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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
Meeting of Experts on Housing
Problems in Africa
9-18 January 1963

NOTE ON THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, BUILDING
AND PLANNING

(prepared by the United Nations Secretariat)

1. The Meeting of Experts on Housing Problems in Africa convened by the Economic Commission for Africa, will find it useful for its deliberations and recommendations, to be informed of developments in regard to United Nations policy and organization generally, in the field of housing, building and physical planning. This short note explains the functions and policies of the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning established by the Economic and Social Council to give stronger and more specialized leadership at the United Nations level in housing, building and physical planning. ^{1/}

2. The Committee consists of twenty-one members and the following countries have been elected as members for the number of years mentioned in parenthesis after each name:

Argentina	(2)	Iran	(3)
Canada	(1)	Israel	(3)
Chile	(1)	Italy	(2)
Colombia	(3)	Japan	(3)
Costa Rica	(1)	Madagascar	(3)
Denmark	(1)	Nigeria	(3)
France	(2)	Rumania	(2)
Greece	(2)	Tanganyika	(2)
Hungary	(1)	USSR	(1)
Indonesia	(1)	United Arab Republic	(2)
United States of America	(3)		

3. The terms of reference of the Committee include responsibilities for:

- (a) Examination of reports concerning technical assistance activities in the field of housing, related community facilities and physical planning;

^{1/} The Committee was established by the Economic and Social Council at its 34th session in 1962 by resolution 9030.

- (b) recommendations to the Economic and Social Council for appropriate co-ordination of these programmes among the various United Nations bodies, including the regional economic commissions, and with other international agencies;
- (c) recommendations to Governments, through the Council, on appropriate priorities and programme emphasis in the field of housing and related community facilities and physical planning;
- (d) promotion of research and of the exchange and dissemination of experience and information in these fields, with especial reference to the needs of under-developed countries;
- (e) development of proposals for consideration by appropriate United Nations bodies and others, on such matters as financing of home construction and ownership, provision of land for homes and community facilities at reasonable cost, designs suitable for low-cost housing in different climates and cultures, improved building materials and their better use, and ways of promoting acceptance and adoption of efficient organizational and building techniques;
- (f) development of means and methods for the increased utilization of the regional economic commissions in this field.

4. It will be noted that one of the responsibilities of the Committee is the development of means and methods "for the increased utilization of the regional economic commissions". The Economic and Social Council also, in paragraph 5 of its resolution establishing the Committee, invited the regional economic commissions to strengthen their activities in this field and to collaborate fully in the work of the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning. The Council also decided that the Committee should send its report, inter alia to the regional economic commissions in order that the Economic and Social Council may consider the Committee's report together with the comments thereon, of these bodies.

5. The first session of the Committee will be held at United Nations Headquarters from 21 January to 1 February 1963. According to the Provisional Agenda for the First Session, the Committee will consider reports on the following items:

(a) Housing and Urban Development in the United Nations
Development Decade

A report will be submitted for the consideration of the Committee, outlining the place of housing, building and physical planning in the present decade, which has been designated "The United Nations Development Decade" which was initiated by General Assembly resolution 1710(XVI).

(b) Co-ordination and Organization of Existing and Increased
International Assistance to Housing, Building and Planning

The Committee will consider a report on measures necessary for better co-ordination and organization of international activity in housing, building and planning. Special attention is given to the role of the regional economic commissions in co-ordination and in utilization of increased international assistance.

(c) The Promotion of Research and of the Exchange and
Dissemination of Experience and Information

The Committee will consider a report on the organizational and procedural measures which might be taken, both to promote research and to ensure effective exchange and dissemination of information, knowledge and experience.

(d) Planning and Implementation of Pilot Projects in
Housing, Building and Planning

The Committee will consider a report emphasizing the contribution practical pilot or demonstration projects can make towards the solution of housing, building and physical planning problems in developing countries. The report also contains proposals relating to specific projects in African countries including Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Togo and the United Arab Republic.

(e) Material and Financial Assistance towards Home Construction and Community Improvement within Development Planning

The Committee will consider a report on the needs and possibilities of increasing substantially, international financial and material assistance for investment in housing and related community facilities and in building and building materials industries in developing countries.

(f) Training and Educational Facilities in Housing, Building and Planning

The Committee will consider a report reviewing existing facilities and examining the main issues which arise in relation to the expansion and improvement of training and educational facilities in housing, building and planning in developing countries.

6. The Committee, having considered the reports submitted to it under the foregoing agenda items, will establish a working programme. This work programme will take into account the work being undertaken and planned, or work which could be undertaken by the regional economic commissions in this field. Since the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning will meet shortly after the Meeting of Experts on Housing Problems in Africa, it is hoped that it will be possible to inform the Committee of the conclusions and recommendations concerning housing requirements and related problems in Africa. In this way the Meeting's views on these requirements and problems, and the specific contributions which it is considered the Economic Commission for Africa could make in this field could be brought to the notice of the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning.