



Economic Commission for Africa
Commission économique pour l'Afrique

Date: 18 March 2000

Ref: ECA/RCID/LET/173/00

Dear Mr. Boulahya,

Subject: Definition of a new relationship between ECA and the Regional Development Institutions

It may be recalled that in May 1997 the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted resolution 827 (XXXII) as the final recommendations on the long-standing issue of rationalization and harmonization of ECA-sponsored institutions and called for their implementation by the member States in close cooperation with ECA. By the same resolution, the Conference also endorsed a proposal for ECA to redefine its relationship between it and the institutions.

In consequence, a report on the new relationship was submitted to the ECA Conference of Ministers in May 1999 for information. ECA subsequently revised the report to ensure that the new categorization proposals, while taking into account the on-going rationalization process particularly in terms of the proposed mergers of certain institutions, were not totally predicated on the final outcome of this process, which is likely to require time to materialize. Following this exercise, which was carried out in full consultation with the senior management team of ECA, we feel it imperative to inform all the institutions concerned about the decisions ECA has now made on the nature of its future relationships with them.

For your information, the modalities applied in ascertaining the new relationship with each institution is briefly described as follows. We began by first reviewing the current list of ECA-sponsored institutions, which numbers about thirty. The current reality in ECA's relationship with many of the institutions suggested that it was necessary to remove the following kinds of institutions from the list.

- ◆ Those which are already self-dependent or have long been independent of ECA;
- ◆ Those that have virtually ceased to function; and
- ◆ The Associations: these consist of a **grouping** or a **networking** of several like-minded professional entities or organisations promoting their common objectives and interests.

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Additionally, the criteria previously approved by the ECA Conference of Ministers (i.e. relevance to ECA's strategic focus; functionality; and regular support by member States) were used to inform the future relationship of the remaining institutions. In this context, two main categories of institutions were identified. The **first category** consists of institutions maintaining close cooperation and statutory links with ECA. In this regard, ECA would only serve, in addition to its membership of the Executive Board, as an *ex-officio* member on the Governing Council, particularly in those cases where ECA has served as Chairman of the Council or already committed itself to playing a vital role in policy-making bodies. However, it has been decided that, in future, ECA would no longer serve as Chairman to the Governing Councils of these institutions. This role would remain the primary responsibility of member States as the main stakeholders, owners and sponsors of their respective institutions. In this regard, the new relationship between ECA and the **first category** institutions would be based on the following principles:

- ◆ Complementarity and avoidance of duplication; the relationship would be developed on a predictable rather than ad hoc basis.
- ◆ Institutions need to be aware of the constraints of the UN programming procedures and, where feasible, joint activities would have to be planned in advance, as ECA may not have the latitude to change its work programme to accommodate late cooperative programmes from its partners.
- ◆ Relations should not be viewed as shifting responsibility for financial support from member States to ECA. Each institution would remain primarily accountable for its own work programme and to its member States. However, ECA would assist in mobilizing resources for joint programmes whenever possible.
- ◆ Most importantly, it is incumbent on member States, who are owners of the institutions, to provide the institutions with the support they need to function effectively by paying their assessed financial contributions consistently and in full, and by utilising the services of the centres.

A **second category** has been established for those institutions with which ECA will cease to maintain statutory relations. Thus, ECA's relations with such institutions would, whenever possible, be limited to participation in seminars, technical and non-policy meetings to which the secretariat may be invited. ECA would also continue to support efforts in the context of their on-going rationalization measures. For example, ECA is assisting in the merger of certain institutions. In the event that there is a successful outcome to such proposals, which involve some institutions both in the first and second categories, the new organization to emerge would most likely belong to the first category.



I would like to inform you that your institution falls under the **first category**. May I therefore request that the present statutes or constituent instrument of your centre be revised accordingly.

I would like to take this opportunity to express ECA's appreciation for the collaboration it has experienced with your institution. I do hope the changes as described herein will meet with your support and understanding concerning the difficult process of rationalization. It is our fervent wish that all such institutions are actively supported by their constituent members to thus empower them to fulfil the noble objectives for which they were established.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K.Y. Amoako', written in a cursive style.

K.Y. Amoako
Executive Secretary