



7518

ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA

16 AUG 1983

LIBRARY

Distr.
GENERAL
E/ECWA/170
17 March 1983
ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Tenth session

7-11 May 1983

Baghdad, Iraq

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Report of the Executive Secretary

83-0209

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1-2	1
I. Research studies, publications meetings and advisory services	3-11	1
II. Institutional support	12-13	6
III. Regional arrangements	14-14	7
IV. Interregional co-operation	15-19	7

1. Economic and technical co-operation among developing countries (ECDC/TCDC) as a means for international and regional socio-economic development and integration is a fundamental aspect of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) which has been drawing increased attention at the national, regional and international levels. The recent regional seminar on TCDC organized by UNDP in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific and the Government of India (23-26 April 1982, New Delhi) reaffirmed that TCDC activities should focus on collective self-reliance and interdependence based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit. In this seminar, attention was also drawn to the TCDC recommendations of the Caracas high-level conference on ECDC. The seminar stressed the need for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of these recommendations in order to determine the extent of current technical co-operation among developing countries and its future potential.

2. Recognizing the important role of ECDC/TCDC activities in the process of economic integration of the ECWA region and pursuant to the pertinent resolutions of the General Assembly, which took account of the recommendations of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and of the relevant resolutions of the Commission, the ECWA secretariat has taken major steps to strengthen the co-ordination function of its TCDC programme within and outside the ECWA region. ECWA's activities during 1982 relating to economic and technical co-operation among developing countries are summarized below.

I. RESEARCH STUDIES, PUBLICATIONS, MEETINGS AND ADVISORY SERVICES

3. The ECWA secretariat considers relevant research, meetings, publications and extention of useful advisory services to the ECWA countries essential for promoting co-operation among developing countries. The major emphasis of such promotional, operational and supporting ECDC/TCDC activities is to open the way to regional horizontal or south-south interdependence i.e. between regions and between developing countries from different geographical areas so that these countries are able to benefit from each others experiences, utilize their existing capabilities and develop new ones for their mutual advantage.

A. Research and studies

4. In accordance with its resolution 105(VIII) ECWA's secretariat carried out a number of research activities during 1982 with an emphasis on their ECDC/TCDC components. For instance, in the energy programme the basic philosophy has been to include the theme of co-operation among ECWA countries in studies of energy-related fields. In the project formulation and implementation of the energy programme as well as in the study on energy conservation ECWA has made recommendations on such technical questions as manpower planning, skilled labour and training with the proviso that the promotion of technical co-operation among member countries of ECWA should be central to the whole idea of economic integration. Similarly, the study on the integration of electric grids in the ECWA region which is in preparation aims at promoting technical know-how in this field among its members. A joint project activity between ECWA and the European Economic Community (EEC) on energy methodologies suitable for the ECWA region has passed the stage of formulation and negotiations and is reaching the stage of implementation.

5. From the point of view of programme project co-ordination, ECWA has been in contact with regional and United Nations organizations having regional programmes with ECDC/TCDC components with a view to enhancing co-operation in its programme/project activities for the benefit of developing countries. ECWA presented two technical papers to the Second Arab Energy Conference (March 1982, Doha, Qatar) which focus on the co-operative aspects of the utilization of new and renewable sources of energy and the prospect of Arab energy to the year 2000. These papers are ready to be circulated for comment in the ECWA region in order to advance the concept of co-operation among developing countries in the field of energy.

6. A case study was prepared and circulated to member States for comment on the role of consulting and engineering design (CED) in the development process. The study analyses problems encountered in one member state owing to the participation of local versus foreign technological capabilities in the initiation

of selected industrial and infrastructural projects. Furthermore, information on the operation of joint ventures in the ECWA region has been compiled, and efforts by the countries of ECWA to promote regional co-operation and integration were reviewed and a report completed for publication. In this connection, the first draft of a study on trade and economic relations between the countries of ECWA and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, which considers the co-operation mechanisms, including the legal and institutional framework, was completed. In the area of social development a study was completed which assesses the status and role of women in rural areas of the ECWA region and which emphasizes co-operative aspects of human resources development such as female participation in the development process, education and employment. In the field of tourism, a study was completed on tourism development potential in the southern ECWA subregion which stressed the importance of co-operation among ECWA countries. In this connection, some steps have been taken towards the publication of a bibliographic note on tourism development planning. The analysis of the role of transnational corporations in the development process in the ECWA region was the subject of a research study entitled "technology and management dependence in the oil industry in the ECWA countries". The study's recommendations are concerned with the strengthening of the bargaining power of the ECWA countries vis-a-vis transnational corporations by means of co-operation and co-ordination. In the field of agriculture and food security several studies were completed including the analysis of long-term agricultural development alternatives in the Syrian Arab Republic, and the study on agricultural development and plan analysis of Saudi Arabia. A study on agricultural price policy in Iraq is in progress. Also, research work was initiated on a study of the iron and steel industry, consumer durables and petrochemical industries and another one on food strategy and food security in Saudi Arabia. A major intent of these studies is to raise awareness among ECWA countries about the impact of co-operative activities on the level of productivity and efficiency in various areas of economic development.

