



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/42/674
21 October 1987

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-second session
Agenda items 21 and 115

CRITICAL ECONOMIC SITUATION IN AFRICA: UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF
ACTION FOR AFRICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT 1986-1990

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989

Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action
for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its twenty-seventh session, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination "recommended that the Secretary-General should prepare a report for submission to the General Assembly at its forty-second session, giving information on the measures he intended to take in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 to ensure that due consideration was given to the priority he had assigned to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development". 1/ The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

2. It should be recalled that in setting forth his programme budget policy for the biennium 1988-1989, the Secretary-General specifically called on programme managers to give priority attention to measures, as appropriate, to implement the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (General Assembly resolution S-13/2, annex). This basic policy orientation also guided the work of the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board in the preparation of the budget proposal for the biennium that has been submitted by the Secretary-General for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-second session. Since the information is already available, the present report will not review support for the implementation of the Programme of Action as reflected in 1988-1989 programme budget submission.

3. It should also be recalled that pursuant to General Assembly resolution S-13/2 of 1 June 1986, the Secretary-General has submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-second session a report on the implementation of the Programme of Action (A/42/560 and Corr.1) which covers, inter alia, the activities and programmes of the entities of the United Nations system. Again, it would not seem useful to duplicate that information in the present report.

4. Pursuant to the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, a communication was sent to all concerned entities of the United Nations, requesting the necessary information. The replies received to date are summarized below. Subsequent responses will be summarized in an addendum to the present report.

II. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

5. The proposals in the work programme of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for the biennium 1988-1989 have been formulated on the basis of the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa, the Final Act of Lagos (A/S-11/14, annexes I and II), Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 (A/40/666, annex I, declaration AHG/Decl.1(XI), annex) and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. The basic orientation of each of the ECA substantive programmes for the biennium 1988-1989 that directly reflect the priorities of the Programme of Action is described below.

Executive direction and management

6. The activities include preparation for and participation in meetings of the legislative organs of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and all other meetings organized by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations at the regional and subregional levels.

Programme 1. Food and agriculture

7. The salient areas focused on include improvement of agricultural development planning and policies; development of statistical data; conservation and expansion of forest and land resources; and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Programme of Action in the rural sector.

Programme 3. Development issues and policies

8. The activities planned on development issues and policies will include advisory services to countries, substantive support in development planning, plan preparation and evaluation and research in critical areas to assess and review social and economic development in African countries in the light of the objectives of the Programme of Action. Multisectoral planning models and short-term forecasting systems will be used in individual African countries to initiate short-term adjustment measures and to serve as an early-warning system. Continued in-depth studies of the economies of least developed countries will be undertaken to address critical areas. Research will also be conducted in areas of short-term and long-term finance. In addition, activities are planned for the strengthening of the economic co-operation and integration process within the main economic communities.

9. The subprogramme on education and training for development and the subprogramme on manpower and employment planning and policies will continue to focus on the strengthening of human resources planning and development institutions.

10. Other activities include organizing training courses for personnel of documentation centres in Africa and assisting information and documentation centres of the member countries by supplying them with computer hardware and software and other technical equipment.

Programme 4. Environment

11. This programme is aimed at strengthening technical co-operation among ECA member States in developing national environmental capabilities to implement measures related to combating desertification and alleviating the effects of drought.

Programme 5. Human settlements

12. Activities will focus on the establishment of human settlements policies for rural human resources development and the improvement of rural productivity.

Programme 6. Industrial development

13. Activities aim at assisting African countries in creating a self-reliant and self-sustaining industrial base with intrasectoral and intersectoral linkages and appropriate manpower capabilities. The activities will be carried out in close collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and OAU in the framework of the joint inter-secretariat committee.

Programme 7. International trade and development finance

14. The activities cover the preparation of technical publications and studies analysing the relevant issues in trade and development finance; provision of advisory services on trade policy and institutional arrangements; organization of meetings devoted to harmonization of Africa's position in international trade, monetary and financial negotiations; and training courses and seminars aimed at dissemination of information to facilitate the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for promoting trade and financial relations between developing countries.

