



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
LIMITED

E/1999/L.38  
26 July 1999

Original: ENGLISH

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Substantive session of 1999  
Geneva, 5-30 July 1999  
Agenda item 4

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED  
AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED  
TO THE FOLLOWING THEME: DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA: IMPLEMENTATION  
AND COORDINATED FOLLOW-UP BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF  
INITIATIVES ON AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

Draft agreed conclusions submitted by the Vice-President of the Council,  
Mr. Alfonso Valdivieso (Colombia)

Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by  
the United Nations system of initiatives on African development

1. The economic recovery and development of Africa has been a priority concern for the United Nations since the mid-1980s when the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development <sup>1</sup> was launched. In addition, the United Nations-New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, <sup>2</sup> which followed in 1991, and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations-New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s combined with other activities in the areas of peacemaking and peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance to further emphasize the commitment of the international community and the United Nations to help create an enabling environment for development.

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<sup>1</sup>General Assembly resolution S-13/2, annex.

<sup>2</sup>General Assembly resolution 46/151, annex.

2. In considering the item entitled "Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development" during its coordination segment of 1999, the Economic and Social Council reaffirms the importance of United Nations participation in the development of Africa and underscores its intention to ensure that all United Nations initiatives on Africa and those of other multilateral and bilateral donors are maximized for the benefit of the African people.

3. The Council again welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318). The Council restates its strong support for the link made by the Secretary-General in his report between peace, democracy, human rights and development. The Council reiterates the importance of a stable and predictable political and economic environment for local and foreign investment and other international financial flows, which remain essential for Africa's economic and social development.

4. The Council takes note of the recent spurt of economic growth and development in Africa. While recognizing the fact that the recent gains made by African countries are grounded in economic and political reforms, the Council recognizes their fragility, particularly against the backdrop of still vastly underdeveloped human and institutional capacities, the recent volatility in the global financial system and its effect on the price of commodities exported by the region. Against this backdrop, the Council recognizes and appreciates the urgent need to sustain and accelerate the conditions for these recent gains towards eliminating poverty, raising of the standard of living of the population, preventing and reducing conflicts and integrating the economies of the region more closely into the global economy.

5. In order to consolidate and accelerate the gains made, the Council, while noting with concern the declining trend in official development assistance (ODA) to African countries and its impact on the countries of the region, also urges the international community to improve access to markets and to continue to assist African countries in making better use of existing market opportunities already available while facilitating foreign direct investment, ensuring adequate flows of ODA in tandem with agreed targets and providing deeper relief from external debt. In this context, the Council welcomes the recent decision of the seven major industrialized countries (Group of Seven) to improve the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)

Initiative and grant additional debt relief. The Council calls for a more concerted effort to achieve rapid progress towards faster and deeper debt relief under the HIPC Initiative and through other means to ensure a permanent exit from the unsustainable debt burden of the poorest countries. In this regard, the Council urges that any International Monetary Fund (IMF) gold reserve sales should be done in a limited and cautiously phased manner to minimize any adverse effect on African and other developing gold-producing countries. Furthermore, the Council welcomes the pledge by the Group of Seven to make substantial contributions to the HIPC trust fund to fund debt relief measures. Special attention should be given to post-conflict countries, including those adversely affected by conflicts in neighbouring countries and by natural disasters.

6. The Council notes the importance that African countries assign to the need for domestic reforms in order to ensure an adequate environment for development, to create relevant institutions and regulations for the promotion of democracy, good governance, political accountability and transparency, respect for human rights and the rule of law for the promotion of sustainable development. Further reforms related, inter alia, to the strengthening of administrative and institutional capacity and the functioning of the financial systems are needed. It is also necessary to engender a strong civil society which is able to help Governments take decisions with the active and full involvement of a broad spectrum of the population, including local groups, particularly women. At the same time, the Council urges that political will be sustained with renewed and concerted action.

7. The Council recognizes the efforts of the funds, programmes and organizations of the United Nations system to follow up and implement the recommendations contained in the report, recognizing that only one year has elapsed since the presentation of the report to the Security Council. In this regard, the Council calls on all the relevant components of the United Nations system to strengthen their support to African countries in their efforts in the area of governance, poverty eradication and social development, creating an enabling environment for the expansion of trade and investment and towards regional integration and cooperation.

8. The Council recognizes the existence of broad agreement on the priorities for African development as defined in the Cairo Agenda for Action and the United Nations-New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

It nevertheless recognizes the need to take note of the variety of country-specific situations and needs in the African region, which is also reflected in the variety of coordination mechanisms adopted by the United Nations system and host countries to ensure a harmonized and integrated response to national development challenges. Ranking of priorities for partnership should thus be based on an African-driven agenda and on ownership by the African countries, and should take place at the national and local levels in cooperation with development partners and civil society.

9. However, the Council recognizes the critical importance of a number of priorities to all African countries. The strengthening of education and health systems is critical to building the human resources necessary for tackling the challenges of globalization and sustainable human development. The Council takes note with concern that the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic constitutes a major threat to the economic and social development of many African countries. Appropriate national and international strategies are essential to prevent the spread and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS effectively. Therefore, the Council calls on the international community to support the efforts of the African Governments in the implementation of those strategies. In this regard, the Council especially welcomes the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, financed by the United Nations funds and programmes and the World Bank.

10. The Council notes the key role played by agriculture in the overall economic development of Africa and takes note of the various structural impediments in improving the supply capacity in general, including the marketing aspects for their products. The Council emphasizes that continued efforts are needed to enhance market access for products of export interest to Africa and to support the efforts of African economies at diversification and building of supply capacity. The Council calls on the international community to support broad-based trade liberalization and to address in the next round of multilateral negotiations all the pertinent issues which can hinder the ability of African economies to be more competitive.

11. The Council also recognizes the importance of industrial development, including the diversification of the mineral sector. The Council calls on all development partners to effectively support the implementation of the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa and the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization. The Council also urges all relevant components of the

United Nations system to work closely with Governments and the private sector in Africa to foster industrial production and development. Increased foreign direct investment is important for sustaining current growth rates and improving trade flows that Africa needs to strengthen its investment in human and physical capital. In this context, the Council stresses the important role of the Governments in ensuring a sound and conducive environment for the growth of the private sector.

12. The Council notes that the development of technology in Africa has lagged behind other regions of the world. Recognizing its importance, especially information technology, in creating new poles of growth, the Council therefore calls on the international community to effectively support the strengthening of the structures for technology development and urges Governments and international development institutions to facilitate the transfer of technology, particularly privately owned technologies, especially to the least developed African countries, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights, as affirmed in the annex to General Assembly resolution S/19-2 of 28 June 1997.

13. The Council stresses the importance of various programmes and initiatives which are being undertaken by the United Nations, bilateral donors and multilateral institutions in mobilizing the efforts of the international community for the development of Africa. While welcoming those various initiatives, the Council believes that more effective coordination and harmonization of the implementation of all initiatives, better funding and stronger ownership by recipient countries will enhance the attainment of sustainable development of Africa.

14. The Council requests the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as other multilateral and regional organizations and bilateral donors, to collaborate with national Governments and among themselves, in order to ensure consistency of the various coordination mechanisms, to create synergy, avoid duplication and contradictions and simplify, as appropriate, modalities and procedures required for the functioning of those mechanisms. At the same time, the role of the different stakeholders, namely, Governments, parliaments and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the implementation of various programmes and initiatives needs to be clearly recognized and defined.

15. The Council reaffirms that national development strategies should form the basis and framework for overall coordination. The Council recognizes the need to develop, under the leadership of the recipient country, country-specific comprehensive coordination mechanisms to enhance overall development programme ownership by African countries. In this regard, the enhancement of ownership in recipient countries should be facilitated through efforts by members of the Resident Coordinator system and other external partners in development to build capacity in recipient countries to set their own strategies and to coordinate programmes themselves, including hosting consultative group meetings, where appropriate.

16. The Council recognizes in this regard that the Bretton Woods institutions are increasingly involved in the promotion of the development of Africa. The Council welcomes the World Bank Special Programme of Assistance for Africa and the recent programme for the Partnership for Capacity-Building in Africa, to be implemented jointly by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. The Council also recognizes the efforts of the Bretton Woods institutions to enhance field-level coordination through mechanisms such as consultative group meetings, and programming instruments and initiatives such as the country assistance strategies, the policy framework papers and the recently introduced Comprehensive Development Framework in interested countries.

