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**First Meeting of the Conference of African Ministers
Responsible for Human Development
Africa Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

MEETING OF THE MINISTERS

20-21 January 1994

DRAFT

**REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development was established in compliance with Resolution 757(XXVIII) of 5 May 1993 by the UN ECA Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic Development and Planning, which called for the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of the Commission with a view to enabling it to address the emerging challenges and priorities of the region more effectively. The broad mandate of the Conference is to address issues related to sustained development and transformation through the effective implementation of human-centred development strategies and programmes; to assist member States to develop and to harmonize their policies and programmes in the area of human development and related fields such as human resources, social affairs and rehabilitation and humanitarian affairs, popular participation, etc. and to monitor developments in these fields; to encourage the integration of the human dimension into development policies, plans and programmes at both the macroeconomic and sectoral levels; and to encourage the establishment of appropriate mechanisms at the national, subregional and regional levels to ensure human development through democratization and popular participation.

2. The Conference meets every four years. Its work is undertaken in the inter-sessional years, by a Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen which meets every two years and whose mandate is inter alia to monitor human development conditions on the content and to review and follow-up on the implementation of the decisions of the Conference.

3. The First Meeting of Ministers of the Conference was convened from 20 to 21 January 1994 and provided a convenient forum for the preparation by the region of its common position on the World Summit for Social Development, which was to take place in Copenhagen, Denmark from 6 to 12 March 1995, thus,

serving as the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Summit for Social Development, as mandated in Paragraph 3 of Commission resolution No. 749(XXVIII).

4. The Meeting of Ministers was preceded by a meeting of the Preparatory Committee of Experts from 17 to 19 January 1994.

5. In addition to the general debate, the Conference considered and adopted an African Common Position on Social and Human Development in Africa for presentation to the World Summit for Social Development as well as the Report of the First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of Experts of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development, submitted to it by the Preparatory Committee of Experts.

II. ATTENDANCE

6. In attendance at the conference were representatives from the following countries: Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

7. Observers from the following member States of the United Nations were present: Canada, France, Japan, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

8. The following agencies and organizations of the United Nations system were represented at the Conference: Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO); International Labour Organization (ILO); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); World Health Organization (WHO); and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

9. The meeting of Ministers was also attended by observers from the following intergovernmental, regional, international and non-governmental organizations and institutions: The African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development (ACARTSOD); the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Christian Relief and Development Agency (CRDA); Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA); the European Union (EU), Forum of African Voluntary Development Organizations (FAVDO), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), international Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Inter-Africa Group; Organization for Social Science Research in East Africa (OSSREA), Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), Shelter Afrique and the World Student Federation.

10. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was represented.

III. OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

11. The Officer-in-Charge of the Commission, Mr. Samba Jack, who also acted as chairperson of the opening ceremony, welcomed the Ministers to Africa Hall on behalf of Mr. Layashi Yaker, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa. He also expressed the regrets of the Executive Secretary to the Conference, for having to travel out unexpectedly on an urgent official business. He welcomed the representative of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, Dr. Duri Mohamed and invited him to make a statement to the Conference.

12. In his opening statement, H.E. Dr. Duri Mohamed, Minister of Economic Planning, Transitional Government of Ethiopia, welcomed the distinguished ministers and delegates to the First Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development on behalf of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia. He observed that the theme of the conference was timely and pertinent since human development had been brought to centre stage in Africa's search for solution to its development problem.

13. He emphasized that all efforts must be made to weave development around people, not people around development. There must be investment in human capabilities to unleash their creativity, increase their productivity and enable them to overcome the common challenges of poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment and reverse the disintegration of the social fabric of African societies.

14. Dr. Duri said that the Transitional Government of Ethiopia was closely following the deliberations on the state of human development in Africa in all its ramifications and responding to the call for an urgent and comprehensive approach to tackling the issues of human development. He cautioned that it was not enough to be dissatisfied and dismayed with the deteriorating human and social conditions of African countries. It was more important to take concerted actions on several fronts to reverse the alarming situation in a harmonized and comprehensive manner. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia was eager to participate in the comprehensive approach suggested by the Preparatory Committee of the Conference.

15. He stated that the Transitional Government of Ethiopia had already taken several measures that were in line with the comprehensive approach to human development. Some of these measures included the assignment of a central role to agriculture to improve the productivity of the population; educational

strategies to increase human resource capacity; a health strategy with focus on combating and preventing diseases; and policy measures at macro and micro levels.

16. In order to ensure that people would participate fully in the development process, the Transitional Government took decentralization measures through democratic elections with the right over ownership and management of resources. The public policies and programmes of the Transitional Government were framed taking the people into account with greater participation and consensus building at all levels.