Programme 8. Natural resources

15. The activities include the continuation of assistance to member States in the development of integrated policies for the planning and management of their natural resources; development of water resources in drought-affected areas; preparation of inventories of industrial minerals in selected countries; and support for institutions responsible for development of natural resources.

Programme 9. Energy and development

16. Major emphasis will be placed on the exploration, evaluation and development of energy resources in Africa; research, training and information; and assistance in institution-building.

Programme 10. Population

17. The areas covered by the programme are advisory services to member States in data analysis and utilization; formulation and implementation of population policies and programmes; and on-the-job and formal training. Research on population dynamics, population policies and their impact on socio-economic development, and population information dissemination will also continue to form an important component of the population programme during the biennium 1988-1989.

Programme 11. Public administration and finance

18. The subprogramme on public administration will address problems associated with the management of public enterprises, personnel training, the organization of central and local government institutions, and the management and administration of public services. Efforts will be made to strengthen institutions and increase the knowledge, skills and analytical capacity of key government personnel through advisory and consultative missions, training workshops and technical publications on specific issues and problems. The subprogramme on development of budgetary and

taxation systems will focus principally on effective and efficient management of public financial resources.

Programme 12. Science and technology

19. The programme aims at providing training to nationals to enable them to meet their needs, paying due attention to the promotion of subregional, regional and interregional co-operation.

Programme 13. Social development

20. The programme will focus on social development and increased productivity in rural areas. Evaluation studies, research and field missions will be undertaken to promote adoption of an integrated approach to self-reliant rural development with equity, dignity and participation. The activities will concentrate on research studies and policy recommendations on social trends and social development problems, particularly in the rural areas affected by drought, desertification and refugee problems. The activities related to the integration of women in development will concentrate on implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. 2/

Programme 14. Statistics

21. This programme is aimed at strengthening the national capacities of African Governments to collect, process and disseminate statistical information, with special focus on the data related to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Programme 15. Transport, communications and tourism

22. Outputs will include reports to the ECA Conference of Ministers; reports to and servicing of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning; advisory services to member States, organization of seminars and preparation of technical publications and technical support to intergovernmental organizations in the areas of general and multimodal transport, maritime transport, inland water transport and ports, land transport, air transport, tourism and communications.

Efforts to mobilize extrabudgetary resources

23. Available and expected resources in the regular budget and from extrabudgetary contributions are estimated to be insufficient to meet the financial requirements for proposed activities, which will necessitate a renewed effort by ECA to mobilize extrabudgetary resources. In particular, extrabudgetary resources will be essential for the implementation of the subprogrammes on integration of women in development and the programmes on statistics and the development of information systems, on science and technology and on industry.

III. UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

24. Since the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly and the adoption of the Programme of Action, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has continued to play an active role not only in responding to programme needs within its own specific human resource development mandate - in relation to the framework for action defined in the Programme of Action - but also in the Steering Committee and the Inter-Agency Task Force established to co-ordinate implementation of the Programme of Action. UNICEF is deeply committed, both at Headquarters and in the field, to support African Governments in the implementation of the Programme of Action in partnership with other United Nations agencies, donor Governments, non-governmental organizations and private sector groups.

25. The UNICEF medium-term plan for the period 1986-1990 ^{3/} stipulates that Africa will remain a priority for UNICEF for the rest of the century. UNICEF is responding to African concerns through appropriate adaptations of its global strategies, including increased attention to the widespread application of low-cost child-survival and development measures, in the context of progressive development of national primary health care institutions. In addition, UNICEF seeks to promote child development, including expanded relevant education, especially for girls. UNICEF programme co-operation also reflects an active concern about the impact of economic adjustment measures, which result in severe cut-backs in social expenditures, particularly affecting the most vulnerable groups of African societies.

26. The ramine and food shortages that have affected the continent over the past few years suggest that UNICEF concerns should include household food security. Specific measures such as the promotion of good nutritional practices will contribute to the protection of children. UNICEF also supports the integration of food programmes into the implementation of water-supply and sanitation programmes, which continue to be of particular importance in the region.

