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DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN AFRICA AND REVIEW OF  
GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES AFFECTING POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

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DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN AFRICA AND REVIEW OF  
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Introduction

This paper is to indicate some general views concerning population distribution in African countries. While the main emphasis is towards the distribution of total population, it is important to stress that in general it is not possible to isolate absolutely such kind of questions as the process of urbanization and especially urban-rural dispersion of population. This is a very important aspect because urbanization has a great impact upon the general picture of distribution of population in any country.

Distribution of population in itself can be considered from different points of view. But the main characteristics of it are distribution of total population within the continent, region or country and also urban-rural distribution of population. The last gives a very important picture of economic activity within the country in non-agricultural sectors and especially of urban development.

Bearing in mind that the greatest part of African population (about 83 per cent) is rural, it is possible to say that the characteristics of the total population distribution in the region mainly has the same picture as the distribution of rural population. In this connection the second part of the paper is mainly devoted to the distribution of urban population and partly to the general questions of urbanization.

Speaking about the distribution of population in the developing countries, it is necessary to point out that they altogether contain about 70 per cent of the world's total population. The majority of this population lives only on a very small part of the land area. Despite considerable redistribution in the past the inhabited area has advanced not much. At present not more than one-tenth of the world's land area is considered as arable land and less than one-fifth as permanent meadows and pastures. In all, only three-tenths of the land area is permanently inhabited. About 70 per cent of the earth's land surface comprise particularly those with extreme climatic conditions - the high mountains, the hot and mid-latitude deserts, parts of tropical wet-lands, etc. These areas pose difficult climatic problems to human existence, but this does not mean that they are constantly committed to emptiness. It is within the capacity of mankind to develop new areas, to expand the resources and to make great changes in their utilization through economic development. In this regard, the economic development is closely connected with and largely depends upon proper distribution of population within the country.

General Characteristic of Population Distribution in Africa

The average density of population in Africa in 1969 was estimated at 11 persons per square kilometer. That constitutes less than half the world average of 26 persons per square kilometer.

TABLE 1

Major areas and regions	Populations (millions)	Area (000 km <sup>2</sup> )	Density
World total	3,552	135,772	26
Africa	345	30,313	11
North America	224	81,515	10
Latin America	276	20,565	13
East Asia	901	11,757	77
South Asia	1,087	15,775	69
Europe	460	4,934	93
Oceania	18.9	8,511	2
U.S.S.R.	240	22,402	11

Source: United Nations "Demographic Handbook for Africa" - 1971.

This is at the same level as exists in the U.S.S.R., Latin America, North America and much lower than in East and South Asia.

The situation can be explained by the fact that in the African region there are many areas which are almost uninhabited. So the picture given by the density of population of Africa must be supplemented by such indicators as pressure of population on land as the density of total and rural population per square km. of arable land. In 1968 as compared with the world's density per sq. km. of arable land of 248 and density of rural population of 178 persons, Africa had respectively 164 and 137 persons per sq. km. These figures the same as those of Latin America, are a little bit higher than those of Oceania and Northern America and much more lower than those of Asia.

TABLE 2

Major area and regions	Persons per sq. km.		Rural population per square km. of arable land
	Total area	Arable land	
World Total	26	248	178
Africa	11	164	137
Northern America	10	140	38
Latin America	13	219	138
Southern Asia	67	-	473
East Asia	76	-	
Europe	92	305	160
Oceania	2	43	18
U.S.S.R.	11	106	62

Source: United Nations, Demographic Handbook for Africa, 1971.

The distribution of population and land area between individual countries of Africa (there are nearly 60 countries) as well as amongst the five sub-regions is extremely uneven.

The most densely populated sub-regions in Africa are the West and East (17 and 15) persons per sq. km. followed by North Africa with 10. The least densely populated area is Central Africa - 7.5 persons per sq. km.

TABLE 3

Sub-regions	Area <sup>2</sup> (000 km <sup>2</sup> )	Population (thousands)	Density <sup>2</sup> per km <sup>2</sup>
Africa (total)	30,305	351,734	11.6
North	8,526	84,069	9.8
West	6,142	109,264	17.7
Central	5,420	40,678	7.5
East	5,106	77,410	15.1
Other African countries	5,111	40,313	7.8

Source: United Nations, Demographic Handbook for Africa, 1971.

The Western and Eastern sub-regions with 37 per cent of the total land have about 45 per cent of the region's population. At the same time North and Central Africa with 46 per cent of total land account for only 35 per cent of the region's population. This picture is easily explicable. North and Central Africa have vast areas which are almost uninhabited. They are - the Sahara desert, large areas in Gabon, Congo (Brazzaville), Central African Republic and South-Western Sudan. The density of population per arable land however presents an absolutely different picture. Except Central Africa where it is very low - North Africa has the highest density per arable land - 235 and 175 persons per sq. km. It is followed by East Africa (103 and 172 persons), West Africa - 146 and 126 persons and by sub-region of other African countries 196 and 110 persons respectively.

The situation can be explained only by the fact that the size of arable land in Africa is very small.

TABLE 4

Sub-regions	Total Land (000 km <sup>2</sup> )	Arable land		% of population
		(000 km <sup>2</sup> )	% of total	
Africa Total	30,305.0	2,620.3	8.6	100.0
North Africa	8,526.0	357.7	4.2	23.9
West Africa	6,142.0	748.3	12.1	31.1
Central Africa	5,420.0	884.0	16.3	11.5
East Africa	5,106.0	423.0	8.2	22.0
Other African countries	5,111.0	208.3	4.0	11.5

Source: United Nations, Demographic Handbook for Africa.

Out of about 300 million sq. km. of total land, arable land in Africa constitutes only 8.6 per cent. Central Africa has the highest percentage of arable land - 16.3. It is followed by West Africa with 12.1 per cent, East Africa 8.2 per cent, North Africa and sub-region of Other African countries have respectively 4.2 and 4.0 per cent of arable land.

Available data show that the amount of the arable land per person one in Africa as a whole is less than 1 hectare per one person (or exactly 0.7 hectare per person); the sub-region of North Africa only 0.4 ha., West Africa - 0.7 ha, East Africa - 0.1 and only Central Africa has 2.0 hectares per person.

Increasing the amount of arable land will be an important means of improving agricultural productivity and of rational distribution of population in general and productive forces in particular.

The distribution of population among the countries in Africa has more uneven picture than it is between Africa's sub-regions. Among the individual countries, Nigeria alone has one-fifth of Africa's population (18.3 per cent). At the same time Nigeria and Arab Republic of Egypt together form more than a quarter (27.7 per cent) of the population, but their combined areas cover less than one fifteenth of the continent.

Excluding small territories, inhabited mainly by non-Africans and some islands, only three countries of the continent have the densities more than 50 persons per sq. km. of area. They are Nigeria (63), Rwanda (121) and Burundi (120). Seven countries have densities ranging from 20 to 50 persons and others less than 20 persons per sq. km. The most sparsely populated countries (density less than 5 persons) can be combined in four major groups: those partly or wholly situated in the Sahara desert, those situated in the Kalahari desert: Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Gabon and Angola; French Territory for Afars & Issas, Somalia in East Africa. These countries have about fifty per cent of the total area of the continent and less than 18 per cent of population which is the same as what Nigeria and the Arab Republic of Egypt have together. 1/

Distribution of population within individual countries varies very widely.

