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CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND
REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

84-0231

1. During the Economic and Social Council's second regular session of 1983 there was "a more than evident fundamental consensus concerning the existence of a crisis of unprecedented magnitude" which would have "devastating consequences for the developing countries (A/38/3, Part II). That crisis, namely the global recession, and the recognition of its negative impact on developing countries have increased the significance of co-operation among developing countries and regional organizations. It is argued that such co-operation will provide the essential means for strengthening the developing countries' collective self-reliance, thus reducing their vulnerability and increasing their capacity to contribute to global economic prosperity. In the various inter-governmental meetings and conferences, co-operation among developing countries, and regional organizations as a theoretical and practical concept, has become the focus of debates on how to overcome the increasing socio-economic difficulties facing the developing countries.

2. These debates centre around the felt need for appropriate institutional arrangements and administrative mechanisms for technical co-operation among developing countries (see TCDC/2/14); the promotion of programmes of interregional economic and technical co-operation among developing countries (Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/66); the formulation of suitable methodologies for promoting horizontal co-operation among developing countries in scientific and technological research (see TCDC/2/12); and the advancement of functional technical co-operation among developing countries (see TCDC/F/PTCDC/1). These innovative ideas help to widen the scope of co-operative activities among developing countries; however, in the June 1983 meeting of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries it was reported that efforts by the agencies, regional commissions, and other organizations of the United Nations system to promote and support technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) during the biennium 1981-1983 had achieved only a moderate degree of success (see TCDC/3/7).

3. Because of the slow progress in ECDC/TCDC activities the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) and the Administrative Committee on co-ordination (ACC) took up the subject at their eighteenth series joint meetings in July 1983. Based on the recommendations and the conclusions of that meeting, the Economic and Social Council passed in resolution 1983/50 of 28 July 1983 paragraph 5 of which reads:

Invites the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies and United Nations bodies, in the light of their mandates, to pay particular attention to the assessment of their capacities and potentials for the promotion of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries and to suggest, as appropriate, ways and means of strengthening

the activities in this field in their respective organizations, and to play an active role in supporting the efforts of the developing countries to implement economic co-operation programmes among themselves, as a contribution towards the attainment of the objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

I. ECWA'S PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

4. Promotional TCDC activities are those which involve the deliberate and voluntary sharing or exchange of technical resources, skills and capabilities between two or more developing countries for their individual or mutual development. They are mandated, organized and managed primarily by developing countries themselves; and the financing and other project inputs which are provided by developed countries and UNDP Indicative Planning figures (IPF's), play only a supplementary and catalytic role. In this connection, it is to be noted that short-term promotional TCDC activities are aimed at identifying opportunities for TCDC and advising on modalities for project formulation. Operational TCDC activities are those development activities which meet the above criteria and they are also expected to be government-executed with maximum support from third parties when necessary.

5. ECWA's role in ECDC/TCDC activities is essentially promotional and co-ordinational. These activities are carried out within the framework of the biennium programme budget and/or in the context of extrabudgetary operations and they take place at subregional, regional and interregional levels.¶ Within the basic guidelines outlined in paragraph 4 above, during the reporting period 1983 ECWA's secretariat has promoted and co-ordinated activities at these levels:

(a) Activities relating to advisory services and training;

(b) Co-ordination and harmonization of research and operational activities;

¶ On the question of co-operation with regional organizations refer to E/ECWA/XI/CP/4 under item 6 of the provisional agenda of the Standing Committee for the Programme.

(c) Information and clearing-house activities;

(d) Co-ordination in the area of financial support for TCDC activities;

(e) Activities relating to publications, meetings, workshops and symposiums.

