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Twenty-fourth Session
31 July - 11 August 1978
GENEVA

Report of the ACAST Regional Group for Western Asia
18 - 20 May 1978
Beirut - Lebanon

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF THE HUMANITIES

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The conference is held in a different city each year, and it is a great opportunity for scholars to meet and exchange ideas. The conference is also a great opportunity for students to attend and learn from the best scholars in the field.

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Introduction

1. The third regular meeting of the ACAST Regional Group for Western Asia was held in Beirut, Lebanon, during 18-20 May 1978. The meeting was opened by Mr. Khair El-Din Haseeb, Chief, Natural Resources, Science and Technology Division, ECWA, who welcomed the participants on behalf of the Executive Secretary of ECWA and pointed out that ECWA's team will act as the Secretariat of the meeting.

Election of Officers

(Agenda Item 1)

2. Dr. Essam Galal was unanimously elected Chairman of the Meeting. Mr. Anthony Tsou served as Rapporteur of the Meeting. Names of participants are given in Appendix A.

Adoption of the Agenda

(Agenda Item 2)

3. The provisional agenda was adopted. Item (4), "Regional Aspects of a harmonized Science and Technology Policy for Programmes within the UN System", was later dropped at the suggestion of Mr. V. Vasiliev, since this item will be discussed at the third session of ACAST Ad Hoc Working Group on Science and Technology Policy to be held in Paris, 22-26 May 1978. Appendix B contains the provisional agenda.

Comments and Advice on the Draft Regional UNCSTD Paper

(Agenda Item 3A)

4. The draft ECWA regional report for the forthcoming Second Regional Preparatory Meeting for UNCSTD was briefly presented. Detailed discussions of the report took place. Comments on the contents of the report were made in the following order:

General Comments:

5. It was pointed out that the report did not place enough emphasis on international co-operation in science and technology which might be considered as a basic function of the Conference. However, it was felt that the countries of the region have not taken the initiative in compiling data on over-pricing, licensing and restrictive practices associated with their international transactions, it is thus difficult to emphasize areas that have so far escaped the concern of the States in the region. As a form of co-operation, consultation among the countries of the region and the suppliers of hardware technology may be a forward step, but not for technological orientation purposes.

6. It was felt that the framework of the report need to be reorganized and it will be left for the ECWA secretariat to perform such a task later. Furthermore, it was suggested that a paragraph to place UNCSTD in perspective be added.

Objectives:

7. One participant felt that an important objective of the Conference is the mobilization and upgrading of government and non-government agencies involved or concerned with science and technology.

Issues:

8. The meeting noted that the issues concerning the turn-key approach and non-governmental regional co-operation need further elaboration.

The Regional characteristic

9. It was pointed out that the lack of national plans and indigenous tools to build up local capabilities in most countries of the region calls for further elaboration.

10. It was suggested that the presentation of the five subject areas should adopt a format where the basic parameters are utilized in analysis.

11. The subject of free technology drew more attention and thought of as an important component for development, hence the presentation need to be augmented.

12. In response to a comment regarding more in-depth analysis in conjunction with shortfalls of present systems, it was pointed out that national papers ought to dwell more on the obstacles facing the utilization of existing capacities, i.e., planning machineries, etc.

13. It was pointed out that many of the behaviour of the society regarding technology oriented thinking may be closely associated with the traditional schooling starting from the elementary level.

14. It was felt that the following topics be considered for recommendations at the national level: policy formulation; mandatory linkage between policy making and decision takers; public awareness and critical assessment of science and technology policies.

15. It was noted that a possible overlap may take place between the recommended Arab Registry for licences and the proposed Arab Regional Centre for the Transfer and Development of Technology. Clarification is needed.

16. More suggestions were given with respect to recommendations at the international level to cover other areas; aid and assistance; trade; investment; multi-national companies; transfer of appropriate technologies, consultations on a multi-national and/or bilateral basis.

Regional Contribution to preliminary UNCSTD programme of action
(Agenda Item 3B)

17. In discussing this topic, ACAST intention was expressed as being interested in soliciting regional views and ideas for further considerations by UNCSTD regional and preliminary meetings aside from the regional report. As for the role of ECWA, it was pointed out that ECWA has been pursuing a very extensive programme at national, regional and international levels by convening meetings and seminars and by organizing and preparing documents on the status of science and technology in the region, the establishment of a regional centre for the transfer and development of technology, etc. Other relevant activities will be followed by ECWA in the course of implementing its programme on science and technology during the next few months.

Involvement of regional non-governmental organizations
(Agenda Item 3C)

18. It was pointed out that regional scientific technological communities and relevant non-governmental organizations need to be identified first in order to be involved in the United Nations activities, particularly in the preparation for UNCSTD.

19. ECWA has been inviting a good number of concerned non-governmental and regional organizations to its meetings as observers and in a sense as participants. Many such organizations have responded. More of these organizations can be approached to solicit their opinions for a more active role during the forthcoming meetings.

"Regional Aspects of a harmonized Science and Technology
Policy for Programmes within the United Nations System"

(Agenda Item 4)

20. This item was dropped (See paragraph 3 of this report).

ECWA's Work Programme in Science and Technology for 1980-1983

(Agenda Item 5)

21. This item was introduced by a representative of the ECWA secretariat. The Group took note of the programme of work of ECWA in the field of science and technology for the period 1980-1983, as it is presented in the document No. 3. Because the programme should reflect the decisions of the ^{UNCSTD} Conference (1979) and of regional ^{UNCSTD} conference (July 1978) in particular, the Group decided to postpone the consideration of this item till the later stage when the regional recommendations to the Programme of Action of the Conference is finalized. A proposal was made that the Group might have an additional meeting to be convened by the ECWA secretariat to consider the ^{next} ECWA programme of work for 1980-1981 in the field of science and technology.

Preparations for the 24th Session of ACAST
(31 July - 11 Aug. 1978, Geneva)

(Agenda Item 6)

22. In his introduction to this item of the agenda, the representative of the Office for Science and Technology of the UN Secretariat stated that:

23. After the adoption of the provisional agenda for the 24th session of ACAST by the 23rd session of ACAST in November 1977, a number of events took place including the second session of the Preparatory Committee for UNCSTD, the fourth session of CSTD and first 1978 session of ECOSOC, decisions of which have an impact on the agenda of the 24th session of ACAST;

24. At the joint meeting of representatives of the Conference Secretariat and Office for Science and Technology, suggestions were made that:

- (i) item 3(d) of the mentioned provisional agenda "Elaboration of Harmonized UN Policy in the Field of Science and Technology", ought to be discussed not under the general heading of agenda item "Preparation of UNCSTD", but as a separate item of the agenda. The reason for suggesting this is because the elaboration of

harmonized UN policy in the field of science and technology is a question concerning not only the Conference preparations, but also a long standing request of ECOSOC and it should be discussed in the light of the recommendations on restructuring of the economic and social sector of UN system;

- (ii) item 5 of the mentioned provisional agenda, "World Plan of Action for the Application of Science and Technology to Development", ought to be withdrawn. Reason for suggesting this is because at the first 1978 session, ECOSOC made the recommendation to stop all activities relating to current revision of the World Plan of Action till the end of the Conference;
- (iii) During the 24th session, ACAST should consider and make recommendations on the following questions in light of decisions of the 2nd session of the Preparatory Committee; the 4th session of CSTD and the first 1978 session of ECOSOC:
 - the resolution 4(II) of the Preparatory Committee on the question of the obstacles, which may arise in the development, adaptation and application of science and technology for development of developing countries. This could be discussed under item 3(b) of the provisional agenda.
 - Recommendations on the organization and structure of "The Forum A" which is recommended to be held one week before the Conference. This could be considered under item 3(c).
 - Recommendations to the Conference Secretariat on preparation of preliminary draft of a Programme of Action of the Conference.

25. The Group took note of the information given on possible changes of the provisional agenda and decided to recommend to include in the agenda of the 24th session of the ACAST the following new items: "Future orientation of the work of the ACAST in the light of the Conference preparations and recommendations made on restructuring of economic and social sector on UN system".

26. The Group was informed that some elements in the biennial 1978/79 Science and Technology Work Programme of ECWA may bear relevance to the

provisional agenda of the 24th session of ACAST. Specifically, agenda item 6 "Research and Development on Non-Conventional Sources of Energy" and item 2 "Appropriate Technology". The biennial 78/79 Science and Technology Work Programme of ECWA will be sent to members of the Group and the work of ECWA in these areas could be taken into account during the discussion of these agenda items during the 24th session of ACAST.

Adoption of the Session Report

(Agenda Item 7)

27. A draft report highlighting the deliberations of the Meeting was approved and adopted..

Closure of the Meeting

28. Following closing speeches made by Dr. Galal on behalf of the participants and Mr. Haseeb on behalf of ECWA, the Chairman declared the meeting closed.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The 3rd ACAST/ECWA Meeting
18-20 May 1978, Beirut

The Regional Group of ACAST

Dr. Essam Galal
Mr. Wassek Chahid
Prof. Antoine Zahlan

United Nations Secretariat

Mr. V.N. Vasiliev	Deputy Director, Office for Science and Technology
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Economic Commission for Western Asia

Mr. Khair El-Din Haseeb	Chief, Natural Resources, Science and Technology Division
Mr. Tariq Al-Khudayri	Regional Adviser
Mr. Anthony Tsou	Scientific Affairs Officer
Miss Ban Khayyat	Research Assistant

APPENDIX B

Third ACAST/ECWA Meeting
18-20 May 1978
Beirut, Lebanon

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of Officers
2. Adoption of Agenda and Organization of work
3. Preparation for UNCSTD
 - 3.A Comments and advice on draft regional UNCSTD paper to be submitted to 2nd regional UNCSTD meeting (scheduled 10-14 July, Beirut).
 - 3.B Regional Contribution to preliminary UNCSTD Programme of Action
 - 3.C Involvement of regional non-governmental organizations and the scientific-technological community in the preparations for UNCSTD.
4. Regional Aspects of a harmonized science and technology policy for programmes within the UN system
5. ECWA's work programme in science and technology for 1980-1983
6. Preparation for the 24th session of ACAST (scheduled 31 July - 11 Aug. 78, Geneva)
7. Adoption of session report.

DOCUMENTS

1. For agenda item 3A - Draft Regional UNCSTD Paper.
2. For agenda item 4 - Report of ACAST (E/C.8/49) Dec. 20, 1977.
3. For agenda item 5 - Draft 1980-1983 Science and Technology Work Programme of ECWA.
4. For agenda item 5 - Programme of work in Science and Technology for 1980 to 1983 (ACAST/ECWA.III) April 3, 1978.
5. For agenda item 6 - ACAST Thirteenth Report (E/C.8/57) Dec. 19, 1977.

