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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
SILVER JUBILEE ANNIVERSARY MEETINGS

Eighteenth session of the Commission
and ninth meeting of the Conference
of Ministers of the Commission

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 27 April - 3 May 1983

Item 12 B. (iv) of the provisional agenda

RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
AT ITS SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF 1982 AND BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT ITS THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION THAT ARE OF INTEREST
TO THE COMMISSION

Executive summary*

* The present summary constitutes the main document for consideration.

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1. At its eighth meeting held at Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, from 27 to 30 April 1982, the Conference of Ministers of the Commission adopted a number of resolutions by which the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, on the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1982, was requested to take some specific actions with regard to matters affecting the socio-economic development of Africa. Specifically, the Economic and Social Council, meeting at Geneva for its second regular session of 1982 from 7 to 30 July 1982, recommended for adoption by the General Assembly draft resolutions concerning the following: new statutes of the Regional Institute for Population Studies, Accra, and the Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques, Yaoundé; demographic data collection and analysis; regional programming, operations, restructuring and decentralization issues; financing of the Commission's Multinational Programming and Operational Centres on an established basis; expansion of the Conference facilities of the Commission at Addis Ababa; and the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa.

2. In response to General Assembly resolutions 36/180, 36/182 and 36/186 of 17 December 1981 the Economic and Social Council recommended also for adoption by the Assembly draft resolutions relating respectively to special measures for the social and economic development of Africa in the 1980s, the Industrial Development Decade for Africa, and the situation of food and agriculture in Africa since their implementation is expected to contribute substantially to the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos.

3. The aim of this paper is to highlight the main decisions taken by both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly with regard to matters of vital interest and importance to the Commission, as requested by the Conference of Ministers at its eighth meeting and to review other decisions which affect world socio-economic development in general and the development of developing countries in particular.

4. Shortly after the closure of the seventeenth session of the Commission at Tripoli, the secretariat prepared a report for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1982 and brought to the attention of the Council the requests made by the ECA Conference of Ministers. As in previous years, the Executive Secretary attended the second regular session of 1982 of the Council and introduced in the plenary the annual report on the activities of the Commission ^{1/} containing the above mentioned issues calling for action by the Council. Immediately thereafter he appeared before the Committee of the Council, entrusted with economic matters, to expatiate on these issues and appeal to members of the Committee to recommend for adoption by the Council the various proposals which would be submitted to it on the basis of the relevant report of the Secretary-General. In fact, the alarming

^{1/} E/1982/21, E/ECA/CM.8/32/Rev.1.

socio-economic conditions of the African region gained international recognition and the mere fact that not less than five substantive items on the agenda of the Council addressed themselves specifically to the problems concerning the African continent bears testimony to this. Three reports on ECA were considered concerning the expansion of conference facilities of the Commission; particular problems facing Zaire with regard to transport, transit and access to foreign markets and the MULPOCs.

5. The appeal made by the Executive Secretary was immediately echoed among African members of the Council who, together with the Group of 77 and other groups, held the necessary consultations on the various proposals sponsored by the African Group as a whole. Generally speaking, the gist of the proposals was to request the Economic and Social Council to recommend that the General Assembly should make available to ECA more material, human and financial resources to overcome the inadequacy of available resources and to enable it to assume its increased responsibilities. Although developed countries were generally opposed to the idea of additional resources in a non-budget year the merits of the proposals themselves were not to be questioned. It is for this latter reason that, at the end of its session, the Council recommended no less than seven resolutions of direct concern to ECA for adoption by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session. These were Council resolutions: 1982/54 on the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa; 1982/60 on the expansion of the conference facilities of the Economic Commission for Africa at Addis Ababa; 1982/61 on particular problems facing Zaire with regard to transport, transit and access to foreign markets; 1982/62 on financing of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Economic Commission for Africa on an established basis; 1982/63 on regional programming, operations, restructuring and decentralization issues with respect to the Economic Commission for Africa; 1982/65 on activities of the Economic Commission for Africa, including the new statutes of the Regional Institute for Population Studies at Accra and the Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques at Yaounde and demographic data collection and analysis; and 1982/66 on industrial development co-operation, part B of which concerns the Industrial Development Decade for Africa.

