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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Sixth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of the Subregional Development Centre for Southern Africa (SRDC-SA), was held from 11 to 13 April, 2000 in Windhoek, Namibia.

2. The meeting was attended by representatives from the following countries: Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The following organizations also participated: Southern African Development Community (SADC), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Pan African Institute for Development-Eastern and Southern Africa (PAID-ESA), Southern African Broadcasting Association, Eastern and Southern Africa Mineral Centre (SEAMIC), University of South Africa (UNISA) and also the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Office for Africa and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

II. OPENING OF THE MEETING (Agenda Item 1)

3. The opening statements were delivered by the ICE outgoing Chairman, the Director of the SRDC-SA, and the representative of the Government of the Republic of Namibia.

4. The outgoing Chairman, Mr. Misheck Mwanza, Director, Regional Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of Zambia, welcomed participants and thanked the Government and People of Namibia for their hospitality and for providing facilities for the meeting. Mr. Mwanza recognized the presence of three Ministers responsible for Information and Broadcasting from Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia who were attending this meeting and the Subregional Workshop on National Information and Communication Infrastructure in Southern Africa (NICI). He indicated that the Sixth Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) meeting should have been held in 1999 but was postponed to this year on the recommendation of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW) in 1999. That recommendation was made to enable the ICE Meeting to be held as close as possible to the Commission's meeting so that recommendations emanating from the ICE could be considered by the Commission while they were still pertinent.

5. The outgoing Chairman observed the following major development at the Centre since the last ICE: the intensification of cooperation between the Centre and the Regional Economic Communities, particularly COMESA and SADC, while relations with the IOC needed to be firmly established; continued assistance to member States, based on requests; and the appointments of the Director of the Centre and the new Gender Focal Point replacing the one who retired in 1999. The outgoing Chairman then reviewed some of the issues from the Fifth Meeting of the ICE which required follow-up actions. Among these were: the conduct of a Study on the Framework for the Accelerated Development and Growth of Small-Scale Mining in the Subregion; and the mechanisms for the harmonization of requests for data collection from

member States. He then informed the meeting that the Centre was taking appropriate action on these and he commended the Centre for the positive actions. He urged member States to make full use of the Centre's services and those of ECA as a whole.

6. In conclusion, Mr. Mwanza appealed to the meeting to critically assess the operations of the Centre and to make appropriate recommendations for its future activities, in the light of development needs of member States.

7. The Director of the ECA/SRDC-SA, Mr. Robert M. Okello, welcomed participants to the Meeting on behalf of Mr. K.Y. Amoako, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa. He also thanked the Government and People of Namibia for accepting to host both the meeting of the ICE and the (NICI) Workshop. He explained that combining the two events seemed a natural development given the relationship between them and the key role information and communication played in economic and social development. NICI, thus, was a special event of the Sixth ICE Meeting.

8. The Director reminded the participants that the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the SRDC was the policy organ of the Centre, and that it was responsible for overseeing the functioning of the SRDC. The ICE reported to the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning (the Commission) through its Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW) or the Ministerial Follow-up Committee. The SRDC for Southern Africa served the following eleven member countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

9. The Director further briefed the meeting on the type of services the SRDC provided to member States and the two major publications by the Centre: The Report on Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa and the Southern Africa Development Bulletin. He noted that the current Report on Economic and Social Conditions included a special study on the impact of crime on economic and social development in the subregion.

10. The Director then briefly reviewed the agenda of the meeting and stressed that the meeting should propose, where necessary, recommendations which would be presented to the ECA Ministerial Follow-up Committee of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning scheduled for May 2000 in Abuja, Nigeria.

11. Mr. Madume J. Kaulinge, Director of Development Planning in the Secretariat of the National Planning Commission of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, read the opening statement on behalf of Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa, Director-General of the National Planning Commission. A minute of silence was observed in honour of the flood victims in Mozambique.

12. In warmly welcoming the participants to Namibia, he pointed out that the official opening marked two important events organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and that these were the Sixth Meeting for Intergovernmental Committee Experts (ICE) of the SRDC-SA and the Subregional Workshop on National Information and Communication Infrastructure in Southern Africa (NICI). Namibia had participated at the 1999 African Development Forum whose objective was to develop and support African initiatives that were fundamental in shaping the African Information Age. He stated that Namibia attached great importance to the two meetings and was pleased to host them.

13. He highlighted some issues on the agenda item including the issue of food security in relation to the agenda item on the impact of population, environment, development and agriculture (PEDA) Model. In particular, he observed that floods in the subregion, especially in Mozambique, had negatively impacted on the food situation, living conditions of the population affected, and the development infrastructure. He commended the international community in assisting Mozambique as well as SADC member States for setting up a Disaster Committee for future emergency situations.

14. Referring to the issues of crime and its impact on socio-economic development, the Government representative appealed for urgency in developing and implementing policies that would effectively curb crime in whatever form. He was pleased to note that crime was the theme of the report of Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa, 1998-1999.

15. Regarding the 1998-1999 Report, he commended the ECA/SRDC-SA for producing such a report which was useful in that it assessed progress towards achieving certain goals member States had set for themselves collectively or individually. It also provided policy issues that needed to be addressed in further improving socio-economic conditions in the subregion.

16. In conclusion, he appealed to participants to adequately address all the agenda items of both the ICE and NICI and propose actions that needed to be taken to enhance socio-economic development in the subregion. He observed that the subregion faced many challenges which required collective collaboration among countries and partners to find common solutions. Finally, he declared the Sixth Intergovernmental Committee of Experts Meeting of the SRDC-SA and the NICI Workshop officially open and wished participants successful deliberations.

17. A vote of thanks, on behalf of the participants, was moved by Hon. Clement G.J. Stambuli, Minister of Information of the Republic of Malawi who extended his thanks to the Government and the People of Namibia for the hospitality given to participants and for hosting the meeting. He then thanked ECA for convening the two meetings. Finally, he wished participants successful deliberations.

III. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

A. Election of Officers (Agenda item 2)

18. The meeting elected the following countries to the Bureau:

Namibia	-	Chairman
Malawi	-	Vice-Chairman
Zimbabwe	-	Rapporteur

B. Consideration of the Draft Agenda and Organization of Work (Agenda item 3)

19. The meeting adopted the following Agenda:

- (i) Official Opening
- (ii) Election of Officers
- (iii) Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
- (iv) Report of the Director of ECA/SRDC-SA
- (v) Report of Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa, 1998-1999
- (vi) Relevant Decisions from Regional and Global Conferences:
 - (a) Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD-PA)
 - (b) Report on ECA Programme for Monitoring the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action
- (vii) Reports on ECA Programmes:
 - (a) Impact of the Population, Environment, Development and Agriculture (PEDA) Model on Different Policy Options in Relation to Food Security
 - (b) External Challenges, Internal Initial Conditions and Elements of Comprehensive Strategy
 - (c) Development Management Division Programme of Work for 2000: Core Activities
- (viii) Reports by Cooperating Partners: DBSA, SADC, FAO and PAID-ESA
- (ix) Regional Priorities and Programme of Work of ECA/SRDC-SA
- (x) National Planning for Information and Communication Technology in Southern Africa

- (xi) Any other business
- (xii) Date and venue of the next Meeting
- (xiii) Adoption of the report
- (xiv) Closure of the Meeting

20. The meeting adopted the following time table for the sessions: 08.30 – 13.00 hours in the morning and 14.30 – 18.00 hours in the afternoon.

