

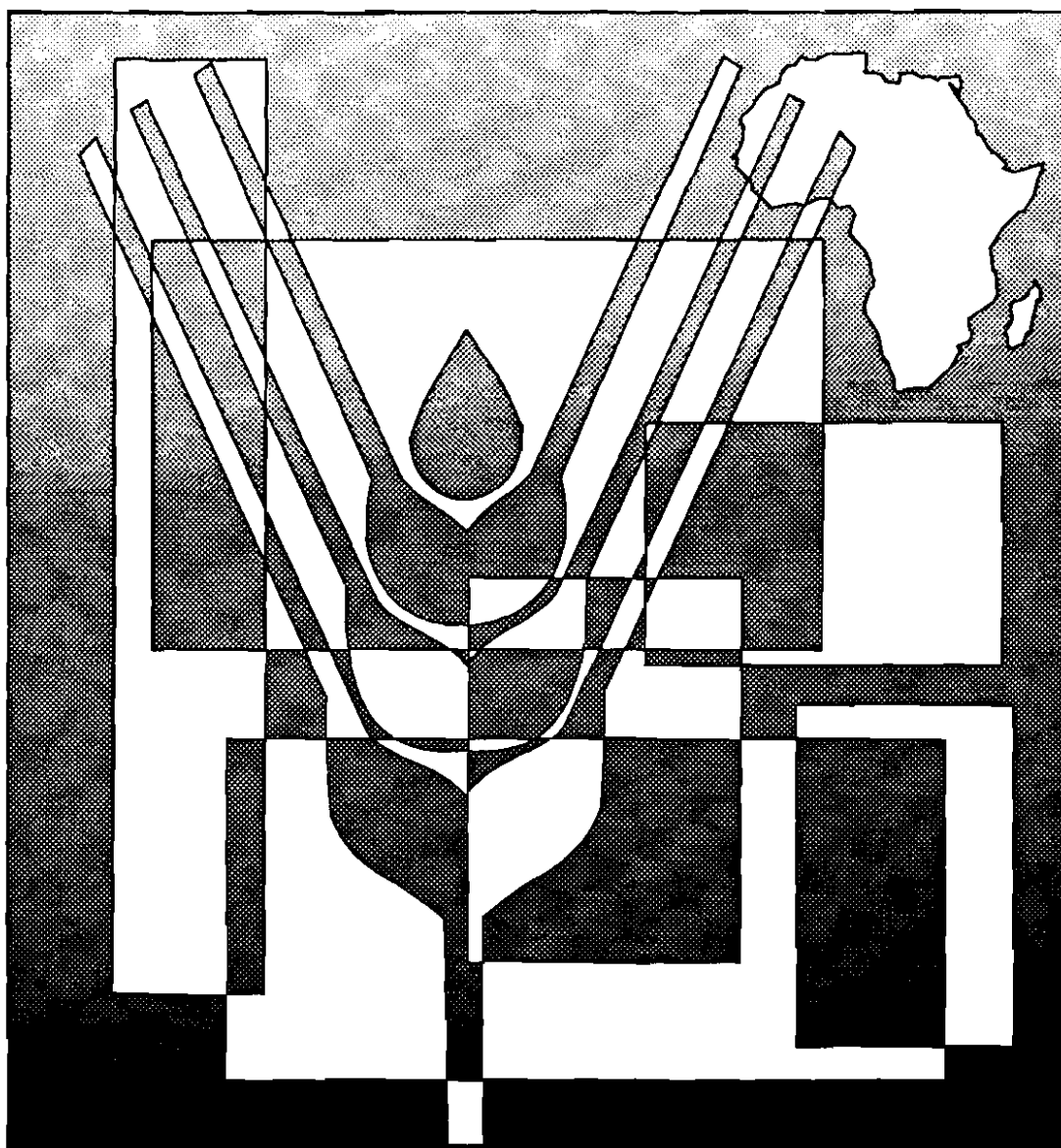


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the United Nations

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ECA'S ROLE IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA



Joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division

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A Brief History of ECA'S Role in Rural Development in Africa

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**The views expressed in this paper are
those of the author and do not
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Forward

The author of this monograph, Mrs. Turuwork DAWIT was a staff member of our Division. She passed away on 28 October 1991. This is her last contribution. The monograph is being published basically as was drafted by the late Mrs. T. Dawit, under her name and in her honour and memory with minimal editorial changes.

It provides a succinct account of the role that the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) plays in creating an informed and enabling environment at various levels for development of the rural sector of Africa since its establishment in 1958. Development in her own words "means advance in both economic and social aspects resulting from conscious efforts to alter, modify and adapt the prevailing systems and sub-systems of a society so that all its members, individually and collectively, participate in decision-making, in the management and use of resources and in equitably sharing the fruits of collective efforts".

Knowledge logically precedes action. It is, therefore, essential for us to know what has been done in order to facilitate the process of development of rural Africa. The monograph makes a contribution in providing the knowledge base, which it is hoped, will be of use to those who are interested in the issues concerning the development of the continent.

The opinions, figures and estimates set forth herewith should not be considered as necessarily reflecting the views or carrying the endorsement of the ECA and/or the FAO.



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A Brief History of ECA's Role in Rural Development in Africa

Introduction

Development as a concept has been subjected to a plethora of definitions. This paper, however, agrees with the school of thought that, in our contemporary world, development means advance in both economic and social aspects of life resulting from conscious efforts to alter, modify and adapt the prevailing systems and sub-systems of a society so that all its members, individually and collectively, participate in decision-making, in the management and use of resources and in equitably sharing the fruits of collective effort.

The annals of history are rich in examples of upheavals as well as gradual transformations in societies seeking to create a better world for all. These events have all made a contribution to the contemporary human relationships of our world today. Despite the fact that to-day's world has reached a scientific pinnacle unparalleled in the history of mankind the same basic issues still plague human societies. In our continent, for example, poverty, disparity, hunger, ignorance and disease on one hand and civil war, political strife and other dysfunctional characteristics on the other hand contribute to its underdevelopment and stagnation.

The possible way out of the malaise simply calls for all human resources to be developed and given an ample opportunity to participate effectively in all efforts to improve the quality of life for all.

More than three decades have elapsed since African countries took an interest in the development of rural life and institutions to make such life more meaningful for their inhabitants. Experiments with various techniques and programmes have been initiated.

The fact that most African countries shared common characteristics of having large proportions of their people in the rural areas made rural development a priority for many of these countries. Their numerous economic and social development programmes and projects sought to develop and improve the rural areas by way of devising various strategies, the latest of which is known as **Rural Structural Transformation and Development (RSTD)**. Theoretically, RSTD involves the optimum utilization of natural resources and the mobilization of the material and human capital in rural areas in order to maximize the economic and social returns.

The ultimate objective of the RSTD is to make accessible to the rural people the basic elements of a

comfortable life, which consists of health, wealth and knowledge. These obviously call for a viable strategy which should include: (i) a comprehensive analysis of information and data pertaining to the area; (ii) an integrated plan which takes into account the economic, social, spatial and human potentialities, as well as the constraints; and (iii) its implementation according to schedule, with due regard to the inter-dependence of the various components.

In our continent, especially South of the Sahara, a great deal of attention has been paid to development programmes, with agriculture as a primary means of realizing the economic potential of rural communities and thereby raising their living standards. It is recognized that the development of agriculture is an important factor for rural progress, but it is, by no means, the only element. Rather it calls for e.g.: (i) improving the quality of life, as related to the social, cultural, educational, nutritional and environmental aspects of life in rural areas; (ii) helping the target population to create effective grass-roots infrastructures and the process of decision-making for the articulation of community priorities; (iii) developing and utilizing the various manpower groups such as women, youth and other interest groups and integrating them into the development effort; and (iv) involving target communities with appropriate regional and national agencies and institutions at the time when such linkages are necessary for further development.

The very nature of the process of RSTD and the magnitude of the problem in rural areas require that action be taken on several points simultaneously but not independently of each other. Hence, programmes of agriculture, education and training, health and nutrition should be planned and implemented, with due consideration given to the implications that development programmes in one area might have for the others.

There are various aspects of RSTD, however the central factor is the concept of integration: integration in terms of the objectives of the various activities undertaken in pursuit of improving rural life and institutions. The RSTD strategies that have been used by many countries in the region have also been diverse and much of the diversity stem from the peculiar economies, social, political and physical environments of each country. Therefore, attempts towards RSTD have been going on under various names for several decades and the result has varied from country to country.

History of Community Development in Africa and the Role of ECA

From the mid-50s up to the early 60s, African countries adopted short and long-term economic objectives in an attempt to improve the general aspect of life through various experiments, techniques, methods and programmes. Among the earliest efforts was what was known under many names as: better work, animation, mass education, community organization and community development, the latter being the most commonly used terminology.

In 1956, the United Nations adopted the following definition for community development: "the processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress".¹

Three main elements of this definition are:

- (a) people's participation;
- (b) government's participation; and
- (c) the integrated approach to development: economic, social and cultural.