17. In conclusion, Dr. Duri urged that Africa must demonstrate the political will to make the necessary policy shift and take concrete actions to ensure that human development policies and programmes were at the heart of strategies for sustained development and transformation on the continent. He believed that the conference would come up with an African Common Position for the World Summit for Social Development from which Africa would speak with one determined voice.

18. On behalf of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, H.E. Duri expressed many thanks to the organizers, the participants in the Preparatory Committee of Experts and all who had contributed to the holding of the Conference.

19. He then declared the meeting open.

20. The chairman then invited Dr. Sadig Rasheed, Director, Public Administration, Human Resources and Social Development Division to deliver the opening statement of Mr. Layashi Yaker, United Nations UnderSecretary-General and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa. Mr. Layashi Yaker stated that the presence of the ministers at the conference was a testimony

of their profound concern over the great challenges that human development posed for the Africa region. As trustees of human development in Africa, he said, the ministers carried a heavy burden on their shoulders.

21. The Executive Secretary went on to state that one timely response to the recognition of the paramount importance of human development lay precisely in the fact that the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Development had been restructured in order that it take on the challenge in a more focused manner. He hoped that the new and consolidated structure would enable all issues pertaining to human and social development in Africa to be addressed in a comprehensive and holistic manner. Beyond this, he further expressed the hope that the Conference would constitute an important occasion to forge political will for effective policy implementation at the national level.

22. It was entirely appropriate that one of the leading agenda items at this very first meeting of the Conference was the adoption of an African Common Position on the World Summit for Social Development which was to take place in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 6 to 12 March 1995. The adoption of a Common Position afforded the Conference the opportunity not only to tell the world about the extent of human deprivation in Africa but also to commit African Governments to take appropriate action to meet the challenges and to mobilise the support of the world community towards this end. He noted that the Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of Experts of the Conference had worked diligently to revise, refine, and finalize a draft document embodying the African Common Position on the World Summit for Social Development for the Ministers' consideration and eventual adoption.

23. In addition to the draft Common Position, the Conference was to consider several other agenda items which had also been the subject of thorough scrutiny by the Preparatory Committee of Experts. These related to various aspects of

human development and constituted important building blocks in the effort to foster human development and improve human conditions in Africa. They also further elaborated on the many measures encompassed by the Actionable Agenda of the African Common Position for the World Summit for Social Development.

24. The Executive Secretary informed the meeting that the African Common Position would, upon adoption by the Conference, be transmitted by the Chairman to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the World Summit for Social Development so that the Common Position may be considered by the Preparatory Committee at its first meeting scheduled to take place from 31 January to 11 February 1994 in New York.

25. The Executive Secretary concluded his statement by wishing the conference every success in its deliberations.

26. Dr. M.T. Mapuranga, Assistant-Secretary-General of the OAU in charge of Political Affairs delivered a statement in which he welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Secretary General, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim. He recalled that the Conference of Ministers was established to respond to the emerging consensus that human development must be put at the centre of the entire development process, and therefore, an important function of the Conference was to focus and address issues related to achieving sustained development and transformation through the effective implementation of human-centred development strategies and programmes ensuring an integral and effective interplay between the political, socio-economic and human development dimensions.

27. He concurred with the view expressed in opening statement of the Executive Secretary of UNECA to the First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee

of Experts that the scale and intensity of human deprivation was acutely manifest in the African region, in the form of widespread malnutrition and hunger, soaring unemployment and underemployment, a host of diseases, and declining access to education, especially of girls and women. He pointed out that this appalling state of human and social conditions in Africa was compounded by a general lack of peace and stability, endemic wars and political conflicts with negative implications for human development.

28. He pointed out that political instability discouraged support for development and that peace in its broadest sense did not only mean the absence of war, violence and hostilities at national and international levels, but also the enjoyment of social justice as well as fundamental freedoms. Political conflict, he said, destroyed the foundations of development. Between 1960 and 1993, there had been no less than 24 full-fledged wars in Africa while currently there were 12 on-going civil conflicts in a number of member States of the OAU.

29. The consequences of the absence of peace, the frequency of instability and civil conflict were evident, he noted, in the millions of lives lost, the increasing number of refugees and displaced persons, the destroyed infrastructure and the disintegration of the social fabric of many African countries. He said that the OAU was keenly aware of the down-ward spiral in human and social conditions in Africa as well as the growing pockets of conflict and tension within the continent. To respond to the latter threat to human development, the OAU Heads of State and Government, meeting in Cairo, Egypt in 1993 created, a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution as well as a Peace Fund.

30. The Assistant-Secretary-General of the OAU emphasized that the concern for human-centred development was epitomized in the development strategies that were enshrined in the treaty establishing the African Economic Community in Abuja, Nigeria in 1990. This treaty did not only advocate the development and

use of the continent's natural and human resources, but also enjoined member States to undertake, formulate and adopt common strategies for the benefit of Africa's development. It was therefore timely and appropriate that the Draft African Position on Social Development In Africa for the World Summit on Social Development would be considered for adoption by the Ministers Responsible for Human Development.

