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**UNECA ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF EMERGENCY,
HUMANITARIAN, REHABILITATION, RECONSTRUCTION
AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: PROGRESS REPORT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Africa is a continent of continuing crisis of enormous proportions. The continent continues to experience civil wars and famines in magnitudes unprecedented in its history. These have resulted in displacing hundreds of thousands of people. Those who suffer most are always the poorest and most vulnerable in society, namely children, mothers, the elderly and the disabled. Attempts to rehabilitate these destitutes are gravely inadequate, primarily because resources are lacking. Even in such futile attempts, the principle of finding African solutions to African problems is sidelined, forcing Africans to be at the mercy of alien methods, values and systems. Regardless of this state of affairs, ECA is at present preoccupied and has evolved the capacity to respond to the numerous and complex emergencies that are emerging throughout Africa. This policy direction of ECA has much in common with the United Nations Agenda for Peace and Development adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 1991 under resolution 46/182. This important resolution places emphasis on international security, emergency preparedness, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development - all integrated frameworks of one developmental continuum. This forcefully emerging policy framework will require the attention and vigorous efforts of States, governmental, non-governmental and regional organizations, working in unison with the entire United Nations system and its major agencies.

ECA's close proximity to the habitats of Africa's poorest as well as to the hot beds of tensions places it conveniently to play a useful role in implementing the twin but unified agenda of peace and development. As a result, ECA is currently engaged in the formulation, at country and subregional levels, of master plans for economic and social rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. The preparation of these master plans takes into consideration sectoral and inter-sectoral policies, plans, strategies, programmes and systems. The ECA document entitled, "Agenda on Emergency, Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Affairs in Africa" outlines the specific modalities for the preparation of the master plans. Accordingly, ECA has launched various missions to Africa such as to Mozambique, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Rwanda in support of preparing the master plans. It has also organized special colloquiums such as the Ouagadougou Colloquium whose Final Act was presented to the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Cairo, Egypt, in June 1993. More of such missions and colloquiums will be organized depending on the expressed interests of the countries and subregions concerned.

The preparation of a master plan takes place with the full guidance and participation of the countries and populations concerned, and as a prerequisite, ECA makes sure that it is owned by the country concerned. Based on the experiences so far obtained in the preparation of the master plans, ECA is now able to draw some reflections on important issues affecting the future destiny of Africa. These reflections include, among others, that democracy, accountability and good governance are inseparable elements of real development; decentralization, when properly handled, could increase economic participation and could also be cost effective in economic management; self-reliance is desirable and advantageous as an objective, if pursued within the framework of beneficial inter-dependence, starting from Africa's subregions extending to the global economy; coordination and integration of pro-programme activities supported by transparency facilitate accountability and efficiency.

ECA's master plan series have multifaceted advantages not only in shaping programmes but also in setting up priorities within programmes for effective development assistance. African countries can finance the preparation of the master plans and their follow-up through the African Trust Fund for Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development recently set up by ECA, to which fund the donor community is expected to contribute.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. For some time now, whether in the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, the Sudan, Uganda), in Central Africa (Burundi, Chad, the Congo, Rwanda), Eastern and Southern Africa (Angola, Mozambique, South Africa), West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone) or in North Africa, all kinds of extremely serious conflicts have developed.
2. For many years, Africa has been experiencing civil wars and famines of unprecedented proportions. These have brought about the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the combat or drought-stricken zones. Those who suffer most from such situations are always the poorest and most vulnerable in society, namely children, mothers, the elderly and the disabled.
3. Most of the countries, communities which are already having difficulties in satisfying their own basic needs, are now confronted with the additional burden of supporting thousands of people who flock in completely destitute. In Ethiopia or Kenya, the number of refugees and returnees from the conflict raging in Somalia runs into several dozen thousands. In Southern Africa, the violence in Angola and Mozambique has uprooted an even greater number of people who have mostly settled in Malawi. In West Africa, one third of the 2.5 million of Liberians has sought refuge in neighbouring countries and, last January, an estimated number of more than 300,000 southern Togolese were forced to seek refuge in Benin and in Ghana. In Central Africa, about 100,000 Burundi citizens have to run for refuge in neighbouring countries particularly in Rwanda which is also facing internal problems.
4. The havoc wrought by armed conflicts is ruining the development efforts of the warring countries by destroying such infrastructure as roads, schools, health centres, paths, public works, apartment buildings and houses. All these have to be rebuilt at the very place where human and material resources are lacking.
5. Without necessarily sliding into fatal-pessimism, it could be said that Africa is a continent in serious crisis. Practically none of its countries has been spared the evils hampering the development of the most backward continent of the world. From North to South, East to West, the proud and dynamic people of Africa are in the throes of civil wars, subjected to inoperative political systems and affected by problems of refugees, drought, desertification, corruption, the pandemic AIDS disease, and other most alarming disasters. This continent, for all these reasons, is now in a continuing state of emergency.
6. Man-made emergencies in Africa resulting from civil wars, corruption, bad governance, etc. call for a determined search for an African solution to African problems. Africa's colonial past prevented Africans from thinking through their problems, and forced them to adopt alien values and systems. Emergencies resulting from desertification, drought, poor rains, etc., have also compounded and exacerbated the crisis in Africa. The causes (and even the consequences) of African emergencies are, however, not rooted purely in political development but also in unfolding economic and social conditions.
7. One of the most important mandate of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is to initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic development of Africa and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations between and among countries and territories of the continent.¹ Given the strong linkages between African emergencies and economic and social conditions in the continent, it is clear that one of ECA's important responsibilities is to be able to respond effectively to the numerous and complex emergencies that are erupting throughout Africa.