A. Institutional building through extension of advisory services and training

6. Under its regular programme of regional advisory services for 1983 ECWA extended services to its member States in several areas, including development planning, financial management, human resources development, industrial project identification, formulation and appraisal of household surveys, national accounts and economic statistics. As an executing agency and/or associate agency, ECWA has monitored or provided substantive support for those technical assistance projects in the region which are supported by the United Nations specialized agencies. These include areas such as statistics, demography, industrialization and mechanical engineering. These activities and those relating to technical assistance projects which are an integral component of ECDC/TCDC are aimed at building appropriate human and institutional structures necessary for coping with the development problems of the region. Details of ECWA's technical co-operation activities are reported under agenda item 6(a) of the Provisional agenda of the Commission's eleventh session (E/ECWA/XI/4 Part II). It is worth noting that in the process of executing national or regional projects, as well as in rendering advisory services, ECWA has endeavoured to recruit experts from developing countries, thus assisting in the transfer of the technical know-how from one developing country to another one. This has usually required the agreement of the concerned developing countries to release the expert in demand to another developing country.

7. In the area of training, several activities have been undertaken. For instance, a joint FAO/ECWA/UNDP mission was undertaken in November 1983 to Iraq, Kuwait, Egypt and Sudan to initiate work on the assessment of training needs in the area of agricultural planning and project analysis and to design a regional training programme that will strengthen the existing efforts of the national planning institutes, regional institutes and international agencies. Similarly, a paper was prepared on

training personnel for human settlements and it was presented to the First Conference on Construction and Reconstruction held at Aden, 20-22 November 1983. The secretariat has also provided technical support and substantive assistance to several projects involving women; of particular interest here are the project on the acquisition of maintenance skills for electrical appliances (Jordan) and training in the production of communication and audio visual materials for female extension programmes in the region of ECWA.

B. Co-ordination and harmonization of research and operational activities

8. Co-operation among developing countries cuts across ECWA's major programmes which are research-oriented and operational in nature. The secretariat has taken measures to bring its research and operational activities closer, and within this framework and in line with Economic and Social resolution 1983/50, to operationalize its ECDC/TCDC activities. Paragraph 2 of resolution 1983/50:

Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the cross-organizational programme analysis of the activities of the United Nations System in economic and technical co-operation, scheduled for review by the Committee for Programme and co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in 1985, is carried out with due regard to the support provided by the United Nations system towards the implementation of the Caracas Programme of Action, in accordance with the mandates adopted by the organizations of the United Nations system.

9. For the implementation of resolution 1983/50 and in consultation with the United Nation Secretariat ECWA's resolution have been reviewed and those which have direct relevance to ECDC/TCDC activities within its existing programmes have been identified (see annex). These mandates have been incorporated, by the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination (Headquarters), in the cross-organizational programme analysis (COPA) of United Nations's system activities in the area of ECDC/TCDC. A report on this subject will be presented to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) at its nineteenth series of joint meetings with ACC in 1984. This exercise, when finalized, will permit the organizations of the United Nations to improve on the harmonization of their ECDC/TCDC activities with similar ones carried out at the regional and interregional levels.

10. An example of the integration of ECWA's ECDC/TCDC projects into its existing regular programme activities is its project on scientific and technological co-operation among Western Asian

countries. The project is funded by the Government of the Netherlands, and complements ECWA's Science and Technology programme element 1.3 "Promotion of subregional and regional co-operation for the strengthening of national scientific and technological capabilities." The modalities of the implementation of the project are under study. Similarly, the energy issues programme has been complemented by one project which contains aspects of TCDC. This project, carried out jointly with the Commission of the European Communities (CEC), is entitled "Energy methodology and planning" and it complements the energy issues programme element 1.2 on "Integrated energy planning in selected ECWA countries." The solar energy programme which is supported by the assistance of the French Government and consists of five projects, complements several of ECWA's programme. These projects are: (a) demonstration and training centre for simple solar appliances for remote communities; (b) alternative architectural designs for community centres in rural areas; (c) Computer listing of data on wells; (d) energy management and; (e) non-baked bricks technology. Also, discussions on the possibilities for joint activities having components of ECDC/TCDC are ongoing with the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and India. (Refer to paragraph 13 below).

11. In this connection, it is worth mentioning another project entitled, "Directory of Regional and National Training Institutes, Research Centres, Specialized Agencies, Training and Technical University Programmes Available in ECWA Countries". This project was implemented with the financial support of the Government of the Netherlands. The Directory was published in English and distributed widely and the Arabic version of it is under preparation. One of the major problems of development in the region is the identification of appropriate expertise and know-how. The availability of directories such as this one will enable ECWA countries and other developing nations to easily locate the needed expertise and skills and share them among themselves in a manner which is cost-effective and appropriate.

C. Information and clearing-house activities

12. An important aspect of ECDC/TCDC is the free flow of information on the development activities of the region. Integrated information provides the basis for objective analysis of development problems and of the expertise and knowledge available in different sectors of the economy. In this connection, it is important to refer to the secretariat's proposal in May 1982 to the ECWA Ad hoc Intergovernmental Expert Committee on the 1984-1989 Medium-term Plan regarding the necessity for a comprehensive information system for the co-ordination of development activities including ECDC/TCDC in the ECWA region. In the report which was before that Committee it was explained that the existence of complex relationships among the various regional and international bodies, and interaction between them and the newly established ones in the future called for proper planning of a regional and information system (E/ECWA/CMP/W.P.2/Add.1/Rev.1). As a follow-up to this proposal and because of the significance of the matter, under the item 9 of the provisional agenda of the Standing Committee for the Programme a special topic, information systems, has been introduced for discussion. In addition, in the recent meeting of the Executive Secretary of ECWA and the Director-General of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development several areas for mutual co-operation were discussed, one of which was informatics and documentation. Details on this subject are reported under item 6 of the provisional agenda of the Standing Committee for the Programme (Follow-up to the Committee's resolution 3(1) on co-operation with regional organizations).

13. In 1983, several activities of ECWA included information-related matters. For instance, data compiled by the secretariat from the in-house files and other sources in ECWA countries have made it possible to formulate guidelines on water planning, policy-making, alternative strategies in water development and legislation for water as well as on the institutional framework for water development activities. In a similar exercise, information on the state of the art of waste-water treatment for reuse in the ECWA region was compiled from various sources in ECWA countries. Based on this information an economic analysis was carried out to estimate the current cost of treated waste water, the relative costs of various treatment methods and unit energy requirements. Furthermore, on the basis of data collected on demographic changes, socio-economic indicators of the ECWA countries have been constructed and updated, and the first part of the population projections confined to the countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council was completed. These projections, and the population country profiles prepared for several member countries, provide the needed materials for car-

rying out development activities in the region in a co-operative manner and for the mutual benefit of the ECWA countries.

D. Co-ordination in the area of financial support for TCDC activities

14. One of the major difficulties concerning the integration of TCDC activities into ongoing programmes of developing countries is the dearth of information on the availability of funds for the implementation of promising projects. Although the developing countries have embraced the concept of TCDC, their efforts in implementing TCDC have been thwarted by financial constraints. The central issue is how to achieve the most efficient utilization of domestic and external resources in view of these constraints and how to improve their mobilization. The ECWA secretariat believes that the answers to these questions is effective co-ordination and improvement of the channels of communication on the availability of such resources. On this premise, the secretariat has taken a major effort to improve its co-ordinating role in the area of financial support activities. The general activity of ECWA in this area is reported under item 10 of the provisional agenda of the Commission's eleventh session (E/ECWA/XI/10).

15. In the area of finance support for TCDC activities both developing and developed countries have been contributors with ECWA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations specialized agencies playing mainly catalytic role. Currently the Governments of France and the Netherlands have made financial commitments in support of ECWA's TCDC activities or in support of its regular programme activities which contain TCDC components (see paragraph 9 above). The secretariat, in its efforts to match the needs of the least developed countries of ECWA with the capacities of India, has approached the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC and the UNDP's Regional Bureau for Arab States for their possible financial support. The matter is still under discussion.