C. Report of the Director of the ECA/SRDC-SA (Agenda item 4)

21. The meeting considered the Report of the Director, October 1998 to April, 2000 (ECA/SRDC/SA/ICE/2000/4) on the activities of the Centre.

22. The activities undertaken by the Centre were organized under the following four categories:

- (a) promoting regional cooperation and integration in Southern Africa by providing effective technical support to the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and member States;
- (b) facilitating networking and information exchange by providing fora for public sector , civil society and private sector development partners to interact and share experiences at national and subregional levels;
- (c) providing essential harmonization mechanism for operational programmes of the United Nations system as a whole at the subregional level, in close collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator system at the national level in each country; and
- (d) strengthening the outreach function of ECA, thus, bringing the Commission and the available development resources closer to member States.

23. The Centre worked closely with SATCC/SADC and COMESA in the area of transport and communication. This resulted in the joint ECA/SATCC/COMESA Transport Programme which would be funded by a number of donors. Another area of successful cooperation was the agreement to develop a single Communications Navigation Systems and Air Transport Management Systems (CNS/ATM) for Eastern and Southern Africa. This was in line with the regional policy adopted in 1988 under the Yamoussoukro Declaration on New African Air Transport.

24. The SRDC-SA and SRDC-EA jointly assisted COMESA in a restructuring exercise of its secretariat. Furthermore, the SRDC-SA and the ECA Development Management Division (DMD) assisted COMESA Secretariat in undertaking training needs assessment for its staff. There was constant interaction

between the Centre and COMESA and the Centre participated in COMESA meetings of both Technical Committees and Policy Organs.

25. The Centre also provided technical support to SADC with regard to its 1998 Economic Report as well as the preparation and servicing of the meetings of the Southern African Minister's Conference on Population and Development (SAMCPD) and the Southern African Forum on Population and Development (SAFPAD). As was the case with COMESA, the Centre participated in the technical and the policy organ meetings of SADC.

26. The Centre had provided technical assistance and advisory services to the following countries: Swaziland in the development of its National Transport Policy; Zambia in the areas of Population, Informal Sector, Transport and Communication and Environment; Zimbabwe in the Traffic Safety Programme; and Lesotho in the Training of Officials of the Sales Tax Department in the Ministry of Finance.

27. The networking and information exchange activities carried out by the Centre included:

- (i) Subregional Follow-up Meeting on the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action (organized by SRDC-SA, SRDC-EA and the African Centre for Women and the Government of Seychelles);
- (ii) Eastern and Southern Africa Follow-up Conference to the World Summit on Social Development (organized by the SRDC-SA, SRDC-EA, and the Economic and Social Policy Analysis Division, UNDP and the Government of Kenya);
- (iii) Forum on Policy Options for Promoting the Economic Empowerment of Women: Use of Information and Communication Technology (organized by SRDC-SA, SRDC-EA, African Centre for Women and the Government of Tanzania);
- (iv) Workshop on Trade and Investment Promotion in Southern Africa;
- (v) Subregional Seminar on Integrated Economic and Social Development in Southern Africa: National Long-Term Perspective Studies; and
- (vi) Publications which included the Southern Africa Development Bulletin, Report on Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa and A Policy Framework on Nexus Issues on Population, Food Security and Environment in Southern Africa.

28. There were several activities in which the Centre collaborated with other United Nations agencies under the leadership of Resident Coordinator in Zambia, while the Centre received cooperation and assistance from many UNDP offices in other countries in the region in the implementation of its activities.

The Centre and ECA Headquarters worked closely and supported the Zambia UNDP Office in the Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique Growth Triangle Initiative (ZMM-GT).

29. Regarding strengthening ECA's Outreach in Southern Africa, the activities undertaken included: the visit of the ECA Executive Secretary to Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia and his participation at the Summit meetings of COMESA and SADC.

30. The Director's report also highlighted activities undertaken by the ECA Headquarters in support of Southern Africa and advisory services ECA was able to provide to member States. The areas of advisory services covered were: Food Security and Sustainable Development; Environment; Economic Policy Analysis; Customs and Trade; Economic Empowerment of Women; Promotion of Women's Human and Legal Rights; Organization and Management of Statistical Systems; Information and Communication Technology Policy; Information Technology and Connectivity; Water Resources Development and Management; Transport and Communications; Public Sector Management; and Private Sector Development.

31. The Committee raised several issues and observations which included information on strengthening the SRDC; information on preparation of the Second African Development Forum (ADF II) on HIV/AIDS; the added value of ADF II in view of several other meetings that were being organized by various organizations; strategic framework for cooperation with RECs; further coordination on data collection at country level in view of different national focal points providing different data to organizations; and giving greater importance to information.

32. The Director gave an account of efforts that were being made by ECA to strengthen the Centre. He reported that some delay had been experienced in filling the vacant posts not only at the Centre but also at ECA as a whole. However, a campaign had been mounted to speed up the recruitment process to the vacant posts. In this regard, announcements on vacancies at ECA as a whole were distributed to participants to share with qualified candidates in their countries.

33. The Committee requested further information on the status of preparation of ADF II on HIV/AIDS and actions to ensure timely preparation by member States of their inputs. The Secretariat informed the meeting that the theme of ADF II was HIV/AIDS: The Leadership Challenge. In order to adequately prepare for ADF II, a Steering Committee had been formed which consisted of UNDP, UNAIDS, World Bank and the ECA. The Steering Committee is advised by a Technical Advisory Committee made up of about 30 members drawn from African governments, civil society including community leaders and people living with HIV/AIDS. The meeting was further informed that ADF II would be action-oriented and the process was a continental launching pad to accelerate preventive actions by focusing on leadership at all levels (community, local, national and regional). Experience has shown that local response was most important and ADF II would showcase country initiatives at all levels.

34. The format for ADF II would include the development of an electronic discussion list to bring in a broad spectrum of opinion, prior to the conference itself; organization of focus groups (gender, youth, private sector, information and communication technology) before ADF II; installation of demonstrations/exhibitions; and holding of plenaries and breakout groups that would lead to a high level of interactions. The next steps in preparing for ADF II included contracting papers, drafting the programme, issuing invitations and identifying relevant experiences to be show-cased.