Community Development has the following objectives:

- (a) the long-term goals: to assist people in communities to attain a higher standard of living and to help them lead a richer life;
- (b) the medium term goals: to improve economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate those communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress; and
- (c) the short term goals: to help people in communities to learn how to:
 - i) plan collectively;
 - ii) coordinate efforts among themselves and governments;
 - iii) promote economic and social services through self-help and social action; and
 - iv) create a favourable atmosphere for general development.

"Community Development" was also one of the main pre-occupations of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

The first Workshop on Community Development was organized by the Commission in Addis Ababa in September 1959. Its objectives were to:

- (a) provide an opportunity for exchange of experience between governments and experts;
- (b) formulate recommendations concerning various aspects of planning and administering national programmes of community development; and
- (c) develop a guideline for the ECA for its future work and responsibilities in the field.

The Workshop adopted several recommendations for designing national community development programmes in the region, for recruitment and training of personnel, financing of projects, approach and techniques at project level, regional cooperation and international assistance, collection of data and research on community development and dissemination of information, etc.

It was that Workshop which requested the ECA to play a major role ranging from initiating projects to implementing them at the national level including the provision of assistance to member States in all their development activities.

Some of the more important recommendations requested the ECA to:

- (a) provide assistance to African countries in training administrators and technicians for planning and directing community development policies;
- (b) collect and disseminate information to member States and publish a bulletin on community development;
- (c) establish a film library and demonstration and training centres equipped with audio-visual facilities;
- (d) carry out comprehensive study on community development activities in Africa;
- (e) organize study tours and provide fellowships for the study of community development, both within and outside the region; and

- (f) establish a committee on community development for assessing progress.

In 1960, the ECA, in collaboration with the United Nations, New York sponsored a Workshop on Extension of Family and Child Welfare on Community Development Programmes in Accra, Ghana. The Workshop dealt extensively with such subjects as: (a) Family and Child Services and (b) Role of Women in Community Development.

The participants of that Workshop made several recommendations which also requested the ECA to provide expertise through staff visits to member countries and to appoint resident representatives to the various subregional centres and to organize seminars and workshops on similar subjects.

In February-March 1962, the first meeting of ECA's Standing Committee on Social Welfare and Community Development was held. Its recommendations touched on social aspects of economic development, low-cost housing and community facilities programmes, training in community development and social work, technical services, urbanization, etc. This meeting also requested the ECA to give priority to training and also to play an increasing role as a clearing house on documentation and dissemination of information in the fields of community development, social welfare, urbanization, and the publication of a bulletin on various activities.

To words, the ECA in the 1960s made notable contributions in organizing pre-vocational courses in a number of countries in the region for young people, including the issuance of study papers, research and innovative techniques, through its bulletins and in providing technical assistance and expertise to member countries to organize community development activities as well as establishing pre-vocational training centres. The Rural Pre-vocational Training Programmes were designed to provide young people with the required orientation on rural life and knowledge of the rural environment with practical orientation to agriculture. It was also geared to prepare them for their future occupation as farmers and artisans.

One such training course took place in Tunisia in November-December 1962 in community development policy designed to train the senior specialists in community development to serve as advisers, directors or planners in African countries. It also focused on the physical environment and on economic, demographic and social data and several other matters to help the integration of the rural community integration into the mainstream of national life. The Seminar adopted several recommendations for future implementation. (E/CN.14/225 -22 Jan. 1963).

The Rise and Fall of Community Development

Although the roots of the community development movement can be traced to the 1920s², it was a Ford Foundation-funded pilot project introduced in the Etawah District of Uttar Pradesh, India in 1948 which initiated the chain of events that brought it into prominence in the post-colonial era. The deployment of multi-purpose village level workers in the project achieved impressive results in self-help approaches for increasing agricultural production and strengthening rural infrastructure.

In 1952, the Government of India adopted the concept as the basis of a major national rural development effort. However, it failed to adapt the painstaking approach for developing a participatory administrative structure able to respond to bottom-up initiatives which had been the key to the project's success³. However, India's launching of a national community development effort led to the initiation of similar programmes in over 60 nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America during the 1950s, labelled by Holdcroft as community development's "Decade of Prominence".

By 1960, some programmes were already faltering, and by 1965 most had either been terminated or drastically reduced. That was because community Development had promised much, had delivered little⁴. The decline of community development was attributed to a number of factors such as:

- (a) existing power structures and conflicting interests between various segments of the rural population;
- (b) lack of coordination of responsibilities for community development among various ministries and bureaucratic conflict;
- (c) greater emphasis placed on the expansion of social services rather than increasing rural incomes;
- (d) implementation schedule of programmes were formulated centrally without due regard for the target groups' willingness or capacity; and
- (e) lack of attention to the needs of the rural poor and failure to develop self-governing village controlled economies.

The types of projects which were then in vogue presented problems that could not be solved. They rather created a vicious circle that was suited only to large capital development projects than to people-centered rural development.

The World Bank in 1980, for example, estimated that nearly 800 million people, or roughly 40 per cent of the population of the developing nations, live in absolute poverty⁵. Studies indicated that in many instances the poor had not benefited and instead they had suffered even more during the early stages of community development⁶.

There has, thus, been a growing interest in new approaches to national development intended to give the poor scope for full participation in development decisions, implementation, and benefits⁷. Many observers had in the past looked to effective community-controlled social organizations as important if not essential instruments if the rural poor were to give meaningful expression to their views, mobilize their own resources in self-help action and enforce their demands on the broader national political and economic systems.

Although several national and international agencies claimed commitment to participatory approaches for helping the rural poor, little progress was made in translating ambitious plans into effective action. The record of earliest community development and co-operative effort was largely a history of failure, resulting more often in strengthening the position of traditional elites than in integrating poorer elements into the national development process.

It has been recognized time and again that the prevailing blueprint approach to development programme, with its emphasis on detailed pre-planning and time-bound projects is by itself an important impediment. An examination of a number of programmes suggested that the more successful ones grew out of village experience and initiative. The key to success was not pre-planning but organization with the capacity, for embracing the people concerned, learning with them and building new knowledge and institutional capacity through action.

Rural cooperatives in developing countries also brought little benefit to the poor masses and failed to be regarded as change agents for such groups. The services often rendered by cooperatives, such as production loans and marketing were of little use to the landless labourer or the subsistence farmer. Moreover, in relatively stratified communities, its poorer members seldom had a voice and in many instances, found themselves ineligible for certain services such as loans. In fact, too often the co-operative leaders were corrupt and abusive of their power.

In order to redress those anomalies, the World Bank responded with new emphasis on agriculture and rural development projects designed to benefit the rural poor⁸. Its rural development sector policy paper called explicitly for: "participation by the rural poor in the

planning and implementation processes through local government, project advisory committees, co-operatives and other forms of group organizations".

It is worth noting here that at various meetings and conferences the most difficult aspect of the discussions centred on the establishment of systems within which small farmers could voice their opinions and wishes how programmes could be designed and implemented and how their skills and expert knowledge of their local farming environment and their capacity to help themselves could be fully integrated into overall efforts.

At the same time, some fairly substantial amount of money was also being channelled to the Third World through private voluntary organizations, many of which were also going through painful re-examination of their roles. Eventually, they also recognized that the answer to poverty depended not on relief, but in increasing the capacity of the poor to meet their own needs - thus, the need to create more developmental-oriented programmes labelled as the "new style" rural development projects⁹.

Commenting on rural development projects, the World Bank's 1978 Annual Report observed that: "...with hindsight, project design and the pace of implementation have been too ambitious, resulting in delays and shortfalls from original expectation. ... Among the more difficult aspects is the establishment of a system within which small farmers can themselves have a say, and in how programmes are designed and implemented, and how their skills, expert knowledge of the local farming environment, and their capacity to help themselves can be fully integrated into an overall effort¹⁰. Awareness of the need for change in approach at the Bank was growing, as well as the magnitude of the changes in procedures. Also posing greater challenge was the lack of data on the social, demographic and economic characteristics of project areas. As a result, little had been done even in Bank-assisted projects to utilize the potential of indigenous social organizations¹¹.

In Africa, it has been estimated that about 80-90 per cent of the population live in the rural areas bearing the brunt of the continent's stagnation and buttressing the pre-dominantly agriculture-reliant economies of the region with their toil and sweat. In contrast, development efforts of African governments and most technical assistance agencies previously tended to give emphasis to the urban/industrial sector, often at the expense of the rural/agricultural sector.

Consequently, the socio-economic disparity has been perpetuated between the urban enclaves and the large traditional rural areas - constituting social injustice, as well as a number of pressing problems which had

painfully slowed down the tempo of national development affecting the entire population. This trend resulted in:

- (a) a decline in *per capita* food production;
- (b) slow development of industry and other economic activities; and
- (c) growing problem of unemployment and underemployment due to the degrading conditions of life aggravating the exodus of potential entrepreneurs from rural to urban cities.

It is worth noting here that the rural sector in Africa has eventually become increasingly recognized as the key sector in African development plans and assumed a priority objective for most national governments and international agencies. It is also recognized that the United Nations Economic and Social Council, in its 1963 Report on the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, made reference to "increased attention to integrating existing arrangements for inter-agency cooperation and co-ordination in, a concerted attack on the problems of improving living and working conditions in rural areas".