27. In September 1986, UNICEF held its first pan-African meeting at Dakar. At that meeting, UNICEF-supported programmes in Africa were reviewed, and priorities were reoriented and harmonized in consultation with African Governments and university researchers.

28. In the 21 country-programme recommendations approved at the 1986 and 1987 sessions of the Executive Board of UNICEF, long-term programmes (in most cases, covering five years) parallel to the countries' own national development plans were called for. This is a major departure from established practice, since in the past, the average country programme in Africa did not exceed 18 months. It will enable Governments and UNICEF to prepare more substantive proposals and provide more time for implementation, with emphasis on sustaining the programme and on long-term monitoring of performance and evaluation of achievements.

29. Detailed situation analyses of children and women by Governments and UNICEF have been an important element in the preparation of these country programmes. Such documents now exist for 38 countries, providing information on the specific situation of vulnerable groups for advocacy purposes, for social planning and for the setting of priorities in UNICEF-assisted projects.

30. In 1984, the Executive Board of UNICEF decided that Africa should be accorded priority for UNICEF programme and advocacy support, and approved expanded programmes for Africa and strengthened operational capacity. UNICEF has increased its expenditure in Africa by almost 50 per cent over the last two years, to a level more than double that of five years ago.

31. In addition to increased resource allocation, UNICEF has placed major emphasis on strengthening field structure organization and staffing capacity in Africa. On the basis of a comprehensive review by the secretariat, the Executive Board of UNICEF has decided since 1984 on a number of steps, chief among them the following:

(a) The upgrading of UNICEF offices to full country/area offices, headed by a representative, in 14 countries in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);

(b) The upgrading to sub-offices, with resident programme officers, of units in nine other countries;

(c) A doubling of the international and national staff of UNICEF in West Africa and a 40 per cent increase in eastern and southern Africa, in part by redeployment from UNICEF headquarters and other UNICEF localities and in part by enhanced recruitment;

(d) The reorganization of country/area responsibilities in a number of cases in order to improve implementation;

(e) Strengthened professional capabilities in programme management and communication areas;

(f) Increased staff training.

32. The majority of these measures were achieved within existing administrative budget resources, through redeployment and other efficiency measures. In addition, wherever possible, UNICEF sought to strengthen its field presence in such a way as also to strengthen its collaborative efforts with the United Nations system. As part of this effort, a number of initiatives are currently under way, including the work being done by UNICEF, UNDP, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the World Food Programme in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy regarding common premises and services.

33. As a result, there is now a UNICEF presence in all 43 countries with which UNICEF co-operates in Africa, except Gabon and the Seychelles. One half of all UNICEF representatives are now posted in Africa. More than 25 per cent of all UNICEF core posts and 35 per cent of all core posts at field duty stations are in Africa. About 45 per cent of all project personnel are working in Africa.

34. After a period of rapid staff expansion through redeployment and recruitment between 1984 and 1986, particularly in response to the emergency, the main thrust of UNICEF management in Africa during the remainder of this decade will be to consolidate its field and headquarters structures, redress remaining imbalances and improve efficiency and effectiveness.

35. Strictly speaking, all UNICEF resources are extrabudgetary, as funding is exclusively assured through voluntary contributions. However, efforts to mobilize additional support for Africa are reflected in the proposals for supplementary funding noted by the Executive Board at its 1987 session. Of particular relevance are the regional project for institutional strengthening and national capacity-building for child survival and development and the subregional project for southern Africa for monitoring and strengthening child-survival activities.

IV. WORLD FOOD COUNCIL

36. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/191 of 8 December 1986, the World Food Council (WFC) has attached high priority to the Programme of Action in its proposed work programme for the biennium 1988-1989. Its planned policy co-ordination activities include the convening of subregional, regional and global consultations, workshops and seminars designed to assist developing countries - notably African countries - in the preparation, financing and implementation of their national food strategies with the active participation of other United Nations agencies, and in strengthening South-South co-operation at the regional and interregional levels in the food and agriculture sector.

