

**CATALYZING AND COORDINATING: ECA'S ROLE IN  
APPER MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Introduction: A Record Of Contribution

1. ECA has played an important role in stimulating and supporting national economic analysis, in providing continental overviews and in serving as a spokesperson for Africa on the international institutional scene for over a quarter of a century. Over that period it has pioneered a number of approaches, played a catalytic role in the creation of several sub-regional organisations and assisted in the organisation of several sub-regional pledging conferences notably with respect to transport and communications.
2. ECA has devoted considerable attention to the requirements for altered patterns of development and for structural change. The Monrovia Declaration and Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 are based in large part on ECA background material and - especially in the second case - collaboration with the OAU. In 1985-86 ECA - again in collaboration with the OAU, the ADB and African sub-regional organisations - has made significant inputs into APPER and to the African submission to the Special Session.

A Loss of Leadership

3. However, ECA has since 1980 not been able to maintain a perceived leadership position in thought and presentation about the crises and responses in African economies and in particular about their causes, consequences and requirements for renewed and altered programmes of action nationally, sub-regionally and globally. Like the more general African crises of which it is a part, this loss of a once established leadership role is the result of both external and internal causes about whose nature and interaction reasonable people can, and do, disagree. However, the immediate priority is to identify and act on ways and means

of reversing the downward trend.

4. Since 1981 virtually all work on SSA - both analytical and applied - has focused on the World Bank's AD report and its extended family. Much of that work has been critical and has led to substantial changes of focus but it has nonetheless taken AD - not the Lagos Plan nor the ongoing work of ECA - as its starting point. Similarly the IMF's traditional stabilisation model (which even the IMF agrees has a poor empirical record in Africa) and the World Bank's evolving structural adjustment/consultative group model have dominated responses to the crises. The exceptions have largely been national, e.g. the 1981-82 Botswana stabilisation, the 1983-85 Zimbabwe adjustment and - potentially - the 1986 Tanzania recovery programmes. Similarly ECA's sub-regional approach has tended to become static in content and to be overtaken by events. For whatever reasons, it is a fact that the greatest momentum and the most interesting developments of approach and of structures since 1980 have been by SADCC, the sub-regional group with which ECA has had the most limited catalytic and supportive roles. That fact was noted and ways of learning from it suggested at the 1980 OAU Summit leading to APPER.
5. Within the UN system there has been a welcome increase in interest in and contributions to overall analysis and contribution to understanding and meeting the African crises. The 1985 special issue of the Journal of Development Planning, Within Human Reach and - at operational level - the Emergency Office [**ARJ - please correct the title!**] are examples. These have involved Africans and are African concern focused. What they have lacked - for whatever reasons - is a coordinating and catalytic role by ECA and, indeed, any African set of core parameters, coordinates and road maps toward the future enunciated by and through ECA to which they could relate.
6. The present need is not for either recrimination nor for jurisdictional disputes. Quite the contrary. It is for strengthening ECA to allow it to resume its traditional role and for facilitating relationships among national and sub-regional initiatives in Africa as well as those of UN institutions in an African catalyzed and coordinated way. APPER and the Special Session show some initial signs of such stabilisation and

structureal adjustment of ECA's role. These need to be built upon in their monitoring and implementation.

What Is To Be Done?

7. ECA needs to develop a recognised catalytic, coordinating and spokesperson role in five main areas:
  - a. Followup to APPER/Special Session.
  - b. Articulating reconstruction and renewed development approaches in priority areas.
  - c. Highlighting special concerns and emergencies (e.g. locusts) promptly, cogently and compellingly (as, for whatever reasons, it did not do in respect to the 1979-1984 drought cycles).
  - d. Support national contributions to and achievement of room for manoeuvre within the Structural Adjustment/Consultative Group process.
  - e. Cooperate with and support Sub-Regional Institution monitoring, issue raising and negotiating initiatives.
  
8. To be fully effective in these roles ECA must transcend its own institutional base and coordinate African experience and knowledge broader and closer to the level of application than that of its own staff. Continued and closened collaboration with the OAU, the ADB, the five major (North, West, Central, Eastern and Southern, Southern) Sub-Regional Organisations and with selected national experts will - as illustrated in the APPER, Special Session process - be absolutely critical to successful fulfillment of the tasks and roles set out in the previous paragraph.

Monitoring And Followup

9. ECA should prepare an annual report covering:
  - a. performance in respect to APPER goals;
  - b. monitoring of Special Session resolution commitments/statements of intent;
  - c. Consultative Group, national programme evolution;
  - d. major new developments (debt or locusts, small farmer support services or agricultural resources, regional coordination or economic destabilisation);
  - e. perspectives on the following year and three years.
10. It should be - say - 50 pages with an eye-catching cover, an executive summary, visually effective boxes, tables, graphs. (Initially it need not duplicate the World Bank's statistical coverage although it should select from that and from UNICEF's social and human indicator coverage and add other key data.) It should appear in August/September in time for the Bank/Fund Meetings as well as the General Assembly. These points are not trivial - unless well presented and timely no document, however intellectually and programmatically sound, will be effective.
11. Close collaboration with OAU is essential if the report is to have the effective political backing of ECA's member states (a two way street). Close liaison with the ADB and with sub-regional institutions is needed to increase and to achieve timeliness in data (statistical, problem identification, programme evolution, analytical) coverage and breadth of thought and proposals. Using a small group of nationally based African experts to assist in writing and editing - as with the Special Session documentation - should become an institutionalised part of the process.

