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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

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Regional Technical Committee  
for PADIS

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REPORT ON PROGRESS IN PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

## I. REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

1. During the period since the last meeting of the Regional Technical Committee, the Pan African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) continued its efforts to expand its information system for delivery to member States and to develop national, subregional and regional information centres and infrastructure.

2. The activities of PADIS mainly focussed on four major areas:

- a) the development/enhancement of data bases, as well as the strengthening of information services to users;
- b) the provision of advisory services as technical assistance in information programmes for the benefit of member States and regional/subregional institutions;
- c) network building through the establishment and strengthening of national, subregional and regional information and documentation centres;
- d) the provision of training for member States and regional/subregional institutions.

### a. Data base development and user services

#### DEVINDEX-Africa

3. Work continued in the updating of the PADIS-DEV data base, with 1500 new records added during the period under review. Staff members of PADIS undertook missions connected with indexing of documents and publication of indexes for centres in Togo and Botswana. Volume 14 of the DEVINDEX-Africa, DEVINDEX-Togo and DEVINDEX-Botswana were printed. Input sheets received from Morocco are being reviewed and processed for the preparation of the next DEVINDEX. During the year more than 1500 records were added to the data base, bringing the total number to over 6500 references.

#### PADIS-STAT

4. The Pan African Statistical Data Bank (PADIS-STAT) which covers the period 1970-1985 now contains more than 160,000 statistical series.

#### PADIS-TCDC

5. Work is underway to update the PADIS data base of African experts. New methods of data collection have been devised. Publication of the second edition of the Directory of African Experts is expected by the end of 1987.

### PADIS-COMP (External Bibliographic Data Bases)

During the period PADIS acquired the following data bases:

- a) AGRIS - FAO data base containing references on all aspects of agriculture including rural sociology, animal industry and food;
- b) DEVSIS-CANADA - IDRC data base containing over 8000 bibliographic references on socio-economic development;
- c) ISU - data base of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) containing unpublished United Nations reports on economic and social development;
- d) LABORDOC - a supplementary data base from ILO containing 2584 references on socio-economic development;

#### POP-IN AFRICA

6. The co-ordinating unit of POP-IN AFRICA at ECA has created a data base using PADIS computer facilities. Over 750 records have now been entered, and a bibliographic index called POPINDEX-AFRICA containing abstracts and indexes will be published shortly.

#### Selective Dissemination of Information (PADIS/SDI)

7. This service was launched in 1986 to channel new items of information to planners, decision makers and researchers in the field of social and economic development using the data bases installed in the PADIS/CCO. The PADIS/SDI service presently has 38 subscribers.

#### PADIS Newsletter

8. PADIS launched a quarterly newsletter to facilitate the exchange of experiences between member States and individual organizations and agencies working in the field of information systems. Four issues were published in 1986, and two to date in 1987.

#### b. Advisory Services

9. Advisory services were rendered to Morocco where the PADIS-STAT data base was installed. Staff members of the National Documentation Centre and the Central Statistics Office were trained in the use and development of the statistical data base.

10. A mission to Tunisia was undertaken by PADIS in collaboration with the ECA Statistics Division at the request of the Arab League Documentation Centre (ALDOC) where the North African Documentation and Information Center (NADIS) is to be housed. The PADIS-STAT data base and a mechanism for exchange of statistical data relating to North Africa between ALDOC and PADIS were installed. Computer staff from ALDOC were trained in the use and development of the statistical data base.

c. Network Building

11. During the period two member States designated institutions for participation in the PADIS network as national centres. They were: Malawi, University of Malawi; and Central African Republic, Documentation Centre and Archives of the Ministry of Planning, Statistics and International Co-operation. This brings to nine the number of member States which have designated national participating centres.
12. The Sub-Regional Technical Committee for the Eastern and Southern African Information System (ESADIS), meeting in Nairobi from 28-30 April 1986, discussed the modalities of making the ESADIS centre operational as soon as possible. The agreement between the Government of Zambia and the Economic Commission for Africa to establish ESADIS was signed on 9 January 1987.
13. A mission was undertaken to Niamey, Niger to continue efforts to have WADIS established in Niger. Progress made towards the establishment of WADIS was reported to the tenth meeting of the legislative organs of the West Africa Subregion, meeting in Ouagadougou in February 1987. WADIS is expected to be launched later in 1987.
14. Missions to assist in the establishment and strengthening of national documentation centres were undertaken to Burkina Faso (November 1986), Djibouti (January 1987), Somalia (November 1986) and Sudan (February 1987).
15. PADIS participated in a seminar on the establishment and management of national information services held in Gaborone, Botswana from 19-27 February 1987. The seminar was organized by the German Foundation for International Development.
16. PADIS participated in the Third ECA/Association of African Universities Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa held in Harare, 19-21 January 1987, suggesting ways to establish a technical process for collecting and disseminating theses of African universities in the region. PADIS also set forth a plan for co-operation with African universities in library and information science and education. In implementing the PADIS project in Africa, the meeting recommended that efforts should be made to include PADIS methodologies in the curricula of library schools and departments in Africa and that available development information in African universities, especially theses and dissertations in the subject areas that fall within the scope of PADIS-DEV, should be made available to member States through PADIS.
17. PADIS also participated in the Seventh Conference of Chief Executives of ECA-sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions held in Tripoli, Libya, 24-27 January 1987. At this meeting the Standing Committee on the Harmonization and Standardization of Documentation and Information Systems of ECA-sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions (SCOHSDIS) was established. The Committee, which will be convened annually, is to monitor progress made in the harmonization and standardization of documentation and information systems of all