It is to be recalled that earlier in 1960, for example, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) at its Conference also launched on a philosophy it called "The Contribution of the ILO to the Raising of Incomes and Living Conditions in Rural Communities, with Particular Reference to Countries in the Process of Development". The resolution on this particular subject was unanimously adopted by the Conference, thus marking a turning point in the development of the ILO activities in the rural field¹². The resolution and the principles drew attention to the Permanent Agricultural Committee at its Sixth Session on the need among others, for research and standard-setting. The Conference also noted responsibility of the ILO "because of its concern with labour employment and social aspects of economic development" recommended that "a special long-term research and operational activities to be established by the ILO without delay"¹³.

As a result of this resolution, the ILO's Rural Development Programme was launched in 1962 under its regular budget. The ILO was, thus, largely instrumental in providing the basic needs approach to rural development. That approach had the primary objective of mobilizing human and material resources in rural areas and called for the following:

- (a) active participation of the population;

- (b) provision of physical and economic factors relevant to rural development programmes, such as land, water, energy, roads and communication;
- (c) promotion of rural crafts and small-scale industries;
- (d) human resources development through manpower surveys, vocational training and education, as well as promotion of services related to health, nutrition, housing, social welfare, etc.;
- (e) institutional development, i.e., land ownership, voluntary rural associations and organisations, as well as developing cooperatives and credit facilities; and
- (f) administrative organization for integrated approach and for effective communication at all levels.

Development of Rural Life and Institutions

At its 113th plenary meeting (6th session) held at Addis Ababa in March 1964, the Economic Commission for Africa also took the decisive step when it moved in favour of "rural development" instead of "community development"¹⁴.

The meeting in resolution 117 (vi) on "Rural Life and Community Action" requested the ECA Executive Secretary 'to give special attention to the study of specific problems encountered by Governments in carrying out rural development programmes and to give assistance to them, at their request, in their efforts to promote the development of active rural life and institution. It further urged him, in collaboration with the specialized agencies, to undertake subregional studies and the investigation of social and economic problems encountered in the process of rural development, including:

- (a) land tenure and land distribution;
- (b) supply of water for irrigation and drinking as a means of improving both agricultural production and health of rural population;
- (c) provision of institutional credit facilities, such as credit banks and producers co-operatives;
- (d) coordination of community action in such welfare programmes as home economics, adult education, road building, village construction and resettlement schemes.

As a result of an the ECA/FAO programme evaluation exercise in December/January 1963/64, the ECA Community Development Programme Section was not only re-formulated and re-designed but also renamed **Development of Rural Life and Institutions Section** within the Social Development Division of ECA.

The Section was required to concentrate activities on:

- (a) inter-disciplinary advisory services to member States on rural development; and
- (b) inter-disciplinary studies of socio-economic situations of national and local governments in the process of rural development.

As part of ECA/FAO co-operative arrangements: (a) rural institutions personnel from FAO Headquarters were out-posted to the ECA/FAO Joint Agriculture Division; and (b) one Regional Adviser in rural life and institutions provided to ECA from 1964 to 1973. That was done to generate the development of active rural life and rural institutions in order to meet the contemporary needs with the involvement of the rural people themselves.

The Section carried out its activities jointly with other Sections of the Division and in collaboration with other United Nations specialized agencies.

In 1963, the ECA at its Sixth Session held the Meeting of Experts on the "Integration of Social Development Plans with overall Development Planning" at Addis Ababa. The Meeting which drew together persons from a wide variety of disciplines considered a range of problems which covered the social and economic development of the region with particular reference to government policy and the allocation of resources in the social sectors¹⁵. It also made a critical analysis of the Five Year Development Plans of the member States as a major concern at the international level¹⁶.

Inter-Agency Committee on Integrated Approach to Rural Development

Since 1963 ECA has been engaged in promotional and advisory activities and field programmes in rural development. It has also been playing a coordinating role in this field with respect to the regional activities of the United Nations system and those of voluntary agencies which carried out rural development activities in the region.

By far the most significant development in the region, as regards the promotion of the concept of integrated rural development, has been the establishment in 1967, of a **United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Rural Development in Africa** composed of ECA, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNHCR, UNDP and OAU. It was initiated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at a Working Group Meeting convened at its New York Headquarters "to explore problems of comprehensive rural development particularly in Africa"¹⁷.

The terms of reference of the Committee were defined at the inaugural meeting. They are to:

- (a) consider ways and means of strengthening regional inter-agency collaboration in rural development;
- (b) exchange views on the essential contribution of each United Nations agency to the development of rural life and rural institutions in Africa;
- (c) work out jointly guiding principles relating to inter-agency and integrated approach to the tackling of problems of rural development in Africa; and
- (d) consider a suitable strategy for a regional inter-agency concerted action in rural development.

The Working Group on Rural and Community Development at its sixteenth session directed attention to the impracticability of planning for simultaneous development on a country-wide scale and, thus, introduced the concept of regional integrated rural development, which was also endorsed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Consequently the First United Nations Africa Regional Inter-agency Meeting held in Accra, 28-30 July 1967 noted the need for periodic consultation between regional heads of international organizations in Africa. It also considered the recommendations of the Administrative Co-ordination Committee of the United Nations relating to co-ordination at the regional level and requested the Executive Secretary of the ECA to arrange for such an exchange at the technical level, particularly on matters relating to rural life and institutions.

As a result of the joint efforts of the Inter-agency Committee a memorandum on Rural Development in Africa was prepared, which had the following substantive sections:

- (a) background to the need for integrated approach to rural development;
- (b) Role of individual United Nations agencies and their respective special contributions to rural development in Africa;
- (c) Guiding principles relating to an inter-agency and integrated approach to the problems of rural development in Africa;
- (d) A strategy for African Regional Inter-agency Concerted Action in Rural Development, including recommendations¹⁸.

In March 1968 under the auspices of ECA, the first ad-hoc session of the African Regional Inter-Agency Committee on Rural Development was convened in Addis Ababa to consider, *inter-alia*:

- (a) more closely the concept of integrated approach to rural development and its relevance to the African region;
- (b) ways and means of strengthening inter-agency collaboration in rural development, at both regional and national levels, and
- (c) work out a common strategy and the guiding principles for an inter-agency and integrated approach to the problems of rural development in member States¹⁹.

The Inter-Agency Committee also unanimously adopted the following recommendations:

- (a) that a permanent Regional Inter-Agency Committee on Rural Development in Africa be established at Addis Ababa to provide a forum for periodic consultations among agency representatives (at the technical level) and to consider, plan and suggest methods for implementing suitable projects which lend themselves readily to concerted action in matters relating to rural development and that the ECA should be made responsible for convening and servicing this Committee; and that
- (b) with a view to securing the fullest possible cooperation from African Governments in the adoption of the philosophy and strategy of the integrated approach to rural development (i) subregional seminars to be arranged for exchange of ideas and information on the integrated approach and (ii) in each subregion, one or two suitable pilot projects be identified to satisfy interdisciplinary requirements which

could be sponsored for Regional inter-agency coordination and assistance.

The results of the deliberations of the first and five subsequent sessions of the Inter-Agency Committee were embodied in a memorandum, "Guiding Principles and a Strategy for Integrated Approach to Rural Development in Africa", which was subsequently endorsed by the ninth (1969) session of the ECA²⁰.

The regional Conference on the "Integrated Approach to Rural Development" which was held at the Cooperative College in Moshi (Tanzania) in October 1969 was not only in direct response to the ECA resolution 197(IX) of the ninth session but also marked an important milestone in its history which provided the Secretariat with clear guidance. The resolution requested the Executive Secretary²¹, *inter-alia*, to:

- (a) take steps to secure the fullest possible cooperation of member Governments in the adoption of the philosophy and strategy of the integrated approach to their rural development programmes;
- (b) convene a region-wide meeting of experts and administrators of regional development programmes to discuss how policies, machinery and action for work on agricultural extension, mass media, rural health, and science and technology can reinforce each other in the development of rural communities in Africa;
- (c) intensify research on social inputs required for development, as well as studies of methods required to secure popular participation in rural development projects; and
- (d) promote coordination of the work of the ECA, the specialized agencies of the United Nations and UNICEF and other organizations having rural development programmes in Africa, in order to secure maximum impact of programmes on the social and economic progress of the region.

The Conference approached the question of integrated rural development from two angles: the theoretical and the practical. In preparation for the practical issues, the Conference conducted a theoretical analysis of: (i) the major factors which positively or negatively influence rural development (ii) the problems being encountered by African States in their rural development programmes, sector-by-sector and proceeded to agree on a schedule of essential objectives which would guide African states in the planning and programming of their rural development programmes. Thus, the stage was set for an evaluation of the past

strategies, as well as new strategies being adopted by African States in regional planning and in the coordination and integration of their rural development programmes.

The Conference in this attempt analyzed and critically examined the various factors constituting economic growth of both advanced countries and traditional societies. Participants also delved in, among others, in Colin Clacks' sectoral theory and W.W. Rostow's "Five Stages of Nations".

