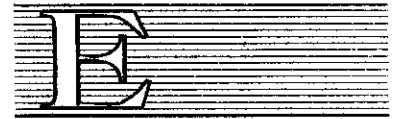


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**UNITED NATIONS
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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

First Conference of African Ministers
responsible for Sustainable
Development and the Environment

Meeting of the Committee of Experts

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
4-7 March 1996

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

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Ministerial meeting

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**ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AFRICAN COMMON POSITION:
THE AFRICAN STRATEGIES**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In May 1993, the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning adopted the African Strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21¹ by its resolution 744 (XXVIII). This took into account the African Common Position which was Africa's input to the deliberations at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992.
2. The African Strategies turned Agenda 21 into its regional dimensions and provided, with other African government policy pronouncements on environment, for the new policy and programme orientation of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), the key African regional intergovernmental institution on environment and development matters. AMCEN plays a major role in charting out, in close consultation with the relevant ministries, procedures for integrating environment into development planning, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation.²
3. At its fifth session in November 1993, AMCEN adopted a new policy orientation and programme. Working on the programme it adopted in Cairo in 1985³ as well as the African Agenda towards Sustainable Development adopted in Kampala in 1989 and the African Strategies for Agenda 21, 12 major areas of focus were selected. Central to them was the thrust on capacity building.
4. In the same manner, at its 1994 annual meeting, the ECA Conference of Ministers, by resolution 771 (XXIX), endorsed the preliminary report on "A Framework Agenda for building and utilizing critical capacities in Africa".⁴ The exercise is focused on building and enhancing the critical capacities needed to sustain growth and development. The Framework Agenda falls within the scope of Agenda 21 and will directly or indirectly be included in this assessment. National governments and the international community must, therefore, build on the initiatives already under way at national, subregional and regional levels to foster self-reliance and interdependence.
5. Since the establishment of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), several strategies have been put in place for a regular review of the implementation of Agenda 21. To harmonize a global approach for assessing and reporting on the progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, DPCSD is promoting a reporting process by Member States to CSD. Another important exercise by DPCSD has been the development and harmonization of sustainable development indicators at national level.
6. This report will attempt to provide an insight into the impact that the African Strategies and the new policy orientation of AMCEN have had on the different environmental activities at national, regional and global levels, with emphasis on capacity building and environmental awareness. Against this background, recommendations are made for future actions to enhance environment and development activities at these levels as well as increased African participation in international cooperative environmental action. In this manner, Africa should be coping with the challenges of environment and sustainable development through

¹ Document E/ECA/CM.19/8/Rev.1 of 18 June 1993 (ECA, Addis Ababa).

² See Strategies document, *ibid.*, paras. 372 and 373.

³ It should be recalled the first session of AMCEN was convened in Cairo in 1985 when Africa was going through one of its worst spells of severe drought which resulted in a number of programmes, important among which were this one and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD).

⁴ Document E/ECA/CM.20/6 of April 1994.

the integration of environmental dimensions into the development planning process and programme implementation. Significant efforts would have to be made to address problems of poverty eradication, capability and capacity building as well as the mobilization of financial, manpower and institutional resources to achieve these objectives.

7. Three years after Rio, there may not be a reliable, quantifiable basis for the exercise. However, it will provide a starting point towards stocktaking of the sustainability of African environmental awareness vis-à-vis the global momentum. This Conference is called upon to provide guidelines on how to enhance the promotion of the UNCED outcomes, particularly those related to Agenda 21 at national, subregional and regional levels. The guidelines should be aimed, *inter alia*, at enhancing the new policy orientations of AMCEN.

8. This report is presented in five sections: Section I is the introduction giving the context of the exercise; progress made at national, subregional and regional actions is assessed in section II; section III deals with global issues; section IV addresses coordination within the United Nations system; and conclusions and recommendations are given in section V.

II. PROGRESS MADE AT NATIONAL, SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

A. Strategic evolution

9. A three-stage evolution can be identified in the progress made in implementing Agenda 21 in Africa within the framework of the African environment and development agenda. The first began in May 1993 with the adoption of the African Strategies for Agenda 21⁵ which were formulated to reconcile the pre-Rio African Common Position on Environment and Development with the Rio outcomes, particularly Agenda 21. Twenty-four priority areas of the African Common Position were grouped around seven key areas, taking into account the 40 chapters of Agenda 21. These include the following:⁶

- (a) Managing demographic change and population pressures;
- (b) Achieving food self-sufficiency and food security;
- (c) Ensuring efficient and equitable use of water resources;
- (d) Securing greater energy self-sufficiency;
- (e) Optimizing environmentally clean industrial production;

⁵ See document E/ECA/CM.19/8/Rev.1 of 18 June 1993.

⁶ Groups and the chapters of the African Common Position they will subsume are as follows:

- (a) Group 1 (Managing demographic change and population pressures): chapters 5, 6 and 24;
- (b) Group 2 (Achieving food self-sufficiency and food security): chapter 1;
- (c) Group 3 (Ensuring efficient and equitable use of water resources): chapters 2 and 3;
- (d) Group 4 (Securing greater energy self-sufficiency): chapter 4;
- (e) Group 5 (Optimizing industrial production): chapters 7, 13 and 19;
- (f) Group 6 (Maintaining species and ecosystems): chapters 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 22 and 23; and
- (g) Group 7 (Preventing and reversing desertification): chapters 11 and 12.

The remaining chapters in the African Common Position (i.e., 14, 16, 18, 20 and 21) are cross-sectoral to these seven major groupings.

- (f) Management of species and ecosystems; and
- (g) Preventing and reversing desertification.