37. At the thirteenth ministerial session in June 1987, WFC Ministers stated that the Council's role during the biennium 1988-1989 would be to monitor, review and co-ordinate the food and food-related policies of various agencies, to assess and analyse their effects on hunger and malnutrition, and to provide appropriate advice to agencies and Governments. The WFC secretariat will act along these lines in its contribution to the relevant provision of the Programme of Action.

V. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

38. Following the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly, UNDP management systematically reviewed functions and operations in Africa so as to contribute best to the implementation of the Programme of Action. At Niamey on 7 July 1986, the Regional Bureau for Africa held a meeting of all UNDP resident representatives serving in the African region. The discussions included participants from the organizations and agencies of the United Nations development system and from African intergovernmental organizations. Agreement was reached on an action-oriented set of measures to make the best use of development resources entrusted to UNDP.

39. UNDP has taken steps to support a strong and coherent response by the United Nations system to implement the Programme of Action. UNDP is a member of the Steering Committee for follow-up of the Programme of Action and the Regional Director for Africa is acting as the Secretary of the Committee. UNDP has allocated \$304,000 towards the personnel and operating costs of the Steering Committee. The Regional Bureau for Africa has also seconded a post and staff member to work with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on African matters, including the follow-up of the Programme of Action. UNDP also approved \$300,000 for ECA execution of a programme of high-level meetings on development issues; these funds were used, *inter alia*, to help finance the International Conference on Africa held at Abuja, Nigeria, in June 1987.

40. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation has, in collaboration with UNDP, communicated with resident co-ordinators so that they will give priority to the Programme of Action within their responsibilities with respect to co-ordination of United Nations operational activities for development at the field level. Moreover, the resident representatives play the central role at the field level in supporting the African Governments in the round-table process and the national technical co-operation and assessment programme (NATCAP) exercises.

41. African Governments held consultations on the respective roles that they expected of the UNDP and the United Nations development system at a meeting of African Planning Ministers held from 13 to 15 October 1986 at Addis Ababa. The Ministers adopted resolutions by which they endorsed, inter alia, the elements of the proposed UNDP-financed regional programme of technical co-operation for 1987-1991; the round-table process, considering it the most suitable country-specific follow-up mechanism to Programme of Action for those Governments which opted for that process as a co-ordination mechanism; and the NATCAP exercises.

42. UNDP resources for Africa, totalling more than \$1.3 billion for the fourth programming cycle (1987-1991), are being used, in agreement with the recipient Governments, to support the implementation of the priorities and themes of the Programme of Action.

(a) During the past year, the Governing Council of UNDP has scrutinized and approved 40 African country programmes, including 30 in sub-Saharan Africa, taking into account both national priorities and the Programme of Action.

(b) The regional programme for sub-Saharan Africa, whose resources total nearly \$200 million, was approved in June 1987. It contains major initiatives that correspond directly to the themes of the Programme of Action: agricultural development and supporting development activities, human resources development and institutional capacity-building. Among the projects is a \$1.3 million project, to be executed by the World Bank in conjunction with ECA, to monitor development programmes and aid flows as a follow-up to the Programme of Action.

(c) Other resources under the responsibility of the Administrator of UNDP are being focused on the priority themes in the Programme of Action through a comprehensive and harmonized approach. These contributed resources include those designated by donors for (i) drought and desertification (United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office), (ii) small- and medium-scale capital assistance projects (United Nations Capital Development Fund), (iii) women's economic development (United Nations Development Fund for Women), (iv) science and technology (United Nations Fund for Science and Technology for Development), (v) volunteer assistance (United Nations Volunteers), and (vi) development projects for refugees and returnees.

(d) UNDP has taken measures to enlarge its ongoing role as a proven catalyst for cost-sharing of development projects and as a facilitator of other resource mobilization. Cost-sharing through UNDP has approximately tripled since 1983 in the African region.

