



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 May 2021

Original: English

2021 session

23 July 2020–22 July 2021

Agenda item 15

Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Summary

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields contains information on the resolutions and decisions adopted or endorsed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its thirty-eighth session, held virtually from 26 to 28 October 2020, the Economic Commission for Africa at its fifty-third session, held in Addis Ababa, in a hybrid in-person and online format, on 22 and 23 March 2021, the Economic Commission for Europe at its sixty-ninth session, held in Geneva on 20 and 21 April 2021, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-seventh session, held virtually from 26 to 29 April 2021. The full texts of the resolutions and decisions are available at www.regionalcommissions.org/our-work/regional-commissions-sessions-resolutions-and-decisions.



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I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council

Economic Commission for Europe

1. At its sixty-ninth session, held in Geneva on 20 and 21 April 2021, the Economic Commission for Europe adopted decisions F (69) on the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Recovery and Use from Abandoned Coal Mines and G (69) on the updated United Nations Framework Classification for Resources, on the basis of which the following draft decisions are submitted for action by the Economic and Social Council:

Draft decision I

Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Recovery and Use from Abandoned Coal Mines

The Economic and Social Council, noting that, at its sixty-ninth session, held on 20 and 21 April 2021, the Economic Commission for Europe endorsed the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Recovery and Use from Abandoned Coal Mines,¹ recommended that the Best Practice Guidance be disseminated widely, invited States Members of the United Nations, international organizations and the regional commissions to consider the possibility of taking appropriate measures to ensure the application of the Best Practice Guidance in countries worldwide, and proposed to the Council that it recommend the application of the Best Practice Guidance in countries worldwide, noting also that this proposal does not have financial implications, and recalling its decision 2011/222 of 25 July 2011, invites States Members of the United Nations, international organizations and the regional commissions to consider the possibility of taking appropriate measures to ensure the application of the Best Practice Guidance in countries worldwide.

Draft decision II

Updated United Nations Framework Classification for Resources

The Economic and Social Council, noting that, at its sixty-ninth session, held on 20 and 21 April 2021, the Economic Commission for Europe endorsed the updated United Nations Framework Classification for Resources of 2019,² recommended that the updated Framework Classification be disseminated widely, invited States Members of the United Nations, international organizations and the regional commissions to consider the possibility of taking appropriate measures to ensure the application of the updated Framework Classification in countries worldwide, and proposed to the Council that it recommend the application of the updated Framework Classification worldwide, noting also that this proposal does not have financial implications, and recalling its decisions 1997/226 of 18 July 1997 and 2004/233 of 16 July 2004, invites States Members of the United Nations, international organizations and the regional commissions to consider the possibility of taking appropriate measures to ensure the application of the updated Framework Classification worldwide.

¹ *ECE Energy Series* No. 64 (document ECE/ENERGY/128), United Nations publication, 2020.

² *Ibid.*, No. 61 (document ECE/ENERGY/125), United Nations publication, 2020.

II. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

A. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

2. At its thirty-eighth session, held virtually from 26 to 28 October 2020, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean adopted a number of resolutions relating to its programme of work, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Resolution 737(XXXVIII)

San José Resolution

3. The Commission took note of the document entitled *Building a New Future: Transformative Recovery with Equality and Sustainability*, which complements the trilogy of equality, welcomed the integrated approach to development that had marked the thinking of the Commission since its inception, recognized the relevance of the issues examined, supported the general tenor of the conclusions contained in the document, and called upon the secretariat to widely disseminate the document and promote its review in the economic, academic, political, business and social spheres in the region, by means of national dialogues on the main issues covered, taking each country's national characteristics into account, and in international organizations concerned with economic development, in order to continue to foster more in-depth comparative analysis in respect of countries outside the region.

4. The Commission also instructed the secretariat to conduct studies and formulate public policy proposals in the countries, in close cooperation with their policymakers, with a view to supporting the building of national capacities for the achievement of sustainable development.

