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**CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Note by the Executive Secretary

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I. Introduction

1. A number of resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies during the past few years focus on co-operation among developing countries and regional organizations as an integral part of the efforts to establish a new international economic order, without being a substitute for, or an alternative to, co-operation between developed and developing countries. Within the context of these resolutions the broadest and most specific frame for concrete initiative towards economic and technical co-operation among developing countries is contained in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) and the Caracas Programme of Action for economic co-operation among developing countries (ECDC). The ESCWA secretariat has, as part of the overall effort of the United Nations system, continued to strive for a stimulating and co-ordinating role in ECDC/TCDC activities, in line with the Commission's objective to promote regional co-operation and integration. By its very nature, the work of the Commission tends to promote economic co-operation between countries of the region. Through publications, meetings and research, information is exchanged and experiences are shared between governments, institutions and individuals in member countries. The Commission's printed output thus contains much that is relevant to the subject of ECDC. Apart from this, a deliberate effort has been made to develop the ECDC/TCDC concept between the United Nations regional commissions, in pursuance of ECOSOC resolution 1983/66.

II. Interregional co-operation

2. In document E/ESCWA/XII/10 submitted to the Commission at its twelfth session, reference was made to the meeting of the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions held in Addis Ababa in February 1985. At that meeting, the project proposals for the promotion of interregional TCDC/ECDC listed below were identified and a regional commission was designated to take the lead role in co-ordinating activities for each of the identified proposals. Some of them have been selected based on experience and successful regional projects in one regional commission which can be extended to other regional commissions.

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|---|---|
| (a) Trade facilitation | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) |
| (b) Trade promotion among selected developing countries in respect selected commodities | Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) |
| (c) Afro-Arab trade promotion | Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in co-operation with ECWA |
| (d) Trade informatics | ECLAC/ECA in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) |

(e) Facilitation of international traffic	One regional commission in co-operation with ECE
(f) Containerization and combined transport	ECA in co-operation with (ECE) and ECLAC
(g) Agriculture credit and savings system	ESCAP
(h) Food security, in particular the early warning systems	ESCAP in co-operation with ECWA
(i) Fertilizer advisory, development and information network	ESCAP
(j) Fertilizers and pesticides	ECA
(k) Mineral resources development	ECLAC
(l) New and renewable sources of energy	ESCAP in consultation with the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation
(m) Technological information pilot system project	ECA in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
(n) Arabization of informatics	ESCWA in co-operation with ECA
(o) Islam and family planning	ECA in co-operation with ESCAP
(p) Development of low-cost housing construction materials	ECA
(q) Employment opportunities in rural areas with particular reference to women and youth	ECA

Progress made in the implementation of the identified proposals for projects

3. The lead regional commissions have prepared project outlines on the proposals identified and circulated them to the other regional commissions for their comments and suggestions for further improvement. These outlines, and the modalities envisaged for implementation, were further examined during the second 1985 meeting of the Executive Secretaries held in Geneva in July. Listed below are the specific titles of the proposals grouped under the lead regional commission.

ECA

- (a) Development of low-cost housing construction materials
- (b) Fertilizers and pesticides
- (c) Containerization and multimodal transport
- (d) Employment opportunities for women and youth in rural areas
- (e) Promotion of Afro-Arab trade

ECLAC

- (a) Trade information and trade promotion
- (b) Financing of reciprocal trade
- (c) Commercial agreements and joint ventures
- (d) Government purchasing power and the role of State enterprises
- (e) Training in selected aspects of mineral development: (i) training of human resources to improve the negotiating capacity of developing countries; (ii) human resources training to improve the existing capacity for formulating technology transfer agreements; and (iii) training of human resources for the formulation and execution of long-term contracts
- (f) Facilitation of international traffic

ESCAP

- (a) New and renewable sources of energy (NRSE): (i) development of social forestry; (ii) photo-voltaic technology; (iii) small hydro-power; (iv) biogas; and (v) wind water pumping
- (b) Promotion of interregional trade in selected products
- (c) Fertilizer advisory, development and information services
- (d) Agriculture credit and savings system
- (e) Implementation of family planning programmes
- (f) Improving strategies for manpower planning; development and utilization for integrated socio-economic development

ESCWA

- (a) Development of informatics application in the Arab countries
- (b) Arabization of computer research

ECE

ECE is prepared to co-operate in the following projects: (i) trade facilitation; (ii) facilitation of international traffic; (iii) containerization and combined transport; (iv) new and renewable source of energy; and (v) low-cost housing construction materials.