ECA-sponsored regional and subregional institutions, including ECOWAS. Formal agreements will be worked out for the institutions to participate in the PADIS regional network. PADIS will serve as the Convenor of the Committee which will report to the Annual Conference of Chief Executives.

18. PADIS participated in the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) workshop organized for national focal points of the African Network of Administrative Information (ANAI) held in Tangiers and Rabat, Morocco 7-20 May 1986. The aim of the workshop was to introduce national officials to the techniques of completing computer-based workshops and use of the ANAI thesaurus.

#### d. Training

19. Group training was conducted for staff of documentation centres from member States at PADIS as well as in Nairobi and Lusaka for Eastern and Southern African countries and in Yaounde for Central African countries. This training introduced participants to PADIS/DEVSIS methodologies and information handling. Seventeen participants from 11 countries attended a subregional course introducing PADIS-DEV methodologies held in Nairobi from 22 April - 2 May 1986. For staff of the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission, a two-week training course was held at PADIS from 26 May to 6 June 1986. Ten participants from six countries of the Central Africa and Great Lakes subregion were trained in a subregional workshop held in Yaounde, Cameroon from 4-8 August 1986. PADIS joined POP-IN in training staff from five national, subregional and regional institutions in a workshop on methodologies of the population information network held in Addis Ababa from 20-31 October 1986. A subregional training workshop for countries within the Eastern and Southern Africa Subregion was held in Lusaka, Zambia from 16-20 March 1987. The workshop focussed on processing of development information with specific reference to abstracting, indexing and building of authority files. A major objective of the workshop was to work towards the development of an integrated subregional system and network of national documentation centres.

20. PADIS in collaboration with the ECA Statistics Division organized a workshop on statistical data base development for French-speaking member States in Addis Ababa, 24-28 November 1986 to enable the participants to design, implement and set up statistical data bases in their respective countries. Topics discussed included the need for computerization of statistical information systems; the role of data bases in an integrated statistical information system; data models and structures; and statistical data base management using microcomputers.

21. Under a project funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Mrs. Jeanne Codjia, Chief, Users' Services at the National Automated Documentation and Information Centre, Cotonou, Benin undertook a two-week training course at PADIS/CCO from 9 to 20 February 1987. The curriculum included training in PADIS methodologies for document analysis; document classification; indexing and abstracting techniques; and introduction to computerized management of bibliographic information using MINISIS software.

## II. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE REGIONAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF PADIS

22. The Second Meeting of the Regional Technical Committee adopted ten recommendations. A report on their implementation follows.

### Recommendation 1

23. The first recommendation called for the strengthening of national information structure by (a) member States urgently initiating action towards the designation or creation of institutions responsible for information and documentation activities; and by (b) PADIS CCO strengthening its capacity to deliver advisory services for the identification or establishment of national participating centres.

24. With regard to (a), Central African Republic and Malawi in 1986 designated institutions responsible for information and documentation activities to be part of the PADIS network. To assist member States in designating, creating or strengthening institutions, PADIS undertook four missions, to Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan, since the last meeting of the RTC. In addition, the ECA Executive Secretary is in the process of sending a letter to member States urging them to designate their national focal point for information and documentation activities. To strengthen its capacity to deliver such advisory services (b), PADIS prepared a project document for submission to UNDP in the amount of more than US\$5,000,000 in which the provision of advisory services for the establishment and strengthening of national documentation and information centres features prominently. Under an advance authorization, the implementation of this project began in January 1987.

### Recommendation 2

25. In order to introduce modern information handling techniques and to harmonize and standardize technical procedures and methods used by African information systems, the Committee requested the PADIS CCO to (a) prepare a comprehensive manpower development programme, (b) intensify and diversify its training programme, and (c) contribute to the formulation and promotion of standardization and harmonization of methodologies in the processing of information.

26. Regarding (a), PADIS proposed at various fora, including the Conference of Vice-Chancellors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa the IDRC-sponsored Workshop on Information Needs in Africa (Dakar and Nairobi, March 1987), the establishment of appropriate training programmes for information and documentation personnel at African institutions and proposals for the in-service training of present personnel. It has intensified and diversified its own training programmes with the assistance of funds received from IDRC and UNDP. Virtually all PADIS staff, including both professional staff and documentalists, will serve as "regional advisors" to deliver training upon request to member States in the noted fields. The number of such requests has been increasing rapidly. PADIS has worked intensively towards the promotion of standardization and harmonization during this period, particularly with the establishment of the SCOSHOIS noted above. It is working with UNESCO to

introduce mini-micro CDS/IDIS which will permit the introduction of information standards and methodologies on microcomputers throughout the region.

