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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Thirtieth session of the Commission/  
twenty-first meeting of the Conference  
of Ministers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
1-4 May 1995

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE  
TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION/TWENTIETH MEETING  
OF THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The twenty-ninth session of the Commission/twentieth meeting of the Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning convened under the theme "ECA at 35: Building critical capacities in Africa for accelerated growth and sustainable development".

The Conference underscored the relevance and appropriateness of capacity building in the interlocking areas of human skills, strengthening national, subregional and regional institutions and infrastructural development to the realization of sustained growth.

A number of ancillary issues pertinent to the building and enhancement of critical capacities, as well as the setbacks and strategies for its achievement were deliberated upon. Among the many issues examined were the financial resources required for domestic capital investment in the short, medium and long term; the implementation of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, including especially the need for member States to promote policy convergence in the various sectors and specific concerns covered in the Treaty; the importance of favourable trade; the need for peace and timely resolution of conflicts including post conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and development; the promotion of the private sector; effective management of natural resources and the environment; and the role of women in all of these.

In addition, the Conference took decisions in the form of resolutions and declarations, which spelt out the necessary follow-up activities and assigned responsibilities to various parties, including the ECA secretariat itself, member States, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Development Bank (ADB).

Section II of this report appraises the Conference on actions taken on issues decided by the 1994 Conference of Ministers.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The twenty-ninth session of the Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 2 to 5 May 1994. Forty member States were represented. The session was also attended by Member States of the United Nations, regional organizations, representatives of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and a number of subregional and international intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

2. The Conference deliberated under the theme, "Building critical capacities in Africa for accelerated growth and sustainable development" providing opportunities for a careful analysis of emphasis that should encompass Africa's agenda for building capacities needed for sustainable growth and development. Among the priority areas identified for concerted efforts were the following: capacities in support of good governance, political stability, peace and security; capacities for socio-economic policy analysis and management; building, strengthening and effectively utilizing human capacities; developing entrepreneurial capacities for public and private sector enterprise; developing Africa's physical infrastructural capacities; capacities for environmentally sustainable food production, food self-sufficiency and security; capacities to exploit natural resources and to diversify African economies into processing and manufacturing and capacities to boost the mobilization of domestic and external capital resources and their efficient allocation through structures for public revenue management and financial intermediation.

3. These were examined in the context of outlining an action-oriented and pragmatic framework agenda for the collaboration and harmonization of efforts and resources towards building an inter-locking and inter-connected human, institutional and infrastructural capacity for the African continent.

4. The Conference also considered global issues of concern to the region's development, in particular the Final Act of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations and its potential effect on the prospects for Africa's recovery, growth and development in view of the sweeping liberalization of world trade, leaving Africa exposed to exploitation and a further deepening of its trade deficits.

5. The effects of debt overhang was again an issue before the Conference. The Conference noted that the debt burden continued to weigh heavily on the resources needed for any meaningful public investment and provision of social services; prerequisites for the establishment of an environment for long-term sustainable development. It was evident that a concerted approach was needed to get Africa out of the debt trap, and for mobilizing the necessary domestic and external resources required for financing development programmes.

6. The impact of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) as a framework for establishing a partnership relationship between Africa and the international community was analyzed to define the problems with its implementation and actions required for generating the necessary support, including financial resources. While noting the encouraging initiatives taken so far following the adoption of the Agenda including economic reforms, the consolidation of democratic governance and the speeding up of cooperation and integration among African countries and the establishment of additional multilateral financial facilities to help Africa cope with emergency situations, the Conference was concerned at the fact that Africa was still facing grave difficulties manifested in increased level of poverty and fragile economic development. While the successful implementation of the New Agenda primarily depended on the efforts of member States, the issue of resources remained crucial. Hence, the importance of the diversification fund for African commodities and the call was made for the African Group at the United Nations to pursue vigorously the negotiations for the establishment of the fund.

7. The Conference also deliberated on issues relating to regional and global cooperation for development in Africa, including the implementation of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, noting in particular, the ratification by 35 African countries and the coming into force of the Treaty on 12 May 1994 and the challenges it poses on the process of regional integration. It also examined strategies for

the implementation of Agenda 21 and the African Common Position on environment and development and to which it remained committed to the attainment of the objectives, especially those related to the realization of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. In this context, the Conference also reviewed mechanisms for natural disaster preparedness and management, in particular Africa's concerns relative to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR).

