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Ad-Hoc High Level Stakeholders Meeting  
on Sustainable Development

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
17-19 January 2000



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**DRAFT REPORT**

## A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANISATION OF WORK

1. The High Level Stakeholders Meeting on Sustainable Development was held at the UN Conference Centre, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) from 17 to 19 January 2000.

2. The meeting was convened to set up a preparatory process for the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 in Africa. Participants would be invited to consider a possible Regional Agenda for the planned comprehensive review of Agenda 21 in 2002 and the modalities and means to undertake Africa's preparation for that purpose including a possible regional preparatory meeting in 2001. In this connection, stakeholders addressed the following issues:

- i. Definition of Sustainable Development (SD): what SD means to various organisations; what the elements of SD taking examples from countries in various regions;
- ii. Collaborative efforts between sub-regional institutions and the member countries;
- iii. Sub-regional strategy (strategies) to attain sustainable development;
- iv. Promoting the institutionalisation of participation at all levels: local, national, and sub-regional;
- v. The usefulness of ECA's PEDDA Model in relation to the issues raised above;
- vi. The concrete actions to be taken, the modalities, means and the timetable for co-ordinating the preparation of the Regional Africa Report for the Earth Summit +10 including the roles of different organisations and the sub-regional meetings to be organised and dates that should result in one regional report for the summit.

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following organizations: ACMAD, ACTS, ADB, AGRHYMET, AMU, ARC, CILSS, COMESA, EC, FAO, IGAD, ICLEI, LCBC, LDF, NESDA, OAU, SADC, S&T (Ethiopia), UNEP.

4. The meeting was chaired by Professor George Benneh, Chairman of the ECA Advisory Board on Population, Agriculture and Environment while Professor A. Falusi, member of the same ECA Advisory Board, was rapporteur.

**B. AGENDA**

5. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Organisation of Work
3. Review of the main provisions of Agenda 21
4. Building on the Synergies Between Population, Environment and Agriculture: Presentation of the Population, Environment, Development, Agriculture (PEDA) Model
5. Presentation of Papers from participants
6. Preparation for Earth Summit +10
  - a) Concrete actions to be taken during the preparatory process and the modalities and means
  - b) the roles of regional and sub-regional organisations and NGOs in the preparatory process
  - c) The sub-regional meetings to be held during the preparatory process and the venues and dates
  - d) The time table for the conclusion of the major actions to be undertaken
  - e) The process for the promotion of institutionalisation of participation at all levels (national and sub-regional)
7. Any other Business
8. Adoption of the Report of the Meeting
9. Date and venue of next meeting
10. Closure of the Meeting

## C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

### Opening Address.

6. In her opening statement, Ms. Paulina Makinwa-Adebusoye, Director of the Food Security and Sustainable Development Division, on behalf of Mr. K. Y. Amoako, the UNECA Executive Secretary, stated that since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) which gave rise to Agenda 21, the term "Sustainable Development" has gained wide currency as a *sine qua non* for long-term survival with a reasonable standard of living for all peoples. In its most popular interpretation, the term "Sustainable Development" pertains to a type of development that not only ensures satisfaction of present needs but also avoids jeopardizing the interests of future generations. However, the popularity of the definition beclouds the fact that it is subject to various interpretations. Furthermore, there are several institutions dealing with matters relating to environment and natural resources, climate change, population and human development issues etc., as elaborated in the various chapters of Agenda 21. The multiplicity of these institutions and the broad scope of Agenda 21 have contributed to the lack of a set of universally accepted and measurable indices with which to chart the progress of nations towards sustainability. Yet, successful monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Agenda 21 requires a set of common concrete and measurable indices. Hence, the need for a meeting such as this one, which brings together, many of the stakeholders, engaged in promoting "Sustainable Development".

7. She reminded the participants that the current situation in Africa is well documented. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), some 80 per cent of the Low Human Development Countries – countries with high population growth rates, low income, low literacy, and low life expectancy – are in Africa. Africans account for one out of every four poor persons in the world. Indeed, Africa is singled out as the only region in the world where both the absolute number and the proportion of poor people are expected to increase this century. This factor is exacerbated by the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS, which is reversing decades of gains in social indicators and throwing families – and children in particular – into

sudden poverty. The overriding development challenge and ultimate goal for every development intervention in Africa is, therefore, poverty reduction. Studies have shown that to reduce poverty in Africa by half by 2015, a scenario of balanced policies for the enhancement of economic growth and reduction of inequality, and an average annual growth rate of at least 7 per cent are minimum requirements.