¹ ECA document E/CN.14/424, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, page 3.

8. The problem, however, is that African mechanisms for responding to African emergencies do not yet exist. Given the large number of ongoing and potential "trouble spots" in Africa, it is obvious that the relevance of the United Nations system in general and that of ECA in particular in Africa, in the 1990s and beyond, will be tested by how effectively the Commission is able to respond to the complex emergencies that are erupting throughout the region.

9. Immediate assistance for long-term reconstruction requires safety and political stability. It was from this medium- and long-term perspective that the Commission decided to advocate the adoption of an approach based on a close linkage between emergency, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

10. The purpose of this report is to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the UNECA's Agenda for meeting the challenges of African emergency, humanitarian and rehabilitation affairs in the 1990s and beyond.

II. UNITED NATIONS: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

A. The new United Nations vision

11. The end of the cold war, the need for economic recovery and the spread of pluralism have all combined to shape the new framework in which the role of the United Nations is being redefined within a new world context whose objective is to meet the challenges of this new era on the economic, social, intellectual and political fronts. The restructuring and streamlining of the United Nations system in order to meet these new challenges are well under way. It is now obvious that in the emerging international environment, the usefulness of the United Nations Organization will be largely determined by the efficiency with which it responds to fresh challenges, working in close cooperation with the regional organizations.

12. The Secretary-General of the United Nations had articulated the new vision of the Organization as being the main source of ideas in the current debate on the nature of democratic governance and on the new meaning and direction of national and international development. This new perception calls on the United Nations to remain faithful to its mission while adapting to new imaginative goals and needs. It will have to retain a world view which seeks to enhance the common interests of the world community. The focus of its interest would have to be people, their rights and creativity, the unspoken concerns of the most disadvantaged and the needs of generations unborn.

13. Within the context of this new vision, one major objective is to define common economic, social and environmental goals in those sectors that have, over the years, become increasingly fragmented and compartmentalized. One important priority here would be to strengthen linkages among these sectors and between these sectors and the political, security and humanitarian areas on which the Organization is preoccupied, working in close cooperation with regional organizations, IGOs and NGOs. In other words, if we want to take up these challenges, we will need to adopt an integrated approach to the implementation of the United Nations Agenda for Peace and Development in which Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali placed particular emphasis on international security, emergency preparedness, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development.

14. In political terms, the bipolarity which characterized the geopolitics of the world has, with the crumbling of the ideological walls within which the cold war thrived, given way to multi-polarity. While the rich nations seem to be well prepared for the new world order, many developing nations have yet to become equal partners in the new deal since they lack the material resources for making the required adjustments, becoming competitive

and tackling their well-known social and economic problems. What is even more serious is that some of these nations, particularly in Africa, are being ravaged by ethnic, tribal and even clan conflicts, civil war and natural disasters.

15. These and other challenges have no doubt influenced the outlook that helped to work out the strategies of the United Nations. As a matter of fact, the new world order is assigning the United Nations a more important and primary role in the making of changes required in all walks of economic, political and social life. Having undergone a positive image change and its responsibilities expanded, the Organization's credibility is now being tested. Its effectiveness will no doubt depend on the sensitivity and efficiency with which it pursues the implementation of its mandate, especially in dealing with crisis management.

