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Kinshasa, 24 February to 3 March 1977

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF DONORS
FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN REMOTE SENSING PROGRAMME

Kinshasa, 17-18 February 1977

Opening of the meeting and attendance (agenda item 1)

1. The Meeting was opened by Mr. Adebayo Adedeji, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa. In his statement, Mr. Adedeji said that he was delighted that those countries represented had accepted ECA's invitation to attend the Meeting of Donors. Originally scheduled to be convened at Addis Ababa at the beginning of February 1977, the dates and venue of the Meeting had been changed to give donors more time to examine the documents prepared by ECA.
2. He stated that a lot had happened since the meeting of experts held at Addis Ababa in September 1975 and referred to resolutions of the General Assembly concerned with the use of remote sensing in the exploration of natural resources by developing countries and recalled the various ECA resolutions concerned with the same subject. He mentioned in particular Conference of Ministers resolution 280 (XII) of 28 February 1975 which requested the Executive Secretary to take the necessary steps to establish remote sensing facilities in Africa.
3. He then stated that the Conference of Ministers to be held at Kinshasa from 24 February to 3 March would expect to receive a report on the progress made to implement resolution 280 (XII).
4. He recalled the meeting of experts at Addis Ababa in September 1975 which had recommended the sending of a technical mission to a number of African countries to examine how existing or planned national activities could be used for the proposed remote sensing facilities in Africa. The mission had produced a very comprehensive report which had been circulated to all African Governments and had been discussed at an intergovernmental meeting in Addis Ababa in September 1976.
5. The report had made specific recommendations about introducing remote sensing technology into Africa and avoiding future duplication while devoting attention to developing African capability and building the necessary institutions for remote sensing in the region.

6. The intergovernmental meeting of Addis Ababa had endorsed the report of the technical mission which had recommended inter alia (a) the establishment of two ground stations initially at Kinshasa and Ouagadougou with a possibility of a third station for parts of Africa not covered by the two initial stations; (b) five training and user assistance centres at Cairo, Ouagadougou, Kinshasa, Ile-Ife and Nairobi; and (c) an African Remote Sensing Council and a secretariat to co-ordinate the programme.

7. The same intergovernmental meeting had requested the Executive Secretary to convene another meeting to draw up the constitution of the African Remote Sensing Council and to examine the proposed expenditure figures for the next five years.

8. Time was now opportune to convene a Meeting of Donors and to submit a report to the ECA Conference of Ministers. The final step would be to convene a Meeting of Plenipotentiaries which could have before it the report from this Donors' Meeting and would be called upon to adopt the constitution of the African Remote Sensing Council.

9. He said the secretariat viewed the report of the technical mission which had been endorsed by the intergovernmental meeting as a complete package deal that should be implemented in its entirety; and although the proposed programme would cost a great deal of money, it lent itself to regional co-operation in the continent. ECA member States had participated in the various intergovernmental meetings organized by the secretariat and had affirmed their political will and desire to implement the programme.

10. Mr. Adedeji then referred to the budgetary proposals submitted by the secretariat and noted that capital and recurrent costs would amount to \$US 70 million, of which the Kinshasa and Ouagadougou stations would cost \$US 12.75 million while the five training centres would cost \$US 45.5 million. The balance would be spent on institutional support, including the secretariat. He further noted that implementation during 1978 would cost \$US 17 million and annual expenditure would amount to \$US 12.5 million.

11. Finally, Mr. Adedeji told the meeting that he was looking forward to receiving frank comments from delegations on the documents circulated so that their experience would contribute towards the successful implementation of the African Remote Sensing Programme. He emphasized the importance of remote sensing technology to the African region and stated that the secretariat was determined to implement the Programme.

12. The following countries attended the Meeting: Austria, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Zaire.

13. The African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme were also represented at the Meeting.

Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 2)

14. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening statement by the Executive Secretary
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. General remarks by heads of delegation
4. Review of the draft constitution
5. Draft capital budget: 1978-1982
6. Draft recurrent budget: 1978-1982
7. Pledges by representatives of donor countries
8. Any other business
9. Closure of meeting

General remarks by heads of delegations (agenda item 3)(a) United States of America

15. The United States representative stated that his Government was delighted to come to Kinshasa to take part in deliberations concerning remote sensing technology in Africa. He congratulated the ECA secretariat for calling attention to the importance of remote sensing for African development. His Government had followed with interest the steps ECA had taken towards introducing the new technology to Africa.

16. Remote sensing, however, was not a panacea for development; and, although it provided a new source of data about man's environment and permitted the introduction of new analytical techniques for planning the management of the earth's resources, it had its limitations and its great potential could be realized only in combination with other data-gathering technologies such as aerial photography and ground investigations. Remote sensing by satellite was an important new technique which complemented and reinforced other techniques.

17. The value of remote sensing lay in the practical application of data to critical African problems, particularly to those related to natural resources and the environment.

18. He went on to state that remote sensing technology would make a significant contribution to African development only when it was better understood by African policy makers and managers and applied by African experts. Training was, therefore, a critical aspect of the Remote Sensing Programme, including the training of technicians, teachers, government officials in practical applications of the data and sensitizing managers and policy makers to the opportunities and possibilities that the technology offered.

19. He further stated that, although non-African donors would play an important role in initiating the Programme, Africanization of the Programme would involve a strong and long-term commitment of people and financial contributions by Governments. His Government was looking forward to joining ECA and the donor community in taking concrete steps towards the launching of the Programme.

(b) Canada

20. The Canadian representative thanked ECA on behalf of CIDA for having invited that agency to participate at the Meeting. He outlined Canada's activities in the field of remote sensing in a large country consisting of 10 provinces, each having jurisdiction over the resources within its borders.

21. CIDA had provided an expert to participate in the ECA technical mission and was now actively investigating future contributions to the proposed programmes in co-operation with the United States and France. The draft constitution was an excellent and comprehensive document while the budget was realistic.

(c) African Development Bank

22. The representative of the African Development Bank stated that his organization would study this project in the context of its policies and principles to see how it would participate, together with other sponsors, in the implementation of the Programme.

(d) France

23. The representative of France stated that his Government had been following with interest the dynamic Programme in remote sensing which has been formulated by the Economic Commission for Africa and that it was prepared to participate in the implementation of some parts of the Programme.

(e) Austria

24. The Austrian representative thanked ECA for inviting his Government to participate in that important Meeting and stated that his Government had actively participated in deliberations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

25. He said that the decision to establish the African Remote Sensing Programme was timely and that remotely sensed data would be important in tackling the problems of drought in the Sahel. He stressed the importance of training African manpower and assured the Meeting that his Government would make a careful study of all possibilities of contributing to the African Remote Sensing Programme.

Review of the draft constitution (agenda item 4)

26. The representative of the United States remarked that the draft constitution was an African document, drafted by the ECA secretariat, and deliberated upon by an African intergovernmental meeting at Nairobi. The constitution had underlined the need for a co-ordinated Remote Sensing Programme in Africa and articulated sound concepts. However, a few points needed to be made.

27. The task of the Council is the capstone of the African Remote Sensing Programme, but it was important to build a functioning substructure first - such as the regional centre at Nairobi, the national programme of Zaire, and hopefully in future a regional centre in the Upper Volta. He expressed the view that time and money spent on the Council should not divert attention and resources from the regional and national programmes.

28. Article II, which spelled out the objectives of the Council, was commended but the Council should not undertake managerial and operational activities which should be the responsibility of regional and national programmes. He hoped, however, that the Council would soon be established and its relationship with other remote sensing organizations in Africa would be worked out.

29. The representative of France stated that he wished to see the ambitious Programme prove successful and effective. Certain dangers such as over-centralization should be avoided.

30. The Canadian representative urged that the total Programme should be kept in balance to assure that the maximum benefit was derived from minimum expenditure on administrative overheads.

31. The Executive Secretary agreed with that view and added that the administrative structure would grow only as the actual Programme grew; but it was important to agree on the basic concept of the required structure.

32. The United States delegation then expressed the view that the draft constitution appeared to have overloaded the functions of the Council as compared to what was provided for in the report of the ECA technical mission. It was important for the Council to act only as spokesman for the African Remote Sensing Programme globally without taking over the management of the actual Programme.

33. The delegation of Zaire felt that principal donors should be African countries themselves since they were familiar with problems of their countries and had agreed to establish the regional Remote Sensing Programme through ECA. He had the impression that the meeting was discussing matters that had already been agreed upon instead of devoting its attention to study all the documents so as to produce a quantified programme for the setting up of remote sensing facilities in Africa.