After a diagnostic approach of available sources, the Conference reached a consensus on a definition based on a survey conducted by the ECA. The data provided by the ECA confirmed the fact that 80 per cent of the population lived in rural areas and were engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishery and also underscored the fact that the economically active population in most African countries would continue to be engaged in rural-based activities and also remain for several decades as the main source of food, as well as the foreign currency required for procuring capital goods. Furthermore, it also acknowledged that agriculture would also play the vital role as the foundation of the African economy²². The critical role played by the rural sector as evidenced in the survey gave way to a practical definition, thereby providing a more realistic approach to the ideas and strategies for rural development.

In the light of the foregoing, "rural development" was, thus, conceived by the regional Conference as, "the outcome of a series of quantitative and qualitative changes occurring amongst a given rural population and whose converging effects would indicate in time a rise in the standard of living and favourable changes in the way of life" of the people concerned²³. Furthermore, the definition took into account the time factor which suggested that rural development was indeed a gradual process. The idea of stages developed by Rostow also appealed to the Conference since it would enable the planner to diagnose the present stage of the economy and help assess the various phases of activities to which appropriate action should correspond.

According to Rostow, there are five phases in the process of economic growth: i.e. the first phase-the traditional society, the second - the transitional stage during which the economic structure would undergo the changes leading to the third - the take-off phase of the growth process.

The "take-off phase", according to Rostow was a relatively short period of two or three decades during which the economy and the society on which it depends would indeed be transformed and that economic growth would become more or less self-sustained. The

fourth stage was self-sustained growth, and the last one is characterized by high mass consumption²⁴.

The Conference, taking into account the aforementioned theory, agreed that African economies were confirmed to be in the transitional phase between the traditional society and the take-off stage. Two series of objectives for rural development were thus schematically suggested: e.g. short- and medium-term objectives and longer-term objectives which reflect the need to:

- (a) increase the per capita income for the economically active population;
- (b) raise wages for the rural worker through increased productivity;
- (c) ensure the maximum coverage of the population's food needs by increasing production at a rate higher than that of population growth;
- (d) increase exports and reduce imports to augment the availability of foreign currency;
- (e) reduce the rural exodus and under-employment in the countryside.

In the long-run, i.e. (a period covering two or three decades) the establishment of a rural economy with self-sustained growth should be achieved.

In the same token ECA in its publication, *Integrated Approach to Rural Development in Africa*, stated that rural development should be viewed in an integrated milieu, calling for a set of policies and projects so designed and coordinated in order to raise and sustain the living standard of the rural population as a whole. Furthermore, it also implied modernization, which would bring about increased productivity and positive changes in human attitude, as well as generate a progressive level of output that also promotes the knowledge and attitudinal base for man's capacity to deal rationally with the environment²⁵.

"Any development" effort, the publication argued, "depends basically on the degree of the attitude of the population for its success and in doing so the popular participation of the majority of the population is vital. In fact, the end result of all development is human well-being and satisfaction. In addition to economic benefits, rural development implies the improvement in the educational and technical knowledge and in modern skills, improvement in land structures and better utilization, job opportunities, health and nutrition²⁶."

According to the publication, rural development calls for changes in the technical, economic and social

life of the rural people. The most significant interacting factors in these activities being: (i) geographical and ecological; (ii) economic; (iii) technological; (iv) sociological and institutional and (v) political factors²⁷.

ECA also convened a Meeting of Experts on the Development of Rural Life and Institutions at the University of Ghana, 22-31 July 1970.

The meeting recommended, among others:

- (a) to give special attention to the study of specific problems encountered by Governments in carrying out rural development programmes and to give assistance to them, at their request, in their efforts to promote the development of active rural life and institutions;
- (b) in collaboration with the specialized agencies, to undertake subregional studies and the investigation of the social and economic problems encountered in the process of rural development;
- (c) to continue to organize as far as possible regional meetings, workshops, seminars, study tours and training courses, in order to bring together administrators or village officials to exchange ideas on various aspects of the planning, administration, financing and execution of rural development programmes.

It also had the following major purposes:

- (a) to define and examine critically the problems encountered by member States in the West Africa subregion in their respective efforts to promote the development of rural life and institutions;
- (b) to exchange views on the planning, organization, administration, financing and implementation of rural development programmes in the countries of the subregion; and
- (c) to secure the cooperation and agreement of the governments of member States in the subregion for the adoption of a philosophy and strategy of integrated approach to rural development²⁸.

Rural Development Within the Context of Regional Development Planning

It was at that Expert Meeting that the concept of Regional Development found expression. Accordingly, regional development was conceived as "the cumula-

tive effect of interacting development processes influenced or controlled by governmental intervention and by collective and individual decision at the local, intermediate or regional and central levels. These interventions and decisions concerned the nature of the administration, as well as the resources and their proper allocation²⁹.

In other words, regional development involves regional planning based on the study and application of man's economic and social behaviour. Simply stated, it is planning for one or more regions inside a country analyzing the social, political and economic processes in a spatial setting corresponding with the structure of the socio-economic landscape. (E/CN.14/SWCD/59).

The policy for regional development was the following:

- (a) economic expansion;
- (b) improved patterns of human settlement and industrial location;
- (c) balancing of population and migration with employment opportunities;
- (d) the promotion of social progress; and
- (e) the evolution of effective legal, political, organizational and administrative patterns for carrying out regional development effort³⁰.

Although, the regional development approach was not a panacea for all the problems that affected the rural sector and rural development, yet it was envisaged as one of the most effective means of approaching planning and administrative problems and encouraging effective use of resources.

Successful examples of some pilot projects examined and appraised by the Expert Group Meeting within the framework of regional development included the construction of the Aswan Dam in Egypt, and the Akosombo project on the Volta River Authority in Accra, Ghana. Both of these projects had benefited the rural communities living in the vicinity of the region where the dams were constructed³¹.

The regional development programmes have also been classified under the following types of strategies adopted i.e:

- (a) River and lake basin development, e.g. Awash (Ethiopia), Sebou (Morocco) and Pangani and Wami (Tanzania);

- (b) Regional development in addition to major infrastructure projects, e.g. Aswan (Egypt), Volta (Ghana), Kariba (Zimbabwe), Kainki (Nigeria), Tan-Zam Highway (Tanzania and Zambia);
- (c) Integrated rural development, e.g. Tanzania's Tanga Integrated Rural Development Programme Ghana's Volta Region Agricultural Development Programme and others.
- (d) The use of existing or new administrative regions for regional planning, e.g. Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Cameroon, Libya, and Madagascar;
- (e) The use of central place and growth pole theories, e.g. studies for Kenya and Angola;
- (f) The multi-disciplinary survey approach, e.g. Ethiopia (Agro-Industrial Survey), Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia.

ECA Relations with NGOs: Highlights of Joint ECA Activities in Response to Commission Mandates

Pursuant to resolution 197 (ix), the Regional Inter-Agency Committee on Rural Development was established on a permanent basis in May 1969. Some of its activities were:

- (a) the all-Africa Regional Conference on the Integrated Approach to Rural Development;
- (b) a six-week West African subregional training course in Lome, Togo, (French-speaking) for middle-grade rural development personnel;
- (c) a Central Africa subregional seminar on the development of rural life and rural institutions was organized at Libreville, Gabon in December 1969 with the cooperation of FAO, UNDP and UNESCO. Twenty four top-level Government officials from 8 African French-speaking countries participated. This subregional meeting was intended to focus more directly upon problems of rural transformation and intergovernmental cooperation at the subregional level and to identify particular projects which could lend themselves to interagency concerted action in the field;
- (d) a second subregional expert group meeting on integrated approach to rural development in West Africa held in Accra (July 1970) for senior

administrators of rural development programmes, and

- (e) two experimental rural development projects at Ngouni (Gabon): (i) the Ngouni cooperative, and (ii) the Integrated Rural Development of Ngouni.

These seminars were basically geared to assist member States in the adoption of the philosophy and strategy of the integrated approach to rural development. These activities were also possible through the cooperation and assistance of the various international agencies and non-governmental organizations.

In that pursuit, the International Development Agency (DANIDA) was one of the earliest contributors which had collaborated with ECA. It had, for example sponsored (i) eight-month Diploma Courses in Rural Development for District Officers from African countries South of the Sahara and (ii) the United Nations' seminars for senior personnel from 1963-1973.

One of ECA's contribution in that endeavour had also been its close association since 1968 with the work of the Pan-African Institute for Development (PAID), which it had earlier helped to be established, especially in research and in the training of intermediate level rural development officers from both French-and English-speaking African countries.

In response to Commission resolution 197(IX), ECA also organized in Addis Ababa, in August 1971 a Symposium on Rural Development in Africa in the 1970s³². As a follow-up to the recommendations of the Symposium, ECA established a Voluntary Agencies Bureau (VAB) within the Social Development Division to promote working relationship with the various international voluntary agencies involved in rural development programmes in the region and to foster and strengthen cooperation with them at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. The Bureau attended regularly to specific requests from voluntary agencies for assistance in the fields of agriculture and settlement; health, child-welfare and nutrition, education and vocational training, small-scale rural industries, special schemes for youth applied research, famine relief and refugee resettlement schemes.

Another major activity in that collaboration with all the agencies was the publication of a **Directory of Activities of Voluntary Agencies in Rural Development in Africa**. The purpose of that Directory was to direct attention of African States to the types of projects being undertaken by voluntary agencies to meet the basic needs of rural communities and to promote a more effective cooperation among the voluntary agencies. ECA also played an important role in this collaboration

by providing assistance to the voluntary agencies in the identification of suitable projects, pre-investment studies, field management and evaluation of selective projects in operation.

The Bureau also responded to various requests e.g. research activities, emergency assistance, refugee projects, land settlement schemes, farm improvement and several self-help activities. These activities had fostered cooperation among member States, voluntary agencies and organizations within the United Nations system at the project level.

Both the Directory and the Newsletter served as a clearing house for dissemination of information on the work of voluntary agencies and similar local self-help projects. Other relevant educational information was the Development of Education Programme by means of radio and other mass media on innovative ideas, such as simple village technology and promotional activities etc.

Analysis of Inter-Organizational Problems and Possible Solutions

While the various activities of voluntary assistance benefited the development efforts, those schemes also had their own problems. In most African countries, several ministries or organizations were simultaneously involved in various aspects of rural development and extension services. But their activities were seldom coordinated. Each service or project was usually implemented by one ministry or agency without coordination with other ministries or external agencies.

In many cases Governments' requests to international agencies for technical assistance projects was sectoral. Consequently, insufficient data were given on the status of the projects of other sectors which were equally essential to the success of the requested project.

Additional problems arose from differences in the concept of rural development. At the international technical assistance level, the philosophy and approach to rural development by the various United Nations agencies had somewhat been divergent, and, in some cases, even conflicting and confusing to recipient governments. Some agencies over-emphasized community and general social approach, without comparable emphasis on increased production and income-generating activities. Other agencies placed too much reliance upon production and pursuit of material wealth and other endeavours, with almost complete neglect of the social and institutional aspects.

Experts believed that the main solution to such problems depended on the realization and acceptance

by both governments and agencies in the United Nations system that the concept of rural development involved much more than increased agricultural production, although its economic base is mostly agriculture. Secondly, the very concept of an "area", "regional" or "rural" development demanded the application of the knowledge and skills of all the relevant national or international services in an **integrated**, rather than an isolated or fragmented manner. Such an integrated approach had the primary objective of mobilizing the human and material resources in rural areas, with a view to stimulating all-round growth, thereby, improving the living and working conditions of the rural population³³.

As a result, the following practical course of actions were noted in order to accelerate integrated rural development:

- (a) active participation and involvement of the people, including women and youth;
- (b) analysis of techno-economic characteristics, including cost-benefit analysis covering the various physical and economic factors, such as land, water, energy, radio and communications, domestic and foreign marketing possibilities etc.;
- (c) basic industrialization of the rural sector;
- (d) human resources development: through manpower surveys and assessment, as well as training and job creation;
- (e) institutional development, land tenure, public services creation of appropriate association and organizations, co-operatives and credit services as well as administrative organizations, e.g. creation of a machinery for integrated approach and for effective communication at all levels.

The Role of Social Welfare and Rural Development in Africa

In June 1972, ECA sponsored the Fifth Social Welfare Seminar on the "Role of Social Welfare Services in Rural Development" in Lusaka (Zambia) in collaboration with the German National Committee of the International Council of Social Welfare³⁴.

The main objective was to explore the structure of social services and to examine the extent to which these services could contribute to the society and in particular rural development in the region.

The seminar noted that the particular problem of rural Africa was the depletion of the demographic potential of the rural area by the out-migration of talented and able youth, who were unable to obtain satisfactory education or employment. It was also recognized that since the cities themselves were not equipped to absorb the huge numbers of rural migrants, the urban living and working conditions had deteriorated. That trend had already been evidenced in many African townships and cities by the ever-increasing shanty towns, slum conditions, maladaptation to modern urban life, poor housing, unemployment and the concomitant rise of frustration amongst the youth were some of the evidence of the deterioration. In addition, social tension and crime were fast assuming alarming proportions and craving for early attention from Governments, as well as from international technical assistance agencies.

That showed that most of the critical urban problems stemmed to a large degree from the poor and neglected conditions of the rural areas. In many aspects, social workers had for a long time been mistakenly grappling without much success with the causative factors as the symptoms. They were mainly concerned with picking up the social causalities in urban areas rather than tackling the symptomatic problems arising from the stagnant rural sector.

The Seminar, thus, observed that the role played by the social welfare services in member countries was based on the pre-colonial orientation which followed the European traditional social welfare activities. Such activities catered for e.g. conventional foster homes, remand homes rehabilitation centres, etc. Those had very little association, if any, with either community or rural development efforts.

From that review of trends, the developmental functions of social work services, as well as other non-governmental organizations were critically examined and criticized for failing to play a vital role in accelerating socio-economic development by generating the dynamic social initiatives and actions in African rural community. A consensus was reached, therefore, that the field of social welfare, as well as governmental agencies should re-define their objectives and alter their policies and strategies in order to suit the needs of rural development in Africa that can facilitate the integrated approach and effective communication at all levels. Participants also agreed on the need for a programme that encompasses rural development which would finance and develop rural projects, quite apart from the complex urban needs and problems.

A new possible role of rural areas in the national economy was envisaged not as buffer areas nor merely as sources of export capital but as a new potential of

'ruralism' itself: this theory included a re-dignifying of rural life, a period of re-discovery and of invention of new forms of rural life which would eventually become a major contributory factor to the national development. That new "ruralism" was seen as a path towards economic self-sufficiency and as an alternative contributor to the new and desirable expression of the national development efforts³⁵. Its implications were said to be so crucial and so vital to the contemporary African development that it required revolutionary changes in the concept of social welfare and also on African national policies, approaches, social research and planning.

As a result, several countries embarked on a new Five-Year Plan which reflected the basic philosophy known as the new national economic policy which embraced the integrated approach to rural development. Governments endorsed not only the concept of the integrated approach to rural development but also tried to translate it into action by establishing national boards, embracing all cabinet ministers and in some cases development committee at provincial and district levels, as well as various rural social centres.

Through such machineries, several gigantic and multi-purpose development programmes and projects were established. The Gezera project in Sudan is a huge integrated rural project, CADU project in Ethiopia, the Intensive Development Zone in Zambia and the Ujamaa Villages in Tanzania are all examples of multisectoral, integrated and interdisciplinary approaches.

In February 1973, at its 171st plenary meeting (11th session) held at Accra, ECA made recommendations touching on the development and improvement of water supply, transport and rural environment. It also called for increased emphasis on the contribution of science and technology to food and agriculture, industry technology, natural resources development, rural development and indigenous scientific and technological advancement.

Organization of Seminars and Courses on United Nations Rural Development

As part of its commitment to assist member States, ECA continued to organize the United Nations Rural Development Seminars in response to their requests. Those seminars were basically geared to assist member States in securing the adoption of the philosophy and strategy of the integrated approach to rural development. Their organization was possible through the cooperation and assistance of the various international agencies and non-governmental organizations.

The main objectives of those seminars were to:

- (a) examine the main problems of rural development in Africa, with special attention to the need for an integrated approach to rural development, the conception, planning and execution of programmes;
- (b) consider the requirements for training to meet the needs of trained personnel, and
- (c) enable participants to acquire and prepare models for interdisciplinary rural development training programmes.

In the same year, November/December (1973), the first subregional workshop, on **International Co-operation in Rural Development in Africa** was held in Khartoum, Sudan. The workshop brought together representatives from five governments of Eastern and Southern Africa, international voluntary organizations, including field agents and national representatives and the United Nations specialized agencies. ECA also organized the second workshop in Tangier, Morocco from 9-13 September 1974 for North Africa which was attended by representatives from four governments, voluntary organizations and United Nations agencies. Both the Khartoum and Tangier Workshops enabled participants to share experiences, to develop strategies and to agree on a machinery for effective cooperation between governmental and non-governmental agencies involved in rural development in the countries of the two subregions.

The third Workshop, which was also organized by ECA, took place in Accra, Ghana from 22-27 November 1974 for countries of the West and Central Africa subregions. It was attended by nine governments and seven United Nations agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations and various research institutes.

That workshop gave due recognition to the emerging issue of rural poverty in Africa. It was also during that period that the slow economic growth in the industrialized, world brought the developing nations to near catastrophe. The economic crisis had come at a time when drought and the rate of population growth had already adversely affected Africa's development. It obliged governments to spend time and resources for meeting emergency situations which became acute and prolonged in the Africa region.

The economic crisis obliged Governments to work out national development workout strategies in an attempt to transform the rural area on whose productivity the entire African population depended upon for their survival. The Workshop, endorsed recommendations

regarding: strategies for cooperation, communication and information, identification of new projects and feasibility studies, local participation that includes women, evaluation of projects and special activities in areas affected by drought and other emergency situation³⁶.

Conference on the New International Economic Order (NIEO): the African Strategies for Self-Reliance

The Declaration and Plan of Action of the New Economic International Order (General Assembly Resolution 3362 (5-VII)) of 16 September 1975, proposed the rearrangement of the international economy, i.e. the responsibility of the industrialized countries toward the developing world. The strategy placed emphasis on the restructuring of international trade, the transfer of resources, the need to reform the international monetary system, the acceleration of industrialization, food production and agriculture and the application of science and technology. It also called for the cooperation among developing countries themselves which was considered essential to the new order.

While fully engaged in the movement to re-organize the international economy in favour of a just world order, African States were also placing special emphasis on the complementary need for national self-reliance and for interdependence among developing countries. The basic aims of Africa's strategy for a new international economic order as stated in the revised framework of principles for the implementation of the New International Economic Order, in Africa³⁷ included:

- (a) the deliberate promotion of an increasing measure of self-reliance;
- (b) the acceleration of internal resource-based growth and diversification by relatively autonomous processes, and
- (c) the progressive eradication of unemployment and mass poverty.

The Executive Secretary of ECA explained those aims in the following words at a conference held in Lagos in 1977: "self reliance must be visualized as a process by which skill development, technology, capital goods and services, finance and so on are internally generated rather than imported.. in other words, economic cooperation must be seen not merely as a means for market expansion but primarily as an instrument for the transformation of the structure of production and distribution"³⁸.

According to the revised framework of principles, that transformation would be through the interaction in three strategic areas: agricultural, rural and industrial sectors. Most African economies depended to a great extent on overseas capital, expertise and markets rather than creating interdependent internal production and marketing systems. Because of that they had become victims of the vagaries of the economies of the industrial countries. If the agricultural, rural and industrial sectors were developed simultaneously, internal selfreliance and economic independence could gradually be achieved.

In agriculture, Africa's strategy placed primary emphasis on food production because food supply had not kept pace with population growth and vital foreign exchange was being spent to import basic foods. Organization, management and incentives, including guaranteed markets were identified as key inputs to improve food production. Agricultural communication systems had to be reformed, industrial development with appropriate technologies, initiated land tenure system examined; water supplies guaranteed and improved methods of food storage, preservation, processing and packing included in the efforts to increase food production.

Rural transformation would, according to the strategy, assure supply of agricultural raw materials for industry and a market for industrial products, thus generating autonomous national growth. If the flow of migrants to large cities was to be diverted, employment would be created in the rural areas, both through agriculture and rural industrialization. A comprehensive research programme in micro-economics and micro-sociology of rural societies was necessary, especially since there was not much evidence that African policy-makers and planners seriously considered "the roles of women and children in agriculture, particularly food production, processing, and marketing". The emergence of an elite class of farmers was not desirable. Income distribution needed careful monitoring and local participation in decision-making both desirable and essential. Local self-help efforts could be useful in the process. Developers were cautioned of the possible negative effects of well-intentioned programmes.

Industrial development was deemed absolutely essential, but industry itself did not guarantee balanced growth, which depended on an interaction between industry and the other domestic economic sectors. Consideration of the role of industry raised questions as to what technologies were appropriate to particular societies and tasks and how to go about manpower development. In the intra-African context, state-owned African multinational corporations were proposed at national level. Attention was also drawn to small-scale

and rural industries and to the need for innovative approaches for their support and development.

Developing and improving the standard of living of people through an interlinked system of agriculture, rural development and industry require that attention be paid to other areas of action. Planning requirements in the following areas should to be taken into account:

- (a) Population factors, including the rising dependency-ratio, which means that society must be in a position to support an increasing numbers of children. The rate of population growth should be known and its implications understood;
- (b) Health, education and other services for rural development special attention should be paid to water supplies, food and nutrition;
- (c) Human resources development which calls for the encouragement of innovation in educational systems, the use of mass media for adult learning and a shift in emphasis towards the scientific and technological skills;
- (d) Natural resources and their development, particularly in relation to the rest of the economy, with high priority being given to fuel and energy and to their availability in rural areas;
- (e) Entrepreneurship the substitution of African for foreign entrepreneurs, requires the establishment of effective support institutions and services by governments and a recognition of the fact that entrepreneurs often start out as traders;
- (f) Technology transfer which to be useful calls for the initiation of national policies and research programmes and the active encouragement by governments of technological innovation and infusion;
- (g) Environmental considerations which are urgent in Africa where forests have been extensively destroyed and severe droughts have occurred. In this connection environmental changes should be carefully monitored so that early action can be launched;
- (h) External and intra-African trade needs to be encouraged along the lines of the strategies adopted for the establishment of the New International Economic Order. To this end, African capabilities in trade promotion need to be upgraded and facilities for institutionalized

training in trade, finance and marketing urgently required.

It should be recognized that copying economic cooperation models from advanced countries was useless since their circumstances and capabilities differed radically from those of African nations. It urged that governments should assume far more extensive roles in planning than they had previously done. Finally, it stressed that special attention must be given to the basic needs for human and natural resource development in the least-developed countries.

The ECA Revised Framework enunciated the fundamental basis for transformation in Africa. The NIEO's basic requirements of policies, strategies and programmes for rural transformation advocate, "the identification of target groups, evaluate their needs, problems and potential for development and to ensure that the resources allocated to them actually reach them"³⁹. Furthermore, the main objective is "to place these groups in a position where they can identify and exploit development opportunities themselves and benefit substantially from such exploitation".

ECA's position was clear in that there could be no new international order without basic changes in national orders. The new strategy represented a major move away from the position of ECA and its member States prior to 1970, which depended heavily on industrialization to achieve economic growth.

The new emphasis for Africa was on balanced development through intersectoral dependence, by linking industrialization with rural transformation and human resource development. Past economic structures which were, of course, evolved through a century or more of relationship with the metropolitan countries needed to be reoriented to generate employment and eradicate poverty. It was suggested that technologies must also be carefully chosen based on concern for the people who, by their own actions, should create and benefit from the development. Popular participation and equitable distribution of income were critical if Africa was to enter into a new era of self-reliance.

In that context the equal participation of both men and women was a prerequisite at all levels. It was noted that the success of efforts to establish the NIEO would have to depend on the recognition of those realities in global, regional and national plans and programmes⁴⁰. The strategy also led to the principles and practical course of action for grass-root participation.

At Kinshasa in March 1977, ECA, in resolution 321 (XII) on Integrated Rural Development, called on member States to "give the highest priority in their development programmes to effective and sustained

programmes for integrated rural development". It also invited organizations and agencies "to accord the highest priority in their African regional programmes to assisting the member countries in the planning and implementation of integrated rural development programmes, particularly the programmes designed to increase gainful employment, incomes, conditions of living and quality of life of the rural population". It further invited financial institutions like the IBRD, UNDP and ADB "to allocate greater financial resources, whenever possible, on a grant basis and to devise means of increasing loans on soft terms for rural development".

In September 1978, a regional symposium on non-formal education for rural development was jointly sponsored by ECA, FAO and UNICEF at Addis Ababa. In October and November 1978, ECA also organized an Inter-governmental meeting on Policy, Planning, Organization and Management of Integrated Rural Development for senior-level national rural development personnel at Arusha, Tanzania. The purpose of the meeting was to enable participants to evolve general principles or guidelines for evaluating integrated rural development projects. The meeting was also intended to reach some consensus on national policies in the Africa region on, *inter-alia*, integrated rural development, coordination of efforts, delegation of authority besides providing a forum for exchange of experiences in the field of policy, planning, organization and management of integrated rural development programmes in the region. The basic ECA document submitted to the meeting entitled: "Country Case Studies of the Organization, Administration and Financing of Rural Development Programmes in Africa" was updated and later formed one of the resource papers for the FAO World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCAR-RD)⁴¹.

Popular Participation in Integrated Rural Development⁴²

One of the important contributions at that meeting was a paper on "Popular Participation in Integrated Rural Development" (IRD/78/WD.1). The Secretariat sought to put forward a broader view of the subject. The concept was desired from the principle enunciated in the United Nations Declaration on Social Progress and Development. It stated that:

"All peoples and all human beings ... shall have the right to live in dignity and freedom to enjoy the fruits of social progress and should on their part, contribution to" and advocated; "the adoption of measures to ensure the effective participation, as appropriate, of all the elements

*of society in the preparation and execution of national plans and programmes of economic and social development; and the adoption of measures for an increasing rate of popular participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of countries..."*⁴³

Since the Declaration was made, the concept of popular participation has become much broader. However, it was still relatively new in the language of national development and there still existed a gap between acceptance of the importance of popular participation at the international policy level and its acceptance and implementation at the national development level. This was due to (i) ambiguity in the definition of the concept, (ii) absence of systematic evaluation of the benefits and costs associated with development strategies based on popular participation and (iii) lack of dissemination of national experiences on how to practically design and implement such strategies.

An attempt had been made in the paper to draw a distinction between two concepts - popular participation, on the one hand, and mobilization of the masses on the other - which were often confused. The concept had to be examined from the point of view of its possible use as a means for achieving the goal of national development. One possible definition of popular participation was: the "active involvement, at different levels, of the masses of people in decisions on the allocation of the forces of production and of societal values and roles, as well as on the distribution of the benefits of development and in the voluntary execution of resultant programmes and projects"⁴⁴.

In order to distinguish the concept of popular participation from other development concepts, stress was laid on: (i) participation of the mass in the formulation of decisions relating to development, (ii) contribution of the mass to the development effort, and (iii) distribution among them of the benefits of development.