16. Thus, by keeping in sight its responsibility for the promotion of long-term development in larger peace and stability, the Organization has systematically adjusted its strategy and programmes to focus equal attention on immediate problems requiring urgent action and this is why it has had to rethink its approach. In view of the challenges to be met, the United Nations has developed a three-pronged strategy encompassing post-conflict restoration, maintenance and building of peace. There is no doubt that these fundamental areas will require the attention and concerted efforts of various States, governmental, non-governmental and regional organizations working in unison with the entire United Nations system, and its major organs, functioning in as balanced and harmonious a manner as prescribed in the Charter.² Africa must make its contribution to this noble task. We must search for an African solution to the singular plague being visited upon us from north to south and from east to west.

17. Like all United Nations activities, humanitarian assistance which encompasses emergency relief and often goes beyond that, is derived from the ideals and principles of the Charter and from the decisions of the General Assembly. Given the fact that the nature of crises has become more complex, the scope of emergency relief has been widened to take into account other human considerations. Indeed, over the years, cases involving the loss of human life, substantial flows of refugees, massive displacement of people and destruction of property have become widespread. In the concern for strengthening its capacity to respond to complex emergency situations and to render more effective the collective efforts of the international community, the United Nations decided, in December 1991, to define more specifically its role in emergency situations and to set up a special fund to finance related activities. The guiding principles annexed to General Assembly resolution 46/182 dated 19 December 1991 emphasized, among other things, that humanitarian assistance should be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. The sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Member States should be fully respected in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Assistance was to be provided with the consent of the country affected and, in principle, at its request. The primary role in initiating, organizing, coordinating and delivering humanitarian assistance on its territory belongs to the affected country, and concerned governments, together with the international community, should pay particular attention to disaster prevention and forward planning in this regard. There is a close link between emergency preparedness, rehabilitation and development which should provide a basis for instituting a series of integrated programmes and projects. Consequently, the principles annexed to the aforementioned resolution 46/182, stipulate that for the transition from the emergency relief to reconstruction and development to take place smoothly, emergency assistance should be so provided as to support reconstruction and long-term development. Put differently, emergency relief and humanitarian assistance should always be considered within the context of long-term development and with an eye to preventing the crisis from recurring. Humanitarian assistance should be undergirded by the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality.

² Boutros Boutros-Ghali, An Agenda for Peace. United Nations, New York, 1992.

18. Under Chapter VIII of its Charter which allows for the conclusion of agreements and the involvement of regional organizations in the settlement of regional conflicts, the United Nations Organization has a central and unique role to play in conducting operations and in promoting and coordinating the complementary efforts of competent regional organizations and the international community with a view to achieving the goals and ideals of the Charter. The Organization also bears the primary responsibility for effectively coordinating the activities of the United Nations system itself in order to ensure that the activities of the various regional organizations and specialized agencies as well as the NGOs become complementary and mutually reinforcing. Indeed, the United Nations system has been constantly readapting, re-orienting and strengthening its programmes in order to enhance their usefulness and to make them more responsive to future challenges. This concern lies at the heart of the urgency with which collective universal and regional measures must be taken to cope with the challenge of an increasing number of conflicts that threaten international peace and security. Africa must contribute effectively to this task not only for its people, but also for the survival of humanity at large.

B. The role of the Economic Commission for Africa

19. The recent United Nations report, "Agenda for Peace", calls upon the Organization to increase its resources for preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace building. This important document explains why the regional commission is assigned a central role. ECA has an obvious advantage, among African organizations, for coordinating the component of the Agenda dealing with post-conflict peace-building. It is well placed within the context of its cooperation with the regional organizations to collect data relating to potential emergency situations and to take the necessary measures for providing humanitarian aid as well as for undertaking future rehabilitation operations and meeting reconstruction requirements. Its proximity to the hot-beds of tension, whether of natural or human origin, its capacity to quickly study possible concrete actions to be taken and to offer technical assistance upon request, show that ECA is an organization with potential for efficiently and effectively following up and evaluating the political, social and natural events taking place on the African continent and forecasting measures for redressing the situation subsequently. Some emergency situations can be foreseen before they degenerate. A case in point is the current situation in Somalia. The food shortage in 1985 was a harbinger of what was going to happen to that country now ravaged by war. The drought that had recently affected Zimbabwe and Zambia and, indeed, the entire Southern African subregion, had brought the Governments of those countries to the brink of collapse. An appropriate early-warning system could have predicted the event. The uncertainty surrounding the democratic process in many African countries already give some indication of possible conflict areas in the future.