Proposed follow-up action

4. Specific comments and suggestions on the objectives and proposed activities of some of the above project outlines were exchanged between regional commissions. On the basis of the comments and suggestions received the lead regional commission has formulated draft project proposals for circulation to and comments by the relevant United Nations entities and specialized agencies as well as other regional commissions. The lead regional commissions then consult the concerned United Nations entities and specialized agencies, also ascertaining their possible support and participation in the project activities, before finalizing the project document. In this respect, the need has been emphasized for close consultation and co-operation of the regional commissions with concerned United Nations entities and specialized agencies in the formulation and implementation of those projects mutually agreed upon.

5. The draft project documents will be submitted to the Executive Secretaries for their consideration and further action at their first meeting in 1986.

6. The question of financing and possible sources of funding will be dealt with when the project documents are finalized.

III. Regional arrangements

7. The Commission has arrangements for co-operation with most Arab regional organizations and institutions. The instruments and documents describing these arrangements range from formal agreements and memoranda of understanding to joint statements. Efforts to intensify co-operation and co-ordination have continued in 1985, and the secretariat has submitted a number of project proposals and ideas, particularly to the Gulf Co-operation Council and the League of Arab States. The following joint activities with other regional organizations may at this stage be mentioned;

(a) Statistics

The agreement on statistics with the League of Arab States was updated. Joint activities currently focus on the following:

- (i) Seminars on national accounts in 1987 and 1988;
- (ii) Joint publication of a unified Arab Statistical Abstract;
- (iii) Co-ordination through regular half-yearly consultation.

(b) Industrial development

- (i) Preparation of a feasibility study on pressure vessels, heat exchange, furnaces and reactors was undertaken with the Arab Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), the Arab Industrial Development Organization (AIDO), and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD).
- (ii) An agreement was concluded between AIDO, the Arab Industrial Investment Company (AIIC), the Arab Fund and ESCWA on a joint project to prepare a detailed feasibility study and related studies for a high speed diesel engine, with a view to its development at the regional level. The joint project envisages promotional activities including meetings with prospective investors and users of diesel engines and components.
- (iii) The scope of studies on specialized industrial technologies in the field of petrochemicals and engineering was expanded through a co-operation agreement between ESCWA and AIDO to cover all Arab countries, with regard to the oil refining sector, all aspects of technological capability and a study on iron and steel that is to be prepared by AIDO. These efforts are designed to further promote long-term industrial policies and capabilities within the framework of a regional strategy.
- (iv) In co-operation with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and AFESD the secretariat organized a workshop on "Computer Processing of the Arabic Language" in Kuwait from 14 to 16 April 1985. The objectives of the workshop were: (aa) to review and assess past and current efforts exerted in the field of computer Arabization; (bb) to identify issues and problems related to Arabization; and (cc) to generate a framework for research needed in computer Arabization by setting priorities and recommending action on the most pressing issues, so as to enhance the Arabization process and to facilitate the adaptation of various computer applications in Arab societies.

(c) Social development

In the area of employment, ESCWA is co-operating with the Arab Employment Institution/Arab Labour Organization in the following activities:

- (i) Study with regard to technical and vocational education institutions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- (ii) Completion of the statistical base of the Arab countries through the addition of statistical data on manpower and employment in the Maghreb;

(iii) Establishment of a unit for collecting, operating and transferring labour force data in Jordan.

8. It is intended to pursue the above activities with vigour in the current biennium and to identify further avenues for fruitful regional co-operation.