



53693

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.:
Limited

E/ECA/PSD.7/19
30 December 1991

Original: English

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Seventh Session of the Joint Conference
of African Planners, Statisticians
and Demographers

Addis Ababa, 2-7 March 1992

AFRICAN HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS CAPABILITY PROGRAMME
(AHSCP)

05111

CONTENTS

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>
I. Introduction	1 - 2
II. Review of progress	3 - 9
III. Summary of assistance provided in 1990-1991	10 - 23
IV. Problems faced by AHSCP	24 - 31
A. At Country Level	24 - 26
B. At the regional component level	27 - 31
V. Co-ordination with other household survey programmes	32 - 36
VI. Conclusions	37 - 38

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The African Household Surveys Capability Programme (AHSCP) has been in active operation since 1978. Its regional component is executed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa as part of the Statistical Development Programme for Africa (SDPA) under UNDP funding. The International Labour Office has provided substantial support to the AHSCP since its inception and assistance is also provided by the Co-ordinating Unit of National Household Surveys Capability Programme in the UN Statistical Office, New York.

2. This report aims at summarizing progress made with the AHSCP since the last session of the Joint Conference in January 1990, and at addressing some of the issues raised by participants at that Conference which required action.

II. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

3. As at November 1989 (when document E/ECA/PSD.6/12 "The Statistical Development Programme for Africa (SDPA)" was produced as a progress report to the Conference), there were 19 countries participating actively in AHSCP and there were project proposals formulated for nine other countries.

4. At the time of preparing this present report (October 1991), there are now 24 countries participating in AHSCP as follows:

Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

5. The additional countries since the last report to the Joint Conference are Angola, Mozambique, Niger, Seychelles and Tanzania.

6. In addition, there were project proposals formulated for nine other countries as follows:

- (a) Government approved - Burkina Faso, Congo, Egypt, Guinea and Senegal; and
- (b) Government approval awaited - Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea.

7. The most common surveys undertaken by countries under AHSCP are agricultural production surveys, surveys of economic activity (labour force surveys), household income and expenditure surveys, demographic and migration surveys as well as health care surveys, surveys of household enterprise activity, informal sector surveys, housing surveys, literacy surveys, energy use, women's conditions, environment, etc.

8. There is a growing interest in surveys to monitor key socio-economic indicators, including indicators relating to women and children.

9. Strong user demand has also been expressed in some countries for time use statistics, to improve the measurement of economic activity data, to measure the burden of water carrying, firewood collection and other duties often undertaken by women, and so on. However, it is unlikely that any large-scale time use survey can be undertaken with any reliability in Africa in the near future because of problems in the accurate measurement of time, problems in recording and analyzing simultaneous activities, etc. More research is required on alternative methodologies in the meantime.

III. SUMMARY OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

10. The AHSCP regional component provides assistance in three main ways: namely country programmes, regional advisory services and training (working groups, seminars and workshops).

11. Country household survey programmes are adopted by the countries after assessing user demands and priorities in the field of household surveys - that is to say, they are demand driven programmes. The AHSCP is available to assist countries in formulating the country programmes. If this service is used, the AHSCP invites participation from UN and other agencies.

12. During the period 1990-91, there were 12 missions undertaken to African countries by AHSCP/NHSCP staff for the purpose of assisting in the formulation of a programme of household surveys. The countries receiving this assistance were Botswana, Burkina Faso (two separate missions), Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Lesotho, Rwanda (a 2-man mission), Swaziland, Tanzania (associated with the SDA project) and Zimbabwe.

13. Regional advisory services under AHSCP are provided by the UNECA and ILO regional advisers based in Addis Ababa as well as by the NHSCP technical advisers based in New York.

14. As part of the SDPA project, the UNDP has provided funds for two regional advisory positions in the UNECA - one solely on household surveys and the other engaged in both household surveys and statistical training. The ILO provides funds for a further regional advisor attached to the AHSCP and covering surveys of economic activity and household income and expenditure.