20. ECA, like other regional organizations, has traditionally played a major role in making its contribution to the efforts being made by regional and subregional organizations to promote economic integration and cooperation, by assisting in the implementation of policies and plans approved at the regional level, and by bringing Africa's concerns before world leaders and global concerns before regional authorities.

21. By virtue of its mandate, ECA should take, and participate in the policies' programmes execution, measures aimed at facilitating the maintenance and strengthening of economic relations among the subregions of the continent, in close cooperation with the regional organizations. ECA, therefore, stands ready to cooperate closely with all pan-African and subregional organizations in the elaboration and implementation of their programmes in the field of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

22. The preventive diplomacy to which the Secretary-General is so attached is not confined to peace keeping alone. It also has an economic and social dimension. We need to conduct together an objective assessment of the situation in Africa, subregion by subregion and country by country so as to be able to anticipate, before it

is too late, the material means of helping Africans to live or to survive since, in many cases, the issue is one of sheer survival.

23. To attain this objective, the United Nations needs all the help it can get by mobilizing all the energies, mainly of African regional organizations which constitute an indispensable link in the chain but which, at times, do not have the means to fulfil their mission.

24. The analysis underscores the need for humanitarian assistance to conform to a macroeconomic framework such as a Master Plan for Economic and Social Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development. The analysis also reinforces the argument that humanitarian assistance must - with peace - move beyond emergency action to provide relief, and a genuine framework for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. It also points compellingly to the need of providing support to regional and subregional efforts that promote economic integration and cooperation, assisting in the implementation of regionally agreed policies and plans, as well as acting as a conduit for transmitting regional concerns to global attention as well as global concerns to regional fora in the spirit of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community.

25. To accomplish this task, ECA must be in a position to promote policy coherence and programme coordination in the continent in the provision of and follow-up actions for humanitarian relief and economic and social reconstruction as per the Secretary-General's mandate to ECA.

26. Merely coping with emergency situations is not enough. Only a genuine development policy can, in the final analysis, make Africa a partner in the international scheme of things. However essential humanitarian assistance may be, it cannot serve as a substitute or pretext. It must necessarily be accompanied by a concern to move on from the emergency situation by establishing such political, economic and social structures capable to place Africans in charge of their future. While OAU handles the political aspects, ECA is in charge of rehabilitation, reconstruction, development, and cooperation and integration within the subregional and regional context are unavoidable stages which form a logical sequel to humanitarian assistance to member countries, leading to the three continuum strategy: (a) continuum from rehabilitation to reconstruction and development; (b) continuum from national to subregional and regional level; (c) continuum at the national level through decentralization of the development process from national to provincial level with the aim of involving the entire population at the grass-roots level.

27. The Agenda for Peace recommends specific cooperation projects involving two or several countries and which could contribute to economic and social development and increase mutual confidence. For ECA to be effective in building post-conflict peace in Africa, it should participate in the development of regional and subregional mechanisms for linking up relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development activities in and around areas where conflict has broken out within the continent. The Commission is particularly well placed to play its role in the sense that:

(a) It works closely with OAU and the African Development Bank (ADB) through the joint secretariat of the three institutions and is thereby in a position to engage in constant dialogue with the representatives of most countries and regional organizations of Africa;

(b) It can, by serving as the information centre for humanitarian issues and emergency and relief matters on the continent, be more closely associated with the continental initiative for coordinating relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities necessary to enable most countries and humanitarian organizations to quickly take informed decisions on the provision of emergency assistance to those who need it;

(c) It has considerable experience and know-how in easily forging relationships with international organizations, which the member countries could draw on to better explain their needs and so obtain the type of emergency assistance they want and need.

28. The Commission is expected, together with all the parties concerned and particularly the relevant regional organizations, to play a major role in the preparation of such a master plan for the various areas of Africa needing emergency relief and rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. The programme of activities for preparation of the master plan has been as follows, with some variations depending on the circumstances of each country and/or region:

(a) A detailed study of the state of the various economic sectors, particularly agriculture, industry, transport and communications, administration, etc. with a view to assessing the level of the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance that they require;

(b) A detailed study of all the emergency relief and humanitarian assistance activities underway in the various economic sectors;

(c) Formulation of overall strategies for rebuilding the various economic sectors;

(d) Design of a programme for implementing the above-mentioned strategies;

(e) Follow-up and evaluation of additional measures for implementing the strategies.