8. The Conference also considered preliminary proposals for the rationalization and harmonization of ECA-sponsored institutions. While appreciative of the study already carried out, it recommended the wide distribution of the report for an in-depth study and comments by the appropriate authorities of each member State from which an informed decision would be taken. The issue of economic empowerment of women was discussed within the framework of the establishment of the African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (AFWE) and an African bank for women and on which the Conference underscored the need for clarity of purpose of these institutions to ensure they meet their intended objective, that of enhancing women's participation in development. An assessment was made of the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. The Conference, in underscoring the importance of the role of statistics in all aspects of socio-economic life, reiterated the need for external technical assistance in support of the Plan and called upon Africa's development partners and ECA in particular to lend support. The development of an indigenous scientific and technological capacity for promoting sustained science-led development was examined and the Conference recommended that actions be taken to facilitate a breakthrough in the application of science and technology.

9. In reviewing the preparations for global conferences, the Conference reiterated the need for adequate planning and articulation of common issues and concerns around which consensus should be rallied for the region's participation in the following conferences: World Summit for Social Development; fourth World Conference on Women; International Conference on Population and Development; second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II); and World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction.

10. The ravages of war and natural disaster have resulted in the destabilization of economies, displacement of millions of people and, in some instances, an abrupt halt in development. These complex problems were considered by the Conference, which stressed the need for resolve to bring an end to these unprecedented conflicts facing the continent. It also endorsed the move made so far to grapple with the multiple challenges of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

11. The session, which coincided with the end of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Commission, heard addresses from a number of special guest speakers. H.E Albaji Sir Dawda Jawara, President of the Republic of the Gambia, delivered a keynote address. Each guest speaker re-emphasized the tremendous challenges facing the region and to which ECA's effective leadership in reshaping the new Africa that should emerge out of this transitional period was considered very crucial.

12. The conclusions, decisions and recommendations of these deliberations were embodied in the resolutions and declarations adopted by the Conference, indicating the necessary follow-up activities to be taken, including parties responsible for such actions. Issues requiring follow-up actions by the secretariat fall under three main categories, namely those involving policy actions but for which no reporting is specifically or immediately needed; those for which the secretariat needs to take initiatives on its own in response to certain perceived needs; and those that entail a reporting requirement, that is, the secretariat has been requested to report to the next session of the Commission on actions it had undertaken.

13. The purpose of this report is to appraise the meeting with actions taken by the secretariat towards the implementation of issues decided by the 1994 Conference of Ministers, which are not otherwise the subject of a separate agenda item for discussion during the present session.

## II. FOLLOW-UP ON RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 773 (XXIX): Preparations for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction

14. The resolution, among other things, requested the Executive Secretary of ECA, in collaboration with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the World Health Organization (WHO), to harmonize the African Common Position on the Decade as well as submit a progress report on the implementation of the Decade, particularly the outcome of the World Conference in Africa to the twenty-first session of the Commission.

15. The resolution was adopted against the background of the mid-term report for Africa on the Decade, detailing on the assumption that the objectives of the Decade and beyond, should also include the reduction in the incidence and mitigation of the effects of "other" disaster types, induced by underdevelopment, that are prevalent in Africa. A framework of an African programme of action for the second half of the Decade and beyond, as an African Common Position on follow-up activities, was a statement of intention and determination to develop and strengthen existing capacity for natural disaster prevention, reduction, preparedness, mitigation and management as an integral part of national sustainable development planning and programme implementation.

16. The African Group at the Conference carried across this message and the conclusions of the Conference reflected this. The thrust of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World was flexible to facilitate the integration of the recommendations into ongoing programmes. In that spirit, the cross-sectoral nature of the work of the Commission provides the necessary framework for the implementation of follow-up activities to the Conference. Discussions will have to be held urgently with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, particularly the Secretariat of the Decade, on how this can be effectively done, particularly in the light of Commission resolution 773 (XXIX).