TABLE 5

Ranges of density of population (persons per sq. km.)  
among administrative units within selected African countries

Country	Ranges of density	Country	Ranges of density
1. Morocco		11. Nigeria	30.0-161.0
2. Algeria		12. Chad	0.1-28.7
3. Tunisia	7.0-48.3	13. Congo (B)	0.5-11.1
4. Libya	0.2-2.9	14. Cameroon	3.7-222.1
5. Upper Volta	6.1-45.5	15. Zaire	4.4-13.3
6. Niger	0.3-16.5	16. Ethiopia	5.6-55.8
7. Ivory Coast	3.6-15.6	17. Kenya	2.0-168.4
8. Sudan	0.7-42.8	18. Uganda	15.3-66.9
9. Ghana	10.3-90.0	19. Tanzania	4.5-53.5
10. Togo	7.4-76.0	20. Burundi	62.0-263.0

Source: National Publications.

1/ ECA; Demographic Handbook for Africa, 1971.

It depends in general on the environmental conditions within the country or its location in the continent.

Population density in Nigeria is greatest in the south averaging 120 persons per sq. km. all over the area and diminishing on approaching the middle belt where densities range from 11 persons per sq. kilometre in Adamawa Province to 36 persons per sq. km. in Plateau Province. Next follows a belt of relatively higher density north of the middle belt ranging from a density of 15 persons in Burnu Province in the extreme northeast of the country to 35 persons per sq. km. in Sokoto Province in the extreme north-west, while in Kano Province which is centrally situated densities reach 112 persons. The area of highest density in the country in Eastern Nigeria with an overall density of 161 persons per sq. km. The most populated divisions are Orlu, Uyo, Abak and Okigwi, where density of population range from 598 to 443 persons per sq. km.

Algeria illustrates a density-range pattern existing in countries which have substantial portions of their territories in desert and steppe regions. The 1966 census showed that there was a density about 5 persons per sq. km. But if two Saharian departments are excluded it is found that all the three Northern departments had about 95 per cent of the population and only 11.7 per cent of the area with an average density of about 29 persons per sq. km. Using communes as the unit area, however, it appears that about three quarters of the population lived at densities above that figure and that nearly half of the population resided in areas with densities above 75 per sq. km.

Even in the Saharan departments it is likely that the bulk of population lives at high densities in oasis communities, while the nomadic population also probably lives at higher densities than the department average reveal since large parts of the desert are uninhabited.

The Arab Republic of Egypt has a great concentration of population along the Nile in Upper region and on the delta. The arable land of the country constitutes only about 4 per cent of the total area. This gives an overall density in 1968 at about 1140 persons per sq. km. of arable land to compare with the density per total land of 32 persons.

Density-range patterns vary very widely among tropical African countries. The countries which share the Sahara with northern Africa have high proportions of their areas with low densities, but it is almost impossible to find there any regions of very high density comparable to those in the north. The wetter tropical countries have considerably more even distributions, but have

substantial portions of their total population residing on small parts of the total area. Dahomey, for example, had 35.0 per cent of its population in 1961 residing at densities above 38.5 per sq. km. on 3.9 per cent of the area. Togo had 69.5 per cent of its population living at densities above 39 per sq. km. on 29.7 per cent of its area. According to the 1963 Nigerian Census the country had 44.2 per cent of the population living on 13 per cent of its area with densities higher than 100 per sq. km. In 1958 the Republic of Zaire had 47.0 per cent of its population residing on only 17.2 per cent of its area. <sup>1/</sup>

The East African countries, for example, Kenya and Tanzania, show the minimal value of density figures. In 1962 Kenya's data indicate that at one extreme 8.0 per cent of the total population occupied 75.9 per cent of the area at densities below 4 per sq. km., while only 9.0 per cent of the area had densities above 35 per sq. km. The total density in 1962 in the country was estimated at about 1.5 per sq. km.

Densities in Ethiopia range from 5.6 persons per square km. in Arussi to 55.8 persons per sq. km. in Shoa area. The average density of the country is about 19.4 persons. In the Shoa province 25 per cent of population occupy only 7 per cent of the total area. At the same time only four provinces (Arussi, Bale, Eritrea and Hararge) with 25 per cent of the total population occupied more than 41 per cent of the total area.

