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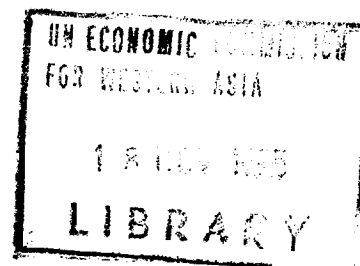
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CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Note of the Executive Secretary

85-0367

Note of the Executive Secretary

Co-operation among developing countries and regional organizations

On 5 August 1976 the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted by consensus resolution 2043 (LXI), which recognized that the regional commissions, with their experience in promoting regional and subregional co-operation, were the appropriate institutions within the United Nations to act as centres for the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of programmes for the promotion of interregional economic and technical co-operation in their respective regions, i.e. economic co-operation among developing countries (ECDC), and technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC).

Moreover, the Programme of Action adopted by the high-level Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries convened by the Group of 77 in Caracas, Venezuela, from 13 to 19 May 1981 stressed, among other things, the actual and potential complementarities existing among the developing countries themselves offered by ECDC as well as its interregional dimensions and underlined the various priority fields of action in the areas of trade, technology, food and agriculture, energy, raw materials, financing and industrialization.

The Caracas Programme of Action (CPA) now constitutes the broadest and most specific frame for the taking of concrete initiatives to make economic co-operation among the developing countries a reality. At the same time it reaffirms the importance of TCDC as an instrument for promoting and implementing ECDC within the framework of the recommendations contained in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, which urges the Governments of developing countries, with the assistance of organizations of the United Nations development system, in particular the regional commissions, to consider, inter alia, initiating joint programmes for the development and strengthening of interregional co-operation.

The implementation of the CPA is examined periodically by the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Co-ordination Committee of the Group of 77, which is now firmly pointing towards increasingly specific and concrete steps

for putting ECDC into practice in the priority spheres singled out by the CPA.

In view of the dismal global economic picture and the decline of resources made available to multilateral development institutions in addition to the economic and social determinants affecting directly and immediately all regions of the world, an increasingly important aspect of ECDC/TCDC co-operation will be the interregional application of regional experiences. ECOSOC, in its resolution 1983/66 of 29 July 1983, requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate steps to ensure co-operation and co-ordination in the preparation and implementation of relevant programmes and activities of the regional commissions for interregional economic and technical co-operation among developing countries.

Pursuant to the above resolution the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions met in Addis Ababa from 21 to 23 February 1985 with a view to identifying specific proposals where regional commissions could assist in the implementation of the CPA on TCDC and ECDC. The meeting was also attended by the Chairman of the Group of 77. A summary of the consensus reached during that meeting is given below.

At the outset, it is worth noting that the role of ECWA in ECDC/TCDC, like the rest of the other commissions, is essentially to promote, support and co-ordinate co-operative arrangements among countries of the region. Such activity is undertaken within the framework of the biennial programme budget and/or in the context of extrabudgetary operations which take place at the subregional, regional and interregional levels. Details on areas of ECWA involvement were presented to ECWA at its eleventh session under document E/ECWA/XI/12.

The participants in the meeting in Addis Ababa, referred to above, were mindful of the need to ensure the proposals for interregional co-operation should be as specific as possible and should give due attention to the financial and manpower constraints within the regional commissions; hence the following project ideas were proposed for interregional co-operation:

1. Trade facilitation and trade promotion

(a) Trade facilitation: to be carried out by regional commissions in co-operation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and other concerned agencies;

(b) Trade promotion: to be carried out between selected developing countries in respect of selected commodities in co-operation with UNCTAD, ITC and other concerned agencies;

(c) Afro-Arab Trade promotion: to be undertaken jointly between ECWA and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA);

(d) Trade informatics: this project idea deals with the consequences of international trade procedure with a view to promoting and harmonizing the use of new techniques and standardizing related data.

2. Transport and communications

This sector was found to be most suitable for inter-regional co-operation and a project was identified entitled: "Facilitation of international traffic among regions of the various Commissions".

3. Agriculture

The project identified relates to: (a) agriculture credit and saving systems; and (b) food security, in particular the early warning system.

4. Industry

The idea of developing a fertilizer project both at the interregional and inter-agency level was proposed.

5. Natural resources and energy

The two main sectors of interest for interregional co-operation identified under this item were mineral resource development and the development of new and renewable sources of energy. It was agreed that under the former a project idea should be proposed on the development of expertise aimed at enhancing the negotiating capacity of the developing countries, in particular, regarding international contracts and transfer of technology.

In the field of new and renewable sources of energy the development of biogas, solar and wind energy were identified as a basis for co-operation in these matters.

#### 6. Technology and informatics

The participants in the meeting at Addis Ababa were of the view that the technological information pilot system being financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the exchange of information and data on selected technological sectors should be linked up to all the regional commissions. With respect to informatics the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) indicated its willingness to assist in that field, particularly with regard to the implications of the rapid development of informatics in trade relationships between the various regions.

#### 7. Human settlements

The development of low cost housing construction material was selected as a candidate project for interregional co-operation.

#### 8. Social development

The idea of a project on employment opportunities in the rural areas, with particular reference to women and youth, was agreed upon.

The issue of resources available to the regional commissions for the implementation of the above projects was discussed and the following practical approaches were suggested:

(1) Promotion of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries should be given high priority ranking in the work programmes of regional commissions and resources redeployed to that effect;

(2) There should be increased utilization of UNDP resources at the country, regional, interregional and global levels for ECDC/TCDC projects and programmes;

(3) Concerted action was needed to increase the availability of extrabudgetary resources including those that might come from developing countries themselves;

(4) Continuous funding of ECDC/TCDC activities should be ensured by making them part of the work programmes and priorities;

(5) Effective channels of communications with other United Nations organizations, agencies and entities should be established for better resource maximization and utilization and to avoid duplication of efforts.

The participants in the Addis Ababa meeting recognized that the effective implementation of the ECDC/TCDC projects not only depended on the availability of financing, but also on the adequate collection and dissemination of information and on the political will in the countries concerned. It was also decided that the project ideas listed above would be the subject of consultation among regional commissions with a view to elaborating and formulating the relevant project documents indicating specific plans of action and a timetable for implementation. The Group of 77 will then be seized of the projects proposed. Concerned members of ECWA will be approached in the early stages of elaboration of any of the TCDC/ECDC projects for their consultation and involvement in implementation of the projects.