8. She stated that successive international forums have called on policy makers to address the synergistic forces of high population growth, environmental degradation, low agricultural productivity, poor economic growth, and poverty, as an urgent matter of public policy. This is a key step towards the population, environmental, and agricultural transitions necessary for sustainable development and food security.

9. She informed the participants that an essential purpose of this meeting is, therefore to define key "indicators" on the basis of which we can monitor the implementation of Agenda 21. Whatever indicators we arrive at will also highlight key elements in national strategies for sustainable development.

10. A second objective of this meeting is to identify ways and means of fostering partnerships and co-operation among the regional and sub-regional institutions here present in order to avoid overlaps and duplication of efforts. In this regard, the goal is to gain a better understanding of shared problems, while promoting the exchange of information, formulating common approaches and ideas, and catalyzing joint actions.

11. A third objective of this meeting is to begin preparations for the Earth Summit +10 event in the year 2002. African countries would be expected to prepare a joint regional report on their successes and constraints in implementing Agenda 21. Hence, this meeting should decide the concrete steps to be followed to achieve an African Regional report for the Earth Summit +10 event; the modalities and means, the roles of regional, sub-regional and non-governmental organizations. At the end of the meeting, we should have arrived at an acceptable schedule and venues for holding subsequent meetings as part of the preparatory process.

12. In conclusion, she pointed out that it is the personal and institutional experience, more than all else, that will shape the discussion and determine the outcome of the meeting.

### **Review of the Main Provisions of Agenda 21.**

13. In the first session, an over view of the main provisions of Agenda 21 was presented. It noted that the World Commission on Environment and Development in its 1987 report "Our Common Future", linked environment and development and thus led to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992. UNCED produced, among other things, Agenda 21 for the implementation by all concerned.

14. It is recognised that all countries, regardless of the level of development, have an important role to play in the follow-up of the UNCED and the implementation of Agenda 21. National efforts should be based on the acceptance of the need to take a balanced and integrated approach to physical and social environment and development issues.

15. It was noted that Agenda 21 addresses the pressing problems of today and also aims at preparing the world for the challenges of the 21st century. Its successful implementation is first and foremost the responsibility of Governments. National strategies, plans and policies are crucial in achieving this. International co-operation should support and supplement such national efforts. In this context, the United Nations system and other international, regional and sub-regional organisations are called upon to contribute to this effort. The broadest public participation and the active involvement of the non-governmental organisations and other groups are also encouraged.

16. The forty programme areas that constitute Agenda 21, are covered in four sections, namely:

1. Social and economic dimensions, including combating poverty, demographic dynamic, changing consumption, protecting human health, human settlements development etc...
2. Conservation and management of resources for development, including protection of atmosphere, management of land resources, combating deforestation, desertification and drought, managing fragile ecosystems, promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development, conservation of biological diversity, management of biotechnology, protection the oceans, all kinds of seas and the quality and supply of freshwater resources, management of toxic chemical, hazardous wastes, solid wastes and radioactive wastes etc
3. Strengthening the role of major groups, including global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development, children and youth, indigenous people, strengthening the role of NGOs, local authorities, the role of workers and trade unions, business and industry, farmers, scientific and technological community etc., and
4. Means of implementation, Agenda 21 is a dynamic programme. It is expected to be carried out by the various actors according to the different situations, capacities and priorities of countries and regions. It could evolve over time in the light of changing needs and circumstances.

17. It is the main objective of this workshop to identify key elements of sustainable development in Africa; in other words, the major acceptable and readily measurable indicators that are common to all African countries.

18. The main sustainability issues of concern to African Countries were noted in the African common position on environment. These are management of demographic changes and population pressures; achieving food self sufficiency and food security; ensuring efficient and equitable use of water resources; securing greater energy

efficiency; optimising environmentally clean production systems; management of species and ecosystems and preventing and reversing desertification. To these were added poverty, gender and degradation and habitat concerns.

19. It was also stressed that since Agenda 21 was not a legally binding document, there was need to focus on steps that would lead to the incorporation of its various provisions into national legislation.

20. Participants further stressed that in order to be practical, there was need to examine priorities in terms of the various sub-regions, as well as eco-regions. It was also emphasised that the issue of key indicators for measurement of sustainable distribution be seriously considered.

21. Regarding constraints being experienced by African countries in implementing the various aspects of agenda 21, it was noted that one important consideration should be the problem posed by Africa having to deal with various conventions that were negotiated separately. As a result of separate financial commitments with respect to the different conventions, there was the danger of certain aspects of agenda 21 not receiving sufficient attention. It was noted that at in the informal meeting of ministers in charge of the environment held in Elmina Ghana on September 2-5 1999, ministers representing the northern countries showed little interest in issues they considered essentially African problems, such as land degradation and desertification.

**Building on the synergies between Population, Environment and Agriculture. Presentation of the PEDDA model.**

22. In this session, a representative of the FSSDD introduced the PEDDA model to the participants; carried out some projections and discussed the outputs of the simulation exercise. During the presentation it was also argued that 'food security status' must be taken into account when discussing sustainable development indicators. The PEDDA model clearly illustrates that the food security status of the



population is dependent on evolutions in the different development related sectors, i.e. population, the environment, agriculture and education.

23. In the discussion that followed, most of the participants stressed the potential of PEDAs as an advocacy tool. They asked for some further clarifications on the treatment of the different variables in the model (e.g. on the treatment of water, fertiliser and machinery use and education) and the level of analysis; the availability of reliable data and aspects that were not taken into account by the model, such as livestock, land tenure systems, international migration and remittances, international trade, the effect of climate changes and population-land dynamics in urban areas. Regarding the data, it was pointed out that in its present format the PEDA model uses internationally available data and further relies on some estimations because some of the needed data are simply not available. This is not necessarily a problem since the major objective of the model is to illustrate the magnitude of the relationships between the different variables in the model and the kind of interactions at hand between the different sectors covered by it. The ECA, however, further intends to support initiatives for the collection of adequate data for its application. This eventually needs to be done by a group of national experts since they are closest to these data sources and best qualified.

24. The representative of the FSSDD further stressed that PEDA is not to be conceived as a short term econometric planning tool and, therefore, a number of variables are left out to keep the model simple and comprehensible for a broad public, including policy makers. This for example applies to international trade and migrant remittances. However, in the sense that trade contributes to the food supply in a country, this can be accounted for by the model through the external variable 'food imports/exports'. As the model stands now it doesn't take livestock into account. This was identified as a major shortcoming for countries that almost completely depend on livestock for their food production. The structure of the model is, however, flexible enough to allow for a customisation of the model to similar situations. Land tenure systems are not treated in detail either, but since the land variable is conceived as an

index variable (the quantity and quality of land in the starting year is set to have the value 1), this is not necessarily problematic. Climate changes are not treated by the model either, but as climate changes probably only affect agricultural production significantly in the long term this is not to be seen as a major shortcoming of PEDDA which takes 50 years as its longest projection perspective. Furthermore a water index is included in the PEDDA model.

### **Presentation of papers by participants**

25. Sub-regional economic communities (AMU, COMESA), regional institutions/centres (ACMAD, LCBC, SADC, CLISS, IGAD, AGRHYMET), NGOs (LDF, EC, NESDA, ICLEI), and regional UN agencies (FAO, UNEP), made brief presentations on their mandates and contributions to sustainable development in their geographical areas of operation. In the presentations made, the following points emerged:

- There is a need for a better management of climatic resources for sustainable development. The thematic areas that can be covered are seasonal predictions such as weather and climate forecasting and water previsions in order to alleviate the effects of drought. The implementation of these programmes would imply the use of new technologies and the diffusion of information in order to make meteorological products available to final users. There is also a need to build the required capacity in the areas of: a) operational techniques of weather and climate monitoring and prediction; and b) communication technologies so as to provide a complete and integrated system for data acquisition and processing.
- Most African countries have already formulated some sort of plans (environmental plans, national development plans) which contains explicitly or implicitly some parts on environment. However, these plans have been found to: a) be sectoral; b) lack co-ordination at the national level; and c) lack co-ordination among States even in the presence of cross-border issues.

