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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION:  
RESTRUCTURING OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECTORS OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Implementation of section IV (Regional co-operation) of the  
annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197

Report of the Secretary-General

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 34/206 of 19 December 1979, on the implementation of section IV ("Structures for regional and interregional co-operation") of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its thirty-sixth session on restructuring measures taken pursuant to the relevant Assembly resolutions of concern to the regional commissions. 1/
2. An interim report on the implications of General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 33/202 for the regional commissions (A/35/546, hereafter referred to as the 1980 report), was submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. That report provided, in its introduction, a description of measures taken since 1978 with regard to decentralization to, and the strengthening of, the regional commissions: section II contained an analysis of the expanded functions devolving upon the regional commissions under the above-mentioned resolutions; and section III presented the immediate programme priorities of the regional commissions within the framework of the restructuring process.
3. The General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session took action on some of the most immediate requirements of the regional commissions as set out in section III of the report by approving, as an interim measure subject to review in the context of the preparation of the programme budget for 1982-1983, the allocation of a total of five professional posts to the regional commissions covering the developing regions (General Assembly decision 35/440). It also decided to invite the regional commissions "to consider further at their plenary sessions in 1981 the implications for their role and functions of General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 33/202, in the light, inter alia, of the observations and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, particularly paragraphs 76 and 79 thereof, and to report thereon, for action by the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, in the context of its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General called for under Assembly resolution 34/206 of 19 December 1979". In order to facilitate consideration of the issues raised in the Secretary-General's report, introductory notes, prepared by the respective secretariats, 2/ were submitted to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Economic Commission for Western Asia at their regular sessions in 1981. The present report should be read in conjunction with sections I and II of the 1980 report. The two documents, taken together, constitute an integral submission pursuant to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 34/206 and Assembly decision 35/440.

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1/ These include General Assembly resolutions 32/197 of 20 December 1977, 33/202 of 29 January 1978 and 34/206 of 19 December 1979.

2/ E/ESCAP/214; E/CEPAL/G.1174; E/CN.14/811; E/ECWA/125 and Add.1.

4. Bearing in mind that the restructuring process was initiated as "an integral part of the efforts required to ensure the equitable, full and effective participation of the developing countries in the formulation and application of all decisions within the United Nations system in the field of development and international economic co-operation" (General Assembly resolution 33/202, fourth paragraph of the preamble), the report concentrates on the role and functions of the regional commissions in the developing regions. Its main focus is on the legislative outcome of debates at the regular sessions of ESCAP, ECLA, ECA and ECWA in 1981 on the implications of the restructuring process, as reflected in the following resolutions:

(a) Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: resolution 219 (XXXVII), entitled "Expanding and strengthening the functions of the Commission in the context of the restructuring of the economic and social sector of the United Nations system"; 3/

(b) Economic Commission for Latin America: resolution 431 (XXIX), entitled "Decentralization of the economic and social activities of the United Nations"; 4/

(c) Economic Commission for Africa: resolution 427 (XVI), entitled "Implications of General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 33/202 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system for the regional commissions"; 5/

(d) Economic Commission for Western Asia: resolution 105 (VIII), entitled "Defining and strengthening the functions of the Commission within the context of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system". 6/

The operative parts of these resolutions appear in the annex to the present report.

## II. POLICY-MAKING AND CONSULTATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

### A. The regional commissions as main general development centres in their respective regions

5. In their resolutions on restructuring, all the regional commissions noted or endorsed the views expressed in the 1980 report concerning the role envisaged for the commissions in General Assembly resolution 32/197, particularly the implications of the provisions of that resolution designating the commissions as "the main general economic and social development centres in their respective regions" (A/35/546, paras. 13-20 and 76-79). In the 1980 report it had been noted that the regional commissions were, under the provisions of Assembly resolution 32/197,

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3/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1981, Supplement No. 12 (E/1981/52), chap. IV.

4/ Ibid., Supplement No. 16 (E/1981/56).

5/ Ibid., Supplement No. 14 (E/1981/54, chap. I).

6/ Ibid., Supplement No. 15 (E/1981/55, chap. IV).

called upon to perform, at the regional level, a range of policy-making and consultative functions akin to that entrusted, at the global level, to the central organs of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors. The report had emphasized in this context, the position of the regional commissions as an integral part of the Organization and had stressed the enhanced contribution which the commissions, drawing upon the authority vested in the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, could make to the effective performance by these organs of their over-all functions and responsibilities, and generally to the full exercise by the Organization of the role and functions envisaged for it in the resolutions on restructuring.

