organizations and data base operators in order to facilitate the final user's access to information. The Committee observed that information generation, and availability and access to

information, are serious problem areas in the subregion. The extent of usage of the new information technology is very low and there is no West African Website where information on specific indicators on sustainable development can be found.

78. The Committee noted that in most West African countries there are on-going initiatives aimed at creating data banks with the support of the UN system. ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS are also being connected electronically to each other's databases and to databases outside the sub-region. However, it seems that only Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone directly manage their own Websites. It is not possible to gain access to the site of other countries unless through Websites managed by other Internet service providers, the most significant of whom is the site known as Africanet.Com.

79. The Committee recognized that ECA has launched a number of initiatives such as the African Information Society that is aimed at promoting exchanges between the various information systems. The ECA has also a system of management of knowledge through the interconnection of ECA Internet and the five Internets of the SRDCs that are also connected to the network systems of the United Nations and to the Internet via VSAT.

80. The new network thus set up represents a major advancement in the architecture of electronic information system in Africa. Member States could get connected through the SRDCs and enjoy all the benefits of the Internet. The proposed West African Website would continue to undergo improvement.

81. The Committee, in its discussion of the report, noted that when the West African website is created it will be possible for all countries in the subregion to have their own websites. The Committee emphasized the point that there is an urgent need for training which is considered to be indispensable for the optimum use of the internet. Training should constitute an essential component of the study on the mobilisation of resources for the creation of the West African Website. On the issue of feeding the Website with information, the Committee observed that electronic interconnection of the existing databases in the sub-region constitutes the first important source to which will be added specific data from member States.

82. The Committee further proposed that the West African Website should be in the major languages of the sub-region. Since the Internet is a universal means to transmit information, it is important that adequate structures be put in place to

facilitate access by all sectors of the population, including the rural population.

83. In the face of the enormous work that remains to be done before the creation and effective operation of the Website, the Committee recommended to the SRDC-WA start a process of resource mobilisation aimed at :

- i) developing the Website ;
- ii) assisting member States to create/develop databases, connected to the internet ;
- iii) harmonisation of methods for collecting information as well as standardization of formats for information generation.

**4.6. Report on the seminar on physical integration in West Africa;  
Agenda for development of infrastructures (SRDC-  
WA/ECA/5.4.2b/3Sem./99) (Agenda item 4.6)**

84. The report of the seminar on Physical Integration in West Africa held earlier in the week was submitted to the Committee. Among the points singled out for attention were the urgency of having an efficient transport and communication network for social and economic development and ways in which the vast funds required for this purpose can be mobilized. On the latter, the Committee agreed that the private sector should be encouraged to play a role.

**5. Date and venue of the next meeting (Agenda item 5)**

85. The Committee decided that the Government of the Gambia should be invited to host the next meeting scheduled for the last week of March 2001. In case this invitation was not accepted the Director should seek another venue.

**6. Any other business (Agenda Item 6)**

86. No other business was brought up for discussion by the meeting.

**7. Closing session**

87. The closing ceremony comprised a Vote of Thanks by a representative of the delegations, a Closing Statement by the Director of the Centre, and a Closing Address by the Chairman.

88. The delegate from Burkina Faso, on behalf of all participants, expressed profound thanks and heartfelt gratitude to the people and Government of the

Federal Republic of Nigeria for the warm welcome accorded them and for the special attention received since arriving in Nigeria. Appreciations were also extended to the Bureau of the Committee and to the Secretariat for all efforts deployed in ensuring a successful outcome of the meeting. The technical nature of the deliberations was particularly appreciated.

89. The Director of the Centre expressed satisfaction with the quality of the debates. He was especially grateful for ideas on the actual needs of the member States and what type of interventions should be made by the Centre to respond to the expectations of its primary clientele. He was committed to strengthening relationships with all governments in the subregion and to networking with institutions and organizations at different levels. Of course, everything depended on the quality and quantity of resources at the disposal of the Centre and the willingness of partners within and outside of the United Nations system to assist it give substance to its commitment.

90. The Director sincerely thanked the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for agreeing to host the meeting at very short notice. He expressed satisfaction at the extent of participation of officials from the Ministry for Cooperation and Integration in Africa, starting off with the statement by the Minister himself at the opening session. He thanked all those who, directly or indirectly, contributed to the smooth running of the meeting, especially the translators, interpreters, the rapporteur and the personnel of the secretariat.

91. Finally, the Director expressed the hope that the same participants will be present at the next ICE meeting as this will ensure continuity and consolidation of the bonds of cooperation between member states, subregional organizations and the Centre.

92. In his closing address, the Chairman commended the quality and relevance of the working documents and the high level of the discussions. He thanked all participants and the Secretariat of ECOWAS for their contributions to the success of the meeting. He wished them safe journey back to their respective countries and also assured them of the Governments joy and happiness at hosting the meeting in Abuja.

## **VOTE OF THANKS**

Delegates to the Third Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Sub-Regional Development Centre for West Africa held in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, from June 7 to June 10, 2000.

Express their profound gratitude to the people and Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for their hospitality and for creating a congenial environment that made for very productive deliberations.

To His Excellency General OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the delegates extend their most sincere gratitude for his commitment to the Economic Commission for Africa in its quest to serve Africa better.

Done at Abuja, 10 June 2000

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