15. During the two years ending 31 December 1991, the AHSCP team carried out a total of 42 missions as follows:

	<u>Formulation missions</u>	<u>Technical missions</u>	<u>Other (a)</u>	<u>Total</u>
By UNECA staff	6	12	4	22
By ILO adviser	7(b)	10	4	21
TOTAL	13	22	8	43

16. In addition, a separate UNECA project (Regional Advisory Service in Demographic Statistics, RASDS) provides regional advice to countries conducting demographic household surveys.

17. FAO regional advisers based in Addis Ababa and Accra also provide advisory services for the agricultural surveys conducted by countries as part of their household surveys programmes. It may be recalled that participants at the Working Group on Household Surveys, (October 1989) had expressed the hope that the activities of these FAO advisers would be integrated into AHSCP operations (paragraph 28 of the Report of the Working Group presented to the Sixth Joint Conference as document E/ECA/PSD.6/27).

18. The World Bank's SDA regional project also provides support to countries conducting surveys as part of the Social Dimensions of Structural Adjustment and some of these countries have also indicated that they are participating in the AHSCP programme.

19. The regional advisory services of other agencies (such as the World Health Organisation or the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) are not coordinated with the AHSCP activities.

20. The AHSCP also provides assistance in the training of statisticians engaged in the development, implementation and analysis of household surveys. This is done through on-the-job training and discussions during advisory missions, as well as more formally through working groups, seminars and workshops which are more commonly conducted in Addis Ababa, but which may be held in other locations.

21. Due to resource constraints and other commitments, there have not been any household survey seminars or workshops held under the regional component of the AHSCP programme since the last session of the Joint Conference. However, the regional advisors have participated in country-level seminars (such as the seminar on household budget surveys held in Zanzibar, April 1990) and regional seminars held by other agencies (such as the training workshop on energy surveys held by the World Bank in Arusha in April 1991).

(a) "Other" includes inter-agency, briefing and technical meetings.

(b) The ILO advisor undertook one project formulation mission outside the African region in the period.

22. The preparation of technical manuals and guidelines has generally been undertaken by the NHSCP Central Coordination Unit in New York, but the AHSCP team has had the opportunity of commenting upon drafts of these documents prior to their finalization. In the 1990-91 period, the AHSCP team commented upon the draft manuals for household energy surveys, for surveys on household economic activities, on estimation of sampling errors, and on agricultural surveys.

23. Although most technical manuals in the field of household surveys have been prepared by the NHSCP Central Coordinating Unit in New York, the AHSCP had planned to produce two technical guidelines during 1990-91 - the first on data processing of household surveys and the second on data analysis and dissemination of household surveys. The first output has been suspended because the NHSCP publication "Survey Data Processing: A Review of Issues and Procedures" (1982) was considered to be still relevant in the African context. The second output is expected to be produced early in 1992.

IV. PROBLEMS FACED BY AHSCP

(A) At country level

24. In the AHSCP progress report presented to the sixth session of the Joint Conference in January 1990, the main problems facing countries in developing and implementing their household survey programmes were considered to be (i) lack of finance to carry out the programmes and difficulties in finding external donors for these programmes; (ii) lack of skilled manpower resources due to high staff turnover; (iii) delays in computer processing due to lack of skilled manpower and adequate computing equipment; and (iv) problems in the analysis and dissemination of survey results due to various reasons including lack of experience and know-how, lack of report-writing ability, lack of funds for printing or low printing priority given to statistical output, etc.

25. These problems remain and continue to be addressed by all involved in statistical development in this field of statistics. In addition, growing awareness is being given to the need for improved project planning and management. Computer processing in particular will benefit from adequate planning and preparation before data collection starts.

26. Lack of coordination of international programmes of assistance in the field of household surveys was also mentioned at the sixth session of the Joint Conference and there was a call for improved coordination. Some improvements have been made in this regard, but there is still room for increased co-ordination and co-operation.

(b) At the regional component level

27. The greatest problem is the insecurity of funding. As already stated, the AHSCP regional component is part of the Statistical Development Programme for Africa (SDPA) project. Due to financial constraints under the fourth UNDP regional programming cycle (1987-1991), the funding of the project was originally available only until September 1990, with the understanding that a project revision would be made in due course to cover the remaining period October 1990 - December 1991. However, in view of continuing budgetary constraints, the project has been extended three times since then, first until December 1990, then until March 1991 and December 1991.