31. He ended his statement by transmitting to the Conference the best wishes for a successful meeting, of the Secretary General of the OAU.

32. Dr. Wally N'Dow, Special Representative of Mr. Gustave Speth, Administrator of UNDP, was invited to read Mr. Speth's statement to the meeting. In his statement, the UNDP representative expressed appreciation for being invited to participate at the first meeting of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Development. He noted that the first issue on which the conference had chosen to deliberate was on the preparation of Africa's Common Position on Social Development, to be presented at the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in March 1995. He hoped that the Copenhagen Summit would advance further the paradigm of sustainable development which was evolved at the Rio Earth Summit, to sustainable human development.

33. He noted that, as underlined by UNDP's Human Development Report of 1993, there was not a single African country in the category of countries with high human development indices and only seven out of 51 countries were in the medium category. The remaining 44 countries accounting for about 93 per cent of the African population were in the low human development category. Globally of the 62 countries in the low human development category, Africa accounted for 71 per cent. This dismal state of human deprivation was a challenge to African governments.

34. The representative further noted that inspite of some positive trends in life expectancy, infant mortality rates, adult literacy , primary school enrolment and access to safe drinking water, Africa's food insecurity and absolute poverty situation had worsened.

35. The Copenhagen Summit for which the conference was preparing would need to achieve consensus on a new development paradigm referred to as sustainable human development by UNDP. This new paradigm of development was predicated on the rationale that development must improve the lives of the great masses of the poor, must not impoverish the environment, must depend on both effective governance and the empowerment of people to participate actively in decisions that affect their lives. A sustainable human development paradigm would put poor people first, was environmentally sound, participatory and pro-gender. It underscored the self-reliance and self-determination of governments and peoples. It was in consonance with the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the accord of the Rio Earth Summit.

36. He said that the promotion of sustainable human development (SHD) in the 1990s would involve the UNDP in far more advocacy work than in the past. The modalities for implementing the SHD would vary according to circumstances and opportunities. Africa's recognition of a human-centred approach to development had been well-documented. The UNDP was ready to support the African region to reverse its economic decline and support its human development endeavours.

37. He indicated that the 1994 Human Development Report would be released in May and would address the Social Summit under the key theme of human security. He suggested that the conference could consider issues such as the essence of peace as a prerequisite for human development; education for all as

the key to development; the challenge of unemployment and underemployment; and the challenge of people's participation either as individuals or in groups and their empowerment. The UNDP was satisfied that the conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development had intended to consider these foundation issues for inclusion in Africa's Common Position on Social Development. He ended by wishing the Conference success in its deliberations.

38. The Chairman then called upon Ambassador Stephen Lewis, Special Representative of Mr. James P. Grant, UNICEF Executive Director, to deliver his statement to the Conference.

39. Ambassador Lewis affirmed that Africa had always believed in human development as the means and end of socio-economic development and that it was the International community that had only recently discovered this notion.

40. He said that there had been some remarkable gains in human development in Africa particularly in the levels of immunization in the declining fertility rates in some countries and in the number of people who now had access to safe drinking water. These improvements had saved millions of lives, especially those of children. And more gains continued to be made. The Convention on the Rights of the Child had been ratified by the overwhelming majority of African governments. National Programmes of Action for Children had been initiated in 45 African countries. He said that the struggle to consolidate and extend those gains was of paramount importance and necessity, particularly in the face of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) which had not contributed to improving the human condition on the continent.

41. Ambassador Lewis went on to say that as Africa moved forward, there were several lessons to be learned. First, it was important to know that progress could be made even in the face of structural adjustment programmes, soul-destroying poverty and civil conflict. Second, that whatever goals set must be accompanied by concrete actions which must be prioritized. Third, that policies must be clearly defined and implementable. And finally, that restructuring, if properly implemented and monitored does work and could produce wonderful results. With greater political commitment, Africa could make huge gains in human development and go a long way towards meeting the basic needs of the people. For example, the commitment of a mere 20% of the domestic budget and an equal percentage of international aid flows to Africa combined with strong social mobilization could enhance the attainment of some of the major human development goals of the continent. These gains notwithstanding, the downward spiral continued unabated, moving the continent from marginalization to the "periphery of the periphery". Over 200 million people were living in absolute poverty and the numbers were increasing and were projected to increase dramatically every year.

42. What was more worrying, he said, was that Africa had done all what the international community had demanded of it - strong and painful economic reforms, structural adjustment, devaluation of national currencies, reduction in public spending - and adhered to every conditionality imposed by the World Bank, IMF, UNDP, the Group of Seven etc., but got worse in return. The international community had become delinquent. Aid flows were declining, the debt burden was increasing and net resource flows from the continent in the form of debt service placed at US\$9-10 billion in 1993, would grow in the years ahead. At the same time already unfavourable terms of trade could be further worsened by the implementation of the Uruguay Round Agreement.