III. ECA ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF REHABILITATION, RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

29. The rehabilitation, rebuilding and development of a country are inconceivable in the absence of security, stability and democratization.

30. The problem, however, is that African mechanisms for responding to African emergencies do not yet exist. Given the large number of ongoing and potential "trouble spots" in Africa, it is obvious that the relevance of the United Nations system in general and that of the Commission in particular in Africa, in the 1990s and beyond, will be importantly determined by how effectively the Commission is able to cooperate and respond to the complex emergencies that are erupting throughout the region, and move from there to rehabilitation, reconstruction, development, cooperation and regional integration.

31. To face this challenge, ECA had prepared a report entitled: Agenda on Emergency, Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Affairs in Africa, whose purpose is to map out ECA's Agenda for meeting the challenges of African emergency, humanitarian, rehabilitation and reconstruction and development affairs in the 1990s and beyond.

32. Even though the situation in Somalia still has a long way to go before it can be considered normal, ECA, within its mandate, and as the test of its Agenda on Emergency, Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Affairs in Africa, has initiated the process of formulating a master plan for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country. This process is being fruitfully coordinated with the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Bureau for Arab States, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), the World Bank and the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA).

33. The Commission has actively participated in the meetings on the humanitarian assistance programme in Mozambique. The situation in Mozambique, following the October 1992 signed General Peace Agreement, points compellingly to the need for immediate measures for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the productive and social sectors. It also reinforces the argument that humanitarian assistance must, together with peace, move beyond emergency action to provide a Master Plan for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. Accordingly, the Commission sent a high level mission to Mozambique in October 1993 to elaborate a comprehensive Master Plan for the Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development of the Country. This Master Plan was developed in close cooperation with the Mozambican authorities and all other concerned, regional, subregional and international organizations, including NGOs.

34. The Eritrea Master Plan Outline has served as a basis for preparing similar comprehensive, coordinated and coherent master plan for other African countries facing similar situation: Mozambique, Rwanda. The missions to these different countries have been undertaken in close cooperation and with the effective participation of the embassies of those countries in Addis Ababa.

35. The Commission has also elaborated, at the request of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, a comprehensive Master Plan for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of the Tigray Region. This important programme is called "Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Rehabilitation in Tigray" (SAERT). The design of SAERT will serve a useful purpose for designing similar master plans for other regions of Ethiopia as it is in line with the Transitional Government of Ethiopia's rehabilitation and reconstruction policy which puts emphasis on decentralized regional development planning. The plan was elaborated in close cooperation with the UNDP office in Addis Ababa and in collaboration with other appropriate United Nations specialized agencies, especially FAO.

36. ECA, working in conjunction with the Pan-African Centre for Social Action (CPPS), has approached OAU, ADB, the African Leadership Forum and African NGOs working within the framework of IRED,³ in order to promote an "African Humanitarian Initiative" that would benefit countries and peoples affected by such disasters as civil strife and famine. The highly positive feedback that was received from these contacts encouraged the Commission and other institutions concerned, including DHA, to propose the convening of a colloquium in Ouagadougou from 18 to 20 March 1993 in order to discuss and adopt a plan of action and to take adequate steps for its speedy implementation.

37. The objective to be attained is to make Africa participate actively and effectively in relief operations for Africans.

38. The purpose of the international colloquium, in addition to creating awareness, was specifically designed to work out an African approach within a plan, a network and structure for expressing solidarity.

39. The theme of the Ouagadougou colloquium therefore addressed serious issues in contemporary Africa which happens to be the continent where development policies and humanitarian intervention should henceforth be combined and harmonized.

40. The document entitled Final Act which reflects the conclusion and policy recommendations of the colloquium regarding the African Humanitarian Initiative was presented to the OAU Summit in Cairo in June 1993, by the President of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Blaise Compaore. It should be underlined that the follow-up

³ "Innovations et réseaux pour le développement", 3, rue Varembe, Geneva.

committee on the Action Plan set up under the Final Act is composed of CPPS, Burkina Faso, OAU, ECA, ADB and DHA.