- Since it will be difficult to address all issues of Agenda 21 at the same time, there is a need to prioritise issues at the i) national level, ii) sub-regional level, and iii) ecological region level (countries that have common peculiarities). At each level, an analysis and evaluation of what has been done so far and what remains to be done is to be made systematically. Based on this, it would be possible to decide the African priorities for the after Rio+10. It is not necessary to concentrate only on the formulation of strategies, rather, it is necessary to insure that strategies are translated into implementation. Success stories must be identified in the evaluation of the implementation of Agenda 21 in Africa so that they can be replicated.
- The presentations highlighted also the fact that there is a need to emphasise i) real life experimentation that integrates local traditional practices, ii) sustainable management of natural resources and valorisation of the bio-diversity, and iii) participation of the local population to ensure future sustainability. In order to encourage the participation of the local population in these programmes, accompanying measures geared towards the improvements of the quality of life at the grass-root level should be added to these programmes. In the implementation of programmes, the participation of national and regional partners, civil society and other actors should be ensured.
- For a strategy to achieve sustainable development, there is need to ensure a better co-ordination of programs, information sharing, and harmonisation of sub-regional projects.
- There is need to assist local authorities in managing their local environment since local actions can build up towards global sustainability. For example, in most African cities there are severe environmental problems caused by deficiencies in garbage collection, traffic congestion, water pollution, lack of cost recovery, etc. and these can be alleviated through local actions.

26. Sustainable development should be looked at in larger way. It is possible to contribute directly or indirectly to sustainable development, through the enlargement of the market-size of individual States. This can stimulate production and quality improvement, which in turn can lead to enhanced investment and job creation. There is also a need to ensure peace and political and social stability in order to achieve sustainable development.

27. Participants also discussed whether to use the convention to combat desertification as an umbrella to deal also with implementation of other convention. ✓

28. The preparation of Rio+10 provides the opportunity to review the Rio declaration and plan of action. Strategic plans for sustainable development and sustainable exploitation of natural resources should contain components on agriculture, environment, water and natural resources, drought control and desertification. They should also contain components on development of human resources, institutional development, and economic development. The plans should put a special emphasis on close co-operation and collaboration between member countries and with the international community and a better harmonisation of programs.

29. It was also noted that while some countries have strategic plans for combating soil and land degradation, few have any such strategies for food security. It was reported that for Africa, water management is a key factor to agriculture intensification. Since only 4% of the agricultural land (mainly in the Nile basin), is under irrigation the potential for irrigated agriculture remains untapped.

30. Another presentation highlighted the need for multi-stakeholder programs for integrative sustainable development, the promotion of an earth charter and conflict resolution (primarily environmental conflicts).

## **Preparations for Earth Summit +10**

### **Concrete actions to be taken during the preparatory process and the modalities and means**

31. The session started with an examination of a set of questions that need to be asked in the run up to the Earth Summit II. These included: to what extent African countries have gone in implementing the provisions of Agenda 21; whether the impact of these provisions was weakened by their complexity; whether UNCED has changed the role of NGOs and governmental agencies; whether UNCED has improved our understanding of the integrated processes; and whether the world is gradually going back to business as usual despite UNCED.

32. It was noted that both Stockholm in 1972 and UNCED in 1992 were products of history. The Stockholm conference was about the environment, yet it was dominated by discussions about development, and UNCED was about the environment and development but it debated mainly the environment.

33. It was suggested that concrete, strategic efforts be made to ensure: preparations for, and inputs into, Earth Summit II process bring about substantive and political gains; analyse and redefine crucial issues impacting on the environment and development; comprehensively involve the region's leaders - including the various relevant ministries responsible for the environment, natural resources, finance, planning, etc; enlist industry and business; incorporate NGOs; and foster partnership with regional and sub-regional groups.

34. It is necessary to review key issues for information and to build on experiences and insights gained in a variety of efforts, such as the African Common Position of 1991 ahead of UNCED. The ECA could assist with documentation relating to this. Steps should be undertaken to bring out the lessons learned from joint programmes; involve scientific groups; take advantage of ongoing consultations, including the recent informal meeting of ministries responsible for the environment held in Elmina Ghana; and develop strategies for enlisting the media in Africa.

35. Participants suggested the following steps in preparation for Earth Summit +10: review of the status of implementation of Agenda 21 in African countries; determination of the areas of urgent concern during the review; identification of structures and framework for the review; consideration of how the process would be financed.