43. Sadly, the war in Bosnia, peace in the Middle East and programmes in the former Soviet Union commanded more attention and attracted more resources from the international community than did the African cause. Thus Africa continued to be exploited and neglected by outsiders in the hour of its most desperate need. He called for greater understanding and partnership from the international community. Africa, he said, could not afford to wait for the international community before beginning to pursue its human development goals of alleviating poverty, fostering social integration, and creating gainful employment. Human development should not be left to external forces as this may lead to betrayal. External assistance should be used only to supplement national efforts.

44. To achieve human development Africa needed to immediately initiate policies that focus on human-centred development; keep up pressure on the international community, donors and funding institutions for debt relief; secure better terms of trade and more stable prices; and mobilize the United Nations system and friends of Africa to generate more resources for the implementation of human development programmes. African Governments should ensure that Africa's development interests are not taken out of the agenda of the United Nations to be entrusted to the Bretton Woods institutions. The World Summit on Social Development was the forum, he said, for bringing Africa back on the UN Agenda and to ensure that the consistency of poverty should not constitute Africa's agenda forever.

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

45. The Meeting elected the following Officers:
- | | | |
|-------------------|---|----------|
| Chairman | - | Ethiopia |
| 1st Vice-Chairman | - | Egypt |
| 2nd Vice-Chairman | - | Cameroon |

3rd Vice-Chairman	-	Nigeria
Rapporteur	-	Zimbabwe

46. The entire Bureau as well as the following member States were elected into the Conference's Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen representing their various sub-region:

Kenya and Sudan - Eastern African;
 Sierra Leone and Guinea - West African;
 Algeria and Tunisia - North African;
 Namibia and Swaziland - Southern African.

47. The Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen would therefore be composed as follows:

Ethiopia - Chairman; Egypt - 1st Vice-Chairman; Cameroon - 2nd Vice-Chairman; Nigeria - 3rd Vice-Chairman; Zimbabwe - Rapporteur; Kenya; Sudan; Central African Republic; Guinea; Sierra Leone; Gabon; Algeria; Tunisia; Namibia; Swaziland.

V. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND PROGRAMME OF WORK

48. The meeting adopted the following Agenda:

- o Opening Ceremony;
- o Election of Officers and Formation of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen;
- o Adoption of agenda and organization of work;
- o General Debate;
- o Consideration of the draft African Common Position on Social and Human Development for the World Summit for Social

Development and the report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts of the Conference;

- o Any other business;
- o Date and venue of the next meeting;
- o Adoption of the Report;
- o Closure of the meeting.

VI. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

GENERAL DEBATE

ALGERIA

49. The Head of Delegation of Algeria stated that the African Group in New York had been the first to support Ambassador SOMAVIA of Chile's idea of a World Social Summit. The African Group had put forward a number of cardinal principles; placing social development at the centre of global stakes of the end of the century; inter-relating political, economic and social affairs; and fostering social development not only as a national effort but also as a matter of international solidarity.

50. Turning to the document prepared by the committee of experts, he found the analysis in the Draft Common Position mostly fair although smacking of the Afro-pessimism in which international civil servants had indulged in recent years. This had happened mainly because the document was silent about the efforts that African States had made to promote economic and social development, employment, education and health.

51. African countries had now come to such a pass that they risked losing all these gains. There was first of all the debt service burden, then declining export revenue and finally the adverse impact of structural adjustment

programmes on social protection and employment. Employment was a source of survival and dignity.

52. He also mentioned the informal sector which seemed to be encouraged by the international funding institutions. Operations in that sector actually jeopardized the credibility of the State since they were governed by no rules. It would be prudent to adopt a cautious approach in this area.

53. In conclusion, he stated that African countries were particularly exposed to these changes by the dwindling of development resources and the excessive weight of financial constraints. In his view, Africa did not need another programme but rather a new conceptual framework to handle the transition between two systems of management. It would be in the interest and also the duty of the developed countries to promote a stable transition based on regulatory processes universally agreed. That would enable African countries to carry out the necessary economic restructuring at a pace and under conditions of economic growth and social cohesion that the people can bear.

ANGOLA

54. The Head of Delegation of Angola stated that the situation in his country was inimical to any human development. Persistent civil strife had led to wanton destruction of human life. Some 1,000 people were dying daily in Angola and the social effects had made the country the world leader in its number of disabled persons. More than two-thirds of the population lived as refugees in their own country. This was true of the masses of displaced rural folk which had come to live in refugee camps around the cities. The civil war and its secondary effects were killing 292 children out of every 1000. In 1992, at least 100,000 Angolans had died and such systematic destruction of human life had lowered the national life expectancy to 46 years.