41. Based on ECA experiences in Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Mozambique and Rwanda, the general framework should, on average, foresee a phase I with a transitional period of up to three years for rehabilitation of basic infrastructure and institutions and the reintegration of displaced populations. This programme phase would be undertaken before tackling longer term reconstruction and development issues, although the planning exercise would start already with phase I.

42. As we have observed, everywhere, there seems to be a clear indication that the lack of a general framework is making coordination impossible at all levels (among donors, between sectors, between donors, NGOs and government, etc.). Even priorities are not linked to the needs of the communities concerned. Under those conditions, the problem of sustainability could, in the long run, become impossible to achieve for the governments concerned.

43. The Commission's multisectoral expertise on cooperation and integration, management, manpower development statistics and on public administration is bearing importantly and beneficially on the development of coherent rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes.

44. The objectives of these missions are based, among others, on:

(a) The necessity of maintaining a continuum between rehabilitation, reconstruction and development in order to ensure the appropriate link between the short-, medium- and long-term development process of the country;

(b) The necessity to maintain a continuum from national to subregional and regional development process. In fact, it is necessary for African countries to search for economic cooperation and integration within the spirit of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community;

(c) The necessity of achieving a decentralization of the economic development process from national level to regional or provincial, with the aim of involving the whole population at the grass-roots level;

(d) ECA was also of the view that, in order for the donor community to see the interface which exists between the different blocks constituting the national, economic and social development programme of the concerned country, there must be a master plan which can also serve as a coordinating instrument for the implementation of such national programme. The final goal of the ECA mission was, therefore, to help the concerned country's authorities elaborate such a master plan, as ECA was convinced that the master plan must be owned by country's populations themselves.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

45. One of the principal features of the proposed planning process has been the effective participation of populations of the country concerned. Any planning must take place with the active participation of those who later will implement the master plan and bear its consequences. The participation of the concerned populations in deciding their future economic development process is indeed essential and a prerequisite to any country's ownership of the master plan.

46. The planning principles have been the general guidelines affecting all aspects of the development of the master plan and must be considered as:

(a) Identifying national programmes to address specific problems as the main framework for coordinating national and international resources, thus putting into practice the principle of the "programme approach";

(b) Supporting the emergency activities, the decentralization and good governance process; and the efficient public sector management;

(c) Encouraging the establishment of efficient markets rather than re-establish the command economy of the pre-civil war (which existed in some countries);

(d) Promoting the role of private sector and of regional and rural communities' self reliance through an institutional and regulatory framework that supports private initiative and re-enforces the process of privatization already under way;

(e) Seeking economic and financial sustainability as an important element in defining viable economic development activities by not committing countries to development projects beyond their institutional, technical and financial capacity;

(f) Encouraging efforts at domestic resource mobilization and ensuring efficient utilization;

(g) Ensuring that sectoral components are internally consistent;

(h) Addressing the historic apparent regional imbalances between regions and provinces in their entire natural strengths and their potential in the allocation of resources, reach all regions and involve all segments of society including women. While it is not always efficient to distribute investments equally among regions, a distribution without taking into account certain balance has led to instability and greater loss than would have otherwise been the case;

(i) Encouraging environmentally sound policies and practices throughout the economy to ensure a balanced and sustainable development;

(j) Giving preference to projects for which the concerned populations are willing to invest and commit their own development and operating funds, so as to reinforce and sustain a sense of country's ownership and to provide a credible indicator of the country's priorities; and

(k) Encouraging the subregional and regional cooperation and integration as an element of paramount importance in the development process of the country.

47. The above principles highlight the common themes that have, in general, been pursued in the design of the different segments or building blocks of the master plan for a country.

48. Applying the ECA principles of continuum in the elaboration of the master plan series, the Commission, through experiences, could make the following reflections.

A. Democratization

49. As underlined by the 1993 Human Development Report, the 1980s saw a strong movement away from authoritarian rule towards greater political freedom and democracy. Although this is a positive trend, there is still some way to go in developing African countries as well as in other developing countries before people are truly in command of their destinies. Even where citizens can elect their leaders in free, regular and fair elections, they seldom have achieved full political participation. If developing countries' citizens are to have an impact on development and social transformation processes, the trend towards democracy and good governance must widen and deepen.