36. It was further suggested that the process be as decentralised as possible, at least taking it to the national level. It should also integrate considerations of both the physical and social environment, along with cross cutting themes, like stakeholder participation. A three- phase process was recommended for the review. These are: a review of what is happening on the ground; identification of what interventions are needed by nation and sub-region, including technical and financial issues; and the production of national reports, a synthesis of which would comprise an African Position paper.

37. The key steps in the organization of the African Preparatory Process for Earth Summit II are as stated below:

#### **KEY STEPS IN THE ORGANISATION OF THE AFRICAN PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR EARTH SUMMIT II**

##### **1. Institutional Framework for the Preparation of Earth Summit II**

A mechanism is needed to facilitate contacts, communications, reviews, synthesis, and publications as well as for the mobilisation of actions at all levels. A core group of representatives of stakeholders will be put in place and entrusted to the above tasks. The existing ministerial conferences in Africa and their respective secretariats will be called upon to support the institutional framework. It was agreed that an African Forum on Earth Summit II be put in place. Its work will be serviced by joint secretariat of ECA/OAU/ADB/UNEP.

##### **2. Vision, Mission and Work Plan.**

A coherent programme for the preparatory process should be developed to provide strategic direction. It will provide the basis for defining indicators, benchmarks, milestones and key issues to be critically reviewed. A work plan

will be developed particularly for the major components of the preparatory process. A calendar of major events and meetings will be prepared for circulation to all stakeholders.

3. **Communication and Awareness Raising**

An appropriate communication strategy will be developed to keep the Stakeholders informed of plans, events and developments. The target groups should include principal actors in both the formal and informal sectors.

4. **Country level Preparations.**

Each African Country will be invited to put in place appropriate multi-stakeholders mechanism to guide and facilitate national preparations as well as inputs to the sub-regional and regional preparatory processes.

5. **Sub-Regional level Preparations.**

The sub-regional economic communities as well as the sub-regional organisations will steer and oversee the sub-regional preparatory process. For this purpose, they would set up appropriate sub-regional steering mechanisms on which relevant stakeholders will serve. They will also provide for a for the review of progress made in the preparatory process as well as for the determination of common areas of concern in their respective sub-regions. In addition, they will provide for the review and synthesis of national reports of their member states.

6. **Regional Institutions and Centres.**

The relevant regional institutions and centres dealing with social, economic and environmental as well as technological and scientific matters will play a major role in the preparatory process. They will, as appropriate, support the national, sub-regional and regional preparatory processes.

7. **Key Stakeholders including NGOs**

The participation of key stakeholders and NGOs will be an indispensable and crucial element of the African preparatory process. Stakeholders' forums or public hearings will be organised to ensure that civil society perspectives are fully reflected in the final report and position paper of Africa to Earth Summit II. They will also be members of the national, sub-regional and regional preparatory arrangements/mechanisms.

8. **Components of the Review Process**

Action is needed at various levels but more so at the following:

- (a) review of the current situation at both the country and sub-regional levels. The compilation of information and synthesis could be undertaken by the sub-regional organisations, in partnership with representatives of stake-holders especially the NGOs;
- (b) review of key issues in the context of the Rio agreements in terms of progress made or needed against the background of Africa's expectations on UNCED;
- (c) periodic publications of reviews on critical issues as well as lessons learned by Africa in its preparations for Earth Summit I (Rio Summit).

9. **Analysis of priority concerns in Africa**

A critical review will be carried out to identify the priority and critical issues of concern to the region.

10. **African Regional Preparatory Conference on Earth Summit II**

This preparatory Conference will be convened in 2001. It will consider draft regional report and position paper on Earth summit II. It will be called upon to adopt the two documents for subsequent submission to Earth Summit II.

11. **Supporting the Preparatory Process**

Action is needed at two levels:

- (a) agreement on the nature and scope (terms of reference) of the regional co-ordinating and facilitation mechanism indicated under item 1 above; mobilisation of resources essential to supporting key elements of the preparatory process. Stakeholders, including governments, major groups/NGOs/private sector/scientific and academic community will be expected to make contributions to these efforts. It is also expected that UN agencies and other Co-operation partners of Africa will provide complimentary support.