Resolution 738(XXXVIII)

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean calendar of conferences for the period 2021–2022

5. The Commission reaffirmed the decision to maintain the current intergovernmental structure and the existing pattern of meetings and approved its calendar of conferences for the period 2021–2022. It reaffirmed that its current conference servicing system had proved to be efficient in substantive and organizational terms, as well as cost-effective, and recommended that those tasks continue to be the responsibility of the Executive Secretary with a view to an ongoing and sustained improvement in those services.

6. The Commission also reaffirmed the importance of its continuing to be entrusted with the task of organizing and holding regional and subregional meetings to prepare for and follow up on world conferences of the United Nations in the economic, social and sustainable development fields.

Resolution 739(XXXVIII)

Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

7. The Commission reaffirmed the commitment of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean to mainstream a transformative gender perspective in all of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, indicators and implementation mechanisms, and to take action to fulfil the Goal on the empowerment of all women and girls. It recommended the redoubling of efforts to ensure that the indicators for monitoring the Goals reflected the inequalities between

men and women and could be used to design effective public policies for overcoming such inequalities.

8. The Commission highlighted the progress that it had made in implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy and emphasized the need to strengthen work in conjunction with Governments, economic policymakers and machineries for the advancement of women, as well as relevant civil society organizations. It acknowledged the role that it played in the work relating to gender statistics in the region, as well as in shedding light on gender affairs at the sessions of regional sectoral conferences, including those on population, social development and statistics, and encouraged the design and implementation of comprehensive public policies and programmes that integrate sustainable development, including a gender perspective, to respond to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

9. The Commission also called for active participation in the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Argentina in 2022, and requested that every effort be made to ensure the involvement of civil society in the session.

**Resolution 740(XXXVIII)
Support for the work of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for
Economic and Social Planning**

10. The Commission recognized the importance of public policy consistency for strengthening the processes and instruments of planning for development and public management for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. It requested the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning to maintain applied research, technical cooperation, advisory work and training to promote cross-sectoral and multilevel integration of the 2030 Agenda in planning for development.

11. The Commission reaffirmed that the Regular System of Government Financing was essential for the continuity of the Institute and the implementation of its programme of work, as a complement to the regular budget of the Commission, expressed concern at the critical level of resources reached by the Regular System and requested member States to take the measures necessary to make and regularize their contributions to the Institute. It requested the secretariat to make the arrangements necessary to ensure and strengthen the operation of the Institute within existing resources and to continue to seek extrabudgetary funds.

12. The Commission also reiterated the recommendation that the Institute should strengthen its capacity as the body responsible for training within the Commission system and should step up the activities it conducted in that area in collaboration with the subregional headquarters and divisions of the Commission and other international institutions.

**Resolution 741(XXXVIII)
Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin
America and the Caribbean**

13. The Commission reiterated the importance of the increasing consolidation of its Statistical Conference of the Americas as the intergovernmental body that coordinated regional and international statistical activities in Latin America and the Caribbean and fostered the strengthening of national statistical offices and national statistical systems of the countries of the region. It noted the adoption of a prioritized set of indicators for regional statistical follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean, as a regional framework of indicators that would help to prioritize measurement efforts and achieve the effective coordination of

horizontal, regional and international cooperation in order to close gaps in statistical capacities.

14. The Commission commended the launch of the regional portal on the Sustainable Development Goals (Sustainable Development Goal Gateway), developed in an inter-agency effort under the leadership of the Commission, as a key tool for supporting the countries in the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for strengthening the capacities to that end. It encouraged the countries to use the Gateway to promote collaborative work and horizontal cooperation for closing gaps in data availability for follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

15. The Commission also acknowledged the adoption of the generic law on official statistics for Latin America, which defined the national statistical office as the leading authority of the respective national statistical system and as a professionally independent body, and recognized it as a regional model for countries that were interested in formulating or reformulating the legal basis for the functioning of their national statistical systems and the production of official statistics. It expressed its satisfaction with the actions of the Knowledge Transfer Network to exchange experiences and recommendations relating to the challenges and solutions adopted by the countries of the region in the face of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and encouraged the continued consolidation of dissemination and exchange activities, inter alia, on how to ensure the continuity of statistical operations in emergency situations. It expressed its support for the joint declaration on the integration of statistical and geospatial information, in which the Governments of the region were urged to establish governance mechanisms that would better support the joint work of national statistical offices, national statistical systems and national mapping agencies through the establishment of national geostatistical frameworks.