6. A further testimony to the fact that the development problems of Africa were particularly serious and should, therefore, receive especial attention from the international community was the adoption by the Council of resolution 1982/41 by which the Council recommended that the General Assembly should approve the inclusion of five additional African countries, namely Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone and Togo, in the list of the least developed countries. For the Council it was clear that out of the 50 countries members of the Commission 26 (or 52 per cent of the total) were to be classified among the poorest in the world.

7. In September 1982 the Executive Secretary of the Commission addressed the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session and briefed the world community about the deteriorating social and economic conditions in Africa appealing once again for action to redress this situation which might, in the long run, constitute a threat to world economic and political stability if not tackled as a matter of urgency. Addressing the Second Committee of the Assembly on 30 September 1982, the Executive Secretary painted the picture of the African

economy in 1982 and indicated what actions the Commission was taking to assist African Governments in their quest for self-reliant economic growth within the framework of the priority sectors defined in the Lagos Plan of Action. He observed that, regrettably, most African countries continued to be, for the past few years, "engulfed by four major devastating and debilitating crises - to wit - chronic food deficits aggravated by pernicious drought; the energy crisis which now affects not only the oil importers but also the oil exporters; deteriorating terms of trade with consequential balance-of-payments deficits; and mounting external debt burdens".

8. With regard to food production, the level remained very low and in fact decreased in comparison to previous years. Persistent drought in the Sahel area, now spreading down the Eastern coast, the high level of post-harvest losses, the erosion of soils through torrential rains and poor reforestation practices, insufficient investment and inadequate government policies were responsible for this situation.

9. In the field of industrialization, the major developments were the steps taken by African Governments and the Commission to implement the programme for the Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1980-1990) which was proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 35/66B. The Executive Secretary drew attention to a progress report on the implementation of the Decade programme prepared jointly by ECA and UNIDO which was being submitted to the Committee and appealed for support for Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/66 B on the Decade. Emphasis was laid on the efforts being made by the secretariat in the promotion of subregional and regional co-operation and the role ECA played in the establishment of a Preferential Trade Area (PTA) for the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa and towards the establishment of an Economic Community for Central African States. The prime instruments for those efforts, the Executive Secretary said, were ECA's Multinational Programming and Operational Centres whose past and potential contribution to subregional economic integration had been consistently recognized. However, he added, the effective implementation of the MULPOCs' work programmes has been hampered by the inadequacy and the inconsistency of the resources made available to these Centres. The Executive Secretary expressed the hope that members of the Committee would lend their full support to the proposals for regular budget financing of the activities of the MULPOCs.

10. In recognition of the absence of functional links between the agricultural, industrial and trade sectors of Africa which is in part due to the backwardness of the transport and communications infrastructure of the continent, the General Assembly adopted in November 1977 resolution 32/160 proclaiming the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa. The Executive Secretary reported on the progress achieved during phase I (1978-1983) of the Decade and on the on-going preparations for phase II (1984-1988), which, he added, were well advanced. The Assembly was expected to consider and adopt another resolution on this issue on the basis of the recommendations made by the Economic and Social Council after consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Decade. Within the Framework of the overall transport and communications problems of Africa, the Committee's attention was once again drawn to the particular problems facing the Republic of Zaire with regard to transport, transit and access to foreign markets and the hope for further support from the Assembly was expressed.

11. The issues of regional programming, operations, restructuring and de-centralization, the Executive Secretary recalled, were the subject of the Joint Inspection Unit report on the Commission. After consideration of the report and the Secretary-General's comments thereon, the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolution 1982/63 by which it invited the General Assembly to consider appropriate measures to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the JIU recommendations as modified by the Secretary-General.

12. As a result of the Executive Secretary's convincing explanation on the plight of the African continent and the deliberations and recommendations of the Second, Third and Fifth Committees, the General Assembly adopted the following resolutions which are of direct concern to the Commission. The results achieved would not have been possible without the tenacity the African Group and the kind understanding of the large majority of the international community.