Articulating Approaches

12. Gaps in reconstruction and renewed development articulation are evident in many sectors and sub-sectors. On others present articulations are fairly clearly inadequate and/or lack serious African input (one reason in several cases for their palpable inadequacy).
13. ECA can and should organise and serve as secretariat for expert groups for sectoral articulations. Sectors worthy of priority attention include: raising small farmer output (with special attention to supporting services, relevant research, learning from farmers, farmer self organisation in initiative); human dimensions of adjustment (including their short and long term production and socio-political aspects); basic services in development (concrete interactions of universal access basic services, e.g. education, health, water, extension with human and production development); exports (roles in development, limitations of present export base, practicable methods to broadening and deepening export base).
14. One approach would be for ECA to:
  - a. secure approval of one or two new sectors a year for articulation;
  - b. prepare background papers for a meeting of ECA-OAU-ADB-5 Main Sub-Regional Bodies and selected national experts to identify parameters and guidelines;
  - c. service a working group of - say 10 - experts (half ECA, half individual Africans) to prepare inputs into, meet on and agree a report;
  - d. consult with broader group noted at "b";
  - e. publish a monograph length report and include a summary and highlights in Annual Report.

### Focusing Attention

15. Africa does not face one static crisis but a series of evolving, overlapping crises. These need to be presented by a broader than national body and from broader than national or sub-regional perspectives. They also need to be presented to the international community primarily by and from Africa.
  
16. Three such crisis require attention as of 1986:
  - a. locusts (which can, unless prompt action is taken, equal the 1979-84 drought cycle in famine, misery and economic disintegration impact);
  
  - b. debt (where the World Bank, Institute for International Economics, ACMS work needs to be built on and transmuted into an operational African approach integrally linked to reconstruction and renewed development);
  
  - c. South Africa's destructive engagement in Southern Africa and the economic liberation ways and means of overcoming it (where SADCC, FLS work could benefit from ECA professional and presentational support).
  
17. The broad procedural format at Para 14 is relevant here too, but would require a shorter time scale - preferably 6 to 12 months with an interim report after 3. Further, the particular critical actors to be involved, e.g. SADCC, FLS, locust control organisations, ACMS/AACB would vary from issue to issue.

### The Consultative Group Process

18. Whether wholly desirable or not, the Consultative Group process has become central to African states' and (at least in some cases) Sub-Regional Organisations' securing major external technical and financial support. The main channels are UNDP Round Tables and World Bank Consultative Groups with nationally or sub-regionally convened groups of external cooperating partners (e.g. ZIMCORD, SADCC Annual Consultative Conference) a somewhat more self reliant alternative.

19. ECA and ADB to date have been at best peripherally involved in these processes. Given their experience, data base and professional staff this both weakens the African sides in the individual negotiations and fails to achieve a coordinated African approach to the consultative group/programme adoption/pledging/monitoring process.
20. Neither ECA nor ADB can assume a leadership role. That would not be acceptable to African states nor would it be appropriate. National programmes must be basically nationally not externally (even externally African) based or they will (and deserve to) fail. But ECA, jointly with ADB, should offer support to African states in preparation for Consultative Group, Round Table, Paris Club and similar meetings. Where desired by the state or Sub-Regional Organisation concerned, they should stand ready to prepare major background papers and to participate in the meetings.

#### Supporting Sub-Regional Work

21. Sub-regional organisations can and should be carrying out functions at their level analagous to those sketched above for ECA. In varying degrees several are doing so. For example, SADCC has an annual regional economic survey, working groups on some sectoral areas and on at least one (destructive engagement by South Africa and ways to counter it) emerging crisis and an annual consultative group process.
22. ECA should broaden and refocus its relationships with Sub-Regional Organisations to provide concrete support to and, where appropriate, coordination among sub-regions of such work. Clearly the initiatives and the bulk of the work must be sub-regional and coordinated national. Neither bureaucratic dominance from Addis Ababa nor provision of complete packaged technical units or programmes would be either generally welcome or productive. But ECA should make known its interests in providing concrete support, in channelling information among sub-regional bodies and - where appropriate - coordinating their approaches and should make response to requests a priority.

23. To launch such a process ECA might consider convening a consultative meeting of key regional organisations (Mahgreb, ECOWAS, [ARJ - please get initials of Francophone West African one (think it may be CEAO)] UDEAC, Central Africa, PTA, SADCC) plus OAU, ADB, ACMS/AACB, IDEP to discuss parameters and ways and means for work in this field.

Note to ARJ

(only)

This is all very well. It is plausible, perhaps placatory. It could in fact be done. If Chidzero or Jamal or Delphin Rwegasira or Phil Ndegwa (or even ARJ or RHG!) headed ECA I'd have some faith in its having a real chance of happening. "For whatever reasons" it has no chance with the incumbent. See my separate note on that topic.