From the foregoing, it is possible to deduce that except a few areas in rural parts of Africa and of course in and around big cities there is not much pressure of population on total land. The rather high density of population on arable land might be explained by the small size of this kind of land.

The following table shows that the importance of agriculture is evident. In all cases it is the largest single component of Gross Domestic Product. But the development of this sector is going very slow and it has become clear that the share of the agricultural sector is decreasing. During the preparation of their first national plans many African countries paid a great attention to the development of the economy through rapid industrialization; at the same time they neglected the development of agriculture which provides employment for 80-90 per cent of labour force and the development of rural areas as a whole where more than 80 per cent of population lives. Governments devoted very small proportion of planned expenditures to direct investment in agriculture. The proportion varies from country to country but few countries spent as much as one-third of their budget on agricultural development. The rural areas are rich in land which could be cultivated and in labour force. But the main difficulty of its development is lack of capital. So rural development must therefore rely on the most effective use of existing cultivated land and development of human and land resources.

<sup>1/</sup> W.A. Hance. "The Crudeness of Crude Densities". 1969.

TABLE 6

Percentage of agriculture in industrial origin of GDP at  
current factor cost in selected sub-regions of Africa

	1960	1965	1969
North Africa	29.0	25.6	22.3
West Africa	55.1	48.1	46.3
Central Africa	40.0	35.1	33.2
East Africa	44.5	43.1	37.8

Source: "Population Growth and Social and Economic Development in Africa", E/CN.14/POP/46, 1971.

This is extremely important in the sense that in African countries rural activities are the main source of foreign currency required for the production of capital goods, and agricultural production for the development of national small-scale industry. Although the density of population in Africa, excepting a few areas, is very low the development of new and more intensive use of existing land can be one of the measures for more rational distribution of population in the countries of the region.

Rural-Urban distribution of Population

The picture of population distribution would not be completed by taking in account only the description of general population distribution within the region. One of the most effective measures of population distribution is the share of urban and rural population. Table 7 gives the picture of percentages of the population living in towns of 20,000 and more inhabitants in African countries; as one can see the greatest part of African population still resides in rural areas. Only in Arab Republic of Egypt, urban population is above 40 per cent.

Eighteen countries out of 39 presented in the table has the share of urban population less than 10 per cent of the total; in 14 countries the share of urban population ranges from 10 to 20 per cent while 6 countries have the share of urban population ranging from 30 to 40 per cent of the total.

TABLE 7  
Urban population in African countries (Percentage of total)

Country	Per cent	Country	Per cent
Kenya	1.9	Gabon	11.4
Lesotho	1.8	Dahomey	11.9
Burundi	1.9	Somalia	11.3
Mauritania	2.3	Congo (B)	12.8
Niger	2.4	Sierra Leone	13.1
Uganda	2.5	Nigeria	15.3
Malawi	3.8	Central African Republic	16.6
Swaziland	4.7	Southern Rhodesia	16.5
Ethiopia	4.9	Reunion	16.9
Tanzania	5.1	Ghana	17.5
Portuguese Guinea	5.5	Ivory Coast	18.8
Upper Volta	5.7	Liberia	18.3
Chad	5.8	Libya	23.7
Mozambique	6.0	Tunisia	25.7
Cameroon	7.4	Zambia	26.9
Sudan	7.5	Morocco	30.3
Gambia	9.6	Algeria	30.7
Angola	9.7	Equatorial Guinea	37.7
Togo	10.3	Egypt	41.1
Guinea	10.6		

Source: National publications.

Although Africa is the least urbanized continent of the major world's regions, its urban population growth rate is among the most rapid in the world. Urban growth rates especially those of major cities have averaged two to three times the overall rate of population growth.