Resolution 37/138 Financing of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Economic Commission for Africa on an established basis

13. By this resolution adopted on 17 December 1982, the General Assembly welcomed the decision of the Governing Council of the UNDP to continue to provide financial support to the five MULPOCs of ECA; renewed its call upon other organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, to give their fullest financial and other support to the MULPOCs; called upon the Secretary-General to further explore ways and means of ensuring substantial increases in contributions from extrabudgetary sources, including bilateral donors; and endorsed the recommendations contained in paragraphs 47 to 49 of the report of the Secretary-General, which call for the provision of the financial resources required from the regular budget, among other sources, for funding the MULPOCs on an established basis.

14. By endorsing these recommendations the General Assembly demonstrated its recognition of the fact that the Centres were an integral part of the United Nations secretariat, performing part of the responsibilities of the Organization at the subregional and regional levels as called for in Assembly resolutions 32/197, 33/202 and 34/206 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system.

15. As of 1 January 1983, 19 posts of the MULPOCs (13 Professional and 6 local level) will be financed from the United Nations regular budget.

Resolution 37/139 Special measures for the social and economic development of Africa in the 1980s

16. By this resolution of 17 December 1982, the Assembly, after recalling its resolutions 35/64 of 5 December 1980 and 36/180 of 17 December 1981 concerning the adoption of a wide range of special measures for the social and economic development of Africa in the 1980s, renewed its calls upon the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to examine measures to increase

the resources for the execution of the programmes for the Industrial Development Decade for Africa and to apply the special measures in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner; it then urged in paragraph 4 of the resolution, donor countries to provide substantial and sustained levels of resources for promoting the accelerated development of African countries and the effective implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action, and to contribute generously to the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development. By this paragraph, the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development was now open for pledges of contributions by non-African countries. In paragraph 5 of the resolution all international financial institutions were invited to continue to consider actively increasing substantially their development assistance to Africa during the Decade.

Resolution 37/140 Transport and Communications Decade in Africa

17. As can be expected there was almost unanimous support for this resolution by which the Assembly appealed to donor countries, financing organs and various financial institutions to increase their financial support to the programme for the Decade in view of the fact that the total volume of the resources thus far mobilized was well below the amount required to finance the whole of the programme for the first phase. The Executive Secretary of the Commission was requested to organize, during the second half of 1983, a fifth consultative technical meeting on roads, maritime transport and ports for the countries of North Africa, East Africa and the islands of the Indian Ocean in which donor countries and financing institutions were urged to participate fully and positively. The resolution requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to maintain good co-ordination between the financing sources and the African countries in order to monitor the follow-up to the four consultative technical meetings held by closely assisting the countries in their contacts with donors and in formulating and presenting their requests for financing. The Assembly noted the measures taken by the Executive Secretary of the Commission with regard to the preparation of the plan of action for the second phase (1984-1988) of the Decade, and further noted the establishment of the Inter-agency Co-ordinating Committee with a view to harmonizing and co-ordinating studies for the prompt implementation of the project on a regional satellite communication system for Africa. Finally, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide the Economic Commission for Africa, as the lead agency for the implementation of the Decade, with the financial and other resources using, inter alia, extrabudgetary funds and existing resources to the maximum extent possible, to enable it to hold the fifth consultative technical meeting and to complete the preparation of the plan of action for the second phase of the Decade. For these two activities, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee, approved the provision from the regular budget of the United Nations, of \$US 84,400 and \$542,400 respectively.

Resolution 37/212 Industrial development co-operation

18. Part II of this resolution deals with the Industrial Development Decade for Africa. In it the Assembly took note of the progress report submitted jointly by the Executive Director of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Executive Secretary of ECA regarding the Decade; requested the Secretary-General to allocate adequate staff and financial resources so as to ensure the effective co-ordination and implementation of the activities of UNIDO and ECA related to the Industrial Development Decade for

Africa and appealed to all countries to contribute generously to the Industrial Development Fund for supporting activities related to the Decade.