Resolution 742(XXXVIII)

Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

16. The Commission, taking into account the additional challenges brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in terms of poverty and inequality, and acknowledging that such challenges required universal and comprehensive social protection systems to be strengthened, took note of the report on the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City from 1 to 3 October 2019, and of the adoption of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development. It recognized that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a universal and inclusive action plan based on the three dimensions of sustainable development and that the Regional Conference was one of the platforms in which to enhance synergies and pool efforts among the various stakeholders in sustainable development with a focus on the social dimension of sustainable development. The Commission requested that the secretariat support the ministries of social development and equivalent entities in the countries in identifying key policy areas that could be strengthened in accordance with the Regional Agenda, and also requested that the secretariat organize, maintain and systematically update the Observatory on Social Development, on the basis of official data provided by the countries.

Resolution 743(XXXVIII)

Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

17. The Commission renewed the countries' commitment to implementing and monitoring the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and recognized the contribution of the first regional report on the implementation of the

Montevideo Consensus to the global follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014. It also encouraged all member States to participate actively in the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in 2021, and to make every effort to send inclusive, diverse and pluralistic official delegations. The Commission urged all member States that had not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, and invited all the stakeholders to ensure its full implementation. It recognized the contribution of the United Nations Population Fund in support of the activities of the Regional Conference and requested the other funds, programmes and specialized agencies to make their contributions, as appropriate, to the activities to be carried out by the Conference.

18. The Commission also encouraged all member States to participate in the regional review of the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean and invited all the stakeholders to engage in this process.

Resolution 744(XXXVIII)

Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean

19. The Commission took note of the report of the first meeting of the countries signatory to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in San José on 11 and 12 October 2019. The Commission noted with appreciation the signature of the Regional Agreement by 24 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and its ratification by nine countries of the region, by 28 October 2020, as a contribution to sustainable development in its three dimensions, and invited all Latin American and Caribbean States to consider ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to the Regional Agreement, as appropriate, in accordance with its article 21, as soon as possible.

Resolution 745(XXXVIII)

Review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024

20. The Commission reiterated its invitation to member States to mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 into their national and sectoral development strategies at the national and regional levels, as well as its invitation to regional and subregional organizations to integrate the Vienna Programme of Action into their relevant programmes of work and to provide technical and financial support for its implementation. It once again encouraged the private sector to contribute to the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, including through transparent, effective and accountable public-private partnerships. The Commission took note with appreciation of the report of the midterm review meeting of Latin American countries preparatory to the comprehensive midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action, held in Santiago on 11 and 12 June 2019, and called upon the secretariat to continue to provide technical support to the region's landlocked developing countries in areas related to the Vienna Programme of Action, such as infrastructure investment, transport facilitation, logistical integration and logistics cost studies.

Resolution 746(XXXVIII)
Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee

21. The Commission reaffirmed its key role, particularly through its subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, in coordinating development support for the subregion, in collaboration with the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and through direct engagement with Caribbean development partners, including the Caribbean Community and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. It welcomed the role that it was mandated to play, particularly through its subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, in incorporating the needs of the small island developing States in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and urged the Executive Secretary to employ all measures necessary to ensure the full implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee at its twenty-eighth session, the recommendations formulated by the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee at its nineteenth meeting and the conclusions reached at the sixth meeting of the Caribbean Development Roundtable.