43. UNDP has actively played a managerial and lead role, at the request of specific donors, in facilitating implementation of special programmes. At the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly, the Government of the Netherlands pledged f.12.5 million as a special contribution to strengthen public administration and management in the African region. To date, funds have been programmed in seven countries within the framework of the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management. In order to reinforce the effectiveness of the round-table process during the past year, UNDP committed not only its own resources but also nearly \$2 million from the Netherlands Trust Fund for the support of round tables. In addition, in December 1986 the Government of France signed an agreement with the Administrator establishing a trust fund to strengthen preparations for round-table activities, either conferences or in-country sectoral consultations. To strengthen the NATCAP process and extend it to interested African Governments, the Government of Finland pledged at the seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in July 1987 approximately \$2 million for UNDP-led NATCAP exercises.

44. The round-table process, for which UNDP serves as lead agency at the request of 18 sub-Saharan African Governments, has been confirmed as a vehicle for reaching joint agreements and for implementing and monitoring the Programme of Action at the country level. Since adoption of the Programme of Action, very successful round-table conferences were held for Cape Verde (October 1986), the Central African Republic (June 1987), and Niger (July 1987). Following careful preparations and constructive policy and strategy discussions, at these round-table conferences, donors announced financing intentions that more than covered the respective programmes requirements. Specific follow-up actions and a plan for future sectoral consultations were also agreed to. Since the adoption of the Programme of Action, other African countries that have opted for the round-table process have held in-country sectoral consultations or are preparing for future round-table activities.

45. UNDP, by joint agreement with the World Bank, is not only participating as a donor, but also providing input to consultative group meetings, particularly with respect to human resources development, economic management and technical assistance priority needs. It is agreed with the World Bank that for those countries which have requested NATCAPs, the latter will serve as a basis for this input to the consultative group meetings.

46. UNDP, in collaboration with African partners, has an important responsibility with respect to call in the Programme of Action for policies and actions intended to make the best use of national human resources and institutional capacity and to develop the African human resources capital required to meet priority needs. Another challenge cited in the Programme of Action is the need to make the best use of resources available for technical co-operation and to improve its effectiveness. In response, UNDP has conducted these exercises at the request of eight African Governments, and 10 NATCAPs are being launched by the end of 1987, in addition to the pilot NATCAPs already undertaken. Several specialized agencies, the World Bank and bilateral donors have been directly involved or have actively collaborated in pilot NATCAPs.

47. In May 1986, UNDP and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) reached an agreement to establish the African Project Development Facility. The Facility, which has become fully operational since adoption of the Programme of Action, will provide technical and consultancy services to African entrepreneurs and assist them in securing access to sources of equity and loan finance. The project is being financed under a cost-sharing agreement between UNDP (\$2.5 million), IFC (\$2 million), the African Development Bank (\$1 million) and bilateral sources (a total of more than \$10 million).

48. Efforts to promote South-South co-operation have been intensified since adoption of the Programme of Action. More than 40 current UNDP-supported projects in the African region have significant South-South co-operation objectives and/or components. UNDP has long been associated with technical co-operation among developing countries and has actively promoted it. However, in this area, UNDP is trying to make great strides in the extent to which intra-African economic co-operation among developing countries and technical co-operation among developing countries, as well as interregional technical co-operation among developing countries, will be implemented in the coming years. Several UNDP-financed projects in sub-Saharan Africa emphasize economic co-operation among developing countries through the strengthening of the programmes and capabilities of inter-country institutions. One recent South-South co-operation project of an interregional character, carried out in collaboration with the WFC, focused on food production, the highest priority in the Programme of Action. The Governments of China and India hosted workshops for African agricultural specialists; follow-up discussions were then held in Africa in early 1987. Specific arrangements have also been or are being worked out to foster technical co-operation among developing countries with other countries, such as Brazil, Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey.

VI. DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

49. Although the Department's proposed programme of work for the biennium 1988-1989 is essentially global in coverage, it is intended to provide, within this world-wide perspective, specific focus on the African situation and to highlight as much as possible the relevant information necessary to support the Programme of Action.