#### Recommendation 3

27. The Committee recommended that PADIS CCO accelerate the development and testing of methodologies for constructing statistical data bases, ensure their replication at institutions in the region and undertake activities to make its replication possible on other brands of computer hardware and operating systems.

28. With regard to the statistical data base, the number of entries has increased to over 125,000. Programmes have been developed for calculation of distributions and growth rates. On development and testing of methods, work is being done on price statistics. The data base has been revised to incorporate data, when available, through 1990. PADIS-STAT was used to prepare the tables in the statistical annex for the Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa, 1985-1986, (E/ECA/CM.13/3). As noted, the statistical data base was installed in the National Documentation Centre in Morocco and at the Arab League Documentation Centre in Tunisia where staff were trained in its utilization and the exchange of statistical data between ECA and the countries of North Africa was discussed. Further work on development and testing of methods and possibilities of replication on other systems has been hampered by lack of staff available for the tasks.

#### Recommendation 4

29. The Committee recommended that ECA pursue vigorously the signing of agreements to permit the establishment of subregional centres for East and Southern Africa, North Africa and West Africa.

30. As reported, the agreement for the establishment of ESADIS was signed in January 1987. Negotiations are at an advanced stage for the signing of the WADIS agreement, which is expected to be signed with Niger in 1987. Provision has been made for the housing of NADIS with ALDOC, under a proposal for ARISNET submitted by UNESCO and ECA to the UNDP Bureau of Arab States. Once the proposal is funded, an agreement between ALDOC and ECA will be concluded.

#### Recommendation 5

31. This recommendation which called for the elaboration of a workplan and strategy for PADIS has been reported on in document ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/5.

#### Recommendation 6

32. This recommendation which called for various actions to increase financial support for PADIS has been reported on in document ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/4.

### Recommendation 7

33. This recommendation which called for the identification of possible income generating activities and modalities for the implementation has also been reported on in ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/4, para. 12. In addition, it has been incorporated into the project document (RAF/87/053) submitted to UNDP for PADIS Phase III, which states that "with an expanded information resource base and available computer resources, the project's user service and participating centres will be in a position to generate a variety of information products and services (indexes, current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, on-line searches, question/answer services, national bibliographies, subject bibliographies, statistical profiles and abstracts, directories, etc.) At the same time, the project's user service will produce newsletters, brochures, posters, etc. to promote the utilization of information and to activate potential user demand. Information products and services will be marketed commercially."

### Recommendations 8,9

34. These two recommendations dealt with securing funds for the activities of PADIS in North Africa and the establishment of NADIS.

35. Under the mandate given him by ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 581 (XXI), the President of the North Africa Regional Technical Committee wrote to the Administrator of UNDP (copied to ECA) expressing the desire of member States to see successfully concluded the ECA request for financing of a project to permit the participation on North African states in the PADIS system and network. The Director of the ECA Technical Assistance Co-ordination and Operations Office (TACOO) also wrote the UNDP Bureau for Arab States (in May 1986) communicating the decision in the cited resolution of the ECA Conference of Ministers as well as the recommendations of the RTC. The Deputy Director of the UNDP Bureau for Arab States responded that it was not the intention of the Bureau to fund two "similar" projects in their region and that priority would be given to the ALDOC ARISNET project, executed by UNESCO, because it concerned a larger number of countries. The ECA Executive Secretary wrote the Director of the Bureau expressing his reserve regarding this decision which would deprive eight states of the subregion (constituting 80 percent of the total Arab population) of participation in the PADIS system and network. He added further that there was no risk of duplication of activities between the two projects in view of the close collaboration between PADIS and ALDOC. It was finally decided to include the activities which PADIS proposed to undertake in the subregion in the ARISNET project to be submitted to UNDP Bureau of Arab States for financing under the fourth programming cycle (1987-1991). Once funded, they would then be subcontracted by the executing agency to ECA/PADIS.

### Recommendation 10

36. This recommendation dealt with the need to build adequate infrastructure at PADIS CCO to deliver services to member States in information technologies through the strengthening of its technical staff and provision for their in-service training.



✓ 37. Under the project document submitted to UNDP, PADIS/CCO will have seven technical staff members at the professional level, plus documentalists and technicians. The same project document also makes provision for fellowships for PADIS staff to ensure their training in new technologies and methodologies. In February 1987 one staff member undertook a training course in mini-micro CDS/ISIS in Budapest; four staff members received training in this programme at the International Livestock Centre for Africa in Addis Ababa in March. The IDRC-funded project document also provides for technical staff and their continuing training.