Resolution 747(XXXVIII)
Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean

22. The Commission, recognizing that, in the 15 years since its formal establishment in 2005, the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean had made significant contributions to a common vision for building an inclusive information society in the region, and emphasizing that digital technologies had been essential to the functioning of the economy and society during the crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, called upon all member States to participate in the seventh Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held virtually from 23 to 26 November 2020. It commended the joint efforts made by member States to strengthen regional collaboration on the information society with a view to identifying the advances achieved by Latin America and the Caribbean in the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. The Commission recognized the importance of rethinking the digital governance model within the framework of a digital welfare state that promotes universal access to information and communications technologies, protects the economic, social and labour rights of the population, repudiates the unauthorized collection and improper or unauthorized use of personal data, and fosters innovation and the diffusion of technology in the productive system, for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, and affirmed the need to promote public policies for this purpose.

23. The Commission also requested the secretariat to continue to work with the countries of the region in the implementation of and follow-up to decisions adopted at the seventh Ministerial Conference, especially with regard to the advisability and feasibility of advancing an agenda for the development of a regional digital market in close cooperation with stakeholders.

Resolution 748(XXXVIII)
Programme of work and priorities of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for 2022

24. The Commission adopted its programme of work for 2022 in its entirety, including its innovations and changes in the implementation strategies. It emphasized and welcomed the fact that the draft programme of work and priorities of the Commission system for 2022 reflected the alignment and adaptation of activities,

contents and modalities of the programme of work to the new requirements arising from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, including the accelerated modalities and priorities of the decade of action, as well as from other internationally agreed action plans and instruments. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to submit the proposed budget for implementing the activities described in the programme of work to the relevant United Nations bodies for their consideration.

25. The Commission expressed its concern at the recent liquidity crisis which had negatively affected the budgetary resources allocated to it to carry out the activities set forth in the programme of work. It took note with satisfaction of the report on the activities of the Commission, 2019, and underlined the wide-ranging outcomes achieved by the Commission in the different areas of work, commending especially its results-based approach and capacity to respond to the needs of the region.

26. The Commission also welcomed the efforts made by the Executive Secretary to strengthen accountability and evaluation with a view to enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of the Commission to the benefit of the region's development. It encouraged the Executive Secretary to continue the practice of convening the Committee of the Whole in the intervals between the sessions of the Commission, also with a view to strengthening and broadening the dialogue between member States and the secretariat on issues deemed to be relevant.

Resolution 749(XXXVIII)
Committee on South-South Cooperation

27. The Commission endorsed the Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, and requested the Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation to convene, with the support of the secretariat, an extraordinary meeting of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, outside the framework of the session of the Commission, as soon as possible and no later than the second half of 2021, in order to examine ways to enhance its functioning, including the need for institutional changes, with a view to providing recommendations to the Commission on those deliberations. The Commission also requested the Committee, in its capacity as a subsidiary body of the Commission, to report to the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development on its contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Resolution 750(XXXVIII)
Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

28. The Commission welcomed the ongoing efforts to implement a short-term regional cooperation agenda in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, based on science, technology, innovation and digital technologies. It reaffirmed the need for a coordinated joint effort and response from the science, technology, innovation and information and communications technology regional institutions to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic effectively and prepare for a sustainable recovery, and encouraged the prompt operationalization of the online platform of the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies, to share information about existing science, technology and innovation policies, initiatives and programmes.

B. Economic Commission for Africa

29. At the fifty-third session of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in Addis Ababa on 22 and 23 March 2021, in a hybrid format, with both in-person and online participation, the Commission adopted a ministerial statement on the theme “Africa’s sustainable industrialization and diversification in the digital era in the context of COVID-19”. It also adopted a number of resolutions relating to its programme of work, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Resolution 972 (LIII)

African Continental Free Trade Area

30. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, recognizing the development potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area as a vehicle for achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, called upon the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to support the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, including and in particular the ratification of the Agreement by those member States that had yet to do so, and urged it to provide technical support to its member States, the African Union Commission, the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and regional economic communities, in respect of agricultural development, industrialization, high-priority continental infrastructure projects, in particular those listed in Priority Action Plan II of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, digitalization, implementation of national strategies for the Free Trade Area, and phase II and phase III negotiations under the Free Trade Area.