17. Possible participation in the activities of the Decade and its follow-up would involve inputs from a number of the substantive programmes of the Commission. The major programmes, both at the level of member States and that of the Commission, would be poverty alleviation through sustainable development and infrastructural development, social and economic research, public administration, social development and human resources development.

18. To provide the needed database, and formulate follow-up projects, a series of workshops are being organized by the Secretariat of the Decade in consultation with ECA. The first of these workshops, for Eastern and Southern Africa, was held in Gaborone, Botswana in November 1994. Two others are planned for West and Central Africa and North Africa.

19. The thrust of the contributions from the Commission has been on:

(a) Formulation of projects, risk assessment programmes and emergency plans focusing on food security and food self-sufficiency, structural aspects of human settlement with particular emphasis on building materials and architectural design;

(b) Upgrading infrastructure to be able to cope with disaster mitigation activities;

(c) NGO support for improved disaster reduction and mitigation at the local level;

(d) Environmental impact assessment and related information dissemination;

(e) Periodic reviews of the progress made in the implementation of disaster reduction measures within the context of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action;

(f) Support to least developed countries in the implementation of the Decade programmes; and

(g) Awareness promotion among all groups at all levels for enhanced disaster prevention needs in the field of human resources development;

Resolution 776 (XXIX): Development and strengthening of the Economic Commission for Africa's programme activities in the field of natural resources, energy and marine affairs

20. Progress on the implementation of the main provisions of this resolution is treated in a separate document before the Conference (E/ECA/CM.21/13) entitled "Progress report on programme evaluation in ECA".

Resolution 780 (XXIX): Implementation of the programme for the second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1993-2002)

21. The resolution, among other things, requested the Executive Secretary of ECA and the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to demonstrate their commitments to the implementation of the Decade programme by undertaking concrete actions, soliciting private sector participation, mobilizing support and resources and enhancing the participation of women and the utilization of African consultants.

22. In pursuance to the implementation of this resolution, ECA and UNIDO took the following actions:

(a) Steps were taken to implement an Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA) technology for development project. The project represents a sustained approach to the objective of developing national capabilities in the fields of technology policies, strategies, management, technology transfer and promotion in the African region, and promoting and strengthening regional cooperation through the "Technology Information Exchange System" network. This project covers nine African countries;

(b) ECA organized jointly with UNIDO an ad hoc expert group meeting on the promotion of investment in industrial projects in the context of the IDDA in which the active participation of the private sector, as well as officials of institutions in charge of the promotion of the industrial sector and national and subregional investment promotion agencies, was substantial;

(c) Field missions of ECA and UNIDO consultants have been mounted to review country projects within the framework of IDDA II. The review was to redefine the objectives of these projects for relevancy to the changing situations and to reestablish the Decade priorities in this regard;

(d) On the need to utilize African nationals in the implementation of IDDA-related activities, in 1994, ECA undertook studies on 11 subregional industrial projects cutting across different economic sectors using African nationals. This, however, is not exhaustive of the number of instances when nationals have been used to carry out activities for the implementation of Decade activities;

(e) Concerning the mobilization of resources, discussions are being held on how ECA, OAU and UNIDO could assist in the areas of household savings, savings associations, capital markets including stock exchange, bonds, shares and insurance schemes. In addition, consultations are being held on how to identify and attract foreign investment, in particular measures to improve the region's image to foreign investors, development of sustainable approaches for private investment promotion and information packaging on investment opportunities.

Resolution 781 (XXIX): Development of the private sector for the accelerated Implementation of the programme for the second Industrial Development Decade for Africa and beyond

23. In this resolution, the Conference of Ministers requested ECA and the Director-General of UNIDO "to provide African countries with increased support for the development of their private sector." (operative paragraph 4).

24. In an attempt to contribute to the implementation of this resolution, ECA and UNIDO, in the implementation of their respective work programmes and their assistance to African countries, are increasingly placing emphasis on the virtues and cardinal role of the private sector in the economic development in Africa, particularly in the industrialization process of African economies.

25. UNIDO's programmed activities under IDDA-II include organizing three investors fora to take place later in 1995, namely Ghana (Accra, June); Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA) (Addis Ababa, October - for Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda); Morocco (Rabat, November).

26. Likewise, in the context of its programme of work, ECA is undertaking a number of development activities having bearing on the promotion of the private sector, viz: the establishment of a pilot project for stabilized soil blocks in Senegal and the establishment of a pilot project of roofing tiles in Guinea, through which private sector participation in the building industry would be encouraged. It also provides technical assistance on private sector promotion, including the preparation of technical publications covering its financing, development of small-scale industries and other conditions for private sector participation; and organization of workshops on information systems for small-scale industries and management systems for women entrepreneurs in small-scale industries.

27. Furthermore, UNIDO consultants are to visit several countries under its short-term advisory services programme to identify and formulate investment projects which will be promoted individually through the UNIDO Investment Promotion Services.

28. In line with this resolution, in 1994 ECA initiated two studies, one on basic industries and the other on food industries in the region, providing the necessary research and development services needed for stimulating private sector initiatives and participation.

29. Similarly, UNIDO's focus is on the economic empowerment of women, in particular, the development of their entrepreneurship capability aimed at preparing them for and/or enhancing their private sector participation. Along these lines, UNIDO has been implementing projects in Kenya to enhance the production/design, managerial and marketing skills of women in textiles and related products. In the Gambia, Senegal, Nigeria and Guinea, women entrepreneurs are provided with training both in the management of their business and in food processing technologies for the processing and production of fruits and vegetables, shea butter, salt and cassava. Similar projects are about to start in the United Republic of Tanzania, Ghana and Sierra Leone.

Resolution 792 (XXIX): An integrated approach to women's empowerment: The Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace; violation of women's human rights; and women's economic empowerment

30. In this resolution, the Conference of Ministers requested ECA to, among other things, ensure that women's concerns contained in the Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace are incorporated in the African Platform for Action, facilitate the organization of sensitization seminars on the socio-cultural and legal realities in which women live, give full support to the African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs

(AFWE) and complete preparatory work towards the establishment of a regional financial institution for women.

31. As a follow up to the resolution, the fifth Regional Conference on Women preparatory to the fourth World Conference on Women which assembled all ECA member States and a large number of non-governmental organizations, discussed at length the issue of peace and violation of women's rights. Their recommendations inspired from Kampala Plan of Action are reflected in the critical area of concern entitled "women in the peace process" in the African Platform for Action which contains the African common position on the advancement of women. In addition, a network of African women leaders was formed in Dakar with a view to promoting concerted action on peace and greater involvement of women in conflict resolution and peace building. In a further attempt to contribute towards the implementation of the Kampala Action Plan, ECA intends to organize a forum of African women leaders on their role in peacemaking and conflict resolution.

32. ECA continued to facilitate the activities of AFWE by assisting in planning of activities and servicing its executive committee meetings. ECA is a member of the planning committee of the first All-African and American Trade Fair on women's exportable products to be organized by AFWE in Accra from 22 June to 1 July 1995.

33. Finally, ECA organized an expert group meeting to consider the modalities for the establishment of an African bank for women. Conclusions of the meeting on the functions, structure, size and location of the bank are presented under a separate agenda item (document E/ECA/CM.21/9). The meeting recommended that a privately owned regional financial institution be established in a country that meets certain pre-defined criteria. The regional institution should have branches at the national level.

Declaration DCL.1 (XXIX): The re-integration of new democratic South Africa into Africa

34. In this declaration, the Conference requested the Executive Secretary of ECA to submit a report to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in conformity with its resolution 974D (XXXVI) of 30 July 1965 to recommend a readmission of a democratic South Africa into the Commission.

35. To this end, the secretariat, in making the request to the 1994 substantive session of ECOSOC, recognized the radical changes that had taken place in South Africa since February 1990, particularly the dismantling of the system of apartheid, the adoption of a democratic constitution and the holding of the first non-racial elections as convincing observations for the readmission of South Africa into the Commission.

36. In response to this request, ECOSOC, at its forty-eighth plenary meeting on 29 July 1994, recalling section IV of its resolution 974D (XXXVI) of 30 July 1965 and noting paragraph 10 of Declaration 1 (XXIX), adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers on 4 May 1994, decided to readmit South Africa as a member of the Economic Commission for Africa.