6. The endorsement by the General Assembly of the approaches outlined above, in the light of the views expressed by the regional commissions, would serve to give guidance and direction to the further development of the role and functions to be performed by the regional commissions, under the authority of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 33/202.

7. As far as secretariat functions are concerned, some commissions recommended that appropriate arrangements should be made, as rapidly as possible, to improve the distribution of tasks and responsibilities among the commissions and the competent global organizations of the United Nations system, particularly with a view to identifying those research and analysis functions that could be carried out most effectively at the regional level. 7/ For two programme sectors, such arrangements are in the process of implementation. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination decided at its twentieth session to review the distribution of tasks and responsibilities between Headquarters and the regional commissions in the fields of water and environment, as provided for by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1980/79 of 25 July 1980. 8/ At its twenty-first session CPC agreed to pursue consideration of those two areas at its next session, on the basis of a further report containing a detailed analysis of relevant mandates and activities of both Headquarters (including the United Nations Environment Programme) and the regional commissions. CPC also agreed that the Secretariat should, in the context of preparations for the medium-term plan 1984-1989, continue to review activities to determine whether tasks were being performed at appropriate levels. 9/

8. It is expected that this review of activities in the context of the preparation of the medium-term plan will be of assistance in an appropriate distribution of tasks and responsibilities within the Organization, particularly

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7/ ECLA resolution 431 (XIX), para. 9 (c) (ii); ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 8 (b); the following are also relevant: ECA resolution 427 (XVI), para. 2, and ECWA resolution 105 (VIII), paras. 4 and 5.

8/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/35/38), chap. VI; and chap. X, para. 364.

9/ Ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/36/38), chap. VII, sect. C). One commission made specific suggestions for the selection of programme areas deserving priority attention in future reviews (see ECWA resolution 105 (VIII), para. 5).

between the Secretariat at the centre and in the regions, taking into account the needs of the developing countries as expressed in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. In this context, the Secretary-General draws attention to the consultative arrangements concerning planning, budgeting and evaluation proposed to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session in connexion with the implementation of section VIII of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 (A/35/527 and Corr.1, paras. 16-20), which might serve to facilitate, at the secretariat level, the conduct of such reviews.

B. Co-ordination and co-operation at the regional level

9. All the regional commissions noted or endorsed the views contained in the 1980 report concerning the responsibilities of the regional commissions for co-ordination and the exercise of team leadership at the regional level (A/35/546, para. 7 (b)). 10/ The report placed particular emphasis on the involvement of the regional commissions at the intergovernmental level in the elaboration and regional application of global United Nations guidelines and priorities, and in the formulation of regional priorities 11/ for intercountry development co-operation.

10. These co-ordination functions of the regional commissions, as enhanced in the restructuring process, include responsibilities for the elaboration, at the regional level and under the authority of the General Assembly, of strategies, policies and priorities in respect of intercountry co-operation in economic, social and related fields; the specialized bodies and funding agencies might be invited to collaborate as appropriate with the regional commissions in the performance of these responsibilities.

11. The commissions' discussions on the institutional implications of their co-ordination mandates as defined above focused, inter alia, on measures to enhance inter-secretariat co-ordination within the United Nations system at the regional level as well as on the participation of their secretariats in global interagency co-ordination arrangements, particularly the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and its subsidiary machinery. 12/

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10/ See also ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 2; ECLA resolution 431 (XIX) para. 2 (b); and ECA resolution 427 (XVI), para. 8.

11/ Developments in this respect in so far as they relate to operational activities, including the role played by the regional commissions in connexion with the intergovernmental meetings organized by UNDP in collaboration with them to discuss priorities for intercountry programmes for the third programming cycle of UNDP, and the recommendations formulated in this context by one of the regional commissions at its plenary session in 1981, are dealt with in para. 24 below.

12/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 4; ECLA resolution 431 (XIX), para. 9 (a); ECA resolution 437 (XVI), paras. 5, 6 and 10; and ECWA resolution 105 (VIII), para. 3.

12. Consultations initiated at the secretariat level on these issues are continuing. In the same context, the commissions and the specialized bodies of the system that regularly schedule regional meetings might give renewed attention to possibilities of enhanced co-ordination at the intergovernmental level, including joint scheduling of regional meetings or effective prior consultations on the agenda of, and the substantive preparations for such meetings.

C. Participation in programme planning

13. Several commissions gave consideration to their role in the programme planning process. 13/ The main underlying concern was whether existing procedures governing the preparation and approval of the commissions' programmes of work and the involvement of the commissions in the elaboration of relevant sections of the programme budgets and medium-term plan reflected the expanded roles envisaged for the commissions in the restructuring process. The enhancement of their authority in this respect was considered important, particularly in regard to activities designed specifically to benefit regional members, so as to help narrow the distance between regional intergovernmental involvement in programme formulation on the one hand and programme approval on the other, and to contribute to a greater responsiveness of the planning process to regional priorities.

14. One commission attached special importance to an analysis of internal programme planning procedures with a view to ensuring the optimal involvement of member Governments in the planning process. To that end, it decided that the meeting of its Committee of the Whole to be held in 1982 would include among its main agenda items a review of the planning and programming process of the Commission. 14/

15. Consideration was furthermore given to the scope for further measures to harmonize programme formats and to synchronize programme cycles between the regional and global bodies of the United Nations. 15/

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13/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 7; ECLA resolution 431 (XIX), para. 2 (c) and ECWA resolution 105 (VIII), para. 2 (a).

14/ ECLA resolution 433 (XIX) entitled "Establishment of priorities in the CEPAL Programme of Work".

15/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 8 (a), and ECLA resolution 431 (XIX), paras. 9 (b) and (c). ESCAP had already initiated measures to this end when it decided at its thirty-sixth session on a number of changes in the periodicity of meetings of its intergovernmental substructure. ECLA, at a special session of its Committee of the Whole in November 1980, decided that the Commission should shift its biennial plenary sessions from odd to even years so as to bring its pattern of conferences into line with the two-year budget programming cycle introduced by the General Assembly.

D. Regional contributions to United Nations policy-making at the global level

16. All regional commissions reaffirmed their responsibility to contribute to the global policy-making processes of the Organization and emphasized the need for their full participation in the implementation of global decisions affecting them. 16/ One Commission recommended in this context that its Executive Secretary be enabled to address the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly on the economic and social conditions of the region as well as on the programmes of work and priorities of the commission. 17/
17. Some commissions focused on their role in the preparations for relevant consultations and negotiations taking place not only at the regional but also at the global level, and requested the General Assembly to provide for their effective participation in these preparations, paying due regard to the special needs of the developing countries. 18/
18. Action on the recommendations mentioned above would, inter alia, make provisions for a wider and more consistent involvement of the regional commissions in the preparation of intergovernmental consultations at the global level, including not only the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, but also ad hoc United Nations conferences and other global meetings, and provide for a wider involvement of the regional secretariats in supporting their member countries, particularly the developing member countries, in their preparations for such consultations. This role should find appropriate reflection in the programme planning process and in the preparation of resource requirements for relevant meetings and conferences.
19. The provision of effective follow-up of intergovernmental decisions taken at the global level will be facilitated by consultations between Headquarters and the secretariats of the regional commissions in the context of the consultative mechanism comprising the heads of all United Nations entities concerned, proposed by the Secretary-General to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. (A/35/527 and Corr.1, para. 13).

III. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND EXECUTING AGENCY STATUS

20. In reviewing the implications of their expanding operational responsibilities, the commissions focused on arrangements for improved interagency collaboration and on the need for continued support by the funding agencies. 19/

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16/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 3 (b); ECLA resolution 431 (XIX), para. 3; ECA resolution 427 (XVI), para. 4; and ECWA resolution 105 (VIII), para. 2.

17/ ECA resolution 427 (XVI), para. 4.

18/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 3 (b), and ECWA resolution 105 (VIII), para. 2

19/ For the latter, see ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 6 (b), and ECA resolution 427 (XVI), para. 7.

21. Thus, one commission recommended that its technical and operational expertise should be more fully drawn upon for the implementation of projects executed by the United Nations development system. This commission estimated that the technical expertise accumulated in its secretariat, particularly in the areas identified in the restructuring process, should be brought to bear on the execution of operational projects in the light of their substantive requirements. In the same context, the commission recommended a further development of the practice of formalizing interagency agreements for the execution of operational activities with a view to ensuring that the technical expertise of participating agencies on the one hand and the multisectoral approach and socio-economic perspective of the commission on the other will be brought to bear on the requirements of operational projects in a more integrated and mutually supportive manner. 20/

22. Another commission requested its Executive Secretary to maintain close liaison with the United Nations resident co-ordinators in its region, thus promoting communication and exchange of communication and information between the principal focal points of the United Nations system at the national and regional levels. 21/

23. It would be beneficial if the specialized agencies and regional commissions could intensify and expand co-operative practices and procedures so as to ensure mutually supportive and complementary inputs to externally financed technical co-operation projects, based on the specific development capabilities accumulated in the agency and regional secretariats.

