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FOLLOW-UP ACTION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL ON UNITED NATIONS
WORLD CONFERENCES AND ECWA REGIONAL MEETINGS

United Nations Conference on the Least-Developed Countries

(Paris, 1-14 September 1981)

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. **Further** to UNCTAD resolution 122(V), outlining the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA) for the 1980s in favour of the Least Developed Countries, the General Assembly, in its resolution 34/203, decided to convene the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (UNCLDC) in 1981 in order to finalize, adopt and support the programme. The Conference was held in Paris from 1 to 14 September 1981.
2. In preparation for the Conference, the ECWA secretariat assisted, through its focal point for LDCs, the **two** least developed member States in the preparation of their country presentations to the review meetings with their aid partners and participated in the various meetings of the Conference preparatory committee held in Geneva; the review meeting of the least developed countries of Asia and the Pacific held in Vienna, 30 March to 10 April 1981; and the meeting of the ministers of member States of ESCAP and ECWA held in Bangkok from 10 to 11 August 1981, preceded by a meeting of senior officials from 7 to 8 August 1981. The meetings in Bangkok were co-sponsored by the ESCAP and ECWA secretariats.
3. The Conference was inaugurated by the President of France, who stressed the relationship between assistance to developing countries and the efforts of the developed countries to overcome their current economic crisis, as well as the international solidarity that was reflected in the efforts of the industrialized countries to review the process of the North-South dialogue.
4. The Conference was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, who stressed the urgency of the questions facing the Conference and the need to agree on concrete measures to achieve its objectives. He emphasized that the Programme of Action to be decided by the Conference would be a major step towards the economic transformation of the least developed countries that could help them break out of the vicious trap of poverty and deprivation.
5. In line with the request of the Ministers of the ECWA and ESCAP member States' meeting in Bangkok, on 10-11 August 1981, His Majesty the King of Nepal addressed the Conference on behalf of the Least Developed Countries of the two

regions. In addition to the two Yemens, the Conference was also addressed by such other members of ECWA as Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, the Palestine Liberation Organization and Saudi Arabia.

6. The deliberations of the Conference were guided by a draft resolution embodying the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA) for the 1980s for the least developed countries and which was presented by Peru on behalf of States members of the group of 77. This draft resolution comprised the following three chapters: 1. General Situation and National Measures; 2. International Support Measures; and 3. Arrangements for Implementation, Follow-up and Monitoring. The two Conference committees in which the ECWA secretariat participated, prepared for consideration of the Conference, the final draft of the SNPA which was adopted by the Conference on 14 September 1981.

Conference recommendations

7. The Conference recommended to the General Assembly that it decide that the UNCTAD Intergovernmental Group on the Least Developed Countries should be involved in carrying out the mid-term review and consider the possibility of holding a global review at the end of the decade which might take the form of a United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The Conference further recommended that the United Nations' Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, in close collaboration with the Secretary General of UNCTAD, the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions, and the lead agencies for the aid groups, should ensure, at the secretariat level, the full mobilization of the system for the purpose of the implementation and follow-up of the SNPA. The system of focal points in each United Nations agency, used in the preparations for the Conference, should be kept active also for the implementation tasks over the decade. The General Assembly in resolution 36/194 adopted the SNPA.

Follow-up action by the secretariat

8. At the regional level, the relevant United Nations regional commissions shall, as appropriate, contribute to the follow-up process and offer an opportunity

for the least developed countries of their regions to exchange experience and seek solutions to common problems at the national, regional and global levels. For this, the regional commissions are expected to give full attention, in their economic analysis and monitoring, to the problems, needs and achievements of the least developed countries and produce relevant statistics. Each regional commission should prepare periodic reports on the activities falling within its competence as inputs to the global review process.

More specifically, the secretariat's activities relating to Chapter III of the SNPA dealing with its implementation, follow-up and monitoring, will comprise of:

(a) Assistance in the preparation for, and participation in, the meetings of the aid consultation groups of Democratic Yemen and Yemen Arab Republic.

(b) Assistance in the preparation for, and participation in, the review meetings at the national and regional levels.

(c) Assistance to ECWA least developed countries in the preparation of reports for their review meetings.

(d) Preparation of relevant statistics and periodic reports on activities falling within its competence as inputs to the global review process.

(e) Collaboration with UNCTAD in the preparation of up-to-date information on the LDCs of ECWA and participation in the Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group on the Least Developed Countries and the mid-term and end of decade global review meetings.

(f) Contribution to the follow-up process, providing the opportunity for the least developed member countries of the Commission to exchange experience with each other and with the other ECWA countries, and to seek solution to common problems.

9. In addition, the secretariat envisages to render substantive assistance to the two member countries in relation to the relevant areas of Chapters I and II of the SNPA. Consultations are underway with the Governments of the two countries to determine the nature and extent of such assistance
10. Within the context of the 1982-1983 programme budget, the secretariat will be initiating at an early stage action pertaining to the outlined tasks in paragraph 8 above, for which the General Assembly has provided additional resources (one professional and one local level posts). The secretariat will further endeavour to mobilize extrabudgetary resources for activities pertaining to the Commission's two least developed member States.