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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTH MEETING

held at Africa Hall, Addis Ababa,
on Monday, 24 February 1964, at 3.10 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. MASSAQUOI (Liberia)

Secretary: Mr. SYLLA

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activities of the Economic Commission for Africa (continued)

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRENDS IN AFRICA AND REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (agenda item 5) (E/CN.14/237, 238, 239, 245, 246 and Corr. 1, 247 and Corr. 1, 248 and Corr. 1, 249 and Corr. 1, 250/Rev. 2, 279) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN invited observers to address the Commission.

Mr. NICOLAESCU (Observer for Romania) congratulated the Commission on its support of the African countries in their struggle for economic independence, social progress, and the elimination of the complex aftermath of colonialism, and on its bold and realistic approach to Africa's problems, such as planning, statistics, industrialization, intra-African co-operation, finance, and technical training.

Romania had first hand experience of the part played by economic development in the achievement of political independence and in the improvement of living standards. Industrialization was of prime importance in that development, and could be achieved only on the basis of common ownership of the means of production. On that basis, and through scientific planning, Romanian industrial production had increased over the last four years at a rate of over 15 per cent, and Romania had progressed from a backward country with a high percentage of illiteracy to a modern, fully-developed, industrial-agricultural State. He therefore welcomed the attention given by ECA to problems of industrialization and planning, as a step towards the full utilization of Africa's abundant natural resources and the improvement of the living standards of her people.

Foreign trade had an important part to play in Africa's economic expansion. Romania believed that peaceful co-existence and international trade were mutually dependent, and that it was essential all discriminatory and restrictive practices be abolished. Africa's foreign trade was still threatened by fluctuations in export prices and hampered by artificial barriers. The forthcoming Conference on Trade and Development would do much towards eliminating the great economic difference between the developed and the developing countries. His Government had submitted a proposal to the United Nations Secretary-General to the effect that the Conference should emphasize the importance of long-term

agreements for the stability and development of international trade; recommend the supply on credit of material and equipment for the setting up of new industries, payment being made in the form of the products of those industries; and recognize the importance of the release for peaceful uses, for international trade and economic development, of the resources made available by disarmament. It was also desirable that the legal aspects of world trade should be studied, and that the Conference should establish machinery for the conclusion of such long-term agreements.

Mr. SARWATE (Observer for the International Telecommunication Union) stressed the importance of telecommunications as a prerequisite for economic progress and international understanding. The building-up of regional telecommunications networks was primarily the concern of the countries of the region. Nevertheless, ITU had given assistance, under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, to almost every African country. With the help of the United Nations Special Fund it was also acting as executive agency for training projects in Africa. It had drawn up a plan of radio frequency assignments to be used for the establishment of very high frequency and ultra-high frequency broadcasting and television in Africa and was making preparations for a conference which would draw up a similar plan for medium-wave broadcasting stations.

Given that the development of national telecommunications in Africa and of interconnections between networks in the region depended primarily on the efforts of individual countries, attention must be concentrated on obtaining three things: sound and well-organized telecommunication administrations, adequately trained technical staff and facilities for training additional personnel, and technical resources for the planning and installation of networks.

The need for creating telecommunication links between African capitals hardly needed stressing. ECA's programme in that field had been prepared in full co-operation with ITU. Since financial assistance

from his organization was limited to assistance under the Expanded Programme, he urged the Commission to give consideration to the Executive Secretary's proposals on the subject of telecommunications. As part of the collaboration between ITU and ECA, an ITU expert mission had been appointed to make a survey of telecommunications in Africa and to implement the programme for connecting capitals.

The Chairman of the ITU Plan Committee for Africa, Mr. Tedros, had been requested by the ITU Administrative Council to present to the Commission an outline of ITU's general plan for interconnecting the various African national networks, known as the Dakar Plan.

Mr. TEDROS (Observer for the International Telecommunication Union), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, informed the Commission that the task of the ITU Committee and its Plan Sub-Committee for Africa was to plan international arteries and the interconnexion of telecommunications subscribers and users in various countries. Two plan periods had been adopted of 5 years and 12-15 years respectively; in Africa, estimates or plans of more than 5 years duration were considered unrealistic.

The Plan Sub-Committee for Africa had met for the first time at Dakar in January 1962. Most telecommunications between African countries were at that time being relayed through at least one transit station outside Africa, since owing to prohibitive costs, insufficient traffic and other difficulties radio telephone communications inside Africa were virtually non-existent.

