

1992/51. Strengthening the Economic Commission for Africa to face Africa's development challenges in the 1990s

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Africa, as adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 671 (XXV) of 29 April 1958 and amended by resolutions 974 D (XXXVI), section 1, of 5 July 1963, 1343 (XLV) of 18 July 1968 and 1978/68 of 4 August 1978,

Recalling also the various resolutions that have implications on the mandate and operations of the Commission, including, in particular, General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, and Assembly resolutions 33/202 of 29 January 1979 and 44/211 of 21 December 1989,

Recalling further its endorsement in its decision 1991/302 of 26 July 1991 of resolution 718 (XXVI) of 12 May 1991 of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa on the revitalization of the mandate and operational framework of the regional commission for Africa,¹¹²

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 45/177 of 19 December 1990, 45/264 of 13 May 1991 and 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, in which it was stated that the regional commissions should be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and that those regional commissions located in developing countries should be strengthened in the context of the overall objectives of the ongoing restructuring and revitalization process,

Reiterating the validity of the general orientation of the programme of work of the Commission, as outlined in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997,¹¹³ including the identified individual subprogrammes,

Convinced that the many and important changes that are taking place in the member States of the Commission, in the international environment and in the United Nations system as a whole will necessitate new approaches by the Commission in carrying out its mandate and new relationships with its constituency and partners, with a view to increasing its impact,

Having examined the in-depth analysis made by the Acting Executive Secretary of the Commission as contained in the document entitled "The Economic Commission for Africa in the 1990s: a policy and management framework for facing Africa's development challenges",¹¹⁴

1. *Congratulates* the Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa for taking the initiative to establish a task force to review and appraise the policy orientation, programmes and management capacity of the Commission and for his excellent analysis of the pertinent

issues and the useful and innovative proposals he has made;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary of the Commission to ensure that there is a clear and concrete balance between the research and operational activities of the secretariat of the Commission and to focus all such activities on the specific realities and characteristics of the African region and on individual subregions;

3. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary of the Commission to ensure that its activities are fully grounded in sound data and information systems, through the strengthening of the Pan-African Documentation and Information System and providing it with adequate financial resources;

4. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to ascertain that the implementation of all subprogrammes contained in the programme of work of the Commission is solidly based on the full attainment of the identified basic indicators of achievement of the objectives of the Commission, namely, strengthening the advisory role of the Commission on socio-economic questions; promoting regional cooperation and integration; enhancing the efficiency of the public sector; promoting private initiatives and entrepreneurship; development, dissemination and utilization of science and technology; ensuring a desirable balance between food supply, population, human settlements and environment; fostering human-centred development; achieving structural transformation and diversification of African economies; and promotion of women in development;

5. *Welcomes* the process of frequent and close consultations by the secretariat with member States and donors, including with their representatives at Addis Ababa, through regular briefing sessions;

6. *Recommends* the establishment, within existing resources, of a consultative mechanism that would advise the Executive Secretary on the grouping of conferences along specific themes, including the scheduling and preparation of conferences, meetings, seminars and workshops, taking into account the need to harmonize them with those of the Organization of African Unity and the African Development Bank to avoid duplication and achieve greater efficiency;

7. *Urges* the Executive Secretary to explore all possibilities for establishing or strengthening the relationships of the Commission with African intergovernmental organizations, the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, bilateral and multilateral development cooperation agencies and non-governmental organizations, including, in particular, the possibility of establishing joint units or special programmes with the specialized agencies and the creation of a special unit within the secretariat of the Commission to coordinate the increased joint activities of the Commission with non-governmental organizations;

8. *Expresses appreciation* to the General Assembly for providing additional resources to the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres, and consequently recommends that, in conformity with resolution 702 (XXV) of 19 May 1990 of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa on transforming and strengthening the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Commission,¹¹⁵ the Centres should be further strengthened through the redeployment of resources, should be given specific assignments with respect to technical assistance and advisory services for the execution of joint projects of member States within the framework of the intergovernmental organizations in their re-

spective subregions, and should be enabled to act as the major subregional focal points for collecting and disseminating information on all aspects of economic cooperation and integration;

9. *Expresses its gratitude* to the General Assembly for providing the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning with four additional posts for the biennium 1992-1993, thus enabling the Institute to contribute to the process of strengthening the operational capacity of the Commission in meeting the challenges facing Africa in the 1990s, and requests the redeployment of resources which would enable the Institute to assume additional responsibility;

10. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in close cooperation with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, to undertake a thorough examination of the problems and constraints facing the institutions sponsored by the Commission and subsequently to make concrete proposals aimed at alleviating the different problems and to consider alternative solutions such as merging some of the institutions;

11. *Appeals* to bilateral and multilateral donors to increase their financial and other forms of assistance to the Economic Commission for Africa to enable it to shoulder its responsibilities to member States in the form of extrabudgetary operational activities;

12. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to undertake, as necessary, reforms in the structure of the secretariat so as to achieve full consistency with the new orientations recommended in the present resolution and attain greater efficiency and increased capacity for the secretariat to serve as an effective organ for the economic and social development of Africa;

13. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa at its nineteenth meeting.

*42nd plenary meeting
31 July 1992*