

Report on the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa

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COMMUNICATIONS DECADE IN AFRICA

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The end of 1983 marked the conclusion of the first phase of the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (1978-1988). The Decade, for which the "lead agency" is the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) ^{1/}, is a unique experiment in that it concerns a single region of the globe, whereas previous United Nations "years" and "decades" have involved the international community as a whole. In taking the unprecedented decision to proclaim a decade for a single region, the General Assembly wished to emphasize the gravity of the transport and communications situation in Africa, compared with that in other regions, and to stress the importance of transport and communications for the economic and social development and the regional integration of African countries. The Assembly therefore called upon "Member States, in particular the developed countries and others in a position to do so, to participate effectively in the implementation of programmes for achieving the objectives of the decade" (resolution 32/160).

2. The Joint Inspection Unit considered it important to analyze the conception and operation of this new tool which, although it is for the use of the Member States of a single region, concerns, by extension, the whole of the international community. The purpose of this report is to arrive at as objective an assessment as possible of the execution of the first phase of the Decade and of the preparations for the second phase, to examine the effectiveness of the strategy and methods adopted and to draw lessons from it that might be of use to the United Nations system in launching similar operations in the future.

3. The first chapter of the report describes the operation of the Decade and of the machinery set up by ECA, the specialized agencies and the Member States (chapter II). The report goes on to examine the results achieved during the first phase, both from an over-all point of view and in terms of individual objectives, taking into account the financial constraints (chapter III). Chapter IV deals with the problems encountered in the preparation of the second phase and the prospects for its implementation. The report ends (chapter V) with conclusions regarding the lessons to be learned from the Decade and with recommendations, addressed more particularly to the African States and the ECA Secretariat. Thus, the report deals mainly with the approach followed by ECA, with the process of planning and implementing the Decade and the context within which the Decade is being conducted. However, wherever possible the report contains some evaluation and quantitative analysis observations, particularly with regard to the observance of the priorities established by Member States for selecting projects and obtaining financing.

4. The subject-matter of the report is not easily dealt with, since the Decade covers a wide range of activities (preparation of studies, organization of meetings, technical co-operation projects, inter-State co-operation efforts, negotiation of agreements, fund-raising, etc.), in at least 12 different sub-sectors (road, rail, multimodal transport) and involving various categories or groupings of countries (national and regional projects, for least-developed countries, land-locked countries, etc.), and in which a multitude of parties participate in various capacities (African Governments, Economic Commission for Africa, OAU, specialized agencies of the United Nations system, African regional

^{1/} In this report the acronym ECA has been used to designate both the institution as a whole and its Secretariat.

and subregional organizations, bilateral and multilateral lenders, etc.). In addition, analysis of the progress made during the first phase of the Decade has been made difficult by the lack of reliable and accurate information on the financing, the execution and even the number of Decade projects. The complex and changing character of the situation did not always facilitate the work of the Inspector. The Decade has now got into its stride and it is too late to do anything about the misgivings which typified the conception and implementation of the first phase. Some adjustments can perhaps still be made with regard to the second phase, but the purpose of this report is to make a contribution to the thinking and debate on how to derive the greatest possible benefit from the various on-going activities and their results over the medium and long term extending well beyond the end of the Decade. Africa will continue to experience acute transport and communications problems long after 1988, and the Decade will at least have had the effect of drawing attention to the gravity of such problems and providing a framework for international co-operation in this field.

5. In the short, in the view of JIU, the value of the report lies in the following factors :

(a) The Decade associates, apart from the States concerned, the United Nations system and the regional and subregional international and intergovernmental organizations. It therefore seemed worthwhile to study in depth the mechanisms and procedures of such association, which is obviously of a complex nature;

(b) Transport and communications are a fundamental priority for African countries, since they affect their development. Consequently, it was necessary to determine whether the implementation of the Decade's programme has had positive effects on the development of transport and communications and on international co-operation, bearing in mind the costs of the programme both for the Member States and for the United Nations system;

(c) Generally speaking, it seemed necessary to reflect on the course of action to be followed after 1988 (end of the Decade) in order to avoid losing the momentum built up through the implementation of the programme.

6. In preparing this report, the Inspector held numerous consultations with the ECA secretariat and with officials responsible for the Decade in various United Nations specialized agencies, as well as in African sectoral and regional agencies. He also attended various meetings (meetings of experts, conferences of Ministers of Transport and Communications, Paris Round-Table on the Decade, etc.). He wishes to express his gratitude and appreciation to all those who assisted him in carrying out his task. The report was circulated in draft form to all the organizations of the United Nations system concerned and to the African sectoral agencies members of the Inter-Agency Committee on the Decade. Many useful comments were received.

II. CONCEPTION OF THE DECADE AND VALIDITY OF THE APPROACH ADOPTED

1. Background

7. The importance of transport and communications in the process of economic development and integration and the constraints weighing on the African continent in this field are well known and need not be described here. Suffice it to say that, since independence, the African countries have been fully aware of the structural shortcomings and inadequacies of the transport and communications systems inherited from the colonial period, designed as they were to facilitate the export of raw materials and agricultural produce to the metropolitan countries and not to facilitate intra-African trade or the self-oriented development of African countries.

8. With the signing of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity in May 1963, the African Governments were in a position to establish a common platform for consideration of the problems of regional transport and communications. Since that time, numerous OAU, ECA and General Assembly resolutions have emphasized the importance of international co-operation and co-ordination for the integration of the various transport and communications systems in Africa.

9. It was against this general background that the ECA Conference of Ministers first put forward the idea of a transport and communications decade in Africa by adopting resolution 291 (XIII) at its meeting in Kinshasa, in February 1977. The resolution recommended that the international community and, in particular, the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation and the competent United Nations bodies, should proclaim a transport and communications decade in Africa during the years 1978-1988, in order to :

"(a) Give active support to the global strategy for the development of transport and communications in Africa and to the application of that strategy for the purpose of solving the problems of the continent in this field,....

(b) Mobilize the technical and financial resources required for this purpose."

10. The idea of a Transport and Communications Decade for Africa was first put forward by one delegation (Cameroon) at the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation (April 1976). In the course of the ECA ministerial meeting in Kinshasa this same delegation reiterated its proposal which was then collectively endorsed. The impromptu manner in which the Decade originated is possibly one of the reasons for the misgivings and haste which marked its launching (since it was due to begin in January 1978, the time available for establishing its form and content was very limited).

11. In any event, resolution 291 (XIII) was endorsed by OAU 2/ at the Monrovia summit in July 1979, by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 2097 (LXIII)

2/ The Decade was subsequently incorporated in the Lagos Plan of Action.

of 29 July 1977, and by the United Nations General Assembly, which officially "proclaimed" the Decade in resolution 32/160 of 19 December 1977 3/.

12. Apart from the resolution of the ECA Conference of Ministers, which is of course mentioned, the resolution of the General Assembly contains no reference to any document or preparatory study which would have facilitated the consideration of the question by Member States. Moreover, it is worth noting that the operative part of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly contains the following additional paragraph which appears to confirm that the Decade had not been planned in advance : "2. Decides that, in accordance with its resolution 31/93 of 14 December 1976, the mobilization of the necessary financial and technical resources required to make the Decade a success constitutes a pressing need of an unforeseeable nature." 4/

13. It should also be noted that, in addition to the "global strategy" concept set forth in resolution 291 (XIII) of the Conference of Ministers, the idea of a "plan of action" is also referred to in the General Assembly resolution, paragraph 3 of which states : "Requests the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the executive heads of the agencies concerned, to provide all possible assistance to the African States in the preparation of a detailed plan of action for the Decade and to co-ordinate the mobilization of the necessary technical and financial resources required to make the Decade a success."

14. By a decision of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/197, the Economic Commission for Africa was selected from among the agencies of the United Nations system as "lead agency" for the implementation of resolution 32/160. Pursuant to the General Assembly resolution, in March 1978, ECA organized an interagency meeting in Addis Ababa as part of the preparation of the programme of the Decade. This preparatory meeting decided, inter alia, to set up an Interagency Co-ordinating Committee on the Decade, whose secretariat would be provided by ECA and in which all the United Nations specialized agencies, OAU and other African regional and intergovernmental organizations would be invited to participate. The Committee normally meets once a year and is responsible for the preparation of the various documents and programmes to be submitted to meetings of experts and Conferences of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning. It is also responsible for preparing reports on the status of the Decade for the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations General Assembly.

15. In late 1978 and early 1979, a number of agencies co-operated in carrying out a series of studies under the direction of the Economic Commission for Africa. The studies took stock of the situation of the various transport and communication resources in Africa, assessed the quantitative and qualitative needs in these areas and laid the groundwork for an over-all programme of projects and activities.

3/ In the preamble, the General Assembly gave the following reasons as justifying the need for a Decade :

"Recognizing the urgent need to improve substantially the transport and communications infrastructure ...

Convinced that effective support is required from the international community in order to promote the principle of collective self-reliance for the purpose of solving African problems in these sectors ..." and "Convinced further of the need to adopt an integrated approach in the formulation of a global strategy for the development of transport and communications in Africa, taking into account all the problems facing the continent in this field."

4/ Emphasis added.

16. From a study of the documents submitted to this first interagency meeting (in particular E/CN.14/ECO/137, E/CN.14/ECO/138 and Rev.1) it would appear that, at the outset, the ECA Secretariat had a different concept of its role than was subsequently the case, since, in document E/CN.14/ECO/138/Rev.1, paragraph 5, it interprets the mandate given to it as follows : "to define the basis and the constituent elements of a strategy for the establishment of an integrated transport and communications network for Africa; to prepare the development programmes and plans concerning each mode of transport and communications for Africa, focusing on the key sectors of industry, agriculture, trade, with a view to their development during the Decade 1978-1988". It was thus primarily a planning and research role, with, as yet, no direct involvement of ECA in the identification and execution of specific Decade projects.

17. Actually, the General Assembly resolution requested ECA to provide assistance to African Governments in the preparation of their "national plans" for the Decade. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary of ECA despatched advisory missions to most of the countries with a view to assisting governments for a period of six to nine months in the preparation of their plans (document E/CN.14/ECO/138, paragraph 13 (a)). However, as the consultants carried out their missions and their reports were considered by the modal working groups set up by ECA, the emphasis became increasingly focused on the identification of specific projects.

18. The report of the Interagency Committee, which was prepared on the basis of the reports of working groups and approved by the first Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning (Addis Ababa, 9-12 May 1979) and constitutes in fact the plan of action for the first phase (document DEC/TRANSCOM/WP.GEN/Rev.1, I, paras. 7-8), stresses that : "The strength of the Transport and Communications Decade lies in this determination to culminate in concrete achievements. Its challenge is to propose to all the Member States of ECA, in the name of an effective solidarity of the whole continent, projects of concern to particular countries or individual regions, because these will in the long run lead to integration of the African countries and their joint development. ... It will thus represent a commitment of the African countries to the actions proposed. It will then be possible to submit to the international community, on the occasion of a meeting of plenipotentiaries of the donors scheduled for November 1979 under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, the will and the request of the African countries with respect to transport and communications ...".