It is estimated that between 1950 and 1960 the annual increase in population for cities of 20,000 and over for Africa as a whole was 10-13 per cent, for North Africa 21-26 per cent and for Sub-Saharan Africa 6 to 9 per cent. <sup>1/</sup> The largest urban growth rate of 15.2 per cent per annum occurred in Zaire and Somalia, where only about 13 per cent of the population lived in towns. In Upper Volta where the total population growth rate was 1.6 per cent per annum, the urban rate was 10.8 per cent, in Malawi it was 2.8 per cent and 10.4 per cent respectively. Many of the capital cities have doubled their population in the past decade.

<sup>1/</sup> UN, "World Survey of Urban and Rural Population Growth" (E/CN.9/187), 1965.

At the same time Dar-es-Salaam and Sudan nearly doubled and Accra more than doubled. This rate of growth is rapidly increasing the number of African agglomerations. According to the UN ECA Population Programme Centre estimates such cities as Accra, Dakar have already passed 500,000 inhabitants in 1970; Algiers, Lagos and Kinshasa will soon have more than 1,000,000 inhabitants and Cairo had already in 1966 more than 4 million inhabitants.

One of the major characteristics of the distribution of urban population in Africa as shown in Table 8 is that practically half of it is located in big cities. 67 per cent of big cities of the region have in general more than fifty per cent of urban population of each country, 20 per cent of the cities have more than a quarter of the urban population. Only Lagos has about 10 per cent of the population living in towns of more than 20,000 inhabitants in Nigeria.

TABLE 8

Primate Cities of African Countries as per cent of the Urban Population and of the Total National Population

Sub-region and country	City	Year	Per cent of the urban <u>a/</u> population	Per cent of the total national population
<u>North Africa</u>				
Algeria	Algiers <sup>b/</sup>	1968	29	7.6
Libya	Tripoli	1968	61	1.4
Morocco	Casablanca	1969	29	8.6
Sudan	Khartoum <u>c/</u>	1968	36	2.7
Tunisia	Tunis	1966	45	10.0
U.A.R.	Cairo	1966	36	13.9
<u>West Africa</u>				
Gambia	Bathurst	1967	100	9.3
Dahomey	Cotonou	1965	48	4.7
Ghana	Accra	1968	46	7.7
Guinea	Conakry <u>b/</u>	1967	58	5.4
Ivory Coast	Abidjan <u>b/</u>	1964	57	7.5
Liberia	Monrovia	1962	65	7.9
Mali	Bamako <u>b/</u>	1968	59	3.7
Niger	Niamey	1968	58	2.2
Nigeria	Lagos	1970	9	1.3
Senegal	Dakar <u>b/</u>	1969	57	15.1
Sierra Leone	Freetown	1969	53	6.6
Togo	Lome <u>b/</u>	1968	78	7.2
Upper Volta	Ouagadougou	1966	46	1.6

TABLE 8 (Cont'd)

Sub-region and country	City	Year	Per cent of the urban <u>a/</u> population	Per cent of the total national population
<u>Central Africa</u>				
Cameroon	Douala <u>b/</u>	1965	57	3.8
Chad	Fort-Lamy <u>b/</u>	1964	55	3.0
Central African Republic	Bangui	1966	79	10.9
Congo (B)	Brazzaville <u>b/</u>	1961-62	64	17.3
Burundi	Bujumbura	1965	100	2.2
Gabon	Libreville	1967 <u>a/</u>	67	12.1
Zaire	Kinshasa	1967	32	4.4
<u>East Africa</u>				
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	1967	59	2.7
Tanzania	Dar-es-Salaam	1967	43	2.2
Kenya	Nairobi <u>b/</u>	1969	58	4.4
Uganda	Kampala <u>b/</u>	1969	68	3.5
Madagascar	Tananarive	1968	49	5.1
Malawi	Blantyre-Limbe	1966	85	2.7
Zambia	Lusaka <u>b/</u>	1969	26	5.9
Somalia	Mogadiscio	1967	67	6.6
Mauritius	Port Louis <u>b/</u>	1967	39	16.9
<u>Other Africa</u>				
South Africa	Johannesburg <u>b/</u>	1960	22	7.2
Namibia	Windhoek <u>b/</u>	1960	100	6.2
Mozambique	Lourenco-Marques	1960	70	2.8
Southern Rhodesia	Salisbury <u>b/</u>	1968	49	8.1

Source: Aspects of urbanization and population distribution in Africa.  
ECA, Seminar on human environment, Addis Ababa, 23-28 August  
1971.

a/ Population in localities of 20,000 inhabitants or more.

b/ Urban agglomeration

c/ Including Omdurman.