55. The Government's efforts to reduce the human suffering had been rendered almost futile by the insecurity and virtual destruction of all infrastructural facilities. Security and peace were needed for social development and the country faced an arduous task of reconstruction and rehabilitation following the peace accords signed in 1992. Some 45,000 to 60,000 disabled persons had to be catered for and thousands of demobilized soldiers provided with vocational training with a view to their rehabilitation. The destruction of productive infrastructure had virtually ruled out the possibility of employment. In spite of the Government's efforts, it would be impossible for Angola to meet the numerous needs of the various strata of its society.

56. He therefore appealed to all participants to make every effort to improve the highly critical social situation in his country because without security, stability and peace, there could be no talking of human and social development in Angola in particular and in Africa in general.

CAMEROON

57. The Minister from Cameroon then took the floor. He said that his country's development experiences in the last thirty years demonstrated that neither oil resources and export commodities such as coffee and cocoa, nor the various development policies and strategies pursued had succeeded in bringing about improvements in the lives of the people. Today, all had come to understand that the ultimate objective of all government policies must be the improvement of the living conditions of the people. The revival of the development momentum within the context of human development should find expression in three broad themes: popular participation, good public sector management, a restructured economy and greater coherence in development policy formulation.

58. He said that structures and mechanisms had to be established to allow the people a greater participation in development in ways that make them

feel that they have benefitted from development activities. This was important for political and economic stability. Participatory development which calls for investments in man as well as a full exploitation of his energies and his potential, was a most effective strategy for the economic recovery of African countries.

59. He pointed out that the pervasive poor management of the public sector in Africa, was linked to institutional capacity. This constraint on development could be removed if accountability, transparency and the application of sanctions were increased. This could contribute to a greater respect for human rights which is a fundamental prerequisite of human development.

60. He was of the view that African economies needed to be restructured in order to strengthen the inter-sectoral and inter-industry linkages. To do so required the pursuit of macro-economic policies that go beyond short-run policies that address economic imbalances to long-term strategies aimed at strengthening these linkages.

61. He said that there was a need for greater coherence in development policy formulation and greater co-operation between the different agents of development. The development of this coherence should lead to the notion of the State and of the public good being developed as well. It would be this same search for coherence that would lead to a greater preference for locally-available expertise over foreign technical assistance personnel in development projects on the continent.

62. Finally, he said that the challenge facing Africa was how to formulate and prosecute human development policies that would fully involve all the major partners - governments, NGOs and local communities and lead to consensus on the social and economic reforms that need to be undertaken and accompanied by the appropriate expenditure switches that would ensure

that domestic resource allocations as well as international development assistance to Africa would go to support human development in concrete ways.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

63. The Minister from the Central African Republic began by expressing her sincere appreciation to the bureau of the meeting and to ECA Secretariat for the smooth conduct of deliberations and the quality of documents submitted. She was particularly grateful to the delegations from the Central African Sub-region for selecting her country to become a member of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen.

64. In spite of the financial difficulties of the Central African Republic, her delegation had made it a point to attend the current meeting in order to underscore the importance which the Government attached to human and social development. The decline of her country's human development index between 1990 and 1991 had placed the Central African Republic in the 144th place among the 160 countries surveyed. Such a situation was due to the fact that previous Governments had not laid enough stress on the improvement of the main social sectors of health, welfare, education and youth. The 16 per cent of the national budget allocated had not been enough to make a significant improvement in the social indicators. There were 26,000 people per medical doctor, the infant mortality rate was as low as 219 per thousand, life expectancy was 49.5 years, in the rural areas 18 per cent of the people had access to drinking water while the percentage was 20 in the urban areas and 60 per cent of the population was illiterate.

65. This social situation had been worsened by the drop in prices of the country's major commodity exports and the social effects of various structural adjustment policies were being acutely felt by most of the people. The deterioration in the socio-economic situation had compelled the new

Government to adopt a strategy built around regionalization and decentralization with active involvement of local people; the taking into account of the social dimension of adjustment in economic reforms; and the pursuit of a poverty eradication policy laying particular emphasis on health and education. Among other things, the Government had set up a department of women's affairs and social welfare. Three major programmes undergirded the social development policy. These were the community development programme, the women's advancement programme and the human resources development programme.

66. The community development strategy pursued gave pride of place to the active participation of project beneficiaries and the development of continuing education. The women's advancement policy sought to impart a new impetus to the mobilization of women for development activities and caring for their family. Efforts were made to incorporate women into economic groupings that pursued labour-saving, cultural and health education objectives. Emphasis was also placed on the training of women in AIDS control. The focus of human resources development was the strengthening of initial and refresher training.

67. With the recent devaluation of the CFA Franc, it was to be feared that countries members of the franc zone might not be able to continue with the implementation of such social development programmes as had been adopted in the Central African Republic.

68. In conclusion, she invited member States to ensure that sub-regional and regional social development programmes were successfully implemented. That would require the strengthening of the institutions created for the purpose rather than the proliferation of new institutions. It would also be necessary to create an environment in which the risk of conflict would be minimal. In that regard, OAU had a very important role to play.

EGYPT

69. In his statement the Egyptian minister thanked the Government and people of Ethiopia for their hospitality and cooperation in facilitating the work of the conference. He said that his country would spare no effort in contributing to the success of this conference and in the preparations for the Copenhagen Summit. The Minister, then congratulated the preparatory Committee and the ECA/OAU joint Secretariat for their seriousness and devotion in preparing the documents which were of high quality for to the meeting.

70. He stressed that concentrating on economic development alone had not helped in averting social problems in the world, and in particular, developing poor countries were facing, especially in Africa where the development of human capabilities as an essential factor for achieving sustainable development was being neglected.

71. He said that Egypt had long recognised the importance of the social development approach based on the development of human capacities and on meeting the real development needs of the people in a fully participatory manner. Special attention was given to the most deprived segments of society who were victims of the negative effects of economic reforms and the cuts in public spending in the social sector.

72. Finally, he said measures had been taken to alleviate the adverse effects of the economic reforms by strengthening social action and developing human capacities to improve the quality of life; establishing of appropriate programmes and mechanisms to serve as "safety nets" to reduce the specially painful effects of the public sector cuts; emphasizing the importance of self-reliance and avoiding dependency on foreign aid; encouraging the private sector to contribute to the development process and creating an appropriate environment for investment and improving production and productivity to

better mobilize available resources for development; promoting informal sector and labour intensive activities, improving high level skills to meet productive needs, implement development projects and attract investment.

KENYA

73. The Minister from Kenya noted that the transformation of this Conference to the Conference of Ministers responsible for Human Development not only broadened its mandate but placed the concept of human development in a much broader context encompassing aspects such as nutrition, health, shelter, democracy and environment not purely in their social contexts but as they contributed to effective socio-economic development and enhanced productivity of human capital. Kenya's stance on the adoption of the human centred strategy was unequivocally clear and the Kenyan government had over time taken various human development related measures, reported the Minister.

74. These measures included restructuring of educational and training systems, promotion of employment and income-generating activities, provision of health services, food self-sufficiency, sensitization of people in popular participation and the creation of relevant institutional arrangements for human development activities. In addition to these measures which were inter-related, complementary and supportive of one another, human development now featured prominently in the National Development Plan, stated the Minister.

75. Despite these measures, the Minister reported, progress in human development had been rather slow. A number of issues such as the fast growing population, the influx of refugees from war-torn neighbouring states, lack of financial and adequately trained human resources and the lack of commitment to human-centred development policies by the key decision-makers had all affected the implementation of human development. These

factors necessitated a self-evaluation and assessment of progress, that was anchored on the actual needs of the people rather than on quantifying physical infrastructures, noted the Minister.

76. In the final analysis, it must be recognized that it was not possible to adequately manage human development single-handedly, particularly, when the resources were limited and not many donors were forthcoming in their assistance towards human development. Against this background, the establishment of a human development fund would definitely help in building the capacity and capability of experts from member States. However, this request for external assistance must be supplemented by a regional staff exchange programme, proposed the Minister. Such a programme would not only expose staff to practical aspects of what was being done in other member States but would cut down the hiring of expatriates as well as alleviate critical skill shortages in member States and encourage regional cooperation. The Minister informed the meeting that his country would like to extend an invitation to the Conference for the hosting of the first meeting of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen of the Conference in Nairobi.

NAMIBIA

77. The Minister from the Republic of Namibia then took the floor and congratulated the ECA and OAU Secretariats for the excellent work done in preparing a draft working document which faithfully reflected the real issues facing Africa today and the commitment to resolutely live up to the challenge in confronting these problems. He observed that states could succeed in the holding of free and fair elections and the drafting of wonderfully democratic constitutions to initiate the democratization process. It was important that when democracy had taken roots there should be comprehensive assistance programmes, especially for the poor countries of the South. This assistance would facilitate, nurture and sustain democracy. It was not that easy to

institutionalize democracy without any meaningful and sustained assistance in the form of external resources to complement local efforts.

78. The viability of a democratic society and political systems based on good governance would ultimately depend on the development and maintenance of a healthy economy, the equitable distribution of income, provision of jobs and the supply of adequate education and social services. The Minister noted that the realization of the fact that people needed bread and not ballot papers should impel the forging of new partnerships between governments and the private sector in cooperation with the international community. Namibia was actively encouraging this partnership in its own environment.