19. The Global Strategy is contained in document E/CN.14/726, E/CN.14/TRANS/147. In the preparation of the document, account was taken of the general development objectives set out in document E/CN.14/ECO/90/Rev.3 entitled "Revised Framework of Principles for the Implementation of the New International Economic Order in Africa, 1976-1981-1986". On the basis of the global objectives set out in that document, the sectoral and subsectoral objectives for transport and communications were defined, account being taken of the fact that they must be of the maximum social benefit for the economy as a whole. The conception and formulation of the programme for the Decade reflect the wish to promote endogenous and self-sufficient socio-economic development by setting up appropriate, reliable and economical transport and communications services, which are essential for the development of agriculture, industry and intra-African trade. From this point of view, the programme for the Decade conforms to the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action, and might be considered as a sectoral precursor of that Plan.

2. Objectives and priorities of the Decade

20. The over-all objectives of the Decade, as set out in the strategy adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications, are as follows :

(a) Promotion of the integration of transport and communications infrastructures with a view to increasing intra-African trade;

(b) Ensuring the co-ordination of the various transport systems in order to increase their efficiency;

(c) Opening up of the land-locked countries and isolated regions;

(d) Harmonization of national regulations and reduction to a minimum of physical and non-physical barriers with the aim of facilitating the movement of persons and goods;

(e) Stimulating the use of local human and material resources, the standardization of networks and of equipment, research and dissemination of techniques adapted to the African context in the building of transport and communication infrastructures;

(f) Promotion of an African industry in the field of transport and communications equipment;

(g) Mobilization of technical and financial resources during the Decade with a view to promoting the development and modernization of transport and communications infrastructures in Africa.

(h) Restructuring of the transport sector to ensure African trade with the rest of the world under the most favourable conditions for the continent. 5/

21. In document E/CN.14/726 - E/CN.14/TRANS/147, it was also stated quite clearly (para. 15) that "for each of the modes of transport (road, rail, sea, inland water and air, etc.) and communications (telecommunications, broadcasting, television, postal services, etc.), these objectives must be reflected in the strategy adopted and in the specific activities subsequently to be carried out in a co-ordinated manner to attain the objectives laid down. This strategy must, in each of the subsectors mentioned above, cover (i) the training of administrative and technical staff, (ii) the establishment of transport and communications infrastructure, (iii) the establishment of national transport and communications industries, (iv) the adoption of appropriate and harmonized legislation, particularly in the field of international transport, including legislation for facilitating the movement of passengers and cargo, and environmental protection, (v) the establishment and/or strengthening of policy centres for the development of transport and communications, and (vi) the creation of a co-ordinating mechanism and information system for monitoring implementation of the strategy in the various subsectors".

5/ The eighth over-all objective was added by the Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications in 1981.

22. The order of priority in the implementation of the Decade was as follows :

- (a) (i) Regional projects
- (ii) Subregional projects
- (iii) National projects with a regional or subregional implication;

(b) Projects for the least developed, land-locked, newly independent, island and front-line countries;

(c) Projects of concern to other countries.

23. It was also noted in the document that, for there to be "real international co-operation, a high degree of priority should be accorded to subregional complementarity in the economic field". In other words, the Decade was conceived at the outset, by the authors of the draft strategy and by the African ministers who adopted it, as a set of actions and instruments designed to facilitate and promote international co-operation in the field of transport and communications and, in particular, subregional co-operation. We shall see later that the difficulties encountered in implementing the programme are such that the Decade has only partly fulfilled this expectation.

24. The programme for the Decade was divided into two phases : 1980-1983 (although the Decade began in 1978, the Global Strategy was not adopted by the African Ministers until May 1979) and 1984-1988. Since many programmes financed both by African Governments themselves and by external bilateral and multilateral sources were already in progress, it was decided that the first phase of the Decade would be devoted to the continuation of on-going projects, the execution of projects already identified but as yet without financing and the identification of new projects.

3. Institutional arrangements for the Decade

A. The role of ECA

25. ECA, as the lead agency for the Decade, was assigned the following responsibilities (see Global Strategy, para. 111) :

(a) Co-ordination and implementation of the preparatory activities for the elaboration and finalization of the strategy and work programme of the Decade;

(b) Co-ordination and monitoring of the planning and elaboration of the individual projects within the Decade programme;

(c) Assisting the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Decade programme;

(d) Monitoring and evaluation of the actual implementation of these projects by designated "executing" agencies both within and outside the United Nations system;

(e) Reporting on an annual basis to the United Nations General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress of the implementation of the Decade programme.

26. The responsibility for the implementation of the programme devolves upon the Transport, Communications and Tourism Division (TCTD) of ECA and on the Decade Co-ordination Unit set up within the Division with extrabudgetary financing mainly from UNDP. Tables I and II below give some idea of the personnel and budgetary resources available to the Decade. It will be noted that the 12 professional staff members of the Division are involved primarily in carrying out the work programme of the Division (which is financed from the United Nations regular budget). The servicing of the Decade comes as an additional function to which - in their own estimation - they can only devote some 30 per cent of their time. The Decade Co-ordination Unit is composed of six professional posts including three experts posts financed from bilateral sources. In view of the role which the Decade secretariat was called upon to play, there might be some question as to whether the resources and manpower made available to ECA by the international community were adequate and whether it was able to make the best use of these resources. ECA repeatedly, and with increasing frequency towards the end of the first phase of the Decade, stressed the fact that the financial and human resources made available to it were insufficient for the task entrusted to it. The Inspector notes that in actual fact the resources with which ECA is provided do not allow it to adequately carry out the entire set of tasks which are allotted to it.

27. It should be noted, however, that the action of the ECA secretariat was hindered by the level of vacancies within the Division and the Decade Co-ordination Unit. At the time of writing this report there were two vacancies in the Division (the Chief of the Communications Unit vacant since 1983 and one P-3) and two in the Decade Co-ordination Unit (the Co-ordinator L-7 vacant since September 1982 ^{6/} and the Deputy Co-ordinator for Communications, L-6, vacant since June 1984^{7/}). The situation with respect to communications appears especially serious since the only staff available at present within the Decade Co-ordination Unit is the bilateral expert provided by the Federal Republic of Germany (in addition France has provided ECA with two railways experts). The ECA secretariat has conveyed to the Inspector its entire satisfaction with regard to the results of the work of the experts put at its disposal by the governments of the above-mentioned countries. It is therefore suggested that other Governments may wish to similarly assist ECA in areas not yet covered.

28. The deficiencies of the ECA secretariat in the area of recruitment have already been noted in another JIU report ^{7/}. The situation does not appear to have changed a great deal, at least as far as the Decade secretariat is concerned. ECA informed the Inspector that these deficiencies are the result of lack of flexibility in present recruitment procedures. In view of the negative effects of this state of affairs, it is recommended that the Secretary-General and the Executive Secretary of ECA should take urgent steps to increase ECA's recruitment capacity so that all the vacancies can be quickly filled.

29. The capacity of the Division and Co-ordination Unit staff to carry out their programme of work is also hindered by the lack of adequate equipment and supplies and by the quality of the administrative back-up services provided centrally by the ECA secretariat. Several problems were brought to the attention of the Inspector by UNTACDA and TCD staff during a visit to Addis Ababa for discussion of the draft of this report : difficulties in obtaining authorization for the purchase of word processing equipment (for which funds were available),

^{6/} This post is temporarily encumbered by the former Chief of the Transport and Tourism Section.

^{7/} Report on the Economic Commission for Africa, JIU/REP/82/1, paras. 61-82.

TABLE I - STAFFING OF THE DECADE SECRETARIAT

I. Staff of Transport, Communications and Tourism Division

	<u>Functional Title</u>	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Grade</u>
1.	Chief of Division	Zaire	D-1
	<u>Transport Section (funded from the Regular Budget)</u>		
2.	Chief Transport Section	Tanzania	P-5
3.	EAO/Maritime Transport	Ivory Coast	P-4
4.	EAO/Transport	Cameroon	P-4
5.	EAO/Inland Water Transport	Madagascar	P-4
6.	EAO/Multimodal Transport	Kenya	P-4
7.	EAO/Air Transport	Mali	P-3
8.	EAO/Highways	Burundi	P-3
9.	EAO/Ports	USSR	P-4

United Nations Technical Assistance Funds :

10.	Regional Advisor/Transport	Ethiopia	L-5
	<u>Communications Unit (funded from the Regular Budget)</u>		
11.	EAO/Postal Services	Burkina Faso	P-4
12.	EAO/Telecommunications	Liberia	P-3

II. UNTACDA (Funded by UNDP)

1.	Deputy Co-ordinator	Lesotho	L-5
2.	Ports Expert	Ethiopia	L-5
3.	Financial Analyst	Ethiopia	L-2

UNTACDA Staff (Funded by Bilateral Sources)

4.	Railway Expert	France	L-5
5.	Railway Expert	France	L-5
6.	Telecommunications Expert	FRG	L-5

III. VACANCIES

Regular Budget

Chief, Communications Unit	P-5 (vacant since 1.8.1980 presently redeployed to translation section)
EAO/Railways	P-3 (vacant since 1.7.1984 presently redeployed to Natural Resources Division)

UNTACDA

Co-ordinator	L-6 (vacant since 1.9.1982 and temporarily encumbered by the former Chief of Transport Section)
Deputy Co-ordinator for Communications	L-5/6 (vacant since 1.7.1984 under recruitment)

TABLE II

UNTACDA RESOURCES 1978-1985 (\$US THOUSANDS)

Funding sources	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	Total
UN Regular Budget	-	-	-	250 600	183 100	384 400	143 300	340 800	1 302 200
UNDP	248 345	807 802	564 476	558 238	1 418 367	824 232	923 771	731 000	6 076 231
FRANCE	-	-	-	-	<u>1982-1983</u> 123 000		123 000	123 000	369 000
NETHERLANDS	-	-	-	-	<u>1982-1983</u> 73 000		-	-	73 000
FED. REP. OF GERMANY	-	-	-	-	<u>1982-1983</u> 202 150		140 448	140 500	563 098
<u>TOTAL</u>									8 383 529

Source : ECA/TCTD

which results in delays in the issuing of documents ^{8/}; lack of proper photocopying facilities and of basic office supplies; administrative and technical impediments to the issuance of documents (e.g. the programme for phase II, which was finalized in March 1984, had not yet been printed in January 1985); difficulties in obtaining translation for UNTACDA documents; lack of adequate office space; slow and rigid administrative procedures.

30. In view of the above, the Inspector recommends that the Executive Secretary should undertake a review of the quality and pertinence of the central services provided and procedures applicable to the Decade secretariat.

31. While the low level of ECA's resources may have had a negative effect on its ability to perform fully all the tasks provided for in the mandate conferring on it the role of lead agency for the Decade, the problem of access to information had much more serious consequences. In the various documents issued by ECA on the progress of the first phase of the Decade, it was stressed that a physical, or even a purely financial, evaluation of the projects was made very difficult, if not impossible, by the lack of relevant information. Various methods of gathering information were tried (questionnaires to Governments, request that Governments appoint a person or an office to liaise with the ECA secretariat, use of field offices of specialized agencies and, finally, a proposal to make use of the network of UNDP resident representatives), but all of them seem to come up against the same problem : the difficulties encountered by many African Governments in providing information on project execution. In such circumstances, the responsibilities of "co-ordination and monitoring" of planning, implementation and evaluation of projects obviously could not be fully carried out by ECA.

32. This observation raises a number of questions on the conception of the Decade and the role of the ECA secretariat vis-à-vis the Governments. The wording of the mandate of ECA (see para. 25 above) seems to suggest that, initially, it was intended that ECA should play a leading role in the implementation of the Decade. The fact that item (b) states clearly that the secretariat should be involved in the planning and elaboration of individual projects of the Decade can reasonably be interpreted as an invitation to play an active role (negotiation, arbitration, screening of projects submitted by African Governments), particularly with regard to the observance of the priorities set out in the Global Strategy. The ECA secretariat was not in a position to perform this role. It stressed repeatedly ^{9/} that its role was not to comment on the coherence or integration of projects submitted and that it had no mandate to refuse projects submitted by Governments. Consequently, ECA's co-ordinating function was limited to a somewhat passive role; the programme for the first phase of the Decade then became, as was stated at the Paris Round-Table ^{10/} "a general purpose programme" of highly disparate projects, rather than a well-thought out, co-ordinated and integrated programme, as initially intended.

33. There are perhaps many reasons for this situation (optimism on the launching of the Decade, lack of experience of the ECA secretariat for a vast and complex programme calling for new types of action outside United Nations routine activities, uncertainty as to the precise role that ECA was expected to play resulting from the lack of precision in the mandate it was given, inability of

^{8/} This authorization has now been given.

^{9/} See, for example, document DEC/TRANSCOM/CM/IV/4 (ALT), para. 3.

^{10/} See document E/ECA/TCD/10, para. 62.

the secretariat to reject projects not conforming to the objectives of the Decade so as not to offend the sensibilities of Governments, lack of resources, etc.). Nevertheless, it is reassuring to note that, following various meetings at which the excessive timidity of the ECA secretariat vis-à-vis the African Governments was criticized ^{11/}, it seems to have adopted a more active approach; its initiative in presenting a less ambitious and more realistic "alternative programme" for the second phase of the Decade is a step in this direction (see paras. 83 to 93 below).

34. It should also be noted that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the roles of ECA as a Commission and as a secretariat, as far as the Decade is concerned. Texts are often ambiguous, and the ECA secretariat's concern to deal tactfully with African Governments can perhaps be explained by a restrictive interpretation of the various texts and resolutions defining ECA's role (in particular, General Assembly resolution 33/197). It would be desirable for African Governments and the General Assembly to draw the appropriate conclusions from this situation, both for the present Decade and for any similar future exercises. A redefinition of the role of the ECA secretariat can still be useful in maximizing its effectiveness during the second phase. If clear and precise tasks, with a specific time-limit, had been defined at the outset for the secretariat, within the general objectives of the Decade, it would have been a simple matter to clear up the ambiguity which still shrouds the role of the Decade's secretariat vis-à-vis Governments. Although the United Nations is naturally dependent on the wishes of Governments, the Joint Inspection Unit believes that the "proposing" role of the secretariat should be encouraged. It is recommended, therefore, that the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning should review the role of the ECA secretariat by assigning to it more clearly defined areas of competence and clearer objectives. An appropriate recommendation is set out in paragraph 99 below.

B. The role of African Governments

35. The Global Strategy for the Decade (Doc. E/CN.14/726, E/CN.14/Trans/147) envisaged certain responsibilities for African Governments vis-à-vis the Decade. The very definition of the strategy says that the principal goal must be, inter alia, international co-operation among the African States in the field of transport and communications (see para. 12). Regarding the mechanisms for the implementation of the Decade, the same document in para. 20 only describes the arrangements at the subregional and regional levels since it assumes that "each Government will no doubt create its own instruments". Finally, the strategy entrusts the responsibility for the mobilization of resources to States when it says the resource mobilization will have to take place "first and foremost at the national level" (para. 23).

36. When we look at the three above responsibilities, we find that some progress has been made in international co-operation. With the creation of the Preferential Trade Area of Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA) and the Economic Community of Central African States, only the six countries of North Africa are without a trade grouping. Because these two groupings are relatively new, their impact on co-operation in transport and communications has not yet been considerable. Other subregional groupings, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic Community, the Southern African

^{11/} Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications (Cairo, March 1983), Paris Round-Table (June 1983), Sixth and Seventh Meetings of the Inter-agency Committee, etc.

Development Co-ordination Conference, the Mano River Union, the Communauté Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs, the Organisation pour la mise en valeur du Fleuve Sénégal, etc. have to some degree successfully promoted the development of transport and communications in their respective subregions.

37. The same success, however, cannot be claimed as regards the establishment of national machinery for the Decade. Of course, Governments have continued to implement their projects; but this is still under the structures and procedures that has always existed; there has not been established, at the national level, a machinery for monitoring the progress of the Decade projects. It is the absence of such a machinery which has led to the great difficulties that the ECA secretariat has encountered in trying to obtain information on the physical status of projects. These difficulties are discussed in Chapter III.

C. The role of UNDP

38. UNDP has contributed substantially to the achievement of the objectives and the execution of the activities of the Decade, both by co-operating with ECA and by financing specific pre-investment and technical assistance projects. UNDP has directly supported the co-ordinating activities of ECA by taking over the funding of the Co-ordinating Unit within the Transport, Communications and Tourism division of ECA and by assuming the costs of the multi-agency studies carried out prior to the elaboration of the Global Strategy and the first-phase programme.

39. As part of its second regional programme for Africa (1982-1986), UNDP approved a sum of \$US 3.5 million for the promotion and co-ordination of the activities of the Decade. In addition, a sum of \$US 5 million from special programme resources was earmarked for the continued support of Decade activities. Owing to the financial difficulties currently being experienced by UNDP, an amount equivalent to 80 per cent of this sum (i.e. \$US 4 million), was at first programmed, and was subsequently reduced to 60 per cent of the \$US 5 million initially earmarked, i.e. \$US 3 million. Pursuant to a decision taken by the UNDP Governing Council in June 1981, the Division of Interregional and Global Projects opened a line of credit of \$US 2.5 million under the interregional IPF, to be used to support the activities of the Decade. Unfortunately, following the limitation of resources usable for actual programming to 55 per cent of the relevant IPF, this sum was subsequently reduced to \$US 1.375 million or 55 per cent of the sum originally earmarked.

40. Despite these successive reductions of the amounts initially earmarked, UNDP naturally supplied the bulk of the funds enabling ECA to set up the planning and co-ordinating unit for the Decade. The Inspector however notes that these reductions have prejudiced ECA's capacity to carry out the entire range of tasks called for in the Decade's objectives. While it was not directly involved in drawing up the Strategy, UNDP participates regularly in interagency meetings and is represented at most of the intergovernmental meetings on the Decade. UNDP has not yet undertaken an evaluation of its participation in the Decade : discussions are now under way with the ECA secretariat on the modalities and time-table of an evaluation exercise.

D. The role of the specialized agencies

41. Under the general strategy, ECA, in carrying out its task of co-ordinating and supervising the execution of the Decade, was authorized to call for the co-operation of all United Nations organizations concerned, of OAU and of African regional and subregional organizations through an Interagency Co-ordinating Committee on the Decade. The Committee's mandate is defined rather broadly in the strategy document (E/CN.14/726 - E/CN.14/TRANS/147), in which two specific tasks only are mentioned - the preparation of programmes to be submitted to high-level national officials, and subsequently to the ministers concerned, and the preparation of reports to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. This is a very broad mandate calling for the Co-ordinating Committee to consider all Decade activities and, implicitly, even to make an evaluation before reporting to intergovernmental bodies.

42. The Committee comprises approximately 50 members and observers representing the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the World Bank, African intergovernmental organizations involved in the areas of transport and communications and a number of international organizations which are not part of the United Nations system (the ACP group, the International Road Federation, etc.).

43. Since the beginning of the Decade, the Co-ordinating Committee has held seven meetings. The result of these meetings has been the gradual development of a climate of "collective responsibility" on the part of agencies with regard to the Decade, as exemplified in the decision to plan jointly the apportionment of UNDP regional funds earmarked for the Decade, thus avoiding unnecessary competition between agencies regarding the allocation of such funds. Through the Co-ordinating Committee, the agencies too, have also done vital work in identifying projects and formulating the programme of the Decade, particularly with regard to the identification and formulation of regional and subregional projects. Moreover, the Co-ordinating Committee's proposals for the regional programme seldom seem to have been amended by the African ministers. In general, the projects proposed by the Co-ordinating Committee, the planning and execution of some of which had begun before the Decade, can be said to have formed the nucleus of the Decade programme to which projects (many of them of national importance) proposed by African Governments have been added.

44. The Co-ordinating Committee's meetings have also provided a forum for discussion of the conception and orientation of the Decade. From the reports of the various meetings, it is clear that the agencies generally supported ECA in its role as lead agency and even encouraged the secretariat to play a more prominent role ^{12/}. The Co-ordinating Committee, on a number of occasions, drew attention to the fact that the programme of the Decade resembled a collection of unrelated projects rather than a coherent whole. The Committee also supported ECA with regard to the alternative programme which it had prepared for the second phase and, in an effort to reduce the danger of the programme becoming incoherent and over-stretched, even proposed at its most recent meeting (January 1984) that African ministers should agree to consider it as "the" programme of the second phase.

45. The Joint Inspection Unit wrote to the organizations in the United Nations system asking them about their participation in the Decade. Generally speaking, the organizations which replied appear to have accepted the role of ECA as lead

^{12/} See reports of meetings at Dakar (1983) and Addis Ababa (January 1984).

agency. While some organizations (IMO, ICAO) participated directly in the formulation of the Strategy, most of them became involved only marginally, at best. Some agencies, particularly ITU, regret that the Decade has become an assemblage of national projects without much homogeneity, rather than an integrated programme for the implementation of concrete regional and subregional activities, as initially intended. ITU also deplores the absence of targets in terms of figures for the Decade as a whole ^{13/}. It also seems that organizations are continuing efforts (project implementation, fund-raising) for transport and communications outside the framework of the Decade, either by pursuing activities which already existed or by activities which, for various reasons, were not included in the plan of action for the Decade. This is particularly true for UNESCO. The impression gained is that there is little difference between what the agencies were doing before the launching of the Decade and afterwards. The Decade aroused expectations, including expectations of additional financing, which have not actually been realised, and enthusiasm has been replaced by routine.

4. Observations on the conception and launching of the Decade

46. In the light of the relative successes and failures recorded during the first phase, it is in order to ask a fundamental question regarding the nature of the Decade itself, namely, what was the aim of the operation, exactly what was it intended to achieve? There seems to have been some lack of precision; in this regard, with the activities of the Decade being oriented simultaneously towards :

(a) On the one hand, the awakening of over-all awareness of Africa's needs in the area of transport and communications and the identification of the various ways in which these needs could be met (for example, in-depth global and sectoral studies, co-operation between Governments in setting up appropriate regional and subregional institutional structures, negotiation of conventions, harmonization of legislation, identification of types of priority projects by mode, sector, subregion, etc.);

(b) On the other hand, the identification, search for financing and execution of as wide a range of specific projects as possible, the success of the Decade being measured, in this case, more by the quantity of financial resources mobilized than by the internal cohesion of the programme.

47. Another question which arises is the possibility of a discrepancy between, on the one hand, the objectives and priorities of the Decade as defined collectively by African Governments, with the emphasis being placed on supra-national co-operation in regional and subregional project execution, and, on the other hand, the objectives and priorities in the areas of transport and communications as expressed at the national level in the development plans of individual States. This discrepancy may account for :

(a) The confusion over the scope of the Decade - should it include all national and regional projects of all African countries in the area of transport and communications, or simply a portion of those projects, and, if so, which portion? Imbalance between the approaches of Governments : for example, one submitted 58 projects for the first phase, while another submitted only one;

^{13/} At the beginning of the Decade, ITU had made some global proposals for the telecommunications sector, specifying measurable targets for the Decade (one telephone per 100 inhabitants; one public telephone office per 10,000 inhabitants in rural areas; 20 radios per 100 inhabitants).

(b) The confusion between Decade projects and projects included in national plans. Lack of correlation in many cases: many national projects - even those financed by external sources such as United Nations agencies - are not included in the Decade, while many projects included in the Decade do not feature in national plans.

48. From the preparatory studies conducted by experts for the various modes on the basis of surveys carried out in a large number of African countries, it would appear that, at the outset, on reflection, it was decided to prepare a relatively restricted programme for the Decade. This programme was based on an analysis of the situation obtaining at the time, on ongoing regional programmes and projects (major African highways, PANAFTTEL network, etc.), and on new priority projects for which the socio-economic justification was evident. Special emphasis was placed on regional and subregional projects and on projects concerning land-locked countries, on the one hand, and projects having training, maintenance and management components, on the other. This realistic approach seems subsequently to have given way to a more ambitious approach. The proclamation of the Decade, which had caused governments to believe that considerable amounts of "new" external financing would become available, led to an inflated number of projects, ending in a programme in which projects of national importance became preponderant.

49. This trend had two types of adverse effect:

(a) It changed the conception of the Decade, with primary emphasis no longer on defining an integrated programme with coherent objectives but on a somewhat ill-assorted collection of projects of all kinds (some more justified than others).

(b) It complicated considerably the position of the ECA Secretariat, which did not have the mandate and was, therefore, unable to act as arbiter regarding the projects submitted by African governments. The limited manpower of the ECA Secretariat, inundated with projects, was unable to cope with the tasks of "co-ordination and monitoring of the planning and elaboration of the individual projects within the Decade programme", ¹⁴/ still less the "monitoring and evaluation of the actual implementation" of projects. This gave rise to a degree of ambiguity on the part of the ECA Secretariat regarding its role in the Decade and the "added value" which it was to contribute (initially a more active role, followed by a role involving simply the carrying out of governments' instructions, and a revival of activity towards the end of the first phase with the presentation of the "alternative programme" for the second phase).

¹⁴ Emphasis added.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE FIRST PHASE

1. Difficulties encountered in information gathering and results evaluation

50. An analysis of the results of the first phase of the Decade is not an easy undertaking, partly because no indicator or quantitative objective for measuring the progress achieved was provided at the outset (except for the telecommunications sub-sector), and partly because the information which ECA was able to collect from African governments and on which its reports are based is often fragmentary and in general leaves much to be desired. Although evaluation was one of the tasks provided for in the mandate of ECA (see paragraph 25(d) above), no in-depth evaluation of the execution of the all projects, far less of their impact, has yet been made, because of the lack of adequate information and resources.

51. The United Nations Economic and Social Council, at its session in July 1983, expressly requested that a report on the implementation of first-phase projects should be submitted to it at its July 1984 session. ECA was unable to prepare the report on the basis of the information received from Member States. As the circulation of questionnaires to governments with a view to obtaining data on the financing and physical execution of projects produced no satisfactory results, the ECA Secretariat decided to go and collect information on the spot. During the autumn of 1984, evaluation missions visited some 20 African countries.

52. A report on the Evaluation of the Physical Execution of the First Phase (1980-1983) ^{15/} was submitted to the April 1985 session of ECA. This document was communicated to the Inspector when the present report was ready for printing; it contains information on the physical execution of a limited number of first-phase projects (216 projects) for which the ECA Secretariat was able to obtain reliable information. As stated in paragraph 26 of the document, this evaluation effort is partial and provisional: "The 216 projects on which the analysis is based are not truly representative of the reference programme of the first phase (in terms of statistics), even though they account for about 40% of the total programme. It would, therefore, be inaccurate and quite dangerous to extend these quantitative results to the entire first phase". This partial and provisional evaluation effort (cf. paragraph 49(vi)): "the analysis and conclusion of this report as well as the reference programme are all provisional because any new information obtained will call for some modification", can only be considered as an introduction to an in-depth and global evaluation process of the Decade as a whole (first and second phases).

53. The lack of effective machinery for the collection, processing and analysis of information on the status of projects can only be detrimental to the Decade and the efficiency of the work of ECA in the long term. In its preceding report on the Economic Commission for Africa ^{16/}, the JIU drew attention to the lack of a monitoring and evaluation system for ECA as a whole and recommended that "a small unit", attached to the cabinet of the Executive Secretary "should be urgently established to develop a monitoring and evaluation system". Until recently, the recommendation had not been implemented. It now seems that a

^{15/} Document E/ECA/CM.11/11 dated 8 April 1985.

^{16/} JIU/REP/82/1, paragraphs 43-45, and recommendation 6(c).

modest start is being made in this regard: pursuant to a resolution of the ECA Conference of Ministers (resolution 500/XIX) and following internal redeployment, a P-4 staff member in the cabinet of the Executive Secretary has been made responsible for evaluation. Given the urgency of ensuring that the implementation of the Decade programme be properly evaluated - since future ECA work in the area of transport and communication, whether in the framework of a second Decade or otherwise, depends on a sound assessment of the results of the Decade - it is recommended that:

(a) The above-mentioned evaluation specialist, working closely with the Decade secretariat, should give priority attention to the development of a methodology and procedures of evaluation adapted to the needs of the Decade programme.

(b) A report on the problems of evaluating the Decade programme, prepared in consultation with the African sectoral organizations and the organizations of the United Nations system, and a work programme for an in-depth end-of-Decade evaluation should be submitted to the 1986 ECA ministerial meeting and to the Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications (see also paragraph 102 below).

(c) An evaluation of the efficiency of the Decade secretariat (both TCD and UNTACDA) should be made by the same staff member and submitted to the above-mentioned intergovernmental bodies in 1986. This study should contain an assessment of the personnel and other resource requirements of the Decade secretariat.

(d) As soon as possible, one of the existing vacancies in the Decade secretariat should be filled by an evaluation specialist, to be assisted as necessary by consultants. The functions of this small evaluation unit would be primarily to carry out the work programme mentioned in (b) above and at the same time to ensure that regular reports on the Decade project financing and physical execution are prepared. African governments should facilitate the activities of this unit by guaranteeing it access to information.

(e) Whenever possible, assistance should also be provided to governments wishing to set up their own evaluation machinery, especially with respect to activities in the area of transport and communications. The existence of national evaluation units would greatly facilitate ECA's evaluation responsibility, with respect to the Decade and, beyond this immediate concern, would increase the effectiveness of the United Nations system's activities in Africa.

2. Quantitative data on first-phase projects

54. The present report suffers from the same limitations as have affected the ECA Secretariat with respect to quantitative data on the advancement of the Decade projects. At present, the available information which might be used in attempting an overall assessment of the results are limited and not very reliable:

(a) Quantitative information on the number of projects and the financing obtained by mode and by type of project, which has been published on a number of occasions.

(b) Attempts at qualitative analysis concerned mainly with the degree to which projects conform to the objectives of the strategy for the Decade. The most exhaustive (and critical) analysis known to JIU is contained in the document entitled "Evaluation of the implementation of the programme of the first phase", which was submitted to the Paris Round Table in June 1983 (document DEC/TRANSCOM/RT/3).

(c) The attempt to analyze the physical implementation mentioned in paragraph 52 above.

55. On the basis of the information currently available, the following table, which appears in document DEC/TRANSCOM/CM/IV/2 (dated 23 November 1983), gives a general idea of the breakdown of first-phase projects by sub-sector, their estimated cost and the funding obtained.

TABLE III

Sub-sector	Complete updated programme			
	Number of projects	Estimated cost in thousands US\$	Financing obtained	Financing obtained as a percentage of cost
Roads	224	2,271,073	1,526,731	67
Railways	79	5,459,000	2,455,000	45
Air transport	201	2,162,943	681,165	31
Shipping	75	1,176,154	388,824	33
Ports	120	2,904,915	1,502,702	52
Inland water transport	71	338,232	137,756	41
Multinodal transport	9	37,350	700	2
Total transport projects	779	14,329,667	6,692,878	47
Telecommunications	90	531,063	164,962	31
Satellite communications	2	380	-	-
Broadcasting	115	211,817	50,308	24
Postal services	84	241,553	38,679	16
Manpower training	22	125,804	6,905	5
Total communications projects	312	1,110,617	260,854	23
GRAND TOTAL	1,091	15,440,284	6,953,732	45

56. The programme for the first phase as shown in the table above represents the result of successive revisions of the number of projects since 1979. Indeed:

(a) The global strategy document mentions 771 projects (561 in the transport sector and 210 in communications), 545 of them ready for immediate implementation (389 transport and 156 communications), at a total cost of US\$8.85 billion (8.3 billion for transport and 0.5 billion for communications).

(b) When the evaluation of the first phase was conducted in September 1982 (document DEC/TRANSCOM/IA/VI/1 (A)), the situation was quite different: 1,091 projects, at a total cost of US\$15.3 billion (777 transport projects accounting for a total of US\$14.3 billion, and 315 communications projects accounting for US\$1.04 billion), with 45.7 percent of funding obtained in the case of transport and 6.6 percent in the case of communications. Since the scope of the programme was clearly too great, it was reduced by the second Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications as follows: 489 projects representing US\$6.9 billion, including 396 transport projects (US\$6.8 billion, funding obtained: 84.5 percent), and 42 communications projects US\$69.5 million, funding obtained: 100 percent), all other projects having been deferred to the second phase.

(c) The breakdown of this reduced programme has also changed considerably: 388 transport projects and 254 communications projects in document DEC/TRANSCOM/CM/III/1/Corr.1 (March 1983), as compared with 401 transport projects and 254 communications projects in document TCDC/3/4 (March 1983). However, no further mention is made of the "reduced programme", either in the documents submitted to the Round Table or in those submitted to the Conference of Ministers at Conakry, since ECA takes as a basis for the programme the 1,091 projects referred to above.

57. The foregoing gives an idea of the misgivings which typified the first phase, including the attempts made to inflate the level of funding achieved by the device of transferring unfunded projects to the second phase. As emphasized by ECA itself at the Paris Round Table, the programme represented a kind of general purpose programme of projects submitted by governments and accepted without any very clear justification. The programme had been put together hastily and, apart from the priority criteria set out in the Strategy, there had been no guidelines for the acceptance of projects, such as the degree to which they conformed to the objectives of the Decade. In some cases, ECA even had difficulty in determining by whom projects had been submitted (governments, regional bodies, international organizations); indeed, "many projects (especially in air transport) did not seem to have any initiator...." (DEC/TRANSCOM/RT/3, page 6).

58. The table above also shows major differences in the level of funding achieved for the various sub-sectors. Only two sectors - roads and ports - are more than 50 percent funded; in three others - railways, inland water transport and shipping - more than 30 percent of the resources needed were obtained. Since there is no precise or complete information available, either on the needs of the various countries and what has already been done in the various sub-sectors, or on what is funded either by African States or by external sources outside the Decade programme, the only observation that can be made is that priority seems to have been given to land transport (and inland water transport), while only minimal importance has been attached to the communications sub-sectors.

59. At the end of the first phase in 1983, the bulk of the funding had come or was earmarked from African governments (75 percent, compared with 25 percent from outside sources). Given that the programme of the first phase involves expenditures of some US\$15 billion, 25 percent of the US\$7 billion raised amounts to only US\$1.75 billion.

3. Difficulties in mobilizing financial resources

60. The figures quoted above illustrate the extent of the discrepancy between the hopes and ambitions at the time when the Decade was launched and reality. The proclamation of the Decade was predicated on two assumptions:

(a) that additional resources (and even "massive aid transfers") would be allocated by the international community to the development of transport and communications in Africa; and

(b) that such a mobilization of resources would make it possible to lay the foundation for a physically integrated continent, as a prerequisite for the development of intra-African trade and trade with the rest of the world.

61. The experience of the first phase of the Decade has shown those expectations to have been, as ECA itself pointed out (document DEC/TRANSCOM/CM/IV/2, paragraph 5) "overly optimistic". The massive support of the international community did not materialize. According to the document entitled "Background and Perspectives of the Decade" (DEC/TRANSCOM/VOL.II/INF.1, paragraph 9), before the Decade, payments in the form of loans from the various multilateral and bilateral financing agencies represented about 20 percent of investments in the transport and communications sector in Africa. At the end of 1983, external funding for the programme of the Decade in the form of loans and grants represented about 25 percent of total investments. Thus, the situation does not seem to have changed significantly.

62. A number of ECA documents review the problems of mobilizing resources 17/ and it will be sufficient here to recall just a few salient points. The first effort to solicit the assistance of the international community for the Decade programme was the convening of a Pledging Conference by the United Nations Secretary-General in New York, in November 1979. The evaluation of the particularly disappointing results of this Conference - US\$128,088 formally pledged by 12 countries (of whom 11 were African and one Asian) - showed this not to be the most effective means of fund-raising. Another approach was then tried. The Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, in its resolution 391 (XV), requested the Executive Secretary of ECA to organize a number of technical consultative meetings. Insofar as they represented a new approach, these meetings contained an experimental element.

63. Four of these meetings were held during the first phase and a fifth was held in March 1984 18/; four others are planned for the first two years of the second phase. At these meetings, donors were invited to indicate their interest in the projects submitted. In general, lenders gradually came to recognize the importance of such meetings and to respond positively. The first four meetings

17/ DEC/TRANSCOM/RT/3, part III, DEC/TRANSCOM/CM/IV/2, paragraphs 8 et seq., DEC/TRANSCOM/CM/IV/4, (ES), etc.

18/ The first meeting concerned 16 West African countries and considered two transport sub-sectors and three communications sub-sectors. The second meeting dealt with projects in a single transport sub-sector for all African countries. The third meeting again considered one sub-region - in this case, Central Africa - but, unlike the first, discussed only two modes of transport. The fourth meeting was a variation on the preceding ones, in that it was for the West and Central African States and was concerned only with the sub-sector of shipping. The fifth was concerned with roads, shipping and ports in the countries of North Africa, and East Africa and in the Indian Ocean Islands.

resulted in expressions of interest totalling US\$940 million. As a method of mobilizing resources, this type of dialogue between lenders and African States proved relatively effective, although there is some question whether the funds "mobilized" by the meetings are additional resources or whether they are not rather transfers to the Decade of funds already allocated by the donor countries.

64. The technical consultative meetings were designed to achieve better results than the Pledging Conference. While they have unquestionably achieved that aim, experience has shown that the smaller the number of countries and/or the more limited the number of sub-sectors or projects, the more successful the results. On the basis of these results, efforts to develop the experiment will be continued during the second phase with the organization of somewhat different meetings, which will be devoted either to a transport corridor or to a single topic such as training in a specific sub-sector or even the financing of a group of training institutes in a single field.

65. Technical consultative meetings have not succeeded, however, in removing the constraints on financing and imaginative efforts are still required in order to improve their effectiveness. For example, differences and confusion persist in the attitudes of African governments regarding the projects which they propose for inclusion in the Decade programme. The experience of the first phase showed that some governments tended to propose projects for which they had previously found it difficult to obtain funding. As ECA rightly points out: "The corollary of this was that quite often there were two parallel programmes at the national level: one which the governments themselves pursued vigorously in their negotiations with donors and another which ECA was expected to promote within the framework of the Decade" (document DEC/TRANSCOM/CM/IV/4 (ES), paragraph 7, note 1).

66. Moreover, in the course of the technical consultative meetings, it emerged that a portion of the assistance provided by donors for transport and communications did not cover projects included in the Decade programme; the resources allocated to the Decade programme thus did not represent the total assistance granted for the development of transport and communications in Africa ^{19/}. The technical consultative meetings and inter-agency meetings also demonstrated the misgivings of financing bodies with regard to regional and sub-regional projects. It is not too difficult to obtain grants from multilateral agencies for these projects: the problems arise in the case of multinational capital projects which are to be financed from loans and for which it is necessary to obtain a guarantee. That may be easy in the case of projects sponsored by autonomous self-financing and/or self-accounting enterprises. However, when a project contains clearly distinguishable national components or is a joint intergovernmental venture which does not control its own budget, the problem is very serious.

67. Although it might be thought that grants facilitate the financing of regional and sub-regional projects, it is sometimes forgotten that it is not always easy to obtain the agreement of the beneficiary countries, and yet such agreement is a prerequisite for the countries to assume joint obligations and jointly sign requests for foreign aid. In other words, African governments must demonstrate a greater commitment to regional projects, in practice as well as in theory. With regard to the financing of multinational projects from loans, no final solution has yet been found, although negotiations are in progress between ECA and the financing institutions.

^{19/} During the first phase, payments from lenders allocated to the transport and communications sector in Africa amounted to approximately US\$1 billion a year, of which only 45 percent went to the Decade. See document DEC/TRANSCOM/CM/IV/4(ALT), paragraph 10.

68. ECA's efforts to find solutions to the problems of financing regional and sub-regional projects should be vigorously pursued. The Inspector considers that the financing and implementation of regional projects requires the manifestation of the political will of the States concerned. This political will may take the form of:

(a) Either the establishment of an autonomous authority (like the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS)) responsible for the mobilization of finances and the implementation of projects, an authority to which the Member States delegate part of their prerogatives and which constitutes at the same time an institutional framework for negotiations on matters not delegated to the authority.

(b) Or a more flexible framework, i.e. a committee on which the States concerned by a given regional project would be represented, meeting as necessary. The committee would reflect the individual and collective political will of the States concerned and decide upon all questions regarding the mobilization of financing and the implementation of the projects. ECA could be requested to provide secretariat services to such committees.

69. The second formula has the advantage of being less costly and cumbersome, but implies a dynamic role by ECA, which must do everything to facilitate the manifestation of the individual and collective political will of the States concerned through studies on the programming of the various national sections of the project, on their respective priorities at the national and regional level, bearing in mind the national plans and the socio-economic and geographical context of the projects. The Inspector accordingly recommends to the ECA ministerial meeting and to the Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications that, in efforts aimed at maintaining the momentum of the Transport and Communications Division at the end of the Decade, ECA should be instructed to provide secretariat services to the committees for the various regional or sub-regional projects, in co-ordination with the sub-regional organizations and United Nations agencies concerned. What is certain is that the adoption of one of the formulas mentioned in paragraph 68 is indispensable for the implementation of regional projects. Since the financing of such projects is generally obtained through loans rather than grants, it is absolutely necessary to set up a framework in which commitments on behalf of sovereign States may be made vis-à-vis the financing authority.

4. Observance of the priorities of Decade

70. A breakdown of first-phase projects by priority clearly reveals the primacy of national projects. As we have seen, the updated first-phase programme comprises 1,091 projects. Of that total, in which regional and sub-regional projects and national projects with regional or sub-regional impact had initially accounted for 26 percent, 20/ more than half received no financing to date. The number of projects which received total or partial financing is 476, of which 124 (or 26 percent) are regional, sub-regional or national projects with sub-regional impact.

71. No information on the financing obtained by priority has been published by ECA. The Inspector asked for a tally to be made to see what proportion of the financing had gone to the regional, sub-regional and national projects with sub-regional impact. Table IV below clearly shows the gap between the objectives

20/ See document DEC/TRANSCOM/RT/3.

First-Phase projects: financing obtained by priority
(\$US million)

1971-72

	Regional projects				Subregional projects				National projects with regional and subregional impact				National projects				TOTAL	
	No.	Financing obtained		No.	Cost	Financing obtained		No.	Cost	Financing obtained		No.	Cost	Financing obtained		No.	Cost	Total financing obtained
		External	Local			External	Local			External	Local			External	Local			
1. Road projects	18	146.79	178.99	34	135.02	61.99	16.45	11	497.76	86.30	182.40	305	8 539.28	2 128.53	3 141.20	392	10 865.24	5 542.85
			5.8			1.3				4.5					88.7			(1.0%)
2. Water supply projects	13	200.60	54.08	2	1.47	0.50	0.36	1	2.55	-	0.75	47	380.50	150.13	48.72	85	648.12	26.27
			25.3			0.5				0.3					76.1			(1.1%)
3. Irrigation projects	7	201.7	134.42	36	130.49	62.49	16.81	12	490.31	86.90	183.15	352	8 919.78	2 278.66	3 189.92	476	11 513.36	6 204.78
			6.2			1.3				3.5					88.1			(1.0%)

of the Decade and the actual choices made by governments and lenders. Nearly 90 percent of the resources mobilized within the framework of the Decade went to national projects, while regional projects received 6.2 percent, sub-regional projects 1.3 percent and national projects with regional or sub-regional impact 3.5 percent. The difficulties encountered in financing regional and sub-regional projects have been explained on a number of occasions by ECA, at meetings of African experts and at inter-agency meetings. The preference of African governments and bilateral lenders for national projects has often been demonstrated, but regional and sub-regional projects are the raison d'être of the Decade, and ECA should play a particularly active role in this regard.

5. Results of the first phase, objective by objective

72. In the following paragraphs, an attempt is made to determine the extent to which the actual content of the first-phase programme corresponds to the objectives of the Global Strategy for the Decade. As basic material for this section of the report, we have taken document DEC/TRANSCOM/RT/3, which was submitted to the Paris Round Table and contains a critical evaluation of the content and implementation of the first-phase programme. 21/ This appears to be the only ECA document which analyses the first-phase projects, not only by mode, but also on an objective by objective basis. Its critical and self-critical tone contrasts pleasantly with the usual, somewhat euphoric tone of documents submitted by ECA to the various intergovernmental bodies which monitor the progress of the Decade. It is regrettable, therefore, that the ECA Secretariat did not see fit to bring this document - a reading of which can only be enriching for anyone concerned with the Decade - officially to the attention of Member States. It is to be hoped that ECA's future evaluation reports will emulate the tone of this document.

A. Promotion of the integration of transport and communications infrastructures with a view to expanding intra-African trade

73. This is clearly the most important objective of the Decade and, in theory, the programme might have been expected to include a high proportion of regional and sub-regional projects. However, an analysis of the content of the programme shows that the programme did not reflect the preoccupations of the African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning. The explanation for this may lie in the fact that, when the Decade was proclaimed, there was a great deal of optimism on the part of African governments and an expectation that the Decade would act as a catalyst for the mobilization of international support for projects for which countries had, on their own, found difficulty in attracting financing. Naturally, the governments saw an opportunity to press for their national projects and not necessarily for the regional and sub-regional ones. "A review of the nature of the regional and sub-regional projects reveals that most of them consisted of preinvestment projects and studies into ways of solving problems common among countries and very few were capital projects. In the field of transport, the most important investment project was the trans-African highways system which predated the proclamation of the Decade." On the other hand, some substantial progress was made in setting up the institutional framework (for example, the establishment of "authorities" for the Lagos-Mombasa and Cairo-Gabrone trans-African highways, among others). It can therefore be stated that, although the Global Strategy spoke of the need to develop the transport system in Africa, with the ultimate objective of physically integrating the continent, progress in this direction was very slow during the first phase of the Decade. Not only did most of the projects not reflect this preoccupation, but even where such projects existed, not much progress was made in implementing them.

21/ The portions of the following text which appear in quotation marks are taken from pages 9 to 14 of document DEC/TRANSCOM/RT/3.

B. Co-ordination of the various transport systems in order to increase their efficiency

74. According to document DEC/TRANSCOM/RT/3, this objective was not reflected in any first-phase continental project. But some projects are planned for the second phase. The prospects for sub-regional co-operation (ECOWAS, WAEC, southern Africa) nevertheless seem more encouraging.

C. Opening up land-locked countries and isolated areas

75. Some progress has been made, although most projects are the result of action predating the Decade (for example, the UNCTAD programme for the land-locked countries designed to promote greater co-operation between land-locked countries and the neighbouring transit countries).

D. Harmonization of national regulations and reduction of physical and non-physical barriers with the aim of facilitating the movement of goods and persons

76. The harmonization of national regulations has got off to a "modest start". A number of conventions are under negotiation (for example, the ECOWAS Protocol on motor vehicle insurance, the establishment of inter-State commissions for the reduction of non-physical barriers, etc.).

E. Stimulating the use of local human and material resources, the standardization of networks and of equipment, research and dissemination of techniques adapted to the African context in the building of transport and communications infrastructure

77. With regard to the first element of this objective, namely, "the use of local human and material resources", appreciable progress has been made in setting up and developing multinational training centres. However, their operation is quite often hampered by lack of funds. There seem to be very few projects which have received funding, as far as the "standardization of networks" and "research" are concerned.

F. Promotion of an African industry in the field of transport and communications equipment

78. Nothing has happened in this field, apart from a project of the West African Economic Community (WAEC) on the production of railway waggons.

G. Mobilization of technical and financial resources, etc.

79. This aspect has already been discussed in paragraphs 60 to 69 above.

H. Restructuring of the transport sector to ensure African trade with the rest of the world under the most favourable conditions for the continent

80. This is the eighth objective which was added by the Conference of Ministers in 1981 and for which no project as yet exists.

81. The document concludes: "It is clear that only very few projects that have been achieved during the first phase were reflections of the specific objectives contained in the Global Strategy". Indeed, as the programme was put together somewhat hastily, most projects, even if they did not already exist, were not planned with any real regard for the objectives of the Decade. Moreover, since no guidelines had been established for the acceptance of projects, it was difficult for ECA to reject individual projects on the grounds that they did not conform to the Strategy.

6. Results by mode

82. As noted in paragraphs 50 and 52 above, an in-depth evaluation of the Decade projects has not yet been carried out. In the absence of further information, it is not possible, therefore, to undertake any exhaustive presentation of the results of the Decade by mode. ECA has confined itself to a compilation of the financing of projects by mode, as contained in documents DEC/TRANSCOM/C/III/1, A/38/263 and DEC/TRANSCOM/RT/3, and to a presentation of data on the physical implementation of a portion of the first-phase projects (document E/ECA/CM.11/11). In the absence of more detailed analyses, the reader is simply referred to those documents.

IV. PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAMME FOR THE SECOND PHASE

83. As the preceding chapters have shown, the implementation of the first phase of the Decade was seriously handicapped by a combination of difficulties: conceptual (ambiguities in the formulation of the programme), institutional (role of ECA, lack of criteria for the acceptance of projects), and financial and practical (for example, difficulties in obtaining information from African governments on project execution). In the following paragraphs, an attempt will be made to determine whether the second phase of the Decade has got off to a better start.

84. The first requirement in drawing up the programme for the second phase was to identify projects which governments wished to execute during the 1984-1988 period. This already enormous undertaking was made more so by the large number of first-phase projects for which no funding had been found and which had therefore not been executed. All the new projects and the projects transferred from the first to the second phase, combined, make up a programme of 1,333 projects costing a total of US\$32 billion. At their meeting preceding the third Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, the experts, after studying the draft programme, reached the conclusion that, in the light of the experience acquired during the first phase and in view of the international economic situation, the draft programme was too huge and too costly and must, therefore, be reduced to a realistic level.

85. The third Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, held in March 1983 in Cairo, adopted the following specific guidelines for the reduction of the programme for the second phase (resolutions ECA/UNT4CDA/Res. 83/23 and Res.83/24):

- (a) Retention of the global strategy and objectives adopted in 1979.
- (b) Retention of the priorities for the implementation of the programme.
- (c) Ongoing projects must be continued and included in the programme for the second phase.
- (d) Projects with feasibility studies, and included in the national plan, as well as of relevance to the global objectives, must be included in the programme.

(e) Projects without feasibility studies and those which are still at the conception stage must in general be excluded; however, care should be exercised to ensure that projects related to the global objectives of the Decade should not be excluded out of hand.

(f) A project not included in the national plan of the country submitting it shall not be included in the programme.

(g) The various modes of transport and communication must be effectively co-ordinated and integrated.

(h) Strong emphasis must be placed on maintenance and preservation of existing assets.

(i) There should be a clear indication of the extent of local and foreign financing.

(j) Projects must be grouped and classified in order to facilitate the integration of sub-sectoral activities and render the programme for development of transport and communications in Africa more coherent.

86. The third Conference of African Ministers also approved the ECA proposal to hold, in collaboration with the French Government, a round table in Paris to be attended by equal numbers of African and non-African experts to conduct a critical examination of the experience acquired during the first phase and to determine whether the draft programme for the second phase had a better chance of success. The Paris Round Table, which was held from 21 - 24 June, made recommendations as to the best form in which to present the programme and the chief problems calling for immediate solutions. The main recommendations were the following:

(a) Maintenance and rehabilitation programmes and training programmes at all levels should be classified separately and accorded the highest priority.

(b) It is essential to include in the second phase projects for industries upstream of the transport system infrastructure, on a sub-regional scale.

(c) In order to arrive at a more coherent programme it is advisable not to be limited to presentation by mode. Projects should be interconnected so as to form sub-regional transport for communication systems (e.g. classification by transport corridors).

(d) As transport is the basis for integrated development in Africa, corridors should be defined in terms of agricultural and industrial development.

(e) Physical and timing priorities should be defined (except for maintenance and training projects).

(f) ECA should not isolate the Transport and Communications Decade from the Industrial Development Decade and the Food Plan for Africa.

(g) The second phase of the Decade should be regarded only as one stage in a process of long-term planning of the restructuring of the African transport system.

(h) Non-physical barriers between neighbouring countries should be gradually reduced since they are inconsistent with full utilization of existing resources.

87. In this way African governments and the participants in the Round Table gave ECA a push towards realism. It should be added that the role of ECA also came in for particularly harsh criticism at the meetings of the Inter-agency Committee and at the meeting of governmental experts in January 1983. This criticism, which was concerned basically with ECA's timidity with regard to projects submitted by governments, had the effect of encouraging the ECA Secretariat to play a more active and dynamic role in order to ensure a minimum of coherence and realism in the programme for the second phase.

88. Thus was born the idea of submitting two programmes to the Conference of Ministers in Conakry (February 1984):

(a) One programme based on the application of the guidelines of the Conference of Ministers in Cairo (documents DEC/TRANSCOM/CM/IV/4 (T) and (C)) for a total project cost of almost US\$24 billion; and

(b) An "alternative" programme greatly reduced by the application of the additional selection criteria proposed by ECA (969 projects for a total cost of US\$16.6 billion). The criteria used by ECA are set out in DEC/TRANSCOM/CM/IV/4-(ES).

89. The meeting of the Inter-agency Co-ordinating Committee held prior to the Conference of Ministers in Conakry approved the alternative programme, going so far as to propose that it should be considered as "the" programme for the second phase. The Conference of Ministers received the proposal favourably, although a number of additions and amendments were made to the programme.

90. The main feature of the presentation format of the programme is that it treats maintenance and rehabilitation, training and technical assistance as priorities. In addition, projects are grouped by activity rather than by mode and as part of a transport chain or of a unified communications network. With this new type of presentation, it is possible to gauge whether the projects proposed form part of a coherent whole, whereas the first-phase projects were simply presented by mode, in the form of a list.

91. Two additional innovative features of the second-phase programme adopted by the Conference of Ministers in Conakry are also worth mentioning:

(a) The time factor, which so far has been almost completely neglected: some long-term projects and/or of high cost can be divided up into phases; similarly, certain projects are not so urgent that they must be finished by December 1988, the end of the Decade. In these circumstances, the alternative programme has been considered as a short-term programme, to be financed as a priority during the second phase proper of the Decade, the later phases of the high-cost and/or long-term projects, as well as non-urgent projects, thus represent the start of a medium-term and long-term programme whose implementation can be envisaged beyond 1988.

(b) As regards the selection criteria, account was taken of the Cairo and Paris priorities: all the maintenance, rehabilitation, training and technical assistance projects were therefore related. For the transit corridors, projects were selected so as to reduce competition between different modes in the same corridor. The regional and sub-regional projects, if they are to be included in the final programme, must be supported by at least two Member States involved. First-phase projects which so far have not attracted any financing, either internal or external, have not been transferred to the second phase, but have been included in the medium-term and long-term programme; the same applies to national projects (other than those relating to studies, training, technical assistance, rehabilitation and maintenance, and those of the least developed countries) for which no financing, even local, has been found.

92. The projects for the Decade's second-phase programme as set out in the document adopted by the Conference of Ministers (document E/ECA/CM.10/18) were divided into five functional categories: rehabilitation and maintenance projects, training and technical assistance projects, linkage projects for inter-State integration (transit corridors, trans-African highways and access roads, Inter-State air links), regional and sub-regional projects and purely national projects. Considerable importance was attached to rehabilitation and maintenance and to training and technical assistance. This type of presentation is entirely different from the presentation of phase I. Projects are presented in a more functional manner according to affinity. The following table gives an overall picture of the second-phase programme. It comprises 1,054 projects for a total cost of US\$18.4 billion. The transport sector comprises 582 projects for a total cost of US\$14.4 billion. The communications sector comprises 472 projects, for a cost of US\$3.9 billion.

Type of project	Number of projects	Total cost (US\$ million)
Maintenance and rehabilitation	133	3,070.05
Training and technical assistance	71	296.32
Inter-State links	204	4,098.25
Regional and sub-regional projects	34	756.04
Top priority national projects	140	6,245.26
Sub-total transport	582	14,465.92
Maintenance and rehabilitation	26	129.22
Training and technical assistance	76	278.51
Other regional projects	95	675.89
Other top priority national projects	275	2,847.57
Sub-total communications	472	3,931.19
Grand total	1,054	18,397.11

93. As ECA itself recognizes, "the second phase programme was prepared under more favourable conditions than that of the first phase: ECA had more time at its disposal and benefited from the experience acquired during the first phase" 22/. The improved, more coherent presentation of the programme, which is itself the result of a more dynamic approach by the ECA Secretariat, must be recognized. It is, however, too early to say whether or not the more logical and realistic presentation is equally realistic in terms of financing and implementation prospects.

22/ Document E/ECA/CM.10/18, page 1.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conclusions

94. In the absence of any serious evaluation study on the execution and impact of its constituent projects, any assessment of the Decade would be not only approximate, but subjective. One question asked by the Paris Round Table was whether transport and communications in Africa had developed since 1978 and whether the Decade had been a factor in ushc development. Had it played a stimulating role or simply provided a framework for activities which would have been undertaken in any event? Were the costs that it generated - and which seem very considerable 23/ - commensurate with the benefits to be derived by African States? Do the financial and political conditions exist for the genuine attainment of the objectives of the Decade? These are some of the questions that may be asked on the progress of the Decade.

95. The implementation of first-phase projects showed that the results achieved fell far short of the hopes raised by the Decade. Obviously, the problems encountered were partly the result of the international economic situation, which made it impossible to mobilize the financial resources anticipated. However, the relative lack of success of the first phase is also due to deficiencies of an organizational nature resulting from lack of experience, particularly as far as the role and dynamism of ECA is concerned. These deficiencies were partly corrected towards the end of the first phase, and the preparation of the second-phase programme was undertaken under more favourable circumstances.

96. Some progress has been made in conceptual terms, for example, the second phase of the programme has recognized the crucial importance of rehabilitation of existing infrastructures, of maintenance and training, which seemed secondary to the creation of new infrastructures at the beginning of the Decade; again, the presentation of projects - by traffic corridors for transport and unified networks for communications - has become more coherent. However, in terms of the internal organization in ECA, serious inadequacies still remain (cf. paragraphs 29 - 31 above), and above all, the inevitable conclusion from the scant success achieved so far in large-scale regional and sub-regional projects, which are the raison d'être of the Decade, is that the various sectors - governments, organizations in the United Nations system, lenders - have not yet been in a position to put forward the necessary resources for the realization of the ambitious objectives of the Decade.

97. The Inspector feels that an approach different from the one adopted so far could be considered, namely:

(a) Focus the Decade to a greater extent on increasing global awareness of Africa's needs in transport and communications and seek to define those needs clearly, rather than focus on the financing of a completely heterogeneous collection of individual projects. Efforts could have been concentrated, for example, on:

- (i) The drafting of in-depth global and sectoral studies of needs and possible solutions (including measurable sub-regional and national objectives for the purpose of better appraisal of progress achieved).

23/ The direct costs of the Decade Co-ordination Unit (UNTACDA) - staff, missions, consultants, translation and reproduction of the documents, travel, etc. - can be estimated at at least US\$8.4 million since 1978. No figure of the indirect costs for African States, lending agencies, or organizations in the United Nations system has ever been put forward, but must also be considerable.

- (ii) The setting up of institutional structures to facilitate intergovernmental co-operation in transport and communications at the continental, but particularly the regional and the sub-regional, levels where such co-operation is especially essential.
- (iii) Planning and carrying out activities which do not call for large-scale investment, but which are nevertheless essential for the establishment and optimum utilization of infrastructures and for a climate of co-operation among States: negotiation and adoption of conventions (such as the African highway code, TIR Convention, Fifth freedom, etc.), harmonization of legislation and regulations (for example, relating to the physical standards for infrastructure, transit and safety standards, Customs regulations, etc.).

(b) Concentrate the ECA Secretariat's role on the identification and execution of regional and sub-regional projects, to the exclusion of projects which are solely national (regardless of the means of financing). The proposal made by a number of participants at the Round Table to list the national projects in a separate volume constituting a sort of "compendium" of all transport and communications activities in Africa, was also a valid proposal. ^{24/} The role of ECA would have been much more clear-cut if it had been confined to promotion, planning, arbitration and fund-raising for regional and sub-regional projects. It would also have been easier for ECA to evaluate the results of the Decade.

98. The Inspector feels that the role of ECA should be reconsidered with a view to making its future activities in the fields of transport and communications more effective. The following quotation from the summary of the discussions at the Round Table gives an idea of some of the criticisms made of its present role: "More and more participants suggested that ECA should play a more active role, a role of planning and arbitration. Mention was made of a political arbitration function, of the need for contacts with the national planners and the need for contacts with the financial institutions. Mention was made of co-ordination of the sub-regional organizations. Someone also talked of the expert capability in ECA for developing regional projects and for preparing a number of regional transport projects or projects for technical assistance. There was a degree of unanimity in considering that the Economic Commission for Africa must play an important role in this continental planning process. Finally, the participants expect that it should succeed in setting up this dialogue which would make it possible to guarantee both funding at medium-term and the increasing rationality of this planning, even if it is fully realized that this planning and this rationality will only be developed little by little at the cost of trial and error" (document E/ECA/TCD/10, paragraph 158).

^{24/} The publication of a document presenting all the projects of the African countries, whether or not included in the programme of the Decade, would have been a very useful working tool.

99. The Inspector agrees with these observations. He believes that, in order to capitalize to the full on the efforts made so far in the framework of the Decade, ECA's role needs to be redefined. As pointed out in paragraph 34 above, it is recommended that the Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications should review ECA's mandate and assign it more clearly defined areas of competence. The ECA Secretariat could be instructed, within the framework of a clearly defined mandate and in consultation with the African regional and sub-regional organizations and the agencies in the United Nations system concerned:

(a) To identify, by means of special studies, fundamental inter-State projects consistent with the overall objectives of the Decade and facilitate negotiations between States for the purpose of adopting the studies and taking the requisite follow-up decisions.

(b) To ensure that projects proposed by governments conform to the objectives of the Decade and, if necessary, to initiate negotiations with governments.

(c) To organize fund-raising activities on the basis of a list of major projects of regional, and particularly sub-regional, importance of universally recognized priority.

(d) To provide support to the various African sub-regional organizations and to assist them in co-ordinating their transport and communications programmes.

(e) To seek a juridical framework for ways and means of financing and implementing inter-State projects (establishment of "Authorities" so that the requests for financing presented by individual countries are planned and co-ordinated - see also paragraphs 68 and 69 above).

100. Since the Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications at the fourth meeting in Conakry (February 1984) adopted the principle of a second Decade (resolution No. 7), some thought must now be given to the role which ECA will be called upon to play after 1988. Despite the misgivings surrounding it and its own shortcomings, the Decade enabled an instrument and machinery for co-operation to be set up and brought into smooth operation within ECA. Co-operation between African States in transport and communications was given a boost by the Decade, even though the results fall short of the ambitious objectives originally intended. It is essential to sustain this momentum, either within the framework of the "normal" activities of ECA, or within the framework of a second Decade. Given the extent of the African continent's needs, it may well be that a second Decade will not be enough to solve all transport and communications problems. It is really a question of laying the foundation for continuing co-operation among African countries in these two areas. The natural forum in which such co-operation efforts should be pursued is the Transport, Communications and Tourism Division of ECA, whose activities must of course be consistent with the policy guidelines issued by periodic meetings of the Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning.

101. Consequently, it is recommended that the ECA Secretariat should, in consultation with the regional and sub-regional organizations and the agencies in the United Nations system, prepare for the forthcoming meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning a draft medium- and long-term plan which clearly defines its role in research and conceptualization, fund-raising, monitoring, evaluation, etc., and the activities to be undertaken by the various actors concerned after the end of the Decade. The plan should draw lessons from what has been done to orient the second-phase programme

and maintain the conceptual gains (priority for rehabilitation, maintenance, training, presentation by corridors, etc.) and also pay special attention to the eighth objective of the Decade (restructuring of the transport sector to ensure African trade with the rest of the world under the most favourable conditions), on which no start has yet been made. The document would then be circulated to the intergovernmental authorities of ECA, to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly and would, if approved, become a sort of framework-plan for structuring of inter-African co-operation.

102. Given the fact that, before launching any new activity of any kind, it is essential to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the implementation and impact of the Decade as a whole, the Inspector recommends a two-year "period of reflection and analysis" (1989-1990) for the preparation of an in-depth evaluation and discussion thereof by the Inter-Agency Committee, the appropriate African inter-governmental bodies, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The evaluation should be made in the ECA Secretariat by an interdisciplinary team in which the African sectoral agencies, the agencies in the United Nations system, UNDP and the World Bank would participate when necessary. Secondment of evaluation specialists by UNDP and the World Bank would be particularly desirable for proper completion of the work, and each sectoral or financing organization also has the opportunity to evaluate its own contribution to the Decade. Thus, the final decision on the possible launching of a second Decade would be taken by the same intergovernmental bodies after considering two basic documents: the medium- and long-term plan recommended in paragraph 101 above and the in-depth evaluation of the current Decade.

103. As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the importance of transport and communications for the economic and social development of Africa - a continent which comprises the majority of least-developed countries and whose infrastructures are the least developed in the world - was the initial reason for the pressing appeals launched by the General Assembly to the international community (to all sources of financing and to the governments of Member States) to contribute to the financing of Decade projects. The international community only responded very partially to those appeals. The Inspector considers that the improvement in the conception of the second-phase programme and the forthcoming preparation of a medium- and long-term plan, combined with the increased effectiveness of the ECA Secretariat expected as a result of the various ongoing or planned measures mentioned above, augur well for a more generous response by donors and Member States to Decade projects.

104. In order to facilitate the mobilization of potential resources, the Inspector recommends that:

(a) The ECA Secretariat, together with the financial institutions, establish a standard format and guidelines for the presentation of projects, which would take into account the specific needs of each financial institution with a view to harmonizing them in order to facilitate and accelerate negotiations between African States and financial institutions.

(b) The ECA Secretariat facilitate contacts between States and financial institutions interested in a given project to ensure that the State promoting the project agrees to include the financial institution in the formulation of the project, thereby accelerating the finance mobilization process.

2. Lessons to be drawn from the Decade

A. Co-operation and exchange of experiences between the Regional Economic Commissions

105. At present, although there have been occasional contacts between the Heads of the Transport and Communications Divisions of the regional economic commissions, neither the means nor the institutional framework exist for a meaningful co-operation between the secretariats of the commissions. The Inspector believes that this situation should be remedied, he therefore recommends that the subject of exchange of experiences, co-ordination and mutual technical assistance between the regional economic commissions in the area of transport and communications be placed on the agenda of one of the next meetings of ACC, with a view to finding an institutional framework as soon as possible (perhaps within that of the periodical meetings of the Executive Secretaries).

B. Relations with the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1985-1994)

106. The draft of this report was sent to the Secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) when the Commission was preparing to launch the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1985-1994). It is apparent from the observations and the documents received by the Inspector from ESCAP that the Commission has realized the difficulties encountered by ECA and that, although the structures and procedures ESCAP is now setting up are similar to those of ECA (Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications, Inter-Agency Committee, special unit in the ESCAP Secretariat, etc.), in terms of the content of the programme for the Decade genuine priority seems to have been given to regional and sub-regional activities, rather than to action at the national level. At this stage, the ESCAP Secretariat does not seem to be directly involved in national projects, which are to fall within the context of the development plans of each State. The thrust seems to be more on harmonization of these national transport and communications plans with the overall objectives of the Decade. The Inspector also notes with interest that special attention appears to be paid from the outset to problems of evaluating the results of the Decade.

107. Up to now there does not appear to have been any regular consultation between the secretariats for the two Decades. A meeting of the transport and communications officials of ECA and ESCAP took place for the first time in July 1984. The Inspector considers that this lack of exchange of information and experience between the two secretariats could be detrimental to the success of the ESCAP Decade and that ESCAP would surely benefit from a study of the problems and pitfalls encountered by ECA. It is, therefore, recommended that thorough consultations should be held by the two secretariats within the framework suggested in paragraph 105 above and through missions and ad hoc contacts (for example, visits or exchanges of staff between the two secretariats).

3. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The difficulties encountered in fund-raising and in implementing regional and sub-regional projects (paragraphs 67, 68 and 69) call for some imagination to devise solutions other than those adopted so far. For this reason, in view of the fact that the financing and implementation of regional and sub-regional projects will require effective expression of political will by the States concerned, the Inspector recommends that:

(a) The following two formulas should be used:

- (i) Either the establishment of an autonomous authority (like the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River) responsible for the mobilization of finances and the implementation of projects, an authority to which the Member States delegate part of their prerogatives and which constitutes at the same time an institutional framework for negotiations on matters not delegated to the authority.
- (ii) Or a more flexible framework, i.e., a committee on which the States concerned by a given regional project would be represented, meeting as necessary. The committee would reflect the individual and collective political will of the States concerned and decide upon all questions regarding the mobilization of financing and the implementation of the projects.

(b) The ECA ministerial meeting and the Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications should, in the efforts at maintaining the momentum of the Transport and Communications Division at the end of the Decade, instruct ECA to provide, in co-ordination with the regional and sub-regional organizations and the United Nations agencies concerned, secretariat services to the committees to be established for the various regional and sub-regional projects.

Recommendation 2: In order to facilitate the mobilization of finances which would hopefully increase thanks to the orientation towards a better conception of the Decade programme and to the improved effectiveness of the ECA Secretariat (see paragraphs 103 and 104), the Inspector recommends that:

(a) The ECA Secretariat, together with the financial institutions, establish a standard format and guidelines for the presentation of projects, which would take into account the specific needs of each financial institution with a view to harmonizing them in order to facilitate and accelerate negotiations between African States and financial institutions.

(b) The ECA Secretariat facilitate contacts between States and financial institutions interested in a given project to ensure that the State promoting the project agrees to include the financial institution in the formulation of the project, thereby accelerating the finance mobilization process.

Recommendation 3: Drawing the lesson from the Decade that the development of transport and communications in Africa is a lengthy and exacting task and can be done, above all in an integrated fashion, solely in the context of continuing co-operation between the African countries, first at the sub-regional level, and then at the pan-African level, and that such continuing co-operation calls for a dynamic institutional back-up, the Inspector recommends that the ECA Secretariat should, in consultation with the regional and sub-regional organizations and the agencies of the United Nations system concerned, prepare for the forthcoming meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications, a draft medium- and long-term plan which clearly defines its role in research and conceptualization, fund-raising, monitoring, evaluation, etc., and the activities to be undertaken by the various actors concerned after the end of the Decade. The document would then be circulated to the intergovernmental authorities of ECA, to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly and would, if approved, become a sort of framework-plan for the structuring of inter-African co-operation (paragraph 101).

Recommendation 4: The Inspector, considering that the in-depth evaluation of the current Decade and the elaboration and negotiation of a medium- and long-term plan building on the experience of the first Decade are actions which naturally must be carried out before taking a decision either on a new Decade or on any other co-operation mechanism, recommends a two-year period of reflection and analysis at the end of the current Decade for the preparation of the studies referred to in recommendation 6(b) and recommendation 3 (paragraph 102).

Recommendation 5: The Inspector, bearing in mind the factors discussed in paragraphs 34, 98 and 99, which demonstrate the need to redefine ECA's co-ordination role, recommends that the ECA Secretariat, within the framework of a clearly defined mandate, should be instructed in consultation with the regional and sub-regional organizations and United Nations agencies concerned:

(a) To identify, by means of special studies, fundamental inter-State projects consistent with the overall objectives of the Decade and facilitate negotiations between States for the purpose of adopting the studies and taking the requisite follow-up decisions.

(b) To ensure that projects proposed by governments conform to the objectives of the Decade and, if necessary, to initiate negotiations with governments.

(c) To organize fund-raising activities on the basis of a list of major projects of regional, and particularly sub-regional, importance of universally recognized priority.

(d) To provide support to the various African sub-regional organizations and assist them in co-ordinating their transport and communications programmes.

(e) To seek a juridical framework for ways and means of financing and implementing inter-State projects (establishment of "Authorities" or "Co-ordinating Committees") so that the requests for financing presented by individual countries are planned and co-ordinated (see also paragraphs 68 and 69).

Recommendation 6: In connection with the findings and explanations in paragraphs 53 and 102, which reveal that the lack of a system for information gathering, monitoring and evaluation is in the long term detrimental to the Decade and the efficiency of the work of ECA itself, the Inspector recommends that:

(a) The P-4 evaluation official in the cabinet of the Executive Secretary, working closely with the Decade secretariat, should give priority attention to developing a methodology and procedures of evaluation adapted to the needs of the Decade programme.

(b) A report on the problems of evaluating the Decade programme, prepared in consultation with the regional and sub-regional organizations and the United Nations agencies concerned, and a work programme for an in-depth end-of-Decade evaluation, should be submitted to the 1986 ECA ministerial meeting and to the Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications (see also paragraph 102).

(c) An evaluation of the efficiency of the Decade secretariat should be made by the same staff member and submitted to the above-mentioned intergovernmental bodies in 1986. This study should contain an assessment of the personnel and other resource requirements of the Decade secretariat.

(d) As soon as possible, one of the existing vacancies in the Decade secretariat should be filled by an evaluation specialist, to be assisted as necessary by consultants. The functions of this small evaluation unit would be primarily to carry out the work programme mentioned in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) above, and at the same time to ensure that regular reports are prepared on the financing and implementation of the projects of the Decade. African governments should facilitate the activities of this unit by guaranteeing it access to information.

(e) Whenever possible, assistance should also be provided to governments wishing to set up their own evaluation machinery, more particularly for their transport and communications activities. The existence of national evaluation units would considerably facilitate ECA's task regarding evaluation of the Decade and, over and above this immediate concern, would be of definite value for the activities of the United Nations system as a whole.

Recommendation 7: An institutional framework for co-operation in transport and communications by the regional economic commissions should be set up, as suggested in paragraph 105.

Recommendation 8: In-depth consultations should be arranged between the secretariats of the ECA and the ESCAP Transport and Communications Decades, as suggested in paragraph 107.

Recommendation 9: In view of the difficulties encountered in implementing the programme of the Decade because of staff vacancies both in the ECA Transport and Communications Division and in UNTACDA itself, the Inspector recommends that the Secretary-General and the Executive Secretary of ECA should take urgent steps to increase ECA's recruitment capacity so that all the vacant posts can be filled promptly (paragraph 28).

Recommendation 10: In view of the deficiencies in the procedures and the central service supplied to UNTACDA by ECA, the Inspector recommends that the Executive Secretary of ECA should undertake a review of the quality and pertinence of the central services provided and the procedures applicable to the Decade secretariat (paragraph 29).