24. Co-operation between the regional commissions and the United Nations Development Programme has continued to expand, as called for in the resolutions on restructuring, in relation to both the designation of the regional commissions as executing agents for appropriate UNDP-financed projects and the contribution of the commissions to the UNDP programming process. Pursuant to the relevant decisions of the UNDP Governing Council 22/ at its twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh sessions, the Economic and Social Council (resolution 1979/64 and 1980/65) and the General Assembly (resolution 34/206), relating to the collective involvement of Governments in the determination of priorities for intercountry programmes, three ad hoc intergovernmental meetings were organized by UNDP, in collaboration with the regional commissions, to discuss priorities for intercountry programmes for the third programming cycle of UNDP for, respectively, the Asian and Pacific (New Delhi, February 1981), Latin American (Montevideo, April 1981) and European (Geneva, May 1981) regions. Priorities for the intercountry programme for the African region were reviewed at a special meeting of ministers responsible for economic development

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20/ ECLA resolution 431 (XIX), para. 5.

21/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 9 (d).

22/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1979, Supplement No. 10 (E/1979/40), chap. XXI, decision 79/10; and ibid., 1980, Supplement No. 12 (E/1980/42/Rev.1), chap. XI, decision 80/9.



held under the auspices of ECA in 1980 while those for the Arab region were discussed at the regular sessions of 1981 of ECWA and ECA. At its regular session, one commission requested its Executive Secretary to consult the Administrator of UNDP with a view to continuing to associate the Commission at the intergovernmental level with the setting of priorities and the preparation of proposals for the intercountry programmes of UNDP in the region. 23/

25. These co-operative arrangements established between UNDP and the regional commissions as outlined above could be further developed in the programming and implementation of operational intercountry activities. To this end, the possibility could, inter alia, be explored of a greater utilization of the commissions' functional committees for the development of proposals for regional and subregional projects aimed at strengthening regional co-operation in sectors coming within their purview. The above measures should be accompanied by appropriate arrangements at the secretariat level including the strengthening of collaboration between the regional secretariats and the resident co-ordinators on matters of common concern.

#### IV. REGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

26. With respect to the promotion of co-operation among developing countries, the regional commissions emphasized three forms of supportive action:

(a) First, technical support, including the provision of advisory services to regional intercountry co-operative activities; 24/

(b) Secondly, expanding and strengthening economic and technical co-operation between developing regions, involving the regional commissions at both the intergovernmental and secretariat levels; 25/ it was observed in this context that additional resources may prove to be needed to meet the rapidly expanding range of opportunities for the promotion of interregional co-operation among developing countries; 26/

(c) Thirdly, intensification of co-operation with regional and subregional intergovernmental co-operation schemes outside the United Nations, particularly in the form of secretariat consultations aimed at the harmonization or co-ordination of relevant programmes. 27/

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23/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 6 (a).

24/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 9 (a).

25/ Ibid., paras. 9 (b) and (c); ECA resolution 427 (XVI), para. 9; and ECWA resolution 105 (VIII), para. 6.

26/ Inter alia, ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 10 (a).

27/ ECLA resolutions 431 (XIX), para. 9 (a), and 425 (XIX) (on institutional aspects) para. 1; ECWA resolution 97 (VIII) (on co-operation between ECWA AND specialized Arab and regional organizations), paras. 1 and 2.

27. The restructuring process identified the promotion of both technical and economic co-operation among developing countries as deserving special emphasis in the programmes of the regional commissions. The role of the commissions in this regard includes their responsibilities for expanded promotion, expanded consultations and joint programming. In the same context, particular support might be given to measures taken or contemplated by the regional commissions to enhance the responsiveness of their programme-planning and decision-making procedures to the requirements of regional and subregional economic integration and co-operation schemes and of relevant intergovernmental organizations within the regions. The regional commissions might be invited to provide full information on practical arrangements being made to foster co-operation between the regional commissions and such institutions.

#### V. FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS AND BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS

28. All regional commissions reiterated the need for the allocation of sufficient budgetary resources to enable them to carry out their expanded tasks and responsibilities. 28/

29. In paragraph 26 of the annex to its resolution 32/197, the General Assembly emphasized that adequate budgetary and financial provisions should be made for the regional commissions to enable them to discharge the responsibilities indicated in the relevant paragraphs of that annex. In this connexion, the Secretary-General has, in the proposed programme budget for 1982-1983 requested the approval on a permanent basis of the posts authorized provisionally for 1981 for the regional commissions at the thirty-fifth session of the Assembly. 29/ In the same context, some commissions recommended that renewed attention be given to the scope for further redeployment of resources. 30/ Similarly, the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session in 1981 requested the Assembly to consider accelerating the redeployment to the regional commissions of staff and financial resources commensurate with the substantive activities which are being transferred to them (resolution 1981/66, entitled "Regional co-operation", para. 3).

30. Discussions on the implications of the restructuring process held since the adoption of resolution 32/197 have served to identify a number of general considerations relevant to the determination of "adequate" levels of budgetary and financial provisions to the regional commissions: that the regular budget should provide for all essential commission functions, in particular their policy-making and consultative functions; that a determination of the adequacy of regular budget

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28/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 10 (a); ECLA resolution 431 (XIX), para. 8; ECA resolution 427 (XVI), para. 2; and ECWA resolution 105 (VIII), para. 4.

29/ Cf. General Assembly resolution 34/206, para. 2.

30/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 10 (c) and ECA resolution 427 (XVI), para. 3.

resources should result from a substantive assessment of the contribution expected from the commissions, both in the fulfilment of regional development needs and in support of global United Nations functions; and that possible short-term costs of strengthening the capacities of the regional commissions should be weighed against long-term benefits for the promotion of collective self-reliance in the developing regions (E/AC.51/1980/6, para. 34; A/35/546, para. 79). These considerations could be further examined with a view to providing guidelines to be taken into account in the consideration of future budgetary proposals relating to the regional commissions.

31. A full analysis of long-term budgetary implications of the restructuring process for the regional commissions has not yet been undertaken. In view of the expanding range and volume of programme activities urged upon the regional commissions by their member countries as well as by the United Nations at the global level, and taking into account prevailing over-all budgetary constraints, special arrangements may need to be explored to ensure appropriate funding of the commissions' work. These may, inter alia, include:

(a) Increased reliance on governmental contributions as well as local personnel and facilities, not only for the implementation of operational projects but also in the organization of appropriate regional and subregional meetings;

(b) The granting to the regional commissions of sufficient flexibility, including flexibility in the administration of their budgetary allocations, in order to enable them to respond to unforeseen requirements for the servicing and the provision of support to consultations of a non-recurrent nature at the regional level;

(c) Further efforts to link the activities of the regional commissions, particularly those of an operational nature, to intercountry programmes and projects for which the participating countries have made budgetary provision in their national budgets; as many operational projects sponsored by the regional commissions are designed as promotional or supportive activities, their impact will tend to be correspondingly larger if the respective programmes are sustained through bilateral efforts of the participating countries;

(d) Efforts to link more closely the allocation of extrabudgetary resources to the planning and priority-setting process in each commission; in this connexion one commission emphasized 31/ that adequate provision be made to promote compliance by donor countries and donor institutions with the programme priorities established by the commission at the intergovernmental level.

32. In addition, arrangements will be explored to strengthen co-operation and consultations between Headquarters and the commission secretariats in the preparation of statements of administrative and financial implications of programme decisions for consideration by the commissions, as well as in subsequent phases, in such a way as to enhance the capacity of the commissions to conduct meaningful

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31/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 5.

reviews of such implications, as provided for in the Financial Regulations of the United Nations, on the basis of full and authoritative statements, and to relate this process more closely with subsequent budgetary phases, involving the preparation by the competent units of budgetary submissions for review and action by the General Assembly.

## VI. STREAMLINING THE CONFERENCE AND SECRETARIAT STRUCTURES

33. Several regional commissions have in recent years initiated major changes in their conference structures. The measures introduced through 1980 by ESCAP and ECA have been reported elsewhere (A/35/546, paras. 68 and 71); the relevant recommendations of the ECLA Committee of the Whole are referred to in paragraph 14 above. In addition, one commission recommended that further measures would be initiated to rationalize and streamline its subsidiary machinery. 32/

34. Most rationalization measures taken so far involve the regular conference structures of the commissions. Such measures could now be extended to ad hoc meetings and other bodies operating under the aegis of the commissions in order to consider the scope for further streamlining and the extent to which the functions of these meetings and bodies could be absorbed by the regular conference structures of the commissions.

35. Some commissions also called for expanded collaboration with the specialized bodies of the United Nations system: 33/ this might, inter alia, involve the exchange of information and expertise for the preparation of documentation required for intergovernmental meetings.

36. Finally, recent developments in several commissions point to a growing concern on the part of member countries, particularly the developing member countries, to enhance the responsiveness of the conference structures of the commissions to the needs of particular sections of their membership. Thus, for example, the subregional intergovernmental bodies established under the auspices of some commissions are increasingly being called upon to play important roles in the planning and implementation of the respective work programmes. Within the regional commissions having both developed and developing member countries, there is increasing interest in arrangements which would enable the developing member countries to hold mutual consultations on major substantive and programme matters of particular concern to them. 34/

37. The regional commissions might be requested to provide full information on measures taken or contemplated by them in connexion with these issues. The bodies

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32/ Ibid., para. 11.

33/ ECLA resolution 431 (XIX), paras. 9 (a) and 9 (c) (i); ECA resolution 427 (XVI), paras. 8 and 10; and ECWA resolution 105 (VIII), para. 3.

34/ ESCAP resolution 219 (XXXVII), para. 3 (b); ECLA resolutions 425 (XIX), preambular paragraphs and para. 1, and 433 (XIX) on the establishment of priorities in the ECLA programme of work.

concerned, including the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination, might also be requested to pursue consideration of the scope for practical arrangements leading to increased collaboration between the regional commissions and the specialized bodies in the preparation of and the provision of support, to relevant intergovernmental meetings at the regional level, and to report thereon to the Assembly, through ECOSOC.

ANNEX

Extracts from resolutions adopted by regional commissions

A. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

- 219 (XXXVII). Expanding and strengthening the functions of the Commission in the context of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

...

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system entitled "Implications of General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 33/202 for the regional commissions", and of the Executive Secretary's note on the implications for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific;
2. Takes note also of the observations contained in paragraphs 13 to 20 and 76 to 79 of the Secretary-General's report;
3. Requests the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, with due regard to the observations contained in the Secretary-General's report and taking into account the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, to provide for effective participation of the regional commissions within their respective regions in the context of their inputs into the global policy-making processes of the competent global organs of the United Nations, and without prejudice to the respective functions of these organs:
  - (a) In the formulation of objectives of global programmes in the execution of which the regional commissions are expected to participate;
  - (b) In the preparations for negotiations at the global and the regional levels, with due regard to the pressing needs of the developing members and associate members of the regional commissions and in accordance with established United Nations practices in the matter;
4. Requests the Executive Secretary, in order to enhance co-ordination of activities and to avoid duplication of efforts in the field of socio-economic development undertaken by the United Nations system at the regional level, to consult with the heads of the organizations of the United Nations system maintaining regional programmes, and other subregional bodies within the region, with a view to identifying areas in which there may be a need to strengthen co-ordination and harmonization of programmes in various fields of interest to member Governments and, should such areas be identified, investigating the possibilities of setting up appropriate interagency arrangements, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/197;

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5. Urges donor countries, agencies and institutions to reflect the priorities established by the Commission, in responding to proposals and in extending assistance for intercountry activities of the Commission to be funded by them;

6. Requests the Executive Secretary to consult the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, with a view to:

(a) Continuing to associate the Commission at the intergovernmental level with the setting of priorities and preparation of proposals for the intercountry programmes of the United Nations Development Programme in the region;

(b) The Programme giving appropriate support to the Commission as executing agency in operational activities of the types defined in paragraph 23 of section IV of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197, having due regard to the priorities of the Commission and to the need to ensure full collaboration and co-ordination with the organizations of the United Nations system maintaining regional programmes and with subregional bodies within the region;

7. Requests the Executive Secretary to consult United Nations Headquarters on the delegation of the necessary authority to be provided to the Commission in respect of programme planning and co-ordination;

8. Requests the Executive Secretary to consult United Nations Headquarters in order to take measures in all appropriate sectors designed to contribute to:

(a) The synchronization of programme cycles and harmonization of programme formats between the regional commissions and the global United Nations bodies;

(b) The immediate analysis of the scope for improved distribution of tasks and responsibilities between the regional commissions and the global United Nations bodies, as called for by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its twentieth session;

9. Emphasizing the need to enhance the role of the regional commissions in the promotion of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries in the region, requests the Executive Secretary:

(a) To assist developing countries, at the request of the Governments concerned, in order to strengthen and enlarge economic and technical co-operation among the developing countries at the subregional, regional and interregional levels, in accordance with the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 32/197 and taking into account the relevant provisions of resolution 127 (V) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;

(b) To consult the executive secretaries of the other regional commissions with a view to strengthening and expanding the promotion of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries on an interregional basis;

(c) To consult further the executive secretaries in order to promote co-operative activities among the regional commissions;

(d) To maintain close liaison with the United Nations resident co-ordinators on interest expressed by individual developing countries in economic and technical co-operation activities;

10. Urges the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, in considering the budgetary needs of the regional commissions, to ensure that:

(a) Adequate budgetary and financial provision is made to enable the regional commissions effectively to discharge the responsibilities indicated in General Assembly resolution 32/197;

