

1997/5. Reform of the intergovernmental machinery of the Economic Commission for Africa

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the various resolutions that have implications for the mandate and operations of the Economic Commission for Africa, in particular General Assembly resolutions 32/197 of 20 December 1977 and 33/202 of 29 January 1979 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system and resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989,

Recalling also resolution 618 (XXII) of 24 April 1987 of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa on the in-depth study of the United Nations intergovernmental structure and functions in the economic and social fields,³¹

Recalling further General Assembly resolutions 45/177 of 19 December 1990, 45/264 of 13 May 1991, 46/235 of 13 April 1992 and 50/227 of 24 May 1996 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, on the basis of which the regional commissions should be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council,

Bearing in mind resolution 809 (XXXI) of 8 May 1996 of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa on the new strategic directions for the Commission,³²

Having taken note of the new policy and programme orientation of the Commission as well as the steps being taken to restructure the secretariat, and conscious of the need to align the intergovernmental machinery to this new orientation in order to enable the Commission to address the emerging challenges and priorities of the region effectively,

Having reviewed the existing intergovernmental machinery of the Commission,

Decides that the structure and functioning of the intergovernmental machinery of the Economic Commission for Africa shall be as follows:

A. ORGANS DEALING WITH OVERALL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

1. Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning and the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole

The Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning shall provide legislative mandates and policy guidance for the work of the Commission, consider and endorse the programmes of work of the Commission, serve as a forum for articulating Africa's position on development issues on the agenda of the United Nations and decide upon the recommendations of its subsidiary bodies and of the Executive Secretary.

Since the mandate of the Conference encompasses the full spectrum of economic and social development issues, it shall assume the legislative responsibilities previously assigned to the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development, which shall be abolished.

The Conference shall meet biennially. Its next session shall be held in 1999. The Bureau of the Commission shall be expanded so as to include a representative from each of the five subregions of the continent – North, East, Southern, West and Central Africa. It shall consist of a chairman, three vice-chairmen and one rapporteur.

A Follow-up Committee is hereby established. It shall be composed of the members of the incoming and outgoing bureaux of the Commission. It shall meet as often as necessary, but at least once in inter-sessional years to review Commission affairs and progress in the implementation of decisions.

The meetings of the Follow-up Committee shall be convened by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Chairman of the Commission as and when necessary.

The Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole shall continue to provide technical support to the Conference and shall meet before each session of the Conference.

2. Intergovernmental Committees of Experts of the Subregional Development Centres

The five Intergovernmental Committees of Experts of the Subregional Development Centres shall meet annually and report to the Commission through the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole. In the years when the Commission does not meet, the reports of the Committees shall be presented to the Follow-up Committee of the Bureau of the Commission. The Committees shall oversee the overall formulation and implementation of the programme of work and priorities of the Subregional Development Centres and make recommendations on important issues concerning economic and social development in their respective subregions, as well as on the promotion and strengthening of subregional economic cooperation and integration.

3. Conference of African Ministers of Finance

The Conference of African Ministers of Finance shall be retained. It shall be convened biennially in alternate years with the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance shall have a committee of experts to prepare for its meetings. This committee shall be convened before each session of the Conference.

B. SUBSIDIARY BODIES TO BE CREATED OR RETAINED

1. Committee on Women and Development

The Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development, which shall be renamed "Committee on Women and Development", shall be retained and shall continue to play its role as an advisory forum of experts and policy makers, providing guidance to the Economic Commission for Africa in its work on the advancement of women. It shall also provide a platform for advocacy and assessing follow-up and implementation by African Governments of the regional and global platforms for action for the advancement of women. In particular, the Committee shall address issues relating to the economic empowerment of women, the protection of their legal and human rights and improved access to education and health. It shall meet biennially.

2. Committee on Development Information

As the Commission strengthens its role in assisting member States in developing their national information and communication infrastructure, it needs a body that brings together experts and policy makers to advise it in this area. The beginnings of such a body exist in the high-level working group that helped to articulate "Africa's Information Society Initiative: An action framework to build Africa's information and communication infrastructure"³³ and in the African Technical Advisory Committee of Experts on Information Infrastructure, which was established to provide advice on the implementation of the Initiative. The Committee on Development Information shall build on the work of these bodies as well as that of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Population and Information Specialists.

³³ E/ECA/CM.22/6 and Corr.1.

³¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1987, Supplement No. 16 (E/1987/36)*, chap. IV.

³² *Ibid.*, 1996, *Supplement No. 15 (E/1996/35)*, chap. IV.

The Committee shall include experts from such fields as planning, statistics and geographical information systems, as well as information specialists. It shall meet biennially.

3. *Committee on Sustainable Development*

The Committee on Sustainable Development shall serve as a forum of experts that will provide advice to the Commission in the interlinked areas of food security, population, environment and human settlements. It shall provide a platform for advocacy and the assessment of follow-up activities by African Governments to regional and global plans of action, namely the African Common Position on Environment and Development, the African Common Position on the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development, adopted by the Third African Conference on Population, held at Dakar on 11 and 12 December 1992,³⁴ Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,¹¹ the Habitat Agenda, adopted by the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 14 June 1996,³⁵ the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development³ and the World Food Summit Plan of Action,³⁶ and their implementation of those plans.

The Committee shall address specific measures to promote the protection and regeneration of the environment, enhance food security in Africa, promote sustainable human settlements and deal with issues arising from increased population growth. It shall meet biennially.

4. *Committee on Human Development and Civil Society*

The mission of the Committee on Human Development and Civil Society shall be to help to strengthen civil society and human development. It shall enable the Commission to draw on the opinions of experts in the public and private sectors and civil society. The Committee shall conduct development and follow-up activities pertaining to global and regional action programmes such as the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development⁴ and the Programme of Action⁵ of the World Summit for Social Development and the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation.³⁷ It shall review major trends and issues of regional interest in the areas of human development and civil society and shall assume the functions of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development. The Committee shall meet biennially.

5. *Committee on Industry and Private Sector Development*

The Committee on Industry and Private Sector Development shall serve as a forum for addressing measures to strengthen the private sector. It shall focus on such issues as improving partnerships between the public and private sectors, stimulating private investment and creating a sound legal and

regulatory framework for business. The Committee shall monitor and review progress in the industrialization of Africa and shall identify and recommend measures for accelerating the process of industrialization in the region.

The Committee shall assume some of the functions of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry. It shall provide policy and strategy guidance for enhancing programme formulation in pursuit of various aspects of subregional and regional industrial development. It shall also advise on strategies to facilitate Africa's industrial competitiveness through the promotion of complementarity and integration, taking into account global scientific and technological developments. It shall be composed of experts representing each private sector group, such as chambers of commerce, manufacturers' associations, capital market forums, labour and policy makers from relevant government departments. The Committee shall meet biennially.

6. *Committee on Natural Resources and Science and Technology*

The Committee on Natural Resources and Science and Technology shall assume the functions performed by the African Regional Conference on Science and Technology and the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for the Development and Utilization of Mineral Resources and Energy. It shall be composed of experts in these fields.

The Committee shall serve as a forum for the promotion of cooperation among African countries in the areas of science and technology and development and natural resources and for the provision of advice on science and technology issues relevant to the development of member States. It shall meet biennially.

7. *Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration*

The Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration shall assume some of the functions of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade and Regional Cooperation and Integration. In view of the important role that trade plays in regional cooperation and integration, the main focus of this work shall be trade – intra-African and international trade. The Committee shall be composed of experts in the field of international trade and integration drawn from government as well as the private sector.

In addition, the Committee shall promote the implementation of measures designed to strengthen economic cooperation and integration among African countries, assist African countries and their intergovernmental organizations in making the policy instruments for economic cooperation and integration of the African region more effective and identify measures to coordinate and harmonize microeconomic and macroeconomic policies among African countries as a prerequisite for accelerating regional economic integration. It shall meet biennially.

C. CONFERENCES PROPOSED FOR ABOLITION

1. *Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development*

The Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development is abolished. Its legislative functions shall be assumed by the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning. The functions of its Ministerial Follow-up

³⁴ E/CONF.84/PC/13, annex.

³⁵ A/CONF.165/14, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

³⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Report of the World Food Summit, Rome, 13–17 November 1996*, part one (WFS 96/REP), appendix (Rome, 1997).

³⁷ A/45/427, appendix II.

Committee of Fifteen shall be assumed by the Committee on Human Development and Civil Society.

2. *Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Sustainable Development and Environment*

The Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Sustainable Development and Environment was created in 1993, when the intergovernmental machinery of the Commission was restructured, with a view to providing legislative guidance for the work of the Commission in the area of sustainable development and environment. Subsequently, it was found that its mandate duplicated that of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, which has a joint secretariat composed of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Environment Programme. Consequently, the Executive Secretary of the Commission was requested to undertake consultations on finding ways to resolve the problem of duplication.

The results of those consultations were presented to the Conference of Ministers of the Commission in May 1996. The abolition of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Sustainable Development and Environment resolves the problem of duplication with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

3. *Conference of African Ministers of Trade and Regional Cooperation and Integration*

The Conference of African Ministers of Trade and Regional Cooperation and Integration is abolished to eliminate overlap with both the Economic and Social Commission of the African Economic Community and its Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration. Some of the functions of the Conference shall be assumed by the newly established Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration.

4. *Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications*

The last session of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications shall be in 1999, prior to the end of the Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa.³⁸ Thereafter, the Committee on Transport, Communications and Tourism of the African Economic Community shall become the regional forum for discussions on the relevant issues.

5. *Conference of African Ministers of Industry*

The last session of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry shall be in 2001, prior to the end of the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa.³⁹ Thereafter, the Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment of the African Economic Community shall become the regional forum for discussions. The newly established Committee on Industry and Private Sector Development shall also focus on industry in the broader context of private sector development

D. SUBSIDIARY BODIES PROPOSED FOR ABOLITION

1. *United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa*

The functions of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa shall be assumed by the Committee on Development Information.

2. *African Regional Conference on Science and Technology*

The functions of the African Regional Conference on Science and Technology shall be assumed by the Committee on Natural Resources and Science and Technology.

3. *Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Population and Information Specialists*

The functions of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Population and Information Specialists shall be assumed by the Committee on Sustainable Development and the Committee on Development Information.

E. SECTORAL MINISTERIAL MEETINGS

Although several sectoral ministerial meetings are proposed for abolition, the Commission shall convene ministerial meetings on any issue as necessary.

34th plenary meeting
18 July 1997

ANNEX I

Terms of reference of the organs of the Economic Commission for Africa dealing with overall development issues

1. *Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning*

The Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning shall have the following functions:

(a) To provide legislative mandates and policy guidance for the work of the Economic Commission for Africa;

(b) To consider the programme of work and priorities of the Commission;

(c) To review and analyse the economic and social situation in the region;

(d) To identify and highlight the major economic and social development issues and concerns with a view to promoting policies and strategies for Africa's accelerated development;

(e) To suggest policy measures and actions for implementing various strategies and initiatives, including eliciting the support of the international community for that effort;

(f) To undertake periodic reviews of the follow-up to global conferences preparatory to the review and appraisal of the implementation of the relevant programmes of action of these conferences by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly;

³⁸ General Assembly resolution 43/179.

³⁹ General Assembly resolutions 44/237 and 47/177.

(g) To conduct periodic reviews of the situation of the least developed countries and submit to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, or any special conference, a report on the situation of the least developed countries in Africa;

(h) To encourage the establishment of appropriate mechanisms at the national, subregional and regional levels to promote the advancement of women;

(i) In close collaboration with the Organization of African Unity and the African Development Bank, to assist member States in promoting regional cooperation and integration, in particular in the implementation of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, signed at Abuja on 3 June 1991;⁴⁰

(j) To foster policy coordination with the Organization of African Unity/African Economic Community on all international economic negotiations;

(k) To undertake a review of the work and the functioning of the subsidiary organs of the Commission;

(l) To review and assess the programme orientation of the secretariat and any recommendations submitted by the Executive Secretary.

2. Intergovernmental Committees of Experts of the Subregional Development Centres

The Intergovernmental Committees of Experts of the Subregional Development Centres shall have the following functions:

(a) To recommend strategies, policies, programmes and projects aimed at enhancing economic cooperation and integration within their respective subregions and with other African subregions, in conformity with the objectives of the African Economic Community;

(b) To submit to the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning the biennial draft programmes of work of the Subregional Development Centres and suggest measures for the successful implementation of those programmes of work. The latter should take into account the activities of the intergovernmental organizations with a view to supporting, not duplicating, those activities;

(c) To monitor through a continuous process and an appropriate mechanism the implementation of the approved programmes of work of the Subregional Development Centres and report thereon to the Conference; in this regard, the Committees shall consider the reports of the Follow-up Committees of the Subregional Development Centres;

(d) To review and analyse the economic and social conditions prevailing in their respective subregions with a view to making appropriate recommendations for measures likely to foster economic cooperation and integration among the countries concerned;

(e) To review and make recommendations on reports of sectoral meetings organized by or with the assistance of the Subregional Development Centres;

(f) To suggest measures aimed at mobilizing resources for the effective implementation of the programmes of the Subregional Development Centres;

(g) To carry out any duties assigned to them by the Conference in connection with their mandate;

(h) To establish liaison with other agencies, organizations and non-governmental organizations at the subregional, regional and global levels and take into account their relevant recommendations;

(i) To make recommendations to the Conference.

3. Conference of African Ministers of Finance

The Conference of African Ministers of Finance shall have the following functions:

(a) To monitor and evaluate the impact of the international monetary and financial situation on the African economies and propose appropriate remedial action;

(b) To assess regularly the structure and magnitude of Africa's external debts, including the debt-servicing obligations of African countries, with a view to proposing effective measures to alleviate such debts;

(c) To review intra-African monetary and financial cooperation and suggest ways by which resource flows to Africa can be enhanced;

(d) To promote the exchange of information and the sharing of national experiences in dealing with monetary and financial matters;

(e) To devise strategies for strengthening Africa's position in international negotiations on monetary and financial issues.

ANNEX II

Terms of reference of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic Commission for Africa

1. Committee on Women and Development

The Committee on Women and Development shall have the following functions:

(a) To review periodically progress in the implementation of the regional and global platforms for action;

(b) To review and evaluate the activities carried out in the region within the framework of the relevant programmes for the advancement of women;

(c) To harmonize and coordinate the subregional programmes on women in development approved within the subregions;

(d) To report to the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning on the activities and programmes on women in development covered at the subregional and regional levels;

(e) To mobilize resources for the implementation of the programmes of action agreed at the subregional and regional levels;

⁴⁰ A/46/651, annex.

(f) To participate in the activities and meetings of the United Nations and other relevant bodies;

(g) To organize the exchange of information and experiences on policies regarding the advancement of women in member States.

2. *Committee on Development Information*

The Committee on Development Information shall have the following functions:

(a) To review and advise on the implementation of "Africa's Information Society Initiative: An action framework to build Africa's information and communication infrastructure",³³ with a view to suggesting measures to accelerate its implementation;

(b) To mobilize funding and technical assistance for the implementation of the Initiative;

(c) To identify and suggest techniques for the application of geographical information for natural resource exploitation and management;

(d) To examine and advise on progress by member States in all aspects of statistical development;

(e) To advise on the establishment of arrangements for the improvement of all aspects of methodology and practice in the areas of statistics, information science and geographical information systems (remote sensing and cartography);

(f) To coordinate training for African personnel in the areas of statistics, information science and geographical information systems.

3. *Committee on Sustainable Development*

The Committee on Sustainable Development shall have the following functions:

(a) To undertake periodic reviews of the implementation of regional and global programmes of action such as Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,¹¹ the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,³ the Habitat Agenda, adopted by the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 14 June 1996³⁵ and the World Food Summit Plan of Action;³⁶

(b) To consider and make recommendations on a multidisciplinary approach to the implementation of the relevant programmes of action;

(c) To promote the formulation of policies and measures for environment protection, food security, improved human settlements and the integration of population variables into development planning;

(d) To provide advice to the Economic Commission for Africa in the formulation of activities for supporting member States in the interrelated areas of food security, population, the environment and human settlements.

4. *Committee on Human Development and Civil Society*

The Committee on Human Development and Civil Society shall have the following functions:

(a) To assist member States in promoting measures to follow up the implementation of the regional and global programmes of action in social and human development and popular participation;

(b) To provide advice to the Economic Commission for Africa in formulating its programmes of work in the area of human development and popular participation;

(c) To encourage the integration of social and human dimensions into development policies, plans and programmes at both the macroeconomic and sectoral levels;

(d) To identify and highlight the major economic and social development issues and concerns with a view to promoting policies and strategies for human development and popular participation in development.

5. *Committee on Industry and Private Sector Development*

The Committee on Industry and Private Sector Development shall have the following functions:

(a) To assist the Economic Commission for Africa in the articulation of strategies and programmes for private sector development;

(b) To undertake periodic reviews and assessment of progress in implementing strategies for private sector development;

(c) To provide advice to the Commission on orienting its programme of work to give support to member States in fostering private sector development;

(d) To provide a forum where representatives of government and the private sector can share experiences and exchange information on best practices relating to support policy measures for private sector development;

(e) To review and monitor progress in industrialization in Africa;

(f) To identify and recommend measures for accelerating the process of industrialization in the region;

(i) To provide advice and information that will enable the Commission to formulate strategies for subregional and/or regional industrial integration;

(ii) To provide the Commission with advice on the best ways to assist member States in facilitating industrial development, including their promotion of industrial restructuring programmes;

(g) To assess periodically progress made in the industrialization process and in the implementation of integration strategies.

6. *Committee on Natural Resources, Science and Technology*

The Committee on Natural Resources, Science and Technology shall have the following functions:

(a) To promote measures to facilitate cooperation among African countries in the areas of natural resources, science and technology;

(b) To provide a forum for exchanging information and sharing experiences in these areas;

(c) To assist the Economic Commission for Africa in the formulation of programmes for the development and application of science and technology;

(d) To advise the Commission on ways to strengthen its support to member States in the area of natural resources management.

7. Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration

The Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration shall have the following functions:

(a) To undertake periodic review and assessment of Africa's trading position in the world economy;

(b) To identify and highlight major opportunities and constraints in trade and investment for African countries;

(c) To enhance the African trade sector through the adoption of appropriate measures, policies and strategies for the expansion of regional and external trade;

(d) In close collaboration with the Organization of African Unity/African Economic Community, to promote the implementation of measures designed to strengthen economic cooperation and integration among African countries;

(e) To assist African countries and their intergovernmental organizations in making more effective the policy instruments for economic cooperation and integration in Africa;

(f) In close collaboration with the Intergovernmental Committees of Experts of the Subregional Development Centres, to assist the States members of the Subregional Development Centres and their intergovernmental organizations in strengthening the existing institutional machinery for subregional economic cooperation and integration, as well as strengthening existing institutions for subregional trade cooperation, within the framework of the Abuja Treaty;⁴⁰

(g) To identify measures to coordinate and harmonize microeconomic and macroeconomic policy among African countries as a prerequisite for accelerating regional economic integration.