79. The Minister recalled the enthusiasm with which the Marshall Plan was designed for socio-economic recovery of devastated Western Europe and the current generous response with hard cash and technology to provide assistance to eastern Europe. He wondered why similar donor aid programmes could not be designed and put in place for African countries in general and for Namibia, in particular. It was unfortunate that in spite of the demonstrated and internationally acclaimed democratic processes, national reconciliation, open economy, respect of human rights and freedoms, rule of law, political stability and environmental protection, Namibia had since independence in 1990 not attracted significant aid to redress severe social and economic legacies of apartheid.

80. The Minister emphasised the fact that in spite of the many obstacles, the government and peoples of Namibia had lived up to the challenges facing the country. Namibia had continued to consolidate its sovereignty and to discharge its international responsibilities assiduously. The proliferation of conflicts in Africa was a source of concern to Namibia. In this regard, the OAU initiative to establish a mechanism for conflict resolution was commendable. Nonetheless, the moral and material support of the international community

would be necessary. Similarly the democratization process in South Africa should be supported.

81. In conclusion, the Minister asserted that the Government of Namibia was committed to the process of promoting the development of policies and a legal framework that should be conducive to human and social development. Namibia was committed to the preparation for the World Summit for Social development, Copenhagen in March 1995. He fully supported on-going effort to forge a Common Position that would enable Africa to speak with one determined voice at the forthcoming World Summit in Copenhagen. He took the opportunity to call for support from African brothers and sisters to join Namibia in calling upon the international community to assist countries just emerging out of apartheid colonial rule and occupation to be assisted with social development funds in order to address the massive social deficit inherited from apartheid.

SUDAN

82. The Minister of Sudan spoke next. He said that it was the first time the conference was taking place after the restructuring of Commission's Intergovernmental machinery. In fact there was an international and regional consensus on the fact that the concept of human development was wide and all-embracing as well as defined by people's capacity to live in security, to create an environment conducive to their full participation in society and invested with the capacity to make choices. This common concept, he said, is the first cornerstone of Africa's common position.

83. He was pleased to note that the Meeting's major objective was to prepare for the summit and thanked the ECA and OAU Secretariats for the excellent preparations. The conference was taking place at a time where the international environment was characterized by biases, instability and attempts

to dominate and impose a unilateral cultural perspective on development upon all peoples.

84. Some of Africa's peoples were faced with interventions, threat open and disguised economic embargo, reduction of International aid and aid conditionalities that went as far as demanding renunciation of societies. The major powers should review their position and respect peoples' will, cultures and preferences.

85. He said that International aid was but a partial compensation for injustice. It helped build global peace and should not be considered as charity. Official technical assistance should be increased, rationalized and oriented to priority areas, especially human development.

86. He gave an overview of his country's experience saying that it faced the same problems as the other countries in the continent. His country had, however, elaborated on alternative strategy to replace strategies and models imported from outside and had proved unsuccessful, increased grassroots participation to achieve self-reliance and self sufficiency, strengthened institutional and judicial structures and reformed credit policy. As a result, growth rates had improved allowing the country no longer to be dependent on relief assistance but to channel such assistance to armed conflicts areas in a bid to achieve peace in Africa.

TUNISIA

87. The Minister from Tunisia then took the floor. He said that this meeting was unique for the importance it gave to human development and the pursuit of approaches to integrate social, educational, cultural, environmental and economic concerns into participatory human development and the creation of an enabling and peaceful environment. Such approach should be based on general consensus in order to avoid provoking extremism.

88. He stated that social development should be comprehensive in its multiple dimensions in order to reduce social, economic and cultural disparities while promoting social integration. This called for the involvement of all vital forces in development.

89. He noted that as this meeting was preparatory to the World Summit for social development scheduled in 1995, delegates should reflect on the nature of the message they intended to send to the summit. He said that illiteracy and poverty were obstacles to development, were politically destabilizing, and a serious threat to the social fabric. An effective partnership should therefore be forced in order to achieve progress, development and solidarity and set up an equitable world order.

90. He spoke to the problem of migration, the social problems it could engender and the necessity of preserving the rights and dignity of immigrants. He further emphasized the necessity of establishing a human and social order based on justice, dignity, tolerance and security. He was convinced that if social progress and collective security had to be achieved a pragmatic approach should be adopted and organic links between security, human rights, social and economic development and democracies should be taken into account in order to face the challenges of rapid population growth and urban explosion and criminality. African countries should shift from national development strategies to regional strategies of integration to achieve a minimum of social solidarity, security and justice for the African people.

91. An enabling economic and financial environment could be created if appropriate solutions to the debt dilemma facing Africa could be found. Such solutions would allow African countries to more equitably distribute the benefits of development, promote investment and productivity, and therefore enhance the social aspect of development.