35. On the added value of ADF II in relation to the many meetings on HIV/AIDS by various organizations, the Secretariat informed the Committee that ADF II would focus on political commitment on what had been actually done to translate the commitment into action in the fight against HIV/AIDS. On the contrary, many of the other meetings on HIV/AIDS that had been convened or were being convened by various organizations were generally broad and technical and did not focus on political commitment in the context of the proposed ADF II. Prior to the above, UN-NADAF/UNSIAs would prepare a subregional outlook report on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector in Eastern and Southern Africa and countries were called upon to cooperate in the conduct of the study.

36. The Committee expressed concern about low gender balance at the Centre. In response, the Director of the Centre informed the Committee of efforts that were being taken to address this.

37. Regarding strategic framework for cooperation with the RECs, the Secretariat highlighted the general framework within the African Economic Community (AEC) which is based on supporting the RECs as building blocks towards the AEC. Furthermore, the Director of the Centre informed the Committee that initiatives were underway to develop a strategic framework for cooperation with the RECs.

38. The Committee took note of efforts by the Secretariat to consolidate data collection. However, it urged that further actions were still necessary at national level to ensure that the different national focal points did not give inconsistent data to various organizations.

39. The Committee, in relation to paragraph 13 of the Director's Report, felt that measures to address poverty should include enhancing information systems and processes to achieve items listed under 13(a) to (d), namely:

- (i) Improving service delivery in the social sectors such as education and health to enhance human capacity for development;
- (ii) Promoting development of small-scale and medium-scale enterprises as a basis for creating employment and wealth;
- (iii) Providing safety nets for retrenched civil servants and armies in order to reduce crime;
- (iv) Encouraging all sectors of society (women, youth, private sector and civil society) to participate in development activities.

40. The Committee commended the Director of the Centre for the report.

D. Report on Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa, 1998-1999

(Agenda item 5)

41. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered document ECA/SRDC-SA/ICE/99/05, entitled "Report on Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa, 1998-1999". The report showed that for a number of Southern African countries, 1998 was a year of weak growth. Aggregate output, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP), increased only by 2 per cent. Preliminary estimates for 1999 pointed to a better performance of 5.3 per cent which was still below the UN-NADAF growth target of 6 per cent, in general. There were disparities in economic performance among countries. Only two countries (Botswana and Mozambique) had succeeded in surpassing the GDP growth requirement of 6.2 per cent both in 1998 and 1999, which if sustained, could reduce poverty by half in 2015, as agreed at the 1995 World Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen.

42. A number of external factors, combined with internal structural weaknesses, had continued to adversely affect overall economic performance and to varying degrees among the countries in the subregion and among production sectors.

43. Inflation rates in most countries of the subregion were high, in most cases in the double digits with average rates higher in 1998 than in 1997 in the majority of the countries.

44. The performance in the mining industries had been affected by unfavourable conditions in the major producing countries and the trends in world market prices. The subregion still has great potential to be realized in this sector.

45. Regarding external debt, this continued to be a major problem for Southern African countries with four (4) countries being classified as severely indebted low-income countries. Aggregate data indicated that total external debt of Southern African member States increased from US\$73,735 million in 1996 to US\$79,290 million in 1997, the last year for which complete data was available. It seemed, however, that in 1999 total external debt for the subregion might have decreased due to efforts by countries to limit new borrowing.

46. The Report on Economic and Social Conditions also showed further deterioration in social indicators. Population pressure in Southern Africa was imposing limits on the national management of resources, hence hindering poverty alleviation efforts. This was creating social problems in terms of housing, sanitation, health, education and unemployment, and was also placing unbearable pressure on existing and aging urban facilities. The HIV/AIDS pandemic was most serious in Southern Africa adversely affecting progress in socio-economic development in the subregion. Resolving these problems depended on the

resources committed within the context of social and economic policies pursued in harmony with overall development objectives.

47. The report also emphasized that peace, stability and economic development were fundamentally intertwined and that as long as conflicts continued to threaten stability, economic development would remain illusive.

48. While laudable efforts had been made in the area of road transport services at national level, more remained to be done to improve the infrastructure. Long distance cross-border services were constrained by the market responsiveness, standard of service and service charges. The telecommunication industry was performing better after privatization and liberalization of State monopolies. Regarding tourism, member States had shown interest in exploiting national parks across national boundaries.

49. The report drew attention to the issue of the escalating crime in the subregion, although its dimensions were yet to be fully determined and its impact fully assessed. Preliminary consequences were, however, that it continued to drive away foreign investors and thereby discouraged further domestic and foreign investment.

50. Economic prospects for year 2000 were far from certain. However, improved performance depended on the outcome of a number of domestic and external factors such as the deepening of structural reforms in the subregion, continuing rise in prices of minerals and other primary commodities on the international markets and good weather. There were, nevertheless, modest grounds to expect continued improvements in the economic performance of the subregion in year 2000, with GDP growth expected to average 5-6 per cent. This was subject to many factors including uncertainty of the weather and its impact on agricultural production.

51. In the interventions that followed the presentation of the above-mentioned document, the Committee raised various issues related to the structure and content of the report in general, and which could form the basis for the recommendations that would be adopted by the meeting. Among them were the issue of the macro-economic performance of some member States, which did not give explanations for the performance noted; the need to provide gender disaggregated data in economic and social sectors; and the need to provide accurate data and information that would allow experts to evaluate the impact of crime on the economic and social development of the subregion.

52. Related to the latter, the Committee noted that the section of the report on crime was not objective mainly because of the conclusions which were based on biased sources of information. Therefore, the report did not contain statistics which portrayed the correct situation in the member States of the region. In this regard, it was agreed that the Report on Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa: 1998-1999 be adopted without including the section on crime, and that a workshop be convened to examine the full report on crime.

E. Relevant Decisions from Regional and Global Conferences (Agenda item 6)

(a) Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD-PA)

53. The Committee considered a “Report on the Outcome of the Appraisal of the ICPD+5 by the African Region and the United Nations General Assembly”, doc. ECA/SRDC/SA/ICE/99/06. The report gave a brief on the appraisal of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD-PA) after five years of its implementation:

- (a) African countries which adopted recommendations for the way forward on population and development in Africa in the 21st century; and
- (b) the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly which adopted key actions for the further implementation of the PA.

54. The ICPD-PA was adopted in September 1994 in Cairo, Egypt, by consensus by 179 countries. It was subsequently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 49/128 of 19 December, 1994. Africa’s input to the process that led to the ICPD-PA was the Dakar/Ngor Declaration (DND) on Population, Family and Sustainable Development adopted at the 1992 Third African Population Conference held in Dakar, Senegal. The DND was endorsed at the highest level of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) before it was presented at the ICPD in Cairo in 1994.

55. The objective of the ICPD-PA is to raise the quality of life and the well-being of human beings, and to promote human development by recognizing the interrelationships between population and development policies and programmes aimed at achieving poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, in the context of sustainable development, education, especially for girls, gender equity and equality, infant, child and maternal mortality reduction, provision of universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health, food security, human resource development.

56. The United Nations Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1995/55 of July 1995 requested the Secretary General to provide a report on the review and appraisal of the ICPD-PA every five years. The General Assembly in its resolutions 52/188 of December, 1997 and 53/183 of 15 December, 1998

decided to convene a special session from 30 June to 2 July, 1999 to review and appraise the implementation of the ICPD-PA.

57. The review of the ICPD-PA was done through a series of conferences which included: the International Forum at the Hague, 8-12 February, 1999; conferences by each of the five regional commissions of the United Nations (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 25 to 27 March, 1998; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 13-14 May, 1998; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 22-25 September, 1998; Economic Commission for Africa, 23-25 September, 1998; and Economic Commission for Europe, 7-9 December, 1998); and the United Nations Commission on Population and Development which acted as the Preparatory Committee for the General Assembly Special Session.

58. The reviews and appraisal by the African countries and the General Assembly identified achievements in the implementation of ICPD-PA but there were also constraints that slowed the implementation of the PA. Among the achievements in Africa were: greater involvement and consultations with stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of population and development policies since the ICPD-PA was adopted; initiation of reflecting population issues in long-term planning in the context of sustainable development; greater sensitization which is leading member States to take action to address issues of gender equality, equity and empowerment of women, e.g. SADC gender programme; increased sensitization and advocacy on reproductive rights and reproductive health services including those of the adolescents, and on integrated comprehensive services. Constraints were many and included: deterioration in social and economic conditions in many countries; inadequate national technical capacities to deal with the integration of population and development variables in socio-economic and development planning; political instability in some countries which affect overall development activities; lack of effective structures and systems for implementing policies and programmes; reduced international financial support to population and development programmes to African countries; the threat of HIV/AIDS which has had devastating impact on both economic and social development that it is making it very hard to achieve many of the objectives of the ICPD-PA. Based on the identified positive and negative aspects in these reviews, further recommendations were made to accelerate the implementation of the DND and ICPD-PA.

59. Recommendations for the way forward on population and development in Africa for the 21st century by African countries, covered the following areas: population development strategies, policies and institutional mechanisms; gender equality, equity, empowerment of women and male involvement; reproductive health and reproductive rights; family youth and adolescents; advocacy and the IEC strategies; and the role of NGOs and the private sector in programme implementation.

60. The outcome of the appraisal by the United Nations General Assembly of the ICPD-PA was the adoption of key actions for the further implementation of the PA in the following areas: population and development concerns; gender equality, equity, and empowerment of women; reproductive rights and reproductive health; partnerships and collaboration; and mobilization of resources.

61. Based on the lessons of the assessment of the DND and ICPD-PA, there was need to strengthen efforts and commitment in further implementation of the ICPD-PA.

62. The Committee did not raise questions on this item. It urged member states to renew and strengthen their commitments and support to population and development activities and appealed to member States to take concrete measures to implement the recommendations they adopted on the way forward on population and development in Africa in the 21st century.

63. The Committee further appealed to member States to implement recommendations by the United Nations General Assembly on key actions for further implementation of the ICPD-PA.

(b) Report on ECA Programme for Monitoring the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action

64. Under this agenda item, the meeting was reminded that at the Beijing International Conference on Women in 1995, it was decided that a mid-decade review would be carried out both at the regional and global levels to assess progress made after five years of its implementation. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), through the Technical Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW) and the Committee on Women and Development (CWID), was mandated to follow up, support and facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of these commitments.

65. At the regional level, the ECA organized the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women in Addis Ababa on 22-26 November, 1999. The main objectives of the Conference were to: evaluate the implementation of Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action; formulate and adopt a plan of action to accelerate the implementation of the Platforms; and prepare for Beijing +5, the Global Review in New York in June 2000.

66. The major outcomes from the Conference were: drawing up and adoption of the African Plan of Action to accelerate the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action for the Advancement of Women; Declaration of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women: Mid-Term Review of the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action; and a framework for Africa's participation at the Global Mid-Term Review of the Implementation of the Platforms of Action in New York in June 2000.

67. In order to support and assist member States in enhancing the further implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action, the Subregional Development Centre, in collaboration with the African Centre for Women at headquarters in Addis Ababa, SADC, COMESA and other stakeholders, was planning to organize a gender networking meeting for Southern Africa in 2000.

68. In follow-up to the outcome of the Sixth Regional Conference on Women, the ECA African Centre

for Women undertook a number of activities. To enhance effective participation of Africa at the Preparatory Committee Meeting in March 2000 and the Special Session on Beijing+5, ECA engaged in the following activities:

- (i) Dissemination of critical documents to all member States;
- (ii) Sensitization of the New York African Group on the outcome of the Sixth Regional Conference and Africa's priorities in order to keep them in mind during negotiations;
- (iii) Setting up a mechanism for informal consultations among African delegates during the Preparatory Committee and the Special Session;
- (iv) Organisation of an Information Workshop on 3 June, 2000 in New York to discuss modalities and procedures for participation at the Special Session and to disseminate the latest version of the Outcome document.

69. In addition to the above, ECA has formulated post-Beijing+5 Strategies for monitoring the implementation of Platforms for Action within the framework of follow-up to the outcome of the Sixth Regional Conference. This will constitute its work programme in the area of monitoring and evaluation of the Platforms for Action between 2000-2004.

70. The general objective of the work programme is to identify five issues for strategic policy adjustment on the basis of the slow progress that has been made in the implementation process in the past five years.

71. The issues identified are:

- (i) National Statistics Offices as a source for gender disaggregated data;
- (ii) Accountability system within the public sector;
- (iii) HIV/AIDS and its implications for women's empowerment;
- (iv) Women's rights within the family; and
- (v) The role of national machineries in charge of women and gender affairs.

72. The implementation process will entail collection of information on the current national policies on the issues above through well formulated questionnaires which will be validated through a Regional Meeting. This Regional Meeting, which will be attended by representatives of national governments and subregional IGOs, will also validate the choice of issues, one issue per subregion, as well as the methodology proposed for information collection. In this connection, it is recommended that Southern Africa subregion considers item (c): HIV/AIDS and its implications for women's empowerment. The conduct of the surveys and the analysis of information collected will lead to the formulation of policy adjustment programmes in the five areas. Once the programmes are validated, their implementation at the national level will take place between 2002-2003. Close monitoring of the implementation process will be assured by ECA and IGOs. Evaluation of the implementation will be carried out at the national level and completed at subregional level where the IGOs will be responsible for the process of identifying the subregions priorities and the way

forward for the next ten years. A high level regional consultation meeting will then be organized in 2004 to consolidate the regional priorities and formulate a policy framework for the advancement of women and gender equality for the next ten years. This will be Africa's contribution to the Beijing+10 Conference in 2005. In the entire process close partnerships will be established between ECA and national governments, IGOs, NGOs, UN agencies and donors.

73. In the discussion that ensued, the Committee asked for guidance on the processes of implementing the Beijing Platform of Action. It was observed that in the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, there was more emphasis on women which has been carried over to the implementation process instead of the gender approach.

74. In response, a representative of the Secretariat explained that while the Platforms for Action focused on empowering women, the recommended strategy for doing so was gender mainstreaming. This would seek to approach women as equal actors and beneficiaries in development, which would be more effective in reducing disparities between women and men. It would be more effective in correcting the marginalization that resulted from using the Women-in-Development (WID) approach.

75. The representative of the SADC Secretariat congratulated the presenters for the report. She, however, pointed out two problems that needed to be ironed out with respect to Regional and International Conferences. First was the need to clarify the roles of IGOs in order to maximize their contribution at such meetings, just like the NGOs which will participate in the Beijing + 5 Special Session alongside government delegations. Second, was the need to streamline the Regional Meetings in order to ensure that they were cost effective.

76. In response, ECA acknowledged the need for clarifying the terms of reference (TOR) of IGOs although in international fora, there was a likelihood of duplication since, unlike NGO's, IGO's represented member States who normally choose to present their individual cases. The Secretariat, however, took note of this observation. It was further confirmed that ECA had recognized the need for streamlining regional conferences. As a result, ECA intended to have the evaluation process of the implementation of the Platforms for Action conducted at the national level and completed by the IGOs at the subregional level. The seventh Regional Conference will be a much smaller High Level Consultative Meeting which will synthesize the outcome of the subregional evaluations to formulate the policy framework for the advancement of women in the next ten years.

F. Reports on ECA Programmes (Agenda item 7 (a) ,(b) and (c))

(a) *Impact of Population, Environment, Development and Agriculture (PEDA) Model on Different Policy Options in Relation to Food Security*

77. The meeting considered a presentation, which links population, environment development and

agriculture (PEDA) model. A brief on this was contained in a document entitled “Short introduction to PEDA: an Advocacy Tool Modeling the Interrelationships Between Population, Development, Environment and Agriculture in Africa”, ECA/SRDC/SA/ICE/2000/7(a). Due to high population growth that exceeded that of food and agricultural production combined with rapid environmental degradation, the mission of the Food Security and Sustainable Development of ECA is to ensure food security and promote sustainable development in Africa. In this connection, the Commission is planning a critical programme to raise policy-makers’ awareness of the urgency of food, population and environmental concerns (the nexus issues) in development planning and the need for integrated planning. The negative synergy arising from high and rapid population growth, food insecurity and environmental degradation posed challenges which needed to be addressed in order to achieve these objectives.

78. It is in this context that ECA, with the assistance of International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), has developed the PEDA model. This is a user-friendly interactive computer model for the analysis of population, environment and agriculture interactions. The model focuses on the vicious cycle model of poverty, illiteracy, high fertility, land degradation and food insecurity and quantitatively operationalises the vicious cycle and possible ways to break out of it.

79. After discussing the data requirements of the model which included demographic, agricultural production, land and water, loss of food, food imports and exports as well as food distribution data, a prototype model developed for Burkina Faso was used to demonstrate the long-term implications of alternative policy scenarios for the food security status of eight population sub-groups defined according to age, sex, education and place of residence.

80. The meeting was also informed that at this stage, only a prototype of PEDA Model has been developed. However, it has been initialized for six countries and that for real applications, local experts needed to fill the model with the best empirical information available for their countries.

81. The Committee commended the Secretariat for the excellent presentation of the model and ECA for developing such an advocacy tool. Among the few comments made during the discussion was the suggestion that the model should be able to accommodate differences among countries with respect to drought conditions, soils, prices of agricultural inputs and outputs, rural-urban migration and the over-or under-use of technological innovations which can affect food security.

82. In response, the Secretariat informed the meeting that rural-urban, internal and external migration are incorporated in the model because the demographic and transition intensities estimated for the starting period as well as the assumed trends over the projection period take into account changes in migration and other demographic variables.

83. The Secretariat also emphasized the flexible nature of the model which enables the user to put in data and make assumptions which reflect the situation of the country he/she is dealing with. In fact, this is

the purpose of initializing the model for different countries.

(b) *External Challenges, Internal Initial Conditions and Elements of Comprehensive Strategy*

84. The Committee considered document entitled “External Challenges, Internal Initial Conditions and Elements of Comprehensive Strategy” (ECA/SRDC/SA/ICE/2000/7(b)) which focused on the following aspects:

- (i) the likely impacts of two major external challenges of globalisation and information technology revolution on African economic performance;
- (ii) internal initial conditions in Africa and Southern Africa at the dawn of the century in such major challenges as “initial income, inequality and poverty”, “production and export structure and structural transformation”, “growth and required investment”, “human capital formation”, and “scientific and technology capacity”.

85. It is important to note that African countries face serious external challenges in spite of some perceived benefits from greater integration to the global economy through potential linkages such as increased trade, efficient allocation of global savings via integrated capital markets, and improved access to knowledge and technology. The global economy has become more interdependent as a result of globalization and the rules of international trade in the context of the WTO regime. In this regard, African countries would find it increasingly difficult to protect their domestic markets for infant industry. At the same time, there are increased pressures to further liberalize their domestic markets thereby making it difficult to catch up with the developed world in a similar way as for East and Southeast Asian countries. Moreover, protection of intellectual property rights pre-empted duplicative imitation of foreign technologies, which can lead to innovation and thus made it costly to assimilate and adapt these technologies.

86. Although there have been substantial progresses on economic reforms including macro-economic stabilization and liberalization, Africa enters the 21st century as the poorest, with the lowest physical and human capital accumulation, and the most technologically backward region with a rather dim prospect about its future. Africa, which accounts for 12.5 percent of the world’s population, produces only 3.7 per cent of the global GDP and trades goods and services less than 1.5 per cent of the global trade. Africa has the worst income distribution in the world – the richest 20 per cent of the population in the world receive 51 per cent of total expenditure while the poorest 20 per cent receive only 5 per cent. Moreover, 43.5 per cent of the African population were living below a real poverty line of \$39 per person per month.

87. To probe the issue of poverty alleviation and required growth in the Continent and the Southern Africa region, the paper reports the required investment rates to achieve the international development goal of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015. According to the Economic Report on Africa 2000 (ECA), the required investment to enable a GDP growth rate of 6.2 per cent (necessary to obtain the goal of

reducing poverty by half) per annum for Southern Africa would be about 38 per cent of GDP. This needs to be compared with the current investment rate of 18 per cent of GDP. In the area of human capital, progress in education and health made in Africa over the last half a century notwithstanding, both the quality and volume of human capital formation is widely acknowledged as being grossly insufficient to achieve active innovation and adaptation essential to increase productivity and competitiveness.

88. Despite all this, it could be argued that the prevailing conditions within the African continent did not preclude a take-off to rapid and sustained growth. There were emerging signs of a new awareness and determination on the part of many African leaders to pursue new approaches and some countries were enjoying success in contrast to their own recent past. It was important to build on these successes in order to play a firm foundation for long-term development. Moreover, the continent had a lot of scope for more effective use of its resources for development.

89. Reforming the African economies to enable them to adjust with the changing economic and political environment was vital and long over due. But the emphasis on macro economic stability through deflationary measures failed to address the fundamental structural constraints. The development challenges and constraints facing the majority of African countries at the dawn of the new century were complex and multidimensional-involving economic, socio-cultural, political and environmental factors and could not be adequately addressed through separate and isolated interventions. This was compounded by the high population growth rates which, combined with low incomes, had resulted in low or negative per capita income growth rates and high dependency ratios.

90. Taking these factors into account, an important consideration in formulating a development strategy for Africa was the recognition that these challenges and constraints required a broad-based integrated/comprehensive approach that could address all the key issues in a co-ordinated manner. There was currently a growing consensus in the development community that such an approach must go beyond relying solely on markets for resource allocation and the attainment of dynamic growth and development. One of the essential messages was that dynamic growth and development could be achieved through active participation in the global economy by African countries. This would require a major effort by African Governments and their development partners as well as political will to undertake the requisite action to reverse the long-term processes of marginalization and exclusion that had underpinned the continent's poor economic performance in the past.

91. The Committee was concerned about whether Africa is having some benefits from the globalization, given the analysis provided in the report. They were further concerned about the reported decline of agriculture share in GDP without a concomitant increase in the manufacturing sector, but rather an increase of the service sector.

92. The representative of the ECA secretariat informed the meeting that in terms of direct benefits Africa was not having any so far. However, he indicated that Africa needed more focus in its development

strategies to take full benefits of the globalization process. He emphasized the need for African countries to increase value added in their products by transforming their economic structure away from low value added primary products towards resource based industries including agro-processing products. The meeting was further informed that the predominance of the service sector in African economies at this stage of their development is an indication of what is being called as defective transformation, which is inconsistent with the historically observed stylized facts. This structural disarticulation was further confirmed by the stagnation in sectoral employment.

93. The Committee expressed concern about the fact that the required growth and investment scenarios on Africa's development do not take into consideration the views and development activities being undertaken by IGOs and other development institutions at subregional levels. Participants were of the opinion that the figures presented in the report on Africa's initial conditions and external challenges may not fully reflect the fact that Africa has enormous potential which is not being fully utilized. The meeting suggested in this respect that cross-fertilization approach should be used by ECA and other development institutions in such a way that what was seen as weakness in one country could become strength in another country.

94. The Committee took note of the report in the light of the above observations.

(c) Development Management Division: Programme of Work for 2000: Core Activities

95. The Committee was briefed on the ECA Development Management Division (DMD) Programme of Work for 2000 contained in document ECA/SRDC/SA/ICE/2000/(7(c)). The five core activities were: Regional Workshops on Governance Indicators; Consultative Meeting on : Forum for Appointed Elected Parliamentarians on their role in Development Management; Participation in Development and Governance in Africa: Revisiting the Practices and Processes (ARUSHA+10); Strategic Framework for Designing and providing Support Services to enhance Regional and Global Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Africa; and Strengthening the Effectiveness of Financial Resources Management by Regional and Local Governments.

96. In the discussions that ensued, participants raised issues regarding governance indicators being developed by the ECA. The SADC Secretariat informed the meeting of the SADC Regional Human Development Report which was prepared by the Southern African Political Economy Series (SAPES) in Harare for SADC and UNDP and which included the development of good governance indicators. The meeting was also informed that the 1999 volume was under preparation. In forging effective partnership on this project, the ECA Secretariat was advised to involve SADC Parliamentary Forum in the implementation of this important project.

G. Reports by Cooperating Partners: (DBSA, SADC, FAO and PAID-ESA)

(Agenda item 8)

97. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered statements by representatives from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Food and Agriculture Regional Office (FAO) and Pan African Institute for Development in Eastern and Southern Africa (PAID-ESA).

98. Dr. Stephen Mcube, a representative of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) thanked the ECA and the SRDC-SA for inviting his organisation to participate in the ICE and NICI Meetings. He expressed continued interest of the BDSA, through its Development Information Business Unit (DIBU), to participate in the activities and initiatives of ECA as a whole and SRDC-SA in particular. He informed the Committee that the DIBU has a well-developed record of excellence in providing usable knowledge in various areas of socio-economic development information. He took advantage of the important meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) and presented a set of publications on the South Africa 2020 Foresight, and the latest publication on a Comparative Analysis of Economic Development in the nine provinces of South Africa. He hoped that the SRDC-SA would find the publications useful in its work.

99. The representative of SADC Secretariat, Dr. Athaliah Molokomme, acknowledged the action taken by the ECA SRDC-SA to develop an effective mechanism for co-ordination between ECA and the RECs in order to increase synergy among their respective programmes. This is reflected in the inclusion of SATCC in the development of a common road transport development programme with COMESA and ECA, under the broader umbrella of African Road Safety Initiative. SADC Secretariat also welcomed the prospect of developing a joint SADC-ECA Report on Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa. Future areas of collaboration under discussion include technical assistance from the ECA in the preparation of the 1999 SADC annual report, the development of a model on how to bring about an economic growth rate of more than 6.2 per cent that is required to reduce poverty according to ECA estimates.

100. In the field of gender equality, the SADC presentation shared the policy and institutional framework for gender in SADC, as well as some of the achievements and constraints in the implementation of the Plan of Action for Gender in SADC. SADC also expressed concern at the absence of a clear mechanism for the participation of IGOs at UN international conferences as reflected in the African Regional Conference for Women in Addis Ababa in November, 1999 and the Beijing + 5 Review to be held in New York in June, 2000. SADC underlined the importance of working out a more concrete strategic partnership framework of cooperation between the ECA and SADC. In this regard, the presentation shared the partnership framework developed in 1998 between SADC and UNDP in the area of gender equality. SADC Secretariat looks forward to deepening the cooperation with the ECA SRDC-SA in this field, with a view to ensuing better coordination of their programmes. This would avoid unnecessary duplication and wastage of resources, and enhance the impact of interventions.

101. The FAO representative, Dr. Fouda Onambele, addressed the Committee on the importance of developing new initiatives in the information sector; supporting existing initiatives; and developing a Plan of Action for Africa in the Information Age. He stressed the importance of information technology as the axis on which total transformation, development and ideas revolves. However, lack of resources made it difficult for most African countries to benefit from information technology. Consequently, he appealed to donors to assist African countries on acquisition of information technology through grants so that the debt burden for African countries was not worsened.

102. He underlined the involvement of all stakeholders in developing a plan of action for Africa in information Age and that they should develop programmes that would enhance communication. There was need for resources and strategies to support the implementation of the Plans of Action.

103. The FAO representative then briefed the Committee on FAO's activities on information. He referred to a quotation of the Director-General of FAO, Dr. Jacques Diouf in his foreword to the FAO's Corporate Communication Policy and Strategy: "As we approach the new millennium, our increasingly globalized world seems more than ever divided between those suffering from information overload and the millions of others with little or no access to information. The challenge to FAO, therefore, is to ensure that its information and corporate messages reach its targeted audiences and partners, using the new communication tools and technologies in the most cost effective way". He then gave examples of established information programmes/activities of FAO which included: The World Agricultural Information Centre (WAICENT) as a strategic programme for agricultural information, management and dissemination; the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS) providing extensive data bases, tools, guidelines, references and contacts; Emergency Prevention System for Trans-boundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES); and the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) for compiling and exchanging information that was essential for providing regular bulletins on food crop production and markets at the global level, as well as situation reports on regional and country-by-country basis.

104. In his presentation, the Director of PAID-ESA, Dr. L. Banga, explained the mission of PAID-ESA as a whole which is concerned with management training research and consultancy for the whole of Africa, South of the Sahara. He explained that PAID-ESA was one of the four Regional Institutes of PAID which was founded in 1964, with PAID-ESA starting operations in 1979 and covers nineteen countries in Eastern and Southern Africa.

105. Dr. Banga outlined the scope of work and activities of PAID-ESA which largely constitutes the running of twelve courses on average, per year comprising long (9 month) post-graduate and undergraduate diploma courses in Project Management, Higher Diploma in District Health Management and short needs-specific, tailor-made courses in other management areas. Other activities include consultancy services, research services, and collaboration with ECA and ECA/SRDC/SA in particular.

106. Among the areas of collaboration with ECA are the Fifth Meeting of ICE; Forum on Policy

Options for Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs in Eastern and Southern Africa in June, 1999, Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania; and Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, November 1999, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

107. With regard to collaboration with ECA/SRDC/SA, he highlighted two workshops which were planned for implementation in 1999 but were postponed due to lack of funding. These were two High Level Awareness Raising Workshops on Issues in the Nexus of Population, Food Security and Environment which were respectively planned for High Level Planners and Implementers.

108. He also underscored the importance of the theme: Globalization and the Information Age. In highlighting the importance of information and communication, Dr. Banga outlined the problems which include the poor state of the communication infrastructure in most countries in the region. The age of the existing infrastructure which has resulted in very high maintenance and operations costs, and finally, the resulting high cost of communication services per person or organization in the region. In this regard, he updated the delegates on progress that PAID-ESA made on its IT Services and programme.

109. Concluding his presentation, Dr. L. Banga expressed his appreciation of the cooperation taking place between PAID-ESA and ECA/SRDC-SA, for it fits one of the Guiding principals of PAID, which is:

<to further, by all lawful means available to it, the economic, social and cultural development of the countries of Africa to enable African Officials to assume responsibility at various levels for the tasks to be carried out among the people in order to promote their development and improve their levels of living>

110. The Committee recognised the good work done by PAID-ESA. However, it observed that there was need to improve its publicity so that the institution is better known.

H. Regional Priorities and Programme of Work of ECA/SRDC-SA (Agenda item 9)

111. The Meeting considered the document entitled “Work Programme for the Biennium: 2000- 2001 and the Medium Term Plan for 2002 to 2005. (ECA/SRDC/SA/ICE/2000/9. Regarding the 2000–2001 Biennium Work Programme, the SRDC-SA activities were under the sub-programme “Support to Subregional Activities for Development.” As in the previous biennium, the 2000-2001 work programme activities of the Centre aimed at promoting regional cooperation and integration in Southern Africa by:

- ?? Providing effective technical support to the RECs and member States in implementing priority community programmes; and
- ?? Providing a forum to facilitate networking and dialogue among public sector, civil society, private sector and development partners;
- ?? Facilitating integration activities of the United Nations system and specialized agencies, in

- collaboration with UNDP and the United Nations Resident Coordinator System at national level;
- ?? Strengthening ECA's outreach in Southern Africa.

112. Detailed activities were provided in the document presented to the meeting. These included meetings of the ICE, collaboration with RECs and other institutions, advisory services to member States, studies, workshops, ad-hoc expert group meetings and publications by the Centre.

113. The core activities to be carried out in 2000 were: Coordination of National Mechanisms for Economic Cooperation and Integration in Southern Africa; Gender Networking in Southern Africa; a Subregional Roundtable Conference on Relations between the Public and Private Sectors; a Framework for Accelerated Development of Small-Scale Mining in the SADC region; and Development of Efficient, Safe and Integrated Transport Systems in Eastern and Southern Africa.

114. The Secretariat called on the Meeting to consider constituting an Advisory Board to be involved in and assist the Centre on certain activities to ensure that the activities of the Centre effectively responded to the needs of member States and the subregion as whole. The Secretariat further appealed to member States and development partners to provide financial and/or human resources to support the implementation of planned activities, especially with regard to workshops, seminars and other training activities. Member States were also called upon to make contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD).

115. Regarding the 2000-2005 proposed Medium Term Plan, the focus was on the following aspects of regional cooperation and integration: efficient management of the economy through good governance; harmonization of macro-economic policies; promotion of trade and investment; integration of gender in all development programmes; integration of nexus issues of population, food security and environment in all development programmes; development of safe, efficient and integrated transport and communication infrastructure and services; and more efficient exploitation of mineral, energy and water resources.

116. It was expected that the implementation of activities in the above focus areas would by the end of the plan period result in: significantly enhanced capacity of the institutional mechanisms for regional integration in the subregion; greater coordination and harmonization of development policies and programmes of the countries in the subregion; increased participation of population of the populations as a whole (especially women) in all aspects of development activities; and increased impact of the activities of the UN system in general, and ECA in particular, in the subregion.

117. The Committee re-iterated the use of information and communication technology by member States as tool to enhance efficiency and cost savings through the use of the Internet, e-commerce and other technologies which will reduce travel costs. The use of educational data network is also useful because it reaches larger populations and therefore provides more efficient coverage. The Committee therefore

recommended that the use of ICTs should be one area of focus in the SRDC-SA work programme for this period. Member States would, however, require support to implement the use of ICTs.

118. In response, the Director reaffirmed ECA's support to the process of regional integration. The current NICI workshop was therefore a follow-up to the African Development Forum and in recognition of the importance of Information and Communication Technology.

119. Commenting on the Medium-Term Plan 2000-2005, the Committee raised the issue of including in the work programme a self-financing mechanism for Regional Economic Communities. The Director pointed out that in addition to the role played by the Regional Integration and Co-operation Division, for sustainability in programme implementation, the issue of a self-sustaining mechanism will be incorporated into the Centres' work programme for Regional Economic Communities.

120. Responding to a request for member States to propose a theme for the next economic report, the Committee proposed the theme "Enhancing and Strengthening Information Infrastructure and Processes for Accelerated Development". The Committee further recommended that ECA should commission a study on modalities to assist member States to effectively strengthen their information system. The output from the study would provide a useful input into the Tenth African Conference of Information Ministers and the Radio and Television Networking in Africa Workshop, both of which will be hosted by Zambia in the year 2001.

121. The Committee sought clarification on a modality to address duplication between COMESA and SADC in the implementation of activities in the subregion. The Director responded that ECA supports the implementation of programmes by IGOs (RECs) and these programmes are decided upon by their member States. Where duplication is found to occur, as in the case of the transport sector, the ECA facilitated harmonization.

122. The Committee observed that the part of the work programme beyond 2001 did not spell out specific programme areas and did not include the issue of gender. The Director clarified that UN programmes are biennial and budgeted for accordingly. Therefore, the medium-term programme is presented in broad general areas and in the event that gender was excluded, it would be included.

I. National Planning for Information and Communication Technology in Southern Africa
(Agenda item 10)

123. The Committee considered a paper entitled, "The Process of Developing National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) in Africa". Prompted by the advancement of information and communication technologies, development aid-led ICT initiatives and widespread use of the Internet, a number of African countries had introduced a wide range of policies and national strategies during the last three years. Half of the African countries had already embarked on the development and implementation of

national information and communication plans. However, the impact of these policies was visible only to a few because an overwhelming majority of Africans had yet to access basic communication services. Although the last two years witnessed a growing understanding of the needs for universal access, lack of clear direction, inadequate resources and limited political readiness had continued to widen the gap between policy objectives and actions and between expectations and realizations. The paper discussed the driving forces for, the status and implication of emerging broad-based national information and communication policies in the Southern African subregion. Based on data gathered by the Economic Commission for Africa, the World Bank and the International Telecommunication Union and using some of the recent opinions, it presented an analysis of the situation and proposed policy directions for building national and regional information and communication infrastructure in Southern Africa.

124. Advances in information and communication technologies were transforming the way people worked, learned, lived and were creating a new infrastructure for business and wealth creation, scientific research, and social interaction. The opportunities provided by new information and communication technologies (ICTs) had captured not only the attention of developed nations that hitherto built the underlying infrastructure and created an educated citizenry capable of seizing the benefits of a knowledge society but also developing nations that are striving to “catch up”. Although developing nations, especially sub-Saharan African countries, vary considerably from developed countries in the primacy of infrastructure use over technology production, the extent of social and economic development and the level of basic infrastructure development information and communication technologies could provide an opportunity to “leapfrog” some of their development steps.

125. ICTs would facilitate the delivery of basic services such as education and health in Africa. Business in African countries could “leapfrog” into the mainstream of development, because ICTs offered opportunities to buy and sell to customers without limitation of boundary. ICTs offered enormous potential for enhancing employment opportunities, improving universities’ capacities to deal with their recurrent education crisis, helping research institutions to excel in science and technology and making government more responsive and accessible to the needs of its citizens. With limited mobilisation of government’s efforts, without a cohesive and coherent strategy on information infrastructure, with inadequate resources and without a sense of purpose in using ICTs, it will be difficult for developing countries to capture the benefits of the new technologies.

126. The last ten years has witnessed a growing government attention to information and communication technologies and strategies for ICT applications. Prompted by the United States Global/National Information Infrastructure Agenda that was introduced in the early 1990s, many countries and regions have developed elaborate policies, plans and strategies. Although the labels vary from country to country, these strategies have a similar intent- they address the need for proactive steps to meet the challenges of the global information society by building capabilities well beyond the current information and communications infrastructure. The Canadian Government referred to those strategies as “information highway”, the United States referred to it either as “National Information Infrastructure” or the “Global

Information Infrastructure". Europe used the term "information society," and to Japan such a proactive strategy was the "advanced information infrastructure" of the "intellectually creative society of the 21st Century." African countries had also begun to develop their national information and communication infrastructure plans (NICI).

127. The Committee raised a number of issues regarding national information and communication infrastructure plans. It was indicated that providing access to rural areas is the main challenge in the SADC subregion. It was also highlighted that the key issue is not the technology but rather the appropriate policy, regulatory framework, infrastructure and resources. It was noted that various universal services and models had already been developed ranging from rural cooperatives to setting up Universal Service Agency as in the case of South Africa. There are a number of innovative techniques to address the resources issues including the use of private sector and community groups to deploy networks in rural areas, levying taxes on public goods, special rates for schools and clinics, etc.

128. It was noted that some countries found it difficult to define the most optimal privatization route in the telecommunications sector. It was not clear whether privatization was the only answer to increase tele-density. Experience in Mauritius showed that government should develop a long-term plan and develop pertinent strategy. South Africa emphasizes social obligation with strategic equity partner.

129. The Committee also raised issues of regional connectivity and new models for deployment of a subregional backbone. It was noted that national backbones should emerge first. It was important to develop subregional backbone based on economic grouping. Efforts by ComTel and SADC to build a regional backbone should be encouraged.

130. The Committee also noted the need to develop country specific national information and communication policies and plans. Information and communication technologies were knowledge intensive, thus, there was a need for NICI plans to take into account the development and content and applications and to target key user groups. The National Information and Communication Policy must respond to overall development goals.

J. Any Other Business (Agenda item 11)

131. The Committee observed that not all member States of the ECA/SRDC-SA were represented in the Meeting and asked whether there were any apologies. The secretariat replied that two countries were absent, namely: Angola and Mozambique, and that there was no apology received from them.

K. Date and venue of the Next Meeting (Agenda item 12)

132. The Minister of Information and Broadcasting from Malawi, Hon. Stambuli, MP, offered that Malawi would host the next ICE Meeting. The Committee warmly welcomed this offer and

agreed that the Seventh Meeting of ICE will be held in Malawi in the first quarter of 2001. The exact venue and date would be agreed upon in consultation between the Secretariat and the Government of the Republic of Malawi.

L. Adoption of the Report (Agenda item 13)

133. The Committee adopted the draft report after amendments.

M. Closure of the Meeting (Agenda item 14)

134. The Director of the SRDC-SA thanked the Government of the Republic of Namibia for hosting the ICE and the excellent hospitality extended to all participants; the Ministers from Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia for joining the experts; participants and cooperating partners for their support; and the Divisions at ECA headquarters for the strong support, especially the cooperation with DISD in organizing the ICE and NICI Subregional Workshop.

135. He informed the Committee that the SRDC-SA would follow up to implement the decisions of the meeting. The ICE Report would be submitted to the ECA Ministerial Follow-up Committee which would meet in Abuja, Nigeria from 1-5 May 2000. The Centre would also take steps to organize a workshop on the Study on the Impact of Crime on Social and Economic Development in Southern Africa. In this regard, he called for support from member States in terms of hosting the workshop and ensuring that relevant experts from the countries participate at the work.

136. Finally, the Director thanked the Government of the Republic of Malawi for offering to host the Seventh ICE meeting early 2001.

137. In his closing remarks, Mr. Madume J. Kaulinge, Director of the National Planning Commission Secretariat in the Office of the President of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, thanked all the participants for their valuable contributions. He encouraged them to come back to Windhoek in their private capacities.

ANNEX

ICE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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