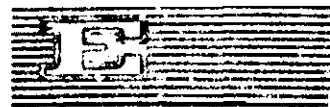


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REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES
OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS

The secretariat has pleasure in bringing to the Commission's attention the attached report* of the meeting of the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Economic Commissions, held in New York from 11 to 13 January 1965, for the purpose of considering the best way to implement the decisions adopted at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held in Geneva from 23 March to 16 June 1964.

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES
OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS

Held at Headquarters, New York,
from 11 to 13 January 1965

1. In the Report of the Meeting of the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Economic Commissions, dated 11 July 1964, it was stated that a special meeting of the Executive Secretaries would be convened at Headquarters to review in further detail the arrangements required for following up the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (E/3937, paragraph 9).
2. Since the inssuance of that report, the General Assembly, on 30 December 1964, adopted resolution 1995 (XIX), by which the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was established as an organ of the General Assembly. Paragraph 19 of this resolution provides that the Trade and Development Board of the Conference "shall establish close and continuing links with the regional economic commissions...". In paragraph 28 of the same resolution, it is provided that "adequate arrangements shall be made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for closer co-operation and co-ordination between the secretariat of the Conference and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, including the secretariats of the regional economic commissions".
3. The present additional report is intended to provide further information on the arrangements for continued collaboration between the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and its secretariat on the one hand and the regional economic commissions and their secretariats on the other. Arrangements for co-operation and co-ordination of work between the UNCTAD secretariat and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at Headquarters have been outlined by the Secretary-General in document A/5829 dated 8 December 1964.
4. The Special Meeting referred to in paragraph 1 was held at Headquarters from 11 to 13 January 1965. It was presided over by the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs and attended by the Secretary-General of the Conference, the Executive Secretaries of the regional economic commissions, the Director of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut and other senior officials of the secretariat.

* Document E/3937/Add.1, 13. February 1965.

5. The Meeting discussed various ways of ensuring close co-operation and co-ordination between the Conference and the regional economic commissions at both the inter-governmental and the secretariat levels. It was agreed that continuing and close contacts would be maintained by the various units of the secretariat to keep each other fully informed of their work and to avoid unnecessary duplication and overlapping in the trade work of the Conference secretariat and the corresponding divisions of the regional secretariats. To this end, it was agreed that further meetings of the officials concerned would be convened as necessary.

6. At the inter-governmental level, it was considered desirable that the regional economic commissions and their trade committees regularly follow UNCTAD activities and recommendations with a view to their being brought to the attention of their regional members. This would serve to stimulate the regional government's interest and active participation in the work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The commissions and their trade committees, with their intimate and specialized knowledge of regional matters, should also be able to make suggestions and recommendations for consideration by the Trade and Development Board and its committees. The arrangements outlined above which would be applied in an informal and flexible manner would enable the regional economic commissions to participate effectively in the work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. By the same token, UNCTAD would be able to benefit from the consideration by the regional economic commissions of various questions primarily of regional interest.

7. It was also agreed that after the formative stages of UNCTAD had been passed, in particular after the second Conference, it might be desirable for some meetings of the Trade and Development Board or its subsidiary bodies to be convened at the headquarters of the regional economic commissions. It was understood that such meetings would involve financial implications and that, therefore, any proposals for such meetings would require the approval of the General Assembly.

8. The meeting considered that the co-operative arrangements between the Conference secretariat and the secretariats of the regional economic commissions which were established in connexion with the first Conference should be continued and strengthened. The assistance of the regional secretariats would be required in preparing studies for the Board, its Committees, and the next Conference itself. It was expected that the Trade and Development Board at the first meeting, now tentatively scheduled for April 1965, would in addition to establishing the terms of reference of its committees, adopt a programme of work and priorities. The work programme would be the subject of detailed consultations with the regional secretariats, with a view to determining specific arrangements for co-operation. These consultations would help identify areas in which joint studies by the Conference secretariat and the regional secretariats may be undertaken and in which specific studies may be requested of the regional secretariats.

9. The recommendations contained in the Final Act of the Geneva Conference have made it possible to suggest areas in which co-operative work could be carried out by the regional secretariats. Those areas include projections of the trade needs and the "trade gap" of the developing countries, on a regional, sub-regional and country basis; projections of production and demand for primary commodities; studies on trade trends; studies on the exports of manufactured and semi-manufactured products of developing countries; analyses of efforts towards regional and sub-regional economic co-operation and integration; shipping and ocean freight rates; and trade with the centrally planned economies.

10. In view of the importance of these subjects in the continuing work of UNCTAD, the staff of the area sections of the Research Division of UNCTAD would be able to provide assistance to the regional secretariats in undertaking some of the required studies. The staff of these sections might be able to spend periods of time at the headquarters of the regional economic commissions in order to help in the preparation of the studies.

11. In addition to the activities enumerated above, a number of other trade activities are being carried on by the regional economic commissions. These include such subjects as trade promotion, commercial arbitration, simplification of customs procedures, conditions of contracts, regional financing, etc. It was agreed that these activities of the regional commissions should be continued and might in some cases be intensified.

12. A meeting of the officials concerned of the Conference secretariat and of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and of the regional secretariats will be held in the first half of 1965. The task of the meeting will be generally to examine the research programmes of the various units of the secretariat and, in particular, to determine common methodology and assumptions for projections.