As Mr. William A. Hance says in his book "Population, Migration and Urbanization in Africa", there are a lot of examples of the predominance of this primate cities in variety of activities. Dakar, with about 16 per cent of the population of Senegal accounts for 70 per cent of the countries' commercial workers, over 50 per cent of employees in transportation, administration and other services, and 80 per cent of those in manufacturing. The three towns of Sudan, (Khartoum, Omdurman, North Khartoum), employ nearly all the educated Sudanese, contain half of the public utilities and most of the nation's industry, the main commercial and financial establishments, the only university, and the national government offices; they account for 90 per cent of the vehicles registered in the country. Lagos, although it is one of many centres in Nigeria and containing only about 1 per cent of its population accounts for more than 46 per cent of electricity consumed, 56 per cent of the country's telephones, 20 per cent of its newspapers, 80 per cent of its periodicals, 37 per cent of hospital facilities. Casablanca, in a country with a long tradition of urbanization and with 10 cities of over 100,000 inhabitants, accounts for over half of commercial and financial enterprises in Morocco, for over 70 per cent of workers employed in industrial enterprises and three fifths of industrial output. The city consumes 59 per cent of Morocco's high tension electricity and has one third of its telephones and two-fifths of the medical doctors in the country. The dominance of a single city is even more marked in some countries, including Conakry in Guinea, Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, Lome in Togo, Bangui in the Central African Republic, Bujumbura in Burundi, etc.

The expansion of African cities is due far more to migration from the rural areas than to natural growth. There is tendency for the migration to be directed mainly towards one or two of the largest cities in each particular country so that the growth rates of cities with population of 100,000 and more inhabitants are often higher than the rate for urban areas as a whole. It has been estimated that about 68 per cent of the total urban population is concentrated in big cities. This trend may be explained by the tendency for industrial development to be concentrated in large cities. But it is necessary to point out that the rate of industrial development still lagging behind the rate of urbanization. Thus the economically active population is growing faster than the number of jobs, especially industrial jobs, that is being created. It is very well known that new industries are also attracted in increasing numbers to the larger urban areas for many reasons but new industrial jobs are also lagging behind the population explosion concentrated in a few metropolitan areas. <sup>1/</sup> At the same time smaller towns are stagnating of loosing population, because new industries do not settle there and there are no industrial jobs to absorb or attract the labour force.

<sup>1/</sup> The optimum pattern of Urbanization, Working paper for the UN Seminar on Regional Planning in Tokyo.

In European countries the percentage of the working force in industry is always higher than that of the population living in cities, in some cases as much as three times higher. However, the direct opposite is true in the developing countries. There, in each case, the percentage of population living in towns over more 20,000 exceeds the percentage employed in manufacturing in some cases more than three times. <sup>1/</sup>

#### Review of governmental policies, affecting population distribution

One of the major problems associated with distribution of population is inadequacy of planning machinery. In this context regional planning would mean physical framework within which many types of planned activity, education, housing, location of industry, development of natural resources, agriculture etc. can be achieved to develop the economy as a whole. In most cases where a regional planning machinery has been set up and a programme of action undertaken, their scope tends to be separated between the planning of the development of rural areas and to the city proper, nor is this kind of planning usually integrated with national development planning or programming in the larger perspective of urban-rural relations.

The complex process of urban-rural development as well as problems of economic and social development need to be considered in their entirety. Urbanization, industrialization, community development and regional planning are closely linked problems of policy and practice which may together provide some answers to the search for more balanced growth of industry and agriculture, for a more desirable urban-rural relationship, and for a better use of human and natural resources. Each community or geographical area is related to others economically, physically, etc. From the development point of view the region is in fact the link between the local community and the nation and provides the setting for an easier identification of national goals in terms of local action. However, regional planning in African countries is seen in a more narrow sense. In most cases it, if exists, is primarily limited to the development of rural areas and more rarely to the redevelopment of metropolitan areas. Comprehensive regional planning is almost never used in the region. Even for agricultural development it is possible to find some two or three examples of planning which are used in some African countries. The most interesting of them is the project of the Awash region in Ethiopia. With the area of 123,400 sq. km. the Awash Valley has the potential for resolving problems of the settlement of pastoral nomads with the establishment of new capital-intensive plantations and industrial development at rates sufficient enough to absorb the rapidly growing movement of rural population. The geography and

<sup>1/</sup> Urbanization in the second UN Development Decade (ST/ECA/132).

existence of natural resources in Ethiopia offer great opportunities for regional development. The Third Five-Year Development Plan (1968-73) stresses regional development as a means of promoting balanced national development as well as a means of extending the benefits of progress implied in national development to Ethiopia's less developed areas. The Awash Valley is a case for research in regional development process aimed at rational distribution of population within the country and integrated economic development of the region. But it is necessary to point out that there does not yet exist at present an adequate active relationship between the development promoted in the Awash Valley and that stimulated by the national plan of the country.

Another example of this kind is the project of the Aswan region in the Arab Republic of Egypt. The Aswan region provides an opportunity for studying the interactions of technological advance, physical development and economic progress, and their implications for social and human welfare. This programme encompasses intensive agricultural development and resettlement the development of new transport, power and utility systems as the necessary infrastructural basis for establishing large industrial complexes; and also the development of a modern economic cultural and administrative centre for the region. 1/ Another example of rural resettlement scheme is provided by the volta resettlement scheme in Ghana. This was caused by the creation of a lake 8,450 sq. km. (due to the construction Volta Dam) in extent, which flooded out about 3 per cent of the area and one per cent of the country's population. About 80,000 people involved were scattered in over 700 villages in dry savannah country. The guiding principles in the scheme were to plan and locate the new settlements in the most rational manner and to improve the system of agriculture. Settlement planning was based on a high degree of the concentration which involved four-tier hierarchial settlement pattern. The four tiers comprise central towns with population of 8 to 10,000; service centre village with population of 5 to 8,000; satellite village with population less than 5,000 inhabitants; and farmhouses in small traditional villages. As for the improvement of agriculture it was interpreted in terms of mechanized agriculture on a co-operative basis. It is necessary to mention, that this scheme has not been wholly successful. Very often spontaneous and unplanned settlement development took place and some of the extensively constructed houses were deserted. The mechanization programme could not be implemented due to the absence of machine supply and repairs. etc. 2/

1/ Integrated approach to Rural Development in Africa (UN) E/CN.14/SWSA/8.

2/ Spatial re-distribution of Population in Africa. Paper, prepared for African Population Conference 1971, E/CN.14/POP/45.

There are some more examples of governmental approach to the distribution of population in Africa. This is the Tanzanian experiment in integrated approach to rural development, the project for relief and reconstruction in Southern Region of Sudan. Nigeria's Second National Development Plan, 1970-1974 aims at preventing rural depopulation through the improvement of the lot of farmers by supplying agricultural techniques and providing jobs for rural areas thus to reduce the increasing inequality in rural-urban income and to control the large stream of rural-urban migration.

The Government of Ghana has taken certain actions to control the trend of migration. Its top priority is the development of rural areas through the provision of basic amenities such as electricity, good drinking water, establishment of rural industries and development of agriculture. To execute the Government's rural development policies it established the Ministry of Youth and Rural Development.