UGANDA

92. In his statement the Minister from Uganda said that Uganda's human development was extremely low. Its human development Index ranked to 133rd out of 160 countries. All the indicators of human development income per capita, health nutrition, life expectancy, access to food and safe drinking water, education etc. - should that Uganda was among the least developed countries in the world.

93. The government, cognisant of this sorry state of affairs, had embarked on a number of initiatives in key areas of development such as education, health, employment to improve the human and social situation. He also mentioned key programmes that were underway to remove constraints on the country's economic development. These included measures to reduce inflation, improved management of the exchange and interest rates, improving the climate for investment promotion etc.

94. In order to achieve the goals of sustainable human development, he added, political will and commitment were necessary conditions. In the case of Uganda, he cited, steps were being taken by the Government to lead the country to a new, more democratic political order.

95. In conclusion he emphasized the role being played by development partners in human development and referred to a national workshop on human development currently being held in Uganda to formulate a national strategy on human development.

ZAMBIA

96. The Head of Delegation of Zambia called on meeting to approach the issue of human development in a comprehensive manner so that Africa's

contribution and participation at the World Summit would be effective and complete.

97. He argued that the concept of human development should offer a much broader and more inclusive perspective. The position paper should emphasise that human development is not only limited to social sectors at the expense of economic issues. Human development should stress the imperative need to develop human capabilities and should be equally concerned with how those capabilities are used by people who can participate freely in social, political and economic decision-making and people who can work productively and innovatively for sustainable development in the respective countries.

98. In the area of education, he reiterated the point made in the Lagos Conference of Ministers of education in 1976 where the importance of the local community in primary school reform was highlighted. The Ambassador underscored the need for schools, colleges and universities to make their curriculum relevant to the needs and aspirations of the people; promote relevant and appropriate education and one that builds self confidence. He emphasized the need to encourage and stimulate curricula reforms in education to enhance its suitability and relevance to the social, economic and cultural needs of respective African countries. He identified the later as an area where assistance would be needed.

99. He also drew attention to the urban-rural push/pull factors which impair human development by pushing out from rural areas all the able bodied, skilled and unskilled youths to urban centres. He emphasized the need to carefully examine and monitor the push/pull syndrome in order not to burden the social services. To address this particular challenge, he called for a well focused education programme which could provide lifelong education capable of equipping the people with the skills necessary to produce and process finished products.

100. The representative emphasized the need to formulate and implement policies that strengthen institutional capacity, provide educational opportunities to the disabled and the vulnerable groups promote effective preventive and curative strategies in the health sector and increase agricultural production and the daily calorie supply.

101. Finally, he stressed the need for more determined measures to be pursued to tackle unemployment and underemployment by promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment and income generation activities especially among the disabled.

ZIMBABWE

102. In her statement, the Minister from Zimbabwe said that social integration occupied a central place in the development efforts of Zimbabwe. It was increasingly being realized that development efforts could only be successful if Governments created conducive environments that encouraged the participation of people in formulating development strategies and more importantly pass the empowerment test as stated in the UNDP's 1993 Human Development Report.

103. In order to pass this test the Government of Zimbabwe instituted a local Government system that fostered local participation and integrated all social groups in the process of development. These new post-independent local government structures had facilitated the introduction of new policies and strategies of social integration such as rural resettlement schemes, expansion of primary health care and education, redirection of agricultural state services towards the peasant farmers and expansion of physical infrastructure, particularly roads and water supply coupled with district service centres. This process had also been facilitated by the collaboration between government

and the NGOs whose outreach capacity had helped bringing remote areas into the mainstream.

104. The Government of Zimbabwe had also promulgated laws to enhance the status of women and to integrate the disabled as well as the aged into the political and socio-economic development of the country, reported the Minister said. It had also launched social development programmes to alleviate poverty. The creation of a Ministry for Community Development and Women's Affairs, the promotion of the Co-operative movement, creation of the small enterprises scheme were among the initiatives that the government had instituted.

105. In conclusion, the Minister reiterated Zimbabwe's commitment to assisting the disadvantaged and poor and its determination to see that poverty programmes succeeded.

VII. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ON THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS OF THE CONFERENCE

106. The Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of Experts introduced the report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts as contained in document E/ECA/PHSD/MC/94/WP.2. He went on to say that the Committee deliberated on eight documents and then summarized the debate on these. He commended the Report for adoption by the Conference. He then introduced document E/ECA/PHSD/MC/94/WP.1 entitled "Draft African Common Position on Social and Human Development in Africa" and advised the meeting that the meeting of experts had worked hard to prepare this common position on the basis of a draft that had been presented to the meeting by the Secretariat. He commended the document for adoption by the Conference.

107. The Conference considered the report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts and adopted it. The Conference also considered the Draft African Common Position on Social and Human Development in Africa commented on it extensively and adopted it with amendments, as contained in document E/ECA/PHSD/MC/94.WP.1/Rev.1.