31. The Conference of Ministers also requested the Commission to prepare a study on how to foster investments on the continent through the Free Trade Area, to be presented to member States in 2022 at the fifty-fourth session of the Conference of Ministers, and to continue to provide technical support to the secretariat of the Free Trade Area, including in developing and deploying digital trading systems and documentation.

Resolution 973 (LIII)

Data and statistics

32. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, acknowledging the urgency, in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, of transforming statistical production systems in African countries, so as to generate the data needed for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, and welcoming the creation of an African group on transformation and modernization of official statistics, urged partners and Governments to build strong monitoring systems and health information systems at the national and local levels. It called upon pan-African organizations and partners to foster synergies to support African countries in mitigating the impact of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, and called upon member States to renew their commitments to the conduct of population and housing censuses during the 2020 census round.

33. The Conference of Ministers also urged that steps be taken to ensure that key targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 were incorporated into national development plans. It urged that steps be taken to ensure that the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework was incorporated into national development plans

and fully contextualized at the regional level, and requested the Commission to continue its support for member States in strengthening the capacity of their statistical and data systems.

Resolution 974 (LIII)
Civil registration and vital statistics

34. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development urged African Governments to invest in creating fully functional legal identity systems and recommended that civil registration systems be recognized as essential government services that should continue even during emergencies, given their intrinsic value in upholding human rights, their administrative uses and their role in the production of vital statistics. It encouraged member States to digitize civil registration systems and processes and urged them to build interoperable registration systems based on a life-cycle approach.

35. The Conference of Ministers also called upon member States to establish closer links between civil registration authorities and the health-care sector so that vital events occurring in health-care institutions could be formally reported to civil registration authorities and called upon the Commission to continue to support member States in promoting civil registration in Africa.

Resolution 975 (LIII)
Sustainable industrialization and diversification of Africa in the digital era in the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic

36. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development encouraged member States to re-envisage industrialization and diversification, including by deepening their research and development capabilities, mainstreaming science, technology and innovation and formulating integrated green and climate-resilient growth and digitalization strategies within national development frameworks. It called upon member States to build better digital and new climate economy foundations and to upgrade digital middleware in Africa by adopting digital identity systems and supporting digital payment solutions and to invest in the continent's digital hardware by improving and ensuring affordable Internet coverage and energy access.

37. The Conference of Ministers also called upon the Commission to provide technical support to member States to leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area as a framework for the vertical integration of industries and supply chains and achieving the digitalization of Africa, to carry out a study to explore the prospects for and merits of establishing an African expert group on gas to advise member States on how to unlock the potential of gas in industrialization and the transition to clean energy, and to help member States to include digital expenditures in their national budgets.

Resolution 976 (LIII)
Coronavirus disease vaccines

38. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development commended the various initiatives undertaken by the Commission to support member States in leveraging the adoption in March 2020 by the African Union Commission and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention of the Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Outbreak as a blueprint and master plan for coordinating regional efforts to ensure synergy and minimize duplication, to save lives and support African social and economic development. It also commended the initiatives undertaken by the Economic Commission for Africa in supporting

African member States in the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights on vaccines, debt relief and the issuance of special drawing rights.

39. The Conference of Ministers requested the Commission to continue those efforts, including to continue to advocate for the equitable distribution of and access to COVID-19 vaccines. It also requested that the Commission assist African member States in putting in place continental strategies and policies to facilitate the production of vaccines on the continent, improve pooled procurement, in particular through digital technologies, as exemplified by the African Medical Supply Platform, and leverage the use of digital tools in national supply chains for improved accessibility for all, which would improve the affordability and accessibility of vaccines and assist in generating inclusive economic growth, stimulating job creation and eradicating poverty for the continent's socioeconomic development and sustainable growth. Finally, the Conference of Ministers urged the Commission to continue to support member States in vaccine procurement, including through additional funding made available from debt relief under the Group of 20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative, development finance institutions and special drawing rights.