ECA Relations with Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) Working Group

In response to the ECA's move in November 1969 on the need for the establishment of proper relationship between the ACC and the African Regional Integrated Rural Development Committee, the ACC made the following suggestions, which ECA endorsed to improve working relationship between the African Regional Inter-Agency Committee and the ACC Working Group:

- (a) that the African Regional Committee might make an annual report to the ACC Working

Group on any policy decisions and action programmes undertaken in the region;

- (b) that the African Regional committee might disseminate among its members information on actions taken by the ACC Working Group by circulating copies of its reports;
- (c) that it would be useful for the African Regional Committee to submit a report which would include the ECA resolution 197(IX) on "Integrated Approach to Rural Development in Africa"; Guiding Principle and Strategy for an Integrated Approach to Rural Development" (E/CM.14/422) and the Reports of the various seminars viz. the Moshi Conference and the Subregional Seminar at Libreville..."

In April 1975 at its 64th Session, ACC agreed on the approach and methodologies for undertaking an experimental inter-agency planning exercise in rural development. As a result, an Inter-Agency Committee was created and basic recommendations were adopted by the Inter-agency Task Force at its meeting held in March 1976 in Washington. The World Bank was designated as the lead agency, later on to be succeeded by the ILO and FAO respectively. Recommendations included: a poverty-oriented rural development approach, the initiation of an inter-agency expert working group in order to introduce comparability into the whole system, the launching of a special inter-agency effort and the concentration at the country level and creation of a systematic accumulation and compilation of information etc.

The report entitled "Poverty-oriented Rural Development and the United Nations System - A Turning Point (1976)"⁴⁵, which was presented at the ACC Task Force on Rural Development Meeting, "provided the conceptual framework for the consideration of rural development as a productive programme aimed at redressing poverty which covers all sectors. That was adopted by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and its Task Force on Rural Development in 1976 and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council etc.". As a result, the ACC undertook an inter-agency effort for two years to assist five countries in poverty eradication; the three from Africa, namely, Liberia, Somalia and Lesotho.

Increased emphasis was given to integrated programme for rural development with a view to promoting linkage with agriculture and industry, as well as promoting employment in rural areas and reducing mass poverty as advocated in the "Revised framework of principle for the implementation of the New International Economic Order in Africa". An Integrated Rural Development Section was established for that

purpose. Work on improving the economic and social activities of women had also been intensified for the same purpose and eventually work on youth was also initiated.

The Secretariat continued to promote the coordination of its work in rural development with that of various international voluntary agencies, sponsoring rural development programmes in Africa. An evaluation of a pre-feasibility study on integrated rural development projects was undertaken in some counties.

ECA, in co-operation with the OAU at the Second Conference of African Ministers of Social Affairs in January 1977, reviewed the social situation in Africa and social implications of the search for a new international economic order and adopted recommendations related to action required in the fields of social welfare and rural development, youth and related fields.

At the local level, popular participation was facilitated by face-to-face communication and the relative homogeneity of population. At the national level, popular participation helped to define the relative national priorities and to provide information to be used in considering alternatives. As a development strategy and instrument of change, popular participation required: (i) political commitment by national leaders to the concept (ii) decentralization of decision-making in respect of decisions on programming and project implementation, (iii) careful attention to the way in which people were initially motivated, (iv) training, (v) capacity of the population to organize itself into a productive community and (vi) monitoring and evaluation.

A lengthy discussion followed the presentation. Participants recognized the importance of involving the rural masses in the planning and implementation of programmes and projects that effected them and considered it essential to integrated rural development even though many African countries had failed to utilize it fully in their rural development programmes. They made further suggestions on the topic.

The requirements for popular participation, should also include the following: (i) the need for specific government policies to encourage popular participation, (ii) the need to complement limited rural resources with external resources, (iii) ability of community to mobilize resources and to initiate activities and participate in them, (iv) readiness of the community to change and its awareness of the benefits of community participation, (v) need for communication flows from the centre to the periphery and (vi) presence of an organizational structure conducive to the adoption of the concept of popular participation.

Concerning training, emphasis was put on functional literacy taking into consideration the fact that meaningful participation of the mass did not necessarily require literacy and the provision of rural training centres and library facilities. It was also stressed that the rural population be involved in the evaluation process and that their involvement in all development processes should be spontaneous and voluntary and not merely active.

Joint-Venture: ECA - FAO Collaboration on the Development of Food and Agriculture in Africa

ECA, with a long history of commitment to the development of the region, continued its efforts in assisting member States in the formulation and implementation of meaningful programmes for the speedy realization of their development goals.

Central to that pursuit was the thrust of resolving some, if not all, the economic problems of food and agriculture in Africa which was regarded as the joint responsibility of ECA and FAO, respectively. That was designed to avoid duplication of competition in areas of mutual interest.

Accordingly, the Joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division (JEFAD) was established in 1959 by signing the first memorandum of understanding between their respective organizations. That was followed by the second memorandum of understanding signed in 1966 in order to develop a fruitful and comprehensive programme of collaboration. The third in 1977 signified a turning point in the status of a joint division with the added responsibility of undertaking field projects, at both the regional and subregional levels, with technical and policy back-stopping from the FAO regional office in Accra and its headquarters.

In the early years, JEFAD concentrated on background studies and establishment of intergovernmental organizations. In 1976, however, in view of the deterioration of the food situation in Africa and the consequent Freetown Declaration, the Regional Food Plan for Africa (AFPLAN) was prepared jointly by FAO and ECA, which was later adopted by the FAO Regional Conference of Ministers in Arusha in 1978 and endorsed by the fifth meeting of ECA Conference of Ministers in Rabat, Morocco in 1979.

The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action: The Peasants Charter

July 1979 was a significant month that attempted to seek a global solution in the long and difficult struggle against poverty and hunger; the adoption by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in Rome of a Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action which was endorsed by 145 governments⁴⁶.

The Declaration constitutes a charter for the rural poor which is referred to as "the Peasants' Charter". This Charter points out that rural development being a global problem should be tackled simultaneously on several interrelated fronts: e.g. by the rural institutions at village level, by reorientation of national development policies at country level and finally by the realization of a New International Economic Order throughout the world.

The goal of the agrarian reform and rural development was transformation of rural life and activities in all their economic, social, cultural, institutional environment and human aspects. It also facilitated eradication of poverty, including nutritional improvement and policies for attaining growth, with equity, redistribution of economic and political power and peoples' participation.

The Charter, in spelling out the Programme of Action, included guidelines and principles to be followed by all nations and agencies within the United Nations system. In doing so, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations was mandated to play a leading role in the new strategy with regard to food, agriculture, nutrition and other areas of competence in assisting developing countries to promote agrarian reform and rural development.

It is worth recalling in this connection ECA's Rabat Resolution 352(XIV) of March 1979 on AGRARIAN REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT. It requested "the Executive Secretary to collaborate actively with the Food and Agriculture Organization and other relevant United Nations Organizations in the work of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination Inter-agency Task Force on Rural Development Joint Exercise at Country Level for Africa". It also called upon ECA, in collaboration with FAO and the Organization of African Unity, to convene a Regional Meeting on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development as soon as practicable to consider the recommendations of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural

Development, and the practical ways of implementing those pertinent to the African Region".

The Monrovia Strategy and the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) for the Economic Development of Africa

In light of the global meeting on agrarian reform and rural development, the "Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa" was adopted by the first Economic Summit of the Assembly of Heads of State and government of the OAU in Lagos, Nigeria on 28/29 April 1980. The strategy emphasized agrarian concerns.

The Monrovia Strategy: The Monrovia Strategy and Declaration of Commitment sought to establish self-sustaining development and economic growth based on collective self-reliance. They also aimed at improving the standard of living of the African people and to reduce mass unemployment. In keeping with Africa's demographic trend and the predominant rural emphasis, the Plan stressed first food production and agricultural development and then industry. The industrial sector was further designed to provide the supply of the bulk of industrial inputs required for agricultural production, processing, storage and transportation.

Other aspects of the Plan dealt with energy policy and supply, trade-mechanisms for promoting intra-African trade in raw materials including the modalities of long-term purchases and sales, agreements on raw materials and semi-finished and finished industrial and agricultural products, road transport and communications, science and technology, manpower development and utilization, etc.

At the heart of the food problem in Africa was the fact that member States did not usually give the necessary priority to agriculture both in the allocation of resources and in paying sufficient attention to policies for the promotion and improvement of rural life. Agriculture, after all, had always been the basis of rural life and progress. To improve the food situation in Africa, the basic requirement was also a strong political will to channel a greatly increased volume of resources to agriculture, to carry through essential reorientation of social systems, to apply policies that would induce small farmers to achieve higher levels of productivity and to set up effective machineries for the formulation of relevant programmes and for their implementation. In short, the Plan constituted the first comprehensive region-wide formulation and articulation of the preferred long-term economic objectives of African countries.

It also had a medium-term objective which over the period 1980-85 would bring an improvement in the food situation and would also lay the foundation for the achievement of self-sufficiency in cereals, livestock and fish products.

The Plan also set a number of targets, including a growth rate of 4 per cent for the agricultural sector which if achieved would have brought about food self-reliance in the region. The LPA was also complemented by the Final Act of Lagos (FAL) in order to overcome the hinderance created by the extreme balkanization of the continent through the promotion of subregional economic cooperation and integration. The FAL had a target date for setting up an African Economic Community by the beginning of the 21st century. The LPA was not only geared towards achieving long-term development goals and targets but also took cognizance of the need for short-term actions. However, all these were seen as constituting a continuum of the long-term development and transformation process. Thus, African countries were expected to restructure and transform their social and economic structures and policies continuously with a view to progressively creating the conditions for the realization of the long-term objective of self-reliant and self-sustained development. Unfortunately, with the intensification of the economic crisis in Africa in the early 1980s, the approach of the LPA was in many cases abandoned as the main preoccupation, as most African policy makers increasingly became crisis management for economic survival. The focus, thus, shifted to short-term concerns resulting mainly from external shocks such as the collapse of the regime of stable exchange rates and commodity markets, high interest rates, persistent drought and mounting external debt obligations⁴⁷

African Economic Crisis

Thirty years after the majority of African countries attained their political independence, the African continent still faces the decade of the 1990s seriously handicapped by its underdeveloped condition. This underdevelopment is manifested socially, among other things, by the low level of satisfaction of the basic needs of the population. Other problems are continued widespread illiteracy and the persistence of major endemic diseases. Equally, in the event of a catastrophe, Africa could not meet even a modicum of its needs in terms of food, energy, spare parts, pharmaceutical and other essentials.

Food and Agriculture

Although the African continent experiences rapid growth in population and urbanization, the food and agriculture situation in the region has continued to

deteriorate. Food production and consumption per person had fallen below nutritional requirements. This is because food production has not kept up with targets set, post-harvest losses have been high and periodic shortages have been severe. As a result, Africa has had to rely increasingly on food imports, which in turn resulted in a drain on foreign exchange resources.

In this respect, it has long imposed upon its economic systems which inhibits the range of natural resources utilized. It has been put in a straight jacket to produce what it does not consume, and to consume what it did not produce. It has for a long time been exporting raw materials at low and in most cases declining prices so that it can import semi-finished and finished products at high and rising prices. Obviously no programme for the economic liberation of Africa will succeed unless it deal with this system of subjugation and exploitation.

The economic malaise of most of the 1970s, for example, continued into the 1980s and by mid 1980s the continent was in a deep socio-economic crisis and rapidly worsening economic infrastructure. It was against such background that a number of major strategies were adopted in order to ameliorate the ever-worsening socio-economic condition of the region.

The Lagos Plan of Action was basically formulated to strengthen the objectives and strategies of AFPLAN by focusing on short-term priority measures for the five-year period, 1980-85. The LPA emphasized the adoption of appropriate strategies and a change in course through the re-orientation of social and economic systems and the application of national policies for increased food and agricultural production.

The primary responsibility to implement the stated objectives and, therefore, resolve the African crisis is that of the African countries themselves, with only complementary effort from the international community. Increased attention to the African food problems has stimulated a more comprehensive diagnosis of its causes and, therefore, sought to establish a more purposeful long-term direction and priority by Africa and her development partners, as evidenced by the preparation of such key programmes as the Regional Food Plan for Africa (AFPLAN) in 1978 which, in turn, formed the basis for the agricultural chapter of the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action and more recently APPER/UN-PAAERD and UN-NADAF⁴⁸.

It was in that context that many African countries found themselves trapped in short-term stabilization and adjustment programmes that tended to involve a sharp delinking from and dichotomisation of the short-term objectives of re-establishing financial balance and the long-term objective of social and economic trans-

formation. The same context dictated the recent trends in the implementation of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER), 1986-1990 and the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) 1986-1990 replaced by the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). Although APPER and UN-PAAERD, replaced by the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), aimed at laying the foundation for self-sustained development, many African countries have remained under pressure to cope with only the symptoms of the crisis, such as budgetary and external disequilibria, at the expense of leaving the fundamental structural causes of the crisis unaddressed.

The social impact has even raised more doubts and questions not only at policy-making levels within and outside Africa but also in international fora, such as the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly during the mid-term review of UN-PAAERD, replaced by the UN-NADAF. As is well known, the implementation of these programmes have entailed significant reduction of expenditures in social sectors, especially education and primary health care, as well as in the size of the public sector and parastatals with negative consequences on employment.

The overall assessment of orthodox adjustment programmes has led to the conclusion that although these programmes aim at restoring growth, generally through the achievement of fiscal and external balances and the free play of markets forces, these objectives cannot be achieved without addressing the fundamental structural bottlenecks of African economics. Consequently, at the beginning of 1988, the ECA, with the financial support of UNDP, embarked on a search for an African alternative framework to structural adjustment and structural transformation problems of the African economies. This exercise received great encouragement from the General Assembly of the United Nations when, during the mid-term review of UN-PAAERD replaced by UN-NADAF, at its forty-third session it called upon African countries to increase their efforts in the search for a viable, conceptual and practical framework for economic structural adjustment programmes in keeping with the long-term development objectives and strategies at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.

The search for such an alternative was conceived, since the beginning, as a process of extensive consultations, both within and outside Africa and with a view to reaching a consensus among African countries and between Africa and its bilateral and multilateral development partners. In that regard, an International Advisory Board was set up including African and non-

African high officials from governments and international organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions with a view to providing a broad orientation of the study. It was with the same spirit of consensus-building that the preliminary findings of the study were discussed at an international workshop of African and non-African economists held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 3 - 5 January, 1989. The very stimulating and fruitful discussions which took place at the workshop made it possible for ECA to prepare a preliminary draft for government officials of the Ministries of Finance and the Ministries of Economic Planning and Development.

At the intergovernmental level, the proposals were first examined by a meeting of senior officials of the Ministries of Finance and Central Banks in Blantyre, Malawi from 28 February to 5 March 1989 and then by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance which also took place in Blantyre from 6 to 8 March 1989. The conclusions and recommendations of the ministerial conference, as contained in the Blantyre Statement, constituted substantial inputs in the revision of the proposals for presentation to the twenty-fourth session of the Commission and the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic Planning and Development, which was preceded by the meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW). Both meetings took place in Addis Ababa from 27 March to 9 April 1989. The final stage in the consensus-building process was the joint meeting of African Ministers of Economic Planning and Development and the Ministers of Finance held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 10 April 1989 which adopted the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP).

The main thrust of AAF-SAP is its holistic nature in which the macro-economic framework, the policy directions and measures and the implementation strategies take into account the dynamic relationship existing among all major elements related to adjustment with transformation. Thus, the dichotomy between structural adjustment and long-term development is eliminated. The alternative framework also puts great emphasis on the full mobilization and efficient utilization of domestic resources and the need to establish an enabling environment for sustainable development and to adopt a pragmatic approach between the public and private sectors. Above all, at the centre of the alternative framework is the human dimension - the recognition that it is only through the motivation and the empowerment of people, as well as by ensuring the equitable distribution of income that development can take place on a sustainable basis. An adjustment programme that marginalizes people is doomed to failure.

Three other major characteristics of AAF-SAP must also be stressed. First, it should be noted that the alternative framework is not a standard programme to be applied indiscriminately in all countries under all circumstances. On the contrary, depending on the peculiar characteristics of each individual country, AAF-SAP will be used for designing specific country programmes, selecting appropriate policy instruments and measures and adopting the relevant implementation strategy. Secondly, as a human-centered framework, AAF-SAP implies full democratization of all aspects of economic and social activities and in all stages from decision-making to implementation. Thirdly, the alternative framework calls for intensified intra-country cooperation in the design, implementation and monitoring of national programmes for adjustment with transformation.

Major Policy Directions in AAF-SAP: It should have become abundantly clear by now that, both on theoretical and empirical grounds, the conventional SAPs are inadequate in addressing the real causes of economic, financial and social problems facing African countries which are of a structural nature. There is, therefore, an urgent need for an alternative to the current stabilization and adjustment programmes in Africa. Such an alternative will have to take into consideration, among other things, the structure of production and consumption and the people who are the main actors in the development process. The requirements of this alternative are articulated in the AAF-SAP in terms of a new framework for the design and formulation of programmes of adjustment with transformation, the policy directions and major instrument of policy required and the strategies for implementation and monitoring.

Given the structural bottlenecks in African economies, adjustment must be seen as part of a continuous process of transformation rather than as a dis-

continuous exercise on its own. Consequently, the siege-mentality of adhoc crisis management approach must yield place to the total immersion of adjustment programmes with the long-term needs of transformation, since adjustment policies and measures are unlikely to yield any full and enduring benefits outside the context of transformation. It is in this framework that the major policy directions outlined below must be pursued:

- (a) Enhanced production and efficient use of resource;
- (b) Greater and more efficient mobilization of resources;
- (c) Improvement of human resources capacity through better health, education and other social infrastructure;
- (d) Strengthening the scientific and technological base;
- (e) Vertical and horizontal diversification of goods and services to meet the needs of the majority of the population in all sectors.

The policy directions include: food self-sufficiency and lessening import dependence, re-alignment of consumption patterns with production patterns and managing debt and debt-services.

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