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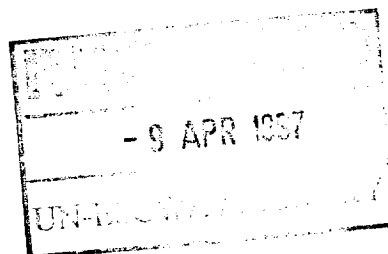
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Ninth session

8-12 May 1982

Baghdad, Iraq

Item 6(f) of the Agenda



Draft Report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental
Expert Committee on the Medium-term Plan
for the period 1984-1989

(9 - 11 May 1982)

82-0217

A. Attendance and Organization of Work

1. The Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Expert Committee on the Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989 met in Baghdad, Iraq from 9 to 12 May 1982. Its deliberations covered 6 meetings.

2. The following members of the Commission attended the Committee 1/: Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, The Palestine Liberation Organization, Qatar, The United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

3. The following States Members of the United Nations not members of the Commission attended the meeting as observer: Tunisia.

4. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies attended the Committee as observers:

United Nations Secretariat (New York), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Development Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Telecommunications Union.

5. The following regional and intergovernmental organizations attended the Committee 1/:

Arab **Labour** Organization, Arab Telecommunications Union, League of Arab States and Arab Industrial Development Organization.

1. For the names of the participants in the Committee, see document E/ECWA/CMTP/INF.3/Rev.2

6. At its first meeting, the Committee unanimously elected the bureau as follows:

- Chairman : Mr. Ismail A. Al-Delaimy
- V. Chairman: Mr. Hayyan Haider, Member, Council for Development and Reconstruction, Lebanon
- V. Chairman: Mr. Jalal Moula, Assistant Deputy Minister of Planning, PDRY
- Rapporteur : Dr. Ahmad Salim Ahmed, Economic Expert, Ministry of Economy and Commerce

7. At its first meeting, the Committee adopted E/ECWA/CMTP/2/Rev.2 for its organization of work. The representative of Iraq called for flexibility in dealing with the various agenda items.

B. Agenda

8. The Committee adopted at its first meeting the following agenda (contained in E/ECWA/CMTP/1/Rev.1)

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Organization of work
5. Programme priorities for the period 1984-1989
6. The Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989
7. Institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989
8. Other business
9. Adoption of the report.

C. Account of proceedings

9. In his opening address, Mr. Mohammad Said Al-Attar, the Executive Secretary of ECWA, described the meeting as a significant step towards the integration of the ECWA's work programme and priorities into the Medium-term Plan 1984-1989. He referred to General Assembly resolution 32/197 in which the roles and functions of the regional commissions are outlined. ECWA would discharge its responsibilities more effectively in those respects if programme priorities were defined on the basis of the needs and interests of the region. A well structured Medium-term Plan should be attuned to the development requirements of the region but also not only to the implementation of global mandates and strategies. To those ends, the Committee might focus its work, on the determination of priorities among the various subprogrammes within each major programme and on the specification of the implications of relevant regional and global development strategies for the Medium-term Plan. He furthermore expressed the view that consideration should be given to the establishment of institutional arrangements within the Commission to assist it, on a permanent basis, in the performance of its various programming functions.

10. In his introductory statement pertaining to agenda item 5: Programme Priorities for the period 1984-1989 (E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.2/Rev.1) Mr. George Abu-Jawdeh, Chief, Programme Planning and Co-ordination Unit of ECWA, gave an outlook of the various stages of the preparation of the United Nations Medium-term Plan. In that connection, he drew attention to General Assembly resolution 36/228 on Programme Planning, which provided a new basis for the general process of Planning, programming and management, particularly as regards the determination of priorities between programmes and sub-programmes

The Medium-term Plan proposed by ECWA contained ten priorities, including food security, rural development and the development of human resources development which were added in the light of their importance in the context of various regional strategies such as the strategy for "Joint Arab Economic Action" adopted by the eleventh Arab Summit (November 1980 Amman, Jordan) and the conclusions of the Symposium on the Arab world in the year 2000 (5-10 May 1980, Tangiers, Morocco).

11. The representative of the Government of Iraq referring to document E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.2/Add.1/Rev.1, emphasized the importance of food security, rural development and human resources development as well as industrial development and the transfer of technology in the development process of the ECWA region. In his view, the establishment of a balanced development in the region required that the special needs of the least developed countries of the region should be taken into account. Thus, he supported the importance attached to the subprogramme on activities for the Least Developed Countries. He furthermore suggested that the energy programme be placed to the first level of priorities. In this connection, he stressed that particular attention be given to the development of human resources in the energy sector. He expressed the view that the establishment of a Committee for the Programmes would be conducive to a more effective performance of the responsibilities of the Commission the programming planning and review. The Committee should draw, as appropriate, on the documentation and recommendations considered by relevant regional organizations, with a view to ensure greater responsiveness to regional priorities and to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts.

12. The Secretariat introduced document, E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/Rev.1: Proposed Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989 (Note by the Executive Secretary) by focusing attention to its annex which contains lists of subprogrammes within each major programme. The importance of determining relatively high and low priority subprogrammes was emphasized.

13. The representative of Egypt stressed that the proposed programmes did not sufficiently take into account economic integration and expressed the view that this required further attention by the Secretariat.

14. Following the introduction by the Secretariat of E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/13/Rev.1 on Industrial Development the delegate of Bahrain stated that development of heavy industry was not emphasized in the industry programme although it was an important priority area in the Gulf Region, where the Gulf Co-operation Council is concentrating on several important projects such as steel, aluminium and dry dock industries. It was suggested that the secretariat takes into account these development needs since these could make important contributions to the economic integration of the region.

15. The representative of Oman supported the view expressed by Bahrain stating that the expansion of the regional market is conducive to regional integration and would render the region more economically competitive with industrialized countries.

16. Representatives of Iraq concentrated on several aspects of the industry programme drawing attention to the important fact that almost 90% of OPEC countries activities consist of crude oil export. Therefore it was emphasized that industrial diversification would help to reduce dependence on this sector.

17. The representative of Oman in his intervention observed that there was only slight reference to the importance of industrial scientific research.

18. The representative of PDRY emphasized the importance of setting up light and medium-industries in the context of rural development.
19. The representative of the Arab Industrial Development Organization urged that the Commission give due attention to the importance of industrial planning and called for greater co-ordination between organizations at the regional level.
20. In responding to the various observations the Secretariat noted that the Medium-term Plan was only a general framework. Details of the programme were to be worked out in the context of the preparation of the biennial programmes of work.
21. The representative of Egypt expressed the view that the attainment of food security is indispensable for the stability and development of the region. He was pleased to note that ECWA has given top priority to this area.
22. The representative of Yemen Arab Republic emphasized that particular attention should be given to the energy requirement of the least developed countries in the region.
23. The representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen observed that many countries of the region would benefit from the further development of coastal fisheries; the Medium-Term Plan should properly reflect the importance of the Commission's expanded involvement in this sector.
24. The representative of Lebanon underlined the importance of the programme on rural development in the Medium-Term Plan.
25. The representative of Bahrain supported the effort to establish levels of priority among the various programmes; it should be kept in mind, however, that all programmes are inter-related. Care should be taken that emphasis placed on individual programmes should not detract from the overall implementation of the Plan.

26. The representative of Oman called attention to the importance of the construction industry, transport and tourism; due attention should be given to programmes in these areas in the context of the Medium-Term Plan.

27. The Secretariat in responding to the above comments and observations, indicated that the grouping of programmes into three priority levels did not prejudice the importance of the respective sectors in the national economic and social policy-making process. The purpose of the classification was rather to facilitate the establishment of a link on an indicative and flexible basis between programmes and anticipated resources.

28. Following the introduction by the Secretariat of working papers E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1, 8, 9, 10 and 16/Rev.1.

The representative of Oman stated that although the proposed programme for international trade and development discussed the need for ECWA countries to expand export trade, it did not take into account the trade with advanced countries which were important trade partners of the ECWA countries. It should be borne in mind that the institution of a preferential trade system would not as such lead to a larger volume of export from the ECWA region. The observer from the Arab Industrial Development Organization noted that the level of interregional trade had remained relatively low, and was, in effect, declining, despite the conclusion of major trade agreements in recent years. Without a significant strengthening of the industrial production capacity, prospects for expanded interregional trade were to remain low.

29. The secretariat replied that in view of the limited resources anticipated for activities in this sector, a selective approach should be followed. It was estimated that activities aimed at the rationalization of import policies of member States would prove to be both feasible and urgently required in the region and should therefore deserve attention on a priority basis in the Medium-term Plan.

30. The representative of Iraq urged that the proposed programme on international trade should focus on import substitution, expansion and diversification of regional trade, and, eventually, the creation of an integrated market that would be competitive with the national and regional markets of developed countries. The Commission, in close co-operation with Arab regional organizations, could support member countries in the preparation of policies and measures aimed at or strengthening the economic position of the region in these respects and make wider provision, in the context of the Medium-term Plan, for supporting activities including, inter alia, expanded programmes for the exchange of trade information and for the strengthening of international arrangements at the national and regional levels. More attention should also be given to the analysis of the practices of the multinational corporations operating in the region and to the strengthening of the negotiating capacity of the countries of the region vis-à-vis these corporations.

31. The objectives and strategies of the programme on statistics were generally supported.

32. Support was also expressed for the proposed programme on the environment. In that connexion it was, inter alia, observed that particular attention should be given to the strengthening of institutional arrangements at the national level for the formulation and co-ordination of environment policies.

33. In reference to the proposed programme of natural resources (E/ECWA/CMTP/W.P.1/15/Rev 1), the representative of Iraq called attention to the need for regulating large rivers particularly those that run through more than one country in the region. Furthermore, there was an urgent need for improved management of basic ground water and watershed resources in desert and semi-desert regions and in plateau and mountain areas. The Medium-Term Plan should properly reflect these needs and in that connexion, place a particular emphasis on training activities for middle-level and high-level experts in water management; provision should also be made for detailed groundwater studies involving a comprehensive mapping of water resources in the region covered by the "Sahl al-Hamed" project now being executed by Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

34. The representative of Iraq also supported the view that the energy plan should give due attention to the development of alternative sources of energy with a view to conserving the hydrocarbon resources of the region. He called attention to the establishment of a national energy commission in Iraq to undertake energy planning in the country and to act as a motivating force in OPEC countries so that the Iraqi experience is shared by all Arab states - He mentioned that the rising cost of energy is only one of a number of obstacles facing the development of developing countries - These obstacles include the rising costs of imported goods and services from developed countries, increased public debt of developing countries and high cost of imported technology products. These considerations should be duly reflected in the relevant parts of the Medium-term Plan under consideration.

35. The representative of Egypt suggested that special provision should be made for activities benefiting of the least developed countries in the region in the fields of food security and agricultural development in the energy sector, it was of the essence that the region actively participated in the development of new and renewable sources of energy. ECWA could play an important role in the co-ordination of relevant activities in the region as regards the proposed programme on Science and Technology he felt that it should not only cover activities related to the transfer of technology but also support the strengthening of regional capacities for the development of Science and Technology. The delegate of Oman stressed, in this connexion, the role of local technology and technical expertise obtained through practice.

36. With regard to the Science and Technology programme (E/ECWA/CMTP/W.P.1/6/Rev.1, the delegate of Iraq urged that the plan should make provision for activities aimed at the negotiation of patents and technology contracts. He also emphasized the need to strengthen and expand consulting and engineering services in the region. The delegate of Egypt stressed the need to study priority issues in transfer of technology in Food and Agriculture as well as Energy, particularly New and Renewable sources of energy.

37. Referring to the proposed programme on food and agriculture (E/ECWA/CMTP/W.P.1/5/Rev.2) the representative of Iraq supported the framework and priorities of the plan and commented on the need for a comprehensive strategy of agricultural and rural development in the region, to be based on the full utilization of domestic potentials. Training, management and basic infrastructure were considered critical requirements for successful rural development. The importance given to the subject of combating desertification in the Medium-term Plan was endorsed; in this connexion particular reference was made to soil erosion and salinisation problems; flood hazards; rational water use and soil management; etc. Specific emphasis was to be placed on the development of management capabilities; farm mechanisation; the social revival of rural communities; agricultural extension; marketing and storage of agricultural products.

38. Delegates of Egypt, Iraq and Qatar agreed with the structure and priorities of the Medium-term plan pointing to the need for a study of the linkages between agricultural education and employment in agriculture. Reference was also made to the crucial role of policies providing strong incentives for employment in the agricultural sector.

39. During the course of the meeting representatives expressed their opinion on the relative priorities among subprogrammes in the various programmes reviewed. The conclusion in this regard are contained in annex I to this report.

Institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989 (Agenda item 7).

40. In its introduction of document E/ECWA/CMTP/3/Rev.1, the secretariat referred to General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the UN system and which defined the role of regional commissions as the main general centres for economic and social development in their respective regions. Attention was also drawn to ECWA resolution 56 (v) on the definition of a long-term development strategy and to resolution 84(VII) on the formation of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Expert Committee which was now meeting and which was called upon to advise the Commission on the establishment of subsidiary bodies. The secretariat's proposal to establish a Standing Committee for the Programme was elaborated upon.

41. The representative of Iraq expressed the view that the programming requirements of the Commission would merit consideration of the establishment of a permanent expert body to assist the Commission in the fulfillment of its responsibilities in this regard and proposed that the Ad Hoc Committee recommend a resolution to this end. Other representatives supported this proposal. The Ad Hoc Committee accordingly proposes the attached text (Annex II) of a draft resolution for consideration by the Commission.

Annex I

Relative priorities among subprogrammes in the
Medium-term Plan for the 1984-1989

Major Programme	Subprogrammes in the Medium-term Plan	Recommended order of priority
Statistics (E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/4/Rev.1)	1. Statistical Development 2. National accounts and economic statistics 3. Social demographic and environmental statistics	1, 2, 3
Transport, Communications and Tourism (E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/5/Rev.1)	1. Development of intergrated transport 2. Development of Tourism 3. Communications	1, 2, 3
Food and Agriculture	1. Monitoring and Management of Agricultural Development and Agricultural resources 2. Food Planning and policy 3. Support to agrarian reform and rural development programmes	2, 3, 1

Science and Technology

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|------|
| E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/6/Rev.1 | 1. The strengthening of national scientific and technological capabilities | 1, 2 |
| | 2. Transfer of technology | |
-

Energy

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/7/Rev.1 | 1. Energy Planning | 1, 2, 3 |
| | 2. Energy Resources development. | |
| | 3. Energy conservation and efficiency | |
-

Social Development

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/11/Rev.1 | 1. Social integration | 1, 2 |
| | 2. Human Resources development | |
-

Population

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/12/Rev.1 | 1. Demographic data collection and analysis | |
| | 2. Population development and policies | |
| | 3. Population education and information | |
| | 4. Employment promotion and manpower development | |
-

Industrial Development

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---------|
| E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/13/Rev.1 | 1. National Planning and regional co-ordination in the industrial sector | 3, 1, 2 |
| | 2. Trade manufactured products and financing industrial development | |
| | 3. Development of selected industrial branches. | |
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Human Settlements

E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/14/Rev.1

1. Integration of physical planning with economic and social planning.
2. City Management
3. Building materials
4. Survey analysis and evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of prefabrication.

1, 3, 4, 2

Natural Resources

E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/15/Rev.1

1. Mineral resources
2. Water resources

2, 1

Development Issues and Policies

E/ECWA/CMTP/WP.1/16/Rev.1

1. Perspective planning
2. Special measures in favour of the Least Developed Countries of the region.
3. Review and analysis of economic trends.

2, 1, 3

The ECWA Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989

The Economic Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, particularly its provisions regarding the role of the regional commissions for the promotion of co-ordination at the regional level and regarding their tasks and responsibilities in the programme planning and review process.

Recalling further General Assembly Resolution 36/228 of 18/12/1981 on Programme Planning particularly its section (A);

Mindful of ECOSOC resolution 1981/64 of 23 July 1981 which called upon all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations System to apply the International Development Strategy for the Third Development Decade as a policy framework in the formulation and implementation of their programmes of work and Medium-term Plans;

Recalling also its resolution 56(V) on the definition of long-term development objectives and regional development strategy and its resolution 84(VII) of 23 April 1980 by which it established an Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Expert Committee with a view, inter alia, to advising the Commission regarding institutional arrangements, including the creation of technical bodies, for the effective implementation of the Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989;

1. Emphasizes the need to ensure that the programme planning and review processes of the Commission reflect more fully and consistently the development priorities and requirements of the States Members of the Commission.

2. Adopts the report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Expert Committee on the Medium-term Plan and the recommendations contained therein*.

3. Endorses in that context the Commission's Medium-term Plan for the period 1984-1989;**

4. Recommends to the Economic and Social Council to establish a Standing Committee for the Programme composed of all members of the Commission, as its main subsidiary organ to assist the Commission in the execution of its responsibilities for programme planning and review;

5. Recommends further that the terms of reference of the Standing Committee will be as follows:

(a) The Committee shall function as the main subsidiary organ of the Commission for reviewing, planning, programming, evaluation and co-ordination;

(b) The Committee shall

(i) Review the programmes of the United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia as defined in the Medium-term Plan;

(ii) Review the totality of the work programme(s) of the Commission in light of the availability of resources;

(iii) Recommend an order of priorities among the programmes and subprogrammes of the United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia as defined in the Medium-term Plan;

(iv) Give guidance to the Executive Secretary on the ~~design~~ of the programme.

* E/ECWA/142

** E/ECWA/142/Add.1/Rev.1

(v) Recommend guidelines to the agencies of the United Nations System maintaining programmes and activities in the region taking into account their respective functions and responsibilities and the need for coherence and co-ordination;

(vi) Consider and develop evaluation procedures and their use in the improvement of programme design and implementation;

(c) The Committee, in discharging its responsibilities, shall

Consider the programme of the Commission as a whole or as appropriate on a sector-by-sector basis and may for this purpose convene ad hoc subject-oriented meetings, and

Assist the Commission in achieving compatibility and complementarity of its work programme with those of other regional intergovernmental organizations in the region.

(d) The Committee shall meet annually prior to the regular session of the Commission and whenever it deems it desirable to do so for the proper discharge of its responsibilities. It may invite for this purpose UN bodies and agencies and regional organizations to attend its meetings.

(e) The Committee, shall be guided as appropriate by the reports of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and relevant reports of other UN bodies.

6. Requests the Executive Secretary to consult with the heads of the UN bodies and agencies maintaining programmes in the region with a view to strengthening arrangements aimed at improved co-operation and co-ordination of activities carried out or sponsored by the UN system in the region, particularly in the context of the preparation of the respective programmes of work and medium-term Plans of the bodies involved.

7. Requests the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its 10th session on the implementation of this resolution.

Financial Implications of the
Draft Resolution on the ECWA Medium-term Plan
for the period 1984-1989
(E/ECWA/IX/L8), Annex 2

1. Temporary assistance for meetings \$ 20,000 1/

1/ Estimate based on interpretation costs for two meetings during the biennium 1982-1983.