Except the project of Awash region in Ethiopia the Third Five Year Plan puts great stress on Regional Development Planning and a strategy for future controlled urbanization and settlement scheme is on the study. The Ministry of Land Reform and Administration is responsible for the control of settlement in Government owned lands.

Gambia has no plans for the distribution of population. But there are some measures towards discouraging people from leaving the rural areas for towns. They include improving agricultural techniques, providing new varieties of seeds and crops and general improvement of medical, health and social facilities in the provinces.

In Swaziland the encouragement of small-scale industry and rural handicraft developments as well as agricultural development programmes are the essential part of the policy the distribution of population aimed both at increasing job opportunities and reducing migration to urban areas.

In Botswana since agriculture will for a long time remain the most important source of national domestic income and employment the overall plan for the country is the allocation of increased resources for the improvement of the livestock industry and the opening up of more areas for both crop and livestock production. Great attention is paid to the development of rural areas in order to achieve a balance of living conditions in rural and urban localities. While in general Botswana depends for its skilled labour on persons recruited from outside the country, there is a cautious policy of controlling the flow of immigrants into the country.

It is therefore possible to say that the policy of distribution of population in most African countries is directed towards development of rural areas being a kind of prevention of rural-urban migration.

Policies of combined development of rural-urban areas are very rare in the region. It is very difficult to find any examples of comprehensive planning of economy and distribution of the population within the whole country. Practically there is no policy towards restriction of development of big cities and development of small urban settlement. Examples of resettlement projects are generally concerned with resettlement of population within particular region which result from the construction of dams etc.

### Summary

Generally speaking the distribution of African population is very uneven and spontaneous in character. It is the most sparsely populated continent in the world.

The major part of the population nearly 85 per cent live in rural areas in places which had been developed very long ago especially for agricultural production, and mining. Though the density of rural population in African countries is not very high the total share of arable land is very small. Only 8.6 per cent of the total land in the region is under permanent crop. Moreover, the productivity of this land is going down year by year, due to the extensive use of land, inadequate supply of water, lack or underdeveloped transportation, inadequate machinery, etc. All this together leads to constant movement of rural population to urban areas. More energetic, especially young people, migrate to towns leaving behind those less competent to carry on good husbandry. Constant movement of population from rural areas results in its turn in declining its agricultural productivity and even in stagnation of agriculture, and moreover creates a problem of urban overcrowding.

The distribution of urban population as well as distribution of total population in the region is also very uneven. Practically the major part of this population is concentrated in big cities. Such concentration creates two major problems in urban areas namely acute shortage of housing and excessive unemployment. The rate of unemployment in Africa varies from 10 to 20 per cent. Up to date many African Governments have not yet set any employment targets. But they are getting increasingly concerned with the problem. Among the measures adopted are restraining control of flow of migrants to the towns by means of rural development, resettlement schemes, repatriating unemployed urban migrants to the villages, etc. Attempts also have been made to spread migration to small urban localities. 1/

1/ Africa Social Situation, Paper prepared for African Population Conference, E/CN.14/POP/38, Accra, Ghana, 1971.

Meanwhile all these measures are of one-side character. Rational distribution of population can be achieved only through integrated economic development of the country. There could be three ways to achieve more or less adequate distribution of population within a country as a whole as well as between rural and urban areas, which have to be based on the comprehensive planning of economic development of the country.

- More intensive use of existing cultivated land with the view to get more than one crop during the year. This is to be based on the application of modern techniques. To prevent migration from rural areas it is necessary to provide development of new lands and create agro-industrial complexes, based on the processing of agricultural raw materials.
- Intensive development of small towns based on the location of small-scale industry and handicrafts with the view to attract more labour force from big cities and surplus of that from rural areas.
- More deliberate location of new industry in particular areas and the decentralization of existing industrial enterprises, in big cities, as a deliberate method of reducing urban congestion. In addition to this, careful regional and urban planning programmes could together be the most effective measures to ensure a balanced distribution of the population among the various regions and also among the various urban centres of the country.