50. In African countries especially, the legitimacy to rule were based on the demagogy promises by governments to establish order and promote economic growth and development with structural and social transformation. When these promises faltered, their legitimacy was undermined and even where governments have obtained some success in alleviating poverty, as in China and the Republic of Korea, people sooner or later want greater democracy, accountability and good governance. Attempts have often been made from outside to promote and/or encourage democracy, i.e., by making aid conditional on democratic reforms. This is often an expression of shared concern for universal human rights; nevertheless, it can be counter-productive, as it might not produce lasting change and can also antagonize people unnecessarily and even undermine those pressing for democratic change. Democracy is definitely not a matter of one decision or of hastily organized elections. Democracy and good governance require a long political development process. Considering the immense diversity of possible political forms, it is unlikely that the demands of outsiders will correspond to another country's real and genuine needs. The democratic process chosen by people who have to determine their own destiny, has to be adapted to local circumstances. Whatever formal structure a country opts for, is only the starting point in a long process of facilitating effective forms of popular participation.

51. Democracy and good governance usually bring their own problems. An immediate difficulty is managing competing claims of different classes, ethnic groups and political actors. The central problem for many developing countries is that they lack strong democratic institutions. In the absence of democratic structures, local governments lack an effective political power base from which to generate local control over decision-making. Democracies and good governance need much than voting booths to work efficiently. They also need stable political parties that can themselves draw together many diverse interests and weave them into a cohesive organization. They need independent groups: farmers' organizations, trade unions, consumer groups, chambers of commerce, cultural and religious groups - and all the other elements of a civil society that systematically facilitate and regulate the process of articulating citizens' demands. Building these institutions takes time and constant renewal, if they are not to become instruments for a small elite to manipulate the levers of power. There are also dangers from the creation of new forms of central control. Many African countries are going through two difficult processes simultaneously: democratization, good governance and economic liberalization, which is straining the political capacities of many newly elected leaders. In many countries, it has therefore been found necessary to complement democratization with efforts aimed at enhanced transparency and accountability of government. After gaining independence, many developing countries have initially emphasized efforts to build a nation-State. This has often had a highly centralizing effect. External assistance, which in many countries forms a large part of the national budget, has only helped to reinforce these trends. Decentralizing governance, from capital cities to regions, towns and villages, can be one of the best means of promoting participation and efficiency.

B. Decentralization

52. A move to decentralization, not only affects the way resources are spent, it also affects the way money can be collected. It could, for example, allow more taxes to be raised locally if people are confident that their money will be used for the benefit of their own communities. The main ways of increasing local revenue are through taxation, cost recovery, voluntary contributions and borrowing. Regarding user charges, our experiences seem to concur with what was stated in the 1991 Human Development Report, namely that some services should always be free: specifically primary health care (though there could, in some cases, be charges for drugs and hospital care) and basic education and even for secondary education. For water and sanitation, governments should bear the capital costs but users might contribute to recurrent costs. One of the most important benefits of decentralization is the opportunity to cut costs, in several ways. First, if local people feel that it is their money being spent, they are likely to keep a tighter lid on expenditure and to use resources more efficiently. In theory, decentralization should improve efficiency. At the outset, projects would be better able to match local needs. And with projects monitored locally, lines of communication should be shorter, with fewer delays due to conflicts between project staff and the final beneficiaries. Involving local people can also result in a more appropriate structure of services, particularly in health care. Local involvement also opens up the opportunity for people to add voluntary contributions to amplify a programme or project's impact. Some of the most effective contributions as a result of decentralization come from local labour and materials. A final and lasting benefit of greater participation in the provision of local services is that they can be more efficiently run and maintained.

53. Decentralization can increase economic participation by facilitating local entrepreneurial activity, and thus increasing employment in several ways: increased public expenditure; higher quality services and better support for entrepreneurs. In the rural areas, one of the most important routes to increased economic participation is through land reform. However, if poorly planned and executed, decentralization can add to costs rather than reduce them. One common danger is duplicating layers of administration at national, regional and local levels. The benefits of decentralization can also be offset by losses in economy of scale.

C. Self-reliance

54. Self-reliance and interdependence are concepts which are not mutually exclusive in this age of a highly intertwined regional/global economy. Large countries like India and China can aim at high degree of self-reliance, mainly because of the large internal markets they have. But even these countries cannot hope to be totally self-reliant. Smaller nations cannot achieve the same degree of self-reliance as the bigger ones, no matter how hard they try. They have to look for bigger markets, capital, technology, natural resources, etc.. While a self-reliance approach rooted in inward-looking strategies has its advantages, no country can afford to be insular, much less many African countries as cases in point. Patterns of interdependence - subregional, regional and global have to be instituted.