Resolution 977 (LIII)

Economic Commission for Africa support for least developed countries in the context of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

40. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, concerned that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had further jeopardized the limited progress towards the goals of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, and cognizant of the need to revisit the current system of support for the least developed countries in the lead-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in January 2022, requested the Commission to continue to support African least developed countries in their efforts to graduate from least development country status and facilitate their implementation of the programmes of action that emanate from the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

Resolution 978 (LIII)

Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024

41. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development invited the African landlocked and transit developing countries, regional and subregional organizations and other stakeholders to implement the provisions and actions of the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, including those on the promotion of regional connectivity, trade facilitation, the development of regionally integrated, sustainable transport infrastructure resilient to climate change and disasters, the diversification of export structure, the adding of value to exports and the effective implementation of regional integration agreements. It urged transit countries to enhance cross-border collaboration with landlocked countries, by taking needed action to minimize disruptions to international and transboundary transport, eliminate trade restrictions and facilitate movement of, primarily, essential goods such as food, medical supplies and personal protection equipment.

42. The Conference of Ministers called upon transit countries also to enhance collaboration with landlocked countries by strengthening the transparency and availability of information about transit and border procedures, making use of digital technologies. It invited development partners and relevant international, regional and

subregional organizations to enhance support for landlocked developing countries and transit countries in implementing the relevant international trade and transport facilitation conventions and underscored the importance of mobilizing necessary resources to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and to support the landlocked developing countries.

43. The Conference of Ministers called upon the Commission to support landlocked developing countries and transit countries in leveraging the opportunities provided by regional and integration initiatives, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area. It requested the Commission, in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, other relevant United Nations system organizations and relevant international and regional organizations, to continue to provide technical support to the landlocked developing countries in Africa in the priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action, including those included in the road map for its accelerated implementation.

Resolution 979 (LIII)

African Institute for Economic Development and Planning

44. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development endorsed the reconstituted membership of the Governing Council of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, comprising the Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea for Central Africa, Ethiopia and Rwanda for East Africa, Mauritania and the Sudan for North Africa, Botswana and Mozambique for Southern Africa, and Ghana and Guinea for West Africa, in addition to the permanent seats occupied by Senegal as host country and the African Union Commission. It reiterated its call to the Commission, in collaboration with the Institute, to take all steps necessary to request the General Assembly to increase the regular grant in support of the Institute's programme, and also reiterated its call to member States for the more regular payment of assessed annual contributions and the settlement of arrears to the Institute.

Resolution 980 (LIII)

Special drawing rights

45. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development commended the Commission on its advocacy of and substantive support for a new issuance and reallocation of special drawing rights to low-income and middle-income countries, and acknowledged the work performed by the Commission in designing a liquidity and sustainability facility to reduce the cost of private credit for African countries. It requested the Commission to continue to provide a convening platform for African policymakers and other relevant stakeholders, and to advocate for a new issuance of between 500 billion and 650 billion United States dollars in special drawing rights, which would be a vital step in providing much-needed liquidity and investment financing for African countries, and for low-income and middle-income countries in particular.

46. The Conference of Ministers also requested the Commission to support advocacy efforts by member States for the extension of the Group of 20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative until at least the end of 2021, which would free up an additional 8 billion dollars for recovery in 2021 and provide much-needed liquidity to respond to the crisis. It called upon the Commission to mobilize support for a special drawing rights reallocation mechanism commensurate with the development financing needs of African countries, and encouraged member States to work collectively to ensure that they had a common voice and position on the issue of special drawing rights.

Resolution 981 (LIII)
2022 programme plan and budget

47. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development adopted the programme plan and budget of the Commission for 2022. Noting that the formulation of the medium-term programme framework had been affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) situation and would require further consultations with constituencies and stakeholders, and acknowledging the good level of alignment and focus of the programme plan and budget of the Commission with the development priorities and aspirations of Africa, it called upon the Commission to include performance measures in the four-year medium-term programme framework (2022–2025), to facilitate the tracking of progress in its implementation. The Conference of Ministers urged the Commission to consider working towards the consolidation of its programme plan and budget documents and to work towards strengthening its resource mobilization efforts, with a view to improving the balance between regular budgetary allocations and extrabudgetary resources.