E. Activities relating to publications, meetings, workshops and symposia

16. ECWA's regular programme activities produce outputs in various forms such as publications, regional expert group meetings, intergovernmental consultations, workshops etc. These activities are geared to the development needs of the ECWA region. Publications provide analytical studies on socio-economic problems of the region, expert group meetings advise on the

identification and the content of priority areas; seminars and workshops are conducted for educational purposes; symposia are held for purposes of information, exchange and the sharing of ideas by experts on critical social, economic and technological problems of the region; regional preparatory meetings provide inputs to major international conferences dealing with global issues. The secretariat activities relating to these areas are discussed below:

17. In the context of research activities, the Commission has issued a number of annual publications in the areas of agriculture, economic and social development, population and statistics in addition to various studies undertaken under the Commission's work programme by the substantive divisions. These publications and studies are mostly of a regional nature and, as such, contribute towards promoting regional integration and co-operation among developing countries. Further details on these publications and studies are discussed under item 6(a) of the Commission's eleventh session.

18. In pursuance of promoting co-operation among developing countries, the Commission organized or participated in organizing a number of regional meetings, seminars, training courses and workshops during the reporting period. Follow-up action on four of these meetings and/or conferences is discussed under agenda item 8 of the provisional agenda of the Commission's eleventh session. Other meetings and workshops and seminars and similar activities are discussed under agenda item 6(a) of the Commission's eleventh session. Following is a list of the meetings convened by the Commission during the reporting period.

II. ECWA'S PROMOTIONAL TCDC/ECDC ACTIVITIES AT THE INTERREGIONAL LEVEL

19. Co-operation among developing countries at the interregional level has been one of the major issues in recent years. In Economic and Social Council decision 1982/174 the executive secretaries of the regional commissions were requested to submit their joint recommendations for the identification of a subject relating to interregional co-operation of common interest to all regions. The regional commissions, by virtue of their location and multidisciplinary approach, are well placed to initiate and implement TCDC/ECDC projects and programmes which are of an interregional nature. Taking note of this and the request of the Secretary-General on the promotion of programmes of interregional economic and technical co-operation among developing countries by the regional commissions, (E/1983/70) in its resolution 1983/66, the Economic and Social Council:

Further calls upon the executive secretaries of the regional commissions, in the light of the responsibility of the commissions for the exercise of team leadership at the regional level, as stipulated by the General Assembly in resolution 32/197, to organize periodic consultations between their respective commissions and United Nations organizations and entities and specialized agencies active at the regional and interregional levels, with a view to ensuring the effective co-ordination of projects and programmes carried out under the auspices of the bodies involved for the promotion of co-operation among developing countries at the subregional, regional and interregional levels, those periodic consultations to take place on the occasion of meetings already scheduled within the United Nations system.

20. For the implementation of resolution 1983/66 the ECWA secretariat has endeavoured to extend its ECDC/TCDC activities beyond the region of ECWA. The secretariat is in the process of working out the formulation and modalities of co-operation with the League of Arab States in the region of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Details of such co-operation are reflected in the secretariat's report (E/ECWA/XI/C.P./4) under item 6 of the provisional agenda of the Standing Committee for the Programme. In the region of the Economic Commission for South-East Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) the Secretariat participated in the "Regional Intergovernmental Consultations for Formulation and Implementation of Programmes for TCDC in November 1983 (Beijing)". The meeting was sponsored by ESCAP, with China as the host Government and with the support of UNDP.

21. In this connection, paragraph 5 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/69 on the Transport and Communications

Decade in Asia and the Pacific called upon ECWA "to take appropriate action to collaborate with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for the incorporation of the Western Asian region in the programme of action for the decade". As a follow-up to the implementation of this resolution ESCAP held an Ad hoc Intergovernmental meeting in Bangkok from 10 to 13 October 1983 in which the ECWA representative participated. The outcome of the meeting and the strategies to be followed by ECWA for the implementation of Paragraph 5 of the resolution are outlined in a report presented under item 6 of the provisional agenda of the Standing Committee.

22. Possible joint ECDC/TCDC activities with ESCAP include: (a) the holding of an interregional meeting on transnational banks; (b) LMG/LPG/methanol study tour (marketing and trade of ESCAP/ECWA gas and gas-products, for gas based-industries and transport users; (c) international migration policy in Asia and the Pacific (The scope of this project, which is formulated by ESCAP, could be widened to incorporate ECWA's interest in this area as well); and (d) exchange of information. Discussion with the Government of India, UNDP and the two Yemens regarding specific areas of TCDC continue whereby India's and the two Yemens' capacities and needs are matched (see paragraph 14 above).

23. An interregional ECDC/TCDC meeting has been sponsored by the Economic Commission for Latin America in co-operation with the German Foundation for International Development (DSE). The meeting which is tentatively scheduled for July 1984 is expected to be attended by all regional commissions. The meeting entitled Round-table on the Formulation of Development Policies for Intraregional and interregional Economic and Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and Regions tentatively contains the following subjects for discussion: (a) Examples of success of regional and interregional horizontal co-operation and the role that the secretariats of the United Nations and non-United Nations' organizations should play for the promotion and further strengthening of intraregional and interregional economic and technical co-operation in the light of the present international economic situation; (b) practical proposals for intensifying this form of horizontal co-operation and for overcoming obstacles and limitations being faced by United Nations and non-United Nations organizations for promoting ECDC and TCDC; and (c) further action by the secretariats of those organizations to influence the adoption of appropriate measures so that the Governments and institutions of the developing countries may put into practice the recommendations adopted by international forums on the subject of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries.

24. The 1963 Joint Declaration of the Developing Countries, annexed to General Assembly resolution 1897(XVIII), initiated the process of putting forth a unified stand for the United

Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD I). At the conclusion of that Conference on 15 June 1964 the Group of 77 was born. Because of the global economic difficulties, severely affecting the developing countries in recent years, the Group of 77 has increasingly been co-ordinating its activities with various United Nations organizations including regional commissions. Regarding co-ordination of ECWA's activities in the area of ECDC/TCDC and those of the Group of 77 the process of negotiations has begun and the relevant information on each other's ECDC/TCDC activities has been exchanged. In accordance with an agreement reached between ECWA and the Group of 77 it was decided that ECWA translate into Arabic the Group's Bulletin, which reflects major issues relating to ECDC/TCDC at regional and global levels, and that the Group of 77 would distribute it widely. So far, ECWA has translated into Arabic up to the fifteenth issue of this Bulletin, excepting the first four issues.

Annex

THE COMMISSIONS RESOLUTIONS HAVING RELEVANCE
TO ECDC/TCDC ACTIVITIES

9(II). Co-operation with regional institutions

Urges the Executive Secretary to continue with his in-process efforts to expand co-ordination and co-operation with regional institutions and to extend those efforts to other regional institutions where ways and means of co-operation have not yet been explored.

31(III). Co-operation with regional institutions

Calls upon the secretariat of the Commission to define the modes and principles of co-ordination and co-operation with regional institutions, to make such arrangements in consultation with them and to notify the Commission at its next meeting of steps taken. Calls upon the secretariat to arrange for co-ordination and co-operation with regional institutions in the form of agreements where they so request.

39(IV). Regional co-operation in the field of water resources development

Aware of the need for collaboration and co-ordination in water resources development and management, the Commission requests the Executive Secretary to ascertain which member States wish to establish a water resources council and to convene its first meeting soon. Calls upon the secretariat to service the Council at the expense of the Council's members. Further requests the Executive Secretary to report to the next session of the Commission on implementation.

46(IV). Co-operation among developing countries

Request the Executive Secretary to intensify his efforts to promote co-operation among developing countries at the regional and interregional levels. Urges member States to participate effectively in the regional meeting on TCDC in 1977 as well as in the United Nations Conference on TCDC in 1978. Further urges member States to establish or support focal points to give impetus to their activities for the promotion of TCDC.

47(IV). Regional co-operation and co-ordination

Taking note of the report entitled, "The role of regional commissions in promoting co-operation among the developing countries", requests the Executive Secretary to study the regulation of ECWA's relations with Arab and regional organizations, establish a strategy and plan of action and propose practical formulae for effective co-operation and co-ordination between the Commission and Arab and regional organizations, bodies and funds within their common sphere of activity. Further requests the Executive Secretary to study co-ordination and co-operation with other United Nations bodies and report on implementation of the resolution to the next session.

54(V). Regional co-operation and co-ordination

Requests the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Governments of the region, to work out concrete arrangements for co-operation and co-ordination. Urges member States to take appropriate measures in relation to regional, Arab and international organizations to convince them to participate actively in working out such arrangements. Further urges member states to contribute to the resources required through the ECWA financial contributions account for regional activities.

70(VI). Co-operation among developing countries

Urges member countries to participate actively in all forms of co-operation among themselves with emphasis on co-operative research among national institutions; training, the use of expert and consultancy services, the procurement of equipment, and the development and operation of a regional information system. Calls upon the Executive Secretary in co-operation with UNDP and UNCTAD and other United Nations organizations to support ECDC/TCDC in the region, including formulation of intercountry projects, supply of financial resources to facilitate the participation of LDCs and the expansion of fellowships and trainee programmes, etc. and requests the Secretary-General to take urgent steps to provide adequate resources and other support to enable the Commission's secretariat to undertake these activities and to help to achieve the objective of the resolution.

83(VII). Establishment of the Regional Water Resources Council

Decides that the Regional Water Council shall be established; that its competence shall be restricted to co-ordination of the efforts by existing bodies and to the conduct of activities that complement the work of these organizations; that co-ordination should be undertaken through the compilation of

information concerning the organizations active in the region; that the Council shall meet once a year, at least 4 months before the Commissions regular session. Requests the Executive Secretary to assess the financial implications of the resolution, explore funding possibilities and to report to the Commission at its eighth session.

87(VII). International Year of Disabled Persons

Requests member States to contribute to the international symposium in July 1981 on TCDC and technical assistance for disabled persons, particularly as regards the application of science and technology to the mass production of medical, educational and vocational equipment, by utilizing indigenous resources and expertise.

92(VIII). Development of an integrated transport system

Calls upon member states to give attention to the recommendations of the Intergovernmental meeting on the Development of an integrated Transport System for Western Asia, within the framework of their plans for development of the transport sector. Requests the Executive Secretary to continue his efforts to strengthen co-operation among developing countries in the field of transport at the regional level.

97(VIII). Co-operation between the Economic Commission for Western Asia and specialized Arab and regional organizations with a view to the co-ordination of their joint projects

Recommends that the secretariat of the Commission should hold prior consultations with the specialized Arab and regional organizations on proposals for studies and activities in ECWA's short- and medium-term work programmes; the secretariat should co-operate with such organizations in the undertaking of studies and activities of a joint nature. Requests the Executive Secretary to take the necessary measures to put into effect the contents of the recommendations of the resolution; appeals to specialized Arab and regional organizations to co-operate with ECWA; calls upon the Executive Secretary to submit an annual report on the practical steps taken in this regard.

104(VIII). A regional programme of technical assistance to member countries in development finance

Recommends that Governments of member countries should intensify efforts to strengthen training and advisory capacities of their national institutions in various aspects of development finance. Requests the Executive Secretary to follow up recommendations of the survey report on the technical assistance needs

of member countries in financial management, and study possibility of establishing a regional facility to meet training and advisory needs of member countries in development finance and to ensure that such a facility complements national efforts and is closely co-ordinated with related Arab regional institutions.

105(VIII). Defining and strengthening the functions of the Commission within the context of the restructuring of the Economic and Social sectors of the United Nations system

Requests the Executive Secretary, inter alia, to pursue consultations with heads of organizations of the United Nations system maintaining regional programmes with a view to investigating the possibility of setting up appropriate inter-agency arrangements.

113(IX). Regional food security

Urges Governments in the region and international organizations and regional development institutions to provide the necessary technical support and food assistance to regional food security projects, in the region especially in its least developed countries. Calls upon the Executive Secretary to strengthen ECWA's activities in food security in its future work programme in co-ordination with FAO and the Arab organizations for Agricultural Development.