50. Under programme element 1.2 (policy modelling) of subprogramme 1 (development perspectives) of the programme on global development issues and policies, research will be undertaken, with special emphasis on Africa, to improve projections and policy analyses, including development of specialized models that can be readily harmonized with the LINK system to analyse such problems as capital flows, debt services, exchange rates and resource constraints. The country coverage from Africa will be expanded in the LINK system.

51. Under programme element 4.1 (interrelations between the world economy and economic and social development in Africa) of subprogramme 4 (developing countries: problems and prospects) of the same programme, a document will be published in the third quarter of 1989 on institutional aspects of policies for overall development

and their distributional and socio-economic impact, with particular reference to structural reform efforts in Africa.

52. In the World Economic Survey and the Report on the World Social Situation, greater emphasis and coverage will be given to the African situation. In the energy programme, subprogramme 2 (development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy) includes the monitoring, in particular, of the fuel wood crisis and the issue of energy supplies to the rural sector of developing countries, which are particularly relevant to the economic, social and environmental problems of Africa.

53. In the programme on analysis of world population, the biennial report on the monitoring of trends and policies will give detailed coverage of population issues in Africa. Similarly, the biennially revised assessment of population trends and prospects will provide detailed projections of population to the year 2025 for each country in Africa. The Department's Population Division, jointly with the Population Division of ECA, will undertake an in-depth study of population policies for all countries in Africa. In addition, a study of differentials in child mortality will be undertaken by the Department's Population Division, in association with ECA and the United Nations-sponsored Regional Institute for Population Studies of the University of Ghana, with case studies in Ghana, Kenya, and Lesotho.

54. In the world statistics programme, the population and housing census activity, which involves censuses in countries on a decennial basis, will provide assistance to many African countries to enable them to conduct their censuses. In the national household survey capability programme, which assists countries to build their national capability for collecting data for national policy purposes through household surveys, approximately half of the countries expected to participate are in the African region. The world statistics programme also includes a revision of the United Nations system of national accounts, which is aimed, inter alia, at improving the measurement of subsistence-level/informal activities in developing countries, including those of Africa. The Statistical Office has a significant data bank of economic and social statistics on the African countries; these data have been and will be made available for utilization in the preparation of reports in connection with the Programme of Action.

55. Finally, the Department will continue to provide staff resources to undertake ad hoc activities, such as the provision of substantive and technical support for the Advisory Group on Resources Flows for Africa, for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

VII. UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT)

56. The main theme of the Programme of Action is rural development, and in particular, the rehabilitation, improvement and development of agriculture. Accordingly, for its programme in Africa, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (UNCHS) is developing and implementing human settlements projects that are supportive of rural development and agriculture.

57. Apart from providing shelter and related infrastructure (schools, hospitals, sewerage, water supply, etc.) for the rural populations who are primarily engaged in agricultural activities, UNCHS technical co-operation projects are currently being designed to provide the rural populations with the infrastructure required for increased agricultural production, such as an adequate transportation distribution network (feeder roads, bridges, etc.) and storage facilities (granaries, etc.), and to promote the development of small and medium-sized towns in rural areas. Approximately 50 per cent of the Centre's total current technical assistance projects are located in the African region.

58. UNCHS is actively supporting African Governments in their efforts to identify and develop secondary centres (centres for marketing, food-processing, storage and other services), which are needed if the agricultural sector is to become increasingly productive. The first priority is to develop intersectoral programmes that will maximize the contribution of secondary centres in rural economies.

59. UNCHS is also extending assistance to a number of African research institutions and agencies engaged in the development of appropriate technologies for rural areas.

VIII. DEPARTMENT FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL QUESTIONS, REGIONAL CO-OPERATION, DECOLONIZATION AND TRUSTEESHIP OF THE UNITED NATIONS

60. While the Department assists in advising the Secretary-General mainly on specific questions of a political nature, it also participates actively in the various support measures called for in the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Under-Secretary-General serves on the Steering Committee established by the Secretary-General to organize and stimulate action by the United Nations to promote the effective implementation of the Programme of Action, under the chairmanship of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation.

61. The Programme of Action explicitly recognizes that the plight of 5 million refugees and returnees and the adverse effect that the refugee burden continues to have on the frail economies of host countries are matters of high priority for many African States. It calls for the accelerated implementation of the recommendations of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa and acceptance by the international community of burden-sharing in respect of the care and maintenance of refugees and the cost of finding lasting solutions to the continent's refugee problems. In accordance with the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (A/39/402, annex), the Department is responsible for monitoring the follow-up of the Conference, in consultation with OAU, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNDP. The Department also serves on the Steering Committee of the Conference, which is responsible for co-ordinating follow-up action.

62. The Department also serves as the focal point at United Nations Headquarters for co-operation with interregional, regional and subregional organizations, associations and conferences, particularly in Africa, such as OAU and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference.

63. In conformity with recommendation 22 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations concerning the special economic assistance programmes ^{4/} and the Secretary-General's recent decision to transfer the administration of special economic assistance programmes to UNDP, "except in cases of political sensitivity where other arrangements might be appropriate" (A/42/234 and Corr.1, para. 30 (h) (vi)), the Unit for Special Economic Assistance Programmes is being replaced by a unit for emergencies and special relief programmes. This reflects changes in responsibilities that include a reduced role in the implementation of special economic assistance programmes and increased responsibilities with regard to African emergency situations as well as in connection with the implementation of the Programme of Action.

64. The Department thus serves as the focal point at United Nations Headquarters for all African emergency-related questions involving inter-agency action of a complex nature, and facilitates the initial response of the Secretary-General to all requests on an ad hoc basis for assistance in emergency situations of political sensitivity. In this connection, since the closing of the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA) on 31 October 1986, the former Executive Co-ordinator of OEOA has exercised the functions of Director for Emergencies in Africa under the responsibility of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions. It was also decided that the African Emergency Task Force, composed of organizations of the system most concerned with emergency situations, should continue to function. This Task Force played an important role in the recent past, and maintaining its activities at the working level was judged essential. The Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions serves as Chairman of the Task Force at the executive-head level.

IX. DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS

65. The Department is fully involved in the implementation of the Programme of Action. For example, it participated actively in designing a concrete action plan within the framework of the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management in Africa (SAPAM). It participated in the SAPAM missions that identified the following priorities: (a) policy management, especially to improve the management of policies aimed at economic reform; (b) raising productivity in the public sector and in the productive sectors through the rationalization and introduction of procedures, systems and improved co-ordination; and (c) human resources development in the areas of manpower redeployment and training.

66. The Department has also been actively involved in the NATCAP exercises financed by UNDP in Africa. In addition, it has established a project in the field of development planning under its regular programme to strengthen the planning capabilities of the least developed countries of Africa.

X. UNITED NATIONS CENTRE ON TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

67. The United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations formulated its annual programme of assistance to African countries in line with the priorities outlined in the Programme of Action. The thrust of the Centre's programme of assistance to Africa is to improve the overall approach of African countries in their dealings with foreign investors, to develop appropriate national capabilities and to improve existing arrangements with transnational corporations in order to maximize the benefits accruing to the countries. The Centre's participation has been mainly in the following major areas of the Programme of Action:

(a) Improving the management of the economy. The Centre is assisting several African countries in reformulating guidelines for an institutional and legislative framework, including appropriate fiscal régimes pertaining to the participation of transnational corporations in the various sectors of their economies. This framework also reflects their desire for increased participation by the private sector in the national economy;

(b) Human resources development, planning and utilization. The Centre is implementing a special programme of assistance to the African Institute of Development Management and Administration involving the introduction of a curriculum covering issues relating to the operations and strategies of transnational corporations and appropriate policies, regulations and negotiation tactics that host countries should adopt;

(c) Rehabilitation and development of agriculture-related industries. The Centre is assisting several African countries involved in negotiations with transnational corporations in industrial projects with strategic spin-off benefits for agriculture, such as petroleum and energy;

(d) Subregional co-operation. The Centre is assisting the members of the major subregional grouping in Africa in their effort to develop common sectoral policies on issues of foreign investment and technology transfer.

XI. CENTRE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT VIENNA

68. African concerns were highlighted in the documentation submitted to the Commission for Social Development at its thirteenth session. Assistance is provided to African countries in developing comprehensive national policies and programmes concerning youth, aging and disabled persons. In this regard, the Centre has adopted an integrated approach with a special emphasis on policy-oriented research, the exchange and dissemination of information, advisory services and substantive operational activities utilizing the resources of the trust funds that exist in respect of youth, aging and disabled persons. In accordance with the guidance received from the General Assembly, priority in the allocation of trust fund resources is accorded to least developed countries, the majority of which are in Africa. The Centre will also endeavour to strengthen components of youth, aging and disabled persons in UNDP country programmes, with particular emphasis on least developed countries.

69. During the biennium 1986-1987, the Interregional Adviser on Youth Policies and Programmes, whose services are budgeted through the regular programmes of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, undertook missions to Mali, Rwanda and Senegal. Also, the United Nations Youth Fund has disbursed nearly \$98,000 to support 10 projects in the African region. Moreover, as indicated in the proposed programme budget for 1988-1989, the Centre will, inter alia, prepare a report to the Commission for Social Development on the situation of youth during the fourth quarter of 1988 (in which a significant section will describe the situation of African youth) and a technical publication on the situation and needs of marginal youth in the least developed countries, most of which are in the African region.

70. In 1988, the Centre will conduct a survey of Member States, including those in the African region. A comprehensive study on the world aging situation will be prepared, which will entail a description of the situation and needs of the aging in Africa. The first African Regional Conference on Aging, held at Dakar in December 1984, had invited Governments to establish an African gerontological society; as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/96 of 4 December 1986, the Centre is examining ways of assisting in this project, including through the Trust Fund for Aging. In the near future, the Government of Senegal will convene a working group to examine this proposal further. Between 1983 and 1986, the Trust Fund for Aging has assisted six projects related to policies and programmes on aging in Africa, providing \$131,635 as a resource commitment. In 1987, the Centre intends to organize, in co-operation with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, two missions for evaluation of national policies on aging in Africa.

71. The Centre provides technical assistance to the African Rehabilitation Institute at Harare, with focal points in five subregions of Africa. Advisory services were provided in the field of disability to Angola, Djibouti, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia and Uganda. The Global Meeting of Experts, held at Stockholm from 17 to 22 August 1987, was attended by five experts from the African region. Since 1984, the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Disabled Persons has disbursed \$543,495 to support 14 projects benefiting disabled persons in the African region, which amounts to nearly one third of the total projects approved and nearly one half of the resources disbursed.

72. The Centre has provided substantive and technical support for the creation of the African Regional Institute on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, with financial assistance from UNDP. The establishment of this Institute fills an urgent need and will increase the effectiveness of the entire network of United Nations institutes in this field. The activities of the Institute, which is temporarily located at the headquarters of ECA at Addis Ababa, are being carried out with the co-operation of ECA and OAU. The crime prevention and criminal justice requirements of countries of the region have started to be assessed; a pilot study for the collection of comprehensive crime statistics has been initiated; a framework for the Institute's information system has been established; supplementary sources of assistance have been explored; and the Institute's long-term work programme has been elaborated.

73. The Centre's work programme on the problems of rural women, the priority theme for the 1988 session of the Commission on the Status of Women, will include emphasis on the policy issues related to African women. Preparations regarding the priority theme for the 1989 session of the Commission, employment, will similarly contain particular reference to women in Africa. The work on the update of the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development includes a chapter on the effect of structural adjustment on women, which will be based on a series of consultations, seminars and case studies with particular emphasis on this issue as it affects women in Africa.

Notes

1/ A/42/16 (Part I) (to be issued in Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/42/16)), para. 138.

2/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

3/ E/ICEF/1987/3.

4/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/41/49), para. 37.