34. An amendment to article II (e) was proposed by the United States delegation to read, "to encourage the use of remote sensing technology ..." and the secretariat proposed an insertion in the penultimate line of article II (f) to read "the activities of such centres as well as those which already exist ...".

35. Article XI 3 (b) was amended by adding the clause "in pursuance of the objectives of article II" after the words "such projects".

36. The Executive Secretary then proposed that the suggested amendments and modifications would be transmitted to ECA member States for their consideration.

Draft capital and recurrent budgets (agenda items 5 and 6)

37. A member of the secretariat introduced the budget, stating that it presented the first effort to produce planning estimates for the Programme. He referred to table 1 on page 1 and explained that the differences appearing there related to local factors.

38. On page 2 he drew attention to capital and recurrent expenditures which had been separated and stated that land and building expenses would be contributed by African Governments.

39. Item 17 referred to the recruitment of short-term consultants to enable highly qualified people to be recruited from abroad to assist in launching the Programme.

40. One delegation wondered whether ground stations would be operational within 15 months as was indicated in the budget. Moreover, he questioned the idea of using expatriates as expensive short-term consultants instead of employing them on a long-term basis to assure programme continuity. The question of salaries was raised, especially for African personnel, who would in addition be sent abroad for training. High salaries and not using expatriate personnel, moreover, might drain African trained manpower from national programmes to the activities of the Council.

41. Other activities included the possibility of establishing a third receiving station and NASA fees.

Pledges by representative of donor countries (agenda item 7)

42. The representative of the United States reaffirmed that ECA and African countries could count on his Government's support in implementing the African Remote Sensing Programme. He mentioned ongoing programmes in the use of LANDSAT data supported by his Government in the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya, Mali, the Upper Volta and Ghana. Requests had also been submitted by Governments of Mali, Mauritania, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and the Sudan for assistance on various rural development projects to which the United States intended to respond favourably.

43. The USAID training programmes included seminars, which had already been held in Bamako and Nairobi, and the sponsorship of workshops, two of which were planned for 1977. Moreover, USAID had made available the services of Mr. Lowe for the ECA technical mission, and of Mr. Palgen to serve as an adviser to the ECA secretariat. USAID had given preliminary approval for the amount of \$US 400,000 to support ERTS Zaire on a number of national projects for a period of two to three years.

44. His Government was now prepared to support the establishment of the Trainer and User Assistance Centre of Nairobi to serve Uganda, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, Malawi and Somalia by co-locating remote sensing and training and user assistance facilities with the Centre for Surveying and Mapping in Nairobi. For that project, funding had been budgeted in the order of \$US 2.5 million over a five-year period. A project agreement had already been negotiated with the Director of the Centre.

45. In collaboration with Canada and France, the United States was prepared to assist in the establishment of remote sensing facilities in the Upper Volta. To that end, Canada, the United States of America and France had formed a technical committee in which ECA and the Upper Volta Government were invited to participate. The United States was prepared to make an initial contribution of over \$US 0.5 million in the current fiscal year.

46. Finally, the United States looked forward to providing continuing support and hoped that other donors would participate in future in the implementation of the programme.

47. The representative of Canada outlined the remote sensing activities Canada was already supporting in Mali, the United Republic of Tanzania and Kenya and the post-doctoral fellowship programmes, two of which had been followed by a Nigerian and a Kenyan.

48. He recalled the tripartite meeting hosted in Ottawa in January 1977 in connexion with the Ouagadougou centre, which would be carried out in two phases: (a) provision of basic training and user assistance; and (b) installation of a receiving station. The mechanics of implementation required ECA and the Upper Volta Government to appoint a responsible agent with whom the donors would work to implement the project.

49. Canada would be prepared, subject to Government approval, to assist in the implementation of phase (a) and take part in the preparation of studies that would lead to the implementation of phase (b).

50. The French representative stated that his Government was prepared to make a contribution to the establishment of facilities in Ouagadougou. It would be a modest contribution in collaboration with Canada and the United States. For fiscal year 1977, the French Government had considered making a contribution of approximately 1.5 to 2 million francs for the Upper Volta project.

51. Finally, the Executive Secretary stressed the point that in line with the recommendations of the ECA technical mission as adopted by the African inter-governmental meeting, the Ouagadougou project must be viewed as a regional project. The problem remaining for ECA was to find resources for the implementation of the Programme in the remaining centres which, together with those already mentioned, formed a package for the entire African Remote Sensing Programme.