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REPORT ON THE COMMISSION'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVITIES IN 1961

(Resolution 37 (III) of 18 February 1961)

REPORT ON THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES  
THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA IN 1961

(Resolution 37 (III) of 18 February 1961)

I. Introduction

1. At its third session, held at Addis Ababa in February 1961, the Economic Commission for Africa stressed the importance it attached to community development. It particularly considered that community development, by endeavouring to stimulate man to greater effort and to a proper recognition of his responsibilities, thereby promoting the integration of human effort in general development, constitutes one of the decisive factors in such development and in capital formation.
2. To mark the importance it attached to the question, the Commission adopted a resolution (37 (III)) on 18 February 1961 expressing its satisfaction with the work programme prepared in this field by the Secretariat, evincing its special interest in certain projects, inviting the Executive Secretary to speed up activity in this field, in consultation with the specialized agencies, and to apply for the necessary staff for the purpose, and further requesting him to report on this question to the Commission at its fourth session. This document has been prepared in response to the latter request.

II. Community Development and Economic Development

3. A preliminary study on "the contribution of community development to economic development" was undertaken by ECA in 1961 under paragraph 2(a) of the resolution referred to above. That study, which was made by a consultant after a rapid visit to Ghana, the Ivory Coast and Nigeria, is contained in the document published for the Commission's fourth session under symbol E/CN.14/144. It deals in particular with the rural development aspects of community development, with emphasis on economic development, and covers two series of questions: (i) those affecting organization and general policy and (ii) those concerning the content of

the programme. It examines the possible relations between increased productivity and improvements in health and education, and changed attitudes arising out of human endeavour stimulated by community development. It goes into the contribution of community development in directing available labour towards capital formation, the expansion and modernization of agriculture, and the extension of rural industries.

4. In the light of the views expressed by the members of the Commission at the fourth session, a similar, and more thorough, study will be conducted in 1962 by a working party comprising a specialist in community development, a specialist in evaluation techniques, a rural economist and a statistician, with a view to defining evaluation techniques, methods and standards and at the same time to producing a test evaluation. This study is included in the Commission's 1962-63 work programme as project 31-12.

5. Under ECA continuing projects, a more general study on community and rural development in Mali was undertaken in 1961. This appears as an information document under symbol E/CN.14/SWCD/2 for the Standing Committee on Social Welfare and Community Development. It is a concise study dealing mainly with rural and economic development in Mali, general and local services, community structures, finance and staffing.

### III. Training Courses in Community Development

6. In pursuance of paragraph 2 (b) of its resolution 37 (III), and in accordance with its 1961-62 work programme, the Commission arranged a high-level training course for community development specialists at Dakar from 1 to 30 November 1961. It was organized on a subregional and bilingual basis, and open to all West-African countries. The curriculum, which was planned to suit technicians and officials already occupying responsible positions, comprised 72 hours of classes on economic, social

cultural and technical development factors, the technology and methodology of community development, experiments and planning, and 53 hours of practical work divided between seminars (20 hours) and visits and discussions in the field (33 hours).

7. Thirteen out of the eighteen countries invited by ECA to nominate candidates for the course accepted. These were Cameroun, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Leopoldville), Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Upper Volta. The students, nineteen in number, were of excellent quality. Such keenness did they display that they may be expected to have derived the utmost benefit from the course, a report on which, produced for the Standing Committee on Social Welfare and Community Development, will be found in document E/CN.14/SWCD/5.

### III. Workshop on Low-Cost Housing in relation to Community

#### Development Programmes

8. The above-named Workshop was held under ECA auspices at Tunis from 19 to 22 October 1961. It was attended by 26 experts from 18 African countries, the subjects dealt with being the technical, financial, economic and social problems involved in the organization of housing policy, planning, the people's practical contribution to the success of housing and collective installation programmes, assistance from abroad and action by the public authorities. The participants tabled eleven recommendations on the various aspects of low-cost housing and self-help building. The report on the Workshop was published as a working paper of the Standing Committee on Social Welfare and Community Development under symbol E/CN.14/SWCD/4.

IV. Organization of Consultations to assist Governments, on request, in the Preparation of their Programmes

9. This item corresponds to paragraph 2 (c) of resolution 37 (III). Four countries have requested ECA assistance in preparing their community development programmes. Cameroun, Dahomey, Ethiopia, and Madagascar.

10. The ECA Community Development Branch has been consulted on and has assisted in the preparation of planning arrangements for the Ethiopian Ministry of Community Development.

11. It has unfortunately been impossible so far to meet the requests of the other three governments, as the Chief of the Community Development Branch and his assistants were faced with a very heavy programme in 1961. To remedy this situation, the Commission is contemplating calling on a regional consultant to assist its own staff in these activities.

12. It should be added that, in a field related to community development, the Chief of the ECA Community Development Branch was asked in 1961 by the United Nations Special Fund to visit the Ivory Coast and Senegal to look into two requests for assistance from the Fund connected with a long-term vocational training programme in the industrial and agricultural sectors, and that he assisted Senegal in framing a revised request.

V. Organization of a Documentation Centre

13. Funds were allocated by the Technical Assistance Board in 1961-62 for the organization of a documentation centre for the following purposes: (i) the collection of information from African countries and the United Nations on community development, rural development, and social surveys and services; (ii) the dissemination of such information among the various countries; (iii) the collection of audio-visual material and equipment for loan to countries; and (iv) the publication of a liaison bulletin.

It unfortunately proved impossible, for lack of specialized staff, to set up the centre in 1961. But one official is now being recruited, and this should enable the centre to start up in 1962.

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