10. The Strategies document recognizes that for Africa, sustainable development requires initiatives at the political level as well as collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women and youth organizations and the private sector. This implies a national political commitment to ensure that development processes do not destroy the resource base on which future development will depend. It is a redefinition of national development priorities to alleviate constraints imposed by natural conditions, current international economic conditions and the debt burden. The UNCED process is a global vehicle with a comprehensive spectrum of environmental activities which will, to a large extent, decide the tempo and level of international economic and political relations through the 1990s into the twenty-first century. Apart from the need to re-emphasize the imperative to recognize the environmental interdependence between the North and the South, South-South partnership must be promoted more strongly than before. With these objectives, therefore, it was necessary to evolve the strategies to enable African countries to address the problems of eradicating poverty through sustainable development.

11. The second stage began with the adoption of the new policy orientation of the programme of work of AMCEN building strongly on the priority areas identified in the African Strategies for Agenda 21. By this new policy orientation, AMCEN will provide the leadership and guidance in respect of major African environmental issues programmes, including the initiatives envisaged within the framework of the African Common Position and the African Strategies for Agenda 21. More specifically, the areas of definite political action and policy guidance relate to:

- (a) Priority programmes of focus at national, subregional and regional levels as well as Africa's approach to international environmental issues;
- (b) The state of the African environment, including the issues addressed, the policy guidelines, capacity building particularly in the field of environmental legislation from national to global regulatory issues, relation to global issues, etc.; and
- (c) Resource mobilization, including funding mechanisms.

12. In adopting the new policy orientation, African Ministers responsible for the Environment recognized that full use was not being made of all the available technical capacity in the region. This arose from the fact that there was not a clear knowledge of the needs and a relevant register of related capacities developed. To give the necessary support for achieving the objectives of the UNCED outcomes, there is the need also to strengthen and use, to the maximum, all the available national, subregional and regional institutional and manpower capacity for sustainable development.

13. The objective of the AMCEN programme is, therefore, to promote such environment programme strategies which will enable African countries to address the problems of eradicating poverty through the sound management of natural resources and the environment. Poverty is one of the main causes of environmental degradation and the important role of the imbalances in the international economic situation in contributing to the persistence of this state of poverty. To eradicate poverty requires, among other things, the adoption and implementation of the following policies for:

- (a) The systematic integration of environmental dimensions into development programme decision making and programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- (b) Implementing strategies for internalizing the mobilization of resources for environmentally sustainable development; and

(c) Participating actively in the present dialogue aimed at addressing issues relating to the problem of inequalities in the present international economic order.

14. The third stage is the integration of the African Strategies and the AMCEN new policy orientation ideas into the Framework Agenda for building and utilizing critical capacities in Africa,⁷ an exercise being undertaken by ECA in its member States. The focus of this exercise was driven by the fact that, besides analytical convenience, for it to have the necessary impact in the appropriate sectors of African development, a sequencing of priorities based on those indicated in the Common Position was imperative. This sequencing was understood to mean the implementation, *a priori*, of those priority programmes that enhance mutation, growth and development in the other sectors. It would also require the development and strengthening of institutional and manpower capabilities and capacities for programme formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

15. Built on the above, economic integration would be fostered between and among countries to build strong collective bargaining power and overcome the small market constraint. A peaceful and enabling environment and an effective management of the economy under democratic governance should be established. National population programmes should be formulated and implemented simultaneously with programmes aimed at addressing environmental degradation and other social concerns such as health and education.

B. Areas of focus and development objectives

16. To meet the challenges posed by the constantly changing international situation, most often not in its favour, Africa must be more innovative in addressing the emerging trends, particularly those related to such issues as the increased competition among countries and regions for financial resources, the increasing aid fatigue and debt burden. Poverty eradication with particular emphasis on human capacity development should be targeted. The key priority areas of focus for sustainable development should include: (a) environmental economics, accounting and management tools; (b) environmental law, institutions and policies; (c) environmental education and training; and (d) environmental awareness and public information.

17. The following areas are receiving special priority action for capacity building for sustainable development:

(a) Environmental economics, accounting and management tools

18. The driving force behind the need to give value, on financial terms, to environmental resources as an integral part of national accounting and the contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) is gaining ground. Environmental losses and gains are the bases for impact assessment of development actions. On these bases, revenue valuation for commensurate environmental "use charges", tax incentives and a combination of both charges and incentives could be arrived at. These tax incentives should be designed to modify behaviour by encouraging particular groups or activities.

19. The objective of this activity is, therefore, to enhance the capabilities of African countries to integrate environment and development and assist them in the application of relevant economic instruments and policies for environmental management. It is also to strengthen institutions in African countries and train administrators and policy makers in the use of techniques and policies relating to environment and economics.

⁷ See document E/ECA/CM.21/5 of May 1995.

20. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been assisting AMCEN in the promotion of environmental economics and related environmental impact assessments (EIAs). Several workshops have been organized for this purpose. Awareness is being raised at high policy levels,⁸ with the thrust on:

(a) Promoting the use of EIA as a continuous planning tool and the strengthening of institutional and legal frameworks for this purpose to ensure the enforcement of EIA by fully integrating this tool, including bio-physical and socio-economic aspects, from the early stages of policy, plan, programme and project formulation, implementation, monitoring, commissioning and evaluation;

(b) Sensitizing policy and decision makers in government and the private sector to the importance of integrating EIA in development planning;

(c) Establishing a national EIA database of experts and institutions in the region to include a geographic information system (GIS) to facilitate activities on specific environmental problems that lend themselves to EIA; a mechanism to promote information exchange on a regular basis;

(d) Establishing an African network of EIA experts and interested parties, building on the existing networks such as those of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the African Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank, the Network on Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa (NESDA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the AMCEN Network on Environmental Education and Training and its centres of excellence, to provide technical advice, information and training on EIA and mobilize the necessary financial support for its activities;

(e) Collaborative activities between African centres on the environment and African countries to facilitate EIA capacity building in the region as well as promote the exchange of experiences among member States to foster capacity building, based primarily on the use of African expertise and institutions and the coherence of EIA procedures adopted by African countries; this will encourage the development and use of country-specific guidelines, while being cognizant of international efforts in this area; and

(f) Promoting cooperation between developed and developing countries, including the adaptation of those EIA procedures as they benefit and suit the needs of African countries;

(b) Environmental law, institutions and policies

21. Inadequate legislative frameworks for environmental management and cooperation is the rule rather than the exception in Africa. While most countries have environmental regulations pertaining to environmental health, very few have laws with administrative mechanisms to control environmental degradation and the unsustainable exploitation and use of environmental resources.

22. Activities were to be focused on national legislation in African countries, reviewed and strengthened with a view to developing the necessary frameworks for national environmental legislation. It was intended to ensure the entry into force and effective implementation of the conventions on the environment relevant to Africa and the implementation of international legal instruments on marine pollution from land-based sources and information exchange on international trade in chemicals, preparatory work for the development of legal instruments on international cooperation in environmental emergencies, environmental impact assessment and for the development and implementation of a convention on desertification.

23. This would be done through the organization of national, subregional and regional seminars and workshops in environmental law and institutions and training of government legal officials in international

⁸ Durban Ministerial meeting, June 1995.

and national environmental law to increase environmental awareness. Technical advisory services were also to be provided as a contribution to developing the human resource component of the capacity-building programme. All this should be aimed at developing national environmental legislative frameworks and relevant codes for environment and sustainable development.

(c) Environmental education and training

24. Despite the awareness that was raised, at the technical level, during the UNCED process there is still a very low level of awareness of the environmental implications of development among the majority of policy and decision makers. While micro environmental management is a serious concern among the rural populations, the macro- and global-level implications of their actions is still very inadequate. To address this gap, many actions were undertaken through workshops and participation in UNCED follow-up meetings by NGOs to broaden the base for capacity building and utilization beyond the monopoly of government. This approach would ensure the optimum mobilization of the national human resource base to ensure that environmental management provides a full contribution to achieving sustainable development.

25. Activities were to be focused on the promotion of environmental education in Africa, including the implementation of the international environmental education programme (IEEP), modified to cover environment and sustainable development education. The outcome of activities under this rubric would include nationals of African countries trained in environmental management.

(d) Environmental awareness and public information⁹

26. Environmental awareness and public information for sustainable development was promoted through various reports to the legislative bodies within the framework of AMCEN activities and ECA Environment Newsletters. The new policy and programme of AMCEN and the regular work programme of ECA include a useful role in:

(a) Providing guidance on major environmental issues of concern to the region; providing a forum for discussions on needed coordinated and concerted actions on the African environment;

(b) Facilitating the harmonization of Africa's position and perspectives on global environmental issues; and

(c) Encouraging Africa's active participation in major negotiations on key environmental issues; monitoring progress in the implementation of subregional, regional, international and global agreements on the environment; mobilizing support for subregional and regional environmental programmes, including the participation of NGOs and community-based organizations.

27. The Conference is invited to review the major intra-African commitments on the environment with a view to identifying strategies for providing impetus for their implementation. There are some subregional and regional agreements/conventions on the environment (such as the Algiers Convention) which, though dating back a number of years, are still valid. Minor revisions may be necessary in some cases. The Bamako Convention has not yet been ratified by a number of African countries even though it was adopted by the Ministers of Environment in January 1991.

28. In this regard, this Conference is invited to examine critically needed actions in order to give additional impetus to the efforts aimed at sensitizing policy and decision makers on all issues related to environment and sustainable development. Priority should be given to:

⁹ See also AMCEN Secretariat document, UNEP/OAU/ECA/6/5 of 1 November 1995.

(a) Environmental awareness at the grass-roots level concerning issues of national environmental priority; and

(b) Transboundary issues at the national level and promoting participation at subregional and regional levels in honouring commitments relating to the ratification of international conventions, agreements and protocols in the field of the environment and development.

III. PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL ACTIVITIES

29. Conventions, programmes of action and platforms of action arising from Agenda 21 have been the major focus of global action. While the conventions on climate change and biodiversity were negotiated before Rio, the one on combating desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification was done post-UNCED as was the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

A. Conventions

(a) Convention to Combat Desertification

30. Africa underscored the point that the problem of drought and desertification in the region was not just a technical issue. Africa's human and environmental crisis is also about social, economic and political factors, both internal and external. It is influenced by the state of the world economy, commodity prices, interest rates, energy imports and inappropriate and misplaced aid.¹⁰ Desertification must, therefore, be seen as a developmental problem which must be addressed from a multi-sectoral approach. This calls for greater emphasis to be put on the eradication of poverty and the development of alternative patterns of livelihood for the peoples affected by this phenomenon, including, *inter alia*, popular participation, environmental education and promoting the participation of the non-governmental sector.

31. With this orientation, Africa's approach to the negotiations were inclusive of the modalities for addressing the present imbalances in the levels of development and the capacity to address environmental problems in Africa. They demonstrated the imperative for global common action for ensuring a common future that is also assured of common environmental security.

32. The Convention, which was signed in September 1994 with its instrument on Africa, is a reflection of the orientation of the Strategies for Agenda 21 and the new policy orientation of AMCEN. A total of 178 countries agreed and decided to prepare a United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. This commitment was met and the Convention has been signed and adopted in October 1994. It contains a regional annex for Africa and the United Nations General Assembly has adopted a special resolution on urgent action for Africa. Recent reports indicate that 50 African countries have signed and five have already ratified the Convention.

(b) Climate change

33. Although the Convention on Climate Change was negotiated before Rio, the follow-up session of the Conference of the Parties is inspired by the spirit of the negotiations of the Convention to Combat Desertification. Emphasis is on the approach adopted in placing desertification within the fifth window of the global environment facility (GEF) which addressed land degradation and desertification as it affects climate change.

¹⁰ Katerere, Y. M. (1993), "Why a convention on desertification?" in NETWORK, No. 22, January 1993 (Centre for Our Common Future, Geneva).

(c) Biodiversity

34. Before the first Conference of the Parties, a special session of AMCEN was convened to chart out Africa's approach to the implementation of Convention. The African Common Perspectives and Common Position are a reflection of the new orientations of AMCEN, namely:

(a) Developing and sustaining institutional and legislative capacity and the capabilities required for the conservation of biological diversity through research and development;

(b) Harmonizing and coordinating programmes and activities on the protection, on a sustainable basis, of the biological diversity of the region;

(c) Strengthening wildlife management programmes; contributing to global activities on conservation of biological diversity; promoting, collecting, evaluating and conserving gene pools through the establishment of gene banks in institutions concerned;

(d) Disseminating information and results from pilot projects; supporting and strengthening networks for the conservation of genetic resources;

(e) Promoting popular participation in environmental protection and sustainable development should be pursued collectively. Just as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has adopted the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, it should also work collectively to implement it so that popular social groups like workers, NGOs, grass-roots people, women, peasants and youth are mobilized to deal with ecological problems that are manifested everywhere;

(f) Developing mechanisms for global/regional/national afforestation and reforestation including provisions for large-scale global funding for forests.

35. The Conference may wish to discuss the implications for Africa of the above and other major conventions/agreements on the environment to determine modalities for strengthening the strategies of the Conference regarding these agreements on the environment. In the light of recent developments relating to the biodiversity and desertification conventions, the Conference may also consider modalities for a better organization of Africa through the preparation of Africa common perspectives and positions on some of the major conventions.

B. Programmes of action

(a) Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States¹¹

36. All aspects of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)¹² are covered in the African Strategies for Agenda 21. This Programme of Action concerns the following African small island developing States: Cape Verde, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe and Seychelles.

37. The preamble of the Programme of Action underscores that:

¹¹ See Strategies document, *op. cit.*, paras. 252-257.

¹² See United Nations document A/CONF.167/L.5 and its annexes (Barbados, 6 May 1994).

"The small size of small island developing States means that development and environment are closely interrelated and interdependent...; small island countries are fully aware that the environmental consequences of ill-conceived development can have catastrophic effects. Unsustainable development threatens not only the livelihood of people but also the islands themselves and the cultures they nurture."

38. The participation of most of the coastal States and many land-locked countries in the first global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados, West Indies, from 25 April to 6 May 1994, underscored the interdependence of the ecosystems and functioning of the economies of these adjacent countries. Environmental management for the sustainable development of these small island States would depend on the levels of cooperation between them.

39. In order to initiate the implementation of the Programme of Action with immediate effect, contingency plans should be made to absorb some of the activities within ongoing programmes and existing resources. Some of the programme activities of ECA, particularly those relating to poverty alleviation through sustainable development, already respond to some of the concerns of the Programme of Action.

40. The programme activities of the ECA Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs), particularly those based in Lusaka, Niamey and Yaounde, are all relevant. The Yaounde-based MULPOC has carried out a study on the "Integration of Sao Tome and Principe in the Central African subregion" as well as a macro-scale model on the management of the economy. ECA is presently involved in an exploratory exercise with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) for the preparation of a master plan for the development of marine resources, transport and communications, human settlements and trade. A similar exercise is envisaged for Cape Verde in the Niamey-based MULPOC.

41. In addition to being integrated into ongoing activities, there is a need to increase the participation of the small island developing States in all the activities related to capacity building and technical assistance. ECA has been strengthened with resources provided by DPCSD to enable it to support regional activities in this area.

42. AMCEN will continue to monitor the ratification and implementation of these conventions and the SIDS Programme of Action, including Africa's preparations for and participation in all major conferences on sustainable development.

(b) The Regional Seas Programme

43. It will be recalled that the UNEP Regional Seas programme covers the West and Central African, Eastern Africa and the Mediterranean regions. In the West and Central African region, a number of major activities have been undertaken, including the:

- (a) Institution and coordination of national contingency plans;
- (b) Assessment and control of pollution in the marine environment of the West and Central African region; and
- (c) Integrated coastal area management in the West and Central African region.

44. However, since the implementation of the Regional Seas action plans have been delayed by the slowness on the part of some governments in ratifying the conventions and their protocols and contributing to the regional trust funds, the governments, conscious of the concerns and pressing needs of the regions, make every effort to demonstrate their support for the action plans and their conventions and ensure that adequate financial support can be obtained to implement fully the agreed programme of activities.

45. Recognizing the importance and need for regional cooperation, the governments reconfirm their support for Africa's action plans and their conventions within the framework of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme and make every effort to pay their pledged contributions to the respective regional trust funds, as well as initiate the ratification or accession to the conventions; furthermore, the governments call upon the Executive Director of UNEP to continue to financially support the said action plans and conventions.

46. However, limited support for the trust fund has restricted activities and, as a result, UNEP has been unable to pursue more vigorously the implementation of the action plan. In recognition of the importance of this sector to the national economy, the UNEP Ocean and Coastal Areas Programme Activity Centre supported the convening of a joint ECA/UNEP Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting on the methodology for the assessment of the contribution of the ocean sector to the gross domestic product (GDP) in Africa. The meeting was held in Addis Ababa from 28 to 30 November 1994. This was one of the efforts by ECA and UNEP to promote jointly the integration of aspects of environmental economics in programme development and implementation in member States including, for UNEP, subprogrammes on the environmental management of all kinds of seas and coastal areas management; environmental economics, accounting and management tools.

47. After the adoption of UNCED Agenda 21, the United Nations General Assembly and the Governing Council of UNEP endorsed the regional approach to the management of marine and coastal resources, protection of the marine environment from land-based activities and the development of action plans. The promotion of environmental economics as an integral part of the programme was being given high priority.

48. Furthermore, at a macroeconomic level, many countries are supplementing their existing systems of national accounts (SNA) in order to highlight the links between environment and economic growth. The revision of SNA presented a unique opportunity to examine how the various concepts, definitions, classifications and tabulations of environmental and natural resource accounting can be linked to the SNA in a homogeneous framework.¹³

49. Recognizing the importance of the contribution of the ocean sector to the GDP of African nations and the need to develop methodologies for assessing its economic potential, the Ad hoc Expert Group recommended that coastal States, where necessary, should improve their capacity to collect, analyze, assess and use information for sustainable use of resources, including the environmental impact of activities affecting the coastal and marine areas; information for management purposes should receive priority support in view of the intensity and magnitude of the changes taking place in coastal and marine areas. The contribution of the ocean sector should be reflected in countries' accounting systems by utilizing, within five years, the methodologies developed in this report. UNEP should submit to the next meeting of the contracting parties to the subregional conventions for the protection of coastal areas, a proposal to implement the calculation of the value of the contribution of the ocean sector to each nation's GDP.

50. To implement the above proposals, appropriate institutions should be identified, at the national level, to carry out the task. At the international level, UNEP should organize, in cooperation with ECA and other United Nations agencies, a programme of statistical assistance to African countries. A monitoring service, preferably from within the United Nations system, should be put in place to provide annual reports after the second year of implementation.

¹³ "Integrated environmental and economic accounting", Handbook of National Accounting, Studies in Methods, (Series F, No. 61, United Nations, New York, 1993).

(c) International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD.94)

51. By its resolution 49/128 of 19 December 1994, the General Assembly endorsed the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, and decided, *inter alia*, that the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) would consider the questions relevant to the follow-up to the Conference. Within the United Nations system, an Inter-Agency Working Group, chaired by the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has been established.

52. Most of the developing countries of the South already constitute four fifths of the world's population but only one sixth of its economic output. The present population of the African continent will most likely increase very substantially by the year 2010. Some statistics indicate that there will be around 1 billion Africans during that period of which over 40 per cent will be under 14 years. Urban population will most likely increase fourfold. Such growth and major demographic change will continue to create an imbalance in the crucial relationship between people, resources, environment and development. Today, many people in both rural and urban areas in Africa lack such basic necessities of life as adequate food, health, housing, water, sanitation, education and employment.

53. Population issues have yet to receive due prominence in the work of AMCEN. The Conference may therefore wish to discuss the policy aspects of this important subject and make recommendations for the necessary action by governments, NGOs, subregional and regional organizations. The Conference may wish to take a decision to promote the systematic monitoring of population-environment-sustainable development at the national level and request that progress reports be submitted to it regularly.

C. Other declarations and platforms

(a) World Summit for Social Development

54. The World Summit for Social Development was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 6 to 12 March 1995, with the participation of nearly 120 Heads of State and Government. The Summit addressed the following four main issues:

- (a) The enabling environment for social development;
- (b) Eradication of poverty;
- (c) The expansion of productive employment and the reduction of unemployment; and
- (d) Social integration.

55. It adopted the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The following four issues are of particular relevance, namely national strategies; involvement of civil society; mobilization of financial resources; and the role of the United Nations system.

56. This is an issue of vital importance to the African continent and falls within the purview of the pre-occupations of this Conference.

(b) Fourth World Conference on Women

57. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/129 of 14 December 1990 on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (Nairobi, July 1985), the fourth

World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, China, from 4 to 15 September 1995 to discuss the Platform for Action on: Equality, Development and Peace.

58. During the preparatory process for the World Conference, regional conferences were convened to identify regional trends, priorities, obstacles and innovative suggestions for future action. The regional preparatory meeting for Africa took place in Dakar from 16 to 23 November 1994. The proposed actions for Africa to address the three core issues of the Platform for Action (Equality, Development and Peace) were on the following priority areas: women, poverty, food security and economic empowerment; women, environment and natural resource management; women, education and training, science and technology; women, culture, the family and socialization; women's health, family planning and population; the political empowerment of women.

59. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were adopted. It is stated in the Declaration that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. The implementation of the Platform for Action requires a strong commitment on the part of governments, NGOs, international organizations and institutions at all levels. It also requires adequate mobilization of financial resources and new additional resources to the developing countries to strengthen the capacity of national, subregional and regional institutions.

60. The Conference may wish to suggest modalities for the support to be given to the follow-up to the African Platform for Action (November 1994) as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

(c) Human welfare and the environment

61. As the UNDP 1993 Human Development Report emphasized, the focus for action must shift from security through armaments to security through development and from territorial security to human security, especially the provision of more food, shelter and jobs for the poor who comprise the majority.

62. It should also be pointed out that environmental management is linked to human rights and democracy and, therefore, to access to resources. It thus relates to poverty alleviation and justice. Ecological preservation is also linked to culture, in particular the traditional livelihoods and productive practices of indigenous people. Although natural factors are significant, most environmental emergencies are either socially, economically or politically driven. Ecological conflicts are increasingly becoming political issues which require appropriate policies or approaches for the sustainable and equitable management of natural resources.

63. The attention of the Conference is drawn to the fact that, at present, the development aid budgets for Africa continue to be dominated largely by emergency relief for refugees from wars, drought and famine. The numerous immediate emergencies continue to consume most of the resources needed for the many chronic emergencies such as soil degradation, deforestation and desertification which often cause them. Chronic disaster areas include the rapidly expanding urban slums. There is little difference between many slums and large refugee camps. Both are dominated by malnutrition, contagious diseases and inadequate water, sanitation and shelter, yet those in the slums are still largely ignored by most development aid programmes.

64. The Conference may wish to suggest proposals on how best to expand existing and new enabling factors at national, subregional and regional levels, essential to addressing the inter-related issues of human welfare and the environment.

D. Other emerging issues in the wake of UNCED¹⁴

(a) The United Nations Agenda for Peace

65. In September 1993, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/120 B on "An Agenda for Peace" and a supplement to that Agenda in January 1995, entitled "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace"¹⁵ in which the following four issues are addressed: preventive diplomacy; peacemaking; peacekeeping; and post-conflict peace-keeping.

66. These issues are of particular interest to Africa as the region is currently experiencing some of the world's most serious conflicts. The continent continues to be confronted by challenges related to democracy and human rights. Peace is a fundamental prerequisite for environmentally sound and sustainable development. This is another serious challenge for Africa to face.

67. The Conference may wish to review critically how it can best contribute in support of the Agenda for Peace. It might wish to recommend that AMCEN and the Follow-up Committee of Fifteen, in close collaboration with OAU, should, between sessions:

(a) Review as appropriate, progress being made in the implementation of the Agenda for Peace;

(b) Review the impact of refugee situations on the environment and the whole process of sustainable development in order to make recommendations to the OAU Council of Ministers and the ECA Conference of Ministers;

(c) Foster a common understanding of environmental and natural resource issues which are shared among countries and which could become a cause of future potential conflicts such as shared water resources.

(b) Agenda for development

68. This issue is closely linked to and inter-related with the Agenda for Peace. In response to General Assembly resolution 47/181 of 22 December 1992, the Secretary-General circulated in May 1994 a report on an agenda for development.¹⁶ Building on the views expressed during the World Hearings on Development conducted by the President of the General Assembly in June 1994 and the high-level segment of ECOSOC held the same month, the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a report entitled "An agenda for development" based on resolution 49/126 of 19 December 1994. By this resolution, the General Assembly decided to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group to elaborate further an action-oriented, comprehensive agenda for development. In his report, the Secretary-General identified five dimensions of development, namely peace, the economy, environmental protection, social justice, and democracy.

69. Although the agenda for development has a strong focus on development assistance activities, the environment is termed as a basis for sustainability. The interconnections between the environment, society,

¹⁴ See also AMCEN Secretariat document UNEP/OAU/ECA/6/6 of 1 November 1995 (Nairobi).

¹⁵ See United Nations document A/50/60-S/1995/1.

¹⁶ See United Nations document A/48/935.

the economy and political participation highlight the importance of addressing the environmental aspect of development in a national context.¹⁷

IV. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

A. Financial resources

70. In adopting Agenda 21, it was understood that most of the funding of programmes will have to be within national financial resources. Technical assistance and the transferring and sharing of science and technology between the North and the South would be carried out within that context.

71. The fundamental premise of Agenda 21, therefore, is that sustainable development is a highly bankable project provided that all its costs and benefits are properly valued and fully accounted for. In the same vein, an adequately long-term view must be taken and/or a suitably low discount rate used. The most crucial issue of the provision of the new, adequate and additional financial resources to the developing countries has regrettably met with determined opposition by the developed world as a whole. This is evident from the negotiations for the conventions arising from UNCED, specifically the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

72. To meet existing and impending environment-development requirements, high levels of new financial resources are badly needed. This requires practical and innovative thinking about revenue-gathering methods and market incentives which must take into account experiences since the 1972 Stockholm Conference. The causes of environmental destruction lie in poverty and mismanagement of natural resources. The situation is aggravated by many other factors, key among them being mis-management of national resources, inequity, regressive terms of trade, debt burden, barriers to the transfer of technology and know-how as well as short-term economic planning that views natural resources and ecological processes as free goods.

73. Avoidance of environmental degradation and resulting avoidance of environmental costs through appropriate policy reforms should be seen as a source of financial savings. To this end, a number of policy options are open. One set of options concerns the totality of resources to be set aside for sustainable development; another set relates to the appropriate mix of regulations, incentives and safeguards necessary for sustainable development; a third is to ensure the widespread availability of the most appropriate environmentally sound technologies; and a fourth is the global application of natural resources accounting.

74. It must be reiterated that poverty is one of the major causes of massive global environmental degradation and resource wastage. Poverty has perpetuated the underdevelopment of resources, low levels of technological development and, consequently, low production in all sectors leading to the exacerbation of environmental degradation. There is therefore the need to mobilize new additional resources, in an innovative manner, for the implementation of environmental and development programmes within the context of Agenda 21.

B. Mobilization of support for the implementation of Africa's environment programme at national, subregional and regional levels

75. A number of activities involving ECA have provided the opportunity to promote, at national, subregional and regional levels, the ideas contained in the Strategies. These were aimed at integrating such ideas into ongoing programmes or providing guidelines for shifts that would make programme activities more effective. Efforts have been made to incorporate the Strategies in the formulation of national, subregional and regional environment and development programmes within the work programme of AMCEN. Ideas

¹⁷ United Nations document A/48/995, para. 84.

from the Strategies and the programmes of AMCEN contributed significantly as inputs into the negotiations for the elaboration of a convention to combat desertification, particularly in Africa.

(a) At the national level

76. Advisory services provided by the ECA Multidisciplinary Regional Advisory Group (ECA-MRAG) have contributed in promoting the implementation of Agenda 21 within the context of the Strategies. Joint missions with the substantive programmes of the Commission have also been undertaken. The new State of Eritrea benefitted from these missions. The focus was on capacity building in the sustainable management of natural resources and environment, with special emphasis on marine and coastal resources.

77. Consultations are also under way, in close collaboration with IOC, UNEP, UNDP and DPCSD, to replicate these exercises in the small island States of the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic within the framework of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

78. The African Common Position and Agenda 21 on capacity-building are unanimous that there is the need to improve or restructure the decision-making process so that consideration of socio-economic and environmental issues are fully integrated and a broader range of public participation is assured. One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision making. Consequently, promoting the role of major groups in national environmental management becomes a pertinent issue.

79. Furthermore, in the more specific context of environment and development, the need for forms of participation has emerged. This includes the need of individuals, groups and organizations to participate in environmental impact assessment procedures and to know about and participate in decisions, particularly those which potentially affect the communities in which they live and work. Individuals, groups and organizations should have access to information relevant to environment and development held by national authorities, including information on products and activities that have or are likely to have a significant impact on the environment. The objective of the programme is therefore to promote the participation of the major NGOs in environmental activities at all levels.

80. In implementing Agenda 21 and reviewing progress being made, there must be a clear understanding, within the local context, of sustainability. As sustainable development involves the complex interaction of social, economic, institutional and environmental factors, indicators for sustainable development must reflect and incorporate these interactive forces if they are to be meaningful, reliable and useful for evaluation and predictive purposes.

(b) At the subregional level

81. The Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) has been, at its request, the focus of very intense activities with ECA in relation to support in the implementation of its work programme and the decisions of its legislative organs. This has also provided the opportunity to promote the implementation of Agenda 21 within the African and subregional perspectives. Consultations, at its request, on the modalities for collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in programme development and implementation are also well under way.

(c) At the regional level: intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

82. AMCEN has continued to play the lead role in charting out the programme orientations as adopted at its fifth session in November 1993. The work programme adopted then, as earlier indicated, was a strong reflection of the contents of the African Strategies.

83. Significant among its actions was the preparation of the first Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity (Bahamas, November 1994). The African Perspectives and Common Position on the Convention on Biodiversity¹⁸ are consistent with Strategies and the new policy orientations of AMCEN.

84. The subregional AMCEN Ministerial Conference for Eastern and Southern Africa, held in Nairobi from 6 to 8 March 1995, provided the opportunity to review Africa's approach to the different conventions arising from Agenda 21, against the new policy orientations of AMCEN and the African Strategies for Agenda 21.¹⁹

85. The Strategies underscored the fact that as the lead regional political intergovernmental organization, OAU had a unique role to play in the mobilization of member States in the implementation of Agenda 21 within the framework of the African Common Position, particularly within the framework of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. It is within this context that the ECA continues to provide support to OAU initiatives in this area, particularly to ensure the active participation of member States in the activities of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-D) for the elaboration of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. The instrument for Africa is a plausible reflection of OAU and the Ad hoc Expert Group as well as of the support it is receiving from the Joint OAU/ECA/UNSO/UNEP/ADB Secretariat.

86. Another important focus was the promotion of subregional and regional cooperation among member States. The driving force for such cooperation is pertinent for addressing transboundary issues. There is need to promote the integration of environmental dimensions into subregional and regional economic integration organizations, including relevant treaties, conventions, agreements and protocols. Special attention is being given to the Protocol on the Environment of the African Economic Community and the harmonization of activities to respond to the goals and objectives of the Treaty.

87. There is also need for greater cooperation between countries with similar problems and characteristics as well as community involvement at the grass-roots level in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes. Infrastructural facilities and national capabilities for formulating socio-economic development programmes should be improved and expanded. Poverty reduction and increasing employment opportunities could contribute significantly towards the goal of sustainable development. The inclusion of income-generating activities in population and family planning programmes which improve the imbalance in the population-resource relationship should be encouraged to enhance their success.

C. Coordination with agencies of the United Nations system

88. Coordination within the United Nations system on issues related to sustainable development is anchored on the important role of the regional economic commissions. They provide the cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach required for such coordination. This also presupposes that programme coordination at the Secretariat level caters for the regional system-wide approach. Although only some of the key actions are indicated below, there has been different levels of consultations with other agencies, particularly the various task masters of CSD, which have facilitated UNCED follow-up.

¹⁸ AMCEN/Conventions/CBD/1 of 26 October 1994. ECA is member of the Joint AMCEN Secretariat with the UNEP Regional Office for Africa and OAU.

¹⁹ See the report of the meeting.

(a) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

89. The Strategies recognized that UNEP and its Governing Council should continue to play its role with regard to policy guidance and coordination in the field of the environment within the United Nations system, ensuring closer cooperation and collaboration with development and other relevant organs of the United Nations system, particularly the regional commissions.

90. Coordination with the UNEP Regional Office for Africa in terms of general programme development and implementation has been very close. This has been necessary to ensure that assistance to member States is coordinated to avoid duplication of activities. Cooperation with UNEP has also been in the field of the its Regional Seas Programme which underscores the importance of the environmental conservation of the coastal and marine areas in view of their contribution to national economies.

(b) Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA)

91. The preparations for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held in Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994 as a mid-term review conference for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction drew heavily from the Strategies document. The secretariat for the Decade, under the auspices of DHA, organized the Conference and ECA, in collaboration with OAU, coordinated Africa's preparations.

