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ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE  
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REPORT OF THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED  
NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG  
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (TCDC)



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REPORT OF THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED  
NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG  
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (TCDC)

Resolution CM/Res.659(XXXI) of the Thiry-First Session  
of the OAU Council of Ministers inter alia:

1. CALLS on the OAU Administrative Secretary-General to convene as early as possible the preparatory meeting on TCDC;
2. URGES Member States of the Organization of African Unity;
  - to be represented at both this preparatory meeting and at the UN Conference on Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries at Ministerial level and, most appropriately by Ministers of Planning.
3. REQUESTS the OAU Administrative Secretary-General to submit a report on the out come of this Conference to the next Session of the Council of Ministers .

Pursuant to this resolution, the OAU Administrative Secretary-General convened a Preparatory Meeting of Member States in Buenos Aires from 25 to 28 August 1978, while the UN Conference on TCDC was held from 30 August to 12 September 1978.

The present report gives account of these two activities.

Part I deals with the running and the conclusions of the Preparatory Meeting and Part II is devoted to the UN Conference.

PART IOAU Preparatory Meeting on Technical Cooperation  
Among Developing Countries(Buenos Aires, 25-28 August, 1978)Introduction

This meeting afforded the OAU Member States the opportunity:

1. to conduct consultations before the UN Conference;
2. to adopt a common strategy aimed especially at supporting the basic concept of the TCDC by extending it to cover the wider context of International Economic Order for the realisation of the following objectives:
  - a) Promotion of the principle of self reliance of developing countries by highlighting their power of creativity so as to find solutions to their development problems.
  - b) Fostering and strengthening national and collective self-reliance of developing countries through exchanges of experiences, a share and common utilisation of their resources and a development of their supplementary capacities;
  - c) Strengthening of the capacity of developing countries to identify and analyse together their development problems and formulate the necessary policies and strategies in the conduct of their international economic relations and their negotiations taking place within the framework of the United Nations System, notably within the Plenary Committee for the Establishment of the New International Economic Order;

- d) Increase the size and improve the quality of the international cooperation and to render more effective the utilization of the resources devoted to the technical cooperation as a whole.

#### PARTICIPATION AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

2. Present at the meeting were representatives for the following Member States: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Empire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Sao Tome e Principe, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Upper Volta, Zaire and Zambia.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

3. The deliberations were presided over by Mr. Ibrahim A.O. Hamra, Director of Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan. The OAU General Secretariat was elected rapporteur.

#### AGENDA

4. The participants adopted the following agenda:
- OAU Secretary General's report on the OAU's policy on technical cooperation among Developing Countries.
  - Report of the ECA: Major out-lines of the regional meeting held in Addis Ababa in October 1976 and the Kuwait Declaration (May 1977), ECA actions in favour of the TCDC.
  - Consideration of the analytical agenda of the Buenos Aires Conference.
  - Statements by Member States on their national report.
  - Definition of a common strategy.
  - Measures for the implementation of the OAU Resolution CM/Res.657(XXXI)
  - Any other business.

The participants were provided with the following documents:

- I. OAU Secretary General's report on OAU's policy relating to the TCDC.
- II. OAU Resolution CM/Res.659(XXXI).
- III. Inter African Convention on the establishment of a technical cooperation programme CM/Res.513.
- IV. Report of the OAU Executive Secretariat in Geneva on measures for the implementation of Resolution CM/Res.657(XXXI)
- V. Provisional Agenda of the United Nations Conference on TCDC UN Document A/CONF.79/1.
- VI. Draft Plan of Action on the promotion and realisation of the TCDC UN Document A/CONF.79/5.

#### OAU's POLICY RELATING TO TCDC

5. To facilitate the consideration of this item, the meeting was provided with a document presented by the OAU General Secretariat.

6. Presenting this document the OAU Director for Technical Cooperation recalled the background and the aims of Inter-African Technical Cooperation, the text of the Inter-African Technical Cooperation as well as the means at his disposal. He highlighted the present action being undertaken by the OAU and the UNDP in favour of the newly African Independent States. Finally, he laid emphasis on Afro-Arab Cooperation and its conditions.

7. During the debates that ensued the delegates recognised, in general, that the TCDC was not a new concept. OAU's activities show that Developing States should first and foremost rely on their own forces and resources. The TCDC would then be made more dynamic and strengthened both qualitatively and quantitatively. This strengthening should constitute an important factor for any future development strategy.

8. The importance of the TCDC within the context of a New International Economic Order was stressed in all the Statements made including especially the speech of the Algerian Resident Ho. ari Boumedienne, the 1977 Kuwait Declaration and the Algiers Economic Charter.

9. Regarding the United Nations and its specialised Agencies, the delegates emphasised the need for them to increase their technical capacity and gradually participate in the TCDC by strengthening their structures.

10. As for the OAU, it should also reinforce its rôle within the TCDC and cooperate further with the ECA and the UN Specialised Agencies.

11. The question of financing the Technical Cooperation Fund was raised. The general concensus was that both the United Nations and the Developing States should cooperate in the establishment of such a Fund.

#### ECA REPORT ON THE TCDC

12. Since there was no ECA representative at the meeting, this item was not discussed. The delegates strongly deplored that situation.

#### CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TCDC

13. On this item, the meeting heard a statement by Dr. Bernard Chidzero of Zimbabwe who was Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference.

14. Dr. Chidzero reviewed the different agenda items and stressed especially item 9 entitled "Adoption of a plan of Action for the Promotion and realisation of the TCDC". The draft contained in document A/CONF.79/5 was submitted to Member States as working and negotiation document. It is therefore incumbent upon those states to discuss it and improve on it if they wish.

15. Delegates who took the floor during the debate requested that the Draft Plan of Action should take into consideration certain documents such as the Report of the 77, the Kuwait Declaration and the Report presented by the OAU General Secretariat.

16. It was therefore necessary to include a number of priorities: Transport and Communications, Employment, Education and Training.

17. A Working party composed of Ethiopia, Egypt, Mali and Tunisia was set up to prepare a report on it for the meeting's consideration. The working party's report is attached to this report as Annex III.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBER STATES ON THEIR NATIONAL REPORTS ON THE TCDC

18. Views were exchanged on this item. The OAU General Secretariat recalled that it had already received the said reports from 4 Member States.

#### DEFINITION OF A COMMON STRATEGY

19. It emerged from the debates that, as stipulated in the OAU Resolution CM/Res.659(XXXI), the main question was to fit the TCDC in the search for a New International Economic Order. OAU Member States, in referring to this Resolution and the Kuwait Declaration, should take steps to ensure that developing countries and the International Community consider that although important actions were being taken among developing countries to secure technical cooperation, nevertheless, support from developed countries, regional, inter-regional and international institutions was equally necessary. TCDC should therefore be provided with the necessary means for the attainment of its objectives.

#### MEASURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OAU RESOLUTION CM/Res.657(XXXI)

20. Presenting the document, the representative of the General Secretariat intimated that the Resolution was the result of the decisions adopted at the 3rd Ministerial Meeting of the Group of

77 held in Manilla and at the Conference on Economic Cooperation Among Developing Countries. He informed the meeting of the actions taken by the UNCTAD and the assistance provided by the UNDP. He suggested that OAU Preparatory Meeting, Member States should Prononce themselves on the question.

21. During the debates, delegates insisted that UN Member countries should increase their support for the UN General Secretariat, including the UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNEP and UNDP as well as for the Specilised Agencies and Regional Commissions.

#### ANY OTHER MATTERS

22. After the necessary consultations, the participants agreed to present, on behalf of the African Group, the following candidatures for posts which had been assigned to Africa within the Bureau of the Conference:

- 5 Vice-Chairmen: Nigeria, Burundi, Libya, Mauritius and Zambia.
- Chairman of the Main Comission Dr. Abdel Razzak Abdel Meguid, Egyptian Minister of Planning.

#### CLOSING SESSION

23. After all the agenda items had been considered, the Chairman thanked the participants, the OAU General Secretariat and Dr. Chidzero for their assistance and declared the meeting closed.

#### CONCLUSION

24. All the participants unanimously recognised the need for such a meeting which enabled them to consider in-depth the various questions to be tackled by the United Nations Conference on TCDC. They also succeeded in adopting a common strategy. In this way, they faced their opposit numbers of the Group of 77 with almost identical point of view.



25. It is also relevant to mention that Dr. Abdel Razzak Abdel Meguid Egyptian Minister of Planning had been Assistant Secretary General of the UN Conference on TCDC. He was therefore, sufficiently conversant with the question. This was extremely useful to us.

26. Pursuant to the decision taken at the Khartoum meeting, UNDP bore the charge of holding the African meeting, fees and per diem allowances of the delegates of states which had applied for them.

## PART II

### UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

30 August - 12 September 1978

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

About 140 UN Member States including 49 OAU Member States, the UN Council of Namibia, SWAPO, Pan-African congress of Azania, Zimbabwe Patriotic Front and several intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participated in that Conference.

The Conference was opened by the UN Secretary-General and H.E. Mr. VIDELA, President of the Republic of Argentina.

Apart from procedural matters and the election of officers, the agenda called for the consideration of two essential themes:

- Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, new dimension for the international development cooperation.
- Plan of Action for the Promotion and realisation of the TCDC.

The Conference set up one main Commission to consider the 2nd Theme and to submit a report to the plenary. The first Theme was examined in plenary in the form of general debate.

The following were elected officers of the Conference:

- Chairman: Argentina
- 19 Vice-Chairmen including 5 from Africa:  
Burundi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius,  
Nigeria and Zambia.
- Rapporteur: Canada

The Chairman of the main Commission was Mr. Abdal Razak Abdel Meguid, Egyptian Minister of Planning, which was in line with the proposals made by the OAU Preparatory Meeting.

## 2. TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: NEW DIMENSION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

As introduction to the item, the Conference's Secretariat prepared a working document A/CONF/79.6. Debates centered on 3 essential questions:

- What are the practical actions which would promote the use of the TCDC to satisfy specific development needs?
- How could the additional resources be mobilised to strengthen the TCDC?
- What machinery should be set up to follow-up the actions of the TCDC?

All the representatives - often of Ministerial ranks underlined the actions for Technical Cooperation between their States and other developing countries, thereby, having that the TCDC existed, in fact, for a long time at several levels, either bilateral or multilateral. The form of Technical Cooperation considered by the Conference should re-establish, increase or strengthen these cultural and technical exchanges. The idea of convening a world Conference rather than a Conference of only developing countries was to show that the economies of industrialised countries and those of developing countries should

be increasing by inter-dependence. The TCDC should neither perturb nor the trends of economic or technical exchanges existing between the North and the South but rather supplement and make them more dynamic.

Special emphasis was laid on the significant contribution which technical cooperation among developing countries could make to the economic development and the improvement of the Social situation of the peoples of these countries. This type of cooperation should strengthen the individual and collective self-reliance of developing countries. The TCDC would tend to replace the growing inter-dependence of nations of the world on a more just and therefore surer basis by reducing the dependence of developing countries on traditional technical cooperation.

Besides, several participants stressed that developed countries should not only continue to give, financial and other supports to the developing countries but increase them; technical cooperation among developing countries and the more traditional forms of assistance should be considered as complementary and not competitive.

It is therefore especially incumbent upon developing countries themselves to take appropriate measures to give this technical cooperation a new and strongly established dimension for the international development cooperation. This should be based on the principle of sovereignty, equality and true reciprocity of advantages.

The role of the United Nations System for development and particularly, of the UNDP as a catalysing agent for the promotion of technical cooperation among developing countries has often been highlighted. Several delegates paid tribute to the UNDP for its support for the regional meetings which preceded the Conference and the World Conference itself.

The delegates also recognised that the promotion of technical cooperation among developing countries could particularly contribute to the establishment of a New International Economic Order. It could make up, to some extent, for the disadvantages of developing countries strengthen their collective position and facilitate their optimum utilisation of their human and other resources. Developing countries possess considerable reserves, (but a greater part is still unexploited), of aptitude, competence and technical know-how which can and must be placed at the disposal of other countries. The supply of expert services and technical know-how is also of great interest not only to the beneficiary but also to the supplier because exchange of information on experience and know-how is reciprocal. The drift of qualified personnel to other countries, a phenomenon usually described as brain-drain, can be reduced or stopped if developing countries can, within the framework of technical cooperation, deliberately establish the practice of pooling together and sharing their human resources on just, equitable and reciprocal basis.

A large number of delegations were of the opinion that the notion of technical cooperation among developing countries constituted a historic necessity and would become the corner stone of a New International Economic Order.

It was generally recognised that several developing countries had themselves gathered an amount of experience on national utilisation, adaptation and creation of technical know-how, but that, for various reasons, that experience had not yet been sufficiently shared with other countries. This technical know-how, when combined with the local spirit of invention and a true understanding of the local situation, could constitute a vital factor for the cooperation considered at the conference.

### 3. PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE PROMOTION AND THE REALISATION OF THE TCDC

At the end of a lengthy discussion, the Conference adopted this document and decided that henceforth it would be called Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

It was presented in 2 parts:

(a) Part I - The objectives of the TCDC

- To promote self-reliance in developing countries so that the latter may find, new solutions to their development problems, which would meet their own aspirations, values and needs;
- To encourage and strengthen collective self-reliance in developing countries through exchanges of experience, pooling and sharing of their technical resources and development of their complementary capacities .

(b) Part II - A number of recommendations formulated on measures to take at the national, sub-regional and regional as well as inter-regional levels.

Finally, it must be emphasized that the Conference strongly recommended that all Governments, the whole UN Development system and the entire International Community should adopt the necessary measures for the success of the Plan.

This last resolution was a follow-up of a decision of the First Labour Ministers Conference of Non-aligned and Developing Countries held in Tunis in April 1978.

CONCLUSION

The following was the outcome of the UN Conference on TCDC. At its Twenty Ninth and Thirty-First Ordinary Sessions, the OAU Council of Ministers highlighted the TCDC as being a conscious, systematic and politically motivated process whose objective is to forge a multiplicity of links amongst developing countries. Nevertheless, given these results of the Conference, will it be expedient to wait any further? Surely the States participation was impressive and the level of African representation, appreciable. However, one cannot on this score alone draw a maximum benefit from these results.

The General Secretariat would consequently like to recommend to Member States to:

1. undertake an in-depth study on the Buenos Aires Plan of Action;
2. ensure its implementation both at the national and regional levels;
3. actively participate in the various TCDC meetings programmed by the UNDP and, if possible, by a Ministerial delegation;
4. request the OAU Secretary-General to submit to the next Council of Ministers a number of actions in the light of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, with a view to strengthening inter-African technical co-operation.



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