The Dakar Plan, adopted at the meeting, was based on three principles: telecommunication traffic between African countries must not transit countries outside Africa; circuits between African countries must be established in such a way that no communication passed over more than two HF radio circuits in tandem; and each country should endeavour to develop its own national network and connect it by high quality circuits to those of its neighbours. It covered the period 1962 to 1967, and provided for the establishment of 9 HF radio telephone and telegraph links, 12,000 kilometres of radio relay links, 50,000 kilometres of open wire lines,

and 2,000 kilometres of coastal submarine cable, as well as radio circuits and submarine cables to other continents. Most circuits proposed under the Plan should be established by 1967. A reappraisal of the Plan and of the 1967 target date would be made at a meeting of the Plan Sub-Committee at Addis Ababa at the end of 1964.

Mr. PARKER (Liberia) observed that ECA had now spent five years studying the problems of Africa, and the time had come for the Commission to make use of the studies that had been made and commit itself to a plan of action covering the next five years. At the same time, each individual country ought to make use of the studies, and to renew its efforts to speed up economic progress and to co-operate in developing the continent. The Governments of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast had started to co-operate with one another by opening up roads, discussing tariff reductions and in other ways.

The Liberian Government attached great importance to the African Development Bank and hoped that by the end of 1964 all member countries of ECA would have followed the example of Liberia, which expected to ratify the Bank's Charter very shortly.

The West African Conference on Iron and Steel, held in Monrovia in October 1963, had been a concrete expression of the kind of co-operation he advocated. Nevertheless his Government regretted the unilateral decision that had been taken to establish a steel mill in West Africa, and hoped that the secretariat would continue to investigate the plans, feasibility and that, meanwhile, unilateral action would not be taken by any member country.

He welcomed the action taken by ECA in the field of civil aviation, and congratulated it on the establishment of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning. His Government continued to support the establishment of an African common market and an African payments union.

The studies that were being carried out in the field of industrial development would help to eliminate competition and encourage systematic, complementary industrial development. There must be careful consultations through the medium of ECA between national development banks and industrial planning agencies to co-ordinate activities, particularly to co-ordinate activities with the African Development Bank.

The Liberian Government associated itself with the joint declaration of the developing countries on the Conference on Trade and Development, and looked forward to concrete results from the Conference.

Mr. AHMED (Sudan) said that the paper, The Food and Agriculture Situation in Africa (E/CN.14/238), showed that, during the five years covered, agricultural production had lagged behind population growth. The food situation was ludicrous in a continent famed for its vast acreages and water resources. In terms of real purchasing power, agricultural export earnings had declined by about 6 per cent, and prospects for the future were no brighter. The Conference on Trade and Development was therefore vital, and he welcomed the Executive Secretary's decision to send a secretariat team to assist the African delegations: they should be able to work out together an African approach, to consider ways of improving the International Monetary Fund's scheme of compensatory financing, and to discuss ideas generally.

Agriculture was of primary importance because an agrarian revolution must precede and accompany an industrial revolution. Taxes could be drawn from rising real incomes to finance government schemes. The African countries would have to help finance their own development out of national savings, since foreign capital meant interest charges and recurring expenditure.

During the period under review, earnings and food production had been insufficient to meet the needs of the masses. On the other hand, that same period had witnessed the political emancipation of twenty-five countries. There had been little time to spare for other work. The next five years should be those of Africa's economic regeneration.

He recalled his Government's early interest in the African Development Bank, and reiterated its eagerness to serve as host country.

Mr. KANE (Mauritania) said that ECA's basic task was to overcome the economic inequalities resulting from colonialism. The advanced countries had to recognize that the developing nations could not and should not remain simply sources of raw materials. The high living standards of a minority in the world depended on the low standards of the majority. Sacrifices would have to be made for the peace and well-being of all mankind.

He supported the proposal for establishing a West African sub-region, although it was important to avoid the dangers of balkanization. All assistance activities had to be co-ordinated. For some reason, the West African Industrial Co-ordination Mission (E/CN.14/246) had failed to visit Mauritania, and had wrongly named his country's iron ore deposits; he accordingly welcomed the despatch of a secretariat official, and hoped that the next mission would come to inspect Mauritania's other mining enterprises.

Efforts were being made by Mauritania to develop its fishing industry, and due attention was paid to agriculture in its four year development plan. Animal breeding could be sufficiently developed to supply neighbouring countries with meat. As in all desert countries, however, the water problem was acute, and Mauritania was not in a position to set up all the hydrological installations it required. His country hoped that its collaboration with ECA would be fruitful, and was ready to harmonize its plans with those of other countries.

Harmonization required a sound infrastructure of communications which, together with the lowering of tariff barriers and the creation of a payments union, would help to increase trade. In that way economic integration would prepare the way for political integration.

Mr. MUNTHALI (Nyasaland) thanked the Commission for admitting Nyasaland to associate membership. In the past his country had been represented by the Federation, which had since broken up because, though economically viable, it had been politically unacceptable to the majority of Africans. He looked forward with pleasure to his country's attaining full membership at the next session.