19. The significance of the adoption of this resolution for the secretariat of ECA was the recognition by the Assembly of the need to strengthen the staff and financial resources of the joint ECA/UNIDO Division in Addis Ababa by approving the provision of two temporary professional posts and one temporary local level post at a cost of \$US 68,500 for 1983, and the amount of \$US 126,700 for the holding, in the course of 1983, of three joint UNIDO/ECA meetings at the subregional level oriented specifically towards the promotion of intra-African co-operation in the development and implementation of multinational projects.

Resolution 37/214 Economic Commission for Africa: regional programming, operations, restructuring and decentralization issues

20. In this resolution the Assembly welcomed the recommendations made by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report on the Commission and approved the comments of the Secretary-General thereon. It called upon the Secretary-General, inter alia to investigate new approaches to regional and subregional programming and management of the intercountry projects of the United Nations system, working closely with the organizations of the system; to initiate immediately, in consultation with all concerned United Nations organizations, an examination of the progress made thus far in the decentralization of United Nations activities and to report thereon to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Economic and Social Council; and to ensure that the necessary measures proposed by the Secretary-General are undertaken to implement recommendations six to eight of the Joint Inspection Unit and in particular the speedy development of management services, in order to ensure that the Commission functions at optimum efficiency and effectiveness bearing in mind the on-going consultations. The resolution also called upon the Executive Secretary of the Commission to institute, under the aegis of the Commission, regional, subject-oriented and high-level inter-agency meetings to discuss common issues aimed at the development of firm guidelines for co-ordinated action towards attainment of the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa. Finally the resolution requested organizations of the United Nations system to assist African Governments, within the framework of the country-programming process, in incorporating the goals and objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action into their sectoral country programmes and projects and adapting them to subregional and regional priorities.

Resolution 37/224 Implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries

21. The Commission may wish to note this important resolution which is of direct concern to 52 per cent, or the majority, of its member States. By it the General Assembly emphasized that, in the view of their desperate socio-economic plight, the least developed countries need the urgent and special attention and the large-scale support on a continuous basis of the international community to enable them to progress towards self-reliant development, consistent with the plans and programmes of each least developed country. The resolution also requested the Director-General for Development and International

Economic Co-operation to continue, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the executive secretaries of the regional commissions and lead agencies for the aid consultative groups, to ensure at the Secretariat level the full mobilization and co-ordination of the United Nations system for the purpose of implementing and following up the Substantial New Programme of Action.

Resolution 37/245 Situation of food and agriculture in Africa

22. By this resolution, adopted as a follow-up to resolutions 35/69 of 5 December 1980 and 36/186 of 17 December 1981, the Assembly urged all the countries of Africa to implement, in accordance with their national development programmes and priorities, measures to increase substantially their food and agricultural production; and urged the international community to provide increased assistance in support of essential policy adjustments by African Governments, within the framework of the Lagos Plan of Action to alleviate food deficits in Africa. In another paragraph, the Assembly called upon the international community to continue to support efforts undertaken by African countries at the national, subregional and regional levels to increase food production through, inter alia, the provision, on a priority and long-term basis, of additional financial and technical assistance to Africa by organizations of the United Nations system such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNDP and other organizations involved in the financing of agricultural development, and through an increase in lending by the World Bank to the agricultural sector in Africa. Under paragraph 8 of this resolution, the Secretary-General was requested to provide, within existing resources, the Economic Commission for Africa with the necessary resources to undertake, in consultation with relevant organizations, such as FAO and other organizations dealing with food and agriculture and inter-governmental institutions based in Africa, a survey of existing food and agriculture technology in Africa, taking into account the existing and ongoing studies thereon, and to make an assessment of the gap, detailing what exists and what is required to enable the countries in the region to begin to make an effective impact on the resolution of the food and agriculture problem.