C. Economic Commission for Europe

48. At its sixty-ninth session, held in Geneva on 20 and 21 April 2021, the Economic Commission for Europe adopted a high-level statement and a number of decisions relating to its programme of work, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Decision A (69)
High-level statement

49. The Economic Commission for Europe adopted a high-level statement, in which it recognized that reconciling economic prosperity with the need to address environmental pressures remained a key undertaking for the region, that determined action was required in multiple areas to improve the management of natural resources for economic growth not to result in further environmental degradation and that the transition to a more sustainable economy and the improved management of natural resources held many opportunities for building back better and could be a source of economic dynamism and increased competitiveness. The Commission also recognized that more resource-efficient and circular economic approaches were the building blocks for sustainable economic models that integrate and guide policy initiatives to preserve the stock of material resources by minimizing waste and promoting sustainable production and consumption. It consequently committed to stepping up efforts to promote circular economy approaches and the sustainable use of natural resources, namely by mainstreaming circularity and the sustainable use of natural resources in the existing relevant sectoral work programmes of the Commission and through voluntary initiatives and capacity-building cooperation opportunities.

50. The Commission further stated that its work in relevant subprogrammes, sectoral committees and other subsidiary bodies could make an important contribution to foster circular and more resource-efficient economies and improve the management of natural resources in the region and beyond and that such work could contribute to advancing sustainable transport, building sustainable energy systems and advancing sustainable forest management as well as resource-efficient use of wood; fostering environmental cooperation; facilitating the alignment of trade and urban development with sustainable practices, including building resilience to possible future crises, and providing the statistical foundation for the better understanding of ongoing dynamics and the impacts of policy actions.

51. Noting that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis was a reminder of the need to understand and address the risks before they materialized and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provided the vision to anticipate and tackle multiple risks, including those of a transboundary character, Commission member States resolved to strengthen their commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals as the blueprint that guided their policy actions. They further stressed that, in a world that was being shaken by the multiple impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, regional cooperation had acquired an increased importance to manage risks, reduce uncertainty and foster economic dynamism and there was a renewed need for solidarity. In view of this context and the challenges ahead, they stated that the historical mandate of the Commission to facilitate concerted action for the economic development and integration of the region was as relevant as ever.

Decision B (69)

Circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources

52. The Commission emphasized the need to further strengthen its work in the area of circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources and requested the relevant sectoral committees and their subsidiaries to consider how to enhance the impact of relevant existing Commission instruments, in order to foster circular and more resource-efficient approaches. The Commission invited those subsidiary bodies to replicate and scale up existing approaches that facilitate broad and effective use of the appropriate instruments, including through capacity-building and knowledge-sharing activities, and to consider developing proposals in their respective programmes of work, including possible collaboration across subprogrammes, for impactful and measurable solutions that promote a circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources and that could facilitate attaining the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

53. The Commission invited the secretariat to collaborate with other international organizations and regional economic integration organizations, including the European Union, towards the development of a harmonized approach to measuring progress towards circularity, including greater resource efficiency, and to further promote partnerships related to a circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, to explore opportunities for synergies to broaden the use of relevant Commission instruments.

54. It also encouraged timely implementation of the voluntary initiatives submitted by member States to the Commission session, to further accelerate the transition to a circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, and encouraged member States that had not done so yet to consider taking concerted action in that regard.

Decision C (69)

Extension of the mandate of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

55. The Commission, noting with appreciation the successful organization of the previous sessions of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development as a platform for peer learning and the exchange of policy experiences and good practices in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and taking note of the evaluation of the added value of the Regional Forum for Commission member States prepared by the secretariat,³ decided to continue to convene annual sessions of the Regional Forum in 2022 and 2023. It requested the secretariat to develop the agenda of each session of the Regional Forum in close consultation with member States, and to align it with the respective themes and programme of work of the high-level

³ E/ECE/1501.

political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. It also requested the secretariat to continue to publish a yearly report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Commission region and decided to keep the Regional Forum aligned with the overall follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda at the global level.