(b) Greater discretion is provided to the regional commissions with regard to decisions on the use of such funds so that they may be enabled to respond more quickly and more flexibly to the needs of their member Governments, with due respect for the authority of the General Assembly regarding the budgetary accountability of the Commission;

(c) Additional resources for the new functions delegated to the regional commissions are made available through corresponding adjustments in resources at United Nations Headquarters and/or in the global programmes;

11. Requests the Executive Secretary to take measures further to rationalize and streamline the subsidiary machinery of the Commission, in consultation with the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission;

12. Requests the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its thirty-eighth session on the implementation of the measures outlined in the present resolution, in the light of further pertinent decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

#### B. Economic Commission for Latin America

##### 431 (XIX). Decentralization of the economic and social activities of the United Nations

#### The Economic Commission for Latin America,

...

1. Notes with satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General on the implications of General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 33/202 for the regional commissions, a/ particularly paragraphs 13 to 20 and 76 to 79 thereof;

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a/ A/35/546.



2. Recognizes that the Commission's expanded and strengthened functions pursuant to the relevant provisions set forth in the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 include the following:

(a) Consultative and policy-making functions with regard to economic and social activities at the regional level under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;

(b) Leadership function in the joint efforts of the United Nations system for the development of regional co-operation and co-ordination and priority-setting in the field of economic and social development, in keeping with the functions of the United Nations in this respect and taking due account of the functions of the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies in specific sectoral fields;

(c) Involvement in decision-making concerning programme requirements and medium-term planning in respect of activities undertaken by the regional commissions and in the definition of objectives for the region covered by the medium-term plan;

(d) The function of executing agency for intersectoral, subregional, regional and interregional projects, in accordance with the relevant provisions set forth in General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 33/202, and for the promotion of co-operation among developing countries at the subregional, regional and interregional levels;

(e) Responsibility for the continuous exchange of information and experience among the various regional commissions, and identification of opportunities for economic co-operation, as a means of promoting interregional co-operation;

3. Urges the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, with due consideration for the observations contained in the report of the Secretary-General a/ and in the framework of the International Development Strategy for the 1980s, to take appropriate measures, as far as CEPAL is concerned, to enable the Commission to make a regional contribution to the world policy-making process of the competent bodies of the United Nations and to participate fully in the implementation at the regional level of the policy and programme decisions taken by those bodies at the world level, without prejudice to the specific functions incumbent upon them in their respective spheres of competence;

4. Notes that CEPAL is already acting as executing agency for a number of regional projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 33/202;

5. Exhorts the competent bodies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue and further develop the practice of formalizing interagency agreements with CEPAL whereby the Commission may be associated with them not merely in the implementation of certain intersectoral, subregional, regional and interregional projects for which those bodies and organizations have the status of

executing agencies in specific economic and social sectors, but also for country projects in specific areas in which the secretariat of the Commission has great installed technical capacity and an adequate operational structure, in particular for projects in the spheres of economic and social planning and of demography and population;

6. Notes that in 1980 a permanent post in the sphere of social development and a post of water resources expert were redeployed from United Nations Headquarters and assigned to the secretariat of the Commission pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 26 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197;

7. Likewise notes the decision taken by the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session to assign a temporary post to the secretariat of the Commission in the field of technical and economic co-operation among developing countries;

8. Urges the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, to ensure the allocation of sufficient budgetary resources to enable the secretariat of the Commission to carry out the functions expanded and strengthened in the restructuring process, and, in particular, to approve the temporary post mentioned above on a permanent basis and to redeploy sufficient resources to strengthen the biennial and medium-term planning process of the Commission's Programme of Work;

9. Requests the Executive Secretary:

(a) In order to expand the co-ordination of activities and avoid duplication of effort in the economic and social sectors, to initiate and continue consultations with the competent organizations of the United Nations system and with organizations such as the Latin American Economic System (SELA), the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE), the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), etc., which carry out programmes and projects in the region served by CEPAL, with a view to: (i) identifying areas in which it is necessary to strengthen the co-ordination and harmonization of programmes of interest to the Governments of the region; and (ii) examining the possibility of establishing appropriate arrangements;

(b) To work out with the Secretary-General of the United Nations appropriate arrangements for the effective participation of the Commission in the planning of the United Nations medium-term programmes;

(c) Likewise to work out with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with the competent bodies and organizations of the United Nations system appropriate arrangements for: (i) the synchronization of the programming cycles and the harmonization of programme formats between CEPAL, on the one hand, and the United Nations and its system of global organizations, on the other; and (ii) the identification, as rapidly as possible, of ways and means of improving the distribution of the tasks and responsibilities of the Commission and of the competent global organizations of the United Nations system with a view to strengthening those research and analysis functions which can be carried out most effectively at the regional level;

10. Likewise requests the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at the next session of the Committee of the Whole on the implementation of the measures contained in this resolution, in the light of the relevant decisions adopted by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council at their forthcoming sessions.