Resolution 37/246 International year for the mobilization of financial and technological resources for food and agriculture in Africa

23. In this resolution, the General Assembly, after noting with great concern that, over the past two decades, the situation of food and agriculture in Africa had undergone a drastic deterioration, resulting in a decline of food production per capita and a reduction of average dietary standards below essential requirements, expressed the view that an international year devoted to the mobilization of financial and technological resources for food and agriculture in Africa could be an appropriate occasion to focus the attention of the international community on this problem and would stimulate a process that would lead to a significant improvement in the situation in the region, and requested the Secretary-General, after appropriate consultations with Governments, the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Commission for Africa, FAO, WFC,

IFAD and UNDP, to submit an interim report, through the Economic and Council Council at its second regular session of 1983, to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session on the implications of declaring an international year which would be committed to mobilizing financial and technological resources for food and agriculture in Africa.

24. The Commission may note also in this connexion resolution 37/247 on food problems, paragraph 17 of which urged the international community to provide increased assistance in support of essential policy adjustments by African Governments, within the framework of the Lagos Plan of Action to alleviate food deficits in Africa, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the African Ministers for Food and Agriculture at the World Food Council Regional Consultation for Africa, held at Nairobi on 16 and 17 March 1982, and endorsed by the Council at its eighth ministerial session.

Resolution 37/136 Population activities in the regional commissions

25. In this resolution of great concern to the Commission, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions, to consider the inclusion in the draft programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985 of proposals on modalities for the continuation of activities in the field of population at the regional level.

Decision 37/444 Statutes of the regional institutes for population studies at Accra and Yaounde

26. By this decision, the General Assembly approved the proposed statutes of the regional institutes for population studies at Accra (RIPS) and Yaounde (IFORD) and endorsed the observations and understandings reflected in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

Resolutions on special assistance to African countries

27. For some time now the General Assembly has adopted a number of resolutions with regard to special assistance to developing countries, the great majority of which are to be found in Africa. The resolutions in question cover fields such as general socio-economic problems, refugee and natural disasters problems. In 1982, the General Assembly adopted such resolutions in respect of the following countries and areas: Central African Republic (reconstruction, rehabilitation and development: 37/145); Sao Tome and Principe (special assistance: 37/146); Botswana (special assistance: 37/148); Liberia (assistance for development: 37/149); Benin (special economic assistance: 37/151); Cape Verde (special assistance: 37/152); Djibouti (special assistance: 37/153); the Comoros (special assistance: 37/154); Chad (special economic assistance: 37/155); Guinea-Bissau (special economic assistance: 37/156); Sierra Leone (special assistance for development: 37/158); the Gambia (special assistance: 37/159); Lesotho (special assistance: 37/160); Mozambique (special assistance: 37/161); Uganda (special assistance: 37/162); the Sudan (refugee problems: 37/173); Somalia (refugee problems 37/174); Ethiopia (displaced persons: 37/175); Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda (drought problems: 37/147); the Sudano-Sahelian region (Plan of Action to Combat Desertification: 37/216).

Resolution 37/237 XI Expansion of conference facilities of ECA at Addis Ababa

28. Concerning the expansion of conference-facilities of the Commission, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) considered the report of the Secretary-General on the subject dealing with the proposed construction of new conference facilities and the remodelling of existing facilities at the Commission, and also with interim ad hoc measures designed to alleviate the current space problem. After its deliberations on the question, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve additional appropriations in the amount of \$US 635,000 comprising \$175,000 under section 13 of its budget (Economic Commission for Africa) and \$ 460,000 under section 32 (Construction). By its resolution 37/237 of 21 December 1982 on questions relating to the programme budget, section XI, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the adequacy of the conference facilities of ECA at Addis Ababa and of the related report of the ACABQ.

Other resolutions

29. The Commission may wish to note the following resolutions which are of general interest to member States and which are not reviewed in this paper because they do not require any specification on the part of the Commission:

- 37/133 Identification of the least developed among the developing countries
- 37/248 Co-operation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
- 37/48 International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace
- 37/51 Question of Aging
- 37/52 World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons
- 37/57 Integration of Women in Development
- 37/177 Assistance to student refugees in Southern Africa
- 37/202 Review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade
- 37/217 International co-operation in the field of the environment
- 37/223 Human Settlements
- 37/232 United Nations technical co-operation activities
- 37/244 Long-term financial and institutional arrangements for the United Nations Financing System for Science and Technology for Development.