28. As a result, the position of regional adviser in household surveys and statistical training had been filled on a short-term (less than 12 month) basis since November 1990 and this caused personal hardships for the incumbent.

29. The Chief Technical Adviser of the SDPA project is one of the regional advisers in household surveys. As a result of his extensive mission commitments, he cannot give adequate attention to project management and related duties.

30. As it will be reported later under a separate agenda item, an inter-governmental working group on the implementation of the Addis ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s was held, under the SDPA project, in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 1991. The working group has formulated a strategy for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s which will be considered by the present session of the joint Conference.

31. As a first step towards preparing the ground for the implementation of the strategy, UNDP has asked ECA to prepare a bridging project in collaboration with UNDP/OPS. The idea of the bridging project is to facilitate the launching of some preparatory activities, including the preparation of a carefully articulated implementing modality possibly by way of an umbrella programme, with well connected components and players having specific and well defined role to play. The approved bridging project covers the period January - September 1992.

V. CO-ORDINATION WITH OTHER HOUSEHOLD SURVEY PROGRAMMES

32. The issue of coordination with other programmes is also a problem. A number of household survey programmes are being conducted in Africa. These include, in addition to the AHSCP, the household surveys being carried out under the League of Arab States' Pan-Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD), the

World Bank's Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project, the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) sponsored by USAID through the Institute for Resource Development/Macro Systems Inc (IRD), the Inter-Agency Food and Nutrition Surveillance Programme (IFNS) sponsored through UNICEF and WHO and the Inter-agency initiative on statistical measurement of the achievement of social goals and human development progress in the 1990s proposed by a working group of UNICEF, UNFPA and the UN Statistical Office.

33. The extent of AHSCP coordination with the activities of these other programmes has been varied. In the case of SDA, there have been extensive discussions on the topic of coordination, offers of joint missions for project formulation, participation in joint meetings, etc. However, most countries still have problems in coordinating SDA surveys and NHSCP surveys at the level of their national household survey programmes, especially in view of lack of financial and human resources.

34. Some countries have attempted to accommodate the two survey programmes by expanding the household expenditure section of the SDA Integrated Surveys (Ghana) or Priority Surveys (Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire). The effect on data quality arising from this increased burden on respondents, field staff and processing staff has not been fully tested or assessed.

35. AHSCP coordination with the other household survey programmes has not been so problematic, mainly because the objectives of these other programmes are not as broad or as general as those of SDA and AHSCP. PAPCHILD, DHS and IFNS concentrate on surveys relating to women and children, and demographic and health aspects, and it has been relatively easy for countries to fit these surveys into their on-going survey programmes. It should be noted, however, that some countries have had to drop planned surveys (such a labour force survey) in order to accommodate Demographic and Health Surveys even though demographic surveys had recently been conducted in their countries (eg Botswana and Zimbabwe).

36. There have been very few problems in coordinating the AHSCP programme in each country with the programme on Monitoring and Achievement of Social Goals in the 1990's. In fact, in support of that programme and in response to national needs, AHSCP missions have recommended indicator monitoring surveys in the household survey programmes of several countries (Tanzania, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

37. In conclusion, the AHSCP has continued to provide support to African countries in developing and implementing household surveys. Problems continue to affect the AHSCP supported programmes of surveys in each country. The main problem at country level remains that of funding, and serious attention needs to be given to this issue.

38. Despite the problems indicated earlier in respect of the regional component of AHSCP, the project staff continue to provide advisory services and formulation missions to countries on request, as well as training and related aspects. It is hoped that funds will be available under the UNDP fifth regional programming cycle (1992 - 1996) to continue these activities at regional level and that countries will continue to be able to attract funds with sufficient notice to permit adequate programme planning.

39. The Conference is invited to discuss issues relating to the implementation of AHSCP during the period 1990-1991 and suggest ways and means of improving the programme, especially as regards the co-ordination of its activities with those of other survey programmes, for the interest of the countries of the African region.