92. The African Group made very significant inputs into the drafts of the final documents, based on the Mid-term Report and Common Position endorsed by the ECA Conference of Ministers in its resolution 773 (XXIX) of 5 May 1994.

93. The outcome of the Conference was the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World. Drawing from the inputs from the African Group, the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action increased the urgency for the Commission to accommodate activities on disaster mitigation as an integral part of the African Strategies on Agenda 21.

(c) Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD)

94. ECA has contributed to the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21 and its inputs have been from the Strategies as they are consistent with the programmes of AMCEN. This has included the exercise on indicators for sustainable development.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

95. The effectiveness in the implementation of any policy orientation adopted by any of the ECA sectoral legislative organs will depend largely on the concerted action by the secretariat in providing support for related activities in member States and the commitment of member States themselves.

96. More often than not, there is a tendency at the level of the substantive programmes of the secretariat to fall into the oversight syndrome with regard to policy orientations that would help to promote the inter-disciplinary and multi-sectoral mandates of the Commission. This has a negative effect on delivery and impact of programmes. The African Strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21, to a large extent, suffered the same fate.

97. While many substantive programmes have sprinklings of Agenda 21 and sustainable development, the activities and documentation do not reflect the proposals that they had made in the African Strategies.

As earlier alluded to, the spirit of a regional focus that is built into Agenda 21 is lost or is not evident. The result is that member States tend to continue to relate more to the global Agenda 21 instead of the regional Strategies they had developed. The other implication is that, side-tracking the regional framework, it becomes difficult for the Commission to assist African countries in the formulation of what is often referred to as national Agenda 21.

98. At national, subregional and regional levels, the situation was different in that, as part of the Joint AMCEN Secretariat, there was direct participation in the formulation and implementation of the AMCEN work programme at those levels. This is also true concerning the impact at the global level, particularly with regard to conventions, where collaboration with OAU initiatives was very fruitful.

99. With regard to inter-agency activities, collaboration with the UNEP Regional Office for Africa, both at the programme level and that of the Joint AMCEN Secretariat, have been facilitated by the policy orientation of the African Common Position on Environment and Development as consolidated in the African Strategies. The initiatives of the Regional Seas Programme in promoting the valuation and marine and coastal resource accounting needs to be encouraged and promoted as a pertinent aspect of inter-agency collaboration in capacity building in member States.

B. Recommendations

100. At the level of the ECA secretariat and inter-agency activities:

(a) In-house coordinating mechanisms should be established or strengthened to ensure the harmonization of the implementation of the African Strategies for Agenda 21 with all substantive activities of the Commission;

(a) In view of (a) above and the increased activities in member States, particularly the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, more resources should be put at the Commission's disposal; and

(c) Increased inter-agency collaboration and coordination should be fostered.

101. At the level of member States:

(a) The implementation of the new orientation of AMCEN, as adopted at its fifth session in 1993 and the related work programmes, should be promoted;

(b) Capacity building in environmental management should be promoted and, to this end, the exercise on environmental accounting with regard to the contribution of the ocean sector to GDP being supported by UNEP at ECA should be promoted and continued in member States; and

(c) To enhance (b) above and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the implementation of the Regional Seas Programme should receive priority in the programmes of coastal countries of the region through the ratification of and financial support to the related Convention.

102. Important actions to be undertaken at the regional level include preparations for the following major global UNCED-related conferences:

(a) Habitat II

103. Habitat II will take place in Turkey in June 1996 and in conjunction with which World Environment Day will be commemorated in Istanbul to demonstrate the full commitment of environmental bodies such as UNEP to its success and as a further supporting contribution.

104. It will be recalled that in adopting its indicative conference programme for 1994-1995, the Conference recognized that the human settlements objective is to improve the social, economic and environmental quality of human settlements and the living and working environments of all people, in particular the urban and rural poor. Habitat II offers useful opportunities for promoting human welfare, environment and development.

(b) Special session of the General Assembly (1997) to assess the implementation of Agenda 21 and the UNCED outcomes

105. The overall review of the implementation of Agenda 21 by the General Assembly at its special session will need to determine the critical areas of sustainability for the years to come. The identification of the critical areas of sustainability will have to be based on a comprehensive review of progress achieved in the implementation of the Rio commitments at all levels, taking into account relevant conclusions of subsequent global conferences. The objective should be to maintain the political momentum and give a clear sense of direction for future actions to be taken by governments, intergovernmental bodies and major groups aimed at reaching sustainable development. The General Assembly will have to identify priorities at the special session, including those for the institutional follow-up to UNCED and the role of the United Nations system, in particular CSD.

106. In identifying the critical constraints to the implementation of the Rio commitments at local, country, regional and international levels and the means for governments, international organizations and major groups to overcome them, the General Assembly may wish to consider strengthening its substantive activities as well as adopting supportive measures necessary for the achievement of sustainable development goals, such as the provision of financial resources, transfer of environmentally sound technologies and creation of institutional mechanisms.

107. Furthermore, the recommendations of the General Assembly could include the identification of possible themes for future consideration by ECOSOC or its subsidiary bodies, particularly CSD, with a view to ensuring a harmonized and non-duplicative approach to the issues involved.

108. Regional preparations are foreseen and, in the spirit of the UNCED process, the regional commissions are being called upon to mobilize regional consensus and reviews for presentation to the special session which will be held in New York during the second or third quarter of 1997.

109. The Conference may wish to hold a joint session with AMCEN two months before the special session. It may also request the Bureau of AMCEN and the Committee of Fifteen of the Conference to meet during the last week of November or first week of December 1996 to review the status of preparations.