B. Publications

7. ECWA closely monitored the implementation of a major TCDC project formulated by ECWA with a contribution from the Government of the Netherlands. The project entitled "Information support for promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries" was contracted to a consultancy. The objectives of this project are:

(a) to promote collective self-reliance among countries of the ECWA region by accelerating the development of closer links among themselves through TCDC action;

(b) to raise awareness about the potentialities and capabilities of ECWA member countries in various areas of ECDC/TCDC;

(c) to assist in strengthening communication and knowledge among developing countries regarding the scope and possibilities for technical co-operation. The project led to the publication of a directory in English, and an Arabic version of it is in preparation. The directory provides information on regional and national training institutes, research centres, specialized agencies, training programmes and consultancy services available in ECWA countries.

8. During the reporting period several publications appeared reflecting the ECDC/TCDC dimensions of ECWA work. For instance, the fifth issue of ECWA/FAO annual bulletin Agriculture and Development reviewed trends in agricultural production and trade. Country profiles on the least developed countries focused on the analysis of the human settlements situation in the countries. Similarly, in the field of population development and policies, two publications appeared dealing respectively with the problems of population and development in the Middle East and international migration in the Arab world. These publications and the 21st issue of the Population Bulletin, which provides information on the educational aspects of population in the ECWA region, have already been completed both in Arabic and English and widely distributed.

C. Meetings, workshops and seminars

9. Activities continued for the preparation of a workshop on strategic problems of importing technology for industrial investment, which was a part of a larger project financed jointly by ECWA and the United Nations Financing System for Science and Technology for Development entitled "Regional training programme for the development of technological capabilities in petroleum-based industries". From ECWA countries 27 experts are expected to participate in the workshop, and while meeting with experts from other countries and among themselves, to co-operate in decision-making concerning investments in technology. ECWA also participated in a seminar organized by the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils on scientific information and horizontal transfer of technology. The seminar was concerned with the promotion of a Regional Arab Centre for the transfer and development of technology in the light of the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the Arab world.

10. ECWA organized and actively participated in several regional seminars, meetings and conferences which were conducted for the purpose of raising awareness in the area of ECDC/TCDC. These can be listed as follows:

(a) The Symposium on Plastic Technologies and Applications (11-15 December 1982, Amman);

(b) The joint ECWA/FSSTD Regional Training Programme for Development of Industrial Technological Capabilities in Petroleum-based Industries;

(c) The Yemen Second International Development Conference (17-20 April 1982, Sana'a);

(d) The First Inter-agency Consultations on the Follow-up to the Substantial New Programme of Action (24-28 May 1982, Geneva);

(e) Round Table Conference on Reconstruction and Development of Agriculture in Lebanon (11-13 January 1982) which was organized in co-operation with UNDP and ECWA;

(f) The first meeting of the Committee of Petrochemicals organized jointly with ECWA and UNIDO and

(g) The meeting of the Statistical Committee of the Council of Arab Economic Unity (19-21 September 1982, Amman).

D. Advisory services

11. ECWA extended advisory services to the ECWA countries in several areas. Examples include assistance in the area of human resources development to the government of the Democratic Yemen, industrial project identification and formulation to the Government of Jordan, financial development to the Government of the United Arab Emirates, household survey design and execution to the government of Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait. The manner in which ECWA's regional advisory services contribute to the process of development in the ECWA region is explained in detail in E/ECWA/162/Add.2.

II. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

12. In support of regional training and institution-building, ECWA as an executive agency provided assistance to the governments of the ECWA countries by following-up several United Nations agency-assisted projects. For the UNDP-supported household survey project ECWA advised several governments on the sample design for the demographic labour force, and the planning and execution of the household income and expenditures survey. Similarly, through UNFPA ILO and UNIDO assistance several projects were executed and relevant advice was given to various governments in the ECWA region on such important areas as manpower statistics, industrialization and mechanical engineering.

13. The expansion of recent development and trade in the ECWA region necessitated the expansion of maritime infrastructure (shipping and posts) calling for co-operation among ECWA member countries. However, the lack of adequate statistics and sufficient information has hampered the process of efficient planning and

implementation. In order to ensure an integrated and uniform approach to compiling maritime data in the region, the secretariat, jointly with UNCTAD, has formulated a preparatory assistance project. The objective of the project is to provide national authorities with a uniform system of information on maritime statistics.

III. REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

14. Pursuant to the pertinent resolutions of the Commission the ECWA secretariat continued to focus its attention on the co-operating and co-ordinating aspects of its work with regional organizations. The establishment of close relations between ECWA and other regional organizations and the strengthening of joint programme activities among them is a major agenda item of the Standing Committee for the Programme which is scheduled to meet from 7 to 9 May 1983, and which will review the ECWA work programme for 1984-1985. Its recommendations on the secretariat's proposals for developing new procedures and arrangements required for improving relations among regional organizations are expected to be adopted at the Commission's tenth session. Documents relevant to the meeting of the Standing Committee have already been circulated among regional public and private organizations for comment. The aim of such interaction is to promote better understanding of the underlying issues relating to economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, to provide a solid foundation for joint programming and planning in priority areas, and to enhance co-ordination and co-operation among them.

IV. INTERREGIONAL CO-OPERATION

15. ECWA continued consultations with other regional commissions in an effort to strengthen interregional activities. In the Meeting of the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions (8 November 1982) a consensus was reached that a major joint activity among the commissions be embarked upon under the title of "Promotion of interregional ECDC/TCDC and the role of regional commissions".

The focus of this activity would be on the promotion of trade among developing countries as a means of ~~diminishing~~ protectionist policies in developed countries. A joint position paper on this subject will be submitted for review to the next organizational session of the Economic and Social Council in spring 1983. In its contribution to the paper ECWA took the position that a correct approach to the promotion of interregional ECDC/TCDC co-operation would be to ask why trade as a major component of ECDC/TCDC has not been sufficiently expanded among developing countries, thus suggesting that the major issue is not interregional trade per se because such trade already exists to some extent, but rather the issue is how to eliminate obstacles to its expansion such as a narrow production base, concentration of exports on a few primary products, differences in stage of industrial development etc.

16. Similarly, negotiations between UNDP, UNCTAD, the global entities, and regional economic commissions as regional centres for socio-economic advancement continued with a view to strengthening the Commissions' position in the UNDP/UNCTAD Standing Committee for the promotion of economic and technical co-operation at the regional level so that regional commissions can take a much more active part in the ECDC/TCDC related policy-making issues regarding the identification, formulation and execution of regional ECDC/TCDC related projects. For the same reason, ECWA has proposed several guidelines under agenda item 6(d) of the Standing Committee for the Programme to be convened in Baghdad between 7-9 May 1983, designed to guide the secretariat to expand its programme relations with other United Nations agencies, particularly with those having regional activities with ECDC/TCDC components.

17. ECWA participated in and contributed to the seminar on TCDC for Asia and the Pacific region (23 April-1 May 1982). Representatives from various regions participating in this seminar appreciated the need for technical co-operation, discussed the objectives of TCDC, exchanged views and gave concrete examples of TCDC at the subregional, regional, interregional and global levels. These discussions are being studied for the purpose of determining their implications for expanding ECWA's ECDC/TCDC activities in co-operation with ESCAP and other regional commissions.

18. ECWA, jointly with other regional economic commissions, contributed to the UNDP Administrator's progress report for the third session (June 1983) of the High-Level Committee to Review the Implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for promoting and implementing TCDC. The second session of the High-Level Committee in its decision 2/3 requested inter alia that the Administrator prepare the progress report for the third session, according to the following terms of reference:

(a) Analytical review of the progress made in the implementation and promotion of TCDC;

(b) Practical information on potential sources of financing for TCDC from international institutions and organizations, including those within the United Nations development system, multilateral development banks and funds and government agencies of developed as well as developing countries;

(c) Information on the contribution that the network of UNDP offices in the developing countries has made in strengthening and promoting TCDC at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

19. Concerning these guide-lines ECWA has made especial efforts to improve upon its existing relations with various United Nations agencies and regional organizations and to develop new procedures to enhance such relations in order to satisfy the need for the identification of potential sources of funds as well as to prepare concise syntheses of ECWA's activities in the area of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries.