

1989/118. Interregional co-operation for facilitation of international trade

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its decision 1982/174 of 30 July 1982, in which it requested the executive secretaries of the regional commissions to submit recommendations concerning a subject for interregional co-operation of common interest to all regions, and noting ongoing activities undertaken by the regional commissions within this framework,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on regional co-operation,⁹³ in particular section IV thereof,

Conscious of the global importance of trade facilitation and of the work carried out by the regional commissions to reduce, simplify and harmonize formalities, procedures and documentation for the development of international trade, and of the technical co-operation activities carried out by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to promote and implement such measures pursuant to the decision adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 31 July 1969,

Noting that the Rules for Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (EDIFACT) being developed and maintained within the Economic Commission for Europe allow for the progressive replacement of trade documents by electronic messages,

Recalling, in the light of Economic Commission for Europe decision L (44) of 21 April 1989,⁹⁴ that consideration should be given to augmenting the existing facilities in the Commission for the development and the maintenance of EDIFACT, given the central importance of these facilities for the use of EDIFACT by all countries concerned,

Recognizing that the introduction of trade facilitation measures leading to simpler, faster and more economical documentary procedures might require the modification of trade-related practices,

Noting that the introduction of electronic data interchange is contingent upon the availability of appropriate data-processing equipment and telecommunications facilities, as well as relevant business management techniques, which have still to be established in many countries, particularly developing countries,

1. *Invites* the regional commissions to formulate, jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, within existing resources, a draft proposal for interregional co-operation based on projects detailing technical and resource requirements, duly taking into account the national laws and regulations and the needs and concerns of the various regions, especially those of the developing countries, in the area of trade facilitation, and in particular the phased application of EDIFACT, wherever appropriate, and to submit the draft proposal for approval to the Council at its second regular session of 1990;

2. *Requests* the regional commissions to consult with funding organizations, notably the United Nations Development Programme, concerning the financial resources available for possible execution of the draft proposal after approval by the Council at its second regular session of 1990;

3. *Recommends* to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe that, in examining closely the resources required for maintenance and development activity now under way, consideration be given to the issue of what resources, from within the existing resources of the Commission, might be made available to support this activity.

*37th plenary meeting
28 July 1989*

⁹³ E/1989/96.

⁹⁴ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989, Supplement No. 15 (E/1989/34), chap. IV.*