C. Economic Commission for Africa

427 (XVI). Implications of General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 33/202 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system for the regional commissions

(resolution adopted by ECA for action by the Economic and Social Council)

The Economic and Social Council,

...

1. Endorses the analysis contained in the report of the Secretary-General which reflects generally the role of the regional commissions in the United Nations system;

2. Requests the General Assembly to make available to the Economic Commission for Africa the necessary resources so as to enable it fully to play its role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as the main general economic and social development centre within the United Nations system for the African region;

3. Appeals to the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to decentralize the relevant activities and redeploy the associated manpower and financial resources to the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa so as to strengthen the capacity of the secretariat to respond effectively to the growing requests from African Member States particularly in relation to the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade;

4. Calls upon the Secretary-General to involve the regional commissions in all preparations for the meetings of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly and in particular to arrange for the executive secretaries to address the Second Committee on the economic and social conditions of their respective regions as well as on the programmes of work and priorities of their commissions;

5. Also calls upon the Secretary-General to ensure the involvement of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions in the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination by making them full members of that Committee;

6. Further calls upon the Secretary-General to ensure the involvement of the executive secretaries in such other machinery as might enable the regional commissions effectively to exercise their responsibilities for co-ordination at

/...

the regional level in accordance with the requirements of General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 33/202;

7. While congratulating the United Nations Development Programme for its financial contributions to the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa for the implementation of development projects, calls on the Administrator of that Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities to intensify their efforts to provide more resources to the Economic Commission for Africa so as to enable it to carry out more effectively its task as an executing agency of projects of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities in the African region;

8. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to intensify his efforts to strengthen the relations between the Commission and United Nations Headquarters on the one hand, and between the Commission and the specialized agencies and other organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system on the other, so as to achieve the objective of effective leadership and co-ordination within the United Nations system in the African region;

9. Calls upon the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to strengthen the relationship between the Commission and the other regional commissions with a view not only to strengthening interregional co-operation at the United Nations Secretariat level but also to enabling the regional commissions to play a greater role in South-South economic and technical co-operation;

10. Appeals to the Secretary-General and the heads of the specialized agencies and other bodies within the United Nations system as well as the other regional commissions to give the necessary support to the initiatives of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa so that the resources of the system may be properly co-ordinated so as to respond effectively to the development and economic growth needs of the African region.

D. Economic Commission for Western Asia

105 (VIII). Defining and strengthening the functions of the Commission within the context of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system

The Economic Commission for Western Asia,

...

1. Endorses the views expressed in the secretariat's report, particularly concerning those priority areas identified as a result of expanded responsibilities regarding the role and functions of the Commission within the process of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system;

/...

2. Calls upon the Economic and Social Council to request the General Assembly, having due regard to the observations contained in the Secretary-General's report and taking into account the role of the regional commissions as the main economic and social developing centres in their regions as well as the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, to provide for the effective participation of the regional commissions, within their respective regions and in the context of their inputs into the over-all policy-making processes of the competent global organs of the United Nations, and without prejudice to the respective functions of those organs, in:

(a) The formulation of the objectives of global programmes in the execution of which the regional commissions are expected to participate;

(b) The preparations for negotiations at the global and the regional levels, taking due account of the pressing needs of the developing countries members of the regional commissions and in accordance with established United Nations practices in these matters;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary to pursue consultations with heads of organizations of the United Nations system maintaining regional programmes, with a view to investigating the possibility of setting up appropriate interagency arrangements, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/197;

4. Calls also upon the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to provide as expeditiously as possible the resources required for carrying out the activities identified by the ECWA secretariat and resulting from the increased responsibilities of the Commission in the light of General Assembly resolution 32/197;

5. Requests further the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, in deciding on arrangements for the planning and co-ordination of global and regional programmes, including the distribution of tasks and responsibilities between the global and regional bodies, to take fully into account the priorities established for their respective regions by the regional commissions at their intergovernmental sessions;

6. Requests further the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Intensify and expand his efforts to promote regional co-operation and integration;

(b) Pursue consultations with the Executive Secretaries of the other regional commissions, with a view to strengthening economic and technical co-operation among developing countries at the interregional level;

7. Calls also upon the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its ninth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the present resolution.