17. The Council recognizes as well the importance of recent United Nations programming and coordination mechanisms aimed at increasing the effectiveness of United Nations activities at the field level, such as the common country assessment, and the effective role that could be played by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. In view of these various United Nations system efforts, the Council considers it important for the organizations of the United Nations system to try to build coherence among these various initiatives and, to the extent possible, to consolidate these initiatives through enhanced overall cooperation and collaboration, while taking into account their respective mandates.

18. The Council notes, however, that the ability of the United Nations system to play a catalytic role also requires stable, predictable and assured resource levels, in particular core resource levels, which are an essential

ingredient in the effective functioning of the United Nations system, and urges donor countries to give priority attention to increasing their core contributions.

19. The Council also calls for the strengthening of the existing coordination arrangements at the global and regional levels. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) should more effectively ensure that inter-agency consultations are consolidated to facilitate the coordination and harmonization of Africa-related initiatives. In addition, ACC should consider broadening the coverage of countries and the clusters of priority areas to reflect the original commitments in the United Nations-New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Also, the Council invites the Committee for Programme and Coordination to continue to enhance its effectiveness, particularly in regard to the coordinated follow-up and monitoring and evaluation of United Nations system programmes and initiatives for the development of Africa. It is important to further clarify the role played by the organizations of the United Nations system in support of the priority areas identified in various United Nations-sponsored initiatives to support Africa's overall development.

20. The Council also recognizes the existence of several non-United Nations initiatives designed to promote the development of Africa. The effective coordination and harmonization of these strategies and objectives with those of the United Nations system and the host countries will enhance the attainment of sustainable development in Africa. In that spirit, the Council welcomes the first annual regional coordination meeting of the United Nations system in Africa, convened at Nairobi in March 1999. In connection with possible future regional coordination meetings, the Council recommends that thematic consultations among all development partners be held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the involvement of the Organization of African Unity and African regional and subregional economic communities, including the African Economic Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Arab Maghreb Union. In this regard, the Council calls on African countries and their development partners to organize selected thematic consultations at the country level in an effort to better coordinate and harmonize the implementation of the programmes and

initiatives for Africa. During these consultations, common priorities at the policy and operational levels should be discussed with a view to encouraging donor agencies and countries to streamline and rationalize their respective development assistance activities. The donor community also needs to better coordinate its own development assistance strategies so as not to place undue burdens on the capacity of African countries to implement their own national development programmes.

21. The Council further recognizes the importance of regional integration projects and encourages the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as other multilateral and regional organizations and bilateral donors to support them.

22. The Council recommends that a linkage should be established between the discussion and conclusions on coordination and harmonization reached at the present coordination segment with the preparatory work for the Council's high-level segment on African development, to be scheduled before 2002, and the final review of the United Nations-New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s that will occur that same year. To this end, the Council requests the Secretary-General to commission an independent evaluation of the performance of the New Agenda, including its relationship with other relevant initiatives. Such evaluation should clearly show achievements and shortcomings in overall performance, particularly in regard to identified priority areas and in meeting agreed targets. The evaluation should also make recommendations for future action, including consideration of successor arrangements, and be completed with sufficient lead time for inclusion in the preparatory work of the final review of the New Agenda, scheduled to take place in 2002.

23. The Council further requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Council at its high-level segment on African development, to be scheduled before 2002, a report outlining, among other things, the progress achieved in strengthening African capacity to coordinate international development assistance at the country level and at the subregional and regional levels, and in developing country-specific as well as comprehensive coordination mechanisms. The report should also consider ways to improve coordination and harmonization among the various international initiatives established to assist Africa's development and, in particular, the possibilities for rationalizing the number of separate United Nations initiatives so as to



reduce duplication and overlap while maintaining the overall scope of agreed priorities and targets. The main focus of the report should be at the country level, but it should also take into account regional and global linkages, particularly in regard to coordination and harmonization.

24. The Council reaffirms that coordination and harmonization efforts of the various international initiatives to support Africa's overall development, particularly at the country level, should be designed under the leadership of recipient countries to ensure that African countries have ownership of their development programmes and the capacity to effectively coordinate international development efforts in a sustainable manner. Coordination and harmonization efforts should also add coherence among the various international initiatives established to provide assistance to Africa's overall development and utilize simple yet effective coordination mechanisms so as to alleviate the administrative and financial coordination burden on African Governments.

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