D. Coordination

55. There is always likely to be substantial benefits to an aid/investment receiving country if a well coordinated and integrated approach or plan or programme whose "rules of the game" are transparent, facilitate accountability and efficiency, and known to all, is formulated in concert with other international and regional concerned institutions, bilateral partners, NGOs that are active in the interested economic and social sectors. There is an overriding need for the activities of all the related United Nations agencies and even of other donors and NGOs to be harmonized for integrated and cogent actions, so that they support, rather than work against each other. The general proposition states that it is the role of the government to harmonize policies and set

priorities. However, this theoretical notion is often very difficult to apply when small or weak countries face heavy and conflicting external pressures touching on such vital concerns as preserving internal peace and maintaining external financial lifelines. Often, a government dares not put its foot down and insist on terms for external financing which take into account its particular political predicament, for fear of losing the financing. United Nations Organizations and donors community should support a country taking into account its genuine specificities and allow it to avoid a collision between competing processes. Coordination is possible only if there is transparency. In fact, it is difficult to coordinate properly when you do not know what your counterpart is doing, or vice-versa.

56. There is no doubt that transparency and coordination between agencies which are ultimately answerable to separate and distinct governing bodies and ministries of many governments, has to be far more difficult than coordination between those ministries in a single government. Individual governments definitely have greater flexibility to rearrange their own structures than do international organizations which are at the service of a large number of governments. Nevertheless, it is self-evident that an integrated, a coordinated, and synergistic approach to the present kind of problems with which the United Nations system is increasingly challenged in member countries, at subregional and regional levels around the world, will be more practicable considering the fact that a truly unitary approach is highly needed among these separate entities within a loose system.

57. As stated by Alvaro de Soto,⁴ if the United Nations system, as conceived at the end of World War II - with functional responsibilities assigned to separate bodies, each answerable to a different constituency -- is to retain credibility as a viable way of addressing world problems without tampering with the charters of the different organizations, a serious effort to make the necessary adjustments should not be delayed. Paraphrasing the Prince's nephew in Lampedusa's The Leopard, "if we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change. *D'you understand?*".

58. The integrated approach required that three main objectives be pursued:

(a) Greater transparency between actions of different institutions, agencies, and donors community. Ingrained reflexes to protect turf also frequently lead to cageyness in dealings between staff of different agencies. Transparency might in fact be inhibited precisely by the fear that it may be followed by attempts at coordination.⁵ Coordinated and integrated approach remains a must for a successful unitary approach in the interest of member countries of the United Nations system at large;

(b) Enhanced coordination between those institutions agencies and donors community, as well as integration of goals and activities;

(c) Flexibility in the application of the rules and regulations of those institutions.

59. ECA is of the view that the master plan series being elaborated will assist African countries concerned in providing a sound basis for the transition from emergency to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development,

⁴ Alvaro de Soto and Graciana del Castillo: "The United Nations System Pushing Fifty: The Challenge of Peace-Building".

⁵ As stated in Mason and Asher, "United Nations Vs IBRD: A Dilemma of Functionalism" International Organization, 24 virtually everyone underscores the desirability of coordinating technical and financial assistance (to a given country), but no agency wishes to be coordinated by another.

a consistent framework of policy positions on a broad range of medium to long-term issues including the role of markets throughout the economy; the acceleration of the privatization process; increased transparency, accountability and efficiency in public sector management and infrastructure; the role of pricing and cost recovery in providing public services; the development of financial intermediaries; the role of decentralization in ensuring greater regional equity, and the role of government and local communities and institutions in mobilizing domestic resources and spurring human development. Having identified policy positions, the plan would also identify how they shape priorities for the immediate programme of financial and technical assistance, and the possible role of donors, NGOs and international organizations in the delivery of this assistance.

60. Given the newness of the area, financial resources are needed. ECA has up to the present endeavoured to respond to member countries, by diverting resources from other urgent priorities to these similarly urgent but unplanned priorities. Although ECA, OAU, DHA and UNDP have to closely cooperate in these important undertakings, it is suggested that African countries find the modalities of financing these activities within the framework of an African Trust Fund for Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development. The establishment of such trust fund will give the opportunity to international institutions, to donor countries friends of Africa and NGOs, to contribute to a fund which would be jointly managed for the benefit of African countries and/or regions facing the need for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.