Economic emancipation had to follow political independence. Over the past ten years a great deal of time and effort had been devoted to destroying the Federation, and not enough to positive work. The time had now come for reconstruction. Nyasaland depended entirely on agricultural products for its foreign exchange earnings, and had one of the lowest per capita income rates in the region. Its main problem was to increase output and improve marketing methods. Therefore the 1962-1965 development plan laid stress on agriculture, although his Government realized the danger of placing too much reliance on primary agricultural commodities, in view of the fluctuating nature of world prices. Nevertheless, a sound agricultural base had to be established before a programme of wholesale diversification could be introduced.

His Government had embarked upon crash programmes to train administrative officers and middle-grade technicians; but for the time being it would have to rely on external assistance.

The national development plan was at present being revised in the light of expert surveys carried out during the past two years. His Government was grateful to the United Nations and other agencies which had offered experts, and would request ECA's assistance in implementing the new plan. Such assistance, however, did not take the place of bilateral arrangements, and he wished to thank the Governments of Ghana and Nigeria for providing specialists and scholarships.

He welcomed the establishment of the African Development Bank, the African Institute for Development and Planning, and the three sub-regional offices; African unity could best be approached on a regional basis. The time had now come to translate ideas into practice.

Mr. KYARUZI (Observer for the United Nations Children's Fund), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, pointed out that there had been confusion and wastage in African assistance programmes, and hoped that ECA would help to improve the situation.

UNICEF had been active in Africa for more than ten years, except in those regions where it had not been allowed to operate, and was

determined to contribute further towards the development of Africa. In addition to its traditional activities in connection with health and maternity services, UNICEF was now taking an interest in education, community and social development, vocational training, sanitary services and applied nutrition. Financial resources were consequently becoming strained, and requests had far outstripped contributions. He appealed to members to keep UNICEF subscriptions in mind when considering their national budgets.

The needs of children would never be completely met unless they were catered for in national budgets and plans. Some countries had appointed special committees to ensure that their children were adequately provided for. He hoped that other countries would consider that possibility.

In the interests of co-operation and co-ordination, the Executive Director of UNICEF had instructed his area representative to devote more of his time to ECA. In addition, the Addis Ababa staff would be expanded. Within its terms of reference and financial resources, UNICEF would do its utmost to collaborate with ECA.

In view of the difficulty of finding experts in planning for children, the Executive Director was prepared to consider requests for financial assistance for the purpose of securing the services of short-time consultants. Ample notice should be given of such requests.

UNICEF was grateful for the co-operation it had received in the field, and trusted it would continue. He drew the Commission's attention to the 1963 UNICEF report on its activities in the developing countries.

Mr. RAKOTO (Madagascar) observed that no nation, above all no African nation, could afford the luxury of isolation. He commended the work of ECA in fostering co-operation despite many difficulties. Among the difficulties in the way of co-operation were transport and communications, which hampered attendance at and preparation of meetings; lack and overburdening of personnel, which made it difficult for expert missions to study problems with the necessary thoroughness and resulted

in the production of inadequate reports; insufficient co-operation between States, burdened as they were with their many national problems; and the need to establish priorities. It was important to concentrate on really workable projects and to co-ordinate the functions of such bodies as ECA and OAU so as to avoid wasteful overlapping. He fully agreed that the time had come to pass from theory to implementation and urged sacrifice in a spirit of mutual understanding.

The meeting was suspended at 5.05 p.m. and was
resumed at 5.25 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN invited observers to present statements.

MR. WALRAVEN (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that he hoped ECA would, in its endeavours to achieve a co-ordinated, accelerated pace of economic growth, enjoy the assistance of the United Nations Research Institute of Social Development Planning, which had been established thanks to a gift of one million dollars from the Netherlands Government.

His Government would participate in the Conference on Trade and Development, with the aim of liberating world trade. Within the framework of EEC the Netherlands had always maintained a constructive attitude towards the economic interests of the African countries and remained one of the most important buyers from Africa.

His Government welcomed the establishment of the African Institute for Economic Development, and offered the Institute the services of Netherlands planning experts. It was also ready to give technical assistance in the establishment of the African Development Bank and to offer fellowships for the training, in the Netherlands, of future staff of the Bank.

Aid to the developing countries was an important concern of his Government. On the occasion of the session he offered, on behalf of his Government, twenty or more fellowships for further study in the Netherlands, for post-graduate fellows from African countries, also the services of some highly qualified Netherlands experts, whose co-operation in ECA projects would be paid for by the Netherlands Government.

MR. VOHRA (Observer for India) on behalf of his Government invited the Executive Secretary to visit India. His country was prepared to co-operate with ECA in training schemes and would be glad to share with the African countries its experience in such fields as planning, statistics, standardization and industrial in-service training.

Since India and Africa were confronted with the same problems of backwardness and poverty, India's technical experts, planners, engineers and other experts were well qualified to assist African governments. The Indian Government attached great importance to the exchange of information on matters of practical interest in the spheres of social welfare and economic and technological development.

India was now in the middle of its third Five-Year-Plan, and its Planning Commission was prepared to share its experience and planning techniques with the countries of Africa. His country welcomed proposals for economic and technical collaboration on a bi-lateral or regional basis. It also looked forward to an expansion of trade between India and Africa. India wanted to help Africa to set up both basic and consumer industries. It could offer assistance in starting sugar mills, cement factories, paper mills, textile mills and other undertakings.

The developing countries must adopt a united approach at the Conference on Trade and Development, because they all had the same needs: the need to improve their terms of trade; to enjoy, as primary producers, a larger share of the world consumption of commodities; the need for preferential treatment on world markets, in view of the fact that they were at the stage of development; and the need to devise a method for enabling shippers from less developed regions to negotiate with shipowners from developed areas reasonable freight rates for their countries' exports.

MR. THEASAURO (Observer for Italy) said that the problems of industrialization and diversification of economic structures could not be solved by the African States by themselves: all countries which wished to maintain sound and lasting relations with Africa must help to raise Africa's living standards in the interests of world peace and well-being.

During 1963, Italy had concluded numerous trade and economic and technical co-operation agreements with various African countries, and had received visiting African delegations. In 1964, further economic missions would be sent to Africa. In addition, educational assistance had been provided.

Multi-lateral aid was also useful in stimulating co-operation between Africa and the advanced countries. In his view there was no reason to believe that the association of African countries with the European Common Market would interfere with the goal of African unity.

The Conference on Trade and Development was of vital importance. He supported the Ethiopian proposal that a joint African approach to the problems of international trade should be worked out. The Conference would mark a turning point in relations between the advanced and the developing countries, and should lead to more intensive collaboration. Both sides must make themselves acquainted with all points of view and work for practical results. His delegation would accordingly listen with interest to the discussion on document on the Conference (E/CN.14/279).

MR. DIALLO (Observer for the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions) said he would confine his remarks to the future African common market, a project of special concern to his organization. During the colonial period, the African countries had become economic satellites of the colonial powers, producing raw materials for export and importing manufactured goods. Infrastructures had been adapted to that system. Africa had been doomed to under-development, exporting work and importing unemployment. For that reason the African trade union organizations had fought unceasingly against colonialism.

After independence, each country had struggled to re-adapt its economy, creating new political, economic and social structures. But development plans had often overlooked the need for harmonization

and co-ordination. Competition had arisen between neighbouring States, each seeking preferential treatment for its goods and preferential assistance in its economic development plans. In that way neo-colonialism had come to Africa. The only solution was for the African countries to work together on a continental basis.

The present situation was encouraging, in so far as certain legally constituted groups already existed, which might form the basis for a future African common market. The project, however, had political implications, since each State would be obliged to transfer part of its sovereignty to the communal institutions created. The African trade union organizations affiliated to the Union Panafricaine et Malgache des Travailleurs Croyants (UPTC), the regional branch of ICCTU, had always stressed the need to co-ordinate the development plans and social policies of all African countries, with a view to eventual unification.

At the present time Africa lacked technical resources, adequate markets for its goods, control over its own commercial undertakings, which were still largely foreign-owned, and social stability. The results could be seen in current revolutionary movements. The remedy lay in the creation of a broad African economic community, which would have to proceed by stages, tackling first the internal difficulties of individual States and later inter-State and pan-African problems. The aim should be to develop an outward-looking community, maintaining close links with the other continents.

An African common market could only flourish if commercial undertakings, workers and peasants were associated with its operation. To that end a Pan-African economic and social council would have to be set up, preferably within OAU; in collaboration with ECA, it would work progressively towards the integration of national economies and the unification of existing sub-regional groups. Obviously a supra-national authority would be required in order to enforce community decisions.

The decision to create an African common market did not imply the immediate breaking-off of existing relations between States, or with non-African countries. Such relations would be maintained during the process of integration of national economies and sub-regional groups, and would subsequently be handled by the appropriate institutions.

One of the main tasks of the African common market would be to combat poverty and under-nourishment. The African economy could not fully develop without a healthy, well-fed and educated population.

At all stages it would be essential to consult and collaborate with the African trade union organizations, which had a vital part to play in building up the African economy and in the social advancement of the people. Furthermore, the African States must rely on the trade unions in their negotiations with foreign powers. The unions could only be useful for that purpose if they were both strong and free.

He pledged the support of ICCTU and all bodies affiliated to UPTC in the common efforts made by the countries of Africa.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.