56. The Commission decided to submit the reports of the sessions of the Regional Forum, including the Chair's summary of the discussions with key messages, to the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Council, as part of the regional contributions to the global follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda. It requested the secretariat to prepare an evaluation of the added value of the Regional Forums held in 2021 and 2022 for submission to the Commission at its seventieth session.

Decision D (69)

Amendment to the rules of procedure of the Executive Committee

57. The Commission decided to amend rule 3 of the rules of procedure of its Executive Committee,⁴ to read as follows: "In the case of meetings during which decisions are proposed for adoption, the provisional agenda and documentation in one ECE working language shall be distributed as soon as possible but at least 10 working days in advance; and documents in all languages shall be distributed no less than 2 days in advance."

Decision E (69)

Resource management, near-term acceleration of achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through action on gases and buildings, and study of the impact of subsidies as well as carbon pricing options

58. The Commission, noting that sustainable management of natural resources was fundamental to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and crucial for supporting inclusive and sustainable recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) socioeconomic crisis, and that its work on methane, carbon dioxide and hydrogen and on high-performance buildings could have a notable near-term benefit for both climate and quality of life, requested the Committee on Sustainable Energy to undertake further development, dissemination, education and research, consultation, and engagement among stakeholders on the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources and its derivative, the United Nations Resource Management System. It requested the Committee on Sustainable Energy and the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management to undertake dissemination, education and research, consultation, and engagement among stakeholders on high-performance buildings and to support member States in further developing and deploying normative instruments to improve energy efficiency in buildings.

59. The Commission also invited the Committee on Sustainable Energy to pursue diligently further work on the role of natural gas, hydrogen, carbon capture, use and storage, and high-efficiency, low emissions technology for those countries that choose to use it, as well as on the management of anthropogenic methane emissions in the transition to a carbon neutral economy. It also requested the Committee to continue to study how best to address efficient use of energy resources and in that regard the impact of subsidies as well as carbon pricing options.

⁴ ECE/EX/3/Rev.1. For the amended text, see ECE/EX/3/Rev.2

D. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

60. At its seventy-seventh session, held virtually from 26 to 29 April 2021, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted a resolution on the theme of the session, which is summarized below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council. The Commission also adopted 14 decisions, in which it, inter alia, endorsed the proposed programme plan for 2022 and the proposed programme changes for the 2021 programme plan, as well as recommendations on matters brought to its attention by its subsidiary bodies.

Resolution 77/1

Building back better from crises through regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific

61. The Commission called upon its members and associate members to put in place a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including to strengthen health resilience and ensure a sustained socioeconomic recovery in the region. It encouraged all member States to cooperate in closing connectivity gaps, strengthening digital connectivity and promoting the digital economy, sustainable and disaster-resilient infrastructure and investment, and to enhance regional supply chain connectivity and diversification, as well as to facilitate recovery and to ensure resilient connectivity during crises.

62. The Commission encouraged a climate- and environment-responsive approach to COVID-19 recovery efforts and policies in support of the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, encouraged leveraging the regional platform to facilitate North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives and called upon donors to intensify their efforts to fulfil their respective official development assistance commitments.

63. The Commission welcomed the steps taken to provide liquidity and ease the debt burden of developing countries, encouraged all relevant actors, including private and commercial creditors, to address risks of debt vulnerabilities, and called upon member States to design recovery strategies based on risk-informed, sustainable financing policies, supported by integrated national financing frameworks, and to reprioritize the policies necessary to address the economic crisis and depression, begin economic recovery and minimize the negative effects on livelihoods, including the consideration of targeted measures for poverty eradication, social protection for workers, increased access to finance and capacity-building for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, financial inclusion mechanisms, strong fiscal stimulus packages and supportive monetary policies.

64. The Commission encouraged member States to work regionally and interregionally with a view to building back better, aligned with the 2030 Agenda, and requested the Executive Secretary to assist member States, upon request, in further enhancing national social protection systems, including through the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific.